

First National Disabled Day April 7

The first National Disabled Day will be observed in the country on April 7, reports APB. The Ministry of Social Welfare and National Forum of Organisation Working with the Disabled (NFWO) have jointly taken up elaborate programmes to observe the day. The three-day programmes include a colourful rally from National Museum to Shishu Academy on 4.30 am on Wednesday, inaugural function at the Academy auditorium at 5 pm, discussion, exchange of opinion and cultural function. State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain will address as the chief guest at the two functions.

Factory owner stabbed

A plastic factory owner was seriously injured in stabbing and his industry looted by extortionists in the city's Lalbagh thana today, reports UNB. Hospital sources said Mohammad Kazi Billah Hossain, 48, of Shahindagar in the thana was attacked by a band of five blackmailers at his factory in the same area as he refused to pay them Tk 50,000 in the morning. The thugs stabbed him in the chest and looted the factory before decamping safely. Billah was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital from where shifted to Chest Diseases Hospital in critical condition. A case was filed with Lalbagh police.

RMCH

No operation theatre at neuro-surgery ward after 8 years

RAJSHAHI, Apr 5: Though the neuro-surgery ward at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital was inaugurated eight years ago, it has no operation theatre and surgical equipment, reports APB. Neuro-surgery operations are done at the orthopaedic department with old and outdated surgical equipment, sources at the hospital said. The hospital authorities have repeatedly requested the authorities concerned to supply necessary equipment but there has been no positive response yet because of alleged bureaucratic tangle, they said. Tenders for purchase of equipment were floated in 1992, but no purchase was made as suppliers demanded higher prices. No more tenders were floated. Whenever an emergency operation has to be performed, work at the orthopaedic department has to be suspended, and whenever the OT of that department is being used for emergency orthopaedic operations, the neuro-surgery operation has to be delayed, no matter how serious the patients' condition is. Neuro-surgery operations are done once a week as per prior arrangement. So if a dying patient arrives on any other day, doctors can do nothing.

Bodies formed to observe golden jubilee of AL

In observance of the golden jubilee of Bangladesh Awami League, different sub-committees have been formed, reports UNB. The sub-committees were formed at a meeting of the Golden Jubilee Observance Council at Awami Foundation office at Dhanmondi Monday afternoon. Awami League president member and the council convenor Amir Hossain Amu chaired the meeting. The meeting decided to focus the history of struggle and tradition of the party during the last 50 years, including publishing a book, said a press release. It also primarily decided to hold rallies at five divisional headquarters, other than Dhaka, where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be the chief guest, publish souvenirs and posters, award Bangabandhu medals to the devoted leaders of the party and invite foreign guests at the main programme in the capital. Awami League leaders Sayeda Johara Tajuddin, Shamsur Rahman Khan, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Abdul Mannan, K M Jahangir, Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, Advocate Shahara Khatun and Mukul Bosh were, among others, addressed at the meeting.

12-year old girl escapes attempted rape at JU

By JU Correspondent A 12-year-old girl escaped an attempted rape on her by a security guard of Social Science Faculty of Jahangirnagar University (JU) on Thursday. The security guard Abdul Mannan Hawlader (40) was suspended after he confessed that he had lured the girl to the second floor of the Social Science Building at around 12 noon on Thursday when the university classes were closed. Bakul, who is a student of class seven at Gokulnagar High School under Saver thana told JU teachers, who later interrogated her, that the security guard had proposed to pay her money when she refused his proposal. When the guard began to force her she somehow managed to flee and took refuge to a teacher's room on the ground floor. Her clothes were all torn. The teacher Prof Mujibar Rahman took statements from both the victim and the security guard. He later send a report to the university Registrar Mohammad Ali after the offender admitted that he had attempted to rape the girl. JU authorities formed a three-member probe body with Prof Kazi Abdus Samad of Statistics Department as its chief to investigate the matter yesterday. No case was lodged with the thana till writing of this report.

