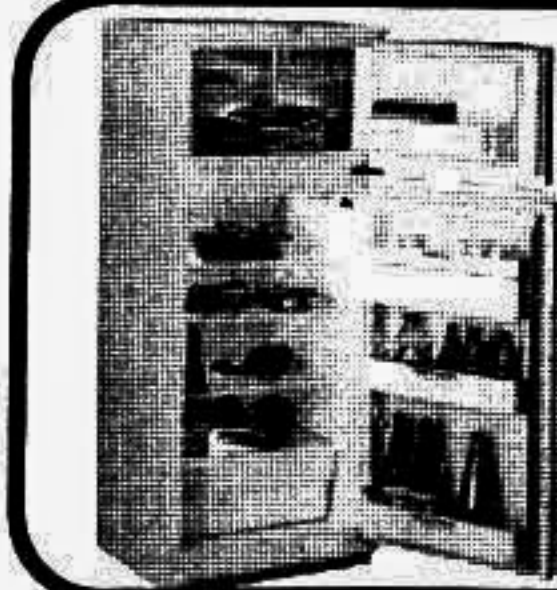




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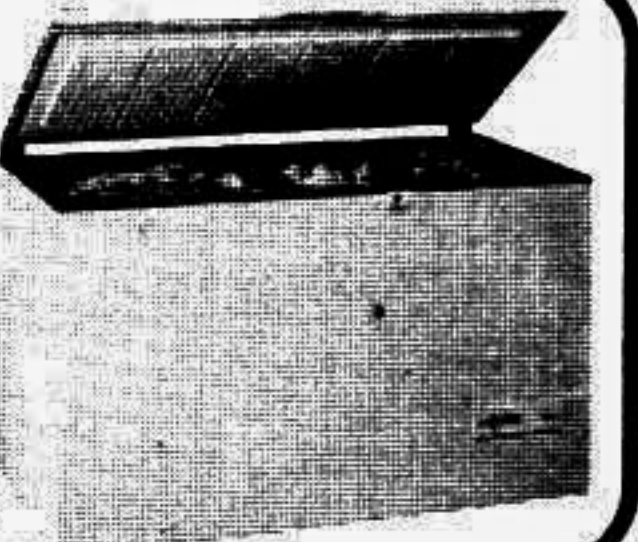
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Children aged six to 14 standing in a long queue to cast their votes in Union Child Council (UCC) election at a centre in Tangail yesterday. —Star photo

A rare example of exercising 'voting right'

Mustak Hossain back from Tangail

There was no rigging, no ballot box snatching or brandishing of firearms. Even without deployment of law enforcing agency personnel, hundreds of children aged six to 14 queued in long lines to cast vote in Union Child Council (UCC) election.

Under an unprecedented move, children exercised their 'voting right' with a dream to practise democratic values. The child councils initiated a new and innovative democratic process for developing democratic values and practices among children.

Save the Children Australia (SCA) has been implementing a Children's Development Programme in partnership with nine local Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in Tangail district over the last four years. This programme was initiated as one of the small components of SCA's advocacy type initiatives for promoting child rights in the country, where child rights have been violated largely, said Marin Brown, Overseas Programme Manager

of SCA. Union Council (UC) is the lowest unit of local government and its Chairman and members are elected by adults. But the Chairman and members of UCC in nine unions of Tangail district are elected by children. This is the first such exercise in the country.

The child council has three tiers. The highest tier is Union Child Council (UCC), the middle tier is Village Child Council (VCC) and the lowest is Child Council (CC). The concept of UCC has been evolved as a proxy model of electoral structure for practising democracy, said Sultan Mahmud, Country Director of SCA.

"The aim of the project is to orient children to democracy, nurture democratic values, develop mutual respect and cooperation among them," he added. An elderly man from Kaliahat thana, Mansoor Rahman, said "I hope children of our country would be able learn democratic values and process from this proxy voting. Children cast vote in the

UCC election. The election process was completed satisfactorily. About 82 per cent voters cast vote. However, at places, some people tried to influence children to vote in favour of their candidates.

