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BNP MPs to stage token hunger strike today

By Staff Correspondent
Opposition MPs will observe simultaneously a nine-hour token hunger strike and sit-in demonstration today to protest the unilateral passage of 'repressive and anti-constitutional' Public Safety Act.

The lawmakers led by Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP chief Khaleda Zia will begin fasting at 8 a.m. at Paltan Maidan and continue till 5 p.m.

Sources said more than 100 BNP MPs will take part in the hunger strike while the non-MP leaders and the activists will attend the sit-in programme.

However, Jatiya Party MPs led by party chairman HM Ershad were undecided until last night whether to join the fast.

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Remove confusion among people over PSA, PM asks ministers

By Staff Correspondent
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked her Cabinet colleagues to go to the people to 'remove confusion over the contents' of the recently enacted Public Safety (Special Provision) Act.

The PM gave the directive at the end of a short Cabinet meeting, a minister who attended the meeting told The Daily Star.

The Cabinet was scheduled to consider an Environment Ministry proposal for extending the ban on cutting trees in public forests till 2005. But the ministry eventually withdrew the proposal. Felling of trees in public forests is banned till 2002.

The Cabinet members observed that the agitating opposition was out to tarnish the image of the government by propagating that the PSA was a

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Enact law to ban tobacco cultivation, HC asks govt

By Staff Correspondent
The High Court yesterday ordered the government to enact a law to ban tobacco cultivation and production in phases.

Prior to enactment of such a law, the government has to introduce another law to stop all sorts of advertisement of tobacco products, the HC order said.

Besides, the court declared that the promotional advertisement of Gold Leaf Voyage of Discovery was clear violation of existing law of the land.

A High Court Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim and Justice Abdul Wahhab Mia yesterday passed the orders in a single judgement on two writ petitions.

One of the petitions was filed by National Professor Nurul Islam on behalf of Adhunik, an anti-smoking organization. The other was filed by Nur Mohammad and some others on behalf of the Bangladesh Anti-Drug Federation of NGOs.

Nurul Islam prayed for an order for appropriate application of the Tobacco Control Act 1988 and introduction of a law to ban all kinds of advertisement of tobacco products. Nur Mohammad's petition challenged advertisement of Gold Leaf Voyage of Discovery.

Barrister Omar Sadat moved the petition on behalf of Adhunik. The other petition was moved by barristers Amirul Islam and Tania Amir.

Barrister Nazmul Huda and Deputy Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mustafa opposed the petitions on behalf of the British American Tobacco Company and the government respectively.

Omar Sadat, argued that under Sections 3(1) and 3(2) of the Tobacco Control Act 1988, it is mandatory that advertisements and packets of tobacco products will contain the statutory warning, 'Tobacco is injurious to health'.

The statutory warning shall be audible in advertisements and clearly visible on substantial parts of the packets. But the

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A sequence from *Merudander Lorai* presented by Natyachakra yesterday on the Central Shaheed Minar premises as part of the National Street Drama Festival 2000 organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre.

Ekushey fair 13 new books hit stalls

By DU Correspondent
Bookworms of different ages thronged the month-long Ekushey Boi Mela (book fair) on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday, the second day of the book fair.

Thirteen new books came to the book stalls till yesterday afternoon. It included Humayun Ahmed's 'Premier Galpo' and 'Shei Hatira Urte Pare' by Mohsin Hossain.

The book stall of Alliance Francaise on the 'Shishu Mela' premises was almost emptied by the evening. The stall was selling collections of French poems in Bangla and some other translated books of French writers at reduced rate.

This year the fair has been announced free of polythene and smoking. Stall owners were seen using paper for wrapping books, but a number of others used polythene bags.

Meanwhile, Information Ministry and its different directorates and departments have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the Amar Ekushey as an International Mother Language Day.

The programmes were approved at a meeting yesterday at the conference room of the ministry with State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed in the chair.

