

FedEx Federal Express Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd. Licensee of Federal Express Corporation Tel # 9565114; Fax # 9565112

CHITTAGONG Hotel Hawaii Building 39, Agrabad C.A., Chittagong Tel # 712127 Fax# 710106

CEPZ Ctg. Export Processing Zone Old Admin Building Halishahar, Chittagong Tel # 740108 Fax# 710106

KHULNA K.D.A Building Khan A. Sabur Road, Khulna Tel # 725008 Fax# 731932

Ideal gift for any occasion. Transcom Electronics Limited Dhaka: 815307-10 Ctg.: 716353, 723578 Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215 Visit your nearest Philips Display Centre Today

Armed Forces have earned faith, confidence of people: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the distance between armed forces and the people has been reduced during the rule of the present government, reports UNB. The gap between members of the armed forces and the people has been removed; they have earned faith and confidence of the people, which is very important for an independent and sovereign nation, she said, addressing the graduation ceremony of Defence Services and Command Staff College at Mirpur yesterday morning. She also distributed degree certificates among the student officers of 24th Army, 18th Naval and 20th Air Force courses. This year 125 student officers including 21 from China, India, Kuwait, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, USA and Zambia graduated from the staff college. The prime minister said the government is taking steps for building a modern and skilled armed forces. She said the government has taken initiative to increase the opportunities of higher education of the members of the armed forces. Army War College will start functioning in 2001, she said adding we want to develop Mirpur as 'Educational Village' of the armed forces. We have implemented various development programmes for army including establishment of one composite brigade, one support battalion, one engineering construction battalion, one ordnance company, one field ambulance and one riverine engineering battalion. The Military Trust Bank has been established for the welfare of the members of the armed forces, she said, adding that the Military Institute of Science and Technology, Armed Forces Medical College and Peace Keeping Operation Centre have been established. She said the government has decided to hand over Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory to the army. Some financial benefits including salary and allowance of the armed forces have been increased. We have started establishing a separate infantry brigade at Sylhet and Bangladesh Infantry Regiment in Rajshahi. The government has approved a DOHS project at Mirpur to establish private housing for the officers of the armed forces and an area of 74 acres of land has been allocated for this, she said. The prime minister said the government has completed the formalities for procurement of a modern frigate for the navy. Moreover two gunboats including modern Action Speed Tactical Trainer have been procured for training in Navy. Procurement of another modern ship for the Navy is at final stage, she said mentioning that the Khulna Shipyard has already been handed over to Navy. A large number of war equipment including the most modern Mig-29 and C-130 transport plane are being procured for the Air Force, she added. She said the government wants to ensure the basic needs of the people and is drawing up a long-term plan to build Bangladesh as a developed nation by the year 2020. We will celebrate golden jubilee of our independence as a developed nation in 2021, she hoped. Commandant of the Staff College Major General Mansur Ahmed also spoke on the occasion while Science and Technology Minister Noor Uddin Khan, Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral A Taher and high civil and military officials attended the function.



A young woman and a man pick their way past potholes on a dilapidated road in front of The Daily Star office at Karwanbazar in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Panna Murder Case 'Jama'i' Farooq, Nasir to be produced in court today

