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PHILIPS

First nat'l day for the disabled No govt programme due to 'fund shortage'

By Staff Correspondent

The government has failed to take up any programme of its own to observe the first "National Day for the Persons with Disability".

In an announcement last year, the government had said that it would observe the first Wednesday of every April as "National Day for the Persons with Disability".

The announcement was made in response to a call from the National Forum of Organisations Working With the Disabled (NFWOD) on the occasion of observance of "International Day of the Disabled Persons" on December 3, 1998.

About 10 per cent of the population of Bangladesh are disabled, according to WHO. Officials in the Ministry of Social Welfare said they failed to take up any programme to observe the Day due to financial constraints.

However, the Social Welfare Ministry has expressed its solidarity with our programmes," said Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman of the committee for observance of the Day, fomed by NFWOD.

"We could not take up separate programmes due to time constraint and financial problem. This is why we are observing the day jointly with NFWOD," said Mir Shahabuddin, DG of Department of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone, he said the department is extending all cooperation in observing the Day. "We have printed invitation cards and made arrangements for publication of supplements in newspapers, highlighting the

significance of the Day".

Besides, the divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners have been instructed to observe the Day with due importance, the DG said.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, the Jatiya Press Club, Monsur Chowdhury said that the government allocated Tk six crore in the current budget for the formation of a foundation for the disabled but there was no progress in this regard till now.

But Mir Shahabuddin said the foundation will be formed very soon and is expected to start work from next financial year. Replying to a question, he said there is no scope to return the funds allocated for the foundation.

Speaking at the press conference, NFWOD general secretary of Jawaherul Islam Mamun mentioned that the government had formulated a National Policy for the Disabled in 1995 but necessary laws to protect the rights and interests of the disabled are yet to be formulated.

Meanwhile, on the first day of the 3-day programme of observance of the Day, a colourful procession will be brought from the National Museum at 5 pm today and it will terminate near the Shishu Academy. A discussion meeting will be held at the Academy at 6:30 pm.

Tomorrow, a discussion on "Persons with disability in the mainstream of development: Limitations and prospects" will be held at LGED Bhaban at 9 and on Friday, a seminar on "Disaster Management and People with Disability" will be held at the same venue at 9 am.

Langer, Ambrose share morning honours

ST JOHN'S, Antigua, Apr 6 (Reuters/Internet): Justin Langer completed his third Test century for Australia but had to share the honours with West Indies paceman Curtly Ambrose on the fourth morning of the final test on Tuesday.

Australia, who must win in Antigua to square the series, were 274 for five in their second innings at lunch, a lead of 355.

The veteran Ambrose conceded just nine runs during a 10-over spell with the old ball, troubling all of the batsmen with his reverse swing.

Ambrose took his tally for the match to eight by dismissing the Waugh twins in almost identical fashion.

Mark Waugh had added only five to his overnight score of 60 when he edged to wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs at 223. Brother Steve went for four, also caught by Langer, at 241.

Langer, 84 not out overnight, reached his hundred from 252 balls with seven fours and a six. He was eventually bowled by a sharply turning Carl Hooper delivery for 127 a few minutes before lunch.

West Indies kept such a tight rein on the batsmen that only 65 runs were scored from the session's 33 overs. Ricky Ponting scoring just four off 50 balls faced.

BAC filed 74 cases, PM tells JS

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption has filed 74 cases relating to irregularities, corruption and abuse of power in the disbursement of money from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund during 1991-95, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina disclosed this in Parliament yesterday during the PM's question hour in response to a question from Zeenat Hossain of Jatiya Party.

The Prime Minister said the money allocated at various rates, with a maximum of Tk 30 lakh, was disbursed on the recommendations of then BNP MPs.

CID arrests

Two DB inspectors — Rezaul Hossain being the other — were called to the CID office for the third time yesterday evening.

The rest seven DB personnel were inspector Abdul Kadir, three sub-inspectors, a naik, a havildar and a constable who were summoned to the CID office for questioning yesterday.

Speaking to The Daily Star, CID officials confirmed the arrest of Ziaul Hossain and said the other eight were being interrogated all late night. CID sources hinted more arrests by last night from among the eight.

Meanwhile, a member of the probe committee headed by a DIG also spoke of similar reasons behind the killing. "We have concluded that Shaif was killed following dispute over distribution of money gained from the recovery incident," the member, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The probe committee interrogated nine assistant commissioners (AC) of DB at the Special Branch office yesterday. This was the first time that officials at AC level came under questioning by investigators after the recovery of Shaif's body.

Earlier, CID and the probe committee had interrogated several DB personnel, ranked between constable and inspector, regarding Shaif's death.

The probe committee in its report would also suggest reforming the detective branch. Investigation by the committee revealed serious irregularities in the activities of the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. The report will be submitted to the Inspector General of police.

