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Amendments to Health Policy, Battalion Ansar Act '95 okayed

The Cabinet yesterday approved amendments to the Health Policy and Battalion Ansar Act 1995, reports UNB.

The Cabinet at a meeting at the Prime Minister's Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair approved the amendments.

The Cabinet also hailed the Prime Minister for her "valuable speech in the famous forum of Harvard University, and in her receiving the prestigious Pearl S Buck award and the key of Lynchburg City".

The council of ministers also warmly greeted the PM on receiving a rare honour through the declaration of 'April 8 as Sheikh Hasina Day' in the US State of Virginia.

6 new HC judges take oath today

Six new judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court will take their oath today, reports BSS.

The additional judges, who had earlier been appointed permanent judges in the same court, will be sworn in by Chief Justice Latifur Rahman at his office in the city at 10.30 am.

The new judges are: Muhammad Latifur Rahman, Muhammad Abdul Quddus, Muhammad Abdul Aziz, Bijon Kumar Das, A B M Khairul Haq and Muhammad Mozammel Hossain.

CEC back home after treatment

By Staff Correspondent
Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena returned home yesterday after treatment in the United States.

He is yet to decide when he would join his office.

The CEC is on leave since November 30 last year. Hena left for the US on February 15. Earlier, he was operated upon in a Bangkok hospital in December last year.

"It all depends on my health condition," Hena said when asked about the possible date of joining. "After receiving treatment at John Hopkins Hospital in the US, I am now feeling better, but the doctors have advised me to take rest for a few more days. Besides, I would be required to have a check-up in the same hospital in June this year."

Replying to a query, the CEC said, he has already been briefed about major developments that took place in the country during his absence.

Asked whether there was any possibility of holding up-

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Our new numbers

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April	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
25	-	6-25 pm
26	5-28 am	-

Prayer Timings

April 25	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-15
Zohr	1-00	1-30
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-25	6-30
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Another Bench embarrassed, CJ forms new HC Bench

By Staff correspondent

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman constituted a new Division Bench in the High Court yesterday for hearing the death reference in Bangabandhu murder case as another Bench felt embarrassed to hear it earlier in the day.

The death reference is likely to appear in the cause list of the new Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin and Justice Khairul Haq today.

Earlier yesterday, the Bench comprising Justice MM Ruhul Amin and Justice Abdul Matin formally expressed embarrassment to hear the death reference.

"Since we are embarrassed to hear the matter (death reference

of Bangabandhu murder case), let the matter be placed before the honourable Chief Justice for necessary order", the Bench said in its order at about 10.30 am. The death reference came before the Bench as item number one in the daily cause list.

The Bench constituted yesterday is the third Bench formed by the CJ since March 30 to hear the case.

The Bench comprising Justice MM Ruhul Amin and Justice A Matin was the second to feel embarrassed to hear the case.

Another Division Bench comprising Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Abdul Aziz constituted to hear

the case also expressed embarrassment on April 10 and sent it to the Chief Justice.

On March 30, the CJ constituted two Criminal Benches exclusively for disposal of death references and capital sentence appeals.

The Bench comprising Justice Ruhul Amin and Justice A Matin is to dispose of death references in cases arising out of 1996 and part of 1997.

The other Bench comprising Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Abdul Aziz is to dispose of the remaining cases of 1997 and those of 1998, ending with the death reference in Bangabandhu murder case.

Special Public Prosecutor

Anisul Haq had earlier tried to mention the death reference in Bangabandhu murder case before four HC benches, but was turned down on different grounds.

It was first mentioned before the Bench comprising Justice Ebadul Haq and Justice Sikder Makhbul Haq on January 16. The Bench advised Haq to go to the Death Reference Bench.

On February 2, it was mentioned before the Bench comprising Justice MM Ruhul Amin and Justice Abdul Matin. The Bench refused to accept the case saying that it was dealing with death reference cases serially, and the

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Mindless movement

Regulations say trucks must be off the road during daytime. But, as it turns out, no one goes by them. Worse still, like the one in picture, they often carry iron rods and other construction materials in total disregard for the safety of commuters.

— Star photo

Thandu terms polls fair, blames party high-ups for defeat

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Apr 24: Both the winner and the loser in the by-election in Rajshahi-5 constituency held on Saturday say the election was free and fair.

Officials in the office of the Returning Officer said they received no allegation of vote rigging.



Nurul Islam Thandu

As many as 51.11 per cent out of a total of 1,89,874 cast their votes in the by-election held.

Independent candidate and general secretary of Charchat upazilla Awami League Raihanul Haque Raihan won the election, bagging 61,465 votes while his rival Awami League runner Nurul Islam Thandu, member of the Awami League central executive committee and a former RUCSU vice-president hailing from Sirajganj, got 31,677 votes.

Thandu blamed betrayal by the party leaders for the defeat. "The party gave me nothing except the symbol 'boat'. Some top leaders betrayed me and some others did not help me, yet others worked against me."