'Jhum cultivation in hills no longer sustainable'

RANGAMATI, Apr 5: Chairman of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHT-DB) Bir Bahadur, MP, today said, "Jhum cultivation in the hills is no longer sustainable as it depletes the top soil and gradually diminishes fertility of lands, reports BSS. 'Upland farming system in the hills need renovation and contour hedgerow barrier-system, commonly known as sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) has already emerged as simple, cost effective and replicable farming method," the CHT-DB chairman said. Bir Bahadur was addressing the inaugural session of the three-day annual review and planning meeting of the regional coordinators of the appropriate technologies for soil conserving farming systems held in the conference hall of CHT-DB here this morning. International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, Nepal and CHT-DB jointly hosted the conference. Head of mountain farming systems division of ICIMOD, Dr Tej Parajapati, chaired the inaugural session. Twenty representatives from China, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh took part in the deliberations. The chairman of CHTDB said traditional jhum farming or shifting cultivation method with a rotation cycle of 10 to 20 years was the prime mode of cultivation of the hilly people. He said the ethnic communities earned their sustenance and used to enjoy the special agricultural method. But with construction of Kaptai-Hydro-Electric Dam in the 60s, 40 per cent of the best cultivable land submerged and 100,000 people were displaced. Bir Bahadur said about 100,000 people mostly depended on the jhum cultivation were affected following the construction of the Hydro-Electric Dam at Kaptai and the total area of arable land became smaller in size. With population boom and scarcity of arable fertile land in the hills, the jhum cycle was reduced to 2 to 3 years. The ICIMOD representatives said the organisation is determined to protect ecological balance in the Hindukush-Himalayan mountain range, which is under heavy strain stemming from population boom in the hills, abject poverty and huge environmental degradation.

BPC condemns NATO strikes on Kosovo

Bangladesh Peace Council (BPC) yesterday condemned the "barbaric" air strikes of NATO on Yugoslavia and demanded immediate cessation of all military actions aimed at a negotiated settlement of the Kosovo problem, reports BSS. BPC General Secretary Ali Akbar, in a statement, yesterday said by its act of armed intervention NATO has trampled upon the independence, sovereignty and right of self-determination of the Yugoslav people.

BNP MPs protest

Some 106 BNP MPs have protested what they said the attempt of putting the blame on BNP leaders and workers, including Alamgir Kabir MP, for the March 30 killing of two Awami League leaders of Atrai in Naogaon district, reports UNB. In a statement yesterday, the BNP lawmakers termed the death of the two AL leaders as unfortunate and demanded punishment to the real culprits. They also demanded judicial inquiry into the incident protesting the filing of false cases against their leaders and workers. The signatories to the statement are: Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Prof AQM Badruddozza Chowdhury, M Saifur Rahman, Oli Ahmad, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, Sheikh Razzak Ali, Akbar Hossain, Barrister Nazmul Huda, M Shamsul Islam, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, MK Anwar.

AXN signs deal with local cable distributor

AXN Action TV has made a deal with Bangladesh's largest cable television distributor, Nationwide Communications, for long-term distribution of Asia's only all action and adventure channel, says a press release. James Buklarewicz, AXN Chief Executive Officer, said the deal, effective immediately, would boost AXN's rapidly growing subscriber base by 100,000. AXN's programme line-up includes top programmes such as the US's number one new TV series, VIP, starring Pamela Anderson Lee, Profler, Acapulco HEAT and Air America other action programmes include best international movies, top quality action animation from Japan and sports programmes from around the world. AXN is a SONY Pictures Entertainment Company.

Youngman electrocuted in Pabna

PABNA, Apr 5: A youth was electrocuted at Pabna Tengri village in Iswardi thana this morning, reports UNB. Family sources said the incident occurred when Akter Hossain, 22, son of Hasmat Ali, was trying to repair a faulty line in his own house early in the morning. An unnatural death case was filed with Iswardi police.

Special cover to be issued today

Bangladesh Post Office will issue a special cover valued at Tk five today to mark inauguration of Dhaka-Calcutta Bus Service, reports UNB. The special cover will be sold from Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi GPOs. A special cancellor will also be used.



BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia addressing an extended meeting of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday. -Star photo

BSC AGMs on Apr 7

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Apr 5: The 20th and 21st annual general meetings of 1996-97 and 1997-98 fiscals of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) will be held at its head office here at 2-30 pm and 3-30 pm on April 7. Official sources said the meetings will be attended by State Minister for Shipping and Chairman of BSC Board of Directors Mofazzal Hossain Maya and secretary of the same M Saiful Islam. Most of the shareholders, out of total 1543, are expected to be present in both the meetings, sources added. Both the meetings had been scheduled to be held on January 28 this year. But it was postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, BSC sources said. BSC has taken all preparations to hold both the general meetings, they added.

