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INSIDE TODAY

### COMMENT

Page 6

Asian values have become a matter of intense debate in recent times. As Asian leaders seek to upgrade the continent's position in the world arena, the problem lies in politicisation of values aimed at cherishing cultural hegemony or resisting democratic movements within the country, writes Delwar Hossain

### SOUTH ASIA

Mansoor Mamoon looks at the far-reaching implications of the agreement between India and Vietnam for co-operation in defence and security measures

### PEOPLE

Versatile theatre personality Shimul Yusuf face to face with Ziaul Karim Noted painter Hamiduzzaman Khan talks about his teenage days to Navine Moshid

Page 4

Page 10

World Health Day today

By Staff Correspondent  
Bangladesh joins the world in observing the World Health Day-2000 today (Friday). It may be mentioned here that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been observing the day through special programmes since 1948, the year when WHO was launched.

This year's theme of WHO — 'Safe Blood Starts With Me — Blood Saves Lives', focuses on raising awareness on voluntary blood donation.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed in a message on the eve of the World Health Day called upon all adult people of the country to donate blood 'at least once a year to save life of a dying person'.

Anyone may require germless blood for anaemia caused by malnutrition, sickness, child birth, accident and surgery', the President pointed out.

In her message Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina underscored the need for healthcare of the citizens for the cause of building a healthy and stout nation.

She said that the people were suffering from malnutrition and various diseases as well as physical and mental problems due to poverty and lack of awareness and that 'some were facing premature deaths'.

She stressed the need for

See page 11 col 4

## Sharif sentenced to life in prison

Prosecution to appeal to higher court for death penalty



Supporters of deposed Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif make the victory sign and carry his poster after an anti-terrorism court announced the verdict against Sharif yesterday in Karachi. The court sentenced Sharif to life imprisonment and ordered the forfeiture of all his property.

— AFP photo

KARACHI, Apr 6: An antiterrorist court, set up by deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif to hand out quick justice, sentenced him Thursday to life in prison on charges he refused to let a commercial airliner with the army chief aboard land in Pakistan, reports AP.

### US expects fair appeals process

WASHINGTON, Apr 6: The White House today said it was pleased ousted Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was spared the death penalty and called for a fair appeals process for his conviction, reports Reuter.

A Karachi Anti-Terrorism Court found Sharif guilty of terrorism and hijacking and sentenced him to two life sentences, which mean a 25-year prison term and an apparent end to Sharif's political career.

"It's not for us to evaluate the

See page 11 col 4

He escaped the death penalty, but the prosecution promised to appeal to a higher court. Sharif's lawyers said they too would appeal.

The six men charged along with Sharif, including his younger brother, Shahbaz were acquitted of all charges. The prosecution said it would appeal their acquittal.

Fifty-one year old Sharif was found guilty of hijacking and terrorism and sentenced to concurrent terms of life in prison. He was cleared of attempted murder and kidnapping charges.

The prosecution argued for the death penalty saying the law that established the antiterrorist courts required the judge to give the maximum punishment. But Judge Rehmatullah Hussain Jaffri said Sharif committed his offense in the heat of the moment and while it was a serious offense, the maximum should be reserved for worse cases. He did not elaborate.

When the verdict and sentence was read out, Sharif's family members, who had been

reading versus of the Koran, leapt from their seats shouting "long live Nawaz Sharif". Several of the women openly wept, some beat their chests and others continued to pray. Sharif looked grim standing to hear the verdict and sentencing. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim

See page 11 col 4

### No comment from India, not yet

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: India declined comment on ousted Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif being sentenced to life in prison by an anti-terrorism court Thursday for hijacking and terrorism, reports AFP.

"We have no comments to offer," a spokeswoman for the Ministry of External Affairs Ministry told reporters when queried about an official Indian response to the Pakistan court verdict.

Sharif, who faced the death penalty, said the verdict was

See page 11 col 5

## Massive loadshedding in Dhaka

By Staff Correspondent

Supply line, transformer and circuit breaker problems, coupled with loadshedding and low voltage, have made life miserable for people in and around Dhaka.

Areas serviced by the Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority have endured 200-megawatt power shortages daily for the last week, concerned officials said.

An Ulon grid substation circuit breaker cut out Wednesday evening, plunging most of Tejgaon, Mohakhali, Nakhalpara, Kawran Bazar, Baglamotar Link Road and Tejkunipara into darkness for almost 24 hours. The power was back on in those areas last night, said authority sources.

A transformer at the Tongi grid 50/75 MVA substation also failed Wednesday night, resulting in severe power disruptions in some parts of Uttara and Gulshan. It is still out of order.

Residents in Postogola, Lalbagh, Kumartuli and other parts of the old city were without power for about an hour when a Siddhong-Maniknagar-Ulon power supply line tripped at around 10 p.m. Wednesday.

Kamlapur, Khilgaon, Kakkrali, Paribagh and Tejgaon experienced routine loadshedding yesterday, since one of three transformers at the Ulon 132 KV grid station has been out of order for about two months.

The country endured another 200-megawatt power shortage yesterday. The Power Development Board generated 2,466 megawatts compared to the requirement of 2,675 megawatts.

Ashugan Gas Turbine-2, Sylhet Gas, Shahjibazar-3, Shahjibazar-6, Shahjibazar-7, Fenchuganj Gas Turbine-1, Fenchuganj Steam, Khulna Barge mounted plant-1, Barisal-2, Baghabari Gas Turbine-1 and Ghorasal-4 are still out of order.

## Land Commission for CHT formed

The government has formed a nine-member commission to resolve land disputes in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with retired High Court judge Abdul Karim as its chairman, an official handout said here yesterday.

