



A demonstrator (R) is kept off the sidewalk by a Los Angeles police officer during an anti-war demonstration in Los Angeles on Saturday. Thousands marched to the CNN office building to protest the way CNN is covering the war in Iraq.

Govt yet to decide action against exam cheats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry is yet to decide what the invigilators will do if copies for cheating in exams are found with the examinees during frisking at the examination hall gate.

The ministry convened a press conference yesterday to describe the measures to be taken against cheating during the forthcoming Secondary School Certificate (SSC), Dhakil and SSC Vocational examinations.

The education minister, state minister, deputy minister and the education secretary expressed their opinions on the matter.

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon said an examinee could be expelled if she/he is found carrying copy materials during the search at the hall gate. Contradicting him, Education Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Alam said that such an act would be a violation of law.

Deputy Minister for Education Abdus Salam Pintu said an examinee could not be accused of cheating until she/he adopts unfair means at the examination hall.

Earlier, the state minister and the education secretary issued separate letters to deputy commissioners in this regard. The letters contradicted each other and the D C s d i d n o t

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Delhi to press Dhaka for free trade deal

STAR REPORT

New Delhi will press for a bilateral free trade agreement against Dhaka's demand of zero-tariff access for its products to Indian markets when the commerce secretaries of the two countries meet today in the Indian capital.

Dhaka is not interested, at least at this stage, to go for any free trade agreement with over \$ one billion trade gap with New Delhi, according to sources.

"Unless the trade deficit between the two countries is reduced significantly, a free trade agreement with New Delhi could jeopardise the country's trade interests," a high official of the commerce ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh's trade deficit with India jumped to \$971.72 million in 2001-02 from \$332.12 million in 1992-93.

Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed will lead a six-member delegation at the two-day trade talks, while his counterpart Deepak Chatterjee will head the Indian side.

They will try to iron out the differences on various issues, and carry on the talks from the point they reached during the talks held

in Dhaka in April 2002.

The talks will also focus on a revised bilateral trade agreement and signing of a bilateral investment agreement.

Dhaka wants the 'inland waterway transit protocol' to be removed from the existing trade agreement. Rather, it said a separate waterway transit protocol could be signed.

Dhaka will place specific examples of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers its products face in the Indian market. And it will also raise imposition of anti-dumping duty on export of Bangladesh's lead acid battery to India.

New Delhi will raise the problem an Indian pharmaceutical company, which invested around \$1.5 million in Bangladesh, is facing before starting production.

According to sources, the company got the nod for its investment from Bangladesh authorities in 2000, but the drug administration is yet to give it permission to produce drugs and market it in Bangladesh.

New Delhi will also raise the ban Bangladesh imposed on the land route for importing a few goods. T h e

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Govt threatens stern action for hoarding fuel

UNB, Dhaka

The government has ordered stern action against stockpiling of fuel oils and artificial price hike taking advantage of the Iraq war in the oil-rich Gulf.

"We have asked all the DCs to cancel licences of any dealer found hoarding oils and charging extra prices," State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain told UNB yesterday.

He said the deputy commissioners had also been directed to release fuel on the open market in case of hoarding by any quarters and take lawful action against hoarders.

Mosharraf said they had received information that some unscrupulous quarters were hoarding fuel to create a crisis trying to advantage of the war situation.

"I want to make sure that there is no shortage of fuel in the country and there is no logical reason that price will mark a minimum rise," said the minister.

He informed that the country at present has a reserve of all kinds of fuels for 60 days and is able to bring kerosene or other oils from Singapore anytime.

"Besides, we have a stock of crude oil of 230,000 tons to meet the demand for fuel under any circumstances," said Mosharraf Hossain.

One to die for rape, murder of 4-yr-old Sathi in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

The accused in the sensational Sathi rape and murder case was convicted and awarded the death penalty at a court here yesterday.

Mohammad Ainul Haque, Additional District and Sessions Judge-1 of Jhenidah, sentenced convict Abdul Latif Khokan, 25, son of Abdul Barek of Baniakandar village to death for the rape and murder of four-year-old Sathi of village Baniakandar in Jhenidah sadar upazila.

The court also fined the convict Tk 2 lakh. The district magistrate was ordered to realise the money and give it to Sathi's parents within a week, or face legal action, court sources said.

The case in brief is that Khokan raped and killed Sathi on March 7, 2002 before dumping her body into the tank of a latrine.

On March 12, he sent a letter to Sathi's father Wazed Ali demanding a ransom of Tk 2 lakh for the release of his daughter.

But people recognised Khokan's handwriting and he was arrested soon after a case was lodged against him with the local police on March 23.

As per Khokan's confessional statement, police recovered Sathi's body from the latrine.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case sub inspector Enam Ahmed submitted the chargesheet against Khokan on July 22.

The court heard 21 witnesses in the case.

Khokan appeared unmoved as the verdict was pronounced.

Sathi's father Wazed Ali and mother Hazera Khatun and a number of relatives were present at the court.

Road accidents kill 5 in Bogra, N'ganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people were killed in road accidents in Bogra and Narayanganj yesterday.

Of them, three were killed in Bogra while the rest two in Narayanganj.

Our Bogra Correspondent reports: Three people were killed in separate road accidents at Bogra yesterday.

Of the dead, two were identified as Azharul Huq, 15, son of Jobber Mia of Salong village under Jhaldhaka upazila in Nilphamari district and Mohammad, 50, of Fulbari village under Sherpur upazila in Bogra.

Witnesses said Azharul was crushed under the wheels of a speeding bus in Charnath area at about 11 am.

