

Jatiya Party brought out a procession in the city yesterday to drum up support for today's hartal. -Star photo

Foreign Minister addresses function

Mujibnagar Day to stimulate spirit of freedom seekers

MUJIBNAGAR (Meherpur). Apr 17: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad today expressed his firm optimism that Mujibnagar and Mujibnagar Day would continue to inspire and enlighten the future generations of freedom seekers and fighters against alien rule, reports BSS

"Both Mujibnagar, the place and Mujibnagar Day symbolise the spirit to fight for freedom and independence keeping the head high". Mr. Azad told a function here marking the 28th anniversary of the historic day when the Bangladesh provisional government took oath in the Amro Kanan (Mango Garden) of Meherpur district during the Liberation War.

The Foreign Minister was the chief guest at the function held on the premise of the Mujibnagar Memorial set up on the northern side of the mango gar-

The sprawling mango garden known as Baidyanathtala.

Scarcity of

drinking water

in Ishwardi

ISHWARDI, Apr 17: Drink-

The crisis is acute in Fateh

Mohammadpur, Loco area, Shi-

lapara, Schoolpara, Per-

arakhali, Shara and Gopalpur

areas under Ishwardi Sadar

that the last rainfall in greater

Pabna district was recorded on

ment, meantime, has suggested

that shallow tubewells be

turned in to deep tubewells to

culture Extension Department

said Boro paddy in some 2,255

hectares in the district may be

damaged due to inadequate irri-

gation. Farmers said that at

places, they dug 10-12 feet and

installed their shallow tubewell

machines but those cannot lift

3 killed in

bus-truck

collision

people were killed and 41 others

injured in a head-on collision

between a bus and truck at

Samity Bazar near the town on

the Dhaka-Chittagong highway

Feni-bound bus from Ramgarh

hit the truck at about 8 am some

11 km off the town, leaving two

35, and Mohammad Hasan, 16,

of Baganbazar of Fotikchhari

thana of Khagrachhari district.

Zafar Ahmed, 40, of Darogapara

of Ramgarh succumbed to

injuries on way to the hospital.

mitted to Sadar Hospital, 16 to

Mostannagar Health Complex

and seven to different clinics.

One Dulal, 25, was sent to

Dhaka from Sadar Hospital in

truck driver fled the scene with

Obituary

Motia Begum,

former head-

master of Ra-

jshahi Colle-

died at the

Police seized the bus but the

Of the injured, 18 were ad-

The two are Abu Raoshan,

Police and witnesses said the

today, reports UNB.

passengers dead.

critical condition.

his vehicle.

FENI. Apr 17: At least three

The local office of the Agri-

November 24 last year.

supply drinking water.

Weather office sources said

The Public Health Depart-

named after its owner one Baidyanath was christened as Mujibnagar (on this day in 1971) which used to be mentioned as the capital of Bangladesh during the War of Liberation. The place is about 17km from Meherpur district headquarters and only a few furlongs from the border with India. The cabinet of the provisional government took oath in the presence of a good number of local and foreign media and

nearby areas. Organised by the Ministry of Culture, the function was also addressed by State Minister for Textile A K M Jahangir Hossain and Secretary, Ministry of Cul-

enthusiastic people from

ture Dr S Zaman Majumder. The Foreign Minister said April 17 is an auspicious day and a glorious chapter in our long and arduous path of independence. On this day 28 years ago here under the mango tree then named Baidyanathtala the provisional government which

was guided by the declaration of the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took oath to free the country from alien forces. Since that day, this sacred place has been named and known as Mujibnagar to honour the Father of the Nation and to enliven his spirit which had helped winning victory.

Recalling this glorious chapter of the Liberation War, Foreign Minister who was a roving ambassador during that period said history is not created on its own, but efforts have to be made for that.

