



Industrial Policy approved

The Cabinet yesterday approved a new national industrial policy, featuring export-oriented industrial growth with special incentives for small and medium enterprises.

Approval to the five-year industrial policy was given at a Cabinet meeting at PM's office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

An official source told UNB that the main objective of the policy is to strengthen private sector for gearing up industrialisation and investment.

The policy envisages that the government will play the role of facilitator instead of regulator to encourage foreign and local investment, setting up small and medium-scale industries and creating scope for massive employment, including employment of women in labour-intensive industries," he said.

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Trial run of bus service today

By Staff Correspondent
The Dhaka-Calcutta bus service begins today with a trial run.

Although it would be a low-key event, the bus to Calcutta marks a ground breaking occasion in opening the horizon of the cross-border direct surface communication between Bangladesh and India. An air-conditioned private luxury coach begins the maiden journey leaving the Kamalapur BRTC Bus Terminal at 7:30 this morning for Calcutta.

With 42 officials and journalists on board, the private bus is due to arrive at the newly constructed Calcutta Salt Lake terminal around 5 pm.

Customs formalities would be completed at the start of the journey at the terminal in Dhaka and cleared at the end of the trip in Calcutta, there being no custom checking at the border. Only simplified immigration procedures will be observed at the border.

Government officials travelling on board the trial bus service belong to the BRTC, BTRC, immigration, customs, communications and home ministries.

The Bangladesh officials will hold meetings with their Indian counterparts in Calcutta on Wednesday.

An Indian bus will start for Dhaka on April 8 on a similar trial run. The Bangladesh delegation will return in the same bus alongside the Indian bus.

Students of BUET Architecture start fast today

By Staff Correspondent
Students of the Architecture Department of BUET will begin a fast-unto-death from today noon to demand implementation of decisions of the university chancellor about changes to admission procedure introduced last year.

"It is extremely undesirable that the authorities are yet to execute the decisions of the Prime Minister, who is also the Chancellor of the university," taken on March 23 last year, said a student of the department at a press conference on the BUET campus yesterday. All the students present had been boycotting classes since Sunday.

The Prime Minister's decision calls for this year's admission committee to be formed according to suggestions made by the teachers who resigned last year and reinstatement of the previous admission procedure.

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Prayer Timings

April 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	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

Power generation threatened Water level at Kaptai Lake critically low

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 5: Water level at Kaptai Lake has recorded further fall due to lack of rainfall and continued heat-wave, forcing a decrease in power generation at the Kaptai Hydroelectric Project, PDB sources said.

The water level at Kaptai Lake, recorded at 91.57 MSL (mean sea level) on March 13, dropped to 84 MSL yesterday. The level is falling day by day, sources said.

Consequently, power generation at Kaptai decreased to 147 MW yesterday from 211 MW recorded on March 13, they said.

PDB sources fear that the water level at the lake may go down further if the dry spell continues.

If the water level falls below 76 MSL, power generation at the Kaptai Project may be threatened, they said.

On the other hand, power generation has decreased at the

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Holding tax DCC warrants against 1500 defaulters

By Morshed Ali Khan
In an unprecedented move, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) magistrate court at Nagar Bhaban has issued more than 1,500 warrants against defaulters of holding tax, sources said.

The warrants have been sent to different thanas in the city for immediate action. But DCC sources said the "over-burdened" police stations are too slow to move.

More than Tk 100 crore outstanding holding taxes have accumulated over the last "few years", the sources said.

The defaulters include members of parliament, political leaders, ward commissioners and businessmen. When asked whether warrants have been issued against any of the big wigs, one source said all defaulters, regardless of their social status are being treated in the same way.

