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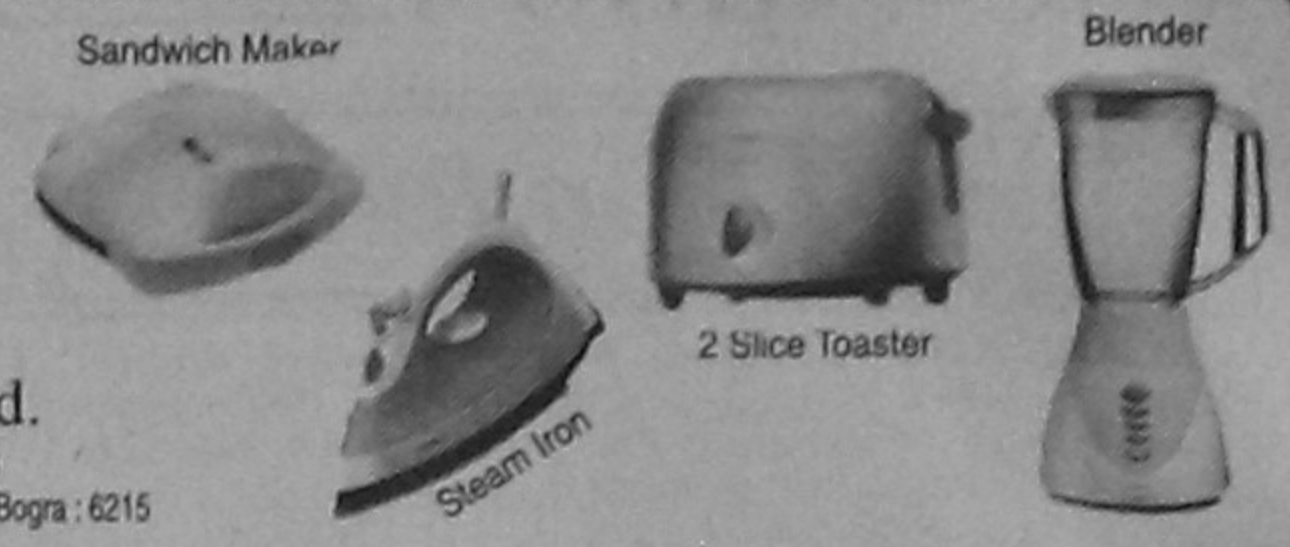


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## Far from formalities Clinton revels in Indian holiday delight

JAIPUR, Mar 23: First tourist President Bill Clinton revelled in Indian holiday delights Thursday in this desert state of fairy-tale palaces, tiger reserves and elephant rides, reports AFP.

In a bit of official business, Clinton began the day in the village of Nayla, where he heard inspiring stories of how rural women had surmounted crushing poverty and prejudice.

Hundreds of villagers turned out to cheer his motorcade as he arrived at Nayla, some 18 kilometres (11 miles) from Jaipur, the capital of the desert state of Rajasthan.

Clinton was garlanded with a chain of marigolds and white chrysanthemums, and showered with petals by women who sang folk songs as the men of the village beat drums.

Clinton is on a six-day tour of South Asia with his daughter Chelsea, who visited India with her mother Hillary Clinton in 1995 to discuss ways of empowering women in the developing world.

Staying in Nayla village for two hours, twice as long as planned, Clinton shunned tight security to shake hands with hundreds of people including policemen before leaving in his black limousine.

Clinton was then joined by

Chelsea as he toured the 16th century Amber fort, some 10 kilometres from Jaipur.

Hundreds of reporters and cameramen had gathered outside the main gate of the fort, but were prevented from following the Clintons inside for what the White House had insisted should be a private visit.

Mahouts with brightly coloured turbans paraded more than a dozen elephants, their faces painted and sides cloaked with embroidered silk, outside the main gate as a tribute to the president.

"It's nice to be around some friendly elephants," joked the Democrat president, referring to the symbol of the Republican party.

