

Hasina, Blair for strong ties

LONDON, July 8: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her British counterpart Tony Blair Wednesday agreed to further consolidate relations between the two friendly countries, reports UNB.

Hasina was received by Blair at his official residence, 10 Downing Street, where they held talks in the evening and discussed entire spectrum of the bilateral relations.

The two leaders held discussion for about 30 minutes in an atmosphere of cordiality and discussed matters of mutual interest and bilateral relations, press secretary to the Prime Minister Jawadul Karim told newsmen after the talks.

The British Prime Minister congratulated Sheikh Hasina on her tackling the devastating floods that swamped Bangladesh last year. "Whatever you have done in this regard was unique," he told her.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (L) meets with British premier Tony Blair at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday. — AFP photo

Death of constable Two cases filed against 150 BNP leaders, activists

Police yesterday lodged two cases against more than 150 BNP leaders and activists in connection with the death of constable Farhad Khan in bomb blast on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said former minister MK Anwar MP, Sadek Hossain Khoka MP and Aman Ullah Aman MP were among the 150 persons who were charged for the killing and explosion.

A namaj-e-janaza of constable Farhad was held at Rajaibagh police lines yesterday noon. Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, Inspector General of Police AYBI Siddique, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AK Shamsuddin and other senior police officials attended the janaza.

Earlier, his autopsy was conducted at the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The body of Farhad was sent to his village home in Faridpur under police escort.

Rickshawpuller killed in crossfire

By Staff Correspondent
A rickshawpuller was shot dead and two others were injured during a gunfight between two rival groups of miscreants in the city's Mahakali area yesterday evening.

The dead was identified as Abdur Rahman, 25, while the injured are Mahbub Ali, 55, a peon of directorate of health and Tawhidul Islam, 25, a member of a rival group.

According to police, the rival groups Imam and Bari groups were locked in a clash at Hazari Bari over establishing supremacy in the area at around 5 pm. Both the groups exchanged several shots during the clash that lasted half an hour.

Rickshawpuller Rahman, who was peddling his vehicle received a bullet in his left chest and died on the spot.

The body of Rahman was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. Tawhid and Mahbub were also admitted to DMCH.

A case was lodged with Gulshan thana in connection with the incident, but none was arrested till filing of this report last night.

3 teenage girls raped in city

By Staff Correspondent
Three teenage girls were raped at the city's DIT plot in Merul Badda at early hours of yesterday.

Police said that the incident took place at about 3:10 am yesterday when the three were going to a house belonging to one of them at Madhya Badda.

When the girls came out of the house, four young men dragged them to an under-construction building and violated them, police added.

The miscreants were identified as Akash, Tulshi Chandra Das, Ripon and Barun Das.

Akash, Tulshi and Ripon were arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident after one of the victims lodged a case with Badda thana. Barun was still absconding.

However, the girls could not give reasons why they were moving so late at night without being escorted.

PM tells British investors Gas export only after meeting internal needs

LONDON, July 8: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today told investors that her government would proceed very cautiously regarding gas export, because meeting the country's needs is the first priority, reports UNB.

Her observations came in reply to queries from her business audience at the investment seminar "Bangladesh: A New Era for Growth and Investment", held at the office of the Confederation of British Industry.

"We are not closed-minded, we are opening up the gas sector for private investment," she said.

She told them that there was good demand for gas in the country as the government had plans to set up more gas-based power plants and industries.

Responding to concerns aired by the business leaders

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necessary steps to ease the rules and regulations for facilitating more foreign investment.

Speaking at the seminar, British minister Dr Kim Howells encouraged the business leaders of UK to invest in Bangladesh.

However, the minister stressed the need for a stable political environment and easier

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ways to do business.

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Uneasy calm at 2 N'ganj brothels They starve, fear eviction

From Ehsnul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, July 8: The clients are all gone. So is the earning of 4,000 or so sex workers at Tanbazar and Nimgali brothels at Narayanganj.

Many of these helpless girls have left the brothels for unknown destinations as trouble started with the killing of an inmate one week ago. Those still clinging to the red light area are simply starving.

Some young mothers are offering their children for adoption because of starvation.

"Sir, please help me. My son and I could not eat properly for the last three days. You take my son and feed him. I have nothing left to feed him," said Morium. She said she can not

Bangladesh Festival opens

From Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan

LONDON, July 8: The Arts Worldwide Bangladesh Festival was inaugurated at Durbar Court Conference room of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office here yesterday afternoon.

Patrons-in-Chief of the festival prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Tony Blair jointly inaugurated the function.

Sheikh Hasina in her inaugural speech said the festival will project extensively

Bangladesh's culture and heritage to the people of Britain.

"All that I will say at this auspicious moment is that Bangladesh comes to London with its glorious past and present," she added.

Bangladeshis living in Britain, business leaders and a cross-section of people from Britain and Bangladesh attended the function.

"We are determined to make our journey to the impending 21st century a success by virtue of our tradition, creativity, courage and skill. Bangladesh will certainly earn a prestigious

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and political status in the world," said Tony Blair.

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about the power situation, the prime minister said the government was taking massive steps to increase electricity output.

The government has also opened up the power-generation sector to private investment.

Requesting the Bangladeshi expatriates to invest in their motherland, she assured of all

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