

Suspected bomb recovered

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recently launched a drive to demolish illegal structures in the area.

Informed by police, army bomb experts deactivated the bomb and took it for examination.

Earlier, Mohammadpur police recovered two bombs from a madrassah at Mohammadia Hosuing Estate on February 3 soon after Islamic zealots killed a police constable inside a nearby mosque.

Initially, police claimed that these were 'a pair of sophisticated powerful bombs' but they are yet to seek help from army bomb experts. Finally, the bombs were dumped at the malkhana of the thana.

Yesterday's one was silver-coloured and cylindrical in shape. The bomb along with two round-shaped magnets was kept right under the driving seat of the deep ash-coloured Toyota Corolla car. Wrapped with cello tape the bomb also contains batteries and circuits.

Mizan, a resident of Iqbal Road, said he used to keep his car at the Prianka Community Centre at night. Yesterday, Kamal took him to his office at about 10:30 a.m. after dropping his children at their school.

Mizan found the bomb at about 11 a.m. when Kamal asked him whether he had installed any special spares with hanging wires under his car, he added.

Sources said immediately after Mizan had informed Mohammadpur police, members of different intelligence agencies stationed at the official residence of the prime minister, also rushed to the scene.

Later, army bomb experts arrived on the scene at around 12:15 p.m. and left the scene with the suspected bomb at about 2:30 p.m. after 'deactivating it', police said.

No case was filed till filing of this report last night.

Buddha Purnima celebrated

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Buddha. The day was a public holiday.

To mark the day, a colourful peace rally was brought out from the Jatiya Press Club in the morning which was inaugurated by State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana M Nurul Islam as chief guest.

Prof Ethin Rakhain MP was present at the occasion as special guest.

Among others, Srimat Bodhimitra Bhikkhu, trustee of Buddhist Community Kalyan Trust, Dr Bhikkhu Sunithananda, convenor of Bangladesh Buddhist Citizens' Forum and Srimat Dharmajyoti Bhikkhu, head of Shakyamuni Buddha Bihar, were present.

Maulana Nurul Islam, Prof Ethin Rakhain, D P Barua, Pijush Kanti Barua, Dr Jadunath Barua,

Gyanendriya Chakma and Dr Kanak Kanti Barua released pigeons, the symbol of peace.

A large number of Buddhists from different parts of the country took part in the rally carrying national and religious flags, placards and banners inscribed with the messages of Buddha.

After the rally, a gathering was held in front of the National Museum.

Bangladesh Buddhist Federation observed the day with elaborate programmes.

Their main function was held at the international monastery at Merul Badda where Dr S A Malek, prime minister's political advisor, was present as chief guest.

BSS reports: The Purnima festival was celebrated also in Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazar in a befitting manner.

Assembly elections

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Tamil Nadu. Congress is a constituent of the Front led by Jayalalitha's party in Tamil Nadu.

In Assam, Congress is likely to get 75 to 80 seats in the 126-member state assembly against 27 to 32 by ruling Asom Gana Parishad in alliance with BJP, according to "Outlook-CMS" projection.

The electioneering in the five states has touched its peak with star campaigners of all parties in the field. In West Bengal, Sonia Gandhi shared the dais with Mamata Banerjee four days ago and launched a vitriolic attack on the Left Front. But interestingly, the two ladies did not share the podium in Englishbazar assembly constituency in Malda district where the two parties' candidates are pitted against one another.

In Kerala, the wind seems to favour the Congress although the party was late in hitting the campaign trail because it was bogged down by a sharp feud between rival

factions led by two veteran leaders K Karunakaran and A K Antony over the number of seats given to each by the party high command. But once that was sorted out by the intervention of the high command, the two factions buried the hatchet and Karunakaran and Antony even shared a common dais at an election rally of the latter.

In Kerala, the CPI (M) has made several changes in its list of candidates dropping several ministers including Chief Minister E K Nayanar and bringing in new faces in a bid to shrug off the anti-incumbency factor.

In Assam, campaign has been marred by violence by suspected ULFA insurgents that has so far killed at least 28 people, mostly leaders and activists of AGP and its ally BJP. In fact, a candidate each of AGP and BJP has been killed. The BJP has accused the Congress of being in league with ULFA, a charge denied by the latter.

Good number of allottees

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"The biggest problem in Uttara third phase would be to find earth to fill up the low-lying sites. Rajuk would have to pay a lot more money because it has to bring earth from faraway places to develop the site," said an official adding that some of the sites go under 10 feet of water during rainy season.

Rajuk officials also feared that the expensive site filling and compensation would increase the per katha price which would be calculated when the plots are ready for handing over.

