

Bus service

From page 1 (BRTC). Bangladesh Porjatan Corporation, the private transport company and customs, immigration and police officials. A similar team from Calcutta is scheduled to arrive Dhaka by an Indian bus on April 8 in a trial run. The passengers travelling from Dhaka tomorrow are due to return in their bus along with the Indian bus. Commercial bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta is expected to start within a week of the trial runs. The much awaited service is taking place following signing of a two-year agreement in Delhi on February 17 by officials of the two countries' communication ministries. The agreement will be reviewed after three months. During the three months, four buses, two from Bangladesh and two from India, will operate in the route six days a week. After three months, representatives of the two governments will review the operation, fare structure, and determine the number of buses that will ply in the route. Dhaka would insist that 60 per cent of the buses operating in this route should be from Bangladesh. It is learnt, however, the fare structure and number of buses would be ultimately determined by market forces. The official teams in the trial runs are expected to see the road condition, immigration and customs arrangements and suggest measures for passengers' comfort. It was learnt that opening of the Dhaka-Calcutta route may lead Bangladesh to consider Indian proposals to allow plying of buses in other routes connecting Bangladesh with its north eastern states. A Foreign Ministry official said that if the government's move to connect Dhaka and Calcutta becomes successful, it may also help to open routes with other countries also. It could lead to opening up of other routes linking Myanmar, Thailand and several other Asian countries through the proposed Asian Highway, said a Foreign Ministry official looking after international organisations including BIM-STEC. Although Bangladesh and India were the first to moot the idea of bus communication between the two countries, arch rivals India and Pakistan managed to open a direct bus service between Delhi and Lahore with Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee travelling in the maiden trip in February. A regular bus service between Lahore and Delhi began last month. Negotiations for opening the direct land route to facilitate quick and easy travel of passengers between Bangladesh and India have been going on between the two governments for nearly two years. An Indian news agency IANA reported that the authorities in Calcutta are giving finishing touches to a 45 lakh Rupee air-conditioned waiting hall at Salt Lake in east Calcutta for passengers of the proposed Dhaka-Calcutta bus service. The waiting hall at Salt Lake will have immigration counters, a communication centre and other facilities. Bangladesh side is also going to press into service air-conditioned luxury coaches. Private tour operators have already lined up several 52-seater buses to accommodate only 36-passengers to make the journey comfortable. It was learnt that one-way Dhaka-Calcutta fare would be around Tk 400 per passenger.

Woman gangraped in Sylhet
From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Apr 4: A young mother of two was raped by a gang of youths at village Bhatishall under Jakiganj thana early hours of today. Police said, the victim was asleep along with her children and husband when 5-6 miscreants, armed with deadly weapons, entered the house forcibly at about 2 am. They tied up her eyes and face and took her to a nearby place and raped her one after another. A case has been lodged accusing five people, police said.

Navy recovers smuggled goods
CHITTAGONG, Apr 4: Bangladesh Navy Ship Sagar apprehended two mechanised country boats with 450 bottles foreign whisky and 360 cans of beer worth about Taka 4 lakh 40 thousand near Chittagong harbour mouth recently, says a press release. Boats with goods were later handed over to the proper authority for legal action.

Mintoo leaves for Tripura today
A 29-member trade delegation led by president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Abdul Awal Mintoo leaves today for Agartala on a three-day visit to the Indian eastern state of Tripura, reports BSS. Talking to BSS, the leader of the delegation, Mintoo said that they would explore the possibilities of enhancing the border trade with the north-eastern states of India.

Urs
The annual urs of Gausul Azam Shah Sufi Maulana Syed Golamur Rahman Maizbhandari (RA) will be held today at Maizbhandar Darbar, Fatikchhari, Chittagong, reports BSS.