He said birth of Bangladesh as an independent state is the logical conclusion of years of struggle and sacrifices of many souls under the guidance of father of the nation. Azad said by creating an independent state the Bengalees in a way have met the desire and the longing of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore who used to lament their Bengalees had not been made

'Post '75 rulers tried to erase contributions of

freedom fighters' ing water has become scarce in many areas of the district in-SIRAJGANJ, Apr 17: Home, cluding the Sadar thana due to Post and Telecommunications fall in the level of groundwater Minister Mohammad Nasim and drying up of sources of surhas said the post '75 rulers tried face water, reports APB. to erase the glorious contribu-Water levels have fallen to tions of freedom fighters in the 45-50 feet at places, making Liberation War and distort his-

shallow and hand-driven tubetory, reports APB. wells inoperative, local people He was addressing a big gathering of freedom fighters at People now have to walk Rani Dinamoni High School long distances, where the deep ground at Kazipur here yestertubewells and Tara pumps are located, to fetch drinking water.

day. He also awarded crests and medals among freedom fighters. The function was addressed

by, among others, Abdul Latif Mirza MP and Sirajganj district Awami League President Motahar Hossain Talukdar with Ameer Hossain Bulu in the chair.

In the evening, the Nasim laid the foundation of a threestoried academic building of Sirajganj Government University College. Speaking on the occasion

Nasim said a new students' dormitory and a science building of the college will be constructed.

He also urged the students to cooperate with the college authorities in maintaining an academic atmosphere at the college.

BGHOA executives

A seven-member executive committee of Bangladesh Guest House Owners Association has been formed with Sadique Ahsan as its president, says a press release.

The other members are Shahadat Hossain — vice president Saif Ahmed — secretary general Humayun Kabir — treasurer Moniruzzaman Chowdhury organising secretary, and Asfar Hossain Khoka, and ASM Shahajahan Chowdhury Mitu

 executive members. Sadique Ahsan was the Financial Controller of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. He was associated with Hotels International Limited and Pan Pacific Group for sixteen years prior to his involvement in Guest House business.

> Four held in Sylhet

SYLHET, Apr 17: BDR jawans arrested four people, including an Indian national from the frontier Baragram village in Bianibazar thana on Monday, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Pakhi Mia of Dheonagar village and Rokan Ahmed of Sridhara village in the thana, Ranju Dey of Zakiganj thana and Dilip Chakrabarty of Syedpur village in Karimganj of In-

The jawans arrested them while they were intruding into

Bangladesh territory. Meanwhile, Kotwali police arrested two youths from Subidbazar and Kazitala areas in the town Sunday in connection with kidnapping of Ashfaque Ahmed and Mahmud Hossain, local leaders of ruling

Awami League. The arrested, identified as Bablu and Sajib, were said to be the activists of BNP-backed Chhatra Dal.

human beings. Eight bodies of missing fishermen

tound in Noakhali NOAKHALI. Apr 17: Eight bodies of the missing fishermen were recovered from the river Meghna near Char Gazaria in Ramgati thana of Laxmipur district on Sunday, reports UNB.

With this, the death toll rose to 15 in the devastating tornado. But the officials confirmed 12 deaths.

Of the 54 missing fishermen, local people rescued 37 on the same day. The rest 9 were still missing.

The April 9 severe tornado left a trial of devastation in 62 km areas of the thana including Char Lawrence, Char Falcon, Hajirhat and the adjacent ar-

The dead were identified as Abdus Sahid, 35, and his son Jahangir. 8. Mohammad Yunus, 35, Mohammad Hasan 21. Hazrat Ali, 29, Abdul Malek, 45, of Char Jagabandhu village and Mohammad Basu of Kalkini village in the thana and Abul Kalam, 35, of Char

Chhenga in Hatiya thana. Some 9,181 families were affected in the tornado while 1,840 homesteads were damaged totally and 2,755 partially, officials said. In addition, 57 schools, 52 madrasas, two colleges and 116 mosques were

damaged, officials added. Fisheries and Livestock Minister ASM Rob visited the affected areas on Sunday and distributed 1.5 tones rice and Tk 45,000 among the tornadostricken people.

