

The Daily Star

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PM performs ziarat at rawza of Prophet

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina performed ziarat at the rawza mubarak of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) on Sunday evening, reports UNB. Hasina who reached Madina late Sunday afternoon went to Masjid-e-Nabaabi and offered fatha and munajat at the rawza mubarak of the Prophet. She also offered prayers at the mosque and sought divine blessings for peace and progress of the country as well as the Muslim ummah. The prime minister visited two mosques — Masjid Kibla Tayin and Masjid Kuba in the city holy Madina yesterday morning. Masjid Kuba is the first mosque set up in Madina during the lifetime of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM). Earlier, on arrival at Madina Airport by Royal Saudi aircraft, Hasina was received by Deputy Governor of the holy city Abdul Karim Al-Monaili. After completing the rituals at Madina, the prime minister was scheduled to fly to Makkah yesterday where she will stay for next five days to perform the holy Hajj.

Finance Minister discloses Fuel, fertiliser prices may go up

Star Business Report

But one has to understand that subsidy in any sector is not good for the economy as there is chances of distortion. So in the greater interest of the economy, we have to take some very unpopular decision," Kibria said. "We need to adjust prices of oil and fuel to save the economy from bankruptcy."

Production of aman crop was "very good" this year and prospect of boro is also similar. Basing on available data, we are expecting five per cent growth in agriculture. It may be higher if there is a super bumper boro production".

The present food stock is 15 lakh tonnes, with sufficient stocks with farmers also. "The food stock may cross all previous records if boro production is up to the expectation".

The finance minister hoped

that it would be possible to achieve the current financial year's 4.8 per cent growth target in the industrial sector, with 5.2 per cent for large industries and four per cent for small industries.

The sector is recovering well from the affects of 1998 flood. Growth rate in the sector had slumped to as low as one to 1.5 per cent with exports at three to 3.5 per cent, he mentioned.

Term loan and working capital

Kibria said disbursement of terms loans to the industrial sector increased by 15 per cent to Tk 697.44 crore during July-December (1999-2000 FY) from Tk 603.99 crore in the corresponding period in the previous fiscal.

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Bamboo traders have transformed the sidewalk in Kalyanpur into an illegal depot, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road at great risk. —Star photo

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Clinton's visit: US satellite to be specially positioned

By M Anwarul Haq

A US communications satellite will be 'specially positioned' to pick up both 'encoded' and other signals from Bangladesh and relay information direct to processing laboratories in Washington and Virginia during President Bill Clinton's visit to Bangladesh. Although the main communications room linking Washington would be at Sonargaon Hotel, two back up communication centres, are being set up at two other points in Dhaka. The security team accompanying the President will also

carry night vision equipment to monitor conditions after dusk. The Combined Military Hospital in the city is being kept as a standby hospital to deal with any emergency. Clinton will stay at the eighth floor Presidential Suite at Sonargaon Hotel. Three Secretaries — Secretary of State Madellene Albright, Commerce Secretary William Deley and Energy Secretary Bill Richardson -- accompanying him will have their rooms on the seventh floor. The President is likely to

have a quiet lunch at his Sonargaon suite. However, efforts are being made to make it a working lunch during the formal talks. It is learnt reliably. Fifteen journalists from the White House Press Pool will accompany the President while 112 others from the US media will fly to Dhaka in separate aircraft. Clinton, according to the latest itinerary, is due to arrive in the city at 10 am on March 20. He will be accorded a guard

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Hazari's comments expunged

The comments Joynal Hazari, Awami League MP from Feni, made in the House on Badhon on February 25 have been expunged from the proceedings of parliament, reports UNB. An official announcement in him by section 307 of the rules of procedures, Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury yesterday expunged the aspersions. In his February 25 speech on the floor of Parliament, ruling party lawmaker from Feni-2 constituency made objectionable comments casting aspersions.

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Where docs don't want to go 500 positions at dist hospitals, thana health complexes lying vacant for years

By Naimul Haq

Over 500 district hospital and thana health complex positions have been vacant for years, since the doctors assigned to them refused to go, arranging alternative "posts" in Dhaka. "Many doctors posted to hospitals outside the capital use connections inside the Bangladesh Medical Association or influential telephone calls to cancel postings," said a health ministry official, who requested anonymity. Many doctors avoid work by becoming a "deputy," an employee with no real duties, or an "academics" such as a medical officer or assistant professor, at a city hospital. For example, an assistant professor at Mitford Hospital has been a deputy since October 25, 1999, while an assistant registrar at Pangu Hospital has been one since October 27, 1999. An orthopaedic surgeon at Shaheed Suhrawardi Hospital has been a deputy since January 1, 1999, while a junior consultant in Dhaka Medical College Hospital's surgery department has been a deputy since July 1999. There are over 25 doctors working as deputies at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, while there are at least 14 at the Bangha Bandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. There are about 20 deputies at the health directorate, the Institute of Public Health and NIP-SOM. In all, about 124 positions have been filled in this way

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Prayer Timings

March 14

| | Azan | Jamaat |
|---------|------|--------|
| Fajr | 5-20 | 5-50 |
| Zohr | 1-00 | 1-30 |
| Asr | 4-45 | 5-00 |
| Maghrib | 6-10 | 6-15 |
| Esha | 7-45 | 8-15 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

BNP to agitate but prepare for polls

By Rezaul Karim

BNP leader told The Daily Star yesterday. Party Chairperson khaleda Zia has instructed party MPs, those defeated in the June 1996 polls and probable candidates to rush to their respective constituencies and start work for the elections side by side with intensifying the anti-government movement, said the leader who did not want to be named. She has also advised party leaders to strengthen the party and go for massive mass contact in their respective areas. The leaders have also been asked to inform the common man Awami League government's "failures, misdeeds, anti-people and anti-state activities", he added.