DU, JU teachers condemn massacre of Albanians

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) on Saturday expressed deep concern over ethnic cleansing and massacre of Albanians in Kosovo by the Serbian military and paramilitary forces, reports UNB. "We condemn Serbian President Milosevic and his forces for forcing lakhs of Muslims out of Kosovo and inflicting inhuman torture on them," said DUTA President Prof AFM Yusuf Haider and General Secretary Ferdous Hossain in a joint statement. In a separate statement, 43 professors of Jahangirnagar University also condemned the anti-human activities of Serbian army in Kosovo. It is a historical and moral responsibility of the government and people of Bangladesh to support the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo in this crisis moment, they said. The signatories included Prof Jasimuddin Ahmed, Prof Syed Safiullah, Prof Abdul Awal, Prof M Khalilur Rahman, Prof Abu Sayeed Khan, Prof Kazi Ali Azam and Prof M Rabul Islam.

CU classes resume today
From CU Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Apr 4: Classes of the Chittagong University will resume tomorrow after a 10-day Eid vacation. Students have already started returning to the campus and their respective dormitories. Offices of the university, however, were opened on Saturday. Students have already started arriving at the campus.

RU classes resume today
RAJSHAHI, Apr 4: The classes of Rajshahi University will resume tomorrow after an 11-day long vacation of Eid-ul-Azha, reports UNB. Offices of the university, however, were opened on Saturday. Students have already started arriving at the campus.

Maulana Nurul Islam returns
State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Mohammad Nurul Islam returned yesterday after leaving Bangladesh's haj delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reports BSS. During his stay in the kingdom, the state minister met his Saudi counterpart Dr Mahmud Bin Mohammad Saif and discussed various aspects of the current year's haj including ensuring better facilities for the pilgrims from Bangladesh, a PID handout said. The Saudi minister assured Maulana Islam of extending necessary facilities. The state minister also held meetings with the chief of moulana and officials of Bangladesh Embassy in Makkah and Jeddah regarding improvement of facilities extended to the hajjis from Bangladeshis.

Ban on 10th issue of 'Desh'
The government has banned the 10th issue (66th year) of fortnightly literary journal Desh published from Calcutta, reports APB. The copies of the issue have been forfeited as it contains controversial author Taslima Nasrin's short story *Aamar Mayer Galpa* which, an official handout said, may hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims and trigger adverse reaction. Import, sale, distribution and preservation of the said issue of the journal have been totally prohibited, the handout added.

Transport strike in Western Zone from Apr 13
KHULNA, Apr 4: The transport workers of the western zone have decided to enforce a 72-hour strike in all routes of the district from April 13 demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of their leader Shahjahan Bhuiyan, reports APB. The call came from a meeting of 33 units of different road transport workers' unions held at Motor Sramik Union's Full-tala office here Saturday night. Transport unions also threatened to go for a non-stop strike in all routes from April 21 if the local administration fails to bring the culprits to book by their deadline.

Khaleda to attend JCD meet today
A two-day extended meeting of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of BNP, begins at Engineers' Institution today, reports UNB. BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the opening session of the meeting as chief guest at 10 am, party sources said.

Qulqhwani
The qulqhwani of Dr Syeduzzaman Chowdhury, former senior medical officer of Suhrawardy Hospital, will be held tomorrow after Asr prayers at his residence 5/15 Humayun Road, Block-B, Mohammadpur in the city, reports BSS. Dr Chowdhury died in the city two days ago at the age of 70. He is survived by his wife and three sons. Dr Chowdhury was a well-known social worker, associated with a number of social and religious organisations.



Bangladesh Prathomik Shikkhak Samity (Primary Teachers' Association) brought out a procession in support of their 21-point demand in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Current water crisis in city to be removed Work on Tk 750 cr water treatment plant begins