Body of housewife exhumed in Joypurhat

JOYPURHAT, Apr 17: The body of a housewife was exhumed at Raghabpur village in sadar thana on Tuesday after eight days of her burial, reports

UNB. Police said the body of Kalpana Devi (24) was unearthed in presence of first class Magistrate Shafi Khan and SI Shaheed Suhrawardy following a murder case filed by

her relatives on April 10. Kalpana Devi was killed allegedly by her husband Manik Singh on April 5, family sources said.

But her husband filed a UD case with the police saying that she committed suicide. Kalpana was buried not following the

Hindu rituals. Later her body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

I wo women commit suicide

JOYPURHAT, Apr 17: Two women allegedly committed suicide by taking pesticides in sadar thana of the district on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said Golche Ara, 24, wife of Abdul Latif of the Hatigara village took her own life early on the day following a chronic stomach-pain.

In another incident, Deepali Rani, 22, wife of Akhil Chandra Debnath of Chanda village allegedly committed suicide in

the morning. The cause behind her suicide could not be unknown immediately.

Pahela Baishakh celebrated at JU

By JU Correspondent All were in a festive mood at the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus yesterday on the occasion of Basanta Mela and

Baishakhbaran Utsab organised by the Department of Organised at the 'Akashmon' Chattar' near Arts faculty, the discussion meeting on Baishakhbaran Utsab (Festival for Celebration of New Year) was presided over by Prof Rabeya Moin, chairperson of Bangla Department, Vice-chan-

Alauddin Ahmed inaugurated the function as the chief guest. Emphasising on the neces-sity of upholding the history, customs and culture of Bangla through generations, the VC called upon all to practise Bangalee culture with a non-communal outlook.

cellor of the university Prof

Among others, who addressed the discussion were Sayed Hasan Imam as special guest and Prof Hayat Mamud of

The discussion was followed by a cultural function performed by the students of the university. They rendered a number of songs including — Esho he Baishakh, Bujhechi Ki, Nishidin bharasha, Phire chalo maatir tane, O aamar Bangla maa, Proloy nachhon nachle jakhan, Ei Bangla Rabi Thakurer and Eki aparup rupe etc. Besides, students also recited a number of famous po-

Meanwhile, a day-long Basanta Mela was also held yesterday in front of the Life Science

BNP dissolves Meherpur Dist Committee

The opposition BNP abolished its Meherpur District Committee and formed an 81member Convening Committee of the unit, reports UNB.

Masud Arun was made Convenor, and Abdul Goni, Elias Hossain, Amjad Hossain. Shahidul Huq Mastar and Amirul Islam were made Joint Convenors of the new commit-

Thana and municipal level presidents and general secretaries of party and its front organisations will be the ex-officio members of the committee, said a party press release.

This convening committee will reorganise the expired committees in thana, union and pourashava levels within the next three months and form the full-fledged District Executive Committee of the party through district conference, the release said.

Dacoity, toll collection free zone

MAGURA, Apr 17: No dacoity or illegal toll collection was reported from Jessore-Kamarkhali part of the highway although such crimes increased manifold in other parts of the country, reports UNB.

Credit goes to the locally raised Highway Defence Party which has been patrolling the highway at night for the last 18 months.

Local Awami League leader Rustam Ali and Police Super Akbar Ali were proud to declare the area 'crime-free zone' at the annual meeting of the Highway Defence Party here today.

There would have been more than one bus or truck dacoity and illegal toll collection every day by terrorists in the area covering four thanas before the HDP was raised.

The HDP consists of 500 people who were drawn from villages. Each 20 of them formed a team, stick in hand and backed by the police, patrol their area of Dhaka-Khulna highway.

A nominal hohorarium paid to members of HDP are met out of voluntary donations paid by bus/truck owners association, transport workers association and local businessmen. The donors are happy with performance of HDP.

The Police Super expressed the hope that similar defence party should be raised in other areas to patrol the highway against dacoity and illegal toll collection.