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Hazardous saline, blood bags

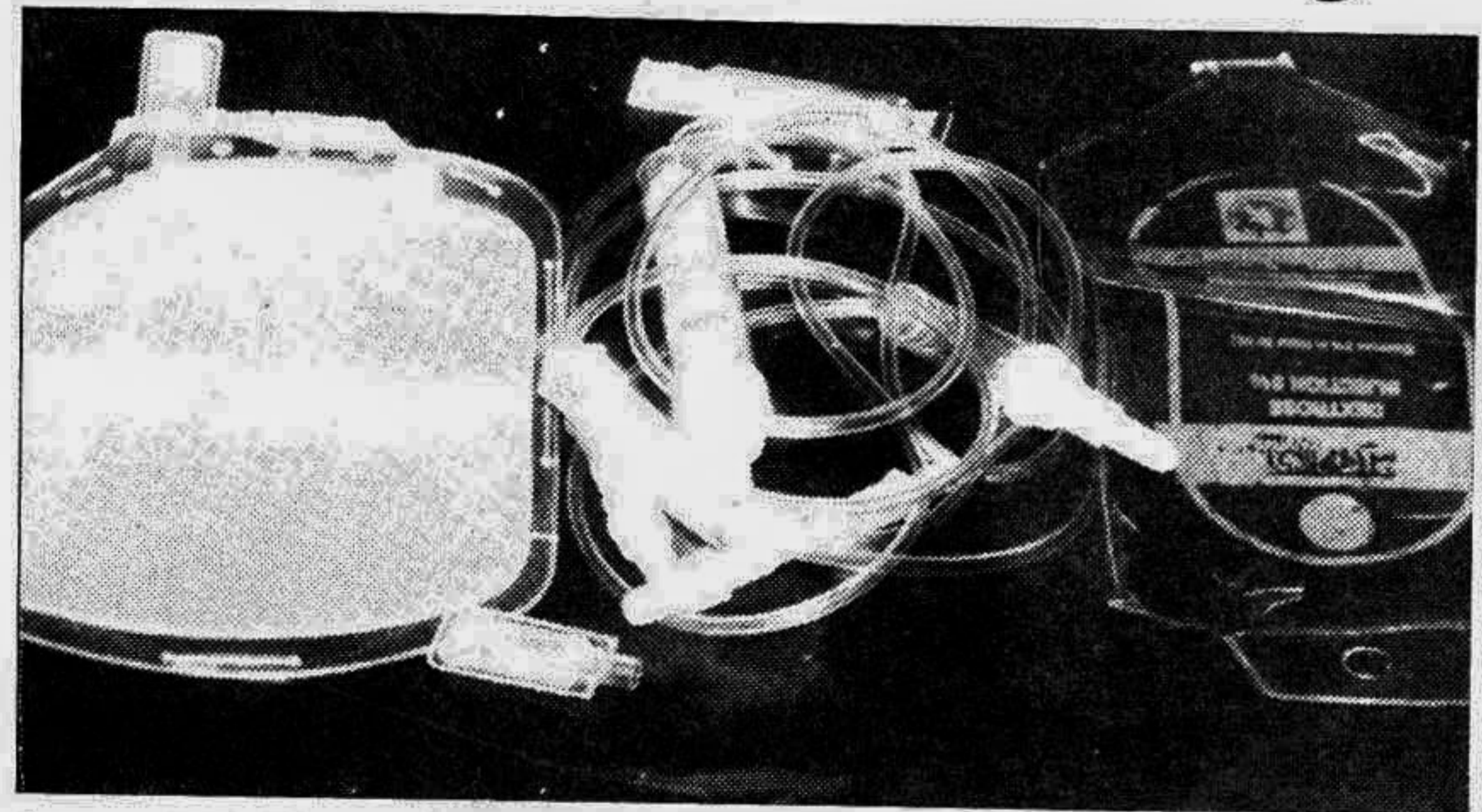
By Naimul Haq

Saline and blood bags and accessory tubes commonly used in clinics and hospitals may damage heart, liver, kidney and lung and cause cancer as those are made of imported plastic sheets containing a toxic chemical called phthalates.

The Institute of Public Health at Mohakhali makes these medical accessories from the imported plastic sheets at its two plants. When contacted, IPH officials confirmed that the special plastic sheets (used to make the bags) are imported from the Netherlands. Some pharmaceutical companies also prepare bags and tubes from imported plastic sheets.