Bangladesh Television and Betar have been airing different programmes on Amar Ekushey since first of this month. Besides, TV and Betar will arrange

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Blast at BNP office 5 days over, none claiming the body

By Staff Correspondent
The body of the victim who died during the bomb blast at the BNP central office at Naya Paltan in the city on February 3 is yet to be claimed even five days after the incident.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) sources said two young men came at the hospital but they could not identify the victim. The body has been kept in the hospital mortuary on special police recommendation.

Usually, an unidentified body is not kept beyond 72 hours at the DMCH; it is handed over to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam for burial, the sources said.

Police had earlier identified the dead as Ismail Hossain Babu, 25, a resident of Nilamber Saha Street in the Old City. But they could not provide other necessary detail on the victim till yesterday.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner also had claimed that relatives of the victim were informed and that police would not wait for more than 72 hours to hand over the body to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam.

Police so far arrested 12 people for their alleged involvement with the bomb explosion in the BNP office. All including the three who made judicial statement were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Meanwhile, our court correspondent adds: Rizvi, an attendant at the BNP central office and one of the accused in the bomb blast case, made a judicial statement before a metropolitan magistrate yesterday.

Rizvi said he went to bed at about 11:00 p.m. But when he woke up at about 2:30 a.m. after

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HC contempt rule on IGP, SP of Kushtia

The High Court yesterday issued a contempt rule upon AYB Siddique, Inspector General of Police and Anwar Hossain, Superintendent of Police of Kushtia District to show cause as to why they would not be liable and punished for contempt of court proceeding, reports BSS.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani and Justice Mohammad Latifur Rahman also asked them to be present in person before this court at 10.30 AM on April 3.

The court issued the rule on a contempt petition filed by Idris Ali, one of the owners of the land of Mouza Mazampur and Harekrishnapur of Kushtia District. The petition was moved by Advocate Hasan Foez Siddiqui.

The fact of the case is that the government acquired 14.54 acres of land at Mouza Mazampur and Harekrishnapur of the district to establish Kushtia district jail. Later, the government established the Kushtia district jail at Kalishankarpur Mouza but since then the said

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Bangabandhu Murder Case HC bench refuses again to take up death ref

For a second consecutive day, a High Court bench yesterday refused to take up the death reference in the Bangabandhu Murder Case citing time constraint, reports UNB.

Chief Prosecutor of the case Advocate Serajul Huq along with Attorney General Mahmudul Islam moved to the court of Justice Nurul Islam and Justice Montazuddin Ahmed yesterday morning.

"This is a motion bench and we can't give time," the court said.

Earlier on Sunday, repeated attempts of the prosecution counsel to fix a date for hearings toward confirming the lower court verdict that pronounced death sentence on 15 former army officers for killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman failed.

The country's founding father was assassinated, along with most members of his family, in August 1975.

Comprising Justice MM Ruhul Amin and Justice Mohammad Abdul Matin, the HC division bench that deals with such cases refused to give date on Sunday also on similar ground.

We are hearing the cases of 1996... the prosecution counsel should wait until the serial comes, the judges told the government's pleaders.

The District and Sessions' Judge gave the judgement in the Mujib murder case on November 8, 1999, and reference to the High Court was made shortly afterwards.

As the first attempt by Advocate Anisul Haq on Sunday failed, Advocate Serajul Huq and Attorney General Mahmudul Islam also on the day

approached the other criminal division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin and Justice S K Sinha.

Their plea for fixing a date for hearings was also turned down. The court expressed its inability to take up the case saying since there is a special bench constituted for hearing the death reference cases, the Attorney General should try to get the hearing date fixed in that court.

Earlier on reopening the Supreme Court after the Eid vacation, Advocate Anisul Haq took the case with a division bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul and Justice Mokbul Beg.

They had also expressed inability to take up the case for hearings.

"We would go on trying in other benches," Advocate Serajul Huq told UNB.