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Feb 23: 'Jama'i' Farooq, condemned to death along with Ershad Shikdar in Zahal Murder Case, will be produced before the Special Court tomorrow in connection with Panna Murder Case. Farooq is one of the FIR named accused along with the others, Nasir Khan, another armed cadre of Ershad Shikdar, will also be produced in court in the same case tomorrow. Farooq and Nasir were arrested by a KMP team from Mirpur in Dhaka on Tuesday evening. They were absconding since the arrest of Ershad on August 11 last year. 'Jama'i' Farooq was the commander in chief of the Zahal group, who was also in charge of Ershad's hidden army containing over 100 illegal firearms including two AK-47 rifles. These arms are yet to be recovered. Farooq is also one of the masterminds of a recent plot to snatch Shikdar from police while he was being taken to special court from Jessore Central Jail. Nasir Khan is not only an armed cadre and political advisor to Ershad Shikdar. He also used to maintain liaison with political leaders. As the lone graduate in Shikdar's gang, Nasir was allegedly involved in seven murders and several rapes and riots. He is also accused in all the cases. They will be interrogated in the KMP headquarters in connection with recovery of arms and ammunitions, said a source today. Meanwhile, trial of Panna Murder Case will resume tomorrow. ASI Hanif of Ramna thana who made the inquest report of Panna's body appeared in the special court today. Mizanur Rahman Panna was totally injured in an armed attack by Shikdar and his accomplices including Jama'i Farooq on October 16 in 1997. He was shifted to DMCH from KMCH as his condition deteriorated. Panna succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on October 17 in 1997. Dr Tejendra Chandra Das and Khalilur Rahman of DMCH did not appear in the special court today. They are among the prosecution witnesses of this murder case. In a statement before being shifted from KMCH to DMCH, Panna named Ershad Shikdar, Jama'i Farooq, Mokter, Idris 'Jama'i', Jalil, Molla, Fancy Alam and Motti as the attackers. Panna was night guard in Jorhagate area. Meanwhile security has been tightened in Khulna Jail and all the five police stations of the city following the arrest of 'Jama'i' Farooq and Nasir Khan. They reportedly used to make contacts regularly with their associates in Khulna over phone from Dhaka, a KMP source said. Ershad Shikdar's house Saranakamol is also being watched by intelligence men apprehending arrival of Khodeja, first wife of Shikdar. She is also wanted in two murder cases. Shikdar killed Akimul and house tutor Jahangir for his illicit relations with Khodeja who is still in control of his wealth, police said.

Scandal: Kohl cancels 70th birthday party

BERLIN, Feb 23: Former Chancellor Helmut Kohl has cancelled a 70th birthday party in his native city because of the campaign of finance scandal surrounding him, the Christian Democratic party said today. Kohl asked local party officials to drop plans for the reception in the Rhine River city of Ludwigshafen because 'this event should not take place in the current situation', the Rhineland-Palatinate state party branch said. Kohl's birthday is April 3. Kohl has angered the party he led for 25 years with his refusal to help clear up the scandal leaving Germany's elder statesman isolated and his fall from grace. His popularity among Germans also has plunged, sinking in one survey last week to the lowest level ever recorded for a prominent politician. The Christian Democrats have not officially scrapped plans for a birthday gala in Berlin that was to include other former world leaders, but it was unlikely to go ahead amid the scandal. The furor erupted after Kohl admitted in a December television interview that he had accepted up to 2 million marks (one million dollars) in unrecorded donations. He has refused to name the donors, causing speculation that he may have accepted money for favours during his 16 years as chancellor. Since then, the scandal has grown to include secret accounts both at federal and state levels, other off-the-books donations and millions in fines for the party for false financial reports. Kohl himself is under investigation by Bonn prosecutors for possible charges of breach of trust.

Tax evasion Youngone rejects allegations by Customs

Star Report Youngone Hitech Sportswear Industries Ltd, has categorically rejected the Customs authorities' findings that it had evaded taxes. It said the allegations of the Customs authorities were based on wrong assumptions. The customs authorities in a press release on Tuesday said that it had fined the Korean company Tk 20 crore for evading Tk 35 crore in taxes. The facts of the case are that customs authorities undertook an audit of the company sometime in 1998 for the period from 1993 to 1997 whereas this audit should have been done every year. The customs authorities on the basis of wrong assumption alleged that this company could not adequately account for the balance quantity of the fabric imported by them. They ignored the prescribed rate of consumption of fabric for each piece of garment. This led them to come to wrong findings. Besides, they did not take into account finished goods inventory for export and fabric in work-in-process. Youngone Hi-tech Sportswear Industries Ltd. also strongly denies that there was ever any joint verification. See page 11 col 7

