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Hasina leaves Mina for Arafat Maidan today

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in Saudi Arabia, will leave Mina for Arafat today by road to perform holy Hajj, reports UNB.

After staying overnight at Madina, she arrived in Makkah on Monday night. She reached Mina from Makkah yesterday morning to make a night halt there.

Over 20 lakh Muslims are performing Hajj this year and staying at the historic Arafat Maidan. Bangladesh Television will telecast live the holy Hajj rituals and prayers today.

She will leave Arafat for Muzdalefa by road and stay overnight. Early in the morning on Thursday, she will leave Muzdalefa for Mina for stone throwing.

The Prime Minister will offer 'qurbani (sacrifice)' and Towal-el-Ifadah at Mina the same day (Thursday) and stay there at night.

Javed declared CCCI acting president

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Mar 14: Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) ran into a fresh trouble today when its senior vice president Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, was declared acting president, sources said.

Javed is the son of former AL leader Aktaruzzaman Babu. It was decided at a meeting of the board of directors of the CCCI at chamber office this afternoon, Chittagong Chamber sources said.

Chamber sources said 17 of 24 directors were present in the meeting. Salimullah, a CCCI director, told this correspondent that 17 directors brought no-confidence against president Kamal Uddin Ahmed and removed him from his post.

"We are majority in the board of directors' meeting to take decision," Salimullah said, adding such a decision was taken today as Kamal refused to resign.

When asked about the court order to hold the CCCI poll by June, Salimullah said copy of the order was yet to reach the chamber.

Kamal was removed and Javed was made acting president as per constitution of the chamber, he said.

When contacted, Kamal Uddin Ahmed said he is still president of CCCI. Javed was made acting president illegally, he said.

Replying to a question, he said he was not invited to the meeting. Javed backed by some dissident directors forcibly captured CCCI, he said.

Kamal also alleged that signatures of some directors were forcibly taken to bring no-confidence against him by Javed group. Salimullah denied the charge.

Bangladesh born envoy to accompany Clinton

By Staff Correspondent President Bill Clinton's entourage will include a Bangladesh born US ambassador.

Bangladesh born US citizen Osman Siddiqui will be accompanying Clinton to Bangladesh and during his entire South Asia tour.

Osman Siddiqui was appointed US ambassador to Fiji by Clinton last year. His appointment was immediately confirmed by the US Congress.

Siddiqui is a first generation immigrant who went in the US in 1974. He is the first South Asian and the first Muslim to be appointed ambassador of the United States.

Kashmir militant leader shot dad

SRINAGAR, Mar 14: Indian security forces shot dead six militants, including a top separatist commander, in two separate encounters in Indian administered Kashmir, police said here today, reports AFP.

A police spokesman said Abdul Hamid Gadda and two fellow separatists were killed late Monday in a shootout with members of the counter-insurgency Special Operations Group (SOG) near Gandherbal town, 35 kilometers north of the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar.

Hamid was a top ranking commander of Kashmir's most powerful militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, which is fighting for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

Business community prepares for US-Bangladesh confce

By Shahriar Karim

The country's business community is putting the finishing touches on a United States-Bangladesh conference, scheduled to be held at the Sheraton Hotel on March 20.

"The main purpose of the conference is to strengthen economic relations between the two countries and convince U.S. entrepreneurs to invest more here," said Abdul Awal Mintoo, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Entitled "United States — Bangladesh Economic Relations: Prospects and Challenges," the conference is being organised by the federation, the United States — Bangladesh Business Council and the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh.

U.S. officials, congressmen and businessmen and their Bangladeshi counterparts are expected to attend, sources said. William Deley, the United States' secretary of Commerce, S.A.M.S. Kibria, minister of Finance, Tofail Ahmed, minister of Industry, and Abdul Jalil, minister of Commerce, are expected to address the conference.

Organisers said they could not confirm whether United

States president Bill Clinton will attend the conference. However, they said they are trying to make sure Clinton attends the seminar. About 150 U.S. businessmen will accompany Clinton during his visit to Dhaka.

In addition to encouraging investment, Bangladeshi businessmen will ask the United States for duty free access to its market, a 30 per cent increase in garment quotas and the merger of certain garment categories, said chamber sources.

They will also ask U.S. investors to spend more on the country's energy, manufacturing and textile sectors.

However, Mintoo said he expects a cool reaction to the proposal from U.S. investors.

Illegal liquor factory found in AJM areas

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGONJ, Mar 14: Officials of the District Narcotics Control Department unearthed an illegal liquor factory in Adamjee Jute Mills area on Monday.

to export gas, U.S. entrepreneurs won't be interested in more investment," he said.

Anisur Rahman Sinha, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the United States assured the sector it would increase the garment quota if the ready-made garment industry eliminated child labour.

