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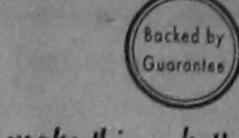
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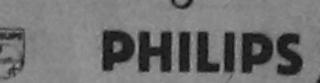
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Road accidents kill 11 in three districts

At least 11 people were killed and 40 others injured in four road accidents in different parts of the country yesterday,

reports UNB. Of them, five were killed in Pabna, four in Khulna while one each in Tongi and

Narayangani.

In Pabna, five people were killed and 15 injured at Dari Sardia near the town on Nagarbari-Pabna highway when a Pabna-bound bus from Santhia ploughed through a group of people pulling up a truck from a

roadside ditch in the morning. Of the victims, Jahangir Hossain, 20, Abdul Karim, 20, Rubel, 10, and Rina Khatun, 9, died on the spot while Ranjit, 50, died in Pabna general hospi-

tal soon after admission. The accident occurred when the driver lost control over the vehicle in thick fog.

Eleven of the injured were taken to the district general hospital while two rushed to

In Khulna, four college students were killed and 25 injured when a bus carrying a picnic party plunged into a roadside

Those killed on the spot are Shiv Sankhar Pakhi, Mehedi Hasan Masud and Sujit of Soto Bayra and Babul of Basupara.

The injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital. Of them, condition of 7, including Uttam and Kundu, was stated to be "critical"

Police said the accident occurred at Singiar Janamkhata on Dhaka-Jessore highway at about 4 am when the Khulnabound picnic bus from Bogra

DUTA for quick probe

By Staff Correspondent The Dhaka University Tea-

chers' Association (DUTA) asked the authorities concerned to take steps to expedite investigation into the charges against its secretary general Ferdous Hossain.

In another development, the DU Syndicate will hold an emergency meeting to discuss the situation following arrest of Ferdous, sources said.

Meanwhile, 102 teachers of the DU in a signed statement condemned Hossain's arrest and said that the arrest was manifestation of the fascist attitude of the ruling party.

fell into a roadside ditch. The driver lost control over the vehicle while giving side to a truck coming from the opposite direction.

The accident occurred on their way back home from Bo-

In Tongi area, an unidentified devotee who came to take part in the Biswa ljtema was crushed under the wheels of a running truck while crossing the road

A report from Narayanganj says one Zinnat Ali was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck near Bhangarpool in Siddirganj thana.

The accident occurred at about noon when a bus hit Zinnat's rickshaw. He fell down on the road. The victim was going to a relative's house at Jalkuri.

WHO campaign flame comes to town tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent The South East Asian Flame part of the World Health Organisation's tobacco free initiative, will arrive in Benapole. Bangladesh, on February 1.

Launched in New Delhi on January 7, 2000 by Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, the director general of the WHO, the flame will travel through Asia for a year. It will remain in Bangladesh for eight weeks.

The flame symbolises life, youth and victory of good over evil in many cultures. The SEAAT Flame symbolises freedom from tobacco dependence and the ability of man to achieve his goals. The program will enlighten policy makers and the public about the dangers of tobacco use and seek a political commitment to enhance tobacco controls at the national level.

There is an alarming rise in tobacco consumption worldwide. The WHO estimates the tobacco epidemic will claim three lives every second by 2030 if consumption continues to increase at current levels.

According to a 1997 WHO study, about 20 per cent of Bangladeshis smoke. The number of women who smoke has jumped from 1 per cent to 15 per cent since 1980.

According to Cancer Society of Bangladesh, about 30 per cent of all deaths from oral, larynx and pharynx cancer are related to smoking.



The 11-party alliance observed a token hunger strike at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting passage of Public Safety Bill in parliament.

Rickshawpuller identifies 2

more accused

By Court Correspondent The test and identification parade of two accused in Nikunaja Bihari Debnath murder case was held in the court custody of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate. Dhaka yesterday.

Debnath, joint secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development was stabbed to death by muggers near Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University on January 11:

Rickshawpuller Abdul Matin, the only witness to the killing yesterday identified two accused Rana and Din Islam as the killers.

Earlier he had, identified

Shahinoor as one of gang mem-Matin was asked to identify the accused brought in the court custody along with others at about 1:30 pm. The identification of the accused was conducted in front of Metropolitan

Rana and Din Islam who were earlier placed on CID remand for 12 days and 14 days respectively were sent to the jail yesterday after the end of their remand.

