

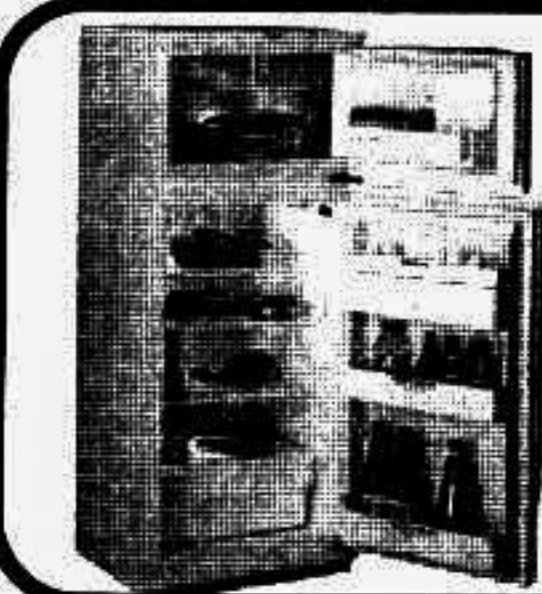
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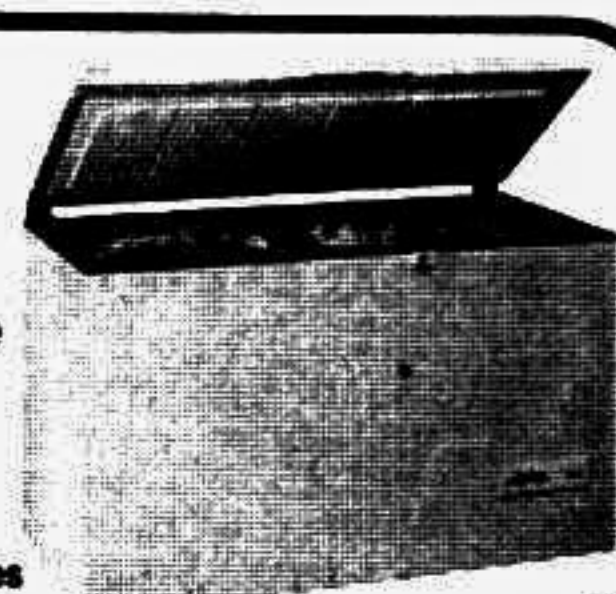
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Who ordered construction of Feni stadium?

FENI, Mar 19: Rescuers today removed debris from the centre-point of Thursday's collapse of an under-construction sports complex at Masterpara in the town, but no more deaths were reported, reports UNB.

Six construction workers were killed and some 200 injured as the roof of the complex, being built, many said illegally, at the local Shishu Park, caved in.

The district administration formed a five-member inquiry committee to probe the worst accident in the tiny frontier town in recent times. The probe body has already started investigation.

But local people are confused as to whether the mystery would be unveiled as a 'very influential' person was behind the construction of the indoor complex.

Officials at Feni municipality, who preferred not to be named, informed that they were compelled to forward a project profile for the indoor stadium.

The Local Government Ministry had rejected the proposal about a year ago as construction of such sport establishment was not under the jurisdiction of the

municipality. But, the municipality was made to start construction works by a contractor, Kutubuddin Hazzari.

The mastermind also continued pressure on the municipality and sources concerned said a handsome amount of money was sanctioned for the complex showing a fake work order.

No government organisations in last 48 hours have admitted that they were concerned with the construction at the Shishu Park, established on the land donated by the late Shishir Majumdar.

The donor in the will had categorically mentioned that the land should be used only for children's park, and if not, his successors would be the owners.

There has been hearsay in the town that the indoor stadium was being built at a cost of Tk 1.5 crore funded by Youths and Sports Ministry.

However, State Minister for Youths and Sports Obaidul Qader who visited the spot, still cordoned off by police, said that his ministry was not aware of the scheme. "Pourasava might be involved with the construc-

tion."

Officials at the municipality, again on condition of anonymity, informed that no tender was floated for the construction and there was also no work order. The chairman was not available.

They said director (planning) of Youths and Sports Ministry Habibur Rahman had warned the contractor concerned that an accident might occur if the construction works continued the way it had been done.

But the contractor didn't pay heed to the warnings and continued the construction without any suggestion from any consultants.

Some workers, who were doing the construction work, said the roof on 35-feet wall was built and beams were set up only with bamboo props. No centring steel and iron pillars and bars were used.

The inquiry committee, headed by additional district magistrate Khadaker Mainuddin, in a meeting today set the modalities of investigation. The also seized some damaged materials from the ruins.