Raihan was neither expelled from Awami League nor his party membership was suspended for contesting the by-polls violating the party decision. No top party leader campaigned for him in the con-

stituency. Only six out of 51 members of the district committee of the party was with him, party sources said.

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim and Food Minister Amir Hossain Annu cancelled their visits to the constituency at the

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Raihanul Haque

Tin Bigha talks open Apr 26 Delhi may extend time for keeping corridor open

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Apr 24: India may favourably consider Bangladesh's request for extending the time for keeping Tin Bigha corridor with Bangladesh open when the issue comes up for discussion at the meeting of Home Secretaries of the two countries here on April 26-27.

Bangladesh Home Minister Mohammed Nasim had made the request to India to keep open the corridor for longer hours than the six at present when he had visited Delhi in January this year.

Official sources here said today that Bangladesh Home Secretary M M Reza would certainly raise the issue once again during his talks with his Indian counterpart.

India, the sources said, is happy with the present arrangement under which Tin Bigha corridor is kept open for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. Still, India is ready to consider

Bangladesh's plea for extending the time for keeping the corridor open for a longer time, they added.

The BJP had earlier opposed handing over the Tin Bigha corridor to Bangladesh in early Nineties.

But during a visit to the corridor yesterday, senior BJP leader and Indian Home Minister L K Advani told mediapersons any party may come to power but a government of the day should honour the decision taken by its predecessor.

"Handing over of Tin Bigha corridor is part of an international agreement and the Indian government will stand by it," Advani said.

The Indian Home Minister further said Bangladesh government was trying to check to activities of some militant groups, which are operating in India's northeastern states, in Bangladesh territory.

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Chernobyl virus may attack again Apr 26

By Staff Correspondent

Information Technology experts are apprehending that Chernobyl virus may again attack millions of computers across the world on April 26.

On April 26 last year millions of computers all over the world including Bangladesh were attacked by a strange virus known as Chernobyl or CIH virus.

However, the possible damage was averted as some world leaders in the field provided remedies immediately after the attack.

CIH virus hits Windows 95 and Windows 98 operating systems by damaging Hard Disk and BIOS. As a result, all files stored in a Hard Disk get omitted.

Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) has asked computer users to take precaution to avert CIH virus attack again.

Computer users could avert the attack in two ways. They could download Anti Virus

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Pulp price goes up Khulna newsprint price may rise further

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, Apr 24: Price of Khulna newsprint may rise further to cope with the price hike of pulp and other raw materials. According to a highly placed source, price of pulp has soared in the international market from 450 dollars to 650 dollars per ton resulting in huge financial loss to Khulna Newsprint Mills. The state-owned mill has no alternative but to go for increasing the price further only for its survival, the source said.

At present, KNM produces two categories of newsprint. The first category is being produced using 90 per cent geewa wood and 10 per cent imported pulp which is now being sold at Tk 19,500 per ton.

The second category is being produced with 20 per cent imported pulp and 80 per cent geewa wood the sale price of which is Tk 25,500 per ton, the source said.

This price level is being maintained from the year 1994 despite devaluations of taka against dollars several times. The source said that proposals have been placed to the au-

thorities concerned for enhancing the prices of the first category from Tk 19,500 to Tk 22,500 and second category from Tk 25,500 to Tk 29,500 per ton for 'surviving economically'.

According to a source at the Sundarbans Forest Division, geewa wood is on verge of extinction due to a lot of reasons including indiscriminate felling of geewa trees.

The reduction in the supply of geewa wood has hit normal output of newsprint. Production has been slashed by about 50 per cent due to irregular supply of geewa wood which is the most important raw material for producing newsprint, said a reliable source in the KNM.

At present, KNM's production has been slashed to 2000 tonnes from over 4000 tonnes per month, the source said. The annual domestic demand for newsprint is nearly one lakh tonnes. KNM is producing 24,000 tonnes, most of which is being used by newspapers, the source said.

A 'silent' eviction drive backed by 2 MPs

By Morshed Ali Khan

The authorities have silently evicted more than 1,500 families living in slums on an 8.2 km stretch of the city flood protection embankment, from Mohammadpur to Mitford.

Sources concerned said the 'negotiated eviction' by Water Development Board (WDB) with cooperation from ruling party MPs Haji Maqbul Hossain and Haji Selim took place over the last two months. A road will be built on the embankment under a Tk eight crore component of the Dhaka Integrated Flood Protection Project (DIFPP) funded by Asian Development

Bank and Government of Bangladesh.

Negotiations are underway to evict in the same way about 2,000 families living on a 3.66 km stretch of the embankment, from Mohammadpur to Gabbital, under the same project.

WDB officials said they paid Tk 2,500 to each evicted family and it cost them a total of Tk 40 lakh. They estimated that about Tk 62 lakh would be paid to the 2,000 families to be evicted in the second phase.

