

Ideal gift for any occasion.

Instalment facility available only for purchases above Tk. 7,500

Transcom Electronics Limited Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets. Dhaka: 815307-10 Ctg: 716353, 723578 Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215 Visit your nearest Philips Display Centre today



Hair Dryer

Cordless Kettle

25 shanties gutted in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 3: At least 15 people were injured and 23 shanties gutted in a fire at a slum at Dhakkin Para under Ruppaganj thana in Narayanganj in the early hours of today. The injured were admitted to different hospitals of the district. The extent of damage could not be estimated immediately. Fire Brigade sources quoting the local people said the fire originated from a burning mosquito coil at a shanty and soon engulfed the entire slum, leaving 42 families shelterless.

transit accord BNP allowed Indian carriers, which we didn't: Hasina

BAGHABARI (Sirajganj), Aug 3: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has criticised the opposition for calling hartal against the proposed transshipment of Indian goods through Bangladesh, saying they are out to block development and welfare of the people, reports UNB. "BNP signed transit agreements with India, but when we have decided to give transshipment (facility) by protecting country's interest, they are calling hartals to hinder development," she said at a huge public meeting at Baghabari High School ground today.

"What's the justification of calling hartal against a matter that BNP had earlier given to India? What is the justification of calling hartal to cause sufferings to the people?" she asked.

The prime minister said BNP had created a scope for India to transport Indian goods by its carriers through Bangladesh by making transit agreement in 1987 and through signing SAFTA in 1993.

She said the present government is going to strike a deal with India that its goods will be carried through Bangladesh by Bangladeshi transports, which will benefit the country's economy and protect its interest.

Through this transshipment, the government would be benefited economically. This will create jobs for the local people, she said adding BNP is opposing this because this will protect the interest of the country. "BNP should recall their agreements with India."

She said BNP's hartal is not for the people, not for upholding the demands or hopes and aspiration of the people, but for obstructing development.

She accused the opposition leader of spreading "lies" against the ruling party. "She said that from the CHT region up to Feni will be part of India."



Cops in riot gear stand vigil in front of the BNP office in the city during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo by Amran Hossain

Impact of '98 flood on city's environment

By Special Correspondent

Floods in 1998 had a number of impacts on the environment of Dhaka city where water stayed above danger level for 65 days, leaving some bizarre examples and lessons for the future on how best to cope with the deluge, an assessment of environmental impacts of the 1998 flood on Dhaka city said.

The Department of Environment (DoE) conducted the assessment in the wake of the century's worst floods last year. The summary and the reports were presented at a two-day workshop which began at the LGED Bhawan in the city yesterday.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria opened the workshop while Forests and Environment Minister Begum Sajeda Choudhury chaired the opening session. Dr Arman Nishat, country representative of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), presented the summary.

The findings revealed that while the flood embankments and polders kept the water off on three sides, barring 'gaps' on western front, the faulty 'unblocked culverts and unclosed regulator and drainage congestion' left the posh villas on the eastern side of the city at the mercy of Balu river which swelled above 1988 level.

Some highlights of the summary and reports are as follows: "The WASA pumps worked full-time at Rampura to flush out water on the other side of the road, but did not at all have any impact as the sluice gate below remained wide open."

"The Titas Gas company had an unwanted gift for its engineers — 1500 butyls in the submerged city areas, pinpointed hitherto unknown leaks for plugging."

"Fish farmers found two or three of their stock swimming away while thieves stole 16 per cent. The escapees from fish farms included predators like Tilapia, African Cat Fish and Grass Carp who could decimate other varieties in the flood plains. The impact could be known in few years."

"City's water was fouled, contaminated with sewage and rubbish. "All relief camps did not get equal amount of relief materials, those with 'better communication' received more supply while food supply was erratic. Water supply and sanitation provisions were not sufficient in most camps."

"Those who did not move to camps had to do without power and gas and faced problems in cooking, availing water for drinking and sanitation, suffered loss of household assets, lack of privacy, from polluted atmosphere and foul air. Political parties, groups and NGOs were active in the camps."

"Collection of solid wastes and garbage was non-functional in a city which generates about 3500-4000 tons of solid waste every day (0.5 kg per capita daily). Toxic and hazardous wastes were also produced from industries (mainly tanneries, pharmaceuticals and clinics) within the city."

"All types of liquid wastes including human excreta and industrial waste got mixed with flood water. Large amount of See page 11 Col 7

Bangladesh-Myanmar border trade Govt decides to set up jetty at Teknaf

Government has decided to set up a jetty on the river Naf at Teknaf to facilitate and expand export and import of goods to and from Myanmar under the bilateral border trade agreement between Bangladesh and Myanmar signed in 1994, reports BSS.

