

# The Daily Star

COMMITTED TO  
People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XI No. 44

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 11, 2001

www.dailystarnews.com

FALGUN 16, 1407 BS

ZELHAJ 3, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 6.00

## BNP urges PM to resign soon after her return from S Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuyan yesterday urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign soon after her return from Saudi Arabia.

Referring to PM's comment in Saudi Arabia that her party is ready for polls before June 12, the BNP leader further said his party hopes that the PM would also advise the President to dissolve the Jatiya Sangsad and hand over power to a caretaker government to pave the way for general elections in May.

He was talking to a group of newsmen at the official residence of the leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

BNP chief Khaleda in her meeting with President Shahabuddin Ahmed on March 7 demanded the elections in May. Khaleda's demand followed the PM's recent offer of election the day the Opposition leader wants.

The prime minister is expected return home tonight.

## Chief Whip's son, again

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Whip's son Sadeq Abdullah, once again came into spotlight firing on a Pajero jeep that was carrying the family members of a top businessman in the capital's posh Gulshan area Friday night.

In the Pajero that came under fire at about 12:30 am near the "Wonderland" children's park at Gulshan were businessman Nurul Haq Shikdar's wife and two daughters who were going to Baridhara from Dhanmondi.

Witnesses said Sadeq, the eldest son of Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, and his associates fired shots on the jeep from a car after they failed to stop it.

When contacted, Sadeq Abdullah told UNB that it was an outcome of "misunderstanding as the jeep dashed my car twice and I got frightened."

Shikdar's family and witnesses  
SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

# AL ready for polls before June 12, says Hasina

BSS, Madina

Awami League is ready to seek people's mandate in polls before June 12, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here Friday night.

Hasina, who is scheduled to return home today after ending her Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, also said her party is ready to go for general elections as early as possible.

"We want that the election is held at the earliest possible time as people of Bangladesh can cast their votes conveniently only in dry season," she added.

The Prime Minister also president of the ruling Bangladesh Awami League, was addressing a gathering of the expatriate Bangalees who assembled at the conference room of the Green Palace Hotel from various parts of Saudi Arabia including Jeddah, Makkah and Madina.

Hasina's comments came following demand of the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia to hold election by May.

The PM said that her party launched arduous struggle and relentless movement for restoration of the voting rights of the people.

She said in the run-up to the so-called general election of February 15, 1996 the BNP government killed at least 140 people of her party.

Hasina said the opposition was out to create a law and order situation in the capital only to discredit her government.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh has excellent relations with Saudi

Arabia from where the biggest amount of remittance goes to her country.

She said the Saudi labour minister would shortly visit Bangladesh to study areas of cooperation between the two countries.

She called upon the Bangladeshi expatriates to send their money through banks and not through 'Hundi'. "Sending money through hundi is not only risky but also detrimental to national economy."

Turning back to the August 15 massacre, the Prime Minister said it is comparable only to the Karbala tragedy. But in Karbala women and children were not so brutally killed as was done in August 15, 1975.

She said through holding trial of the killers of Bangabandhu, the nation has got rid of a great stigma and curse.

While conveying her warm Hajj and Eid greetings to the Bangladeshi expatriates, the Prime Minister referred to the incident in which 52 intended Hajj pilgrims were cheated in the country.

She told the audience how she intervened into the matter and finally enabled those 52 to perform the holy Hajj. She conveyed her deep gratitude to the Saudi King and his government for extending allout help and assistance.

She told the audience how she intervened into the matter and finally enabled those 52 to perform the holy Hajj. She conveyed her deep gratitude to the Saudi King and his government for extending allout help and assistance.

## Liaison body meeting falls thru' as JP refuses to attend

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A scheduled meeting of the Central Liaison Committee (CLC) of the BNP-led opposition alliance could not be held yesterday as Jatiya Party, a key partner in the combine, refused to attend following opposition leader Khaleda Zia's unilateral demand for general elections in May.

Sources said the CLC was scheduled to meet at the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament at 5 p.m. yesterday.

Fresh date for the CLC meeting is yet to be announced.

Jatiya Party felt ignored as Khaleda made unilateral demand to the President for general elections in May without consulting the allies, the sources said.

However, BNP Secretary-General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told

The Daily Star yesterday the meeting could not be held 'as most of the representatives of the liaison committee are yet to return to Dhaka'.

Bhuiyan said the CLC will meet within a couple of days. He denied any commotion among the alliance partners.

City Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami ATM Azharul Islam agreed with Bhuiyan.

Acting Secretary-General of Islami Oikya Jote Ahmed Abdul Qader said they were scheduled to attend the meeting but suddenly came to know that it had been postponed.

However, JP Presidium member Kazi Firoz Rashid said the Presidium will meet today to discuss, among other issues, the BNP chairperson's demand for elections by May, shar

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## JP may suggest BNP not to act alone

STAR REPORT

Jatiya Party led by Ershad is likely to send a letter to its ally BNP tomorrow urging it to define the 'election formula' and not to take any decision alone on suggestions regarding formation of a caretaker government and reform in the Election Commission.