Officials said Clinton had decided to forgo an elephant ride due to the security concerns that have plagued his visit. Clinton was forced to bypass planned visits to a village and a monument in Bangladesh Monday because of safety issues.

The Amber fort was refined and added to over several hundred years by three rulers, making it a unique blend of Rajput and Moghul architecture.

Inside, Clinton toured the Chamber of Mirrors, the Palace of Pleasure and the gracious courtyards with formal gardens

and an octagonal pool. An ancient fortress stands guard at the crest of the hill, where vast vaults still hide the treasures of Jaipur, according to local legend.

The highlight of the day came next as Clinton began a visit to the dense forests of Ranthambore National Park, where Indians are working to protect tigers threatened by poaching and deforestation.

But a carefully-timed report from the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) blasted New Delhi for doing too little to protect its big cats.

The report released in London on Wednesday said a huge haul of leopard skins as well as tiger and leopard bones had been found in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh in January but the Indian government had failed to act.

Conservationists believe there were about 40,000 tigers in India at the start of the last century. Government estimates put today's figure at around 3,750.

The environment also figured in Clinton's first tourist day Wednesday, when he visited the Taj Mahal and launched initiatives to fight the pollution threatening the white marble walls of the tomb.



US President Bill Clinton (R) receives a garland from Rajasthan's Tourism Minister Bina Kak as he enters Rajasthan's 16th century Amber Fort on Thursday. — AFP photo

## Move to modernise madrasah edn

By Asad-uz Zaman

The Madrasah Education Board has initiated a move to introduce a modern curriculum for *Dakhil* students.

"We are giving more emphasis on technical and other subjects in preparing a syllabus for *Dakhil* students," a highly placed source at the Board told The Daily Star yesterday. Computer and agricultural studies will be made compulsory in the proposed curriculum, he said.

About 1.5 lakh students come out of madrasahs in the country every year with little knowledge about modern science and technology.

"Separate syllabus for every subject will be prepared by June. If we can prepare the syllabuses in time and print books, the new curriculum will be introduced from 2001," the source added.

There will be three groups — science, humanities and business studies — at *Dakhil* level like the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) curriculum.

"Our aim is to bring the *Dakhil* curriculum at par with that SSC so that madrasah

students can compete with others."

He pointed out that *Alem* level madrasah students are studying science and other subjects which are almost equivalent to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level. Many students after passing *Alem* examinations get admission at BUET, medical colleges and universities through competitive tests, he mentioned.

Asked whether the new syllabus would be acceptable to madrasah teachers and students, the official the Board's Academic Council which includes madrasah teachers has already approved the plan to amend the curriculum. If necessary, there will be a national workshop on the issue.

He agreed with the correspondent that there will be crisis of trained teachers in introducing the new curriculum as the madrasah teachers now teach only religious subjects.

Teachers having B. Sc and B. Com degrees will be trained to teach science and commerce subjects, he said.

## BNP activist killed in Feni gunfight

FENI, Mar 23: A BNP activist was killed and 25 people were injured in a fierce gunfight with ruling party supporters at a village in Sonagazi thana today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Nazimul Karim Nazim, 28, from the village of Char Laxmiganj.

Locals said the fighting ensued at about 5 pm when Awami League supporters brandishing firearms surrounded the village and started attacking the BNP men.

The BNP men countered, resulting in the three-hour-long clash that spread to adjoining Gopalgaon and Char Huzuri villages.

"The area looked like a battlefield with the exchange of several hundred gunshots and the explosion of innumerable bombs during the clash, which continued until 8 pm", according to a spot report.

Police from the thana and district headquarters rushed to the spot.

Jubo Dal activists Mizan, 23, and Faruq, 25, were admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital. Two injured were sent to Sonagazi thana health complex, while others went to different clinics.

Local leaders of the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP blamed each other for the trouble.

## Hartal observed in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 23: The dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the All Party Action Committee Chittagong Unit to protest the arrest and demand the release of some opposition leaders and activists, including Jamaat leader Shahjahan Chowdhury, passed peacefully here today.