WFP officials from Bangladesh to help refugees in Kosovo

Three World Food Programme (WFP) officials from Bangladesh will join the operation of feeding thousands of Kosovo refugees streaming into Albania and Macedonia. The officials left Dhaka Sunday night for Rome, said a press release of the WFP. The WFP has already despatched 9.6 tons of high protein biscuits to the northern Albanian town of Kukes, where 70,000 refugees have gathered. The Bangladeshi staff are to be transported to Albania and Macedonia by special WFP chartered plane from Rome for the emergency assignment. They will join the WFP offices in Tirana and Macedonia to prepare the logistics for the operation.

Easter festival observed

The Christian Life Bangladesh, an organisation dedicated to the cause of world peace arranged an allied Easter Festival to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ at a local hotel on Saturday evening, reports BSS. Justice KM Sobhan was the chief guest while Daniel Bender of the USA was the special guest. A documentary on the life of Jesus Christ was shown with a running commentary in the Chittagonean dialect composed by Amal Kanti Nath of Chittagong Khelaghar. Asa Michael Kairn of the Assemblies of God Bangladesh explained the significance of Easter festivities to the guests. The function was rounded off with a prayer for peace on earth and prosperity of Bangladesh.



Students standing in a queue to procure forms for admission into first year honours classes of Dhaka University at a bank on the campus yesterday. -Star photo

Fires gut property worth Tk 11 lakh in Barisal, Iswardi

A devastating fire in Babuganj thana in Barisal gutted seven dwellings and valuables worth about Tk 10 lakh on Saturday, report agencies. According to witnesses, the fire originating from a kitchen at Kedarpur village at noon engulfed the nearby houses. The fire fighters extinguished the blaze with the help of the local people. In another incident some ten shops were gutted in a fire in Ambagan of Iswardi in the early hours yesterday. Goods worth about Tk 1 lakh were gutted in the fire, suspected to have originated from a burning cigarette. Fire Brigade sources said.

Nat'l seminar on poverty monitoring today

A national seminar on 'Poverty Monitoring' will be held at CIRDP headquarters in the city today, reports UNB. State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir will inaugurate the seminar at 9 am. CIRDP and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has jointly organised the seminar to discuss the summary results of the rural and urban poverty surveys conducted in April 1998. Policy makers, academicians, researchers, senior government officials and representative of the donor community, international organisations and NGOs will attend.

Policeman succumbs to injuries

KISHOREGANJ, Apr 5: A police constable who was stabbed by dacoits at Nicksy road in the town on March 26 succumbed to his injuries Sunday at the local Zahirul Islam Medical College Hospital, reports UNB. The deceased identified as Abdul Majid (32) of Chandpasa village in Shibpur thana of Narsingdi district was working at Sadar thana here. Police said Majid came under the attack of the dacoits when he along with two on-duty police challenged them at Baraitala, known as crime point of the town. Police arrested one alleged dacoit in this connection.

Nationwide survey on child edn April 26-28

A countrywide child education and literacy survey will be conducted from April 26 to 28, an official announcement said yesterday, reports UNB. The government will conduct the survey every two-year to take stock of the progress of implementation of the law on compulsory primary education and identify the areas of stress in future activities. The data collectors, mainly primary school teachers, will collect the information about the related groups from the head of the family by visiting every home/family. All have been requested to cooperate with the data collectors to make the survey a success.

JS body on telecommunications ministry holds meet

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Post and Telecommunications Ministry yesterday discussed different aspects of agreements signed with various private telephone companies and the progress of services rendered by them, reports UNB. The meeting, held at the Sangsad Bhaban with its president Kamal Ahmed Majumder, in the chair, stressed on encouraging the entrepreneurs so that the subscribers can get modern telephone facilities through the introduction of new technology invented in telecommunications field. Terming the T&T Board as a profit earning commercial institution, the meeting put forward several recommendations in order to bring more dynamism in the activities of the Board. The supply of cellular telephones through T&T Board and the installation of digital telephones in 80 thanas also came up for discussion in the meeting. Committee members - Post and Telecommunications, and Home Minister M Muzammar Nasim, Whip Mizanur Rahman Manu, Muhammad Shahabuddin, Begum Shagufta Yasmin, Lutfar Rahman Khan (Azad) and Barkat Ullah Bhulu attended the meeting. Senior officials of the Ministry and T&T Board were present on the occasion.

