

Water crisis in city will ease next month

The water crisis in Dhaka city will ease considerably next month with completion of sinking 19 additional pumps, WASA officials assured yesterday, reports UNB.

The new pump stations would add 6.65 crore litre of water everyday to the existing supply of 96 crore litre taking the total supply to over 102 crore litre. The demand is, however, estimated at 140 crore litre, said an official.

He said overall water supply situation is not that bad and the water production is now higher than last year's 85 crore litre during this time.

The new 19 pump stations are being installed at Motijheel, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Sabujbag, Ramna and Tejgaon thana areas.

The official said availability

of water to common man declined as the demand by high-rise buildings increased sharply. He denied erratic power supply was affecting operation of pump stations. Some 48 generators are there to keep the pump stations running in case of power failures. Stand by generators will also be provided to the new pump stations, said the official.

One hundred high-powered generators will be available under the Swedish assistance which will reach Bangladesh next month. WASA will purchase another 120 generators, and the deal is under process.

He said WASA also decided to undertake a pilot project to supply water for purposes other than drinking from Turag river.

ECNEC okays 9 projects involving Tk 443.87 crore

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday cleared for construction of nine projects beside all establishments to preserve rainwater to supply arsenic-free water to the people, reports UNB.

Presiding over a (ECNEC) meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council, which endorsed some water-supply projects among others, she also stressed the need for using surface water in order to avert the dangers of arsenic contamination.

The ECNEC meeting approved a total of nine projects involving an estimated cost of Tk 443.87 crore, including Tk 150.46 crore in project aid.

The approved schemes are: Amirpur-Badhartek-Balladanga construction of small bridges and culverts (up to 40 feet) under the food-for-works programme, installation of digital telephone exchanges in Sreepur, Kapasia, and Kaliganj thana headquarters in Gazipur district, construction of RCC bridge over Bhairab

(Dartana) river on Khulna-Bagerhat-Pirojpur road, water supply, sewerage and drain construction in 15 district headquarters, expansion and reconstruction of Panchagarh-Tetulia-Banglabandh road, construction of steel bailey bridge and setting up industrial estates in 24 districts.

Besides, development of some roads of the capital under asphalt plant and self-employment projects for the poor women in greater Jessore district, approved by the State Minister for Planning, were also placed at the meeting.

LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman, Education Minister ASHK Sadique, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and State Minister for Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleque were among others present in the meeting.

Khaleda: AL terrorists

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from Bangabandhu leaders was made five days back, the government is yet to summon the Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka.

The opposition leader also asked the government to refrain from blaming opposition or religious organisations immediately after any occurrence. "The prime minister and other government leaders promptly blame the BNP and various religious organisations without any investigation. But later it is found that the ruling party is involved in all such occurrences," she added.

On bomb explosion at the house of an AL MP at Chhatak, the BNP chief said two people were killed and roof of the house was demolished but none was arrested in this connection. "Whereas thousands of BNP leaders and activists are being arrested and repressed implicating them in false cases."

On loadshedding, she said the prime minister removed the energy minister and took over charge of the ministry, but the power crisis has increased manifold since then. The loadshedding now stands at around 1000 megawatt.

Referring to removal of Rafiqul Islam as home minister, Begum Zia said he was removed from the ministry as he spoke the truth on Jessore incident. He had said that the grenades exploded at the Udichi function at Jessore could only be used by army personnel but Bangladesh Army did not have

those, she added.

She also said the former home minister was not allowed to work independently and instructions always came from the Prime Minister's Office and some other influential men.

Begum Zia said that in the last three years, the government completely destroyed the country. All democratic institutions, universities and colleges, and examination system were ruined due to politicisation and nepotism of the ruling party.

She said violence, rape, murder, extortion and all other criminal activities are now a regular feature in the country as the government is directly patronising and rewarding AL criminals.

On the collapse of Feni stadium, she said it collapsed as the construction work was going on without any tender and there was corruption.

Khaleda in her 30-minute speech also listed failures of the government in different sectors, destruction of industries, lawlessness, price hike of essentials, falsehood of the government, corruption, nepotism and terrorism.

She urged the people to prepare for a tougher movement after the Eid-ul-Azha. "We will launch a one-point movement if the government fails to meet our demands and resolve the problems facing the people and the country," she added.

More than 200 leaders and workers of district Jatiya Party led formally joined BNP at the meeting.

