

DU green space

FROM PAGE 1
The university authorities had earlier planned construction of the centre at the Mokarram Bhaban near the Doel Chattar. Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani also laid the foundation stone of the centre there during his visit in 1995. Later, the authorities constructed another building at the site.

An open space behind the Modern Language Institute was allocated when a team of Iranian engineers visited the university in 1998. But it was later rejected as the space was 'too small for the centre'.

Finally, the university authorities selected the open space between the central library and DUCSU Building. Constructors have marked the allocated land and also identified as many as 19 trees to be chopped down.

There are about 60 coconut, mango, rain-tree, guava and other trees in the open space. Some more trees will also be affected during the construction work.

Meantime, different student organisations have been demonstrating on the campus since Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Sayed Kamal Kharaji laid another foundation stone for the centre on February 15. The angry students also demolished the foundation plaque.

The university authorities however are very determined to construct the centre in the open space.

The demonstrators alleged that they were facing threats from different quarters to stop the movement.

The demonstrating students will submit a memorandum to Vice-chancellor Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury Thursday. Despite repeated attempts yesterday, the VC could not be contacted for comments.

The chief engineer of the DU said a land behind the Modern Language Institute was proposed for the centre. But the Iranian engineers did not accept it and chose the present site.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of general students strongly criticised the university for the unplanned construction.

"It is like defacing our institution," lamented a student.

Foreigners must show income tax certificate before leaving

UNB, Dhaka

Submission of income tax clearance or exemption certificates has been made mandatory for foreign nationals working in industries and businesses at the time of leaving the country.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) will soon issue guidelines to the immigration authority for implementing the decision, an NBR release said here yesterday.

According to the Income Tax Ordinance 1984, working foreign nationals, barring some exceptions, are to show income tax clearance certificates to immigration authorities before leaving the country.

In light of the provision, NBR decided that foreign nationals would have to submit their income tax clearance certificates or income tax exemption certificates to immigration authority before they leave the country.

BAPEX

FROM PAGE 1
The BAPEX earlier began to shift equipment and data tapes from its store to its new Shahjalal Tower office at Malibagh. However, a section of officials put a stop to the relocation process, sources alleged.

They also said that BAPEX activities might come to a halt following the tug of war between two sections of officials over relocation of the data centre.

The data centre comprises a collection of data on the sector for 42 years since its inception in 1962. The BAPEX spent about Taka 425 crore for collection of these data.

"If the data centre is relocated to Petrocentre then BAPEX officials would lose the right to access these data and research-oriented activities of the company might come to a halt," one official said.

He said it would also frustrate BAPEX officials mostly engaged in the field of research and the company would lose ground in further exploration work.

Geologists, geophysicists, petroleum engineers and drilling engineers mainly use the data centre for research.

Bangladesh's role in combating terrorism and its stand in de-escalation of tension in South Asia and the Middle East.

Tension in South Asia

The US assistant secretary of state expressed her government's concern at the slow pace of de-escalation of tension between India and Pakistan. She felt that US involvement would ultimately be required and both countries must engage in dialogue and show restraint.

Dhaka also urged Washington to naturalise undocumented citizens in the US.

Rocca described Bangladesh as a role model of moderate Muslim democracy.

The current South Asia tour of the US assistant secretary of state will also land her in the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

ing on bail petition of Nasim, an accused in the foreign currency smuggling case.

The court also directed the authorities concerned to produce Nasim before the court during the hearing on the issue.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa passed the order following a criminal appeal for bail by the defence lawyers.

Advocate Sahara Khatun, Abdullah Abu, Abdur Rahman Howlader and Momtazuddin Ahmed Mehedi filed the appeal yesterday, seeking bail from the Judge's Court after the rejection order of the CMM's Court, Dhaka.

The CMM's Court rejected Thursday the bail petition of Nasim in connection with the smuggling case.

Nasim was arrested from ZIA on February 27 when he went there to fly for America for treatment of his heart disease. Later he was shown arrested in separate cases -- one in Airport thana and the other filed with Madaripur thana -- on charge of firing gunshots on Khaleda Zia's motorcade.