"Initially, it was announced that the price of per katha land in the project would be around Tk 1.5 lakh but now top Rajuk officials fear that after developing the land they would have to fix the price between Tk 3.5 and four lakh to recover the cost," said a top Rajuk official.

Whatever Rajuk has done, it has not upset anyone of its own 300 applicants. Rajuk has allotted plots to 300 of its sweepers, peons, doormen, clerks and officials. Rajuk officials said they did not understand how the low-paid employees would be able to come up with such an amount to buy the plots.

A total of 246 lucky ones, however, have been allotted readily available residential plots between Uttara Sector 9 and 14. The fate of the remaining 2,421 is uncertain till date. Out of these 246 lucky ones there are eleven serving ministers, 61 Members of Parliament and 164 ruling party leaders of different categories and Rajuk officials.

The Rajuk beneficiaries include 65 MPs and ministers, nine judges, 71 freedom fighters, 30 cultural activists and artists, 58 journalists, 1,139 officials of the government and autonomous organisations, 161 foreign currency earners, 618 businessmen, 31 affected people and 390 of 'other category'.

Cabinet may okay draft

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ment would de-regulate the electronic media before it completes its term.

Over the period, the government allowed a private television channel and a radio station to operate. It also closed down state-run dailies. The Bangladesh Times and the Dainik Bangla.

So, the autonomy of Betar and BTV will virtually end government control on the media.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Minister of State for Information Prof Abu Sayeed said, in the present age of free flow of information, autonomy has become an obsolete concept.

"Rather, our focus is more on creation of an environment so that private channels can operate and enjoy complete freedom. Giving licence to ETV was a bold step of our



Artist Sharmin Hossain rendering song at the Shishu Academy auditorium on the last day of the Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Utsab yesterday.

PM tells SC Bar members

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the opposition at time of national need or crisis", she said. The leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia did not extend any cooperation to the government during the recent border problem, she regretted.

She said the BNP chairperson was uttering hollow words like presenting gallantry awards to three BDR personnel killed in the border skirmishes. Sheikh Hasina questioned why Khaleda Zia did not do the same when two BDR men were killed in such a border clashes when she was in power.

She said since 1947, there has been no demarcation line along the 150 miles borderline of the country. No government in the past took any steps to resolve the border demarcation problems. We have successfully demarcated the entire borderline excepting 6.5 km in various stripes.

Arrangements were made by the previous government to keep open

the Tin Bigha Corridor for only one hour a day, but we have succeeded to keep it open from dawn to dusk.

The prime minister told the bar executives that the country's judiciary has been exercising the highest freedom during the tenure of her government. No government in the past could take so many programmes and projects that her government has taken for the development of judiciary and welfare of the judges, court officers and employees.

Responding to some suggestions and demands of the bar executives, the prime minister said it would not be possible to eradicate terrorism if the criminals and offenders are not properly tried in the court of law.

Seeking cooperation of the lawyers for trial of terrorists and corrupt elements, the prime minister regretted that many corrupt elements could not be brought under

We'll remove causes: Khaleda

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strongly feel that hartal should be avoided," she added.

She said after the 1996 election, BNP assured Awami League government of all-out cooperation for the sake of development of the country, economic emancipation of the people, growth of industries and institutionalisation of democracy.

But it resorted to repression on opposition leaders and activists. It neither allowed BNP to speak in parliament nor exercise democratic rights outside.

As an alternative to hartal, BNP undertook long march, mass procession, sit-in demonstration, hunger strike and such other democratic programmes.

But the ruling party and the

government foiled the peaceful programmes through putting up road barricade, armed attack, arresting opposition activists and filing false cases against them.

"This fascist government foiled all the programmes taken up as alternatives to hartal. Finding no other alternative, BNP went for hartal on some specific and logical issues," the BNP Chairperson said.

During the two and half an hour discussion, the business leaders sought a commitment in BNP's election manifesto that it would not call hartal in future.

In response, Khaleda Zia said AL enforced 174 days of hartal when BNP was in power. "Let the ruling party chief declare first that she did a

PML faction to elect Musharraf President if NA restored

AP, Islamabad

A powerful faction of the former ruling Pakistan Muslim League yesterday offered to elect military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf president if he restores the suspended Parliament.

"If he restores parliament and wants to be elected president, we will give serious consideration to the matter," Abida Hussain, information secretary of the breakaway faction of the Pakistan Muslim League told The Associated Press.

Hussain, along with several other staunch Pakistan Muslim League members revolted against deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, following the bloodless military coup in October 1999 that brought the army into power in Pakistan and landed Sharif in jail on several charges.

