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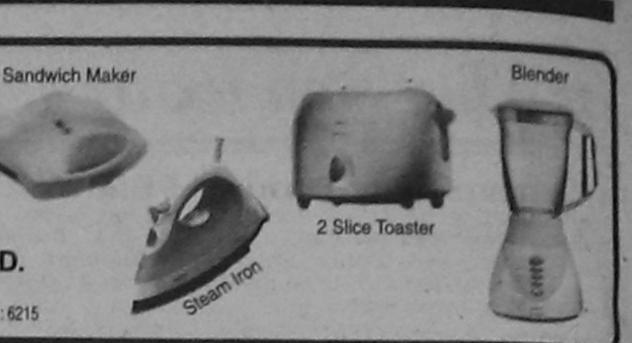
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Queen honours

Liz Taylor

embroidered frock coat and rid-

ing in a wheelchair, actress

Elizabeth Taylor went to Buck-

ingham Palace today to be made

a Dame Commander of the Or-

der of the British Empire, the

distaff equivalent of a knight,

Taylor with the award for ser-

vices to the entertainment in-

dustry and to charity, including

her prodigious fundraising for

ried star — who uncharacteris-

tically arrived on time - said

she wished former husband

Richard Burton could have been

Palace once before, years ago,

with Richard, when he received

the OBE," she said, referring to

his elevation to Officer of the

Order of the British Empire "I

anything else that's happened

necklace and pearl and dia-

mond earrings, the actress wore

one of the large diamond rings

lavished on her by Burton, who

where an elevator carried her

wheelchair up to the ballroom

See page 11 col 6

AL to observe

Hasina's

home-coming

day today

and its front organisations will

Bangladesh Awami League

to me in my life," she added.

"Today doesn't compare to

Along with a heavy pearl

Taylor, 68, was allowed to

miss him so much."

Afterwards, the much-mar-

"I came to Buckingham

Queen Elizabeth II presented

reports AP.

AIDS research.

LONDON, May 16: Clad in an

Prime Minister says

People of all faiths have equal rights

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has guaranteed freedom of all people to perform their respective religious rites and live in peaceful co-exis-tence, reports UNB. "We believe in democracy

and secularism ... People of all religious faiths have got full freedom to perform and culture their religious rites in this land." She said while addressing the members of Buddhist community at her office on the occasion of holy Buddha Purn-

The Prime Minister said Buddha's philosophy was love. welfare and happiness of mankind, which is also the essence of all regions. Those who think of the country must also think of love and welfare of the human beings.

About contribution of people irrespective of region, creed and culture to the war of liberation in 1971, she said it is the responsibility of all to build up the country as an abode of peace and prosperity so that every citizen gets the benefit of indepen-

dence. Hasina said the present government has taken special care for backward sections of the society so that they could enjoy equal rights and facilities in education and jobs and equal honour in society. She said various development programmes were taken up and financial assistance was extended for development of minority groups and their places of worships.

Amidst cheers, she said the government allocated one bigha

of land for construction of Buddhist Monastery at Merul-Badda area in the capital. Besides, seven representatives from different tribes are enjoying the status of cabinet minister or junior ministers. Two Ambassadors - one from Buddhist and another from Christian communities - were appointed as Bangladesh's Ambassadors to Bhutan and Nepal.

The Prime Minister announced donation of Tk one crore to the welfare fund of the Buddhist community.

Earlier, leaders of Buddhist community praised the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in resolving national problems like sharing of the Ganges water with India and insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts through historic peace accord and anti-nuclear mission to India and Pakistan that earned her international lau-

The Buddhist leaders resolved that they are united behind the leadership of Sheikh Hasina and ready to make any amount of sacrifice at the call

of her. Those who spoke on the occasion were Ms Ethin Rakhain MP, Rakhal Chandra Barua of Buddhist Association, ML Barua of Buddhist Federation. Dr Pranab Kumar Barua of Bouddha-Kristi Prachar Sangha and Dr Shukumar Barua of Buddhist Youth Welfare Association.

