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66 more DB officials transferred

By Staff Correspondent
Another 66 Detective Branch officials including 25 sub-inspectors, 10 assistant sub-inspectors, one Habilder and 30 constables were transferred from the Minto Road DB office here yesterday.

Earlier, an ADC, an AC and twelve inspectors were transferred.

A high official at the police headquarters told The Daily Star last night, "Fifty percent of the DB personnel have been transferred so far and the rest will be transferred within a week."

The transfer of DB personnel followed a report of a five-member committee formed earlier to probe the murder of Jalal Ahmed Shaif.

The committee which submitted its report last week made fifteen recommendations including transfer of DB personnel, sources said earlier.

The report also recommended transfer of some senior DB officials.

When contacted last night, DC DB Alif Hossain Mollah said he received official letter as regards transfer of 14 DB men.

Jail Killing Case Charges against 21 accused to be framed on May 2

The Metropolitan sessions judge yesterday rejected the petitions filed by the two accused persons in the Jail Killing Case praying for making a reference to the High Court with recommendation to quash the charges brought against them, reports BSS.

Judge Sheikh Rezwana Ali, in his order, also refused to grant bail to the accused petitioners K M Obaidur Rahman and Nurul Islam Manzoor and fixed May 2 for framing the charges against the 21 accused in the case.

The Jail Killing Case came up for trial after 23 years of the brutal incident.

Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and AHM Quamruzzaman — the four national leaders — were killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Eight out of 21 accused are now in custody and the rest 13 are still absconding.

Shafi murder: 3 DB men on fresh remand

By Staff Correspondent
Four Detective Branch personnel, arrested in connection with the Jalal Ahmed Shaif murder, were again placed on a three-day remand by the CMM's court yesterday.

Inspector Ziaul Ahsan, SI Shaifan, hawilder Bellal and constable Rob were produced before the CMM's court yesterday. CID sought a five-day fresh remand but the court granted a three-day remand for interrogation.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Humayun Kabir was asked to produce before the investigators today. The investigators permitted him to leave Dhaka Saturday night after a departmental meeting at the CID office.

"We have permitted him to leave Dhaka after a departmental decision, but now we realised that he has to be present before the investigators for further interrogation", said a CID official last night.

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Prayer Timings

April 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	4:35
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:45	4:55
Maghrib	6:25	6:30
Esha	7:30	7:35

Source: Islamic Foundation

Paris meet begins today Aid Club may set new standards this year

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The quantum of aid pledged at Paris has long been considered, wrongly or rightly, as the yardstick of government's credibility and successes, but this year could be an exception.

The two-day meeting between the government and the aid-givers gets underway today at the French capital, home to the World Bank (WB) which coordinates the annual event.

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, who is heading the Bangladesh team to the crucial conference, neither confirmed nor denied reports that there would not be any indicative figures coming out of the meeting as usual. The head at Dhaka's World Bank office had hinted earlier that the figures would be a forgotten thing.

"People who know about these things know that aid is pledged and committed by the donors throughout the year. It is a continual process by the financial institutions like the World Bank and ADB," Kibria said in an interview to The

Daily Star before leaving for Paris.

"At every board meeting of theirs, one or the other of our projects come up and it's a continuous process. Many of the donor countries have their own budget cycle and at the time of their annual budget exercise, there is a kind of calculation of the expected aid flow.

"That kind of calculation will definitely be there and you will see the figures that people are waiting to see. I don't like to talk about this at this stage because somehow the belief is that the Paris meeting will not come up with any figures. Let us see what happens.

"People want to see how much is being disbursed, how much is aid utilisation. If we can increase the rate of utilisation, the donors will definitely give more money," Kibria said.

For many years, the local media have portrayed it as an event that puts the government under strict scrutiny from

donor representatives and pledges of loans and grants reflect the level of their satisfaction.

The tendency to highlight the aid figures pledged at the Paris meet has always perturbed both the government officials and the donor representatives, but the mindset has not changed. The quality of aid has never been a subject of discussion.

In practice, indicative pledges at Paris are followed by commitment through negotiations. Then come disbursement, which also depends on performance and pace of implementation of projects and other conditionalities. Every year, pledges remain far from actual disbursement.

Bangladesh's dependence on aid has declined but still foreign assistance provides a substantial part of the development budget.

This 55 per cent or so represents the foreign exchange component of many projects. If

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A nor'wester blew over the city yesterday.

— Star Photo: AKM Mohsin

Hartal passes off peacefully

By Staff Correspondent

Sporadic violence marked yesterday's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal enforced by the BNP-led opposition alliance to protest persistent power and water shortages, worsening law and order and price-hike of essentials.

This time, fortunately, there were no deaths.

Pro-hartal activists clashed with police, at places with the anti-hartal workers, and hurled home-made bombs at police, on streets and transports that plied defying the opposition shutdown.

