



VOL. IX NO. 63 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

CHAITRA 9, 1405 BS

DHAKA TUESDAY MARCH 23, 1999

ZILHAJJ 4, 1419 HIJRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

Paris Consortium
Draft of country
memorandum
approved

The Cabinet approved the draft of the country memorandum to be placed in the meeting of Bangladesh Development Forum April 19-20 in Paris, reports UNB.

The approval was given in a Cabinet meeting at the PM's Office yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Donors make a review of the country's economic performance and make fresh aid commitments in the annual meet, better known as Paris Consortium.

The meeting also approved IRI-Boro and Maize Procurement Policy '99 ahead of the dry season food crop harvests.

The procurement target has been fixed at 1.50 lakh metric tons of IRI-Boro paddy and 3 lakh MT of rice while 5.000 MT of maize.

The government procurement price for per kg paddy and rice has been fixed at Tk 8.25 and Tk 13 respectively while Tk 7 for maize.

CJ turns down Beximco plea for case transfer

Star Report

The Chief Justice yesterday turned down a Beximco plea for transfer from Court Number 6 of the High Court the writ case regarding removal of four Beximco directors from the boards of AB and IFIC banks.

The four had earlier filed the writ challenging the notices for removal of the four directors of Beximco from the IFIC and AB Bank boards.

The four — Sohel F Rahman, Salman F Rahman, M A Quasem and Iqbal Ahmed — had been served notices to vacate their respective posts in the boards as they failed to repay loans.

Beximco lawyer Rafique-ul-Huq later filed an application for transfer of the case from Court-6 as his clients expressed apprehension about fair trial in that court.

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Overdue loans
Morshed Khan,
3 directors of
AB Bank
served notices

The chairman of AB Bank, M Morshed Khan, and three directors have been served with notices for cancellation of their directorships for non-payment of overdue loans worth Taka 40 crore, reports APB.

The three directors are Morshed Khan's uncle-in-law Golam Halim, brother Jashimuddin Khan and brother-in-law Ashgar Karim.

The Bangladesh Bank served the notices under Section 17 of the Bank Companies Act, which says loan defaulters cannot act as directors of scheduled banks.

They have been asked to repay their overdue loans within two months for retaining their directorships, official sources said.

Earlier, the bank's vice chairman Ramzul Siraj and

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President assents to four bills

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday gave assent to the four city corporation bills passed in the current session of Jatiya Sangsad, reports UNB.

The bills are The Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999, The Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999, The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999 and The Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999.

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Prayer Timings

March 23		
Azan	Jamaat	
5:30	5:35	
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:30	4:35
Maghrib	6:20	6:23
Esha	7:30	7:35

Source: Islamic Foundation

Sunday's HC verdict
CMM's court comes to a standstill

Star Report

The Metropolitan Magistracy in the city yesterday did not transact normal business other than handling the cases of persons booked by different police stations during the last 24 hours.

It followed a High Court verdict on Sunday declaring appointment of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate in 1992 and subsequent appointment of two CMMs unlawful. The verdict followed a writ petition filed by a lawyer.

Confusion prevailed in the

CMM court where 17 Magistrates perform various duties including prosecution. Only one Magistrate was found working in his desk.

People and lawyers who had cases had to leave the courts as normal business was not handled.

Sources said CMM K M Abdulla brought the situation to the knowledge of higher authorities and awaited instructions but did not get till the evening.

Law officials said should at least match these earnings," he said.

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Hearing adjourned till Apr 19
AL, BNP leaders reply to rule on hartal

Hearing of government and Opposition submissions on the High Court rule seeking to proscribe pro- and anti-hartal activities was adjourned till April 19, reports UNB.

The adjournment came after the two sides made their depositions yesterday.

The Attorney-General prayed for adjournment to rule to the remarks made by the BNP Secretary General in his 110-pages reply to the *suo moto* rule.

Mahbubey Alam, the counsel for Awami League General Secretary and LGDR Minister Zillur Rahman, submitted the reply of the ruling party leader to the court.

Zillur responded that pro-hartal activities like processions, provocative slogans cre-

ated undue pressures on the people, hampering their normal works.

"Pro-hartal activists used arms and explosives forcing people to keep indoors," says the government reply pointing to frequent shutdowns being enforced by the BNP-led opposition combine to press their demands.

Hartal pickets, he said, hurl bombs and explosives on street shops, establishments and public gatherings. They set fire to cars and other vehicles.

The pro-hartal elements committed cognizable offences and it's the duty of all citizens to protect themselves from their (opposition) criminal acts."

The Awami League leader See Page 12 Col 7

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Fire incidents in three districts
4 killed, 480 families homeless

Three children and an old woman were burnt to death and 130 others injured in three fire incidents in three districts yesterday, reports UNB.

Some 480 families rendered homeless due to the fire incidents.

In Rangpur, two brother and sister, and their grandmother were killed and about 100 others injured when a devastating fire at a slum in Lalmoni Nagar of the district town.

Police and witnesses said the fire which broke out at about 7:30 pm gutted 150 houses.

The victim was identified as Biplob. The injured were admitted to different hospitals and private clinics.

Witnesses said the fire originated from the kitchen of one Jesmin in the slum behind the Mondalpara fire station.

Fire brigade units from Faridpur and Rajbari with the help of local people brought the blaze under control at about 9

pm.

Meanwhile, two persons sustained burn injuries and 80 shanties were gutted when a fire broke out at Jimkhana slum at Narayanganj town yesterday afternoon.

Some 100 chickens of a poultry farm were also roasted alive and five shops damaged in the fire.

Three firemen were seriously injured when angry people beat them up as they reached at the spot late from the nearby fire station.

The matter of rape of the British woman would be discussed, among other things," JP Geddes, Second Secretary of the British High Commission, who looks after political and press matters, told UNB yesterday.

He indicated that the planned meeting might take place tomorrow.

The UK authority confirmed the British woman was raped by four policemen at a police station in Dhaka and Consul Geoffrey Fairhurst wrote a letter to the Inspector General of Police on December 21, 1998 informing him of the incident.

Asked whether the High Commission had sought investigation, Geddes said they had only wanted to inform the IGP since they had no further details of the lady and the incident.

The dead was identified as Shajahan Ali, 36, a leader of the Phultala unit of Khulna District Bus Workers Union.

Shajahan succumbed to his bul-

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US envoy suggests gas export to India

By Staff Correspondent
Contrary to what the prime minister and the leader of the opposition in parliament recently said about gas export, US Ambassador John C Holzman suggested yesterday that Bangladesh should now consider gas export to India as the domestic gas consumption alone would not bring about economic breakthrough.

Even at the present low world petroleum prices, the export of 500 million cubic feet of gas a day, which would amount to about 3.6 tcf (trillion cubic feet) over 20 years, would earn Bangladesh about 450 million dollars each year," Holzman said.

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