

Nor'wester kills 4

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Police identified the dead as Ayesha Akhter, 65, wife of Sahar Ali, Shahjahan, 2, son of Jalal Uddin, Salma, 2, daughter of Akkas Ali of Sindhura village in Dhurbaria upazila.

The nor'wester lashed over 150 villages of Dhurbaria, Phulbari, Gaffargaon, Bhaluka, Trishal, Muktagacha, Guripur and Sadar upazilas, damaging crops and snapping electric supply.

The HSC examinations that began yesterday were hampered in at least 20 centres due to disruption in power supply.

Shipon High School and Chalakanda Dakhil Madrassah in Gaffargaon were badly damaged by the storm.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet writers: A seven-month-old girl was killed in house collapse at village Sikandarpur during a nor'wester yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Panna, daughter of Bogai Miah of Sylhet sadar upazila.

BTTB asks for fresh bid

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The cancellation of the bid will also project a negative image of Bangladesh abroad because the BTTB move goes against the norms needed to follow to cancel an international tender, he added.

Four internationally reputed telecommunications equipment vendors namely Alcatel of France, Siemens of Germany, Ericsson of Sweden and China Machinery and Engineering Corporation (CMEC) had participated in the bid.

The project had created a great deal of enthusiasm among the public as it was claimed to deliver the cheapest cellular service in the country due to the fact that the BTTB had the required infrastructure in place and need not go for additional investment, sources in the state monopoly said.

BJP braces for the worst

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the alliance with AGP and the consequent sharing of a strong anti-incumbency factor may well see the party squandering the gains it had made in 1999 Lok Sabha elections. But the main objective was to try and stop Congress.

The BJP would have liked to see dislodging Left Front government in West Bengal as long as its alliance with Trinamool was intact. But with Trinamool having quit Vajpayee government and joining hands with Congress in the state, BJP would not mind Left Front retaining power in West Bengal, analysts say.

The BJP leadership is conscious that a victory for the Congress in Assam and Kerala would only prompt Sonia Gandhi's party and the rest of the Opposition to mount a stronger attack on Vajpayee government on a number of issues, including economic liberalisation.

To minimise the effects of possible negative outcome of polls in the

Project 'Litigon' comes under fire

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research works on the Sunderbans and wildlife, told The Daily Star that instead of such aimless project the zoo authorities should try to breed animals, which are on the verge of extinction.

Khasru added that in the 1940s there were wolves in Noakhali area, big-tail monkey in Teknaf area. He said authorities should also try to perform DNA test on the Sunderbans tiger, which is now scientifically known as *Panthera tigris tigris*.

The National Zoo has an excellent record of breeding Indian tigers. At present the zoo has a total of 14 tigers, all born in the zoo to a tigress brought in from India. However, it does not have a single Royal Bengal Tiger from the Sunderbans.

"The Royal Bengal Tiger is a unique sort of feline with distinct

Zobayer Adel sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday sent Zobayer Adel, accused in the Kamal Hossain murder case, to the Dhaka Central Jail.

The Judge, Hasan Imam, after hearing both the sides, cancelled the bail prayer of Zobayer and sent him to jail.

Earlier, Zobayer and his father Jahangir Mohammad Adel were granted ad-interim bail to attend the nam-e-janaza of Hena Adel, wife of Jahangir Mohammad Adel.

Kamal Hossain, 30, senior vice-president of ward 67 unit of Awami League was shot dead on August last year as he protested hoisting of national flag of Pakistan by Zobayer, Tareq and others atop the residence of Jahangir Mohammad Adel on the night of August 14, Pakistan's Independence Day.

The court fixed June 6 for hearing on charge framing.

BNP expels SQ Chowdhury, Zahid

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The storm damaged standing crops and houses. A good number of houses were razed to the ground and power supply was disrupted in many areas of sadar upazila.

Our Magura Correspondent adds: Nor'wester hit sadar and Shalikha upazila of the district yesterday noon, damaging over 1000 houses and standing crops.

Some 20 people were injured as house collapsed on them during the storm at Arpara Uzgram, Chukinagar, Talarik, Shalai and Srihatta villages in Shalikha upazila and Jagla, Angardaha and Kechudubi in Sadar upazila.