Another front ranking BNP leader said the party is now negotiating with three other components of the four-party alliance led by it and like-minded parties to form an electoral alliance to contest the polls. The issue of sharing of seats by the parties is now being discussed and a group of alliance leaders are working out a formula for an 'effective' electoral alliance. The leader said two component parties — Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami -- are now bargaining with BNP over sharing of seats and pressing for early solution of this vital issue. JP has come up with a formula to form an electoral alliance and suggested 150 seats for BNP and the rest 150 for other opposition parties. It wants more than 100 seats in different parts of the country, especially in Rangpur, Sylhet and Barisal regions. Jamaat wants 70 seats, he said. Some other senior BNP leaders said the party's Standing Committee has in principle agreed to form an electoral alliance but initially decided not to give more than 80 seats to other parties. "BNP will go for an electoral alliance but wants to ensure the party's majority in parliament and for this, it must contest at least in 220 constituencies", one leader pointed out.

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Sharif's lawyers boycott trial Court gives one day to contact defence team

KARACHI, Mar 13: An anti-terrorist court gave deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif one day to contact his defence team, all of whom boycotted the trial today to press their demand that the case be moved out of southern Karachi, where their colleague was slain last week, reports AP. Judge Rehmetullah Hussein Jaffri adjourned the hearing until tomorrow after Sharif told the court he had not spoken to his lawyers and only read of their decision to boycott his trial in the newspapers. "I read about the decision of my lawyers not to come to court in the newspaper," Sharif told the court. "I haven't had any contact with them and their decision has not been taken with my knowledge. We should be provided the facilities to contact our lawyers and find out what is in their minds."

The judge agreed and ordered the prosecution to let Sharif telephone his lawyers, most of whom live in the eastern Punjab capital of Lahore. On Sunday Sharif's lawyer, Khawaja Sultan, told The Associated Press that the defence team will refuse to participate in the trial if it is held in Karachi, where last Friday one of the leading defence lawyers, Iqbal Radh, was shot and killed. Radh was gunned down by three men who stormed his second story law office in the heart of Karachi. No evidence has surfaced that links the shooting to the Sharif hijacking trial. However, Sharif's remaining defence lawyers say they fear for their lives and Sultan said "We won't come to Karachi."

The judge refused to consider a change of venue for the trial, at least not until after Sharif contacted his lawyers. Sharif, his younger brother, Shahbaz, and five other close aides have been imprisoned since a military coup last Oct. 12 toppled his elected government. They are on trial on hijacking, treason, kidnapping and attempted murder charges. On the day of the coup, Sharif allegedly refused to let a passenger plane carrying army chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf land in Karachi. The plane eventually landed, but with just seven minutes of fuel left. Sharif has pleaded not guilty. His trial is nearing its conclusion with final arguments from both the defence and prosecution still remaining. Prosecution lawyer Raja Qureshi told the court today that the Sindh provincial government.

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Unocal won't expand investment unless it 'feels secure'

By Monjur Mahmud, back from Jalalabad, Sylhet

Unocal chief in Bangladesh has said the oil company's future investment in the country depends mainly on whether the government opens up the gas market, indicating that it is seeking the option of export. But he reiterated a recent Indian newspaper report which quoted Chairman-CEO of Unocal, Roger C Beach, as saying that the company has plans to lay an underwater gas pipeline from Bangladesh to Andhra Pradesh in India and another surface pipeline to Delhi through Calcutta. "The company chief was misquoted", Terry Budden, President and Managing Director of Unocal Bangladesh Ltd, told a group of journalists in the city on Sunday. Roger was interviewed by The Economic Times Calcutta. The briefing followed the newsmen's return from a visit to the Jalalabad gas plant in Sylhet, now operated by Unocal. "We are very much at risk with our investment and are not going to expand it since we are not convinced that our investment here is secure," Budden said. "There is already an over-supply of gas against its present demand," he observed. "If the market is there, we are ready to increase our investment. But if we don't see a prospective market, we will be careful about going for further investment." Budden said Unocal, which

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THE 5TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF PRIME BANK LIMITED

The Board of Directors of Prime Bank Limited recommended 30% cash dividend for approval at the 5th Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of the Bank.

Notice is hereby given to all the Shareholders of Prime Bank Limited that the 5th Annual General Meeting of the Bank will be held on Tuesday the 14th March, 2000 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, (Winter Garden), Dhaka at 11.00 A.M. to transact the following business and to adopt necessary resolutions:

AGENDA

- To confirm the minutes of the 4th Annual General Meeting held on 15.07.1999.
- To receive, consider and adopt the Profit and Loss Account of the Company for the year ended 31st December, 1999 and the Balance Sheet as at that date together with the Reports of the Directors and the Auditors thereon.
- To declare 30% cash dividend for the Shareholders for the year ended 31st December, 1999 as recommended by the Board of Directors.
- To elect Directors in place of those who shall retire by rotation in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association of the Company.
- To elect 2 (two) Directors from Group B Shareholders (General Public) in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association of the Company.
- To appoint Auditors of the company for the term until the next Annual General Meeting and to fix their remuneration.
- To transact any other business with the permission of the Chair.

Dated: 13 March 2000

By order of the Board
Sd/-
MD. ANWAR HOSSAIN
Acting Secretary

Prime Bank Limited
Board Secretariat
Adamjee Court Annexe-2, 119-120, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.