200 hurt as police, visitors clash at Bangla-Nepal it trade fair

BSS, Panchagarh

At least 200 people, including policemen, were injured in a clash between visitors and police centring lottery draw at Bangladesh-Nepal Trade Fair at a local stadium at Panchagarh on Saturday.

Police said the angry visitors damaged a number of stalls, set fire to two gates of the stadium and looted stalls during the clash

The authorities have cancelled the concluding ceremony of the fair scheduled for yesterday following the clash

Police and witnesses said the visitors went on the rampage as the authorities delayed the lottery draw on entry tickets, slated for Saturday night, by a day.

They also attacked the on-duty policeman and pelted stones at

Police used batons and fired teargas shells and blank shots to disperse the agitating visitors.

The clash soon spread to nearby areas of the fair ground. Additional police and BDR forces were called out to bring the situation under control.

Deputy Commissioner and president of the fair Rabiul Islam said the troublemakers looted lottery prizes, CI sheets, cycles and rickshaws besides ransacking

7 BNP leaders get bail in Ctg **BCL** activist murder case

The metropolitan sessions judge yesterday granted bail to seven BNP leaders till April 22 in a BCL activist killing case

A BCL activist was killed and six others were injured during a clash over Khaleda Zia's visit to Chittagong Hospital on November

The bail was granted when Col (rtd) Oli Ahmed MP. Giasuddin Kader Chowdhury MP, Meer Mohammad Nasiruddin and four others appeared before the court.

The court also fixed April 22 for framing charge in the case.

ASP of CID submitted the charge sheet on May 25 last year accusing 23 BNP leaders for the killing

Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury MP, M Morshed Khan MP and others accused in the case had earlier secured anticipatory bail from the High Court.

Constable murder

City BNP leader Igbal remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Abu labal, general secretary of 32 Ward of BNP, arrested in connection with the killing of police constable Abu Naser during hartal on February 13 was placed on a one-day remand for interrogation.

DB police produced him before the CMM's court at about 4 pm with a prayer for seven days' remand. But the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Abul Kashem granted him one day remand for interrogation with great care.

Advocate Mohammad Sanaullah Miah, lawyer of Iqbal, submitted two petitions before the court. In the first petition, he stated that the accused was not involved in the case. His name was not in the FIR. He was implicated in the case as a part of conspiracy. In the second petition, he said the accused was a SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

One shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants shot dead a young man in the city's Mirpur area last night.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Ali, 22.

Sources said a gang of armed miscreants shot in his head point blank in a place between Mirpur D and C block.

One person Kazi Darpon brought him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead

A murder case was filed with Mirpur police in this regard.

Taliban FM rejects Annan's call to stop destruction of statues

India, Pakistan urged to resume peace talks on Kashmir

Taliban Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakel said yesterday he had rejected a plea by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to stop the destruction of ancient Buddhist

"Work on the destruction of the Bamiyan statues has already started and there is not much left," he told a news conference here.

Mutawakel, who held a 45-minute meeting with Annan, said he had told the UN chief the decision to demolish the statues was a religious issue and it was not designed to provoke the outside world.

AP adds: Hundreds of protesters shouting anti-Indian slogans greeted Annan yesterday as he began a round of meetings with Pakistani leaders, where relations with

In a bid to close the chapter on the Second Round Block

Bidding for oil and gas exploration once and for all,

Petrobangla has asked three foreign oil companies -

Chevron, Texaco and Tullow - to sign the Production

If any of the three companies remains absent at the

PSC signing, the government would assign its (Block 9)

equity share to whichever of the participating companies

it finds agreeable and in the best interest of Bangladesh,

says the letter issued to the three companies on March 5

and American companies Chevron and Texaco have

stalled signing of the PSC for this block since it was

initialled on March 9 last year on the eve of President Bill

Clinton's visit. Chevron and Tullow have been in dis-

On transfer of interest, the letter said, "Upon signing

of the PSC. any transfer of all or any part of a Party's

interest in the PSC whether directly or indirectly by any

means (including, but not limited to, merger, consolida-

tion, sale of stock or other conveyance) shall not be

may select to assign all or any party of its interest to any

Party of its choosing. Approval of the GOB will be needed

'The party transferring its interest at its sole discretion

subject to any preferential rights by the other parties.

agreement over transfer of Texaco's 30 per cent share.

Disagreements between Tullow, the Irish concern,

Sharing Contract (PSC) for Block 9 on April 5.

uneasy neighbur India are expected to figure

A young Kashmiri woman wrapped in a giant shawl wept as she told Annan of being raped by Indian soldiers in disputed Kashmir.

The woman, whose name was not given, met Annan outside Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, where the secretary-general met Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar and a small group of 16 women, all from Indian Kashmir, and all demanding an end to the decades-old dispute that has put them in the middle.