The dissidents formed a break-

away faction, dismissing Sharif as party leader. The dissident group says it has the support of 88 of the 133 former Pakistan Muslim League lawmakers in Parliament, which was suspended by the army.

There has been considerable speculation in Pakistani newspapers that Musharraf plans to appoint himself president when he returns the country to democracy sometime before the end of 2002.

The military's recent creation of the new position of deputy army chief was seen as a stepping stone toward making the army chief president.

While promising to hold general elections, Musharraf has said neither Sharif, who is currently living in exile in Saudi Arabia, or Benazir Bhutto, living in self-imposed exile in Britain, will have a role in the future setup.

He did not elaborate.

LDCs to seek elimination of trade discrimination

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to give an opportunity to work out a comprehensive Plan of Action "to arrest the further marginalisation of LDC interests and reactivation of the process of growth" in this group of countries. Major themes expected to feature in discussions include resource requirement, debt burden, question of market access and other international support measures for LDCs to come out of a vicious cycle of poverty and marginalisation. Discussions will also take place on the role of governance; the synergy needed for greater interactions and the need for participation in the development efforts of the LDCs by all stakeholders in the development process, which include civil society organisations and NGOs.

Poverty, economic isolation and instability of the LDC countries are reflected in the fact that their numbers have almost doubled over the last three decades.

Exports from 49 of the poorest countries account for just 0.4 per cent of worldwide trade. The LDCs are also seeking cancellation of all bilateral debts and increase in foreign aid component. They are also seeking cooperation with development partners to get connected to an increasingly technology-driven world.

Developed countries look forward to more concrete steps by LDCs to improve governance, strengthen rule of law in their respective countries.

justice because of prolonged trial and lapses and loopholes of the existing laws.

Bar president Abul Baset Majumder and Secretary Md Momtaj Uddin Fakir while appraising their various professional hazards, called upon the prime minister to extend her assistance in constructing the Supreme Court Bar Building, installing lifts of the main building and setting up a clinic inside the Supreme Court premises.

The prime minister patiently heard their demands and assured them of her help in doing the necessary. Other members of the delegation were Al-haj Mohammad Shamsul Alam, Md Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan, Saifuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Mohammad Abdullah, Md Abdur Rashid, Md Helal Uddin Mollah, B A Rashid, Syed Maimuna Begum (Taskin), Md Abdul Quader Talukder, Reba Kaniz , Md Zafar Ali, and Md Alamgir Kabir.

Publication of Muktakantha demanded

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of the Muktakantha unit of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) at a meeting yesterday demanded continuation of the publication of the daily side by side payment of all dues of its employees, a unit press release said.

The meeting held at the Muktakantha office with the unit chief Ashraf Ali in the chair was addressed, among others, by DUJ's senior vice-president and chief reporter of the daily Jafar Wazed, senior reporter Shishir Sheel, Emdad Hussain Bhuiyan, Hamidur Rasheed Hiron, Fazlur Rahman, Farida Akhter and Sakhawat Hussain.

The employees of the daily are attending their duty everyday as usual but the authorities concerned are not taking any step to resume its publication. The owner of the Daily Muktakantha unilaterally closed its publication since April 28, the press release said.

Bullet-wounded mechanic dies at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A motor mechanic who was shot by an armed gang at his Lal Mohan Saha Street residence on Thursday died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

The gang stormed into the residence of Mustafa, 22, on Thursday morning and fired on him while he was sleeping.

In a critical condition, he was rushed to DMCH where he died yesterday.

According to sources, the killing was a sequel to rivalry over business.

A case was filed with Sutrapur thana in this connection.

Jubo Dal leader

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1 pm yesterday and sent it to Feni Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Local Jubo League activists Kurshed, Manik , Mister, Wasim, Hossain, Joynal, Mofiz, Morshed and Masud killed Karim over political rivalry, victim's family members alleged.

District BNP vice president Abdul Qudar Bhuiyan blamed ruling party terrorists for the killing. He demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Plot to murder

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In March, Tejpal's website released video tapes showing senior politicians, bureaucrats and army officials apparently taking bribes from journalists posing as arms dealers.

The revelations forced the resignations of Defence Minister George Fernandes and the president of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist BJP party, Bangaru Laxman.

The expose also stalled India's budget session of parliament.

Tejpal had been provided special security cover last month following intelligence reports of a threat to his life.

Police said they had recovered arms and ammunition from the six accused, which included two AK-47 rifles, two pistols and live cartridges.

Mamun

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Purbakone on April 18. There are eight other criminal cases against him.

Meanwhile Mamun's father has also gone into hiding after arrest of his two sons Khorshed Alam and Morshed Alam from his house near MES College on Saturday.