Medical services

From Page 1
penalty system should be introduced to ensure accountability of doctors, they said. Doctors, as in other countries, should also have 'protection' to compensate for any claim.

The speakers expressed their disappointment at the role of policy-makers specially those who are involved in designing 'tertiary' healthcare facilities.

Referring to the Fifth Five Year Plan (HPSP), Dr Binaek Sen of BIDS said, "Every year, about Tk 500 crore is spent by people for treatment abroad, which is about 30 per cent of the budget for the health sector."

Outdoor attendance of patients at thana health complexes and district hospitals declined between 1994 and 1996. The attendance declined by 36 per cent in medical college hospitals, 7 per cent at general hospitals, 15 per cent at 100-bed district hospitals, and by 13 per cent at 50-bed district hospitals, he said quoting a BIDS study.

Unequal distribution of specialists, inadequate equipment and drugs, lack of 'one-stop' service and clients' dissatisfaction are the main reasons, he said.

Nasrin Huq, a leader of a women's organisation, said, "I feel that those who are going abroad for treatment are doing so out of frustration. In many occasions, patients lose confi-

dence on local doctors because there are differences of opinion on simple matters."

Borhan Ahmed, a senior journalist, said, "There is no consumer protection law or a health policy in the country. How can we expect quality health services without these?"

Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, President of the Bangladesh Medical Association suggested giving protection to the doctors community by introducing health insurance. The government should train more doctors to ensure quality services.

National Professor M R Khan, a child specialist, suggested that all diagnostic centres in the country should be standardised. A central investigation unit should be set up to ensure quality. For doctors, the curriculum should be reformed to up-date their knowledge, he said.

Prof. M A Quaderi, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical Hospital said, "I agree that many people now seek treatment abroad but it is not due to doctors but due to the flaw in the system."

But most of the participants agreed that proper treatment facilities especially for heart and kidney diseases were lacking in the country.

About 20 participants took part in the discussion that continued for about four hours.

Khaleda demands compensation for victims

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia expressed her deep shock at the collapse of a sports complex in Feni, which left seven people dead and over 200 injured, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, she prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and expressed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

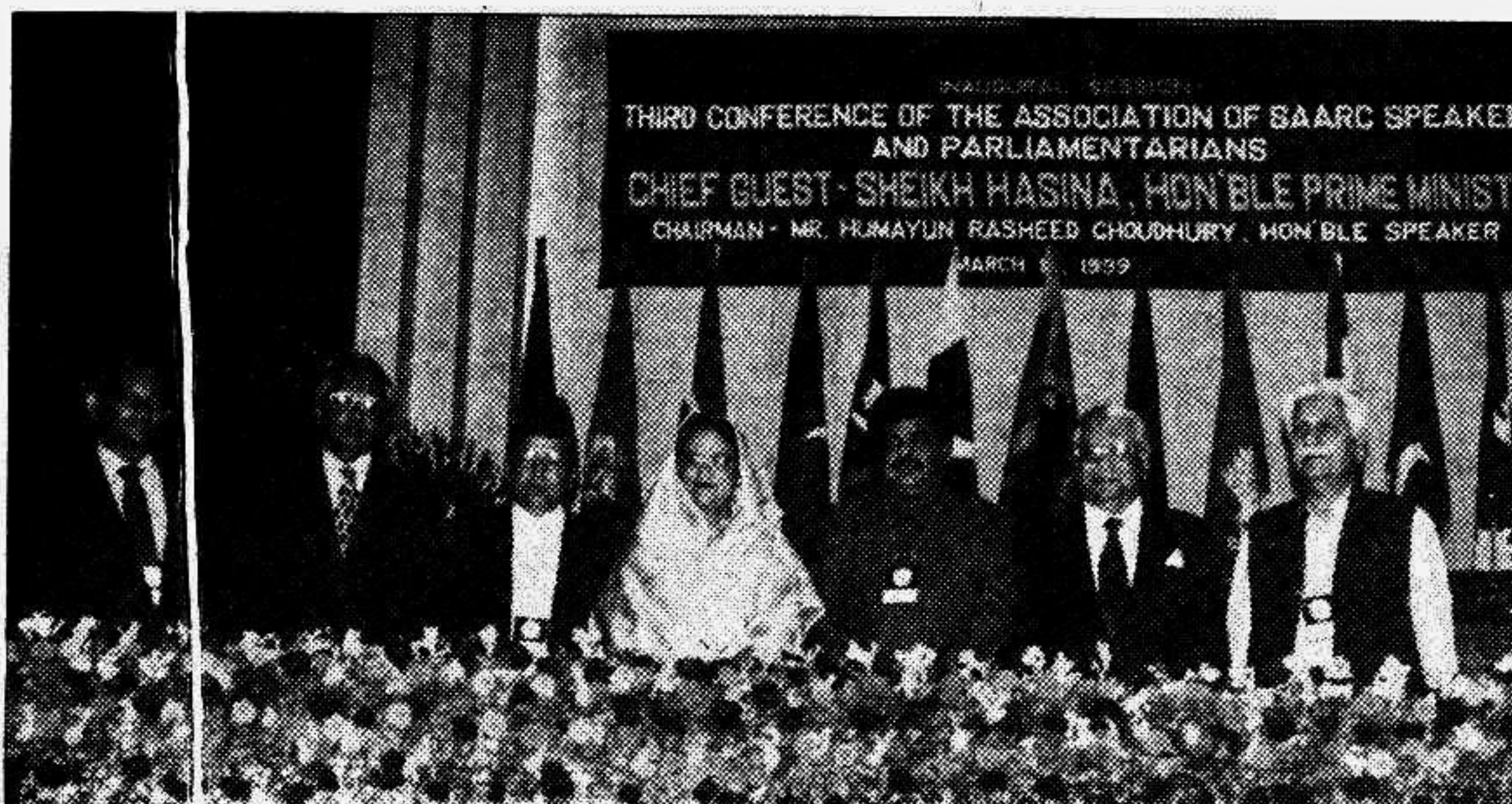
BNP chief wished early recovery of the injured and demanded of the government to ensure proper treatment and compensation for them.