Deposit of silt turns rivers non-navigable in Netrakona

NETRAKONA, Apr 17: All the rivers flowing through the district except Dhonu have become non-navigable due to deposit of silt and emergence of innumerable shoals, reports

Of the 31 rivers, the Dhonu, Dhalai, Krishnai and Kangsha and Dhanaikhali are more important, providing for transportation of goods. But these also remain navigable only during the rainy season, traders and local people said.

Dhonu, originates from the mighty Meghna and flows through Khaliajuri and Mohangani thanas. . The Dhanaikhali bears the

major load of transportation of goods but due to deposit of silt, goods have to be unloaded at Thakurkona Bazar point and transported from there by railway and trucks.

The once mighty Kangsha even does not have enough water for irrigation. People continue to suffer because road communication has

-not yet developed in the district. Local people said that innusions Judge Abdul Kuddus gave merable embankments conlife term to Rejendra Gain, structed by the Water Develop-Kalachand Gain, Bibek Gain, ment Board (WDB), coupled with Dipak Gain, Sunity Gain, Dilack of dredging of the rivers. pali Gain and Jiban Gain for have made the rivers non-navibeating one Nalini Gain to gable. death over a land dispute.

BCL call to resist hartal

Four killed

in Sylhet

ple, including a housewife were

killed, in separate incidents in

the district on Monday, reports

night guard was run over by a

speedy truck at Airport Road in

the town killing him on the

as Shasanka Das, a night guard

of the house of a local poura

commissioner. Later local peo-

succumbed to his injuries at

Sylhet Osmany Medical College

Bianibazar thana was seriously

injured in an attack by his ri-

in connection with the killing.

electrocuted when she came in

contact with a live wire in her

bathroom at Raikhal village in

the body of a minor boy from

the bank of the river Surma on

Akhter Hossain, 7, of Gouripur

village in Chhatak thana, was

Farmers' rally

in Habiganj

ers' rally organised by Bangla-

desh Rice Research Institute

Chief Scientific Officer of

BRRI Director (administra-

tion) attended the rally as chief

guest while Chief Scientific

Officer Dr Noor-e-Elahi and

Deputy Commissioner Ahmed

Bazlur Rashid were present as

Chowdhury MP and officials

spoke on the occasion. Some

200 farmers took part in the

quainted with the modern

methods of cultivation of the

newly invented high yielding

Fire Service &

Civil Defence

Station facing

problems in Sylhet

SYLHET, Apr 17: The Fire

A number of posts, including

Service and Civil Defence Sta-

tion of the town has been facing

many problems since long, re-

a senior station officer, four

readers, two drivers and seven

firemen have been lying vacant

for a long time hampering the

day to day activities, officials

in 1962, needs a special vehicle

of 2,200-gallon capacity for

supplying water to extinguish

also have to collect water from

rivers and canals in the district

with much inconvenience due

to lack of its own water supply

the fire service remain inoper-

ative day after day, as the re-

pairing workshop of the fire

service lies in Chittagong, far

of the fire station is in a dilapi-

Apart from this, the building

Moreover, constant traffic

congestion at the southern side

of the river Surma has also

been hampering the activities

of the firemen in extinguishing

Local people urged the au-

thorities concerned to modern-

ize the station without further

Seven awarded

life-term for

killing

sons have been given life term

for killing a man at a village

under Agailjhhara thana in

Additional District and Ses-

1995, reports APB.

BARISAL, Apr 17: Seven per-

the fire in remote areas.

It was learnt that vehicles of

The fire station, established

The employees of the station

The farmers were ac-

Abu Leis Mohammad Mubin

the institute Zahirul Islam

presided over the meeting.

(BRRI) was held here on Tues-

HABIGANJ, Apr 17: A farm-

missing since April 10.

with the police.

day, reports UNB.

special guests.

varieties of paddy.

rally.

ports UNB.

fire, they added.

away from here.

dated condition.

delay.

Meanwhile, police recovered

The victim, identified as

Separate cases were filed

Sadar thana on the same day.

