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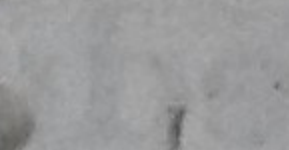
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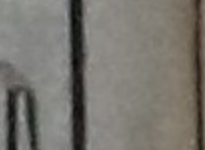
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Khaleda hosts iftar party for diplomats

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia hosted an iftar party at Sheraton Hotel yesterday in honour of the diplomats stationed in Dhaka.

High Commissioners, ambassadors, mission chiefs and chiefs of different international organisations attended the iftar followed by a dinner, said a press release.

The BNP chairperson exchanged pleasantries with the diplomats and the distinguished guests. Sources said BNP leaders who attended the programme held informal talks on the country's latest political situation.

They also briefed the diplomats and chiefs of donor agencies of BNP's plan for movement and preparation for next general election. The diplomats also enquired about BNP's views on various vital issues.

Ambassador of the State of See page 11 col 1



Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Khaleda Zia hosted an iftar party for foreign diplomats posted in the country at her 29 Minto Road residence yesterday. -- Star photo

2 army jawans rape young girl in train compartment

MYMENSINGH, Dec 3: Two Army jawans allegedly raped a young girl in a compartment of a Mymensingh-bound train from Parbatipur Saturday night and tossed her out of the running train near Islampur station in Jamalpur district, reports UNB.

The girl, who sustained injuries, narrated the "misdeed" of the Army men to a magistrate. She was awaiting medical test.

Narrating her ordeal, the girl in her statement under Section 164 to Magistrate Giasuddin Moghul said that she was coming to Mymensingh from Parbatipur by train on Saturday night with her younger brother, Nazrul Islam.

After the train boarded the ferry from Phulchharihat, two jawans of the Army befriended the girl. As they reached Bahadurabadhat, the Army men proposed that the girl and her brother accompany them in the next 8 down train instead of the inter-district Ekata train. She agreed.

The jawans told her that they were coming from Rajshahi on completion of training and with them were a Havildar and a Lance Naik. Late in the night, they boarded the train along with the See page 11 col 4

Autarky not the limit

Better seed, management may provide at least 15pc extra yield, researchers say

By Reaz Ahmad

The country can improve on the autarky achieved this year and increase rice production by another 15 per cent, if not more, with the help of high quality seed and better seed management.

Use of clean seed and proper seed management could provide nine and six per cent extra yield respectively, according to a survey conducted by reputed rice researchers.

In 1999-2000 Bangladesh produced 243 lakh metric tons of food-grains for the first time in history, matching the annual consumption requirement of 130 million people in the country.

A recent survey conducted in seven agro-ecological zones of the country found that 82 per cent of the farmers use seed that they retain from their own harvests. The survey, conducted under an IIRI project in the country, found another ten per cent using seeds purchased or obtained through exchange.

Only five per cent of the farmers surveyed obtain seeds from the public sector and three per cent from private traders. Peasants collecting seeds from the NGOs are few and far between.

Production potential also suffers because of the low-quality seeds that the farmers retain and their poor management in the field, the survey points out.

Unless special emphasis is given on improvement of seed quality, the country has little option for increase in production, Dr Mahbub Hossain, one of the researchers involved in the survey, recently told The Daily Star.

Now that the country has achieved self-sufficiency in food production, there should be

serious thoughts on improvement of seed quality, the head of the Social Science Division of the International Rice Research Institute said.

Despite a fall in birth rate, the country's population would continue to grow by a certain degree for its huge population base, Dr Hossain pointed out. Increasing production is the only option for a country with limited land resources like Bangladesh, he added.

"In rural Bangladesh, per capita income still hovers around 250 US dollars a year. Demand for rice would continue to rise until the income level reaches 400 US dollars by the year 2010," the former director general of BIDS, a local think-tank, said.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), every fourth person in Bangladesh is an ultra-poor. It means one-fourth of the population consumes less than the required calorie intake per day.

Researchers argue that with rise in income level, people's food consumption capacity would also go up and that's precisely the reason why Bangladesh has to increase food production.

The survey conducted in Habiganj, Gazipur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Chuadanga and Barisal reveals that an overwhelming 74 per cent of the farmers who retain seeds from their own harvest believe that quality of the retained seeds is better than the ones available in the market. Besides, there is the question of availability, too.

Farmers are, however, aware that the seeds they retain are not of perfect quality. They know about See page 11 col 4

Council meeting

BNP asks 5 Khulna leaders to explain

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 3: Five leaders of BNP have been asked to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against them for forming a 101-member districts committee on Friday violating constitution of the party.