A group of Buddhist monks recited from their holy book wishing welfare of the country and the Prime Minister.

Concern over move for mass promotions

By Special Correspondent

Amendment to Brick Fields Act

Vested group prevents

Cabinet from taking

tough stand

By Special Correspondent

low grade coal and bamboo hamper the government's on-

The BCS Coordination Committee (26 cadres) executive committee has expressed concern over the reported moves for mass promotions of 400 senior assistant secretaries as deputy secretary and 150 deputy secretaries as joint-secretary in the Secretariat.

The committee in a resolution after an emergency meeting on Monday expressed its deep resentment over what it said the move to promote so many officials to appease BCS (Administration) cadres instead of promotions through open competition and on merit, ignoring a parliamentary standing committee's directive in this regard.

The meeting observed that the BCS (Administration) cadres already have 75 per cent and 70 per cent posts of deputy secretary and joint secretary reserved for them under a 1998 policy, respectively. Already they occupy 84 per cent of the posts of deputy secretary and above in the Secretariat, according to a press release of the committee yesterday.

It said that the committee

A powerful lobby inside the

government has prevented the

Cabinet from approving an

amendment to Brick Fields Act

of 1989, providing for tough

penalties to offenders who burn

The amendment sought to

reduce air and water pollution

in rural areas due to burning of

low-grade coal with high sulfur

content, responsible for 'yellow

rain', something that took

place at a Patuakhali village

bamboo stumps or roots are

creating pressure on the scant

stumps is a cheaper option for

brick kiln owners but it could

cause non-regeneration of

warded by the Ministry of Envi-

ronment and Forests (MOEF)

for approval at its regular meet-

raise penalties from tk 50,000

to tk 800,000 and two years im-

prisonment on charges of burn-

and bamboo stump and tyre.

ing fire wood, low grade coal

the forest and environment of-

ficials to prosecute the offend-

ers besides the Deputy Com-

missioners. Currently only the

DC is authorised to prosecute

months to prepare the amend-

ment, preparing it and have it

vetted from the Law Ministry,

The MOEF had taken 22

It also proposed to empower

The amendment was for-

Among others, it proposed to

bamboo in the countryside.

ing on Monday.

the offenders.

the sources said

forest resources. Burning of tyre

pollutes the air. Use of bamboo said.

Burning of fire-wood and

stumps in their kilns.

last month

In a separate press release, the Police Service Association also reacted sharply to the move for mass promotions. Expressing concern, it said the move aims at giving benefits to a special cadre, which is against justice and fair play. Similar promotions were given in 1992 by passing rules. Higher pay was given to them in 1995.

The move will create frustration and anger among all the services, it said and pleaded for keeping all the posts in Secretariat from deputy secretary and above open to competition and merit of all cadres. It also urged the government to fill the vacancies in police administration from Inspector to Additional IGP through promotions.

(east) DMP.

would hold a rally of 26 cadres at the Engineers' Institution at 5:15 p.m. on May 24 to press for cancellation of the process for mass promotions and upgradation of 321 posts of BCS (Administrative) cadres.

The statement was issued by Mokhlesur Rahman, secretary general of the Bangladesh Police Service Association and DC

When it came up as a routine

matter before the weekly Cabi-

net meeting on Monday it came

under fire from as many as

going development work before

its term expires in July next

formed a committee to examine

the amendment . Headed by Sci-

ence and Technology Minister

Lt. Gen (retd) Nuruddin Khan,

the committee would include

representatives from the Indus-

tries and MOEF. It was however,

not given any time frame to

complete its review, the sources

Khashru briefs

President

By Staff Correspondent

Khashru yesterday briefed the

President about the ruling party

position on appointment of a

new chief election commis-

Daily Star that he met the Pres-

ident at 10 am. He said he had a

different issue other than ap-

pointment new CEC to discuss

minister however admitted,

"Well, I have briefed the Presi-

dent about the ruling party

move for a dialogue with the

opposition and how it was

foiled by the BNP chairperson."