Women Repression Act President urged to 'reconsider' some clauses

By Staff Correspondent
Sammito Nari Samaj (SNS) yesterday urged the President to reconsider some of the important clauses of the proposed Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000.

Some clauses of the proposed Act are violate women's fundamental rights, it said in a statement.

It also urged the government to scrap the Public Safety Act.

The statement signed by Dr. Naila Khan, Joint-co-ordinator of SNS said, to curb repression on women and children, what is needed is to update criminal laws.

The SNS said that in 1998, it had proposed a "complete and comprehensive law" to prevent repression on women and children.

The definition of crime has changed from what it was in 1860, it said.

It said some clauses of the law tantamount to violation of the human rights of women.

The Act is contrary to the recommendations of women's organisations in the country.

There was no provision of "safe custody" in the law of the land, but "safe custody" had been made legal through the new law. This goes completely against women's human rights.

Cop stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent
A police hawilder was stabbed to death in the garden of the Civil Aviation Authority at Zia International Airport yesterday.

Delwar Hossain, 42, son of the late Baddar Uddin, died after he was stabbed in the chest. He belonged to Char Chandpur of Sadarpur in the district of Faridpur.

Hossain's body was found inside the CAAB garden around 8:30 a.m.

Police said the attack probably occurred between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., although the motive behind the killing was still unclear.

A case was filed with Cantonment police station in connection with the attack. No arrests have been made.

Japanese companies now keen to invest in energy sector

By Sharier Khan
Japanese companies are showing keen interest to invest in the energy sector in a big way at a time when interest of international oil companies is declining in the country, sources said.

A high powered Japanese delegation consisting of representative from leading oil companies, trading companies and the Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) during a recent visit submitted various proposals to Petrobangla and Power Development Board (PDB).

The companies are interested in setting up a gas-based integrated power and fertiliser plant at Sirajganj, laying a gas pipeline in northern districts and in the Ashuganj-Rashidpur gas loopline system and investment in the "Ring Main Gas Line" of Titag Gas around Dhaka city.

The integrated plant would include at least a 300 MW power plant. They seek involvement in laying at least 180 km gas pipeline in northern districts.

The investors have also proposed feasibility studies on these projects along with Petrobangla.

The Japanese companies think it is the right time to come to Bangladesh, the sources said.

"They (Japanese delegation members) said they observed involvement of American oil companies for the last few years, and their continued stay in Bangladesh encouraged them to come here," said a source.

"More importantly, they believe that Bangladesh is in dire need of large scale investment in the energy sector. But the World Bank - led donors kept their doors closed for this sector for over a decade. That is why the Japanese investors along with bank representatives came to Bangladesh."

"They have been watching the energy sector scenario and are more or less aware of the problems in working here. It seems, their interest in Bangladesh is genuine and it will certainly help us," the source observed.

The Japanese investors also inquired to Petrobangla whether there would be a third round oil and gas block bidding soon. They would like to invest in hydro-carbon exploration.

Their investment may come through Yen credit. JBIC loans and grants, the sources added.

Till now, Japanese involvement in the country's gas sector is limited to Kalco.

Marubeni, the Japanese company which was involved in setting up Kalco, recently

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Clinton's visit US 'site survey' team arrives today

By Shehab Ahmed
An advance 'site survey' team from the United States is arriving in the city today in connection with President Bill Clinton's forthcoming visit to Bangladesh on March 25.

Foreign Ministry sources said the team is scheduled to inspect a number of places in the city where President Clinton is likely to stay or attend public functions. These include state guest house Jamuna, Bangabandhu National Stadium, National Parade Square and the International Trade Fair site at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. The team leaves Dhaka tomorrow.

If President Clinton agrees to extend his visit by another day, as proposed by Bangladesh, he may stay the night at the Jamuna state guest house.

He is likely to be accorded a civic reception, for which three sites are being considered. These are the Bangabandhu Na-

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Official talks with US Include garments quota in agenda: BGMEA

By Rafiq Hasan
The BGMEA has urged the government to use its good offices for getting a 'positive announcement' regarding increasing garments export quota to US during President Bill Clinton's forthcoming visit to Bangladesh.