Allegations refuted

Managing Director of Royal Tour of Khulna, Md Faruq, in a rejoinder to a news item 'Bagerhat SP refuses to accept case: Discovery cameras crew assaulted by hoodlums in Sunderbans' published in The Daily Star on Mar 3, has termed the allegations as false, baseless and motivated.

In the rejoinder he said: "The allegation made in the news item that a group of seven men led by one Faruk boarded MV Chhutti. Stationed at forest station at Katka on Feb 24 and assaulted the crews on board including one Funsoor and also attempted to hit one Mike Herd, a wildlife camera man from the America's Discovery channel filming a documentary on tigers in the Sunderbans, is not correct. No such things happened at all at Katka on that date."

"On 24 Feb '99 MV Chhutti of The Guide Tour Ltd And ML Royal Gondola of Royal Tour along with three other vessels carrying tourist passengers anchored at Katka. A total of about 400 people were visiting Katka on that date. No body knows about such alleged incidents there."

"In the afternoon our tourists with country boat went round the Sunderbans in the canal and during this time Rubait Munsoor and Mike Herd with a high powered speed boat chased our tourist boat at Katka canal and got photographs of them which is very illegal. During this time our country boat was about to sink due to rough water and rolling. This was strongly protested by me and my guests. And Rubait Munsoor and Mike Herd approached me with some empty beer cans with the plea that they were thrown into the canal from my vessel and they were polluting the Sunderbans. We informed them gently that those cans were not of us and they might be thrown from any other vessel stationed there at Katka. After this, they left us with angry mood and telling that they would give us proper lesson in time."

The talk of Godfather and attempt to shoot deer is also baseless, concocted and motivated. I am not at all aware of such things. I also make it clear that I have no relation with any kind of terrorist activities and there is no such record in any police station anywhere in Bangladesh.

"While talking to the reporter of The Daily Star, after the incident, I clearly explained my position to him about the incident."

"It may be mentioned here that about one and half months ago, while I was at Katka, I found that six cows were brought there by Herd for use as food of tigers for getting photographs and I told them whether they had any permission to bring such drying cows and shoot them and after death throw them in the Sunderbans for use as food of tigers, and whether this activities are allowed by wildlife regulations. He could not give satisfactory reply to me and since then he is maintaining enmity relation with us."

"The Guide Tour Ltd, owner of MV Chhutti, has the business jealousy against the Royal Tour and, as a result, they have used Mike Herd and his people against me and my business firm - the Royal Tour so that our good name and fame in tourist business in Sunderbans are jeopardized. Mike maintains very cordial relations with the owner of the guide Tour Ltd, Ahsan Mansoor, Robait Munsoor, claimed to be the Assistant of Mike is actually the son of the owner of this Guide Tour Ltd. And Rubait Munsoor, in collaboration with Herd, has created this news and such acts of them and sending of letters to British High Commission and to different ministries has lowered my business goodwill and my personal social position and prestige."

Our Reply: The information provided in the report in question was based on first-hand accounts of the incident from Discovery Cameraman - Mike Herd, a representative from the Ministry of Films and Publications and several tourists on board the MV Chhutti at Katka on the 24th of February 1999. As per standard procedure, we contacted Md Faruq at the offices of the Royal Tours in Khulna and printed his version in the original report. Ahsan Nazim, a tourist from Md Faruq's vessel - ML Royal Gondola also confirmed Herd's allegations, admitting that Md Faruq boarded the MV Chhutti and assaulted a member of the film crew.

Md Faruq's allegations that the tiger-baiting was done illegally, are baseless as the entire filming process was conducted in the presence of a government representative, with the full cooperation of the Forest Department. Sources in Cicada Films - the filming company contracted by Discovery, have confirmed that they had completed all the necessary formalities with the Government before the filming started.