The JP Presidium will hold a meeting at the central office of the party this morning in this regard. The meeting is likely to take some resolutions regarding the upcoming elections, party sources said.

Without approval of the Central Liaison Committee (CLC) no component party of the four-party alliance should launch any election campaign on their own, the sources said.

The suggestions on formation of caretaker government and reforms in Election Commission should be approved by top leaders of the four

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Hostages' hope for early release seems fading

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"We are getting weaker and tired," "Our health is deteriorating," "A few beers if ... to help pass the time". These are some excerpts from the notes received earlier from the three European hostages now passing the 24th day in captivity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The notes reflect that the victims have almost given up hopes for early release. The eighth item on the wish list of one of the hostages is "freedom!"

They go to sleep at 6 pm as soon as darkness descends on the dense forest, to "wake up at 9 pm for a little snack and some food, to sleep again from about 10 pm to 6 am 7 am, when daylight comes," wrote Torben in a letter to his wife.

They are sick of the jungle life for over three weeks now in the Kalapahar area, known for various diseases including diarrhoea, SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



A tribal family takes the road to Rangamati yesterday, leaving their home in Kalapahar area. Widespread fear of a military offensive to secure release of three European hostages has prompted many to flee their villages.

## No breakthrough in hostage crisis Leaflets seeking help of local people distributed again

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, From Rangamati

The hostage crisis in Rangamati passed the 23rd day yesterday without any breakthrough as there was no further contact between the authorities and the tribal abductors.

The authorities yesterday distributed leaflets among people in Kalapahar area where the three European engineers Tarbun Mikkelsen, Nils Bulgaard and Tim Selby are believed to be held hostage. The three Europeans were working as consultants for

reconstruction of a road in the hills under a Danish assistance.

"This has gone on for too long, help us secure release of the three innocent men. Please help them", read the leaflets written in Bangla, English and Chakma languages.

See Editorial on page 4

The appeal headlined, "We need your help", added, "We want to hear from anyone who has any information on where the men are now or who can help us talk to the kidnappers".

It said, "Torben is a father of children, Tim is a young man who has a full life to lead and Nils is a grandfather. They have all chosen to devote their lives to help people less fortunate than themselves."

"They were in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to help improve the quality of life of all hill people. No ransom will be paid as this will reward criminal activity and lead to further such incidents", it said.

British experts and the Danish envoy in Bangladesh were also there during the leaflet distribution.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

Horns of Dilemma  
Column: Between the Lines  
Kuldip Nayar

Law and Our Rights 5

Thoughts of International Women's Day 2001; Safe custody in Bangladesh; Law and practice

Business 6

Red tape, political ambivalence impede privatisation of SOEs, Prothom Alo roundtable told

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 11		6.06 pm
Mar 12	6-11 am	

## Prayer Timings

March 11

	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-20	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-10	6-15
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



Bangladesh striker Musa Miah (R) tries to weave his way past two Japanese players during their Prime Minister Gold Cup 2001 hockey championship outing at the Moulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday. The match ended 1-1.

## Hosts held by Japan

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh were denied a win by Japan in the Prime Minister Gold Cup Hockey Tournament that started yesterday.

They played out a 1-1 draw at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium. Bangladesh took the lead in the 55th minute from a penalty corner. Mahbul Alam scored the goal.

But the Japanese didn't waiver in their effort to grab an equaliser. And three minutes before the final whistle skipper Yamahori Takahiko silenced the home crowd with a superb goal.

Earlier, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria inaugurated the prestigious nine-team competition.

Chairman of the organising committee and Commerce Minister MA Jalil, co-chairman State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Secretary of Ministry of Youth and Sports Manik Lal Samaddar, president of Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshall Jamaluddin Ahmed and tournament director Gulasingam

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Acute accommodation crisis at DU female dormitories

ABUL KALAM AZAD

Freshers at Dhaka University, particularly females, are suffering a lot due to serious accommodation problem at dormitories.

The problem is so acute that many first year female students have to struggle for accommodation at common rooms, TV rooms, verandas and in open spaces at the three dormitories for females, sources said.

Accommodation problem is nothing new at DU, but it became acute with the beginning of first year honours classes. The DU authorities started first year honours classes of 2000-01 session in January to reduce session jam. In the last few years, classes used to begin in July.

The sources claimed that authorities at Rokeya Hall compelled first

year students to give a bond that they would not seek accommodation at the hall in next one year.

Not a single seat has been allotted to any of the first year honours students. Most of them coming from districts usually share accommodation with their seniors. But they have to take permission from the authorities for that, they said. Many such students could not attend classes as they could not manage to stay at any of the halls, they claimed.

Dhaka University is a residential university and the authorities are supposed to provide accommodation facility to all students.

"You just visit any of the halls to see the sufferings of first year students," said a student at Kabi Jasim

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2