When asked whether the committee would recommend for abolishing the Detective Branch, the head of the committee replied in the negative.

The committee would recommend for changing the structure of the DB and formulating rules and regulations so that this short of incidents can be avoided, the committee chief said.

CID sources alleged that a senior CID official was trying to influence the investigation as his brother, a DB official, is suspected to be involved in the incident. Top level officials of CID, however, said they saw no such attempts.

Besides, Anwar, the canteen man at the DB office, is likely to be produced in the CMM's Court today after the completion of a five-day remand in CID custody.

Girls rescued

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yara, 16, Nasima, 14, Rina, 16, Parveen-1, 12, Parveen-2, 15 and Parvin-3, 13, Shilpi, 16, Shefali, 15 and Kulsum, 17.

It is learnt that they were brought from low-income families in different parts of the country and were forced into the business. Some injury marks were found at their bodies.

They were taken into police custody.

World Health Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The World Health Day will be observed today in the country with elaborate programmes. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and different socio-cultural and non-government organisations (NGOs) in health sectors have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

The theme of this year's World Health Day is, "Active Ageing Makes the Differences".

Meanwhile, a press briefing was organised jointly by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and World Health Organisation (WHO) yesterday ahead of World Health Day.

Speakers at the briefing urged that senior citizens of the country be treated as an asset and that their experience and expertise be utilised for the nation's progress and prosperity.

"We have to work for elderly

JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid had to pay the price for his generosity he showed to some BNP lawmakers in the House yesterday.

Some BNP MPs were absent from the House when the Chair invited them to discuss their proposals on seven identical bills, seeking to increase the posts of pro-VC at the universities.

But the absentees started arriving in the House while the discussion on the agenda was still on. In an exceptional move, a generous Deputy Speaker also started allowing the late comers to speak.

This triggered an angry response from the Treasury benches and several of them including House Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah jumped on their feet and blasted the Chair.

"This has never happened why are you allowing those who missed the chance because of their absence?" Abdullah shouted at the Deputy Speaker.

For obvious reasons, the Chair did not continue being generous to the opposition members.

BNP whip Mashiur Rahman later told the Chair, "We understand that you are really in a helpless state for you're under threat from the Treasury Bench."

"You people (the Opposition) are not sparing me as well. Threats are there from both the sides, I am here to receive threats," the Deputy Speaker responded.

"I am well convinced that I have failed to win the hearts of any on the either side... It's my earned displeasure," he told another BNP lawmaker, Khairul Enam, who also referred to the House Chief Whip's conduct with the Chair.

ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon and Hafizuddin Ahmed came so late that the Chair had by then stopped allowing the late comers. Getting the floor on the next item, Milon told the Deputy Speaker: "I understand you are afraid of the Chief Whip's threat."

To a similar comment by Hafizuddin, Deputy Speaker Hamid said, "Names of the absentees are deleted and are not possible to revive."

Almost all the opposition lawmakers, protesting the creation of more than one posts of pro-VC, held the common view that the provision was made to reward the pro-Awami League university teachers. Some of them however suggested that the number of pro-VCs be specified.

"Otherwise, the number of pro-VCs may surpass the number of teachers at a particular university," commented Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Jatiya Party.

Making a similar suggestion, BNP's Shamsul Alam Framanik ridiculed education minister ASHK Sadeque. "May I propose that the minister prepare separate lists of the Awami teachers at different universities and accordingly specify the pro-VC posts at those varieties."

Bureaucrat-turned-politician MK Anwar was the only BNP MP who declined to participate in the discussion during which all his party colleagues flayed the education minister, also a former civil servant.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed explained his apathy to the issue. "Because the education minister is his (Anwar's) classmate."

Anwar had left the House before his turn came once again on the same bills piloted by the education minister.

The Deputy Speaker had a brief debate with Mashiur Rahman of BNP on allocation of time for discussion on the university bills. Hamid announced that two minutes would be given to each of the members while the BNP whip insisted on three minutes.

The Chair managed to tame the hyperactive opposition MP, agreeing to allow Mashiur Rahman three minutes and others two-and-a-half minutes each.

"It's a *swagatpreet* (an act of nepotism), honourable Speaker," said fellow BNP MP Khairul Enam.

"Where there is a *swagat* (someone near and dear), there is *preet* (favouritism)," a smiling Deputy Speaker said.

people of the country to make their lives meaningful," health and family welfare minister Salahuddin Yusuf said.

Referring to the government's Old Age Pension Programme, he said, "Our government has been trying to bring welfare to the senior citizens of the country."

"The National Health Policy, which is under consideration, will be announced very soon to give a clear-cut outlook of the nation's health sector."

WHO representative and chief of mission in Bangladesh Dr W Hardjotonojo said, "WHO is taking a worldwide lead in promoting active ageing during the International Year of the Global Movement for Ageing."

