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Laser lights Dhaka's night sky

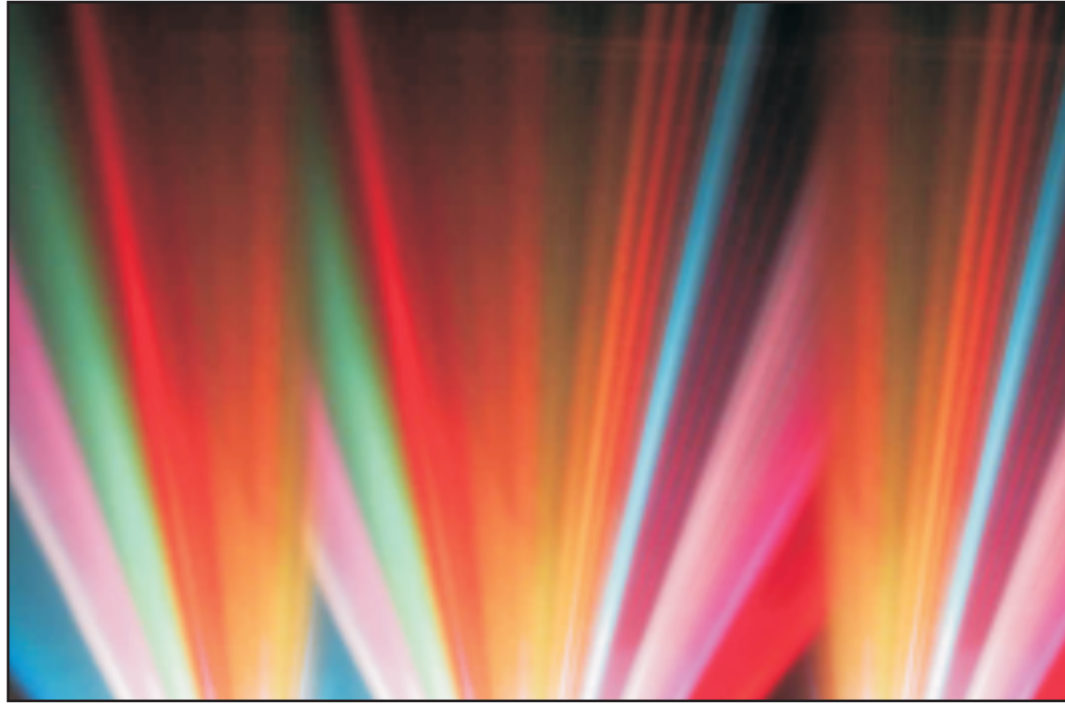
STAR REPORT

As 100,000-watt speakers boomed, the Bangabandhu National Stadium danced with iridescent colours and lapping of waves, sometimes in staccato streams of beams, and some 20,000 people let out wild shrieks in time with Ricky Martin's Ole ole.

This spectacle played out last night at the stadium when Microcel, a local software company, made a razzmatazz of laser show for the first time in the country.

Dhaka never experienced anything of the sort before, as the pitch-black stadium was flooded with all kinds of colour imaginable. And psychedelic shapes and designs of every conceivable kind played on a huge translucent screen hanging on the north end of the bowl from a huge white arch.

Laser beams—blue, green, yellow, red, violet and what not—pierced the night sky. Sometimes, SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Fierce gunfight in Patiya leaves college student killed, 100 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A college student was shot dead and around 100 people were injured, 24 of them bullet-hit, in day-long clashes between local people and madarassah students over a piece of land at Baghuli in Patiya yesterday.

Mohammad Farid, 19, a first year student of Patiya College, was killed at about six pm as the two sides traded several hundred shots. He is the son of one Mahbubur Rahman.

The agitated local people set fire to two hostels of Patiya Al Jamiotul Islamia Madarassah during the clashes.

Five of the injured were admitted into Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Condition of four of them are critical, hospital sources said. They are Sohail, 28, Rashedul, 18, Jahid and Harun.

The clashes created panic in and around Patiya. Around 150 policemen were deployed in the morning at the spot where intermittent clashes took place since Monday evening.

As the situation deteriorated in late afternoon yesterday, three platoons of BDR joined police at about 7pm. Section 144 was imposed at Patiya in the

evening. A tense situation was prevailing in the town when the report was filed at 8.15pm.

Police and witnesses said, the clashes centred a long-drawn dispute over about seven decimals of land adjoining the madarassah.

The trouble ensued on Monday evening when a former pourashava (municipality) chairman, Shafiqur Rahman, was assaulted by the madarassah students when he, leading some local people, went to the madarassah authorities for an amicable settlement of the dispute.

Following the assault, several sporadic clashes marked with chase and counter chase took place that evening and throughout the day on the next day.

The situation deteriorated yesterday morning following a rumour that a madarassah student was kidnapped by the local people. Madarassah students attacked some local people, prompting a clash that intermittently continued for about two hours before police brought the situation under control.

By noon the situation was almost normal. Some district officials and local leaders arrange a meeting between the feuding groups.