But replying to a query, the

with the President.

Law Minister Abdul Matin

The Law Minister told The

They argued that it would

In the end, the Cabinet



- Star photo

Opposition procession demanding resignation of govt

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday brought out a mass procession in the city demanding resignation of the government and trial of the ministers, who reportedly threatened the judges.

Secretaries general of BNP. Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote led the procession that paraded different city streets chanting antigovernment slogans.

They addressed a rally at Paltan Maidan before bring out the procession.

Addressing the rally, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan asked the government to quit power immediately or face dire consequences.

Replying to AL's allegation that the opposition parties are conspiring to come to power through backdoor, Bhuiyan said the demands for resignation of this "corrupt, incompe-

tent, and anti-people" government and holding of early national election are democratic and the BNP has no desire to go to power through backdoor.

He told the ruling AL to step down from power immediately and declare election to prove its popularity. The Awami League will be washed away if the future election is free and fair, Bhuiyan said.

Mannan Bhuiyan blasted the role of some officials and employees of the Radio and Television and asked them to maintain neutrality.

JP secretary general Naziur Rahman Manjur said there can't be any discussion with the present government on appointing a CEC because it has lost its right to stay in power.

The opposition will not sit with the Prime Minister, but with the President, he said. Jamaat secretary general Matiur Rahman Nizami said

the statement made by Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria clearly proved that the government wanted to stage a drama in the name of dialogue with the

Presided over by city BNP president Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, it was addressed, among others, by BNP leader Abdus Salam and Kazi Abul Bashar, JP leader Saifur Rahman and Taiubur Rahman, Jamaat leaders ATM Azharul Islam and Jashimuddin Sarkar, 10J leader Abdur Rab Yusufi and DL leader Saifuddin Ahmed Moni.

The meeting over, several thousands leaders and workers of the four parties brought out a big procession that paraded Dainik Bangla, Fakirerpool, Naya Paltan, Bijoynagar and Topkhana and ended in front of the Jatiya Press Club. No untoward incident was reported.

CJ critical of failure to try war criminals

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman is seriously critical about the war crimes and the failure to try the criminals, but expects Bangladesh to ratify the Rome Statue for establishing International Criminal Court that

can do the job, reports UNB. "Unfortunately, we failed to try the perpetrators who committed such crimes," he said apparently about the failure of the successive governments in holding trial for the offences like killing, raping and causing sufferings of innocent people in

"Even the international community failed to use its available machinery to deal with the situation either with a view to terminating the gross violations of human rights which were occurring or to deal with the threat to international peace which they constituted."

He said : "We cannot forget the fact that Bangladesh was created after a protracted war of liberation wherein millions of people were killed, thousands of women raped and sufferings of the innocent men and women knew no bounds."

The Chief Justice made the observations while inaugurating a two-day national conference on "International Criminal Court and Ratification by Bangladesh" at a local hotel yesterday afternoon.

of human rights was perpetrated in many parts of the world systematically or in preplanned manner.

Although much progress has been made in the protection of human rights worldwide, the disturbing reality is that people who killed, tortured and raped systematically or on a massive scale are still likely to escape

punishment. Besides the atrocities committed by Pakistan in 1971, there were such incidents in Vietnam, Cambodia and Korea, where neither the national system nor the world community could bring to justice those responsible for such crimes of genocide, he said.

It is indeed, the Chief Justice said, gratifying to note that at long last the international community recognised the importance of setting up of a permanent International Criminal Court to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes like genocide and crimes against humanity.

So far 96 countries have signed the Rome Statute and only nine ratified. Ratification by 60 states is needed for establishing the court in the Hague. Bangladesh is one of the signatories, but yet to ratify it.

Asian Network for International Criminal Court (ANICC) in cooperation with Ain O Salish Kendra is organising the conference in their bid to pursue the governments to ratify such a court which will deal See page 11 col 7

Honest, efficient person to be made CEC: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night said an honest and efficient person would be nominated as Chief Election Commissioner, reports UNB.