BNP calls to observe demonstration day Thursday

BNP yesterday urged the party activists as well people to observe countrywide 'Demonstration Day' on Thursday to intensify their current anti-government movement, reports UNB. The call came from a joint meeting of party's joint secretary generals, presidents and general secretaries of the front organisations and city's convenors and joint-convenors. Chaired by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the meeting reiterated its demand of immediate step down of the government for holding general elections under a non-party caretaker administration. As part of the central programme on Thursday, city BNP will hold a rally at Paltan Maidan at 4 pm to be followed by a procession. The BNP-led four party would observe the demonstration day in protest against deterioration of law and order, power-water-gas crises and price hike of essentials. Among others, Abdullah Al Noman, Prof MA Mannan, Selima Rahman, Mirza Abbas, Haris Chowdhury, Nazrul Islam Khan, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Sirajul Islam Selim and Redwan Ahmed were present at the meeting.

Nari Progati Sangha concludes campaign against social crimes today

By Staff Correspondent Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) yesterday held some seven street rallies in different parts of the city to create awareness among the people on repression on women, terrorism, murder, bomb explosion and tyranny of the fundamentalist forces. The BNPS which launched a three-day massive campaign in the capital city on Sunday with the slogan "We want an atmosphere conducive to live." On the first day, the organisation held rallies at Mirpur and Bashantek areas. On the second day yesterday, the BNPS held seven rallies at different places including at Malibagh crossing, Khilgaon, Gulistan, Motijheel and Shapla Chatter. Besides speeches, the activists of BNPS cultural team performed at the street corners. Speakers called upon all to build social resistance against the eve teasers, dowry recipients, rapists, terrorists, bomb makers, and muggers. They also urged the people to form repression and terrorism resistance committees at every ward. The speakers also advised people not to scatter garbage and demanded elimination of black smoke from bus and tempos. The BNPS will hold similar awareness rallies at Maradia, Shamoly, Farmgate, New Market and Azimpur areas today.

Workshop on Internet begins

A four day long workshop titled 'Internet: South Asian Realities and Opportunities' began the LGED Bhaban today, says a press release. The workshop has been organised by LGED in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu. The inaugural session of the workshop was chaired by professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, former adviser of the caretaker government of Bangladesh. In his address of welcome Quamrul Islam Siddique, Chief Engineer LGED said that the importance of information technology (IT) and the role it could play in the socio-economic development has been well conceived by the government. The Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) Kathmandu, Egbert Pelinck, in his address said that in political terms, Internet provides opportunities for the democratisation of access to and dissemination of information by individuals and local organisations. He said that the capacity of people to organise, advocate and lobby beyond physical and administrative boundaries was greatly enhanced by the use of internet, and human organisation is moving away from rigid hierarchies in nations or institutions towards more horizontal, after more informal networks. The session was also addressed by the Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Shawkat Hossain. About twenty experts from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh are taking part in the workshop.

Body of teenage girl recovered in Patuakhali

From Our Correspondent PATUAHALI, Apr 5: Body of a teenage girl was recovered from a brickfield at Joinkhat under Kotwali thana this afternoon. Police were yet to reveal the identity of the 15-year-old victim till filing of this report at 9:30 pm today. Police, citing the inquest report of the body said the girl was raped before killing. There were also some injury marks on different parts of her body. None, however, was arrested in this connection. The body was sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death case was lodged with police regarding the incident.

Obituary

Mohammad Abul Kasem, Administrative Officer of the Jute Ministry, died of cardiac arrest at Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday. He was 50, reports UNB. State Minister for Jute A K Fazul Haq expressed his deep shock at the sudden death of Abul Kasem. In a message of condolence, he conveyed his sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Islamists kill 22 soldiers in Algeria

ALGIERS, Apr 5: Twenty-two Algerian soldiers were killed by armed Islamists at the weekend near Blida, south of the capital Algiers, the daily El Watan reported today, reports AFP. The troops were killed in a firefight by a 'very large number of terrorists' at Melaha, near Blida in farming country outside the capital. Fighting involving government forces and armed Islamic groups have increased since March with more than 300 dead.