Clinton still undecided over Pakistan visit

WASHINGTON, Feb 23: Discounting claims that US President Bill Clinton would visit Pakistan after his five-day tour of India, White House said the President has not yet decided about including Islamabad in the South Asian itinerary, reports PTI. White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said 'no' when asked at his press briefing here yesterday whether Clinton has made up his mind about (visiting) Pakistan. Clinton is visiting India and Bangladesh from March 20. Meanwhile, American experts in the non-governmental community and Congress members are sharply divided over Islamabad's inclusion in the President's itinerary. A pro-Pakistan senator has circulated a letter among his Senate colleagues urging them to sign an appeal to President Clinton to add Pakistan in his forthcoming visit to South Asia, media reports said. It is essential for America's leadership for peace, security and democracy in South Asia that you (Clinton) visit Pakistan and engage in a direct dialogue with the current government, Senator Tim Johnson said in the appeal to Clinton, the Washington Times reported. In Islamabad, a top official in Pakistan's military regime and US ambassador to Islamabad have discussed the possibility of a visit to the country by Clinton at a meeting which covered wide-ranging issues and focussed on a still larger framework. Javed Jabbar, Adviser to Pakistan's Military Rule, Gen Pervez Musharraf, told English Daily 'The News' that the issue of Clinton's visit to the country was discussed when William B Miller called on him Monday. Jabbar refused to comment when asked to comment on the response of the US Envoy, and said, visit by a US President is always important, but relationship between the two countries transcends time and personalities. In Delhi, a senior official of the United States embassy today met Huri wal leaders in the backdrop of the latter's request to have an audience with President Clinton during his visit to India. See page 11 col 8

Truck strike at Ctg Port withdrawn

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 23: Port Truck Owners Association withdrew its 36-hour strike tonight. The strike was withdrawn at around 9 pm after Chittagong City Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury assured the truck owners of resolving their problems. The assurance came at a meeting of 'Truck Owners Association, owners of one concerned cement clinker factory and port officials. The Association enforced the strike at 8 pm yesterday protesting carrying of clinker by the own vehicles of a private cement company and demanding use of the Association's trucks as usual. Delivery of goods to and from Chittagong Port remained suspended due to the strike till 9 pm today.

Hartal observed in south Ctg region

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 23: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed peacefully in south Chittagong region today. Chittagong south district unit of Jamaat enforced the hartal protesting arrest of its leader and activists during yesterday's clash with the police at Satkania. Normal life was paralysed and the entire region remained cut off from Chittagong city and other parts of the country due to the hartal. Local unit of Jamaat held a rally and brought out processions demanding release of its leader and activists.

Hunger strike demanding Barisal Edn Board

From Our Correspondent BARISAL, Feb 23: The teachers of Barisal division demanding immediate functioning of the Barisal Education Board observed a token hunger strike from 9 am to 4 pm today at the Aswini Kumar Hall here. The Barisal Shiksha Board Bastabayan Parishad called the token hunger strike. The teachers also refrained from attending classes to re-assert their demand. Later, they held a meeting.

HC admits appeal of Prof Ferdous

The High Court yesterday admitted the appeal of Mohammad Ferdous Hossain, Associate Professor of Political Science, Dhaka University, in Nari-O-Shishu Nirjatan case lodged by his wife's brother Khalid Mahmud, reports BSS. A High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Nurul Islam and Justice Mohammad Moinuzzuddin Ahmed set the date for hearing of the appeal on February 29. Ferdous appealed against the order rejecting bail prayer by Tapan Kumar Rudra, Judge Nari-O-Shishu Nirjatan Damani Bishesh Adalat, Dhaka, on February 3.

Jute, textile workers' strike March 5

By Staff Correspondent Jute, yarn and textile sector employees have announced a 24-hour token strike in all state-run mills on March 5. The workers said in a press release the strike would be enforced in all public sector mills at 6 a.m. on March 5. The strike was called to demand the immediate declaration and implementation of the wage commission and other fringe benefits.

