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**BTV programme  
PM to reply to  
questions  
on Friday**

By Staff Correspondent  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will reply to questions from the people through a BTV programme, 'Deshbasir Mukhomukhi' on Friday.

An experts' panel would ask the questions in presence of an invited audience, sources concerned said. The programme would be aired after the News at Eight.

The Prime Minister will answer questions from the audience and also people from in different areas of the country received through specialised telephones and faxes.

A BTV source said the experts' panel is likely to comprise journalists Mahfuz Anam, Rahat Khan and Abed Khar, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya and teacher Shyamoli Chowdhury. The programme is likely to be conducted by Anisul Haq.

Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Khaleida Zia, Deputy Leader of the House, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Chief Whips and Whips of the Treasury and the Opposition Benches, Editors of national dailies, journalists, university teachers, various professional bodies and cultural activists have been invited to the programme.

Similar types of programmes were aired by the BTV twice earlier in 1996 and 1998 which had generated much enthusiasm among the viewers.

**Ad-interim bail  
for BNP leaders**

The High Court granted ad-interim anticipatory bail yesterday to the BNP leaders and workers charged with attacking police, damaging vehicles and public property on February 13, reports UNB.

The case filed with the Ramna police station stated the accused and about 1,500 people marched against the Public Safety Act.

The accused are Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, Mirza Abbas, Joyanal Abedin Faruk MP, Aman Ullah Aman MP, Fazlul Huq Milon MP, Nazim Uddin Alam MP, Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Mahabubur Rahman, Ziauddin Ahmed, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Mirza Khokon, Sazzad Zahir, Mokhal Ahmed Akhond, Abdul Majid and Arifal Islam.

**Jamaat-police  
clash at Satkania:**

From Our Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Feb 22: At least 20 people were injured in a clash between police and Jamaat activists at Satkania in Chittagong district today.

The clash erupted when Jamaat activists tried to hold a Sirat Mahfil here defying Section 144 imposed by the local administration.

At least 15 leaders and activists of the local unit of Jamaat-e-Islami, including its central working Council Member Moulana Mominul Haq Chowdhury were arrested during the clash.

Protesting the incident, Chittagong South District Unit of Jamaat called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in South Chittagong region tomorrow.

Earlier, Jamaat had announced to hold a Sirat Mahfil at Satkania High School ground. Local unit of Awami League also called a meeting at the same venue.

Apprehending clash between the two organisations, thana administration imposed a ban on rally at the school ground.

Later, Jamaat shifted its venue to Satkania College ground. AL also convened a protest meeting at the same venue.

At this stage, thana administration imposed Section 144 in and around the college ground. But Jamaat activists led by its party MP Delwar Hossain Saidee marched toward the college ground defying Section 144 that resulted in a clash between police and Jamaat activists.



Two Bengali language lovers decorate Calcutta's Martyr monument with flowers forming the number 21 in Bengali script on the occasion of International Language Day in February 21. In a demonstration earlier in the day, protesters picketed the government radio and TV station demanding more programming in Bengali.

**Siddique's writ  
challenging  
probe body  
rejected**

The High Court yesterday rejected Abdul Quader Siddique's writ petition challenging the three-member inquiry committee formed to investigate the irregularities in the Tangail-8 by-polls, reports BSS.

A High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Fazlu Karim and Justice Mohammad Abdul Wahab Miah pronounced the judgement in the morning after hearing of both the petitioner and the government.

Bangabir Quader Siddique, Bir Uttam, who lost the Tangail by-poll, filed a writ petition challenging the authority of the three-member inquiry committee formed by the Law Ministry.

A four-member inquiry committee formed by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) earlier was replaced by this present committee which was confirmed by the Supreme Court.

On November 28, 1999 following his writ petition, the High Court issued rule upon the government and CEC to show cause why the new committee should replace the previous one formed by the CEC to inquire into alleged irregularities in Tangail-8 by-election.

The new inquiry committee was ordered by the court not to conduct any inquiry of the

same which was scheduled to start its work from November 28, 1999.