Besides, one Izzat Ali, 50.

Izzat of Shaleswar village in

Police arrested one Nazir Ali

Raheda Akhter, 25, was

The deceased was identified

spot early Tuesday.

ple seized the truck.

Hospital on Monday.

vals on April 8.

April 12

Police and witnesses said a

SYLHET, Apr 17: Four peo-

Transport workers march in a procession in the city yesterday, chanting slogans against today's hartal.

President and General Secreary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Bahadur Bepari and Ajoy Kar Khokon in a joint statement yesterday urged the people to reject and resist the anti-people hartal called today by the fallen autocrat, fundamentalist evil forces and vote

dacoits, reports BSS. They called the strike just the day before the meeting between the donor countries and the government as a well planned conspiracy to destroy the on-going democratic practices and economic progress of the country, the BCL leaders

The leaders said people want to know whose interest they would protect by calling hartal They urged the student community to resist efforts to create any chaotic situation in the educational institutions, especially, on the Dhaka University campus by hiring street urchins and hoodlums.

Both the leaders expressed the hope that the people would resist all the undemocratic activities of these evil forces expressing confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as they did in the past.

Farmer tortured to death in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 17: A poor farmer was tortured to death during arbitration at a Union Parishad Office in Chakoria Thana of the district on Friday, reports APB. The victim is Abdul Majid.

26, son of Nazir Ahmed of Dargah Sora village under the coastal union of Toitong. Police arrested two choukidars - Abul Kashem and Khalilur Rahman — on charge

of lynching Majid, but the alleged culprit, a UP member, reportedly escaped arrest. Police quoted the two arrested as saying that they had

brought Majid to the UP office on Friday night following a complaint lodged by a villager regarding a loan. Majid, who was mercilessly beaten up, died at one stage. Police recovered the body

and sent it to morgue for autopsy. Chokoria police were investigating the case.

In a separate case, villagers recovered the body of a daylabourer from a canal at Sindarpar village in Chokoria on Friday night. It is believed that the man, identified as Nobinul Huq. 50, had been murdered over a land dispute.

Dacoities on alarming rise in Chouddagram

COMILLA, Apr 17: Dacoities are on alarming rise in different areas of Chouddagram thana of the district creating panic among the villagers, reports UNB.

The peace-loving people of the thana have been passing their sleepless nights in the absence of necessary measures by the law enforcing agencies.

According to local people, at least 25 dacoities were committed in different areas of the thana during the last one and a half months.

A total of five dacoities were committed at three villages on April 11 simultaneously.

Of this, three were committed at Berala in Cheora union and two at Basantapur in Batisa union.

The dacoits looted cash and valuables worth about Tk five lakh from the houses of Abdul Momin, Manik Mia, Zana Mia, Aslam Mia and Kamal on the

Sex workers' confce Tuesday

A conference of sex workers at Daulatdia will be held there on Tuesday to prevent child prostitution, reports APB. Representatives of Rajbari district administration, NGOs and donor agencies and local elite are expected to attend the conference, said a press release

Australia yesterday. The conference is being organised by Mukti Mohila Samity, an association of sex workers at Daulatdia.

issued by Save The Children

Benazir calls for unity in South Asia

LONDON, Apr 17: Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has called for an "Asian Free Zone" that will build upon a "pre-1947" commonness among the peoples of South Asia, help South Asian governments "to set aside territorial ambitions and seek economic progress" for the region, reports IANS.

Speaking the morning after a Pakistani court sentenced her to five years' imprisonment, Benazir, however, chose to make no reference to the court order against her and her husband, Senator Asif Ali Zardari. Benazir, who was addressing a meeting of the Asian Breakfast Club at the House of Commons. appeared calm and unfazed.