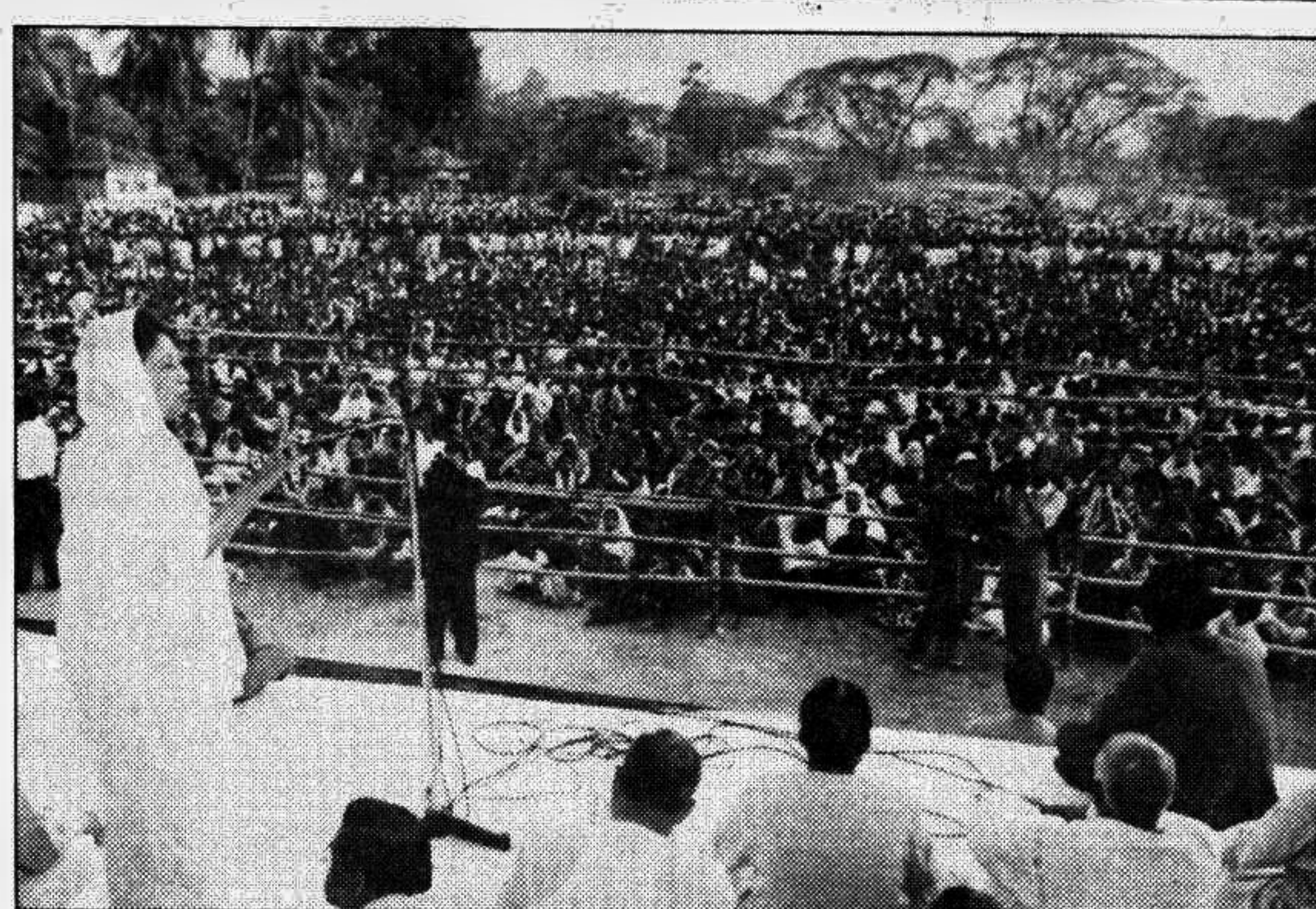
As such we stand by the information provided in our report.

JS body on Finance Ministry discusses foreign aid

The parliamentary standing committee on Finance Ministry has discussed the availability and utilisation of foreign aid during the current fiscal, reports UNB.

The committee at a meeting yesterday also discussed the issues relating to the prospect of getting foreign aids in the next fiscal.

Activities of Economic Relations Division also came up in the meeting for discussion.



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Government Devendra College Ground at Manikganj yesterday.

Body formed for plans to convert BSTI into modern organisation

Consumers have the right to get quality products: Tofail

A high-powered committee has been formed to frame a comprehensive plan of action to convert Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institutions (BSTI) into a modern, dynamic, efficient and action-oriented organisation, reports BSS.

The decision to take this effect was taken at a special meeting of the council of committee of BSTI held in its conference room, Chairman of BSTI and Minister for Commerce and Industries Tofail Ahmed was in the chair.

Industries secretary is the convenor of the committee while others members are commerce secretary, director general of BSTI, a scientist and a specialist.