According to Sirajganj correspondent: At least 55 people were injured as nor'wester lashed the Sirajganj and Pabna district yesterday.

BNP sources said SQ Chowdhury, who never participated

in parliamentary elections on a party ticket twice, is looking for a way out to quit BNP, and thus started carrying anti-party activities so that BNP take action against him.

They said Chowdhury and his family had collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces and reportedly killed many people during the War of Independence. He was first elected MP on Muslim League ticket in 1979.

He then joined hands with military dictator HM Ershad, became a minister and was elected MP in 1986 on Jatiya Party ticket. He quit JP ahead of Ershad's ouster in a mass uprising in 1990 and formed the Nationalist Democratic Party (NDA) with Anwar Zahid and other anti-liberation elements. He was elected MP in 1991. Finally, he joined BNP ahead of the June 12, 1996 parliamentary polls and ran in the election and won on BNP ticket.

Meanwhile, BNP's thana units at Rangunia and Razzoan have declared SQ Chowdhury personnon-grata in Chittagong. Earlier, the Dhaka city chapter had also gone for a similar move.

7,257 expelled on first day

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correspondent reported. Mokamtolla exam centre under Shibganj upazila was cancelled for alleged mass cheating, our Bogra correspondent added.

Pelting of brickbats, scuffle with the on-duty police, and damage of furniture occurred at various examination centres across the country including some centres in Barisal and Chittagong. Examinees were compelled to use candlelight due to outage as rain and stormy weather prevailed in some eastern districts including Feni and Comilla.

BNP sources said SQ Chowdhury may not have got BNP nomination this time around, as leaders and activists from his constituency in a letter to the party chairperson had urged her not to nominate him. The local leaders also threatened to work against him if the party leadership decided otherwise.

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in Kishoreganj, 34 in Gopalganj, 24 in Sharaiptur, 11 in Munshiganj, 46 in Narayanganj, 24 in Faridpur, 10 in Manikganj, 121 in Jamalpur, 110 in Tangail, 12 in Madaripur, 16 in Rajbari and 62 in Gazipur.

The Rajshahi Education Board recorded the highest number of the expelled. As many as 3536 examinees were expelled from different centres of the board. Of them, 508 were in Rajshahi, 127 in Nawabganj, 78 in Natore, 150 in Naogaon, 188 in Pabna, 640 in Sirajganj, 92 in Joypurhat, 387 in Rangpur, 397 in Gaibandha, 132 in Lalmonirhat, 279 in Bogra and 431 in Thakurgaon.

Two hundred and ten examinees were expelled under Chittagong Education Board.

According to the board officials, 232 were expelled in Chittagong, 28 in Cox's Bazar and 12 in Khagrachari, 11 in Rangamati and four in Bandarban.

Four hundred and sixty-three examinees were expelled under the newly commissioned Barisal Education Board.

According to board control room sources, 239 of whom were expelled in Barisal, 28 in Borguna, 33 in Jhalokhati, 54 in Bhola, 74 in Patuakhali and 35 in Pirojpur.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: Pelting of stones and brickbats, scuffle with the on-duty police,

damaging of a government vehicle and ransacking of administrative office by a former Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader and his supporters marked the first day of HSC examination at Government Gouram College yesterday.

According to sources, Ansir Rahman, former president of BCL Gouram upazila and his supporters pelted brickbats and were engaged in scuffle with the on-duty police when he was debarred from supplying copies to his wife, an examinee.

One hundred and four examinees were expelled under Sylhet Education Board. Of them, 34 were in Moulavibazar, 21 in Sylhet, 11 in Hohganj and 38 in Sunamganj.

As many as 1361 examinees were expelled under Comilla Education Board. Of them, 845 were in Comilla, 152 were in Feni, 120 in Luxmipur, 87 in Chandpur, 86 in Brahmanbaria, 241 in Noakhali.

Six hundred and one examinees were expelled under Jessore Education Board. According to board officials, 973 examinees were expelled from different centres for cheating and adopting unfair means.

Four have been expelled in the greater Dhaka city, the officials added.

Treatment of Tipu

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criticism about the proposed laws, highlights of which he made available to reporters.