Some of the members at the meeting, however, expressed serious concern over the order. "Nowhere in the world is the leader of the opposition treated like this." Lord Clinton-Davis

The club has been set up by former minister Tony Baldry and Indian-origin solicitor Sarosh Zaiwalla. Benazir spoke about her

concept of a European Union (EU)-like South Asia, according to her prepared text. She said she had omitted the word "trade" in describing her concept because "it is time that we, one-fifth of the world's population, tackle more than trade." She spoke of a pre-1947 unity in "a common and shared

Detention of alleged organiser of Harkatul Zihad declared illegal By SC Correspondent

The High Court Thursday declared the detention of Ahmed Sadik Ahmed, a South African citizen and allegedly an organiser of Harkatul Žihad, illegal and without lawful authority

A Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury and Justice M A Aziz passed the order after hearing both the government leader and the petitioner's lawver.

It was alleged in the grounds of Ahmed's detention that under the shadow of an international non-government organisation - The Servants of Suffering Humanity - he was maintaining liaison between Harkatul Zihad Al-Islami Bangladesh and Al-Markajul Islam comprising Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals and that he was trained by the Mujahid in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

It was also alleged that he along with his associates, in the name of religious teaching, trained the teachers and innocent underage students of Madrasahs and Mauktabs how to use arms By their activities, they also

attempted to damage the social and religious harmony and peace and thereby disturbed the democratic order and stability in the country, the grounds of detention alleged. But in the writ petition, it

was argued that the detenu's organisation having obtained registration from the government since March 19, 1998, established 450 Madrasahs in the country with the only intention to teach the poor on religion. Ahmed was arrested on Jan-

uary 25 this year under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and on February 16 the order for his detention was given.

history" among South Asian nations. She said: "We speak the same language. Our colour is the same. Our thinking, values, pre-47 history and culture is the same. We have a multi-religious

society with Muslims, Hindus,

Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, Buddhists and others. After the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) nations, this zone should go for a "secondary but not overtly delayed inclusion of Iran, Turkey and the Muslim nations of the former CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)," Benazir said.

A free trade zone among the SAARC nations should be set up by 2005 "or the peoples of South Asia will again be left on the sidelines of the global economic engine." By 2010, she said, this zone should include the SAARC countries. China, Afghanistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The former Prime Miniscri said: "Even the smallest member state, such as Sri Lanka through this cooperation could have a chance to be the President of the 'superpower' Asian

Economically, Benazir said, "we enter an increasingly borderless world, while maintaining our national sovereignty. In the new century the concerns of the state will be driven more by considerations of trade and commerce rather than by our traditional military-territorial

considerations. The success of a nation will be based on "its level of exports, hard currency reserves, its per capita GNP (gross national product) and the creative genius of its citizens." South Asia, she said, "has been far too long a region teetering on the edge of catastrophe.'

Benazir said she saw positive signs. Six weeks ago, she said, she participated in an Indian-Pakistan parliamentarians' conference. The meeting was unprecedented, she said. The nations of South Asia must now "embark on an accelerated path of economic cooperation and follow the leadership of the European nations.'

Indian goods worth Tk 2.5cr seized

JESSORE, Apr 17: Antismuggling team of Bangladesh Rifles seized Indian smuggled goods worth about Tk 2.52 crore from different frontier points of the district during last three months till March 31, reports

The contraband items worth about Tk 14.47 lakh have been seized while being smuggled out of the country and goods worth Tk 2.52 crore seized while being taken into the country. The seized goods were de-

posited with the Jessore and

Benapole customs godowns. Diarrihoea claims 60 lives in

BARISAL, Apr 17: Diarrhoea claimed 60 lives in Barisal Division in the last one week and over 5000 people are now suffering from the disease, official

sources said today, reports APB. The district-wise death tolls are: Barisal-5, Bhola-14, Patriakhali-14, Barguna-11. jpur-7 and Jhalakati-5, the sources at the control room at the Civil Surgeon's office said.



Thai Songkram festival was celebrated at the residence of the Ambassador of Thailand in the city.



She left behind 3 sons, 5 daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death. Her eldest son, AKM Faroog, is now serving as the Ambassador of Bangladesh in China.