Normal life was paralysed due to the hartal. Vehicles remained off the roads, except for some rickshaws. Schools, businesses and shopping centres remained closed. Banks were also closed and production was hampered in the industrial belt. Goods couldn't be transported to or from Chittagong Port although there was some activity inside port.

The committee held rallies and marched through Lalidighi, Bahodderhul, Chawkbazar, Muradpur, Olaner Crossing and Kazi Dewry Crossing.

At the main rally, held at Lalidighi Maidan in the afternoon, opposition leaders alleged the government introduced the Public Safety Act to oppress opposition leaders and activists and to cling to power.

They demanded the immediate release of all opposition men arrested under the act and warned that if any arrests were made during the movement, tougher action programmes, including an indefinite hartal, would be pursued.

The procurement target and the price of food grain for 2000 were also fixed at the meeting. The price was fixed at Tk 8.25 per kilogram for boro, Tk 13.00 per kilogram for rice and Tk 8.90 per kilogram for wheat.

Four lakh tons of boro will be purchased this season, while the target for wheat and maize were fixed at 3 lakh tons and 5,000 tons respectively.

**Prayer Timings**  
March 24

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:15	5:45
Juma	12:30	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:15	6:20
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Young talents urged to embrace IT Tofail inaugurates IBM-ACE training centre

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a launching ceremony of an IT education centre urged the country's young talents to utilise the vast opportunities offered by information technology by availing better education.

They were addressing the launching ceremony of BRAC-IBM-ACE centre at Mohakhali. Founder executive director of BRAC Fazle Hasan Abed chaired the ceremony.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed hoped that Bangladesh IT learners would be able to reach world class standard through better IT education available in the country.

Terminology information technology as the most rapidly growing industry in the world, Tofail said previously e-commerce was hardly a "mili-decimal point" in world economic statistics, but now it is a billion dollars business and a few years from now e-commerce will be a trillion dollar business.

"It is changing the way we shop, we work, we communicate, we do business and the way we provide government services. It has become a part of life of hundreds of millions of people of the world."

Describing various government steps for development of the IT sector, he said, "The present government has withdrawn all taxes and duties on the import of computer hardware, software and accessories to enable people to easily get access to information."

"Hardware are now available in districts, thanas and even in villages. Many schools are now provided with computers."

He said the country will be getting about 500 IT graduates a year from the domestic institutes but "we need 10,000 programmers annually."

He hoped BRAC-IBM training centre will come up with the latest curricula to meet the growing demand of programmers.

"We don't want typists, we want programmers to meet the demand."

The BRAC executive director expressed his optimism that young people of the country would be able to have international standard IT education through the centre.

He reiterated BRAC's commitments towards educating people all over the country.

The function organised at BRAC Centre Inn was also addressed among others by MN Khorana, general manager of IBM Learning Services and Saahol Afzal, Director of IT, BRAC.

Two unidentified infants died and 20 others were injured when a fire gutted more than 200 shanties in a slum near Tongi Milk Gate last night, said witnesses.

The deceased and the injured were sent to Tongi General Hospital.

Police and fire brigade officials confirmed a fire gutted over 200 shanties, but could not confirm whether anyone was killed in the incident.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit at about 8:25 pm and engulfed the area, said police sources. Witnesses, however, said it had originated from a shanty kitchen at one corner of the slum.

Fire fighters and locals were still trying to extinguish the blaze at 10 pm last night.

Three fire fighting units from headquarters in addition to those from Tongi were on the scene to battle the blaze.

## Army deployed in Jammu to quell Sikh unrest 100 injured as mourners turn violent

JAMMU, India, Mar 23: Army troops were called out in the Kashmiri winter capital Jammu Thursday as police fought running battles with thousands of Sikh youths protesting against a massacre of Sikh villagers, reports AFP.

Police had fired more than 100 tear gas shells to try to disperse around 10,000 demonstrators -- some of them armed with swords -- who tried to march on the governor's house, witnesses said.