The violent incidents left some 50 people including 12 policemen injured.

Police detained at least 65 persons for possessing or throwing bombs, obstructing movement of motor vehicles and setting them on fire in Dhaka city.

However, the opposition parties claimed that 150 people were wounded and 250 others arrested in the capital alone during the 12-hour shutdown.

Economic activities suffered due to the nationwide shutdown that also forced educational institutions closed and most private transports off the roads. State-owned buses and some private mini buses plied on the main streets of the capital.

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8-day action programme from Apr 22

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday announced an eight-day action programme, including gherao of electricity offices across the country on April 22, to protest water-gas-power-fertilizer crises, price hike of essentials and deterioration of law and order.

Announcing the programme at a press briefing, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan warned that they will go for tougher programmes if the government fails to resolve the crises immediately.

Besides, the BNP, senior leaders of Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) were present at the news conference held at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia in the evening.

The series of programmes include public rallies and mass contact through processions at all thana headquarters from April 23-27 and mass procession in all cities, districts and thana headquarters on April 29.

Bhuiyan said these programmes have been announced also to protest rising terrorism, frequent murder, hijacking, snatching and toll extortion.

He asked the government to step down immediately and announce mid-term election as it has no right to stay in power after three years of 'misrule, failure and incompetence.'

Bhuiyan said the present electricity crisis is due to two main reasons — the government could not improve power sector by adding required generation of power, and cores of taka were misappropriated in the name of repairing the power plants.

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Opposition plans another hartal May 3

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has planned yet another hartal on May 3 as part of its current agitation against power and water supply shortages in major cities like Dhaka and Chittagong.

The planned hartal is likely to be a half-day one, to be enforced in the capital only.

"Yes, we're considering it," said city BNP chief Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP when asked about the plan.

JP nominee on the opposition liaison committee, Kazi Firoz Rashid, also confirmed the plan. "It may be a half-day

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City experiences first shower of Baishakh

By Special Correspondent

The capital had its first shower of Baishakh, the first month of Bangla year, when squalls rising up to 35 kph blew over it yesterday afternoon.

Squalls also blew over Mymensingh with gusts rising up to 56 kph, the Met office here said.

The high winds triggered welcome showers in the city, totalling 18 mm in two sessions, one at around 4 pm and the other in the evening. The showers cooled the temperature which had reached 36.3 Celsius, and brought some relief to the city dwellers.

In Mymensingh the rains totalled 27 mm. Tangail had 3 mm while Chandpur and Faridpur had traces only, the Met office said.

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All proposed projects delayed Power sector heading for massive disaster

By Sharier Khan

Despite government's repeated assurance of an improvement, the country's power sector continues to head towards a massive disaster as all the proposed private and public sector power projects have been delayed by years, sources said.

The level of load-shedding will decrease within a few months but it will increase to around 250 MW in the next 'lean season' (March-April of 2000) and to around 500 MW in the following year, the sources said.

Besides, the power system is already 'running a risk of total breakdown any time' as some 660 MW, which require over-

hauling, are being operated 'forcibly' now.

"The delay in implementation of the public sector power schemes is due to lack of finance, politicised trade unionism in the Power Development Board (PDB) and lack of understanding of future problems in the power sector at the upper tier of the government", one source said.

Private sector projects are being delayed because of "outside interventions" in putting in or throwing out bidders, lack of transparency and bid negotiation skill of the government, massive lack of coor-

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New education board in Sylhet from July

The country's sixth Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board in Sylhet will start functioning in July next, reports APB.

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education Ministry was informed of this yesterday. The meeting, held at the Sangsad Bhaban, was presided over by chairman of the committee Nurul Islam Nahid.

It discussed the secondary education system, its management, administration and other related matters.

The meeting stressed proper implementation of the steps taken by the country's education boards and the ministry in curbing adoption of unfair means and leakage of question papers in the public examinations, particularly in the Sec-

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2 hospital maids held for lifting new-born babies

By Staff Correspondent

Two hospital maids were arrested on charge of abducting two new-born babies from Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday, police and hospital sources said.

The seven-day-old twins were later rescued from the residence of the maids by some other hospital staff, sources added.

The arrested two were identified as Hamida and Rabeda, both special hospital maids. Both the babies were daughter of Azimun Nisa, wife of Abul Hasan, a rickshaw puller, who gave birth to the twins on April 11.

But the arrested hospital maids told police that the mother, rickshaw puller, her-

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Commentary Wise Words in Political Wilderness?