The NGOs working with children in these areas made a children's voter list. There are about 15,750 voters in the nine unions. An orientation programme was organised to familiarise children with the electoral process.

A manual for conducting child council elections was published and distributed by the SCA.

Earlier, the NGOs formed election management committees, an election commission and an election tribunal.

Similar elections would take place every two years. "If I win the election, I shall work to create facilities so that children can play, try to prevent dropout from schools and do many other work for the good of children," said Parvin, a candidate for UCC membership and a student of class six in High School.

Atique murder Investigators yet to make any headway

By Staff Correspondent

Investigators were yet to make any headway till last night as they questioned the four, arrested in connection with the murder of CID inspector's driver Atique.

The body of Atique was recovered at about 8:30 pm Tuesday night from the stairs of the Shyamoli building in which the CID Inspector Saiful Islam lives.

Mohammadpur police were interrogating the four -- Bidduyt, the younger brother of the inspector, Rahim, Jahangir and Samsuddin. They have been on a three-day remand since yesterday.

Police also interrogated Janu and Rahima, both maids employed by the inspector, at Mohammadpur thana yesterday.

The officer-in-charge of the thana told The Daily Star last night that they were waiting for the return of the landlord. "We are expecting that he can give us information about the background of the killing."

The CID inspector, also the owner of the building, left Dhaka for India with his family a few days before the killing of Atique.

Sharjah

From page 1

seven Indian batsmen failed to reach double figures and only Saurav Ganguly's 50 saw them cross the 100-run mark.

Boisterous Pakistani fans in a sell-out crowd of 26,000 cheered lustily as Ijaz Ahmed and Inzamam-ul Haq saw their team through after leg-spinner Anil Kumble had removed the openers.

It was Pakistan's 10th title at this desert venue where they now hold an emphatic 17-5 winning record over arch-rivals India.

Scores: India 125 all out in 45 overs and Pakistan 129 for two in 28 overs.

Mujibnagar Day

From page 1

sional government were: Tajuddin Ahmed (Prime Minister), Capt. (retd.) M Mansur Ali (Finance Minister), AHM Quamruzzaman (Home, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister), and Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed (Foreign and Law Affairs Minister).

Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam read out the proclamation of the new nation and his government led the nation's War of Liberation for the next several months till victory on December 16.

Nazrul Islam also administered the oath of office of the members of the Mujibnagar government in presence of local and foreign journalists. Later, Commander-in-Chief Bangabir MAG Osmani conducted a march past and gave salute to the first government of Bangladesh. Earlier, the Acting President hoisted the national flag as artists rendered the national anthem -- *Amar Sonar Bangla*. *Ami Tomar Bhalobashi*.

Meanwhile, President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday gave separate messages on the eve of the historic Mujibnagar Day.

In his message, the president called upon all, irrespective of party affiliations, to maintain national solidarity, practice democracy and work together for the nation's progress upholding the wartime unity.

"This is a red letter day in our national history. This day, declaration of the independent Bangladesh government formed at Baidyanathpala, later Mujibnagar in Meherpur district, was read out and the Council of Ministers took oath," recalled the president.

The prime minister, in her message, also called upon the countrymen to unite with the spirit of Independence and War of Liberation to attain national progress.

"The Bengali nation achieved independence through a successful War of Liberation under the able leadership of the Mujibnagar government which was fully respectful to the ideals of the father of the nation," said

Hasina.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed will address a function in the Osmani Memorial Hall today as part of the Mujibnagar Day programmes chalked out by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhavan in the city this morning. She will also take part in a discussion meeting to be organised by ruling Awami League at Paltan Maidan at three in the afternoon.

The Awami League's programmes to observe the Mujibnagar Day also include hoisting of national and party flags at party offices and placing wreaths at Bangabandhu Bhavan.

Besides, different other socio-cultural and political organisations have also chalked out detailed programmes to mark the day.

Woman wins \$70m jackpot in US lottery

SANTIAGO, Apr 16: Relatives of a Chilean immigrant who claimed a 197 million dollar lottery jackpot in the United States dropped from view Thursday, shunning reporters clamoring for details about the new multimillionaire, reports AP.