Amar Ekushey BTV staff deny allegation of negligence

By Staff Correspondent The BTV staff who were served with show cause notices for their alleged negligence in broadcasting the 'Amar Ekushey' programme have claimed that they put in their best possible efforts in making the programme perfect. One of the nine served with notices told The Daily Star that there was no negligence as far as visual projection of the programme was concerned. But there were some sound collision for a while when sounds from loudspeakers set by Dhaka University authorities at the Central Shaheed Minar collided with the BTV audio effects. But there was no question of over-projection of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia, he claimed. Notices were served on three producers and six cameramen. They were supposed to reply to their notices by yesterday. Neither the GM, who had served the notices, nor any other top BTV official could be contacted yesterday for comments. Sources said, all BTV high officials were passing very busy days for preparation of a live programme featuring the Prime Minister, to be aired on February 25. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) has demanded of the authorities concerned withdrawal of the show cause notices. BSEHR Secretary General Signa Huda in a statement expressed deep concern at issuance of show cause notices for projecting the Opposition leader and BNP Chairperson. A democratic government should not be so vindictive, she added.

Order terminating DESCO MD stayed

By Court Correspondent The High Court has issued a rule nisi upon the Secretary (Power Division), Ministry of Energy and the Chairman, Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd, to explain why the order of termination of the Managing Director of DESCO should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority. The rule was issued on February 20 by a Division Bench comprising Justice Md Mozammel Huiq and Justice Md Abdur Rashid. Pending a hearing of the rule, the court also stayed the operation of the termination order for two months.

Two outlaws arrested at Khulna

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Feb 23: Khulna thana police today arrested two outlaws. They were identified as Golum Mostafa, 28, and Gafur Sarder. Mostafa was arrested from Municipal Tank Road while Gafur from Totpara area. Police said Gafur, ring leader of Jessore-based unit to Furbo Banglar Communist Party was wanted for several murder and dacoity cases.

Bullets, phensidyl syrup seized; 3 arrested

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 23: Three miscreants were arrested with huge ammunition and phensidyl syrup from Terri Bazar in the city yesterday evening. Kotwali police and Narcotics Control Department in a joint raid on a residential hotel of the area recovered 46 bullets of 303 rifle and 137 bottles of phensidyl syrup in the evening. Three people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the matter. The arrested were identified as Santosh Chowdhury, alias Tutul, 25, Shimul Dharr, 25, and Tapan Kumar Roy, 22. A case was filed in this connection.

JS body: Power

From Page 1 The recommendations included steps to reduce systems loss, stop trade unionism, introduce electronic metres to stop tampering and increase collection of arrears. We were satisfied with the progress PDB achieved so far in implementing our recommendations, said a member of the Committee. The meeting discussed the recovery position of huge arrears of DESA to PDB and PDB to Titas. It noted that although the situation improved in the last six months, it needs further improvement. Giving an account of their success, the PDB chairman claimed that systems loss has been reduced by 10 per cent in one year. Bill collection also marked a progress as PDB collected Tk 88 crore in January this year against Tk 58 crore in January 1999.

Tejgaon clash: 20 hurt

From Page 1 track near the station. More than 200 policemen took position at the Tejgaon rail crossing early yesterday morning, witnesses said. They started moving towards the slum at about 9:30 a.m. but stopped after the slum dwellers told them that they were going to leave with their belongings, witnesses added. However, the police contingent started the demolition from the east end of the Tejgaon rail crossing at about 2:30 p.m., as the slum dwellers did not keep their word. Local people said police started ransacking their shanties and damaging their belongings. They also alleged that police also torched their defended the action, saying they did so to create panic among the slum inhabitants. The dwellers attacked police, pelting stones at them. They also set fire to rail track in several places. Railway authorities said the deputy commissioner of Railway, Lands and Building, conducted the drive. Asked how they could demolish the slum despite a High Court ban, they

25 hurt as BNP factions clash in C'nawabganj

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Feb 23: At least 25 people were injured when two factions of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) clashed at Nachol thana headquarters in Chapainawabganj last night. Several vehicles were damaged during the clash police said. Police resorted to lathicharge and fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells to disperse the clashing BNP workers. A faction of Chapainawabganj district BNP led by Syed Manzoor Hossain MP expelled three leaders of another faction led by Haroon-ur Rashid MP on January 28. In retaliation, Haroon-group organised a conference at Nachol Degree College playground yesterday. Manzoor group also called a separate conference at the same venue the same day. The district administration imposed Section 144 on rallies and processions to avert untoward incident. Later, Haroon-faction shifted the conference venue to Hatkhola. Rivals attacked them there too and both the groups locked in sporadic clashes.