By Mahfuz Anam

We had written earlier that Sheikh Hasina did the nation a great favour by appointing Justice Shahabuddin as the President, and that she could do herself even a greater favour by listening to what he says from time to time. In fact it is our feeling that if the PM would compile all his speeches since assuming office, it would serve as the best policy guideline for her government. Forget a compilation, we doubt whether even a single one of his speeches was read with the seriousness that it deserved. Otherwise how can it be explained that the same mistakes, the same arrogance, the same acrimony, the same mudslinging, the same practice of always blaming the other is continued even after repeated warnings and urgings by the President.

His latest speech delivered last Friday, came after a period of silence, is among the harshest and perhaps the most valuable. He literally tore away the mask of hypocrisy from the face of our leaders. He said things that needed to be said and in a manner that was necessary. But then as the proverb goes, you can bring the donkey to the water but cannot make it drink. We can give all the sound advice but we cannot make our leaders practice them.

Let us recall some of the points that President Sha-

habuddin made last Saturday. He said "not confrontation, but compromise is the need of the hour... None of our political leaders or parties budges an inch... They never accept their faults, and always blame others, and that also in abusive terms and in very harsh language... Instead of uniting to solve our enormous national problems, we are creating more disunity, more animosity, more conflict and more confrontation... After 28 years of inde-

pendence our people remain so shamefully poor, tragically deprived and so humiliateingly oppressed. Will President Shahabuddin's desperate cry make any dent on the thinking of our leaders?"

Why do we keep on repeating the same mistakes, exhibiting the same arrogance, practising the same ignorance, and committing the same blunders that put us back in time and in history. The reason is that our

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Cong faces tough task to form govt

NEW DELHI, Apr 18: India's oldest political grouping, the Congress Party, today awaited a call to power as it spearheaded efforts to fashion a new administration from a fragmented parliament, reports Reuters.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's 13-month-old coalition government fell on Saturday when it lost a confidence motion by a single vote.

But Congress, to form a new government, must pull together a raft of regional parties and Communist groups for support.

Following are some of the political scenarios that could play out:

President K R Narayanan summons Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, widow of assassinated

Polls seem only way out

premier Rajiv Gandhi, either later today or on Monday to ask her if she was willing and able to form a majority government.

If she says she is willing, Narayanan could ask her to produce letters of support from supporting parties as happened when the ousted Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP) coalition took office a year ago.

Gandhi's party, along with a handful of minor allies, controlled 145 lawmakers in the 545-seat lower house of parliament at the time of Saturday's confidence vote. The Congress needs the support of 128 other

lawmakers for a simple majority.

If the numbers fall in place, Congress could lead a majority government that would include a clutch of regional parties that oppose the BJP, including a so-called Third Front of mostly centre-left parties.

Many of these were part of two United Front coalition governments formed to block the BJP after elections in 1996.

Alternatively, the Congress could lead a minority government with support from the Third Front and other allies from the outside, though it re-

mains to be seen whether regional parties would accept this prospect.

In a third possible scenario, Congress could back a centre-left government from the outside, preferring to wait for another mid-term election to be called — possibly at the end of the year or in early 2000 — in the hope of winning power on its own.

If no party or group of parties is able to put together a viable government, the president would dissolve parliament and the Vajpayee administration would stay on in a caretaker capacity until new elections were held within six months.

Political analysts said it was

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Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project
Institute of Fuel Research & Development
Dr Kudrat-E-Khuda Road
BCSIR, Dhaka-1205

Grant for those interested to establish bio-gas plant

The Fuel Research & Development Institute of Bangladesh Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (Science Laboratory) has undertaken a development project titled "Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project" with a view to achieving the Bangladesh government objective of fuel crisis amelioration, bio-fertiliser & bio-cycle maintenance, maintaining balance of nature, health & environment development, extension of bio-gas as alternative fuel etc. Total 5000 bio-gas plant will be established all over the country under this project. Preference will be given to 8-10 member family possessing minimum 5-6 cattle or poultry farm (400-450 poultry birds) in establishing the bio-gas plant. This 5-6 cowdung & 400-450 bird droppings based bio-gas plant with a daily capacity of 3 cubic metre gas generation will enable daily two-time cooking & one hajak light burning at night time. It will cost Tk 12-14 thousand to establish such as plant. Under the project, a subsidy of Tk 5000/- will be provided for establishment of each plant. In case of additional amount in plant construction, if necessary, any branch of Sonali, Janata, Agrani & Krishi Bank may be contacted for loan on existing terms.

To provide technical assistance in plant establishment, total 128 Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineers have been given appointment all over the country. One Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineer is placed with responsibility of establishing bio-gas plants in 3-4 thanas under him. Interested entrepreneurs in plant establishment are requested to contact the thana level appointed Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineers. For the address of communicating the Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineers it is requested to contact the office of the Thana Nirbahi Officer/Office of the Thana Livestocks Officer/Office of the Thana DPHE Officer/Office of the Thana LGED Officer/Office of the Thana Directorate of Agriculture Extension Officer.

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Quazi Aktaruzzaman
Project Director