Visiting Sri Lankan Minister for Enterprises Development called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday.

Water samples

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International Development) of UK, S M Ihtishamul Huq from DPHE, Dr Han Heinen from WHO, Colin Davis and Roger Boom from Unicef and Dr Ishita Takaku from JICA Japan International Cooperation (Agency) attended the meeting.

A committee was formed at the meeting with Khorshed Alam, DPHE Superintending Engineer, as the convener. Within two months, the committee will suggest the protocol which will include the heavy metals to be tested and frequency of tests.

The committee will also submit a report on strengthening the existing laboratories of DPHE for the new tests, and annual budget for this.

Vajpayee

FROM PAGE 12
The vehicles. All the Muslims of the village have fled," Soni told Reuters by phone from Baroda City.

Soni said he feared the mob would burn down the 60 to 70 Muslim houses that were unharmed in Sunday's violence if police did not step up security.

More than 700 people have died in Gujarat, the country's second-most industrialised state, since a train carrying Hindu devotees from the northern town of Ayodhya was set ablaze by a Muslim mob last month.

Ayodhya is the site of a 16th century mosque razed a decade ago where hardline Hindus are demanding the construction of a temple.

The train attack sparked massive reprisals against Muslims, who make up about 12 per cent of India's one-billion population.

Both houses of parliament were due to discuss the Gujarat crisis yesterday amid anger that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party-led government failed to prevent reprisals against Muslims.

Kamal murder

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disease. So, they prayed for adjournment of the hearing.

The prosecution side opposed the petition as three prosecution witnesses appeared in the court to give deposition.

The prosecution side also alleged that the witnesses would not appear in the court again to face cross-examination due to obstruction of the terrorists patronised by Adel and his sons.

After hearing both sides, the court granted the petition.

Kamal Hossain, 30, senior vice-president of ward no 67 unit of Awami League, was shot dead on August 16, 2000 as he protested hoisting of a Pakistani national flag by Zobayed, Tareq and others at the residence of Jahangir Mohammad Adel on August 14, Independence Day of Pakistan.

Adel's son Zobayed Adel and Pappu were present in the court during the hearing.

Adel's another son Tareq and Nitya Sarker have been absconding since the incident.

Additional PP Golam Mostafa Khan, Advocate Abdullah Abu and Abdur Rahman Howlader appeared for the state while Advocate T M Akbar and Mahbub Ahmed for the accused.

Khaleda

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expanding bilateral cooperation.

Begum Zia also cited scopes for introducing package tour in the regional countries including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Nepal.

Pointing out the training of officers of the Sri Lankan armed forces in the Bangladesh National Defence College and the Army Staff College, she said, "Bangladesh will encourage more officers from Sri Lanka for training in these institutions."

Referring to the present trade volume of 10 million US dollars between the two countries, the Sri Lankan Minister said there was scope for boosting the turnover.

The fourth session of Bangladesh-Sri Lanka joint commission, which will be held in Dhaka soon, will discuss further expansion of trade, economic cooperation and other related issues.

Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Neville Piyadigama and Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddiqui were present during the meeting.

Arafat: Travel ban

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against the Palestinian people," said Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.

Israel widened its military offensive against the Palestinians yesterday, just hours after a Palestinian gunman opened fire on a banquet hall in the Israeli port city of Ashdod where a bar mitzvah celebration -- a Jewish coming-of-age rite -- was under way. The assailant's M-16 assault rifle jammed and he was arrested after wounding a 13-year-old boy in the hall.

Before dawn yesterday, dozens of Israeli armored vehicles entered the West Bank town of Qalqilya.

The governor of Qalqilya, Mustafa Malki, said Israeli helicopters fired missiles at several security installations and an office of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a radical PLO faction that claimed responsibility for the Zeevi assassination. The governor said two people, a policeman and a civilian, were killed and five were wounded in the fighting.

Israeli troops also moved deeper into the Dheisheh refugee camp near the West Bank's biblical Bethlehem and seized the Palestinian police station in the Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

In Dheisheh, Israeli troops ordered all men between the ages of 15 and 45 to report to the large yard of a tile factory at the outskirts of the camp.