But many evicted families, previously living in the slums under Wards 47 and 48, near Shikdar Women's Medical Col-

lege and Hospital, alleged that they were 'held hostage' until they signed a paper for compensation of Tk 2,500 per family. They said the influential landlords who had rented the slums to them made 'lakh of taka' as compensation on the MPs' recommendations.

Many of these evicted families have either rented other accommodations in Hazaribagh, Lalbagh, Kamrangirchar and Rayerbazar areas or moved to rural areas.

They alleged that WDB's survey was 'grossly biased' which paved the way for 'some

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BIMSTEC meeting opens tomorrow Steps for increasing trade & investment to be discussed

By M Anwarul Haq

Commerce ministers of five BIMSTEC countries begin a two-day meeting in New Delhi tomorrow to focus on facilitation measures for increasing trade, commerce and investment among the members of the new economic grouping.

They are also expected to draw up a possible list on tariff concessions and create free trade zones in the BIMSTEC countries.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil is likely to represent Dhaka in the meet.

The Delhi meeting would be the second ministerial meeting on trade and economic affairs of the three-year old regional organisation aimed at concentrating on increasing economic cooperation in the region. The first meeting was held in Bangkok.

The trade and commerce meeting of BIMSTEC, which

comprises Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand, is expected to review the progress in the field of facilitation measures to improve member countries by reducing tariff and other barriers.

The meeting will also try to find out ways and means to boost trade among the member countries through establishing multi-modal links, including road, rail and airways wherever possible.

Discussions are also expected to take place on identification of products and commodities of each country, which could be exported to other member countries by reducing tariff and other barriers.

The BIMSTEC meeting will provide the opportunity for Bangladesh to place its strategic location as a bridge and a facilitator between the countries of ASEAN and SAARC.

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TU s call strike at Ctg port May 10

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 24: The dock workers and employees of Chittagong port, backed by 22 trade unions, staged demonstration and held a rally at the port today protesting government's decision to draw Tk 150 crore from port fund.

Port activities were disrupted for three hours from 9 am during the agitation programme, port sources said.

Leaders of the 22 trade unions at the rally announced a 24-hour strike at Chittagong port from 8 am on May 10 demanding withdrawal of government's decision to draw money from port fund.

Presided by Mahfuzur Rahman Khan, convener of the alliance of 22 trade unions, the rally was addressed by trade union leaders Shamsul Haq Shafi, Shamsul Alam, Kazi Jalil, Abu Jafor Azad, M A Sattar and Shariat Ullah.

The speakers said the government decided to draw the money from port fund to disrupt port's development works. They demanded immediate withdrawal of the decision.

They also expressed concern over delay in procuring 142 equipment for Chittagong port despite approval by the ECNEC.



Hard rain

Completely soaked, these two school-going girls still try to escape the onslaught of heavy rain near the High Court yesterday.

— Star photo

Clash of peers N'ganj AL claims both victims as party activists

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 24: The district Awami League today claimed that the two victims of Friday's clash between followers of two peers were AL activists.

District AL chairperson Prof Nazma Rahman said, Abdul Haque, 20, and Abul Hossain, 35, the two AL workers were killed in police firing.

She was addressing a public meeting this afternoon at Modanpur here.

The meeting, presided over by Abdur Razzak, was also addressed by Md Nazimuddin, Mobarak Hossain and Md Nasiruddin.

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Extortion Bus-truck owners demand tripartite talks

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association has called for a tripartite meeting of representatives of the government, the owners and workers to formulate a guideline to solve 'extortion problem' in the transport sector.

The Association also put forward a 10-point 'recommendation and demand'. These include setting up of a monitoring cell by the government and formation of extortion eradication committee at district level.

The association leaders gave the call and placed the recommendations at a press conference yesterday at the Jatiya Press Club. S M Ziaul Haq, Chairman, and Faruque Talukder, General Secre-

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Strike at BATB halts production from Apr 22

By Staff Correspondent

Manufacturing operations of British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) remained suspended from April 22 due to a strike by its employees.

A press release issued by BATB yesterday said that 'unionised employees' went on strike as 22 employees were terminated as per provisions of the existing labour laws of the country.

"As a responsible company, BATB continues to hold discussions with the union leaders to resolve the issue and is confident of resuming its normal operations soon," the press release said.

The company assured its business partners and consumers that sufficient stocks are being supplied to the market.

APAC calls hartal in Sylhet today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 24: The All Party Action Committee (APAC), agitating here for immediate withdrawal of decision to name the buildings and dormitories in the Shahjalal University, has called a day-long hartal in the Sylhet district tomorrow to press for its 4-point demands.

The demands include removal of the VC and Professor Jafar Iqbal and naming of the halls after the companions of the Prophet Shahjalal (RA).

A procession was brought out this afternoon in the town with a call to make the dawn to dusk hartal a success. District leaders of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat, Khelafat Majlis and others took part. Later a brief rally was also held at the court point in the evening.