She said a proper inquiry into the appointment of the contractor and supervision of the construction work would reveal the partisan attitude and politicisation of the present government.

70 drown as ship sinks off Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Mar 19: Around 70 people drowned when an overloaded ship sank in rough seas off the coast of Sierra Leone, survivors and maritime officials said today, reports Reuters.

Three survivors of the disaster said the vessel had left Tombo on the southern shore of the Freetown peninsula carrying petrol kerosene and rice on Wednesday when it ran into trouble.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the third conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and parliamentarians at the International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. — PID photo

Peace, cooperation

From Page 1

have enough economic potential. This region can be made prosperous through meaningful economic cooperation.

Nepalese Speaker Ramchandra Poudel noted that parliaments in SAARC countries could not yet fulfil the aspirations of their peoples and suggested effective regional cooperation for economic welfare of the impoverished South Asia. He hoped the Speakers' Association would contribute to achieving the objective of SAARC.

Maldives Deputy Education Minister Abdul Hameed Abdul Hakeem said elected representatives of the people should make new commitments to materialise the legitimate expectations of the people in South Asia.

The Bhutanese delegation leader called for fruitful cooperation among the SAARC member states in a sound political environment.

Host Bangladesh Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury said despite being rich in human and natural resources, the SAARC countries were still amongst the poorer nations of the world.

"We must pave the way for cooperation and development and reverse some of the negative tendencies that sometimes break asunder an otherwise congenial bond between neighbours," he told the meet.

The SAARC legislators in the conference, split into different working sessions, will discuss two topics: Ethical Standards of Parliamentarians and Exchange of Information and Communications.

The first plenary of the conference was held at Hotel Sonargaon in the afternoon with Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury in the chair. It adopted the agenda and modalities for the conference and then broke into two groups that met separately.

Group-A was chaired by Mia Muhammad Yasin Khan Watto MP, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs of Pakistan, while Group-B by Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Balayogi.

In group discussions, four keynote papers were discussed — two on 'Ethical Standards of Parliamentarians and Conflict of Interests' and two on 'Communication and Exchange of Information among SAARC Countries'.

Prof Mohammad Ali Ashraf MP of Bangladesh presented the keynote on 'Ethical Standards of Parliamentarians and Conflict of Interests' while Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan of Bangladesh on 'Communication and Exchange of Information among SAARC Countries'.

Sri Lankan paper on 'Ethical Standards of Parliamentarians and Conflict of Interests' was presented by Deputy Speaker Anil Moonesinghe while Indian on 'Communication and Exchange of Information among SAARC Countries' by Speaker G M C Balayogi.

The inauguration of the conference was preceded by the SAARC Speakers Council meet where recommendations made by the secretary-level preparatory meeting were discussed.

Discussion on 'electoral law reform' today

By Staff Correspondent

A discussion on "Electoral Law Reform" will be held at 3 pm today at the FBCCI Bhawan in the city. The discussion has been jointly organised by the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), Study and Research Group (SRG) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), said a press release.

SC Bar polls

From Page 1

man secured 650 votes and his nearest rival Advocate Subrata Chowdhury bagged 601 votes.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed, president of Democratic Lawyers' Association of Bangladesh (DLAB) and Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, secretary of Bangladesh Bar Council, SCBA unit, and joint secretary of DLAB, were backed by Awami Ainjibi Parishad and other pro-liberation organisations in the election.