More than 200 men stood in line yesterday, their hands on their heads and stripped to the waist. Elsewhere in the yard, others had already been handcuffed and blindfolded. "I am very scared," said Mohammed Abu Sdou, 17, as he waited for an Israeli soldier to call him.

Israeli troops have carried out mass arrests in the Tulkarem refugee camp over the weekend. Hundreds of detainees were taken to an Israeli military base for interrogation, and those not suspected of ties to militant groups were released.

In the nearby town of Beit Jalla, the army said it demolished a house yesterday after finding a large number of explosive charges there.

And just to the south, near the town of Yatta, Israeli soldiers opened fire on a car trying to maneuver around a road barrier, killing a 17-year-old boy and wounding three other passengers, said a witness, Ibrahim Fakouseh, who was in the vehicle. The army said soldiers opened fire because the driver did not stop when ordered to do so.

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Major cabinet shake-up

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They observed that the selection of ministers was wrong and that there should be immediate changes, otherwise two-thirds majority in the parliament would be meaningless.

However, it is not known yet whether any concrete decision was taken at the meeting.

The BNP policymakers said that performance of at least 20 ministers and state ministers was very poor, and that a few cabinet members were busy 'making money' rather than running ministerial affairs.

They alleged that family members of some ministers were looking into transfer, appointment and other administrative matters involving money, which created widespread criticism in the administration.

Sources said the meeting laid utmost importance to bringing immediate changes in the ministries of home, information, civil aviation, energy and mineral resources and environment and forest.

The prime minister is learnt to have sought suggestions from her senior colleagues and invited names as replacements.

The policymakers proposed some names instantly and requested her to include some senior and dedicated party leaders in the cabinet by dropping "inefficient" ministers, sources said.

According to BNP insiders, Khaleda told those present at the meeting that she had also come to know what was happening in the

cabinet and would take a final decision very soon.

However, no suitable name for the post of home minister is found yet. Dependable ministers like Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan are learnt to have declined to take over the home ministry.

Khaleda is expected to sit exclusively with some other party leaders in a day or two before she takes any action, sources said.

A senior BNP leader, who wanted not to be named, told The Daily Star yesterday that she would soon bring major changes in the cabinet and also go for action against those instigating intra-party conflict and engaging in corruption.

He said the PM was determined to curb terrorism, stop corruption and nepotism at any cost.

He alleged that she was not getting correct information from people around her at the Prime Minister's Office.

The leader further said a section of party leaders at the PMO and bureaucrats like in the past were keeping her busy with the files and no party leader was able to meet her to give her feedback from the field level.

Meanwhile, conflict between the BNP hardliners and liberals took a serious turn following the March 3 statement issued by Saifur Rahman in the parliament in absence of the prime minister on the communal violence in India.

Sources said a group of senior



US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca met opposition leader and AL chief Sheikh Hasina at Sudha Sadan in the city yesterday.

AL won't join JS unless 'political persecution' ends: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

As a senior US State Department official yesterday observed that Awami League could contribute to the country's democratic process by joining parliament, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina expressed her party's inability to do so unless "political persecution" is stopped to improve the present situation.

Hasina's remarks came when US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca made a courtesy call on her at her Sudha Sadan residence.

During the meeting, political and economic issues, including alleged post-election political persecution, torture on religious minorities, violation of human rights as well as Bangladesh's longstanding plea for duty-and-quota-free access of readymade garments to the US market came up for discussion.

Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told UNB that the opposition leader pointed out how the October 1 election was rigged and manipulated and how her party workers

and supporters were persecuted and murdered, minority Hindu and Christians raped and law and order deteriorated under the present regime.

In response, Rocca agreed on importance of rule of law and ensuring human rights for strengthening democracy. She said they are monitoring the situation here and would look into allegations of human rights violation.

Hasina requested the US government to ensure duty-and-quota-free access of RMG to US market. She said it is important for Bangladesh's economy and employment of women engaged in the sector.

As Rocca observed that Awami League could contribute to the democratic process by returning to parliament, Hasina said, "We are unable to join parliament unless there is an improvement in present situation and persecution of Awami League stopped forthwith."