"We have already done our job. Now it's their turn to fulfill their commitments," said Sinha.

Sinha said the quota in certain categories isn't used due production shortfalls or a lack of demand in the U.S. To overcome this problem, the association proposed the merger of certain categories.

The association will urge U.S. authorities to support the merger, since it will cost money to tackle human rights, work place code of conduct, environmental degradation and other issues that will come up in the future, said Sinha.

Bangladesh's exports to the United States are growing at 19.6 per cent annually. Bangladesh is the sixth largest supplier of apparel and garments to the U.S., said association sources.

Fresh programme after SSC exams: Khaleda

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia has called upon her student wing JCD to continue the movement defying all sorts of government repression, reports UNB.

She said the fresh programme will be announced after the SSC examination. "You must not be afraid of arrest, jail and repression. These are part of politics," Begum Zia told JCD leaders and activists.

JCD central and Dhaka University unit leaders held a brief meeting with Begum Zia at 29 Minto Road yesterday evening.

Asking the JCD leaders to activate and strengthen the student front, BNP chairperson said the party leaders would feel encouraged if they took to the street.

She urged the student leaders to resolve internal conflict through discussion and urged all to work unitedly, meeting sources said.

The opposition leader said all nationalist forces would have to gear up against government movement as there is no alternative to it.

"Cases and attack will come on you even if you keep confined in house. So, join the movement," she told them, adding "you have suffered enough and have to endure more to reach the goal of victory by dislodging the 'fascist' government and establishing democratic rule."

Amanullah Aman MP, Bazul Basit, Helen Zerin Khan and ABM Mosharraf Hossain also spoke at the meeting.

Hajj begins

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"I am so excited. This is like a dream for me," said Bangladeshi Ahmed Yasmin, 72, in Makkah where workers were busy cleaning slowly emptying streets.

Traffic to Mina flowed despite the huge number of cars and buses on the modern highways, bridges and tunnels. Those on foot followed specially assigned routes for pedestrians, including covered parts to shelter from the sun.

Saudi Arabia has improved police communications to avert congestion on a bridge used by pilgrims. In 1998, 119 people died in a stampede on the Jamarat bridge.

Saudi television told the pilgrims to expect hot weather at midday of around 37 Celsius and a low at night of 21 Celsius. Helicopters hovered to monitor the flow of pilgrims and report on any emergencies.



Science and Technology Minister Lt Gen (rtd) Noor Uddin Khan speaking at a seminar on "e-commerce: The Business of the New Millennium" organised by The Daily Star and ASSET International in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Clinton's visit Chelsea to accompany, Hillary to stay back

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: While her mother stays home to run for office, campaign, Chelsea Clinton will accompany her father, President Bill Clinton, to India, Bangladesh and Pakistan on a trip beginning Saturday, reports AP.

But White House press secretary Joe Lockhart said Chelsea would not be the first lady's stand-in at official events.

"I don't know what she will do but she'll serve the role she normally serves as the president's daughter," Lockhart said. It will be Chelsea's second trip to South Asia. She went to India and Pakistan with her mother, Hillary Rodham Clinton, on a goodwill visit in April 1995. Chelsea will have time to kill during spring vacation at Stanford University.

Her mother is running for a Senate seat in New York state.

Opinion poll Over 59pc think Clinton won't press Dhaka for gas export

By Staff Correspondent US President Bill Clinton during his visit will not put any pressure on Bangladesh for export of gas, 59.4 per cent of the respondents said in an opinion poll.

But 40.6 per cent of them said they think Clinton will press for it.

Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD), an NGO, conducted the poll in the city from March 10 to 12. Seven hundred twenty-three residents gave their views.

Of the respondents, 52.2 per cent said they will support the position of the government if Clinton puts pressure for gas export. However, 47.8 per cent think the government should not sign any agreement even if Clinton puts pressure.

On a question regarding this, an overwhelming majority, 71.4 per cent, hoped that President Clinton would initiate a process to write off the debts but at the same time he would create a special fund with this money for the protection of environment and alleviation of poverty. Only 28.6 per cent liked the idea that President Clinton should simply write off the debts.

Although Bangladesh is his first stop in terms of the official visit, President Clinton and his entourage would stay in Delhi overnight on way to Dhaka. The people and the media in Bangladesh have interpreted this in various ways. The poll included a poser whether President's overnight stopover in Delhi undermined the image of Bangladesh as a hospitable and an independent nation. The result shows that only 41.9 per cent think that his Delhi

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Corruption & governance Donors meet today for consensus on measures

By Inam Ahmed

As the annual consultative meeting between the donors and the government begins on April 13 in Paris, the development partners are trying to reach a consensus on what actions they should take if corruption and governance, the two burning issues, are not addressed properly.

