



Venezuelan president arrives tomorrow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

President Hugo Rafael Chavez of Venezuela arrives in Dhaka tomorrow on a one-day visit to Bangladesh, it was officially announced yesterday.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will receive Chavez at Zia International Airport.

A 21-gun salute will be given in honour of the distinguished guest. He will arrive from Iran via Mumbai and leave Dhaka for Beijing Thursday morning on a visit to China.

Chavez is the second head of state from South America to visit Bangladesh. The then Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori paid a visit in 1998.

He will have talks with Sheikh

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

 India and Bangladesh
Ramaswamy R Iyer

Focus 5

What should we do about energy problem?

Business 6-8

FBCCI sees further corporate tax cut vital for investment spark

EU warns China of 'exploding' trade deficit

DSE, CSE price quotations

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 22		6.38 pm
May 23	5-13 am	

Prayer Timings

May 22

	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-20	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

36 murders in city in first 20 days of this month

154 cases since January: Most killers go scot-free

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

Incidents of murder in the capital are rising alarmingly, causing a sense of insecurity among the city dwellers.

With hundreds of firearms being available to criminals, mostly young, movie-style killing has virtually become an everyday incident.

In the first 20 days of this month, at least 36 people were killed in the city. The number is already higher than in any other month this year.

Thirty-three murders took place in January, 22 in February, 31 in March and 32 in April.

According to police records, 29 people were killed in the capital in May last year and 26 in May 1999.

Those killed in 20 days this month included businessmen, housewives, political activists, criminals and a minor boy.

The most sensational was the murder of Dhaka University student Zayed Akber Chowdhury, gunned down in front of his wife at their Shewrapara residence on Sunday.

In all the incidents, cases were filed with the police stations concerned.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Two laid-off Ansar personnel attend another who lost consciousness on the second day of their fast-unto-death at the city's Muktangan. They are demanding reinstatement in service.

1000 'political activists' in guise of DCC cleaners?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is "illegally" borrowing money from different projects to pay monthly staff salary, Mayor Mohammad Hanif has embarked upon recruiting about 1,000 young men as 'cleaners' in 90 wards, sources said.

Many of these recruits are either "political activists or party sympathisers," according to official sources.

Many DCC officials said the decision to add 1,000 men to the 5,500-strong conservancy unit ahead of the mayoral and general elections is politically motivated.

Moreover, they said, most of these new recruits with academic qualifications up to HSC level would be "too smart" to work as mere cleaners and they would become a "permanent liability" to the heavily constrained corporation.

"A bulk of the 5,500 cleaners of the conservancy unit do not report for work at all and for years, causing great financial losses to the corporation," said a DCC official.

"Instead of disciplining the existing manpower, the Mayor's fresh recruitment drive clearly indicates other

obvious motives".

Another DCC source said that with revenue collection dropping significantly, DCC is now facing a critical financial crisis. More than one official confirmed that for the last two months, the Mayor had to resort to "illegal" borrowing from foreign aided projects to pay monthly staff salary. DCC needs about Tk five crore every month to pay for salary and fuel cost.

The new recruitment would cost the public coffers an additional Tk 24 lakh per month.

"The financial situation of DCC is so bad that it now faces bankruptcy. It owes its contractors more than Tk 80 crore in outstanding bills and is facing increasing pressure from DESA, WASA and T&T for clearing outstanding bills worth crores of taka," said a DCC official.

Mayor Mohammad Hanif is in Brussels now. DCC's Chief Executive Officer KM Nurul Huda admitted that they had to "borrow" to pay staff salary.

"With expansion of some wards, more cleaners are

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Cars for diplomats being sold to others

Powerful gang involved in racket

RAFIQ HASAN

The government is being deprived of a huge amount of revenue as the foreign ministry is giving clearance for sale of luxurious cars of diplomats to others, using false valuation and duty payment certificates.

A powerful gang including some C&F (clearing and forwarding) agents and some foreign ministry officials are involved in the racket, according to sources in customs intelligence.

Three such cases of forgery were detected recently.

A Mitsubishi Pajero Roof Wagon four wheeler imported by a UN organisation in Dhaka was given clearance. A certificate of payment of only Tk 47,168 as duty and taxes was used. The price of such a luxurious new car is over Tk. 20 lakh. Even if 50 per cent depreciation is allowed, its price should have been calculated at Tk 10 lakh, on which Tk 10 lakh tax was mandatory for allowing its re-sale to others, the sources said. Import duty on luxurious car is over 100 per cent.

In two other cases, duty payments were shown at Tk 19,262 for sale of a Mazda Sedan and Tk 20,367 for a Nissan Sedric. Both the cars were imported for the Russian embassy.

The actual amount of tax payable for sale of each of the cars to others was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

JCD activists regrouping to regain lost ground

ZAYADUL AHSEN

It was the first week of March 1995. Some activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, student front of the then ruling party, BNP, brought out a procession at Ambagan in Chittagong. They were all brandishing firearms, of different types. The streets were deserted in a flash, as local people, sensing trouble, ran back home. Minutes later, gunshots were heard. After the JCD procession had left the area, people came out to find the body of a local Awami League leader in a pool of blood.

The same group of JCD activists - who roamed around the port city, high and mighty - went virtually silent, after the AL had come to power and their political rivals emerged stronger. Arrest of most of its top-notch terrorists left the group weakened. Although some were released later on bail, the group never quite regained the strength it had when the BNP was in power. Now, it lends the strongest voice to anti-terrorist campaign.

Nevertheless, the JCD-Jubo Dal hoodlums continue to carry on their terrorist and criminal activities, although in a lesser degree. Local people, police and underworld leaders say that they are now trying to strengthen their position. In recent months, two influential BNP leaders have reorganised the JCD-Jubo Dal cadres, as elections draw near. Local people say that these hoodlums are purchasing different types of weapons.

One of these leaders, City BNP Joint Secretary Abu Sufian himself possesses two AK-47s. Sufian, who enjoys total support from former mayor Mir Nasiruddin, has recently purchased one of these, according to underworld sources. However, a detective police said that, as per his knowledge, Sufian had one AK-47.

Sufian strongly denies any involvement with politics of arms


CHITTAGONG THE ARMS PORT-3

politics.

Shafi, a JCD armed cadre who has the blessings of City BNP general secretary Dastagir Chowdhury, purchased an AK-47 two months ago, another source said. Shafi owns five other firearms and has an alliance with the ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in Kotwali area.

According to local people and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