Dr Hardjotonojo said: "This is a network for all those who are interested in moving policies and participate towards active ageing."

The global movement will be inaugurated by a global walk event, the Global Embrace on Saturday, October 2.

"In time zone after time zone, ageing will be celebrated in cities around the world through individual walk events."

Water treaty 'Bangladesh got more than its due share'

Bangladesh received more than its share of the Ganges waters during this lean period, the latest quantum being 33,892 cusec at Harding Bridge March 21-31 against 29,688 cusec stipulated in the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, reports UNB.

This was stated by the Joint River Commission in a press release issued in the city yesterday in the wake of allegations that Bangladesh was not getting its due share and that it is one of the causes of rivers drying up in the country.

As per the treaty, the release said, "Bangladesh shall receive guaranteed 35,000 cusec water during March 11-20, April 1-10 and April 21-30."

On the other hand, India shall receive guaranteed 35,000 cusec during March 21-31, April 11-20 and May 1-10 period.

9 bills

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academic atmosphere alleging that of terrorism and rape had plagued the campus.

Taking part in the discussion on bills they said creation of more than one post would further complicate the university administration and lead to politicisation.

The BNP members said the "plan" behind the Bills is to appoint the government's own men to the posts of Pro Vice Chancellor.

Such creation of more than one post of pro-VC would politicise the university administration, feared the opposition MPs.

They urged the government to give more attention to primary education to increase literacy rate in the country instead of spending money for such "unwarranted" administrative post.

Gopalganj

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As a result, three people were killed on the spot and over 100 others including five women were injured. Besides, 50 houses were damaged and looted. Many people have reportedly fled the locality. The dead were identified as Razzak Chowdhury, 25, Abdur Razzak, 52 and Sharfuddin, 25.

The injured were admitted to Gopalganj and Kasiani hospitals. A case was registered with Kashi police station in this connection.

The Home Minister said the law enforcers should ignore political and other pressures when they deal with criminals.

He declared that the terrorists and criminals across the country have no affiliation with the politics of the ruling party. So, if pressure is mounted on any investigating officer (IO) to release any identified criminal, the officer concerned should immediately report it to the ministry through the Inspector General of Police (IGP).

Nasim

From page 1

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Arrest Manik

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diately for the sake of ensuring people's security," he viewed. The two persons killed in the bomb blasts at the MP's house were notorious criminals, they alleged.

The speakers included ex-MP Advocate Abdul Majid, Abdur Rouf, Moulana Siraj Uddin, Syed Tikumir, Angur, Miah Chowdhury, Mahfuz Shilpi, Mokhtar Ali, Abdul Quaium, Humayun Kabir, Abdur Rahman, Rezaul Karim, Abdur Jabbar Khokon, Afab Uddin, Shamsur Rahman Babul, Hosain Ahmed and Abdul Alim Akal.

Meanwhile, the Chhatrak thana BNP has announced that it would hold a rally at the bus stand at the thana headquarters on April 15 protesting the bomb blast incident.

The Jamaat has also announced a programme to hold a rally on April 9 at the same venue.

2 BCL activists shot in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 6: Two activists of the ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were bullet hit in an attack by unidentified persons at Subapur bus stand last night, police said.

The injured, identified as Sohel and Iqbal, were admitted in Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police said the attackers fired on them while they were going by a motorcycle at about midnight. The attack was a sequel to rivalry in BCL.

BCL activist, Rafiqul Haider was arrested in this connection. Later, his supporters staged a demonstration and put up barricades in Agrabad and Sholoshar area, witnesses said.

PM's directive

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Asking the officials to take necessary measures to overcome the situation, the Prime Minister suggested use of surface water during the crisis and building reservoirs to meet the storage of water.

In this regard, she said the flood water, rain water can be stored, which can be used during the crisis time. She also asked for increasing the depth of the surrounding rivers of the city for ensuring more water.

She also asked the official to take measures for reducing the wastage of water and suggested regulatory water supply in different parts of the city during the dry season.

Presiding over a high level meeting on city traffic system the prime minister specially directed the authorities concerned to immediately vacate the Gulistan-Joykhalibari route from the illegal occupation of buses and trucks.

Khaleda

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close anything about the discussion. When contacted, CPB leader Ruhin Hasan Prince said both the party leaders met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 24 and the opposition leader today and expressed grave concern over the political, law and order and socio-economic situation in the country.

He said the CPB leaders requested both Hasina and Khaleda to behave in a responsible manner and remain alert against "the rise of a third force in politics". The CPB leaders also requested them not to allow anyone to hatch conspiracy.

Shazneen murder

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Parveen and Minu. Of the accused, Humayun Kabir died of a cardiac arrest on January 11.