Phthalates, used as a softening agent in making the sheets, leaches from the bags and tubes and gets mixed with the fluid. When infused into the body of patients, the chemical slowly damages vital organs as well as

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Saline and blood bags and accessory tubes are believed to be highly toxic. — Star photo

Get ready for a tough movement to topple govt, Khaleda tells JCD

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia yesterday asked her party's student activists to get ready for a tough movement to topple the Awami League government.

BNP will soon announce a series of action programmes to this end, she said while inaugurating a two-day extended meeting of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, at Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city yesterday afternoon.

Presidents and secretaries from 84 organising district committees and leaders of 205-member central committee are participating in the extended meeting called to remove organisational weaknesses and prepare a strategy for future course of anti-government movement.

The former prime minister said in future her party will take complete account of false cases filed by the present regime against leaders of BNP and its front organisations.

"The Awami League government dared to file unspecified false cases against us as we didn't take the account in the past, but in future we will not forget to do so," she warned.

Khaleda said according to preliminary estimates, the government in last three years filed some 22,000 'false' cases against unspecified number of leaders and activists of BNP and its different front organisations.

Citing examples of cases

Half of rice bought from India 'rotten'

By Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Apr 5: As much as 7500 tonnes of rice, out of total 16,000 tonnes imported from India on cash payment from January to March this year, is reported to have been declared "unfit" for human consumption.

According to sources, bags containing the "rotten" rice have already been separated from the good ones in three vessels now anchored at Mongla port.

The rice bags have been stockpiled in some barges and at the shed no-7 in the port area.

An inquiry committee headed by Abul Kashem, Commissioner of Khulna Division, has been formed. The committee after its primary investigation found the rice "rotten" and

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DB starts 'internal investigation'

No headway in Shafi murder case
Star Report

There has been no substantial progress in CID investigation into the murder of Jalal Ahmed Shafi whose body was found in the rooftop water tank at the Minto Road office of the Detective Branch.

Sources in the CID yesterday repeated their earlier statement that interrogation of some DB personnel continued and that suspects in the murder would be arrested "any time". They said they have "enough official documents" to arrest the suspects.

Meanwhile, the DB has started "internal investigation" into the murder.

"My office has started internal investigation into the

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Mob attacks thana in Rajshahi: 20 hurt in clash

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Apr 5: At least 20 people including five policemen were injured when some 100 agitated people attacked Rajpara thana in the city this evening.

Police constable Mati was admitted into Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Police shot four rounds of blank fires and lobbed more than 50 tear gas shells to disperse the mob. Two policemen and eight motorcycles were damaged during the violent clash.

Witnesses said the clash ensued as police tried to disperse a mourning procession of ruling party's student wing at about

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Cairn winding up, Shell taking over: Petrobangla mum

By Sharier Khan

Oil giant Shell has officially started taking over British company Cairn's "operation" in Bangladesh while Cairn is "packing up without fulfilling many of its obligations" to Petrobangla as per Production Sharing Contract (PSC).

Sources said, although Cairn has informed Petrobangla about transfer of its PSC operation to Shell Oil in its two blocks, it is not pursuing for "clearance of the transfer". Neither it is informing Petrobangla how it is "winding up" from Bangladesh.

"Petrobangla is nowhere in the picture as far as Cairn's withdrawal from Bangladesh is concerned," said a source.

Whether the government legally accepts the transfer of operation or not, Cairn will be leaving Bangladesh by July next. Shell Oil will be looking after blocks 15 and 16, even if the government does not complete the legal procedures as regards transfer of the PSCs to Shell.

"It seems, nobody is bothered that Shell and Bangladesh government are heading towards a collision course," commented a source.

"It is obvious that by July, the legal procedures to transfer Cairn's operation to Shell will not be completed. Who will take the responsibility if a disaster takes place in Sangu gas field? If it is Shell, then on what legal grounds?" he questioned.

"Now that it is leaving Bangladesh almost secretly, we can say that Cairn has completely disregarded some PSC obligations. It did not train a single Petrobangla employee, nor did it create any training opportunity as per the PSC," an official said.

As the process of Cairn's transfer of operation is not being done transparently, Petrobangla is unaware of the change in the operational structure and organogram to be introduced by Shell in blocks 15 and 16.