She said this while holding a meeting with a 14-member delegation of Jatiya Party (M-M) led by its chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju.

The Prime Minister said with the resignation of Mohammad Abu Hena the Election Commission virtually fell infractuous and said the EC be reconstituted soon appointing a new CEC.

nominate a consensus CEC, Hasina said she had invited Leader of the Opposition to disdemocracy.

ministers and Awami League leaders to discuss the issue with the Opposition at their respective levels, but they did not re-

The JP leaders said after Khaleda Zia's statement at Kurigram public meeting the Prime Minister had no option but to move ahead as per Constitution.

"Jatiya Party now want that died in 1984. The couple marthe Prime Minister take step as ried and divorced twice between the Constitution dictates," the 1964 and 1976. JP leaders said. Emerging from the meeting use a palace side entrance.

Anwar Hossain Manju told newsmen that they requested the Prime Minister to reconstitute the EC and appoint CEC as per constitutional provision.

About Khaleda's rejection of planned dialogue with the government, he said by doing this she proved that she even did not listen to her own partymen.

The meeting was attended by Sardar Amzad Hossain, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Adv Fazle Rabbi MP, Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu MP. Monirul Hug Chowdhury, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto MP, Mustafizur Rahman MP. Sahadat Hossain MP. Golam Hossain MP, Golam Fa-Saved Tarek.

observe Sheikh Hasina's homerook Ovi MP. Abdur Rahim and

coming day today, a party press release said, reports BSS. On this day in 1981, Sheikh Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu and now the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, returned home from exile.

Leaders and workers of Bangladesh Awami League and its front organizations will greet their leader at 9 am today. She will be given a grand reception at 3 pm to mark the historic occasion, the press release

Bus collision kills 3 in Narsingdi

From Our Correspondent NARSINGDI, May 16: At least three people died and 15 others injured in a road accident near Raipura Mahmudabad bridge on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway today.

According to police and witnesses, the accident occurred when a Dhaka bound bus from Bhairab collided with a microbus coming from opposite direction at about 10:30 pm. leaving three passengers dead on the spot and injuring 15 oth-

The identity of the deceased could not be known immedi-

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Of the injured, five were ad-

mitted to Raipura thana health complex while others to private

A case was filed with Raipura police station in this

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Meghnaghat project: PDB blames AES for stubbornness

By Staff Correspondent

The Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday said that its' dispute over the Meghnaghat Power Plant project site with US power company AES could not be resolved even after 13 hours of meeting due to stubbornness of AES.

In an official explanation regarding the news on AES-PDB dispute published in various newspapers Monday PDB said that AES had been declining to take over the Meghnaghat first phase land site on various pretexts, including that the development works there had flaws, since January 3. On Sunday, AES filed a letter

to the Secretary for Power expressing its' frustrations about PDB's rigid stance regarding resolving the Meghnaghat crisis. AES alleged that PDB deliberately and repeatedly differed with AES on drafting an agreement Saturday last.

The PDB explanation said yesterday, to ensure whether the site had any flaws, PDB's consultant Mott MacDonald tested the site and certified that the works were up to the standard. Later, PDB assigned two international experts- Dr. VM Sharma and Dastidar- to verify the land test reports. They also opined that the works were said. flawless.

Last Saturday, under the auspices of the State Minister for Power, PDB-AES met to resolve the crisis. During this

meeting, AES submitted a draft agreement outlining a demand of US 10 million dollars to undertake "so-called remedial works" for the project site. PDB then said that since there were no flaws in the site, PDB would not agree to waste any money for this purpose. However, for the sake of an agreement, the

Kamal visits CCCI office under police protection From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 16: Situation at Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) has taken a dramatic turn today when its ousted president Kamal Uddin Ahmed visited the chamber office this

afternoon, sources concerned

Kamal who claims himself as the CCCI president, went to the chamber office under police protection at 3-20 pm today. But he could not enter the president's room as it was locked and some chamber directors were staying in the conference room, chamber sources

Kamal then looked for the secretary of CCCI to open the president's room, but he was not available at that time. See page 11 col 6

Energy Ministry agreed to pay US 4.3 million dollars.

