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INSIDE TODAY

SOUTH ASIA

The highest-ever increase in India's defence budget is indeed indicative of unabated arms race with its debilitating impact on the overall South Asian scenario, writes Mansoor Mamoon

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Prime Minister's Special TV Appearance: Has it Backfired? wonders M M Rezaul Karim

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SPECIAL

GIS may prove an effective solution to the capital city's transportation problem, writes Md Aroz Ullah

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ENVIRONMENT

Workshops at the grassroots in a bid to formulate an environment management action plan for the Chittagong Hill Tracts have attracted tremendous response from the tribal people, writes Quamrul Islam Chowdhury

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Tight security around diplomatic enclave

Security has been beefed up around the diplomatic enclave and other important areas in the capital following bomb blasts near two five-star hotels on Wednesday, reports UNB.

We have tightened our security network so miscreants won't have a chance," said a high police official last night.

The police have also placed the areas Clinton will visit under round-the-clock surveillance.

The Sonargaon Hotel has also been placed under strict watch.

One crude bomb exploded Wednesday evening at the Sonargaon Hotel, where members of the US pre-advance team stayed overnight.

The team led by Dan Rosenthal, left Dhaka for India after visiting some places, including Curzon Hall, TSC, the International Conference Centre and the VIP lounge.

On March 8 or 9, an advance team from the White House will arrive in Dhaka to put the final touches on the itinerary for Clinton's day-long visit on March 20.

Rajuk to remove Gulshan Lake demarcation pillars

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk will remove the demarcation pillars in the Gulshan Lake, set up by a real estate developer recently, sources said.

A Rajuk team comprising an executive engineer and a deputy director, Land, accompanied by police tried to remove the pillars on Wednesday but failed due to stiff resistance from men belonging to Shinepukur Holdings Ltd., the real estate developer.

Rajuk officials said they informed the law enforcing authorities of the incident, and the team would soon remove the pillars with the help of the police.

They also said the entire lake would be demarcated and the public will be notified through the press.

The demarcation pillars were set up after a Rajuk official authorised Shinepukur keeping top Rajuk officials in the dark.

Shinepukur's managing director reportedly told the press that the real estate developer owned the part of the lake and the company would turn to law if necessary.

Khoka, Salam city BNP president, secretary

By Staff Correspondent

A 294-member executive committee of the BNP Dhaka city unit was formed yesterday with Sadek Hossain Khoka MP as president and Abdus Salam general secretary.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has approved the committee, said a press release.

The new committee consists of 13 vice presidents, 11 joint secretaries, 11 assistant secretaries, 8 organising secretaries and 10 assistant organising secretaries. It also has 36 secretarial posts.

Khaleda Zia, Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Khondaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Lt. Gen (Retd) Mir Shawkat Ali, Mirza Abbas, Abul Hasnat, Haris Chowdhury, Nazrul Islam Khan and Mosaddik Ali were made honorary members of the committee.

Members of the previous convening committee, presidents and general secretaries of all front organisations of city units, thana BNP presidents and general secretaries and ward and union committees presidents will be the ex-officio members of the committee.

Stampede kills 6 at exam centre

The incident at Kalaroa Govt College, Satkhira, claims a female teacher, three examinees & 2 others

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Mar 2: At least six people including three examinees and a female teacher were killed and more than 25 injured in a stampede at a SSC examination sub-centre in Kalaroa thana today.

The stampede occurred when the collapsible gate on the ground floor of the Kalaroa Government College, the sub-centre, was opened about a half an hour before the first examination started at 10 a.m.

More than 900 students as well as hundreds of people tried to enter the centre by the lone narrow staircase.

The situation deteriorated when police charged into the building to restore order and some youths molested female students and women, witnesses said.

Later, an angry mob attacked government offices in Kalaroa, damaged motor vehicles, exploded crackers, threw stones at the thana complex throughout the day. They also demanded

immediate withdrawal of the Thana Nirbahi Officer.

BDR and reserve police were deployed to Kalaroa in the afternoon.

The dead are Shamsunnahar Lipi, 16, Asadullah, 17, Kashem, 16, all examinees; Fazila Khatun, 30, a teacher of Jugkhal Moutaz Ahmed High School; Mamunur Rahman, 22, a BA student of Kalaroa Government College; and Habibur Rahman, an HSC student of Sheikh Amanullah College.

The injured were admitted to hospitals in Satkhira and Khulna.

Shamsunnahar Lipi and Asadullah were students of Hattaganj High School. It could not be known which school Kashem was from.

The district administration has formed a one-member committee comprising an additional district magistrate to probe the incident.

About 983 examinees were to See page 11 col 6

Kibria, his adviser at loggerheads

Debate over 'dismal' picture of economy

By Inam Ahmed

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria and one of his advisors are at loggerheads over the recent performance of the national economy.

Reacting sharply to claims of a poor economic situation made at the Prime Minister's question-answer programme on the TV last week, the finance minister dismissed the dismal portrayal of the economy.

In a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently, Kibria termed confusing the observations made by economist Dr

Debapriya Bhattacharya, who is also his adviser.

When contacted, Dr Bhattacharya however stood by his observations based on Bangladesh Bank statistics and gave a detailed picture of the situation.

"It was not my intention to put up details of mere statistics, but I wanted to highlight the recent economic depression in the country," he said. "Debating on statistics is counter productive. It is rather wise to act to find ways out of the depression."