The two were arrested for illegal possession of two deer. Police filed a case against the arrested brother of Mamun under the Wildlife Preservation Act.

Police continued pressure on the family members to force Mamun to surrender without further delay.

Khoka blasts Salahuddin Quader

BSS, Dhaka

President of Dhaka City Unit of BNP Sadek Hossain Khoka yesterday blasted party leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury saying his recent remarks about fellow BNP leaders lacked "decency."

"The leaders and workers of BNP are watching his activities," Khoka told BSS.

He added that Salahuddin Quader's comments "lack decency" and are beyond party discipline and one could only remain a party member as long he abided by the party discipline and constitution.

Khoka's comments came amid reports of growing intra-party feuds between what is known as "liberal" and "hard-liners" inside BNP.

The feud surfaced when Salahuddin Quader, dubbed as a hard-liner, in a recent public address and newspaper interview ridiculed

PM to open DU halls

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being constructed beside the Bangladesh Kuwait Moitri Hall.

This correspondent saw only four or five rooms of the hall finished so far. Attached bungalows and offices for provosts and house tutors and kitchen facilities for students are yet to be completed.

Sources said construction work of the women's hall began on April 8 last year and as per the bid, is to be finished by July 8 this year.

Workers at the 500-bed Amar Ekushey Hall said at least three to four months would still be needed to complete the construction before students can be accommodated in the hall. The men's dormitory is located beside the Fazlul Haq Hall.

As per the bid, construction

started in February last year and was scheduled to end by May this year.

The inaugural ceremony of the two halls will be held at the university's TSC at 4pm today. Education Minister A S H K Sadek will also attend the function as special guest. Vice Chancellor of the university Prof A K Azad Chowdhury will preside.

Provost of Amar Ekushey Hall Prof. Shaheed Akhter Hossain told this correspondent last night that 80 per cent work of the hall has already been completed and students could be accommodated in the hall when construction ends in July.

Replying to a question, he said the early inauguration of the halls would speed up construction.

HSC examinees block traffic on Sirajganj-Dinajpur highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

The HSC examinees of Laxmikhola Degree College and Hajee Wahed Moriam College yesterday brought out a procession at Rayganj upazila headquarters demanding restoration of HSC examination centre in their respective colleges.

The authorities have shifted the examination centres to two other colleges in a bid to stop cheating at the examination beginning May 10.

The examinees put up a barricade on Dhaka-Dinajpur highway at 11-30 am, blocking traffic for three hours.

Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the barricade during the period.

District officials along with a huge contingent of police went to the spot and removed the barricade following a discussion with the agitating examinees.

The examinees urged the district administration to meet their demand within two days, otherwise, they threatened to block the road for an indefinite period.

Police

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hands of vendors who occupied those illegally. They are backed by two powerful gangs. Allegations have it that a section of Tejgaon police and DCC officials benefit from the illegal occupation in connivance with the gangs.

In addition, this growing commercial area housing some big business houses has lost almost all its foot-paths, pavements, parking spaces, children's parks and parks to the gangs. Lakhs of taka, realised everyday from the illegal occupants are sent to the Nagar Bhaban and police headquarters, it is alleged.

Karwan Bazar also houses the largest wholesale vegetable and fish markets in the city. More than half of the commercial settlements in Karwan Bazar are illegal and have been set up through direct involvement of DCC officials and Tejgaon police, according to some genuine traders.

Tito returns to earth

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lying back in a chair near the space capsule and grinning.

Earlier yesterday, the Soyuz crew gathered with the three astronauts staying on at the space station for a final video linkup with Mission Control in Korolyov, outside Moscow.

Musabayev and American astronaut Jay Voss hugged, but Voss gave Tito a more formal farewell, shaking his hand. Tito and the cosmonauts then floated headfirst into the Soyuz, their stockinged feet disappearing from view before the hatch connecting the capsule with the station was closed.

A video attached to the capsule showed the space station quickly receding in the distance and the Earth coming into view. The capsule orbited once around Earth before braking and shedding its habitation

and instrument modules to lighten the load.

In the last communications session with the crew, Mission Control asked Musabayev to give Tito two unspecified medicines and salt water to help him endure the stress of gravitational forces.

The capsule touched down near Arkalyk, about 400 kilometers southwest of the Kazak capital Astana. It lay on its side, blackened by the fiery re-entry through the atmosphere. A smell of burning metal hung in the air as crowds of officials, reporters and a few curious onlookers crowded around the trio of returning space travelers, still strapped in their seats.

The two cosmonauts walked to a nearby medical tent for a checkup, but Tito had trouble walking, so two men carried him in his chair.