Magistrate A K M Amir Hus-

Nikunja murder Opposition protest

From page 1

and activists led by Khoka and other leaders including Abdullah Al Noman, Shahjahan Siraj, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP. Amanullah Aman MP. and Nazimuddin Alam MP brought out a procession that paraded streets in Naya Paltan. Bijoynagra. Topkhana Road and Jatiya Press Club areas. The processionists also chanted various anti-government slo-

A huge contingent of police to protest the new law. followed the procession.

Three other alliance partners -- Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikva Jote -also held separate rallies and brought out processions.

Top leaders of the 11 - party alliance joined the token hunger strike. They included Nirmol Sen, Manjurul Ahsan Khan, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Rashed Khan Menon, Azizul Islam Khan, Abdullah Sarker, AFM Mahbubul Haq. Pankaj Bhattachariaya, Mujahedul Islam Selim, Dilip Barua, Morshed Ali, Bazlur Rashid Firoz and Siddigur Rahman.

Addressing the hunger strikers, alliance leaders urged President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed not to assent to the

They said government's ac-

tivities in last three and a hall

behind passage of the law is not to curb terrorism but to cling its

years proved that the motive

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, journalist Fayez Ahmed, Dr Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and some others visited the hunger striking leaders and expressed solidarity with their demands. The BNP-led opposition al-

liance will stage demonstrations across the country today

BNP will also hold a joint meeting of leaders of the party and its front organisations at 4:30pm today at 29 Minto Road BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will chair the meeting, said a press release.

Party's vice - chairmen, members of the National Executive Committee and the Chairperson's Advisory Council, secretaries and joint secretaries general staying in Dhaka, presidents and general secretaries of central and city committees of all front organisations, city BNP convenor and joint convenors have been asked to attend the meeting.

BNP and Jatiya Party will bring out separate torch processions while Jamaat and 10J will bring out processions in the city today in support of the countrywide hartal.

jointly.

Rights groups join Khaleda in protesting 'black' law

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia has termed the Public Safety Act 'a fresh black law and said the government Various other political parformulated it to 'brutally suppress' the Opposition.

The government, being isolated from the people and scared of the Opposition's cur-rent movement, has passed the black law unilaterally and ignoring protests from all quarters. She said in a statement vesterday.

The ruling Awami League, when in power in the past, had introduced the 'black' Special Powers Act in 1974, Khaleda re-

The BNP chief called upon the people to observe the Opposition-called 36-hour hartal from 6 am on Wednesday and

build up strong resistance against the government and topple it from power immedi-

ties have also protested passage of the Public Safety Act and termed it a black and repressive law They said this black law is against democratic, fundamen-

tal and human rights and it is

intended to repress and oppress opposition leaders and activists. In separate statements, leaders of these organisations said P that the fresh black law is not necessary to check terrorism

and other criminal activities because the existing laws are enough to curb those. They urged President Sha-

habuddin Ahmed not to assent to the "black law" and called upon the people to build a mass movement and resistance against the government

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and general secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, in a joint statement, said introduction of this new "black law" has created a black chapter in the history of the

They said this law would not help Awami League cling to power and called upon the people to unitedly resist it.

BSD Convenor Khaleguzzaman said the present rulers have introduced this law to suppress political opponents and stay in power in an autocratic way.

APAC Khulna unit yet to be formed

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Jan 30: All-Party Action Committee could not be formed till 8-30 pm today due to difference between Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party

The meeting which began at 11 am at hotel Royal International with a one-hour lunch ended at 7 pm without any agreement. Presided over by city BNP president M Nurul Islam, the meeting was attended by leaders of allied opposition

The tug-of-war between Jamaat and Jatiya Party for the posts of convenor and membersecretary of both city and district action committees marred the meeting prospects.

PM: Brussels

From page 1 of trade, commerce and investment between the two countries. "The visit will reinforce our ties with the European Union and help in enhancing a positive image of Bangladesh in Europe," he added.

Replying to a question Safi Sami said. We have no problem with European Union," a regional body which is a major trading partner of Bangladesh. Bangladesh exported nearly

2.5 billion US dollars worth of goods to the EU countries during the last fiscal and received 8.5 billion US dollars in grants and loans from member states since the Liberation, the briefing was told.

To another question, he said President Clinton's visit to Bangladesh will certainly take place in March and the date of his arrival will be announced

UK to consider opening consul office in Sylhet

The British government will consider Bangladesh's request to open a consul office in Sylhet to facilitate visa services for the people of the area who comprise majority of Bangladeshi community in Britain, reports UNB.