Quader Siddique lodged complaint to the CEC praying cancellations of the results of the by-election on various grounds when the ruling Awami League candidate Shawkat Momen Shahjahan was unofficially declared elected.

On the allegation of Quader Siddique, the CEC formed a four-member inquiry committee headed by Additional District and Sessions Judge, Tangail, AR Masud. The other members were Sub-Judge of Tangail Shahidullah Bakaul, Assistant Judge of Tangail Reza Ali and Assistant Secretary of the Election Commission Mohammad Zakaria.

The CEC sent the names of the inquiry committee to the ministry of law on November 17 for necessary action after consultation with the Supreme Court. Subsequently a three-member committee was announced with new members replacing the old ones.

The new committee was announced with three members namely Shahinur Islam, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, Abul Saleh SK Mohammad, Zahurul Islam, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Law and Shafiqur Rahman, Senior Assistant

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**Dhaka, Beijing joint  
body for cooperation  
in water sector**

Bangladesh and China today formed a joint committee for co-operation in the water sector following high level talks between the two sides in line with a 1997 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), reports BSS.

The committee will initially study the feasibility of two hydroelectric power plants and a rubberdam in Bangladesh. Zhang Jiyao, Chinese Vice Minister for Water Resources, told newsmen at the state guest house Meghna.

Zhang, who is leading a delegation of his country on a week

long visit here, said Bangladesh and China had also identified several other areas of co-operation, which included river training, flood forecasting, drainage and irrigation.

"Both the countries have common problems in the water sector which has created the scope for mutual co-operation," he said.

The briefing came after several hours of talks between the eight-member Chinese delegation and Bangladesh officials led by Water Resources Secretary Dr ATM Shamsul Huda.

Dr Huda said Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO) chief Tahmidul Anwar Khan and Liu Jianming of Department of International Cooperation of Chinese Water Resources Ministry would lead the joint committee as co-ordinators in line with the 1997 MOU signed between Water Resources Ministers of the two countries.

He said both sides agreed to study, on priority basis, the feasibility of constructing a rubber dam on the Matamuhuri River and installing a 100-mw power plant on the same river and another on the Sangu in Bandarban.

The rubber dam is a Chinese innovation suitable for hilly rivers and one such makeshift structure was set up in Cox's Bazar for water preservation and irrigation.

**Nasim at N'ganj  
Roksana's killer  
will be punished  
at any cost**

From A Correspondent  
NARAYANGANJ, Feb 22: Home Minister Mohammed Nasim said the killer of housewife Roksana Akhter will be punished at any cost.

He said this while on a surprise visit to Narayanganj to see the children of Roksana at her residence in Ukilpara on Monday afternoon.

The minister ordered the police superintendent of Narayanganj to find out her husband, Khokon, who is the main accused in the murder case.

Nasim also spent some time with the three sons of Roksana — Emon, 16, Papan, 14, and Chayan, 11.

The children also accused their father of killing their mother and demanded the punishment of their father.

Nasim asked the local administration to take care of the family and young children of Roksana Akhter.

Roksana Akhter, 32, was shot dead allegedly by her husband while she was asleep on February 16.

**Sundarbans  
Pirate killed  
in gunfight  
with police**

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Feb 22: One person was killed and five others, including OC of Koira thana were injured in a gunfight between the police and a group of pirates in lorchar area in the Sundarbans early this morning.

The dead was identified as Mosharrat Hossain, a notorious pirate belonging to 'Mozam Bahini' operating in the forest. OC Abul Hashem Khan and SI Riyadh were among the injured in the gunfight that continued for nearly an hour.

Police arrested five alleged dacoits and recovered three guns from their possession said a handout issued by the police super, Khulna.

**3000 sacks of  
rotten rice  
seized in Ctg**

From Our Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Feb 22: Over 3,000 sacks of rotten rice were seized while being mixed with good ones in the city today.

Acting on a tip off Chondganj police in a predawn raid, recovered these from an abandoned building of the Ibrahim Match Company which was being used as a godown by the miscreants at Bahirer Signal of Balur Tal in Chondganj at around 5.30 am.