JS body to report on implementation of Wage Board

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Ministry yesterday formed a four-member subcommittee to prepare report on the progress of implementation of the wage board award in newspapers and news agencies, reports UNB. The sub-committee was formed at a meeting of the standing committee at Sangsad Eshad with its chairman, Abdul Kalam Azad in the chair, Sultan Mohammad Munsur Ahmed has been made convener of the subcommittee. Other members of the committee are: Shahin Monwara Huq, N K Alam and Afzal H Khan. Earlier, the meeting discussed matters relating to circulation of different newspapers, their sold and unsold copies and progress of implementation of Wage Board. It also discussed various aspects of government's advertisement policy, according to a handout.

Theft at CMCH: No move yet for fresh probe

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 23: Rein-vestigation into the theft of medicines and other things from the medical store of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) has not started despite an order by the Director General of Health few months ago, sources said. A three-member committee headed by the Director (Health) of Chittagong Division was formed as per the order of DG (Health), sources added. The report on the earlier investigation was suppressed. But the process for initiating fresh investigation to identify the persons involved in the theft has been moving at a snail's pace. When contacted, Acting Director (Health), Chittagong Division, Nurul Alam said the fresh investigation would be started after joining of a new director. I am here for the time being as acting director though I know the reinvestigation is under way, Alam said. A source in the hospital administration said reminders were issued to complete the investigation in order to catch the culprits. But there is a sort of dilly-dally in the process of starting investigation, the source said. He further said that some measures were taken after the first investigation of check pilferage of medicines and other things from the medical store. According to sources a section of employees in collusion with some doctors of the hospital were reportedly involved in the theft. They sold them in the pharmacies located in front of CMCH. Even blankets were reportedly stolen from patients' beds at the hospital, sources further said. A senior doctor of the hospital ruled out the involvement of doctors in the pilferage of medicines and other things. He, however, held a section of Class Four employees responsible for the theft at the time of transfer from store to patients' wards.

Testimony of PW's in Sharif trial ends Ample evidence, says AG

KARACHI, Feb 23: After calling 27 witnesses, the prosecution today concluded its case in the hijacking trial of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, reports AP. We are satisfied that we have presented ample evidence to prove our case, said Attorney General Raja Qureshi. Sharif and his six co-accused also are on trial charged with terrorism, kidnapping and attempted murder. All four charges carry either the death penalty or life in prison. As well Qureshi asked the anti-terrorist court to have the accused give their testimony in camera giving the prosecution fears the men will betray state secrets and harm the security and integrity of the country. The judge is to announce his decision tomorrow before the defense launches into its case. Lawyers for Sharif and his co-accused strongly opposed an in camera session. One of Sharif's lawyers, Kawaja Sultan said 'It is against the fundamental rights of the accused and is tantamount to suppressing their defense. The charges against Sharif stem from an incident on Oct. 12 — the day the army took power in Pakistan — in which the passenger plane returning Gen. Pervez Musharraf to Pakistan was denied permission to land in southern Karachi. At the time the army accused Sharif of trying to kill the army chief. According to the testimony of prosecution witnesses, that included the pilot of the aircraft, air traffic control officials and aides of Sharif, the aircraft was ordered to divert to a country in the Middle East. The order was issued after Sharif dismissed Musharraf and appointed a more junior army general as army chief of staff. The orders dismissing Musharraf were issued while the army chief was en route to Pakistan from Sri Lanka. The pilot of the Pakistan International Airlines passenger plane with 200 passenger and crew aboard testified that he was unable to divert to the Middle East because of lack of fuel. The aircraft circled over Karachi seeking permission to land because it was running out of fuel. While the negotiations were continuing the army took control in Pakistan, arrested Sharif and several key members of his government, and ordered the aircraft to land. When the aircraft landed it apparently had only seven minutes of fuel remaining. Sharif and his co-accused have pleaded not guilty. Sultan said that the defense will argue that it was the army that illegally staged a coup and that the army took power unconstitutionally.



Nawaz Sharif