The construction work of the country's first major water treatment plant began yesterday to provide surface water to the residents of Dhaka reducing increased dependence on depleting aquifer (ground water), reports BSS. "With the completion of the Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant by 2001, the current water shortage in the city would be removed to a large extent. We expect to completely solve the water problems in the capital through erecting more such surface water plants in phases," LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman said at a ceremony to mark the beginning of construction of the project here. He added that the project was part of government's mid-term planning to resolve the water problems in the backdrop of increasing population in the city. The plant will produce 22.5 crore litres water per day on completion of the project's first phase in 2001 and another 2.5 crore litres when it is expected to go in full operation in 2005. The World Bank, Japan and France are financing the Tk 750 crore project. Officials said Dhaka WASA is currently supplying 96 to 98 crore litres of water daily against the city's maximum estimated demand of 140 crore litres per day.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Saber Hossain Chowdhury, member of parliament Habibur Rahman Mollah, Korean ambassador in Dhaka Tae Kyu Han, Secretary of Local Government Badur Rahman, and Managing Director of WASA Dr Azharul Haq also spoke at the ceremony chaired by WASA chairman Dr ATM Zahurul Haque. Zillur Rahman said Dhaka WASA has set up, as emergency interim measures, 22 pump stations at different parts of the capital while work is underway to install another 12 pumps this month to meet the increased water demands during the current dry season. He said with these activities, the authorities would be able to supply additional 10 crore litres of water by the end of April. "Long term measures have been taken with the assistance of donors to develop water supply infrastructures in consistency with increased population," he said adding that the volume of water supply has risen to nearly 99 crore litres currently against 85 crore litres in July 1998. Water from the Sitalakha river would reach the Saidabad water plant through an approach canal. "All concerned have to be alert against the deterioration of water quality in the Sitalakha as well as other rivers and I hope all nearby industrial units will take necessary measures against the pollution," the minister said. WASA officials said 98 per cent of its total water supply comes from aquifer and only two per cent from rivers through three existing small surface water plants in Dhaka and Narayanganj. The pressure on the ground water would be reduced from 10 to 15 per cent when the project is completed, they said. Saber Chowdhury said Dhaka is one of the 10 most densely populated cities of the world and ranks 17th in the list of mega cities. But this over-population has created crises in providing civic amenities, particularly in the supply of water. "When the project is to be completed the demand for water will also rise but we are sanguine because all our programmes are aimed at giving a permanent solution to the problems," he said adding that Dhaka WASA has planned a strategy to face the situation after 15 years. The WASA chairman said his establishment was under severe pressure to cope with the increased demand despite over exploitation of groundwaters.



Bangladesh Mohila Parishad brought out a procession in the city yesterday marking its founding anniversary. — Star photo

Mannan Bhuiyan says Threat to lives of elected representatives unprecedented

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has strongly protested attack on Nazimuddin Alam MP at Bhola, killing of a Jubadal leader in Chittagong and arrest of leaders at Khagrachhari. He alleged that the government had bought a "Peace Award" by launching false propaganda of establishing peace in the CHT which actually threatens the country's integrity. "Peace in the CHT region is far from truth instead unrest and conflicts go on there regularly." Opposition leaders, activists and common people are being arrested whenever they raised their voice against the misdeeds of the government, Bhuiyan added. Bhuiyan demanded arrest and trial of the persons involved in attack on Nazimuddin Alam, killers of Jubadal leader and unconditional release of BNP Panchhari thana president Amin Sharif and Jamaat leader Khorshed Alam. BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has strongly protested attack on Nazimuddin Alam MP at Bhola, killing of a Jubadal leader in Chittagong and arrest of leaders at Khagrachhari. He alleged that the government had bought a "Peace Award" by launching false propaganda of establishing peace in the CHT which actually threatens the country's integrity. "Peace in the CHT region is far from truth instead unrest and conflicts go on there regularly." Opposition leaders, activists and common people are being arrested whenever they raised their voice against the misdeeds of the government, Bhuiyan added. Bhuiyan demanded arrest and trial of the persons involved in attack on Nazimuddin Alam, killers of Jubadal leader and unconditional release of BNP Panchhari thana president Amin Sharif and Jamaat leader Khorshed Alam.

AL leader Dr Abul Kashem dead

Captain Dr Abul Kashem, a veteran Awami League leader, former lawmaker and a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, died of old age ailments at the Chittagong Holy Crescent Hospital at 1:35 am yesterday. He was 88, says a press release. He has left behind his wife, a son, daughter-in-law, three grand daughters, numerous political colleagues and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death. His *lamaj-e-janaza* was held at the Lalighi Maidan in Chittagong after Asr prayers yesterday and was later laid to rest at the graveyard adjacent to the Katalganj Baro Mosque. Dr Kashem was elected Gano Parishad member in 1970 and a member of the Parliament in 1973 from Bangladesh Awami League.