During the hour-long meeting, US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters, Political and Economic Counselor Len Hill, Awami League leaders Abul Mal Muhith, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Press Secretary Jawadul Karim were present.

Hasina

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"What will she (Khaleda) do if people of this country gherao the cantonment after torture of any more civilian by DGF1?"

Interrogation of a civilian at DGF1 is illegal, she said.

"Someday names and identities of the DGF1 people would be disclosed and people of Bangladesh know how to take revenge".

She said such atrocities were done in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. Khaleda Zia is following the footsteps of Ayub Khan.

She gave a resume of 'repression' on AL leaders and workers and people of minority communities allegedly by BNP-Jamaat activists. "Are we living in a democracy?"

Hundreds of her party leaders and workers are living away from their homes because of atrocities let loose by the government, she alleged.

"When the people of Bangladesh were experiencing an era of new hopes and aspirations during the last five-year rule of AL, rigging in the October polls snatched their happy days", the former prime minister said.

She called for building resistance against the 'repressive government which has no love people'.

Among others, senior AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Abdul Jalil, Sajeda Chowdhury, SAMS Kibria, Language Movement veteran Gaziul Haq, journalist Shontosh Gupta and economist Dr Atiur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Role in BIMSTEC-EC

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countries and Japan.

The bloc, grouping Bangladesh's next-door neighbour Myanmar which is not a member of the SAARC, was initiated in 1997 in Thailand's capital Bangkok and its first ministerial meeting held in Bangkok in 1998. Six areas of cooperation were identified and countries were given responsibility to draw future plans of cooperation in specific areas.

"But nothing much has progressed so far," Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said, admitting the potential of the BIMST-EC to act as a bridge between two regional groupings with some common members.

As regional trade in the SAARC could not get off the ground, the BIMST-EC member countries must remove all obstacles to have more trade and investment among themselves, he felt.

One specific area should be picked up from the six defined priorities to show how best the member countries can cooperate, the commerce minister said.

BISS Chairman MR Osmany said sub-regional cooperation is the only way for poor countries to overcome negative impacts of globalisation. Lack of political will and resources are two major obstacles in way of leading such coopera-

tion to success, he identified.

BISS Director General Major General S M Shahabuddin said the BIMST-EC initiative could not progress much for want of underpinnings from respective governments, their slow process and lack of academic exchanges and feedback.

Khulna police

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two rifles, four foreign-made guns, five revolvers, two pistols, and eight home-made guns were stolen from 'Malkhana' (store) of Khulna Metropolitan Police.

In August 1997, outlaws looted a sub-machinegun and seven rifles from Ansars who were on duty in the Shimanta Express train at Barobazar. Ansar Commander Azizul Islam was killed in the incident.

On December 26 in the same year, a revolver was snatched from SI Salahuddin of Bagharpara thana in Jessore. Three days later, five rifles were looted from Ansars at Rupsha Sea Foods Ltd in Khulna. On the following day, a rifle was looted from security guard at Sonali Bank at in Bagerhat.

Outlaws looted four rifles from Ansars at Uthali rail station in Chuadanga in February 1995 and one SLR and four rifles from patrol police at Sathkira town on March 21, 2001, police sources said.

Bahauddin Nasim

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two stamps of Tk 100 and 50, a money bag, and a book of 45 pages on, "How to Contact Spy Shop USA" from Nasim.

The CID also seized eight verbatim CD-R and 12 MB CD-R from him.

The complainant also alleged that he found the incidents of murder, torture and ransacking in Dhaka University and different parts of the country caused by the four-party alliance when the video cassettes were screened.

The video cassettes contained torture of Purnima in Sirajgonj, attacks on minority Hindu community after the general election on October 1, last year, ransacking of puja altars, obstruction to celebrate puja of Hindu community.

There were stories of torture of people in Bangladesh in the books seized from Nasim, the complainant claimed.

"Such activities might destroy the communal harmony and worsen the country's law and order," the complainant observed.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed March 20 for hear-



New York City firefighters and construction workers look up at a makeshift steel cross at Ground Zero during a prayer service held yesterday morning to commemorate the sixth-month anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York.

PHOTO: AFP