An insider source said that some 21 expatriates would replace the local employees of Cairn. All salaries and overhead expenditure are recoverable from sale of Sangu gas.

While Cairn is reluctant to interact with Petrobangla in this regard, Petrobangla itself is not taking any step to know about the departing British company's activity.

Sources observed that it was necessary for Petrobangla to have a clear understanding with Cairn on the following issues before Shell takes over completely:

1. A decision on Sangu's en-

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Chhatak blast CID team visits spot, talks to Manik's brother

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Apr 5: The CID team investigating the bomb blast incident visited the spot and some other places in Chhatak thana and the district headquarters today.

The team headed by the ASP Aminul Islam talked to a number of people of different professions including Mujibur Rahman, elder brother of ruling party MP Muhibur Rahman Manik.

Mujibur along with his wife and daughter was staying in the ground floor of Manik's two-storied building where the blast took place on March 15.

The blast killed two young men while another sustained

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JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf
Opposition BNP lawmakers yesterday came down heavily on finance minister SAMS Kibria in the Jatiya Sangsad. Their comments on Kibria's performance evoked laughter in the House and, at times, spark off shouts in the Treasury Bench.

Irrelevant though, during discussion on the Central Depository System Bill, all the BNP MPs devoted their time to blasting the finance minister for bringing about an "economic disaster" in the country.

"Time will come when a janatar mancha (people's dais) will be erected to fix the finance minister," said Shahidul Islam accusing Kibria of the 1996 share scandal.

"The finance minister is lucky that people don't recognise him. Had they done so and had the minister ever been to the share market, what could have happened to him would have been a scene beyond description," Islam commented.

Added Akhtaruzzaman: Shahidul Islam has rightly said... The finance minister will have to borrow the "Nasim bahini" (police force) for going to the share market... You've miserably failed, so look for your way before time runs out.

"It's you who will push the Awami League back to the Opposition," said Abu Yusuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahman.

But Abdul Wahab took an exception. He preferred not to blast the finance minister for his failure. "Unlike my party colleagues, I won't be harsh with him. Rather, I would like

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Kibria under fire for failures as JS passes Depository Bill

Opposition lawmakers in Parliament yesterday blasted the Finance Minister for the share market scandal and ruining the economy as SAMS Kibria moved a bill for transparency in the capital market, says UNB.

The Depository Bill, 1999, which seeks to establish a computer-based modern "depository" with a system of scrip-less

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Encroachers refuse to retreat



Encroachment and garbage at the western end of Road-32 of Dhanmondi lake development work. — Star photo

Dev work at Dhanmondi lake halted

By Morshed Ali Khan
Development work at the western part of Road-32 of the Dhanmondi lake has virtually come to a halt as several residents have refused to relocate their kitchen and sewerage lines which are constantly flowing into the lake.

Encroachment upon the lake on the same part is so serious that at one place the 100-foot wide lake has been reduced to only 15 feet. Site engineers said that unless the encroachment was removed it would not be possible to implement the project "at all".

"Considering the present state of this part of the lake it is better that the government fills this part and uses it for something else," said a frustrated official, pointing at a six-storied building on Road-26 which touches the extreme end of

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প্রথম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী স্মরণে

দেশের ঊষধ শিল্প বিকাশে অন্যতম পুরোধা বাংলাদেশের লোকপ্রিয় বিশিষ্ট শিল্পপতি, অপসোনিন গ্রুপ অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ -এর প্রতিষ্ঠাতা চেয়ারম্যান, আমাদের প্রাণপ্রিয় অভিভাবক মরহুম আবদুল খালেক খাঁন এর আজ ৬ এপ্রিল প্রথম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী।

মরহমের সুদীর্ঘ সংগ্রামী কর্মময় জীবন আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ চলার পথে আলোক বর্তিকার মতো পথ দেখাবে।

আমরা তাঁর বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফেরাত কামনা করি এবং পরম করুণাময় তাঁকে যেন জান্নাতুল ফেরদৌস দান করেন এই প্রার্থনা করি।

অপসোনিন গ্রুপ অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ
-এর
কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীবৃন্দ