It was decided yesterday at an inter-ministerial meeting in the city with Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting also decided to improve the infrastructure and services for speedy and uninterrupted movement of goods by roadway and waterway between the two countries.

The government will also install a pontoon at the jetty point, construct a display-cum-sales centre in the proposed jetty area, a culvert at Ghumdhum on the river Naf, and arrange visa and service facilities for passengers and businessmen.

A five-member committee has been formed with the commerce secretary as the convener to monitor the implementation of the decisions. Other members are: Land secretary, shipping secretary, chairman and vice-

Baghabari plant opens Power shortage to go by 2001, assures PM

BAGHABARI, Sirajganj, Aug 3: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today inaugurated the 130 MW barge mounted power plant giving an assurance that the country's power shortage would go by 2001, reports BSS.

Bijoyer Aho, the combined cycle barge mounted power plant in the private sector will generate at present 90 MW electricity in the 'simple cycle' and another barge with steam turbine will arrive shortly from Malaysia which will generate 40 megawatt.

Westmont Group of Companies of Malaysia installed this modern power plant at a cost of 100 million US dollars.

chairman of Bangladesh-Myanmar Business Promotion Council.

The meeting also decided to take initiative to accomplish Bangladesh-Myanmar Coastal Shipping Agreement. This will be an alternative arrangement for the movement of goods through waterway to and from Cox's Bazar and Sittwe of Myanmar until the construction of Teknaf-Sittwe road which is under construction in Myanmar side.

A team will go to Myanmar soon to discuss and settle the issue with its government.

Stressing the need for full functioning of the border trade between the two countries the minister asked the concerned agencies to complete the work as soon as possible. He said the aim of the government is to increase bilateral border trade especially Bangladesh's export to Myanmar as "we have wider scope to expand export."

He informed the meeting that his Myanmar counterpart would visit Bangladesh within a month where both sides would discuss the issues with a view to increasing bilateral trade.

Through this border trade, Bangladesh exported fertilizer, cement, MS rod, medicine, fabrics, PVC pipes, crushed tobacco, etc. worth 1.60 lakh dollars to Myanmar while imported rice, paddy, wheat, shrimp, turmeric, ginger, dal, red pepper, bamboo, cane, umbrella, dried fish, etc. worth 1.30 lakh dollars.

The border trade was better in 1997-98 and previous two years as total average annual trade was 12 lakh dollars due to communication problem, mainly, the trade was coming down where the government is trying to reinvigorate the border trade through improving infrastructure and other facilities.

Dilip Kumar joins Cong campaign

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: Thespian actor Dilip Kumar has joined the campaign of India's main opposition party Congress for the coming general elections raising hopes in party circles about wooing minorities' votes.

The septuagenarian legend of Hindi cinema has already addressed two election meetings organised by Congress in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh ruled by the party.

During his speeches, he said the stability of coalition governments cannot be relied upon and the Congress was the only party that could provide stability.

Dilip Kumar defended the candidature of Congress President Sonia Gandhi to become India's Prime Minister and termed as "unreasonable" the raking up of her "foreign origin" issue by the ruling BJP, its allies and some major opposition parties.

The actor said Sharad Pawar, who quit Congress who formed a separate party was his 'good friend' but he should not have opposed Sonia Gandhi's projection as Prime Ministerial candidate because of her Italian origin.

He said the Kargil standoff between India and Pakistan should not be made an issue in the elections because there were "more important issues" to be raised.

Despite his election speeches, Dilip Kumar has made it clear that he has no intention to either join politics or contest the coming hustings.

Dilip Kumar is in a 17-member panel set up by the Congress seeking to swing minority voters in its favour. The only non-Muslim member of the panel is actor-turned-politician Sunil Dutt.

West Bengal train crash 275 bodies recovered, railway minister quits

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: India's railway minister, Nitish Kumar, resigned today following the train collision which killed and injured hundreds of people, reports Reuters.

"Railway Minister Nitish Kumar resigned from the union cabinet, owing moral responsibility for yesterday's train accident at Gaisal near New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal," the UNI news agency said.

Kumar, speaking to UNI in the eastern city of Patna, said the accident was probably due to human failure. Kumar said he had sent a letter of resignation to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, whom he would meet in New Delhi later in the day.

BEXIM Bank opens

By Staff Correspondent.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday opened a new private bank, Bengal Export Import Bank Limited (BEXIM Bank).

Speaking at the launching ceremony as chief guest at a city hotel, the finance minister blamed the opposition BNP for maintaining a double standard regarding the transshipments.