Mohammad, a pedestrian, died on the spot at Sherpur upazila bus stand. He was hit by a bus at about 2 p m

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Water Forum fails to suggest concrete action to end woes

Ministers howl at toothless declaration

AFP, Kyoto

A declaration Sunday from the ministerial meeting ending the Third World Water Forum prioritized water issues as an "urgent global requirement" but failed to suggest concrete action to end the global water and sanitation crisis.

Reference to water as a basic human right, a characterization approved last November by the United Nations, was also omitted from the consensus declaration of 101 ministers representing 96 countries and delegates representing another 69 nations.

Also omitted was a follow-up on a call by French President Jacques Chirac, and echoed by former IMF chief Michel Camdessus, for a global watchdog to monitor progress made towards achieving the

UN Millennium Goals of more than halving to one billion the number of people without access to water and sanitation by 2015.

"Prioritizing water issues is an urgent global requirement," the declaration said, calling water a "driving force for sustainable development" and a tool to fight poverty.

The declaration urged better cooperation among nations sharing water resources and sought to spur the United Nations into taking a leading role in mediating, leading and cooperating with other organizations involved in the water sector.

"It is a good opportunity that, during such a conflicting time, representatives from 165 countries could come together and discuss these issues," said Belgium's min-

ister of territory management, Michel Foret.

The United States was "pleased" by the declaration that came from ministerial consensus, said Susan Povenmire, a member of the US delegation.

"The United States looks forward to the G8 Summit in Evian (France) as an important next step to build consensus and develop coalitions that will create concrete and compelling infrastructure for bringing water to the world's poor," she said.

But criticism of the declaration came at both the ministerial and non-governmental level, deriding the document as too soft and l a c k i n g

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presides over a meeting on monthly evaluation of different ministries' and departments' activities at the International Conference Centre yesterday.

More Japanese aid assured

UNB, Dhaka

Japan assured enhanced cooperation in Bangladesh's development efforts and implementing various programmes aimed at poverty alleviation and people's welfare.

The assurances came from the visiting president of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Takao Kawakami, when he called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday afternoon.

The prime minister sought Japanese assistance in construction of the planned Padma Bridge and developing industrial ventures in agricultural sub-sectors, particularly agro-processing industries.

The chief of JICA, a major development partner of Bangladesh for the last 30 years, appreciated the

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Speed up process of recruitment to govt jobs: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday advised all concerned, including ministers and bureaucrats, to infuse more dynamism in the administration to make it more pro-people and worthy of the time.

As a step to that end, she asked the officials concerned to speed up the process of recruitment to government jobs, giving priority to talent and efficiency.

"All have got to come out of the time-serving trend to ensure wel-

fare of the people," she said chairing a meeting on evaluation of different ministries' activities during the month of February.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Information Minister Tariqul Islam, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Agriculture Minister Matiur Rahman Nizami and Post and Telecommunications Minister

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Bagerhat rape Jubo Dal leader admits involvement

UNB, Khulna

A newly elected UP member and local Jubo Dal leader accused in the Komorpur killing and rape case in a confessional statement to the magistrate yesterday admitted his involvement in the crime.

Following his statement, Haroon Sheikh was sent to jail from the police remand.

Police said Haroon confessed that he and three others were behind the brutal killing of Tapan Bhattachariya, looting of gold ornaments and rape of three female inmates of the house on March 9.

Idris, another accused in the case, was also sent to prison after being produced before the court from police remand.

BSS adds: The government has decided to submit chargesheet against the accused soon for their trial under the Speedy Trial Tribunal.

Ten of the accused have been arrested so far. Four of them confessed their involvement in the crime at Komorpur on March 9, a Home Ministry statement said here yesterday.

Ershad Shikdar awarded life term for keeping illegal pistol

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Condemned prisoner Ershad Shikdar has been awarded life term imprisonment for keeping an unauthorised pistol in his possession.

The verdict was pronounced yesterday by Sajedul Karim, Judge of the Special Tribunal Court, Khulna.

According to the prosecution, Ershad Shikdar purchased a 7.62 bore pistol from a local gunshop on October 17, 1990. But he obtained a licence mentioning the pistol as 32 bore.

During a search operation in his residence 'Swamakamol' at Sonadanga in 1999, police recovered the unauthorised pistol. The fake licence of the pistol was also seized.

SI Zahidur Rahman of Sonadanga thana filed a case in this connection as complainant.

Ershad Shikdar who is now in Khulna District Jail has already been awarded death penalty in seven murder cases.

8 JCD men hurt in attack by Shibir at Ctg Polytech Instt

CU CORRESPONDENT

Eight activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were injured, two of them seriously, in an attack by Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) cadres at the Chittagong Polytechnic Institute (CPI) on Saturday night.

JCD enforced an indefinite strike at the institute from today protesting the attack on its activists.

The seriously injured JCD activists--MK Akash and Sumon--were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Police and campus sources said the ICS cadres attacked the JCD men for establishing their supremacy on the campus.

They also damaged some rooms belonging to JCD men at the CPI dormitory and several rooms of the academic buildings, sources added.

Protesting the attack, JCD brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus yesterday morning.

At the rally, the JCD leaders announced an indefinite strike at the institute. They also demanded arrest of the ICS cadres involved in the incident.

The CPI authorities have deployed police on the campus to avert further incident. A tense situation has been prevailing on the campus.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 24		6-11 pm
Mar 25	5-58 am	
Prayer Timings		
Mar 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-15
Maghrib	6-17	6-22
Esha	7-35	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PONTING PUNCH: Australia captain Ricky Ponting pulls on his way to a majestic 140 not out during the World Cup final against India at The Wanderers yesterday.