Maria Grasso, 54, earned front-page headlines and extensive radio and television coverage in Chile after stepping forward to claim Big Game jackpot, the largest lottery prize ever won by an individual.

Grasso said she would take the money in one lump sum. She expects to net about 70 million dollars after taxes, her lawyer said.

One of her sisters, Maria Bete, appeared briefly on state television Wednesday, saying Grasso "fully deserves it, because she is very good and has worked hard all her life." "She has always helped us all, especially our mother," she added.

My good intention

From page 1

"But what I did with a good intention turned out to be a (personal) disaster," he noted. "When something was needed to be done to replace the Siddhirganj circuit breaker before a disaster, nobody took notice."

"Now we have restored the power supply to a great degree by diverting the load flow to Haripur system. This is a temporary arrangement," he said.

PDB engineers and experts are looking into the possibility of replacement of the damaged circuit breaker which was installed in early sixties. If replacement is not possible, they will prepare a plan for "permanent diversion" of the load flow to Dhaka city which consumes nearly half of the power generated in the country.

Nuruddin said he will continue his duties till the government finds his replacement. "I am carrying out my duties according to my contract. I go by what the government orders me to do. If the government wants to remove me, I will go. It asks me to stay, I will stay," he said.

Replying to a question he said he is not aware who will replace him. "I heard Mr Quamrul Islam Siddiqui (of LGED) was suggested to be the Chairman (of PDB) but he was not interested in it."

About the power crisis, the PDB Chairman said, "I tried to do my best. But my best may not be good enough."

He added that as a result of his efforts, the power generation scenario would gradually improve from next month.

"Two private sector barge mounted plants at Baghabari and Haripur will add 200 MW of power to the National Grid by the end of May," he said.

"An important power transmission line, the Comilla-Hathazari 132 KV line, undertaken by the PDB, has already been completed. It will allow the Razoan power plants in Chittagong to generate and supply more power to the National Grid. We'll get an additional 100 MW in the National Grid soon," he pointed out.

Due to absence of a 132 KV line from Chittagong, the two

210 MW Razoan plants generated power less than half of their capacity. Now, PDB will open the line for use after it completes synchronisation of the Comilla-Hathazari line with the power transmission system in Chittagong.

Power plants in the country are now generating around 2200 MW of power on an average against a peak-hour demand for 2450 to 2500 MW, leaving a shortfall of around 300 MW.

Another 110 MW power plant in Khulna, which is undergoing rehabilitation, will resume operation on Sunday. This will add 50 MW power to the National Grid. Two more plants undergoing rehabilitation will add another 50 to 70 MW by June, he said.

"With all these, we'll get around 350 to 400 MW within months. If there is no major disaster, power supply will be around 2500 MW by June", Nuruddin said.

Demand for power in March and April is higher than any other time of the year because of irrigation, hot spell and other reasons. By mid-May, demand for power for irrigation drops. "That will save around 25-30 MW power," the PDB Chairman said.

Tanzila's death: No clues yet

By Staff Correspondent

Police are yet to find out the clues to the mysterious death of Sylvia whose body was recovered from Ramna Lake in the city on Wednesday.

Tanjila Abedin Sylvia, 18, a student of the city's City College, had been missing since Tuesday night.

The Ramna thana duty officer said they are waiting for the autopsy report from the Dhaka Medical College.

Meanwhile, Jainal Abedin, father of Sylvia, told journalists at his house that she had committed suicide. He said she was well behaved and didn't have any affair. He also said that she had not left any suicide note and that before she had left the house, she did not have any altercation.

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Phone (if any)..... Date of Birth.....
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.....

In which country was the first ODI Cricket Match held?
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In the ensuing World Cup with which countries is Bangladesh going to play in the first round?
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- Change in name of the guardian will not be allowed.
- The age of the guardian must be above 25 years.
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- PEPSI will not take any responsibility for arranging the necessary Visas.
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For any further information details of the competition please contact Mr. Qumrul Hasan at 9330125-6.

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