Police said some dishonest businessmen were engaged in marketing rotten rice mixing with good rice at that area for long.

A case was filed under Special Powers Act accusing six people including Nazrul Islam — proprietor of a trading company and an importer — in this connection.

**Unloading of wheat  
suspended for 4  
days at Ctg port**

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Feb 22: Unloading of wheat from a Honorable Sea Bird-1 anchored at silo jetty here, remained suspended for the last four days as its crew went on strike demanding outstanding wages, port sources said.

Some 20 Bangladeshi crew took over the vessel occupying the silo jetty and forcing suspension of unloading of over 3000 tons of wheat brought from a mother vessel at the outer anchorage on February 18, port source said.

The vessel was scheduled to leave the jetty on February 19, port source said.

**'Keep patience till we hand over  
power to caretaker govt'**

PM's call to stop 'politics of destruction'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the opposition parties to "keep patience and stop the politics of killing, bomb blast and destruction" for the sake of development and people's welfare, reports UNB.

"We'll resign and hand over the charge to a neutral caretaker government for holding election. At least until then you'll have to keep patience," she said reiterating that the ruling party will obviously accept the people's verdict.

"If they voted us we'll return to power. If they don't, the opposition will form the government. We will gladly accept the people's judgement," Hasina said, inaugurating the national council of the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) at the IDEB premises yesterday morning.

The prime minister said she had tried heart and soul to reach an understanding with the leader of the Opposition and resolve all outstanding problems through discussion.

Referring to what she called the politics of hartal, destruction, bomb blast and terrorism, she asked "How long shall we have to witness such politics of self-destruction?"

"When she (Khaleda Zia) speaks of one-point movement — that means my resignation — I accepted the proposal and in-

cluded her to talks," Hasina said. "But the opposition leader did not respond positively."

She said she had requested the opposition parties to stop "their politics of destruction" and sit across the table for a peaceful solution. "Even I made telephone calls to the opposition leader, but she did not receive the calls, nor did she return my call."

Hasina said Awami League had called hartals for establishing voting rights of the people. Now there is no need for calling hartal on that issue.

She said now a system has been established and election will be held under a caretaker government.

"During the rule of the previous government all by-elections were held amidst violence, terrorism and rigging. Seven people were killed after Dhaka City Corporation election, rigged result of Mirpur by-polls was publicised through media and massive rigging committed in Magura by-election."

Awami League witnessing such things launched movement for holding elections under the caretaker government and now that system is in place, the prime minister said.

She said for making parliament effective and accountable, the ruling party has formed standing committees headed by

MPs instead of ministers and also introduced Prime Minister's question hour.

Calling upon the diploma engineers to go to the rural areas, the prime minister said the government has taken up schemes for improving economic condition of the rural people by infusing dynamism in the rural economy.

She said the diploma engineers can apply their talents and technological know-how for the development of rural people. They can train the village people and suggest them to adopt modern technology for bringing changes in the lifestyle.

She said the diploma engineers can help the rural youths in setting up small industries, particularly on agriculture. "You can help them in taking credits and change their lives by applying knowledge," she told the diploma engineers.

Referring to different suggestions given by the IDEB leaders, she said the government gives importance to their suggestions and incorporate some of those in the national planning.

She agreed that more emphasis should be given on waterways and railways.

Earlier, the prime minister laid the foundation stone of IDEB headquarters on the IDEB premises at Kakrail.

**Rubel murder  
AC Akram's  
bail petition  
rejected**

By Court Correspondent  
The Third Additional Metropolitan Session Judge's Court yesterday adjourned the proceedings of Shamim Reza Rubel murder case till today following a time prayer by the prosecution lawyers.

A bail petition was moved on behalf of AC Akram Hossain while the prosecution lawyers opposed the prayer.

After hearing both the side, the Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal rejected the bail petition.

**AL-PCP clash  
at Rangamati:  
35 injured**

RANGAMATI, Feb 22: At least 35 people were injured, two of them with bullet, during a clash between the activists of Awami League and Pahari Chhakra Parishad (PCP) at Banarupa in the town today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash erupted in the evening when the PCP activists fired gunshots at a meeting organised by the local Awami League.