"In other words, AES does not want the government or PDB to know how it would spend the remedial money," the explanation said, accusing AES of foiling the combined move of PDB and the Energy Ministry to resolve the crisis. AES also walked out from the meeting keeping the Power Secretary and PDB chairman waiting.

Correction of a draft agreement through discussion is a standard practice, PDB said, adding that it was AES which proposed some suspicious conditions which PDB found disagreeable. These were: a. obtaining 4.5 million dollar from PDB in the name of the socalled flaws, b. conducting remedial works as per one-sided assessment, and c. conducting remedial works in a non-transparent manner.

PDB further claimed that it had always been cooperating regard.

During the amendment of

the draft agreement, PDB proposed AES to conduct the remedial tasks together. AES declined this proposal. Later, PDB chairman again proposed, remedial works should be done in a competitive and transparent way". Again AES declined.

due to lack of infra-structure with AES on all aspects to help progress of the project and refuted AES's allegations in this

He said widespread violation the Statute for establishing

Referring to her initiative to

cuss the matter and set a new trend in democracy upholding the spirit of parliamentary

From page 1

point and be able to connect the

eastern part of Bhutan where

the bulk of the Bhutanese peo-

Bhutan has great feelings for

the people of Bangladesh and

there was a lot of shared feel-

ings of closeness, mutuality and

He expressed the hope that

tourist traffic and exchange of

were allowed into Bhutan. We

want low volume, high quality

day for tourists from other

countries so that it does not

have a unplanned flow of people

who could pollute the eco-sys-

The Bhutanese foreign min-

ister hoped that the SAARC

Summit "had a brief halt" and

that technical cooperation in

all areas would continue among

Summit would be held, Thinley

said: " I am the foreign minister

of only one of the seven coun-

tries, and I cannot, in my wis-

never hosted a SAARC Summit

facilities, is now ready for it

and expects to hold the 2003

Sub-regional cooperation

He said Bhutan, which has

dom, answer that question."

Asked when the SAARC

tem and natural heritage.

Bhutan'charges 200 dollars a

a common cultural affinity.

ple live.

said.

country.

Bhutan.

tourism.

the members.

She has already instructed

Bhutan for bus link among Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India holds great powould allow a shorter passage tential, said Thinley and hoped

that a concrete concerted action

The Bhutanese foreign minister asked the Bangladesh A Bhutanese trade delegabusiness community to tap the tion will have a detailed disgrowing market potential of his cussions on transit, bus service country. He said products in and expansion of items on the garment sector, ceramic, tabletrading list with Bangladesh ware, leather, pharmaceuticals, officials in Dhaka shortly, he battery, electronics and cosmetics could find a good market in Thinley said the people of

plan would be evolved.

Bhutan currently enjoys an overwhelming surplus balance of trade. Dhaka's exports last year was only one million dollars while Thimpu exported goods worth nearly six million dollars

people would increase between Thinley, who has the disthe two neighbours. "Perhaps, tinction of being the first we could together market the Chairman of the Bhutanese Council of Ministers following great sandshore and sunshine amendments to the Constituof your country along with the scenic mountains to encourage tion by King Jigme Wangchuk, said his country believed in a people to visit each other's policy of peace and had no irritant with any country.

Thinley said Bangladesh is He said the problem that one of the three countries enthey have with Nepal would be joying visa-free entry into resolved through negotiations.

be discussed.

He said that his Nepalese counterpart will meet him in Kathmandu next week where talks on the matter of settlement of 90,000 people who have taken shelter in refugee camps would

Bhutan, he said, treasures its culture and its heritage just as Bangladesh does. "We only allow tourism flourish in an orderly manner so that our ecosystem and our culture is protected. Last year, only 6000 foreign (mainly Western) tourists