The commission was formed in line with the landmark CHT peace agreement.

The handout said justice Karim has been appointed for a three-year tenure with salary, allowances and other facilities of a High Court judge.

## Rejoinders

Two residents of Dhanmondi lake area have sent clarifications regarding reports in The Daily Star on the government's public land recovery drive.

Sara Begum stated in rejoinder the report published in the Daily Star on April 6, 2000, stating "The magistrate said Sara Chowdhury, wife of Justice Abdur Rahman of house 661/A, Road-32 illegally occupied 2.8 katha of public land where she built a six storey apartment complex" is absolutely baseless.

She said she purchased 5.75 katha of land in 1988 through a registered deed of sale from Syud Ahmed. Necessary permission was obtained from the Ministry of Works prior to the sale.

She constructed a two and half story building and has been living there since 1990. In June 1999, Rajuk conducted a survey and did not find any unauthorised occupation or construction and gave a certificate to that effect.

On Jan. 31, 2000, she was served with an eviction notice by the Ministry of Works incorporating the land.

See Page 12 Col 5

## Our new numbers

19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215  
Phones: 812 4944, 812 4955  
& 812 4966  
Fax: 812 5155

April Sun Rises Sun Sets

7 5-44 am 6:17pm

8 5-44 am -

Prayer Timings

April 7

Fajr 5.00 5.30

Juma 12-15 1-20

Asr 4-45 5-00

Maghrib 6-20 6-25

Esha 8-00 8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Transport trouble again

### Capital city delinked from the rest of the country for four hours

By Staff Correspondent

Road links between the capital and rest of the country were virtually cut off for over four hours yesterday as transport workers put up barricades at Gabtoli, Kanchpur and near Ashulia and stopped plying vehicles protesting arrest of the President of Inter-district Truck Drivers Association.

Barricades were put up at Gabtoli at about 11 am, and then at Kanchpur and Ashulia, witnesses and transport workers said.

Barricades were also put up at Pagla on the Dhaka-Narayanganj road, witnesses and leaders of the association, said.

See page 11 col 4

Thousands of passengers were stranded at the capital's entry points as angry truckers, joined by bus workers, also damaged other vehicles including autorickshaws and manhandled drivers who tried to sneak through the barricades, witnesses said.

During their visit to Bagerhat and Khulna, Khaleda Zia introduced her party's possible candidates and asked people to vote for them in the next polls.

Sources concerned said JP

## Expedite establishment of HR Commission

### Speakers at a seminar urge government

By Staff Correspondent

The government is taking too long to create the proposed human rights commission and should expedite the process, concluded participants at an open discussion on the issue yesterday.

Organised by the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, the seminar was addressed by Suranjit Sengupta, the prime minister's parliamentary affairs adviser, ruling party lawmaker Akhtaruzzaman, Khushbu Kabir, Prof. Abbar Chowdhury, Debapriya Bhattacharya from the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies and Advocate Nizamul Huq Nasim.

Dr Kamal Hossain, a former minister and chief of the Gono Forum chaired the discussion while Dr. Shah Deen Mallik made some opening remarks.

A bill to create the commission was drafted in late 1997 and approved by cabinet in April 1999. It was then sent a cabinet committee for review. The secretary of the ministry of Home Affairs objected to some vital provisions in the bill, slowing down the process.

"What is important is to mobilise those who want change," said Dr. Kamal Hossain. "Our people have been fighting for democracy and human rights since the 1950s. We've been an independent nation for more than 25 years. It's time to build various democratic institutions, braving all impediments."

Suranjit Sengupta, an Awami League legislator, said the government is constitutionally committed to human

rights, since democracy and human rights are intertwined. However, he defended the government against the accusation of dilly-dallying.

"Sometimes it's better to take time to make a law," said Sengupta. "What is the use of making a law in hurry and amend it a month after its enactment?"

Akhtaruzzaman said he sympathised with those who wanted the process to speed up and assured participants he would do whatever he could to move the process forward.

"But you take it from me that the government will create the commission sooner or later."

Wasim Akram is expected to arrive early in the morning today while five Indians — Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly,

See page 12 Col 2

## Stars parade tomorrow

### Seven in city

Sports Reporter

Seven cricket stars set their feet in Dhaka yesterday to play in the high-profile day-night match between Asia Eleven and Rest of the Eleven on April 8.

Four Sri Lankans — Sanath Jayasuriya, Aravinda de Silva, Muttiah Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas — were the first to arrive in the capital, which has been under the focus of world media since the ICC's (International Cricket Council) celebrations for the Cricket Week began on April 2. The other cricketers are — West Indies tearaway Franklyn Rose, Andrew Caddick and Phil Tufnell of England.

Players apart, ICC president Jagmohan Dalmiya arrived from India last evening to join the ongoing campaign to develop the game globally.

During his three-day visit here, Dalmiya will participate in a series of programmes. He will address a press conference at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. He will also witness the exciting clash between Wasim Akram's Asia XI and Mark Waugh-led Rest of the World XI.

His dynamic colleague David Richards, the chief executive of ICC, is expected to arrive today.

Ravi Shastri, the former Indian captain turned TV commentator, reached the city in the morning.

Meanwhile, two ICC ambassadors — former Pakistani captain Asif Iqbal and ex-Sri Lankan skipper Duleep Mendis — are already in town, busy attending various development programmes.

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See page 12 Col 2



Players and officials of Abahani Limited rejoice after emerging champions in the Nitobanta national football league championship. Abahani drew with arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in the title-deciding match at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. —Star photo