The proceedings in Shazneen rape case have been going on in the Special Court for Women and Children Repression, Dhaka.

All the six accused were produced before the metropolitan judge's court yesterday as the day was fixed for cross-examination of Latifur Rahman.

Mosharraf Hossain Kajal, lawyer of maids Parveen and Minu, moved a bail petition on behalf of Minu. Judge AK Roy, however, did not pass any order regarding the bail petition.

The judge adjourned the proceedings for three weeks following a petition filed by Kajal. The petition mentioned that the charge sheet, autopsy report, witnesses and accused in both cases are the same and trial of the cases were continuing in two courts.

The defence lawyer sought three weeks' time saying that they were going to submit a prayer before the High Court soon to solve the matter and they needed time for this.

Donors

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"We're hoping something good to come out," the Ambassador said, but hastened to add "one will have to wait to see fruit of a plant after sowing seeds."

The envoy didn't agree with the notion that the donors were trying to mediate between the government and the opposition parties to resolve political disputes or bridge a widening gap between the two camps.

"We don't want to interfere in domestic politics," she said, "we are trying to be helpful as we want to work with Bangladesh to quicken economic growth and ensure people's better life in a nice atmosphere."

Renée Veyre said they were looking for ways and means to improve quality of life of the people here with more foreign investments.

Asked if she was optimistic about a political solution, she said: "I'm optimistic and hope to see some success at the end. But I'm not God, not strong enough to see the future."

She said it would be nice if the President could make time of his convenience for a meeting with Bangladesh's development partners.

Bus service

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for continuation of the service. Officials of Bangladesh and India will hold parleys here today to begin trial operation within two weeks. Full operation is expected within three months.

BUET says it has 'no role' Architecture students go on hunger strike

By Staff Correspondent

Students of Architecture Department of BUET started a fast unto death yesterday demanding implementation of the Chancellor's decisions regarding changes of admission procedure introduced last year and setting up of a separate Institute of Architecture at the university.

The students started the fasting at the Architecture Faculty premises at around 3:30 p.m. Earlier, they held demonstration, boycotted classes and submitted a memorandum to the university's Vice-chancellor and also to the Chancellor Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Chancellor had earlier decided that a full-fledged institute for architecture at BUET would be set up and a committee with representatives nominated by teachers who resigned last year in protest of the changed examination procedure formed.

Bangladesh Shapathi Samaj (Architect Society of Bangladesh) at a press conference yesterday also expressed solidarity with the agitating students and urged the government to ensure that decisions of the Chancellor are immediately implemented.

Demanding a separate institute of architecture at BUET, the leaders of the professional organisation of architects also called for withdrawal of teachers opposing last year's agitations from the probe body formed to evaluate the possibility of establishing a separate institute of architecture.

Architects Iqbal Habib, Mobashsher Hossain, Ehsan Khan, ASM Ismail and Rezaul Rahman spoke, among others, at the press briefing.

Meanwhile, BUET authorities in a press release yesterday said it had no role in the activities of the eight-member committee formed by the government to assess the possibility of establishing a separate institute of architecture.

work for the return of about 400,000 ethnic Albanians who have fled the province since a NATO air campaign began March 24.

But the United States said today the NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia would continue despite a unilateral ceasefire declared by Belgrade in Kosovo.

"This unilateral ceasefire falls far short of what is required and will not interfere with NATO continuing the air strikes," said a STATE Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Belgrade

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latest political situation because the party does not want to be seen as fanning the "war" within the BJP-led alliance and trying to grab power.

The Congress spokesman Ajit Jogi told reporters here last night that his party would not like fresh general elections if the Vajpayee government fell but fended off as "hypothetical" the question if the party would form an alternative government.

What has added to the fluidity of the situation is the debate in Congress of AIADMK. A section of the party opposes this.

Besides, Mulayam Singh Yadav, who has teamed up with Laloo Prasad Yadav to form a new political front Rashtriya Loktantrik Morcha has said after a RLM meeting today, the Morcha would form an alternative government with the support of left parties and other secular parties.

The dramatic turn of events leading to AIADMK pulling out of the government came barely a week after the meeting between Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Jayalalitha. Jayalalitha had described it as a "political earthquake", triggering speculations about possible aftershocks, in terms of new alignments.

But the Congress has chosen to be cautious in reacting to the

Finding that the Vajpayee government tottered on the edge, the opposition parties, especially the CPI (M), mounted efforts to cobble up a viable alternative in the event of the fall of the present dispensation.

The CPI (M) General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, known for his skill in back-room negotiations, met senior Congress leader K Natwar Singh and Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav yesterday and Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Laloo Prasad Yadav today in this regard.

A majority of the anti-BJP camp has repeatedly prodded the Congress to take the initiative to pull down Vajpayee government and form an alternative one.

But the Congress has chosen to be cautious in reacting to the