Visiting British Minister of State for Europe in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Keith Vaz MP said this while addressing a select audience at Hotel Sheraton yesterday. He said he would visit Sylhet today to see the feasibility of

having such an office there, as desired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during talks with her British counterpart Tony Blair in July last year. The British High Commission here issues some 60,000

visas every year, 70 per cent of whom coming from Sylhet. The British minister felt the need for improving visa ser-

vices in Bangladesh. "British government sees Bangladeshi community in Britain as an asset. It's an asset for both you and us," the Labour Member of Parliament for Leicester East said.

Keith, an Indian origin recognised the position of least developed countries (LDCs) including Bangladesh in the Seattle meeting of World Trade Organisation (WTO) that ended in failure in December last year.

"More importantly, I think, you felt marginalised in the conference, while a core group of mainly developed countries thrashed out deals in the socalled 'green room,' said Vaz reiterating EU's stand for a new round of trade negotiations which would benefit both developed and developing coun-

Focusing on Bangladesh relationship with the European Union, that consumes almost half of the country's total exports, the minister said the new EC-Bangladesh cooperation agreement, initiated in Brussels last year, opened the way of enhanced cooperation in the economic, trade, commercial and development fields.

Elephant Road incidents

Cops fail to nab burglars By Staff Correspondent

Police have not yet arrested anyone in connection with the recent burglary in which valuables and cash worth Tk 19 lakh were taken away from two houses in New Elephant Road in the city on Friday evening. A gang of about 10 entered

houses of Monir Hossain Kajol and Nazrul Islam at about 6:00 pm, tied up the residents at gun point and looted the valuables. The gang first looted the residence of Kajol on the first floor of the house and then went

to his brother Nazrul Islam's

house in the upstairs and took away valuables and cash. The gang broke open five almirahs and took away 250 tolas of gold ornaments and cash worth about Tk 71 thousand along with other valuables, the

victims complained in the FIR. Giasuddin, the guard of the house at 76 Elephant Road, was earlier tied up by the gang at gun point.

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আইইবি'র ৪৪তম সম্মেলন

সম্মানিত সদস্যদের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আইইবি'র ৪৪তম সম্মেলন আগামী ২৫-২৮ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০০০ সিলেট নগরীতে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

সম্বেলনের সংক্রিপ্ত কর্মসূচী নিম্নে দেয়া হ'ল ঃ ২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০০০ সকাল ৯.০০ টাঃ নিবন্ধীকরণ (প্রাক-নিবন্ধীকৃতদের জনা) সকাল ১০.৩০ ঃ উদ্ধোধনী অনুষ্ঠান-

প্ৰধান অতিথি ঃ শেৰ হাসিনা याननीय श्रधानमञ्जी। সকাল ১০.০০ ঃ বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা

বিকাল ৪-৩০ ঃ সমাপনী অনুষ্ঠান-প্রধান অতিথি ঃ বেগম খালেদা জিয়া জাতীয় সংসদের

माननीय विद्याधीमनीय त्नवी। সদর দত্তর, ঢাকা এবং সিলেট কেন্দ্রে আগামী ১০ই ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০০০ পর্যন্ত প্রি-রেজিট্রেশন ফি জমা নেয়া হবে। বিস্তারিত কর্মসূচী সদর দফতরসহ সকল কেন্দ্র ও উপকেন্দ্রে পাওয়া যাবে। সম্মেলনে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য দেশের সকল প্রকৌশলীকে আমন্ত্রণ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

প্রকৌশদী আ,ন,হ, আখতার হোসেন সন্মানী সাধারণ সম্পাদক

त्यान : केर्राक , वेर्राच , वेर्राच : केर्र्य केर्र्य व

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'Don't back terrorists, muggers'

From page 1 President's New Year address. Allaying opposition's fears about possible misuse of the law as a weapon for political persecution, she repeatedly assured

that in no way would it be used on political grounds. "There is a provision of punishment in the law to ensure that it is not abused, none is harassed and none files false case out of vengeance," she said. "The government would arrange whatever training and institutions needed for impartial ap-

plication of the law. We want the rule of law, security and fair justice for the people. We'll ensure public safety according to our com-

mitment to the nation." Brushing aside the opposition allegation that the law was framed to repress political adversaries of the government. Hasina said next elections would be held in 2001 and "if people do not vote for us, we will go to the opposition. But why this law would be used against us if we don't commit such of-

fences? Ridiculing the critics of the new legislation for fanning fears, she said those who commit these crimes might be scared of the law but those who want peace in society do not

need to be concerned.