Annan, who arrived in Pakistan late Saturday on the first leg of his South Asian tour, was to meet pakistan's militry ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf later vesterday where he was expected to press the military ruler on the nuclear tensions between Pakistan and India. Upon his arrival late Saturday Annan called

The letter suggested that the equity shares of Tullow,

It said that Tullow shall be the operator during the

Sources said that Tullow has already responded to

Tullow did not say that it would not sign the PSC on

The letter noted that although initially Tullow was

But it is not true, Tullow claims, saying that it has

On the other hand, Chevron and Texaco are yet to

recently purchased some hydrocarbon rights in the

send any response to the letter. But industry insiders say

that there are indications that Chevron would definitely

sign the PSC and it was interested to come to the country

Chevron and Texaco would be 30 per cent each while

Bangladeshi company Bapex would get a 10 per cent

initial exploration period and Chevron shall be the opera-

this letter, saying that the Petrobangla notice was tilted

April 5. However, it suggested that Petrobangla should

selected as the sole bidder in Blocks 9 and 11, the gov-

ernment later brought in Chevron and Texaco consider-

towards Chevron while it was being "unfairly treated."

tor during the development period.

also consider awarding it Block 11.

North Sea for 350 million dollars.

ing the Irish company as financially weak

Petrobangla wants Block 9

PSC signed on April 5

for the two countries to resume peace talks to try to find a settlement to Kashmir dispute.

Pakistan wants the United Nations to implement a 1948 resolution calling for a vote by Kashmiris on both sides of the disputed border to decide whether a united Kashmir would join India or Pakistan.

One of the militant groups fighting in India Kashmir issued a statement dismissing the secretary-general's visit and saying 'Jehad' or holy war was the only means to settle the Kashmir dispute.

"Annan is a famous but powerless person," Sheikh Jamil-ur Rehman, chief of Tehrek-ul Mujaheedeen Jammu Kashmir said in a statement. "The United Nations has become a tool in the hands of big powers, especially the United States. The only solution of Kashmir dispute is jehad (holy war)."

Bushra murder Hearing on *naraji* petition Mar 29

COURT CORRESPONDENT

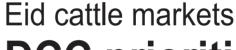
The Special Court on Women and Children Repression, Dhaka yesterday fixed March 29 for hearing on the naraji petition in the Bushra Islam Phool Murder Case.

Judge Mohammad Shah Alam Miah adjourned the hearing following a time petition by the defence

Advocate Mohammad Moslehuddin, a defence lawyer, submitted a petition for adjournment of the hearing stating that the supplementary FIR was not supplied to him. So he was not in a position to take part in the hearing without the certified copy of the FIR. The prosecution side however was ready for hearing. The court then fixed March 29 for next hearing.

Mosammat Laila Islam, the complainant of the case, submitted a naraji petition on January 3 as another accused Mosammat Runu Kader, wife of M A Kader was dropped from the chargesheet by the investigation officers.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



DCC prioritises profit over law, public interest

Chinese Feng Jia (left) and Jie Guo (right) look on as Pakistan's Kashif Jawwad strikes the ball during yesterday's

Prime Minister Gold Cup hockey championship match at the Moulana Bhasani National Stadium. Pakistan won 3-1.

Story on page -13

In a questionable bid to earn more revenue, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) leased out 21 'convenient' places and roads in the city for people to buy sacrificial animals this year, leaving residents of these areas as well as cattle traders and buyers in a reign of lawlessness.

DCC has raked up Tk 1.6 crore in lease money from these makeshift cattle markets, almost twice as much as last year's Tk 85 lakh from 17 such spots.

Observers feel that DCC's prioritisation of profit over public interest has not only touched off lawlessness in these areas but also contributed to increased price of cattle, which otherwise would have

that prohibit illegal use of roads and pavements for commercial use, DCC leased out spaces on roads for cattle market and, by so doing, apparently legalised 'renting out' of thoroughfares in the city for commercial use. Besides, in absence of proper

monitoring, the lessees expanded their markets on to adjacent roads.

The government has designated seven places in the city for public rallies so that these do not create any impediment to traffic movement. As per the Public Safety Act (PSA), obstruction to free movement of vehicles is a non-bailable offence.

However, the DCC has itself contradicted the purpose of the laws and the ordinances by leasing out city roads for use as cattle markets

tion from a record earning of Tk 1.6 crore, traffic and public movement at Banani, Hazaribagh Road, Karwan Bazar, Azimpur Road and other areas where there were cattle markets was heavily affected. Whereas DCC had got nearly Tk

As DCC officials drew satisfac

85 lakh by leasing out 17 spots in the city for use as makeshift cattle markets last year, it earned about Tk 62 lakh by leasing out the 'space' in front of Nawab Yufus Market at Naya Bazar. The leased-out space was actually the stretch of busy road up to Chitramahal Cinema Hall

The DCC-designated space on the north-east of WASA Bhaban at Karwan Bazar for cattle market was also on the road used by trucks and other vehicles to carry goods to the



SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Civil society leaders and residents of Trimohoni in the city's Khilgaon area staged a rally (left) yesterday protesting acute pollution of the Narai, Deb-Dholai and Balu rivers due to massive dumping

Hartal called on Mar 13

Jamaat activist beaten to death in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jamaat activist was beaten to death by his rival group at village Ghatiadanga under Satkania thana yesterday morning, police and party sources said.