Several hundred police, wielding bamboo canes, clashed violently with the protesters who later attacked Muslim businesses in the city's main commercial area, damaging around two dozen shops.

"We were deployed at the request of the state government," said Colonel Gulshan Kumar from the army headquarters in Jammu.

"Our troops have been positioned at key intersections and will remain there as long as necessary."

The protest was in defiance of a round-the-clock curfew imposed after Monday night's massacre to avoid Sikh revenge attacks against Muslims.

"Blood for blood" shouted some of the 20,000 Sikhs, brandishing iron bars, ceremonial swords and sticks above their turbaned heads as they marched 10 kilometres (six miles) to the seat of Jammu-Kashmir's state government.

They demanded revenge on Pakistan, apprehension of the killers, and resignation of the government for not protecting them.

It was the third day members of the religious minority had defied curfew orders to protest the killings of 40 Sikh men in a massacre blamed on Pakistan-based militants trying to separate Jammu-Kashmir from India.

The curfew was imposed Tuesday because authorities feared religious clashes. Many Muslims live on the periphery of Jammu, which is 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the Pakistan border.

During a 10-year insurgency, more than 25,000 people have died and hundreds of thousands of Hindus driven from their homes. But it was the first time Sikhs had been targeted.

The two main militant groups, and Pakistan's government, have denied involvement in Monday's killings in Chati Singhpora village, and accused India's security force of committing the murders to defame the separatist movement during Clinton's visit.

Clinton was visiting tourist sites and a village in western India Thursday.

Pakistan and India have fought two wars over Jammu-Kashmir, the only Muslim majority state in Hindu majority India.

At first, police allowed thousands of Sikh men on women, on foot and piled in trucks, to move toward the city center. "We are allowing them to mourn and take out their anguish," Police Inspector-General RV Raju said in the morning.

But when the procession reached the building that houses the state government

police used water cannon, tear gas and baton charges to break up the demonstration.

More than 100 police and demonstrators, including women, were injured, police and witnesses said.

Violent groups in the crowd beat up police officers and set vehicles afire. Police were unable to regain control of the streets as the crowd dispersed and continued marching in other areas of the city.

They converged at a Sikh temple to listen to addresses by religious and political leaders.

Temper has been rising in Jammu since the news of the killings on Monday, when gunmen in Indian army uniforms speaking the Urdu language of Kashmir and Pakistan ordered people from their homes, lined up the men, and shot 40 of them to death.

Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf denied his government had anything to do with the massacre.

"I personally condemn it and we demand a probe at the highest level," Musharraf told reporters in Islamabad on Thursday. "It is baseless that Pakistan is involved. Pakistan wouldn't do it. It would be foolish of Pakistan to do such a thing and to create a division between Sikhs and Muslims."

Protests spread to other cities, including New Delhi, where an angry crowd chanted anti-Muslim slogans, raising fears of new religious rioting of the kind that has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths in India's 52-year history.

## Teachers

From Page 1

produce results. Some members of the science faculty demonstrated against a visit by the Dean of Science and Prof. M. Shahadat Ali, province chancellor of Dhaka University, to various faculty departments at the behest of university authorities.

They said the visit was an "autocratic drive" that tarnished the university's image.

All said he regretted the protest, but insisted it was his moral and academic duty to determine whether the professors were attending their classes.

"We will continue to create pressure on the teachers so that they stop their illegal jobs," said Ali.

The authorities are now considering of alternative means to make teachers more accountable. An official said the university will introduce shortly a body that will investigate the professors' activities, especially those acting as consultants without the university's permission.

## Taiwan's president to resign as party chief today

TAIPEI, Mar 23: With his support quickly crumbling after a devastating election loss, Taiwan's president said today that he would resign tomorrow as the leader of the party that has ruled this island for five decades, reports AP.

As President Lee Teng-hui struggled to calm the turmoil within his ruling Nationalist Party, Taiwan's next leader, Chen Shui-bian, smiled as he shook hands with a US envoy on a mission to urge peace with the island's well-armed rival: China.