The finance minister in his letter addressed five of the is-

ssues raised at the TV programme by Dr Bhattacharya, who is also executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

On industrial credit flow, the minister contradicted Bhattacharya's remark that it has declined in the first six months of this fiscal year. According to Kibria, term-loan flow has rather increased by six per cent during July-September period of the current fiscal year. During the period, term-loans stood at Tk 277 crore against Tk 256.67 crore of the correspond-

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Mayarani (left), her husband (middle) and a settler carry fire wood and logs at Moratila in Khagrachhari for collection at a road side point. The picture was taken on Feb 23. Star photo: Shehab Ahmed

Vanishing green of the green hills

By Shehab Ahmed back from Khagrachhari

The Moratilla or the 'dead hill' gets shaven and stripped off its green foliage everyday, pushing the forests far and away for Mayarani Tripura, making it difficult for her to gather the firewood and logs for her personal use and sale.

Mayarani, 35, makes a living out of the forest, something she had inherited from her family in the Moratilla village, 35 km north west of Khagrachhari hill town near the frontier with the Indian state of Tripura.

At the crack of dawn everyday, she sets out with other village women to the forest and what has remained of it, in the hills off Panchhari thana where the metalled road ends.

Trudging down the herring bone road gets easy for some time. The road rolls down through the green hills to Tabalch-

hari from the Panchhari bazar which is 25 km off Khagrachhari.

But the vanishing forests under pressure of wood cutters like her and the professionals, feeding a booming trade in the hills of Chittagong today, is making it increasingly difficult for them to gain new grounds on the forests.

Once part of the rain forests where teak, civet and others valuable timbers abounded, the forests are virtually gone.

Near the approaches to the Moratilla, a huge Civet tree with its branches and twigs missing stand guard on the road near a bend where members of the Armed Police Battalion keep watch on the road, a vital link to civilisation for the people who live in the area. See page 11 col 8

Dock workers' 'no' to new terminal

22 TU bodies agitate at Ctg port, threaten indefinite strike

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 2: Protests continued here against the installation of a proposed private container terminal at Patenga by an American company, Stevedoring Services of America (SSA). Several thousand dock workers today staged demonstration and held a rally on Chittagong Port premises protesting the move for construction of container terminal by SSA.

The dock workers led by the leaders of 22 trade union bodies yesterday staged demonstration on port premises demanding withdrawal of the decision to set up a private container terminal at the estuary of the River Karnaphuli by the American firm.

Port sources said the two-day meeting at the port and the Shipping Ministry that ended today, for reviewing matters relating to draft agreement, had triggered the agitation here by the dock workers backed by 22 trade union bodies.

The leaders of 22 trade union bodies threatened to halt the activities of Chittagong port for an indefinite period if any agreement is signed for installation of the terminal.

The leaders of 22 trade union bodies who addressed the rally included Mahfuzur Rahman Khan, president of Chittagong Port CBA, Kazi Habibur Rahman, acting general secretary of CBA and Wahid Ullah Sarkar president of Port Jatiyatobadi Sramik Dal Employees Union.

The leaders announced to stage demonstration and hold a protest rally on Chittagong port premises on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Mayor of

Chittagong City Corporation Mohiuddin Chowdhury announced to launch a movement with the people of Chittagong to resist any move for signing agreement with SSA for construction of the private terminal.

He made this announcement while exchanging views with the representatives of Chittagong port development forum yesterday.

UNB adds: Ruling out the speculation of a final deal with the US company before Clinton's visit, State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya told the agency today that it would take time as they are in the process of examining the pros and cons of the proposal.

"We aren't going to take any step which may go against the

interest of the people including port workers," he said, when asked about the tension that gripped the port city following the government move to finalise the deal.

Shipping Ministry is busy scrutinising the proposal submitted by a US company two years ago to construct a private container terminal at the Karnaphuli estuary.

Officials of the Shipping Ministry and the Chittagong Port Authority continued parley for the second straight day today to examine the proposal that already sparked off a strong opposition from port labour unions.

A ministry official said the meeting might continue till March 5 for a final assessment of the proposal.

But Spain, Switzerland, Belgium and France, the four countries that sought Pinochet's extradition, said they would not, or could not, appeal the British decision based on a medical report that found the retired general mentally incapable of following any trial proceedings.

Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes rejected the Spanish judiciary's demand for an appeal but said he felt "a

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Pinochet wins freedom, leaves UK



Augusto Pinochet

LONDON, Mar 2: A plane believed to be carrying former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet left Britain today, hours after he was ruled mentally unfit to stand trial on charges of human rights abuses.

The medically outfitted plane left an airbase north of London after Britain's top law enforcement official dismissed the extradition requests of Spain and three other nations — Belgium, France and Switzerland — seeking to try Pinochet.

The 84-year-old former dictator, who had been detained in Britain for more than 16 months, was believed to be

headed home to Chile. There was no immediate confirmation he was on the plane, however.

Home Secretary Jack Straw's decision to free Pinochet was based on an independent medical team's conclusions that his diminished mental capacity would make it impossible for him to participate in a trial. Pinochet suffered two small strokes last fall.

The ruling was open to appeal, but any such filings became moot if Pinochet left the country.

Britain's decision to free Pinochet — after a marathon

tug-of-war that tested international will to try rulers for past abuses — stirred up disappointment and dismay in some European capitals.

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Opening today
Second branch of
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Mr. Abdul Awal Mintoo
Hon'ble President of FBCCI
Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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Phone : 880-2-9669634



Our new numbers
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& 812 4966
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Prayer Timings		
March 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:30
Juma	12:30	1:30
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:05	6:08
Esha	7:30	8:00

Source: Islamic Foundation