Holzman calls on Razzak

US ambassador in Bangladesh John C Holzman called on Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

Prof Abu Sayeed tells JS

Body formed to probe destruction of documentaries on Liberation War

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that a probe body was constituted to investigate destruction of documentaries based on the Liberation War, reports BSS. Replying to a question from Panchanan Biswas, the state minister said the probe body was formed on primary information of the destruction. He said the information would be made public when the report of the committee is received. Prof Sayeed said as the matter is under investigation, no punitive measures have been taken. Responding to a question from BNP lawmaker Syed Masud Ahmed Rumi, the state minister said, the government has signed an agreement with "Ekushey Television" on March 9 to install and run a private television channel. Replying to a supplementary question from opposition BNP member Mashiur Rahman Prof Sayeed said ATV was engaged in illegal telecast and an FIR was filed with Mujibhel Thana on January 13 in this connection. In reply to a supplementary question from BNP lawmaker Mashiur Rahman Sayeed also said the present government believes in free flow of information and has given permission for a private TV channel. He expressed the hope that Ekushey television would telecast its programmes within one year. He said Chittagong Television station was a full-fledged station and the government plans to set up similar TV stations in other regions of the country. In reply to a question from Begum Meher Afroj (Women-20) the state minister said the gov-

Hasina greeted for winning UNESCO prize

More individuals and organisations yesterday congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for winning the UNESCO 1998 Houphouet-Boigny Peace Award, reports agencies. Bishwa Shanti Parishad Vice-president and Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak and Bangladesh Shanti Parishad General Secretary Ali Akkad felicitated the Sheikh Hasina for winning the award and said that it has brightened the country's image abroad. Labour and Employment Minister MA Mannan and State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, also congratulated the Prime Minister. Former LGRD Minister Alhaj Syed Abul Hossain also sent his felicitations to Sheikh Hasina. Meanwhile, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Open University Prof M Amanul Islam congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for being awarded the UNESCO award peace. Other organisations and individuals, which congratulated the Prime Minister include Bangladesh Buddhist Kristi Prachar Sangha, Chairman of Bangladesh Public Service Commission Prof Mohammad Mostafizur Chowdhury, Bangladesh Ambassador in Bhutan Saradindu Sekhar Chakma, Group Chairman of International Transaction Circle and designate honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, UK unit of Awami League and Bangladesh Polytechnic Shikkhak Samity and Islamic Foundation Karmakarta Kallyan Sangstha.

'Demand for urea likely to be 26 lakh tonnes by 2002'

Demand for urea fertiliser in the country is expected to rise to 26 lakh tonnes by the year 2002 from the current demand of 24 lakh tonnes, Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS. In reply to a question from KM Abdul Khalek Chantu (Kushtia-3) of BNP, the minister said the production capacity of six urea fertiliser factories under the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), is 23,21,000 tonnes and the shortfall would be met from import. He said the government have also taken steps for establishment of some new fertiliser factories including the proposed 5,61,000 tonnes capacity Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory. In reply to a supplementary

Hasina, Mitchell greet each other

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday congratulated former US senator George Mitchell for winning the UNESCO Houphouet-Boigny Award for Peace for 1998, reports BSS. In a message to the former US lawmaker, Sheikh Hasina recalled his personal initiative in ending the conflicts in the Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, former US senator George J Mitchell, co-recipient of UNESCO Houphouet-Boigny Peace Award for the year 1998 with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has congratulated the Bangladeshi leader on winning the award. In a felicitation letter faxed to Bangladesh embassy in Washington Mitchell said "it is a well-deserved honour". Mitchell, who helped broker last year's historic Northern Ireland Peace Accord, in the letter also said "it is a great privilege for me to share receipt of the award with you. I look forward to the opportunity to congratulate you in person in the near future."

Minister visits Kamalapur slum

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleque visited the fire devastated Kamalapur slum in the city yesterday, reports UNB. The State Minister talked to the affected slum dwellers, and distributed 16 kgs of rice, *saree* and *lungi* among each affected family. Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Joint Secretary of Relief Ministry Shamsul Islam and local ward commissioner were also present.



Baunia Baadh Bashtuhara 54 Paribar Kallyan Samity brought out a procession protesting their eviction and repression on them in the city yesterday. — Star photo