Advocate Md Abdur Rab Chowdhury, former secretary of the government and BNP MP and Advocate Saidur Rahman were nominated by BNP.

Other newly-elected office bearers are two vice-presidents — Barrister Kazi Shahadat Hossain and Advocate Md Abdul Wahab, treasurer — Syed Shahidur Rahman Shahid, two assistant secretaries — Golam Md Chowdhury Alal and Khurshida Bilkish Banu.

Seven members of the executive committee have also been elected. They are Sarker Jahmina Begum, Begum Khaleda Bilkish, S M Aminul Islam, Saifuddin Aminur Rahman, M A Qudus Sheikh, Md Nazrul Islam Talukdar and Md Akram Hossain Chowdhury.

5 plastic godowns gutted at Chandpur

CHANDPUR, Mar 19: A devastating fire that broke out at Tinpatti area in Purnabazar of the town today gutted five plastic godowns, reports UNB.

Fire Brigade sources said the fire originated from one of the godowns at 12.15 pm and soon engulfed the entire area.

Fire fighters from three stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze with the help of local people after two hours.

Zimbabwe beat Kenya

From Page 1

Kenyan innings hammered a quartet of fours, and a towering sixer against paceman Eddo Brandes that travelled all the way into the eastern gallery. But then the stylish right-hander helplessly watched his fiercely driven shot taken by a diving Strang to his right.

In 19th over, one-down Steve Tikolo, the most experienced batsman in the side, ran himself out while chasing a sharp single on a misfield before Strang removed the other opener with the last ball of that over.

The wicketkeeper-batsman, who was dropped by Andy Whittall while on 17, returned to the dressing room giving a simple catch to Zimbabwe skipper Alistair Campbell (37) and 53 for the fifth wicket with Brandes.

Earlier Grant, twin brother of Andy, and Neil Johnson put on 44 runs for the first wicket in 9.3 overs. Grant, at 15, was first to go when he tried to loft Tony Suji over the top but ended up offering a simple catch to the bowler.

But Brandes was the man who provided the real thrust in their innings as the big hitter smashed 53 playing only 34 balls, and with the help of five fours and a six. It's his second half-century in one-dayers.

Kenya will take on hosts Bangladesh at the same venue today.

Andy hit a fluent 99-ball 83 to become the first Zimbabwean to complete 3,000 runs in his 101st one-day international. He stayed at the crease for 128 minutes and laced his 25th fifty with eight fours.

Coming in at number four, the left-hander put on 106 for the fourth wicket with skipper Alistair Campbell (37) and 53 for the fifth wicket with Brandes.

With the Kenyans reduced to 101 for eight, captain Asif Karim fought a lost cause with Thomas Odoyo. They could score 34 runs for the ninth wicket before Heath Streak stepped in to finish the futile resistance.

Returning in his second spell in the 42nd over, the right-arm seamer first had Odoyo in front of his wicket for 25 and then he sent the stumps of Martin Suji cart-wheeling.

Earlier, electing to bat first, Zimbabwe rode on two half-centuries from Andy Flower and Eddo Brandes to score 272 for six.

BCL factions clash Anandamohan College closed

MYMENSINGH, Mar 19: Anandamohan College here was declared closed following armed clashes between the two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on Thursday, reports UNB.

The decision to close the college was taken at an emergency meeting of the authorities Thursday night.

A tense situation has been prevailing on the campus following the clashes, which left ten students wounded.

The authorities asked the students to vacate their dormitories by 11 am today.

'Govt pushing country toward civil war'

The opposition alliance led by BNP yesterday aired their apprehensions that the country was heading towards a 'civil war' and asked the government to step down to avert the impending strife, reports UNB.

"We demand resignation of the Sheikh Hasina government. Unequivocally we announce that we won't allow this anti-state government to push the country towards a civil war," said a joint statement of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote.

Referring to the Supreme Court verdict on a contempt charge against the Prime Minister, the opposition parties said the court gave a view censuring her unguarded utterances for which the Prime Minister did not express regret.

In her written statement to the court, the Prime Minister had accused the newspapers and also given an impression of overriding the bounds of her executive powers, the statement commented.

Such an abortive attempt to exert influence by Sheikh Hasina through her executive authority over judiciary is nothing new, the statement said, adding it is a "symptom in disguise of the BAKSAL programme."

The mainstream opposition parties accused the Awami League administration of creating 'godfathers' and patronising terrorism to establish party influence across the country.

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সংবিধিবদ্ধ সত্যকীরণ : ধূমপান স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য ক্ষতিকর

Editor: Mahfuz Anam