Hasina explained the nature of each offence and provision of punishment, as envisaged in the Public Safety Act, clause by

clause in the House. The prime minister repeatedly shot questions as to how a law could be branded "black law" if it prescribes punishment for mugging, toll-taking, tender tampering, breaking cars, damaging public and private property, obstruction to traffic, kidnapping for ransom and un-

leashing terrorism. Defending the new legislation. Hasina told the House that terrorists have a budget for dealing with their cases in the court. They spend money to bribe investigating officer, weaken the cases against them through various ways and get out through loopholes of law and delayed trials. Even many terrorists threatened over cellular phone to kill witnesses es-

tifying against them. Saying that during her government's three-year rule many terrorists have been arrested and cases filed, she questioned how many trials were completed and how many of them were punished. "Many notorious terrorists were released after arrest."

Citing an example, she said a

court released an accused on hail with an order that he could not be arrested again within next two to three weeks. After getting released, the accused killed the witness who testified against him.

"Who is responsible for that murder? Does the accused alone is responsible? I put this question before the nation." Amidst applause, the prime

minister said the Public Safety Act would identify criminals. put them on dock and punish through quick disposal of the She said the act incorporated the provision of granting

bail and appeal. "How could it

be a black law?" About the Women and Children Repression Act, Hasina said the law made provision for financial compensation for the victimised women and children. It was framed on consultation with representatives

from different strata of society. She said in the past, the law was misused for satisfying personal grudge. But new provision of punishment was incorporated in the law against those who would files false cases to

harass people. Explaining her position on the Special Powers Act (SPA) framed in 1974, Hasina said Awami League's no election manifestos or she herself had promised to scrap the law.

She said those who had op-posed the SPA did not scrap it

either while in power. The regimes of Zia, Ershad, Khaleda and even caretaker government of Shahabuddin Ahmed and Habibur Rahman didn't abrogate the law. Rather, Hasina said, ministers of the Zia, Ershad and

Khaleda Zia governments ad-

mitted the necessity of the SPA to rule the country. The question is to see whether the law is being abused or not. In the past it was abused so much that even in the case of theft of cattle or paddy, the SPA

sword was applied. Hasina said since assuming office, she did not allow anyone to be arrested on political grounds under this law. Rather, while in the opposition, Awami League was repressed under the special law enacted under special circumstances in the wartorn country after Liberation.

Making a flashback on her

efforts for reconciliation with

the opposition, she said after Awami League emerged major-ity party in the 1996 elections, she wanted to govern the country on consensus. She said she had offered BNP the post of Deputy Speaker and posts of chairman of parliamentary standing committees. But it did not reciprocate her

good intentions.

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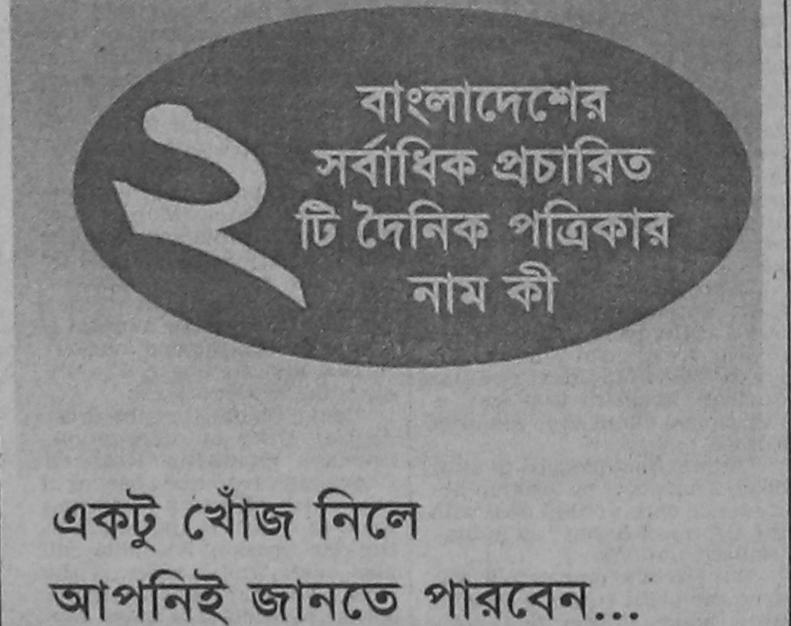
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