"The authorities, one each for Bangladesh Betar (radio) and Bangladesh Television (BTV), will administer, manage and guide the two media," he said and added that the authorities would comprise prominent and acceptable persons from among the intellectuals.

Ruling party MP Jaijal Hazari and his henchmen abducted Tipu in the evening of January 25 from Feni sadar and savagely beat him up, reducing the bones of his limbs to fragments. The assailants then left him for dead.

Doctors at Dhaka's Pangu Hospital where Tipu underwent treatment recommended that he be treated abroad.

Tipu's attackers still roam freely in Feni. Police are yet to lodge a case in this connection.

PM leaves

FROM PAGE 1
notorious robbers since morning. We went to the spot in autorickshaws and rickshaws because the gang could easily recognise our vehicle," Hossain said.

Sub Inspector Saidur Rahman said he was in the vehicle with the bag that was supposed to contain the money. All these men are notorious criminals of the city, he said pointing his finger at the arrested robbers inside a DB microbus.

Four sub inspectors and four constables participated in the operation, led by Inspector Ershad.

A case was filed with Tejgaon thana under the Arms Act and the Public Safety Act (PSA).

The Prime Minister is expected to return home on May 16.

DB operation

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Export sector

FROM PAGE 1
incurred US\$70,000 loss."

"In a state of recession, we will be witnessing competitive devaluation, which will have dampening effect on price," said Dr Zahir Baitul.

"We still don't know how deep this will be."

"In the macro-policy level, imbalance in bilateral exchange rate is hurting us while the overall exchange rate policy has been supportive of export growth," said Dr Baitul.

"Our take has appreciated against Indian rupee and we must include the informal trade with India, which is 125 per cent of the formal trade, in the currency index basket to peg our currency to a correct level."

The exit polls also predicted a resurgence of the Italian-born Sonia

Sayeed defends draft

"Once the parliament passes the laws, a national broadcasting policy will be formulated in line with the spirit of the Independence War, and social and national interests," the minister said. He also said the policy will not protect any party or individual.

He hoped that the laws would come to effect before the end of the Awami League government's term.

Responding to former information minister Nazmul Huda's comment, Prof. Sayeed said that Huda himself had said on several occasions that the state-run radio and TV would be run at his dictates. He also criticised the past BNP government for ignoring its election pledge to grant autonomy to the two media.

The draft laws proposed two separate authorities for Betar and BTV because of the differences in their functioning.

The minister said the concept of autonomy did not suit in the era of free flow of information. "We're fulfilling the election pledge and only time will say how much autonomy the state-owned media will have."

As regards the belated move as regards the autonomy, he told reporters that they had to go through a long process involving examination of similar organisations in seven countries. The country's social, economic and political realities had to be taken into consideration, as well, he added.

The draft laws proposed to bring the autonomy into effect.

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7 dengue victims hospitalised

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Dr Mohammed Arshad Uddin, Chief Health Officer of DCC, when contacted yesterday said they have already launched a dengue awareness campaign.

The study had identified 45 DCC wards out of the 90 as favourable breeding grounds for Aedes mosquito.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old woman was admitted to Central Hospital with dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) yesterday.

A six-year-old boy was admitted to Sishu Hospital earlier as a suspected dengue patient.

Two other dengue patients were admitted to the same hospital earlier. One of them has been released and the other is improving, doctors there said.

Two other dengue patients were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and another at the Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital last one week.

In its budget for 2000-2001

financial year, DCC allocated Tk 13 crore for mosquito control.

Announcing the budget, Mayor Mohammad Hanif had said that mosquito control would be among DCC's four prioritised programmes.

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The Congress could also win in Tamil Nadu in alliance with a powerful regional party AIADMK led by former actress Jayaram Jayalalitha, exit poll estimates said.

A significant feature of Thursday's elections, which witnessed an average turnout of 55 percent, was the widespread use of electronic voting machines, used for the first time in nearly 90 percent of the polling.

The prime minister urged the foreign ministry officials and Bangladesh missions abroad to strongly pursue her government's "economic diplomacy" to increase foreign investment, create international markets for Bangladesh products and further enhance the country's image.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Syed Moazzam Ali also spoke at the meeting.

Later, the prime minister reviewed the performance of the foreign ministry and listened to various problems.