Understandably, corruption is going to be the single big issue in this year's Aid Club meeting, and the donors are preparing a separate paper on it.

But before the meet begins, the local consultative group (LCG) sits here today to hammer out a consensus on the issue.

Donors now want to fix some common quantifiable indicators of governance to judge the performance of the government as well as ascertain the level of corruption in the society. It would then be easier for them to rethink the nature of their involvement in Bangladesh's development process.

As their new strategy, donors are now putting emphasis on governance as a precondition to their assistance. During the last mid-term review meeting in Dhaka in September, 1999, they had categorically stated that the amount of aid would shrink unless there is a marked improvement in governance.

Mannan Bhuiyan, 8 BNP MPs to visit Feni today

FENI, Mar 14: BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan along with 8 party MPs of greater Noakhali will visit Feni tomorrow (Wednesday) in the wake of arrest of many of their party leaders and workers during the combing operation by the police, reports UNB.

Party sources said the Secretary General and the MPs will sit with local BNP leaders at 10 am at the circuit house and visit certain areas.

Police said 12 more people were arrested today. Of them, three were arrested from Feni Sadar thana, three from Daganbhuiyan thana, 4 from Sonagazi and 2 from Fulgazi thana.

Witnesses said police made indiscriminate arrest from the BNP dominated areas and released many of them allegedly after taking bribe.

Meanwhile, ruling party MP Jinal Hazari today visited Faleswar, the area dominated by BNP's Prof Jaynal Abedin. He asked the residents to round up the 'terrorists' whenever they return home from hideouts.

Meanwhile, residents of the areas where police drive is on told UNB that the cadres of the ruling party committed a series of dacoities in the absence of male members in the house.

Court asks jail authorities to give divn to Prof Ferdous

By Court Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday directed the jail authorities to give first class division to Prof Ferdous Hossain, a senior teacher of the Department of Political Science of Dhaka University.

The division was granted yesterday on the basis of his earlier prayer with the CMM's Court filed on January 30. The IO delayed by about a month to submit a report to the CMM about his social position.

The CMM ordered the IO to submit a report by February 8, mentioning whether he deserved first class division in the jail, which is granted on the basis of social position.

He was detained at the Dhaka Central Jail since January 28, under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 1995 on charges of assaulting his wife and demanding dowry from her.

When produced in the court earlier, Prof Ferdous acknowledged of beating his wife but denied to have demanded dowry.

Storm hits Barisal town: 100 houses damaged

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 14: About 100 thatched houses were damaged and many trees were uprooted as nor'western accompanied by heavy rain lashed Barisal town and its adjoining areas at about 4.45 pm this afternoon.

Electricity supply was disrupted for an hour in different areas in the town. Roads in the town have gone under knee-deep water, causing inconvenience to vehicles and pedestrians.

নগরীর পরিচ্ছন্ন পরিবেশ বজায় রাখুন

কোরবানীর পশুর পরিত্যক্ত বর্জ্য পয়ঃলাইনে ফেলবেন না!

অতীতে পবিত্র ঈদ-উল-আজহা পালনকালে নগরীর কোন কোন এলাকায় লক্ষ্য করা গেছে, কোরবানীর পশুর বর্জ্য, নাড়িভূড়ি, চামড়ার অপ্রয়োজনীয় অংশ, জবাইকৃত পশুর রক্ত ধোয়া পানি প্রভৃতি ঢাকা ওয়াসার পয়ঃ ম্যানহোলে ফেলা হয়। ফলে পবিত্র ঈদের পরবর্তী দিনগুলোতে উক্ত এলাকায় পয়ঃ নিষ্কাশন লাইনে ব্লকেজের কারণে দুর্গন্ধময় এক অসহনীয় পরিবেশের সৃষ্টি হয়। ক্ষেত্র বিশেষে অবৈধ/অননুমোদিত পানির লাইনের মধ্যে দূষিত পানি প্রবেশের ফলে ঢাকা ওয়াসাসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের জন্য এক বিস্তারক পরিস্থিতির সৃষ্টি হয়। এমতাবস্থায় কোরবানীর পশুর পরিত্যক্ত বর্জ্য পয়ঃ ম্যানহোলে না ফেলার জন্য ঢাকা ওয়াসার সম্মানিত গ্রাহক সাধারণকে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ জানান যাচ্ছে।

আপনার সেবায় নিয়োজিত

ওয়াসা ঢাকা ওয়াসা

ওয়াসা-জরত: ৮৮২০০০ ৬৫-২৭৭



The Malaysian Airlines aircraft being taken to a hangar at Zia International Airport yesterday. The captain aborted take-off after its landing gear jammed. — Star photo