Speaking on the occasion, Tofail Ahmed said the consumers had the right to get quality products and BSTI could play the role of ensuring standards of the products.

The minister said the BSTI could help the manufacturers and businessmen through counselling them to maintain standards of products. The businessmen, he said, should also be sincere to maintain standards of their products.

Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Faruq Chowdhury, Industries Secretary Ejazul Huq, Director General of BSTI Abu Talab, president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industry Sharif M Afzal Hossain, BUET Professor Dr Dipak Kanti Das, Director of Bangladesh Medical Research Council Dr Harun-ur-Rashid and representatives of DCCI, Khulna, Chamber and different ministries and organisations attended the meeting.

Tofail said that the government with the assistance from the World Bank was taking up an export diversification project where some efforts would be

made to improve the country's standardisation system.

In the third WTO ministerial meeting, he said, environmental standardisation would be the main issue and future external trade would be dictated by eco-labelling.

Tofail asked the newly formed committee to consider all the issues relating to facing future challenges and responsibilities to meet consumers rights and expand export markets.

He asked the BSTI men to discharge their duties with sincerity and honesty to give BSTI certification marks.

The minister directed the BSTI authorities to take lawful actions against the producers and importers of unstandardised products.

A move is underway to amend laws of BSTI to enable the authorities to strictly prohibit malpractice, he added.



Hindu devotees taking dip during the holy bathing - the Astami Snan at Langalbandh yesterday.

HERE and THERE

Sebabroti

By Staff Correspondent

Three scouts belonging to Seabrothi Mukta Scout Group of Bangladesh Scouts Dhaka District Rover, recently concluded their 100-mile march to quality for the "President Rover Scout Award."

Starting from Chittagong on the morning of February 26, the scouts reached Cox's Bazar on March 2. The scout team included Enad Uddin Laskar (Team Leader), Gazi Shaiful Islam and Mohammad Nasimul Kabir.



BIMAS

By Staff Correspondent

A 11-member executive committee of Bangladesh Jatiya Mithila Ainjibi Samity (BIMAS) was elected recently with Advocate Faozia Karim Firoze and Advocate Tanjina Aziz as president and general secretary respectively.

Other members of the committee valid upto the year 2000, are vice president Syeda Alsar Jahan and Elena Khan, joint general secretary Nahreen Parveen, Treasurer Jahanara Haq, joint treasurer Nelufer Quader and members UM Habiburrahman, Fazilatunnessa, Fahima Nasreen and Lutfie Ara.

Association for Aged

Dr M A Wahid and Dr Mahabub Rahman have been elected president and secretary general respectively of Bangladesh Association for the Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine, said a press release.

The election and annual general meeting (AGM) of the organisation held at its office at Agargaon in the city on Mon-

No aid

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tion of these priority actions, he added.

However, the sessions of the meeting would also focus on improving governance, reforming the financial system, mainly the banking system, food security, public administration, health, education and human development, the World Bank country director said.

Asked about donors' attitude towards the prevailing political situation, he said Bangladesh's political leaders from both parties need to figure out their political rivalry and focus on economic reform so that the pace of growth rate and poverty alleviation could be accelerated.

The World Bank country director said, to become a middle income country over a decade or two, a sustainable growth rate of 7-9 per cent is needed.

He termed last year's growth rate as good. "But not good enough for what Bangladesh wants to achieve."

He praised the government for managing the flood situation well in downsizing risks. Managing macro-economic balances even in a difficult time was also good.

"But, the economic and institutional policy reforms are too slow to accelerate the growth rate that Bangladesh needs."

"Temple said the government's policies are at right direction but need to be faster to begin a good time."

The donors will be reluctant to put their money in a place where policies disfavour a fast take off, he added.

Unlike other years, this year World Bank's Vice President for South Asia Miekko Nishimizu will chair the opening and closing sessions of the meeting while Bangladesh Finance Minister "SAMS Kibria will chair the thematic sessions."

Representatives from about 35 countries and international organisations have confirmed their participation in the Aid Consortium meeting.

A one-day Investors Forum, chaired by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), will be held on April 21.

The representatives of investors already having a stake in Bangladesh and other prospective investors will participate in the Investors Forum.

Street crimes on the rise

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About 100 cases are being filed everyday in the city's 21 police stations, mostly in connection with snatching and dacoity, reports UNB.

