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BNP to finalise route, date for proposed road march today

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will hold an emergency meeting with party leaders and MPs of greater Mymensingh and Gazipur districts at the party central office at 5 pm today to discuss preparations for the proposed road march from Dhaka to Haluaghat.

A close aide of BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia told this correspondent that July 20-21 has been tentatively fixed for the road march, to be led by Begum Zia.

The meeting is expected to finalise the route and other details for the march, party sources said. Presidents and general secretaries or convenors and joint convenors, and local MPs of the party have been asked to attend today's meeting, said a party press release last night.

Meanwhile, the liaison committee of the four-party opposition alliance is scheduled to meet this afternoon in the city. The meeting is expected to finalise the date for the proposed simultaneous road marches of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote.

A joint meeting of leaders of Dhaka city BNP, its front organisations and DCC ward commissioners from the party will be held at 4:30 pm today at the central office of Jatiyatabadi Mukti Joddha Dal. City BNP Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP will preside over the meeting, the press release said.

AL plotting vote rigging, alleges Khaleda

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia has accused the ruling Awami League of plotting a massive vote rigging in next general election to capture power for another five years, reports UNB.

Sensing a sure defeat in next election, the government AL has made blueprint to capture polling centres, cast false votes and change the poll result sheets... Awami League is expert in doing these misdeeds, she told a gathering of her partymen in the city on Thursday.

The BNP chairperson and leader of the opposition in parliament alleged that voter's ID card was being forged, and fake voters were being included in the voters' list in collaboration with the Election Commission to implement the blueprint.

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BCL leader murdered in Khulna

KHULNA, July 2: A local leader of the ruling party's student wing Chhatra League was killed by miscreants in the city today, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Shaheen alias Chhoton, 22, son of Abdul Majid of Basupara area.

Police said miscreants waylaid Chhoton near Basupara crossing at midnight last night and hit him with sharp weapons. They left him in an unconscious state.

Local people rushed him to

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Prayer Timings

July 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:10	4:15
John	12:50	1:25
Asr	4:55	5:05
Maghrib	7:00	7:05
Esha	7:55	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Impact of 15pc VAT**Power will be much more costly than it seems**

By Sharier Khan

Power will be much more costly than it seems with the imposition of 15 per cent VAT on it, replacing 15 paisa per unit under the budget for the current financial year.

"Previously, for example, on a Tk 500 bill for using 200 units of power, a consumer had to pay Tk 30 as duty, making the total Tk 530. Now, he will have to pay Tk 575," an official explained.

"For an industry, it would mean a significant rise in the cost of production", he added. The Energy Ministry had earlier suggested the Prime Minister not to impose VAT on power billing, considering its negative impact, but she went ahead with it, sources said.

The

power

sector

now

needs

restoration

of

financial

discipline,

officials

and

experts

said.

"VAT is not going to improve

the real scenario. In fact,

the number of people who do

not

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alone, PDB and DESA incurred a loss of 150 million dollars, they said.

In addition to an average system loss of 30 per cent, the power sector is seriously affected by very poor collection of revenue against bills. PDB or DESA do not or can not collect more than 56 to 60 per cent of the billed amount for supply of power to consumers", one official said.

These losses are ultimately putting pressure on the national exchequer whereinfrom salaries and other expenses of DESA and PDB are met.

OC Nikhil Mondol said that the accused committed suicide. But other prisoners in the *hajat* said that Matin succumbed to fatal head injuries.

Prisoner allegedly tortured to death in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 2: Abdul Matin, 35, an FIR-named accused in a murder case, was found dead in the *hajat* of Daulatpur thana Thursday evening.

Matin was arrested on June 11 from Pirganj thana of Rangpur district on charge of murdering his wife Rabeya Khantha, 24, on April 24 at Sepnara under Daulatpur thana. He was sent to Khulna from Pirganj thana on Wednesday (June 29). Khulna CMM granted four days' remand on Thursday for his interrogation as prayed for by the Investigation Officer (IO).

The accused was, however, found dead in the bathroom of Daulatpur thana *hajat* before the OC received the remand order. His body was found hanging with his *lungi* from the water pipe.