"While in power BNP signed an agreement approving transit to India and today, it is observing hartals which is self-contradictory and can not be justified for the economic development of the country," he said.

Pointing to the country's banking sector, Kibria reiterated that the government would take stern actions against loan defaulters and said the Bangladesh Bank was rightly using its regulatory power to fight indiscipline in the banking system.

"The country has to emerge from the default culture. The future of the nation depends on the restoration of discipline in the financial sector," he said. "The whole nation will suffer if the financial sector is destroyed." "Those days are gone when one could play foul with the depositors' money."

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Mohammed Faruquddin attended the inaugural function as special guest while it was addressed, among others, by Shahjahan Kabir and Mohammad Lakiattullah, chairman and managing director of BEXIM Bank respectively. BEXIM Bank is the 21st private bank of the country

Details on page 6

Aborigines lay siege to TNO's office in Naogaon

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 3: Several hundred people under the banner of Jatiya Adibashi Parishad (National Association for Aborigines) laid a siege to Mohadevpur TNO's office in Naogaon for about six hours yesterday.

They demanded immediate arrest and withdrawal of what they said, illegal occupants from their lands.

Earlier, they brought out a procession at the thana headquarters chanting various slogans in favour of their demands.

Addressing a rally in front of the TNO's office, the leaders of the association alleged that they were being tortured by Mojuddin Moina, Safiuddin Raquuddin and Sirajuddin who 'illegally' occupied their lands.

'They don't know what stuff I'm made of'

Sonia replies to BJP during TV talks

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: Congress Chief Sonia Gandhi will contest the coming general elections, she herself confirmed it last night.

On the other hand, former prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral announced that he would not contest the poll.

Sonia Gandhi not only confirmed her electoral intentions but told her political opponents during an interview with a television network that "they do not know what stuff I am made of."

Asked what she thought of reports that the BJP is unlikely to make her foreign origin an election issue, Sonia Gandhi said she is not convinced.

"Whether they would raise it or not does not worry me. The people will decide. They (the BJP) don't know what stuff I am made of," she told the "Star News."

The Congress chief said her party would be able to mobilise votes of the minority community in the coming elections.

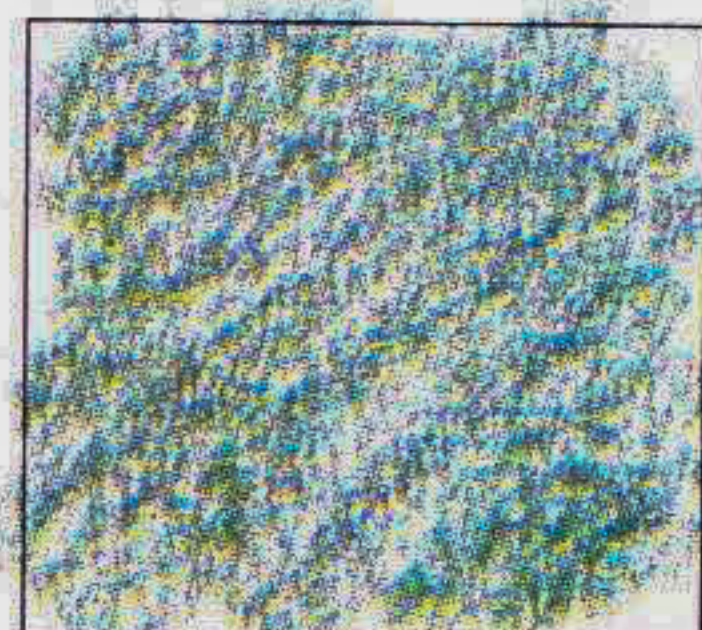
"From all accounts I have from workers and institutions, the Muslim community is coming back to us and placing its trust with us," she said claiming that this was largely at the expense of Samajwadi Party led by Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Yadav dismisses as "disinformation" campaign by the Congress the contention that Muslims are disenchanted with Samajwadi Party and moving



Sonia Gandhi

All we're asking you to do is colour the other two boxes.



Sounds like an odd request? But this could actually improve the quality of your life.

25% of a country's landmass is required to be dedicated to its forests to maintain its ecological balance. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has a mere 8%. Which is what the little green box stands for.

You can change this situation for the better. First, fill in the other two boxes in green and then join us to plant a sapling today. You may not be there to see the difference, but your children will.



BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO BANGLADESH

Collect your free saplings between 4 - 8 August from British American Tobacco Bangladesh's Bunsai Nursery at The Gulshan Central Mosque and Iddgah Society, 111 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka. Timings: 10.00 AM to 6.00 PM