Mugging incidents on the streets have increased manifold on the eve of Eid, said a senior police official requesting anonymity. The police are anxious at the alarming increase of mugging incidents and street crimes in the capital despite tight security measures.

They said security has been strengthened in the city in a bid to check crime, especially snatching and dacoity. Uniformed and plain-clothes police teams have been deployed in the strategic areas of the capital, including the cattle markets.

Some 18 cattle markets have been opened in the city on the eve of Eid and plain-clothes police are active in and around the markets.

Assuring the city dwellers, the DMP commissioner said, police are on top alert to check the crimes and the anti-crime drive is on to nab the culprits.

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Hosts laid to rest

From Page 1

ready reached the final with three consecutive wins against the two lowly-rated teams.

Kennedy Otieno vindicated his captain's decision to bat first with a cracking 120, his second one-day century, to help Kenya recover from a shaky start to a fighting 231.

His maiden hundred, a swashbuckling 144, also came against Bangladesh in the President's Cup in Nairobi two years back.

The sturdy opener played the sheet-anchor role to guide his side to safety after Kenya lost their two in-form batsman Steve Tikolo and Ravindu Shah in quick succession. Taking the toothless and at times erratic Bangladesh bowlers to the sword, the wicketkeeper-batsman raced to the magical three-figure mark with the help half a dozen sixes and as many fours.

Dropped while on 41 by left-arm spinner Mohammed Rafique, the experienced right-hander made the most of the decisive let-off when he reached his hundred in style, smashing slow left-arm Enamul Haque for a huge sixer over square-leg. Otieno put on 70 runs with vice-captain Maurice Odumbe, who made a defiant 25 off 41 balls. But the most enterprising part in the Kenyan innings came when Gupta joined Otieno to feature in 78 runs for the fifth wicket.

Otieno, who hammered eight fours in his marathon 137-ball knock, was eventually out in the 46th over, leaving Kenya comfortably placed at 211 for seven. He was caught at short fine leg, mistiming an intended pull against Hasibul Hossain, the tall right-arm seamer, who eventually finished with ca-

reer-best four for 54 in 10 overs. Bangladesh, in their chase, started miserably as their consistently inconsistent top-order quickly followed one after another to the dressing room. Opener Shahriar Hossain returned for a first ball duck, lazily playing the first ball of the innings into the waiting hands of right-arm seamer Tony Suji.

Shahriar's partner Mehrab hung in the middle for a while before he fell in the trap set by the Kenyan skipper by skying straight to the fielder placed at deep square leg.

Skipper Aminul Islam, dubbed as a technically correct batsman, put batting basics to shame when he shuffled on the back-foot to a rank good-length delivery from Thomas Odoyo and was caught plumb in front after scoring only 10.

With Bangladesh reeling at three for 56, former national captain Akram Khan stood as the lone hope for the expectant crowd. The portly-right hander, coming into bat at number three, threw caution to the wind when he worked his way to his career-best 65 of 105 deliveries inclusive of five hits across the rope.

But local hopes were truly over once Akram was brilliantly caught at cover by Mohammed Shiekh, the left-arm spinner who then went on to mop up the fragile tail to finish with four for 36 in his 10-nig-gling overs.

Otieno's terrific hundred earned him the man-of-the-match award and a purse of US \$500 dollars.

Today's match will also be telecast live and Bangladesh Betar will have ball-to-ball commentary.

Regional seminar

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generally.

* Allow free access to information.

* Develop a code of conduct regulating their own activities.

* Empower organisations outside the state such as local councils, NGOs, unions and associations.

* Periodic review of electoral system.

* Reduce transportation costs by increasing the number of polling stations.

* Provide state funding of the candidates.

* Regulate types of election expenditures.

* Ensure independent operation of the election commission, and

* Insist on impartial election observation.

Political Parties

* Encourage democratisation of political parties, and

* Lobby northern countries for the establishment of laws and regulations discouraging money laundering from southern countries.

Robert Miller, Executive Director of the Canada-based Parliamentary Centre, explained the recommendations to the newsmen while Syed Humayun Kabir and Manzoor Hasan of Transparency International, Bangladesh replied to ques-

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officers, MPs, executives and judges.

* Strengthen watchdog bodies and the judiciary.

* Separate accounts from the audit functions.

* Modernise the AG function to speed