OC Nikhil Mondol said that the accused committed suicide. But other prisoners in the *hajat* said that Matin succumbed to fatal head injuries.

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Pakistan renews call for talks on Kashmir

'Major breakthrough imminent' to avert Indo-Pak war

The newspaper gave no details of the formula but said "good news" for the people of India and Pakistan could be made public, "possibly in 48 to 72 hours, depending on the communication and consideration of both governments."

A senior government official said the DCC meeting, attended by chiefs of Pakistan's Army, Navy and Air Force and top ministers, would discuss "recent developments" on Kashmir.

Another report says Pakistan warned India today of "serious consequences" if it widened the conflict and renewed a call for talks to resolve the crisis.

A statement after a meeting of the DCC said Pakistan was "prepared to deal with any eventuality and to give an effective response to any action of aggression".

India said it did not believe the conflict over Kashmir

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5 drown in Netrokona boat capsizes

NETROKONA, July 2: At least five people, including four minor girls, drowned when an engine boat capsized in Paglikhali Khal under Barhatta thana in the district this afternoon, police said, reports BSS.

Police Superintendent, Netrokona, told the agency over telephone that the boat was going to Ottipur from Dharmapasha under Sunamganj district with 15 to 20 passengers aboard.

The small boat went down due to overloading, witnesses said.

Local people recovered five bodies, identified as Shah Alam, 25, Smriti, 10, Lovely, 9, Happy, 5, Eti, 3, from the canal.

Tk 2.3 lakh looted from Manarat School

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of dacoits looted about Tk 2.3 lakh from Manarat International School and College at Gulshan in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

The institution authorities said 12 dacoits entered the campus crossing the boundary wall. They tied down two security guards and took away the money from some almirahs in different rooms.

The gang entered the campus at around 2 am and left at about 4:30 am.

An official at the institution told The Daily Star that they informed the incident to Gulshan police. But police, when contacted last night, said they did not receive any written complaint about this.

Stock dealer denies allegation

By Staff Correspondent

Sinha & Company, a Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) stock dealer, has denied its involvement in any share scam.

"False allegation has been made against us regarding involvement in the share scam," the company said in a rejoinder to a report published in The Daily Star on June 29.

"Our company has been involved in the stock exchange for more than 18 years and there has not been a single allegation.

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'Dhakka party' around Baitul Mukarram

By Staff Correspondent

Police could not arrest till last night any of the muggers who robbed over one lakh taka from a pedestrian at gun point near the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque Thursday morning.

The snatchers who were reportedly members of a *dhakka party* (who deliberately stumble on their target) snatched the money from one Alaudin Biswas. Alaudin withdrew his gratuity money from a bank a few days ago.

When contacted, the duty officer at Motijheel thana yesterday said that a case was lodged in this connection but none could be arrested. Five policemen normally patrol the area, he said.

But some street vendors and businessmen at Baitul Mukarram and in the adjacent House Building Finance Corporation office area told this correspond-

398 more outlaws and terrorists surrender

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 2: A total of 398 outlaws and terrorists surrendered to the police at a function at the Circuit House Maidan here this afternoon in presence of Home Minister Md. Kamal Nasim.

They laid down 286 firearms and 254 bullets which were displayed at the function, organised by the district police administration. Hundreds of people witnessed the surrender ceremony.

Officials said, the outlaws who surrendered to the police belong to Biplobi Communist Party, Purba Banglar Communist Party and Krishak Samity. The rest terrorists of various nature like pirates and dacoits.

The firearms deposited with the police included one SMG, four 303 rifles, seven foreign-made guns, 29 Indian shutter guns and one foreign revolver while the rest are locally-made pipe guns, SBL guns, pistols and revolvers.

The persons who have surrendered will be housed in Noornagar C&B Community Centre which has already been declared as sub-jail.

Addressing the function as the chief guest, the Home Minister said the deadline to surrender arms and ammunition has been further extended till July 30, 1999. He urged the remaining outlaws and terrorists to lay down their arms within the stipulated time.

He said the combing operation that began on April 22 this year would also continue.

"After expiry of the deadline, the combing operation would be

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Sources concerned pointed out that as the mayoral election

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