Prof Sayeed protests Khaleda's statement

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday denounced and protested Sunday's statement of Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia terming it false and conspiratorial and said it was a ploy to mislead the people, reports BSS. In a statement, Prof Sayeed said through her statement Begum Zia has exposed her heinous political design and revived the horrible memory of the rule of military dictator Zia who had usurped power through killings, coups and conspiracies. By such statement, Begum Zia has surpassed the last limit of falsehood, forgetting the anti-people and corrupt activities and favouritism of the ministers, MPs, leaders and workers of her party during her rule and that of her husband, he said. The state minister for information said it does not belong to her to speak of rule of law, human rights and democracy because of her anti-people activities. He recalled that during her rule Begum Zia had boasted that she did not understand the concept of caretaker government and that she would not concede it saying 'none excepting mad and child are neutral'. Referring to Begum Zia's demand to hold local bodies elections under a caretaker government, Prof Sayeed said this creates doubts about her knowledge of the concept of caretaker government. In this connection, he pointed out that Article 58 B and clause two of 58 B of the constitution clearly mention that the caretaker government is an interim and neutral government which will exercise all possible help and cooperation to the Election Commission for holding general election peacefully, smoothly and impartially. Under the circumstances, how she could ask for the violation of the constitution? Does not Begum Zia know union parishad elections, municipal elections and upazila elections are held at different times of the year? Does not it mean that Begum Zia does not want elected government under the caretaker government to run the affairs of the state? he said. Prof Abu Sayeed said Begum Zia remains so such occupied with the politics of killing, coup and conspiracy that it is natural on her part to create impediments in the way of giving institutional shape to democracy. Even people of the country are not surprised over such activities.

Cuban envoy meets FM

Cuban Ambassador to Bangladesh Resident in New Dhaka Olga Chamero Trias called on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azag at his office yesterday, reports UNB. During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest. Sharjil Hassan, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was present on the occasion.

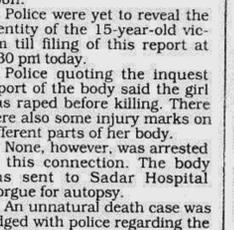
Politician begins Satyagraha Andolon in Ctg today

From Our Correspondent CTG, Apr 5: Renowned local politician Kalam Chowdhury begins his 7 day long 'Satyagraha Andolon' from 10 am today. The said agitation programme is being observed at Andorkilla crossing to be continued till April 12 demanding 31-points relating to the development and keeping up of the tradition of the port city of Chittagong. During the programme Kalam Chowdhury will intake anything except water. Many people extended their support to the initiative taken by Kalam.

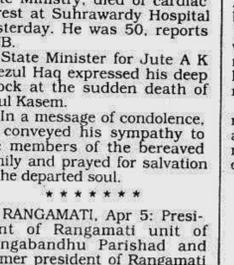
Zillur refutes Khaleda's statement

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday refuted the statement of opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia and made counter accusation of polluting the atmosphere through political bluster, reports UNB. He said Begum Zia did not believe in parliamentary democracy that is reflected from her continued absence from Parliament. She was present in the House only 24 days of the present Parliament. "She fears the parliamentary debate and discussion," he said. Rejecting Begum Zia's views on law and order situation, Zillur said the situation was no better during her regime. Some 13,713 killing, 2,597 rape, 5,060 women repression, 7,832 kidnap, 30,890 riots and 2,27,387 law and order related cases were recorded during her rule. Zillur Rahman who is also minister in charge of LGRD asked the opposition leader to refrain from creating artificial crisis and issues out of nothing.

Dr M Habibullah, Professor of Accounting, Dhaka University (sitting 4th from right) and M Mosharrar Hossain, Managing Director, Rapport Bangladesh Limited (sitting 4th from left) seen with the participants of a three week training course on Inventory Control and Stores Management organised by Rapport Bangladesh Limited at Rapport seminar hall recently.



JS body on telecommunications ministry holds meet



Islamists kill 22 soldiers in Algeria