Since the party's defeat in Saturday's election, protesters have demonstrated outside the nationalists' headquarters, demanding that Lee resign immediately as party chairman.

Lee, who has led Taiwan for 12 years, offered to step down in September but that was not soon enough for his critics.

The foreign ship has been

## SAPTA spirit

From Page 1

ments in a letter to the Dressmen Apparels.

Hasan Abdullah, managing director of Dressmen Apparels, wrote to Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury about sudden increase of duty after getting information from the buyers.

"But I am yet to get any response from any quarters regarding the issue," he said while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

The main reason for imposing such high duty is probably to protect their market from Bangladesh goods, he observed.

"India could be the second largest export destination of Bangladeshi apparels after U.S.A. If that concession was continued," said Faruq Al Naser owner of Shanin Corporation. Naser had been exporting apparels to India since October last year.

Naser had an order of 3 lakh pieces of shirt to export to India annually and also had a plan to set up a new factory and make trousers for the Indian market. "But I am worried because the new duty structure would increase the price very high and none would buy it," he said ex-

pressing frustration.

According to Hasan Abdullah Bangladesh should enter the Indian market with something special in quality which is not available there. He claimed that his goods had a 40 per cent value addition and that he wanted to increase the local price in future.

Anisur Rahman Sinha, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said, "India has a huge market and Bangladesh can earn as much as 100 million dollars annually by exporting apparels there."

He said garment items rejected by the European or American buyers could be diverted to the Indian market if necessary arrangement was there.

An official at the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), who deals with SAPTA related issues said he was aware of the matter but was yet to get any documents.

It is very unlikely that a country would withdraw trade concessions it provided under SAPTA without informing others.

"We are also trying to get necessary documents regarding the latest decision by the Indian government," he said.

## 77 arrested in Ctg on piracy charges

CHITTAGONG, Mar 23: Seventy-seven people including three students were arrested today in connection with an act of piracy against a ship at the outer anchorage, reports UNB.

Navy, Coast Guards and the crew of a cargo ship conducted the operation against the pirates, who were looting rotten rice from a foreign ship.

Coast Guard and port control room sources said 33 members of the gang were in critical condition after their trawler capsized during a frantic escape attempt.

The foreign ship has been

anchored at the outer anchorage since last October because the Ministry of Food refused to allow its cargo of 12,000 tons of rice into the country. A case was lodged with the Admiralty Court over the rotten rice.

The MV Jini was looted three times before.

"The looters went to the ship in two trawlers and when they sensed the presence of the Coast Guard, 33 of them tried to escape in a trawler that capsized," said one official.

They were rescued by the crew of the cargo ship Banglar Kakoli. Navy and Coast Guard personnel.

## Partnership

From Page 1

ing for disaster management and construction of cyclone shelters.

Two MOUs have been initiated involving BTB and US companies for expanding the telecommunication system.

A plan involving the ILO and the Grameen Bank was also announced to help three million rural women get access to micro-health insurance.

Besides, the US will provide six million dollars under a "debt for nature swap" to reduce Bangladesh's debts and another 4.16 million dollars for development of women and children.

Bangladesh's plea for increasing readymade garments quota and regularisation of undocumented Bangladeshis in US will be considered by the US government, the foreign secretary said.

Deportation of the killers of Bangabandhu from the US has to go through some legal procedures set by the government there, the foreign secretary said replying to a question.

## Telephone trouble in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar exchange

By Staff Correspondent

About 300 telephone lines under Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Telephone Exchange remained inoperative yesterday as the underground cables were damaged at different places.

Telephone lines of Shershab Suri and Raziz Sultanabad of Mohammadpur area and Mohammadia Housing and Baitul Aman areas were inactive as the cables at Manik Mia Avenue, Asad Gate and Mirpur Road areas were damaged.

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) officials and employees have already taken initiatives to restore the telephone lines.

BTB in a statement regretted the temporary inconvenience of the subscribers of the concerned areas and said it hope to remove the faults soon.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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