A BGMEA delegation led by its President Anisur Rahman Sinha (BGMEA) met the commerce secretary yesterday and requested him to include the issue in the agenda of official talks between Bangladesh and US during the visit.

US President Bill Clinton is scheduled to visit Bangladesh on March 26 and hold talks with the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The BGMEA delegation urged Commerce Secretary Golam Rahman to take steps to send a delegation for lobbying with the US government before Clinton's visit.

The BGMEA also requested the secretary to urge the Bangladesh embassy in Washington to take proper initiative for increasing Bangladesh's quota by at least 30 per cent.

The commerce secretary informed the delegation that the foreign ministry was yet to seek any proposal from his ministry to include the issue in the agenda for talks during Clinton's visit.

Bangladesh enjoys quota facilities in garments export to US and Canada. BGMEA has been seeking at least 30 per cent increase in the quota.

The issue is under discussion at the White House and at the US State Department. The US President could announce something positive, if he is approached properly during his visit", Sinha pointed out during the meeting, sources said.

He said BGMEA has been lobbying on its own initiative.

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8 killed, 40 hurt as buses collide in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Feb 7: Eight persons were killed and 40 others injured in a road accident at Khajura under Fakirhat thana, 20 kilometres off Khulna city at about 11 am today.

Sixteen of the injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital, two at Khalishpur clinic, two at Nargis Memorial Clinic while the rest at different clinics at Fakirhat and Bagerhat town.

Only two of the dead have been identified as Bakhilur Hossain Montu, 35, and Mustafizur Rahman Janti, 27.

Both of them died on the spot, while six others succumbed to their injuries in Khulna Medical College Hospital, police and doctors said.

According to police and eye-

witnesses, the accident took place when a Mongla-bound minibus from Khulna and a Khulna-bound minibus from Mongla collided and skidded off into a roadside ditch at Khajura on Khulna-Mongla highway.

It could not be ascertained if drivers of the buses are among the dead.

Eyewitnesses said both the mini buses were overloaded with passengers.

Two more bodies were identified later. They are Mohammad Ali Mirza, 38, Asstt Security Officer of Mongla Port Authority and Nurul Islam, 32, a day labourer of Mongla Port.

The death toll may rise further as five of the injured admitted to KMCH are in a critical

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Opposition calls 5-day hartal in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Feb 7: The All Party Action Committee (Opposition), agitating here for withdrawal of the names of the halls and buildings of the Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, has called a 4-day hartal in Sylhet district from February 14.

It was announced at a grand rally at the Court Point in Sylhet town this afternoon.

Earlier, the student wing of the committee called for a day-long hartal on February 13 to press the same demand.

Former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in his speech as chief guest said that the ruling party does not believe in rule of law. Though it was an election pledge, the AL has not scrapped the Special Powers Act yet.

Rather, it enacted another in the name of public safety law, he said.

The ruling party did it only to gain undue benefit in the upcoming elections. There is no need to pass new law, as extortion and other offences can easily be rooted out by controlling the goons within the ruling party itself, Saifur added.

UNB adds: Saifur Rahman told the meeting that the opposition was not allowed to speak in Parliament. The opposition parties have been compelled to opt for street movement.

"Had the Parliament been effective, the movement to oppose naming of the halls and buildings of Shahjalal University would not come to streets. The

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The Daily Star Anniversary Supplement

The Daily Star will bring out a 40-page Special Supplement tomorrow (February 9, 2000) to mark its entry into the Tenth Year of publication. The Supplement which is designed to focus on the first quarter of the new millennium will carry scholarly writings about the directions we need to take as well as reports of our own correspondents highlighting some positive trends in specific areas of national life.

The price of the 56-page Daily Star anniversary issue, inclusive of the normal 16-page spread-out, remains unchanged at Tk 6.00.

We have Moved

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