Jamaat leaders at a press conference in Chittagong blamed BCL activists for killing Munaim alias Munna, 22. They also called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Chittagong on March 13 protesting

the killing. BCL denied the charge. Police said a gang of six armed men went to Munna's house during his sister's marriage ceremony at

around 10 in the morning. They asked him to pay toll. As Munna refused to oblige, the gang dragged him out of the house and

beat him mercilessly. Munna died on the premises of his house, police said A tense situation is prevailing at

the village and additional police force were deployed there to avert fresh violence

None was arrested in this regard till filing of this report at 7:00 pm yesterday.

UNB adds: Munna's elder brother filed a case with Satkania thana in this connection. Informed sources said BCL

activists Shajahan and Jasim were earlier harassed by Shibir cadres. In retaliation, they along with other activists attacked Shibir activists in

front of the house of Munna. Both sides exchanged fire in SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

'Kana' Babu had hand in killing Shamsur Rahman?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Humayun Kabir alias 'Kana' Babu an armed cadre of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), has been shown arrested in journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case as he confessed his involvement in the

Shamsur Rahman, a journalist of Janakantha, was murdered at his Jessore office on the night of July 16

CID will take 'Kana' Babu on remand tomorrow for interrogation on Rahman's murder, said a high official of Jessore district police. Police said that he had rented a

room of a house at Ghop Central Road in Jessore town and stayed there with two other young men to commit the murder. Khalishpur police arrested 'Kana'

Babu along with another PBCP outlaw Mithu on the night of March 6 and foiled their plan to kill an Awami League leader. If necessary, he will be questioned by a joint interrogation cell

(JIC) in Dhaka said the CID investi-

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gation officer of the case.

Stop dumping waste, save the rivers

Residents of Nandipara demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Residents of Nandipara on the outskirts of Dhaka gathered yesterday to strongly protest the acute pollution of three rivers-Narai, Debdholai and Balu-due to the indiscriminate dumping of sewage by Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA)

They were participating in an environment rally organised by Barogram Samajkalyan Parishad in co-operation with Paribesh Rokkha Shapath (POROSH) and the Hunger Project, Bangladesh at Nandipara to protest the environmental degradation in the area.

WASA has long been dumping sewage into these three rivers from the Rampura end of its sewerage outlet, putting the health of several thousand people, cattle heads and aquatic animals at great risk, villag-

The water is not even suitable for use in agriculture or cattle feed. Many of the villagers who used to make a living from fishing in these waters have gone elsewhere as

most fish have died out.

Terming the environmental pollution of about 20 villages in the area through indiscriminate waste disposal as inhuman and violation of human rights, the villagers demanded immediate steps from the authorities concerned to stop the inhuman practice in order to save

Expressing solidarity with the villagers, Prof. Muzaffor Ahmed of Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University urged them to be united on the issue and press for a lasting solution.

In his speech, Chairman of WASA Board Prof. Nazrul Islam who visited the area yesterday assured area residents that he would ask the WASA officials concerned to investigate into the source of pollution of the three rivers. He asked the residents to co-operate in this regard. Villagers in the area have been

suffering from acute crisis of drinking water, as the river waters are no longer potable You must find an alternative

SEE PAGE 11 COL

BNP to hold rallies in dist has today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led opposition alliance will hold rallies in all city and district headquarters today and bring out processions to press for immediate resignation of the government and transfer of power to a caretaker administration, and to protest against the deteriorating law and order situation The other demands of the opposi-

tion are arrest of Dr Iobal MP and his armed gang who fired on a BNP procession in the city killing four people on February 13, withdrawal of "false" cases filed under the Public Safety Act against opposition leaders and activists, and release of all arrested leaders and workers. In Dhaka, BNP, Jatiya Party,

Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote,

and other smaller parties will hold a joint public rally at Muktangan at 4pm today. City BNP president and convenor of All Party Action Council (APAC) Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP will preside over the meeting.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuivan and Sadeque Hossain Khoka in separate statements yesterday asked all opposition activists and the people to make today's programme a success and expedite the current oustgovernment movement. To this end, the alliance will start a

five-day programme from tomorrow, holding rallies and demonstrations in all thana headquarters. Meanwhile, a meeting of the city

unit liaison committee was held yesterday at BNP's city office at Naya SEE PAGE 11 COL 7