Later, police lobbed several teargas shells to bring the situation under control and arrested eight people.

**Intra-party feud  
Jubo League  
activist stabbed  
in Khulna**

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Feb 22: Jubo League activist Mastud Ahmed, 24, was injured when his rivals in the party hurled bomb at him at Khalishpur on Monday night.

They also stabbed in his neck and back.

Police said the attack was a sequel to intra-party rivalry.

The injured Jubo League activist was rushed to the hospital where the doctors stated his condition critical.



Thirtyfive US Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) arrived in the city on February 20. — US Embassy photo

**Bid to join PM's  
rally with  
machete:  
2 arrested**

By Staff Correspondent

Two people were arrested for trying to join the prime minister's public rally at Pallan Maidan in the city yesterday carrying machete, police said.

The arrested were identified as Jahir Uddin Prokash Jamal, son of Nurul Huq, and Abul Kashem Babu, son Garib Hossain.

The two were stopped at about 4:15 pm while they were passing through the metal detector. The security men challenged them. They were searched and two machetes were recovered from their possession.

Later, they were handed over to Motijheel police. When contacted, Motijheel police said that they were interrogating the two to know why they were carrying the machete in the public meeting.

Another sources said that Special Branch of Police are investigating the matter.

**Trial of Panna  
murder case  
begins at Khulna**

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Feb 22: Trial of Panna Murder Case began today in the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court.

Two prosecution witnesses deposed against Ershad Shikdar. They are Dr Omar Faruque of Khulna Medical College Hospital and Medayat Ali, a vegetable vendor.

The witnesses were cross-examined both by prosecution and defence lawyers.

Five accused, including Shikdar were produced in the court.

Four others present in the court were 'Chok Ghola' Alam, Iddris 'Jama', 'Jahajji' Moti and Matiar.

Two of the FIR-named accused are at large. Other prosecution witnesses will also be cross-examined tomorrow.

**35 Peace Corps  
volunteers  
in city**

By Staff Correspondent  
Thirty-five US Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) arrived in the capital on February 20 to begin two years of service in Bangladesh.

The USIS in a news release said, These American teachers will provide training in English language education to Bangladeshi primary school teachers at primary training institutes throughout the country and will teach English at technical training and youth training centres.

The Peace Corps Volunteers now in Bangladesh come from 20 of the 50 US States.

Before taking up their assignment, the volunteers will receive three months training in intensive Bangla, the culture of Bangladesh, and Bangladesh education system. The volunteers will receive training at the National Academy for Primary Education in Mymensingh.

The current batch of Peace Corps joins 18 other volunteers who arrived earlier.

Dhaka and Washington in July 1988 signed a memorandum of understanding to implement the Peace Corps programmes in Bangladesh.

**Plea to promote trade  
among D-8 nations**

The seventh session of D-8 Commission began in the capital yesterday focusing on a greater thrust on trade promotion, reports UNB.

"Through appropriate and well-coordinated trade strategies we could turn our comparative advantages into competitive advantages vis-a-vis rest of the world," said Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil at its inaugural function.

Inaugurating the two-day meeting, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad underlined the need for greater interactions among the private sectors of D-8 member states and hoped that the structure of cooperation under the alliance would further be consolidated.

The D-8 groups eight most populous Muslim countries — Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Egypt and Nigeria — with a population of about 80 crore.

Azad called for translating the core principles of the D-8 to provide the economic emancipation of this economic bloc.

He appreciated Egypt's initiative to convene the first Business' Forum, Iran's proposal for a cooperative agreement for easing visa restrictions, Malaysia's initiative in banking and other steps of other countries for this forum.

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The first session starts on 17th Sept. 2000. Term ends in June 2001.

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**Mr. A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan**  
An eminent poet, scholar, former diplomat, bureaucrat, UN official and at present Chairman of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) is seriously ill and under post operative treatment in a Singapore hospital. We pray to Almighty for his early and complete recovery and request all of his well-wishers to join us in the prayer.

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