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More white papers in the process: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia announced yesterday that her government would come up with more white papers on corruption and misdeeds of the immediate past Awami League government.

"The government is investigating Awami League's corruption and will bring out more white papers on its misdeeds," the prime minister told parliament while replying to a question from Muhammad Giasuddin of the ruling party on losses suffered by the Biman. The lawmaker believed that the losses were due to AL's corruption.

The BNP-led coalition government already brought out a white paper on January 23, identifying 40 cases of corruption and irregularities of the AL government.

Referring the two-part white paper, Khaleda assured the House that the corrupt people will be brought to book once the allegations are proved.

Replying to another question, she said Biman incurred losses of Tk 97.93 crore, Tk 64.98 crore and Tk 0.3 crore in fiscal 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 respectively. It earned a profit of Tk 9.5 crore in 1999-2000. According to provisional estimates, the national flag carrier suffered a loss of Tk104.64 crore in 2001-2002.

The Leader of the House said the government has not yet decided to close Biman's loss-making Dhaka-New York direct flights. But she suggested

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Convention on human rights 8 foreign participants not granted visa: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight intending participants were not given visa by the government to attend the two-day 'national convention on crime against humanity' beginning in the city today, organisers alleged yesterday.

The eight persons including noted human rights activist Asma Jahangir are from three SAARC countries. Three of them are from Pakistan, four from India and one from Maldives, they said.

A total of 12 prominent personalities from SAARC countries confirmed their participation in the convention, being held by Awami League. Besides, more 15 are coming from Europe, America and Canada.

Initially, the Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad granted Asma Jahangir visa, effective from February 12. But on Tuesday, when she was taking preparation to fly to Dhaka, she was asked to get in touch with the Bangladesh consulate in Karachi, barrister Amirul Islam, co-convenor of the convention, said while talking to The Daily Star last night.

"We are stunned following the incidents. This type of action was never known to have been initiated earlier," he said.

Asked what could be the probable reason behind refusal of visa to the intending participants, Islam said, "They (the government) can say this well."

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Strict rules of conduct for public servants

Draft bars officials from doing politics, issuing press statement etc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has prepared a draft to impose strict rules of conduct for public servants to restore 'discipline' in the administration and bar them from pursuing politics.

A high-level Secretary Committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan finalised the draft of the rules expected to be placed soon before the prime minister and the president for approval.

The draft was prepared on an instruction from the highest level of the government, according to sources.

The sources said although laws related to rules of conduct of public servants are already there, the government wants to bring amendments to the rules and frame new ones at the same time to block ways for government officials and employees to get involved in any sort of politics.

The rules are being updated and new provisions are incorporated so that no political party can use the public servants as a tool to destabilise the administration as happened particularly in March 1996 when some officials joined the Awami League's so called Janatar Mancha.

The Secretary Committee after a series of meetings with the Public Service Commission brought a number of amendments to Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979.

The new rules completely prohibit public servants

from joining politics, issuing press statement, distributing leaflets and having association with any organisation affiliated to a political party at home or abroad.

Moreover, a government servant will have to inform the government in writing if his or her spouse is involved in any political activities in any manner. Contravention of the rules is liable to disciplinary action and there are provisions of different types of punishment, including termination.

Following are the important amendments to and incorporations into the 1979 Government Servant (Conduct) Rules.

A new inclusion in the general rule 4 is, "4A. General (1) every government servant shall at all times maintain proper official decorum and dignity towards female employees.

"(2) Every government servant shall comply (with) orders/decisions of the government and, shall not express any dissatisfaction/resentment/agitation and, also shall not exert any influence or presence to alter or change, modify, revise, cancel such orders/decisions of the government."

Another inclusion in the rule 23 is, "23A. Public statement on Government Policy: No government servant

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Bill soon for repealing law on portrait of Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private member's bill seeking repeal of the law making it obligatory for government offices and educational institutions to exhibit and preserve the portrait of the Father of the Nation is likely to be introduced in the current session of parliament, official sources said.

The previous Awami League government enacted the law early last year. It was placed in the parliament as a private member's bill. AL lawmaker in the last parliament Dewan Farid Gazi piloted the bill— Father of the Nation's Portrait (exhibition and preservation) Act, 2001— which the House passed a m i d c o n

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

CHT board & dist councils reconstituted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The government has reconstituted Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Development Board and the three CHT district councils, ending all speculations in this regard.

Wadud Bhuia, MP from Khagrachhari, has been appointed chairman of the CHT Development Board, according to a gazette notification by the Ministry of Establishment yesterday.

The post was lying vacant as Bir Bahadur MP, appointed by the immediate past government, resigned before the last general election.

The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs in a gazette notification yesterday announced that Nakkhatralai Dev Barman was

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Eid-ul-Azha Feb 23

UNB, Dhaka

The Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated in the country on February 23 (Saturday) as the moon of Jilhajj month was sighted yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee in the conference room of the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.

Chaired by Committee Chairman, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrif Hossain Shahjahan, the meeting was also attended by Secretary In-charge of the Ministry Khwaja Abdur Rahman, Foundation Director General Syed Ashraf Ali and other members of the committee.

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