The leaders today received the show-cause notice signed by party's Secretary-General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan. They have been asked to come up with their reply by December 5 or face the consequence as the constitution of the party permits.

We will definitely give reply to show-cause notices in due time explaining the reason for convening the council meeting, the leaders said.

The show-cause notices were served on Advocate Ghazi Abdul Bari, Shaharuzzaman Mortuza, Advocate GA Sabur, Syed Shahidullah and Kausar Ali Jamaddar. All these five top-ranking leaders of BNP's Khulna chapter convened the council meeting of the district committee on Friday despite the existence of a convening committee which has the approval of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The formation of the 101-member committee on Friday at the instruction of former speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali MP and city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman angered party activists at grassroots level, the worsening the rift and deepening the crisis.

Activists loyal to both Razzak-Tayeb and Ashraf-Manju factions have taken position against each other since Saturday in front of the party's city office.

Terrorists clash at Karwan Bazar

By Staff Correspondent

Panic gripped Karwanbazar market area as two groups of terrorists clashed for about 15 minutes, firing gunshots and exploding numerous homemade crackers yesterday evening.

Traffic on the nearby Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue came to a halt for sometime during the clash.

Assisted by some club-wielding local youths, Ansars stationed at Karwanbazar chased down a 15-year-old boy and badly beat him up.

Witnesses said the clash ensued just after iftar when a gang of about 12 criminals from Tejgunipara area attacked the "Muripatti", trying to extort money from the sellers of puff and See page 11 col

Satkhira AL won't agitate for Asadul's release

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 3: Leaders of both district and city committees of Satkhira Awami League have refused to go for any movement to secure release of Kulia UP Chairman Asadul Huq who was recently arrested from Jessore airport.

Asadul Huq is an accused in a case recorded under Public Safety Act with Sadar Thana for launching an armed attack on the Dainik Satkhira Chitra office that left its editor Anisur Rahim severely wounded.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of both committees on Saturday.

The party leaders were of the opinion to cancel primary membership for his alleged involvement in criminal activities.



The Ministry of Social Welfare and the National Forum for the Disabled organised a rally in the city yesterday to mark the International Day of Disabled Persons. Students of different specialised institutions for the disabled took part in the rally. -- Star photo

Quest for a 'scientific guideline' to treat snake bite patients

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 3: A move is underway to formulate a guideline, first of its kind in the country, for 'uniform scientific treatment' of snake bite patients in all hospitals, sources concerned said.

Under the move, a training module will also be prepared to ensure proper training of students of all medical colleges to treat snake bite patients.

The guideline, likely to be prepared shortly, will be placed before the director general health for approval, said the key man behind the move, Prof Dr MA Faiz of medicine department in Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

"But before that, we want to introduce training module in all medical colleges," Prof Faiz told this correspondent.

A team of doctors from 13 medical college hospitals in the country, led by Prof Faiz, has taken the move. Faiz received an award in May this year from the Ministry of Science and Technology for his pioneering work in the field of snake bite treatment at CMCH. See page 11 col 1

Court Case and Disconnection of Water Line Started

For non-payment of DWASA bills

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JS body recommends compensation for fire victims in garment units

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce yesterday recommended a compensation package providing minimum Tk 100,000 and insurance facilities for each of the victims of fire incidents in garment factories and other accidents at workplaces, reports UNB.

It also called for amending the workers' safety acts by updating those to protect the rights of industrial workers.

Chaired by Raziuddin Ahmed Raju, the meeting was attended by committee members Meer Sakawat Ali Daru, Master Mojibur Rahman, Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui and Mosharraf Hossain.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil, Commerce Secretary Ghulam Rahman and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) president Anisur Rahman Sinha were also present.

The meeting, while reviewing the problems facing the country's largest export-earning sector, felt the urgency of a fool proof fire resistance mechanism in garment factories and in the planned garment complex.

5 officials of Ctg Customs House ordered stand release

CHITTAGONG, Dec 3: Chittagong Customs House today ordered stand release of five officials who have been engaged in a movement against the authority over the issue of transfer of officials in September, reports UNB.

The officials are Chief Appriser Mashiul Islam Maruf, Apprises Moniruzzaman, Zakir Hossain Chowdhury, Zakir Hossain and Emdadul Islam. The first two officials were engaged in movement under the banner of 'Awami League'.

The authorities transferred 74 officials in two phases in September for alleged corruption. Immediately thereafter they went on strike and kept the Customs House inoperative for three days.

Subsequently, under pressure from the management 30 of the transferred officials joined their new office. Others again started agitating against the transfer order.

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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