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Attack on Dr Kamal's motorcade in Ctg

Pro-govt settler group blamed for the raid, Gano Forum chief calls it a premeditated attempt on his life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain escaped unscathed when an anti-CHT peace agreement group attacked his motorcade in

Kaukhali upazila on way to Rangamati yesterday morning, triggering a nationwide outcry and a daylong hartal.

The assailants, allegedly activists of pro-government Parbatya Samo

Adhikar Andolan (Equal Rights Movement), attacked the vehicles with iron rods and stones near Godarpar Rubber Garden, damaging two minibuses including one in which Dr Kamal was travelling,

police and witnesses said.

Dr Kamal, a prominent jurist and one of the key framers of Bangladesh's constitution, returned to Chittagong after the attack

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PHOTO: STAR

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, right, sixth from left, joins a procession brought out in Chittagong yesterday in protest against an attack on his motorcade in Kaukhali upazila on way to Rangamati earlier on the day. The microbus, left, the eminent jurist was riding on was damaged in the raid.

PCJSS enforces hartal today in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) has called a daylong strike in Rangamati district today to press for implementation of its three-point demand.

The demands are immediate withdrawal of temporary army camps from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), implementation of the CHT Peace Treaty and removal of ruling party lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan from the post of chairman of CHT Development Board.

Announcing the hartal at a public rally in Rangamati district town yesterday afternoon, PCJSS

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7 M-79 rifles, 12 guns seized in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The joint forces yesterday retrieved seven M-79 rifles, 12 gun barrels and a magnesium flare from a criminal hideout in Baishari Shila Baidhya Para under Naikhonchhari Upazila of the district.

They could arrest no-one, however, for the arms haul. The forces had seized an M-16 rifle with six bullets from the area on Sunday.

The joint forces of paramilitary BDR and army in the last six months

have seized huge arms and ammunition, which army explosives experts said could cause massive destruction.

Of the six operations from August 26 to December 30 last year, the BDR conducted five and recovered huge arms mostly from Naikhonchhari area close to Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

The criminal outfits in possession of the arms and ammunition are believed to have hideouts in the deep forests along the border and

also have an arms sale network.

A source said the BDR informers also work for the criminals and leak information of operation by the joint forces, which is why the criminals flee their hideouts beforehand to evade arrest.

The huge arms seizure from several border areas of the district in the last six months indicates a drastic rise in criminal activities in the region. Most of the heavy arms were recovered from Naikhonchhari.

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Clarification

The Privatisation Commission in a clarification yesterday said that the February 23 report of The Daily Star (headlined SOE sell-off through ministries illegal: Privatisation Commission writes PM) has some factual errors.

In the news item, it was stated that a decision was taken by the cabinet committee to ask the PC to either sell the SOEs or deal with them through 'other means'. But actually the cabinet committee asked the line ministry to do so.

The heading of the story is also misleading, the clarification stated. The PC has not sent any report anywhere mentioning that the SOEs sell-off through ministries is illegal.

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Politics heats up on February 28 plans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politics is apparently heading towards a situation of confrontation as both the BNP-led ruling alliance and the main opposition Awami League (AL) are taking a hardline -- the AL to dislodge the government and the alliance to foil the bid at any cost.

A scheduled public meeting of the BNP in the capital coincides with the countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the AL on February 28, giving rise to fears of a confrontation between the two mighty parties.

BNP sources said the public meeting at Basabo playground is part of a series of eight such meetings in Dhaka and the programme was announced much ahead of the hartal call. Prime Minister and BNP

chief Khaleda Zia will address the meeting.

However, AL sources claimed BNP announced the rally schedule after the hartal call with the motive of foiling the shutdown and resorting to repression on AL leaders and activists, who will be picketing.

Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation and city BNP President Sadeque

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Attack condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political parties and professional bodies yesterday condemned the attack on noted lawyer and Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and several human rights activists near Rautzan in Chittagong and demanded stern action against the attackers.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju, former president Badruddoza Chowdhury condemned the attack and demanded arrest of the persons responsible.

In a joint statement, President of the Workers Party of Bangladesh Rashed Khan Menon and General Secretary Bimal Biswas said the

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Altaf blames it on Dr Kamal's 'armed escorts'

Kader Siddiqui walks out in protest at statement in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury in a statement at the parliament yesterday blamed "armed opposition activists accompanying Dr Kamal" for the incident that forced the veteran political

leader and Gano Forum president to cancel his trip to Rangamati and return to Chittagong.

Altaf was responding to opposition lawmaker Kader Siddiqui who rose on a point of order to inquire about government steps to punish

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PM orders raiders' arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has ordered arrest of those who attacked Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain on his way to Rangamati yesterday.

Political Secretary to the Prime Minister M Harris Chowdhury told The Daily Star that on hearing the news of the attack, the PM instantly issued the orders. She also asked the authorities to take legal action against the attackers irrespective of their party affiliation, Harris Chowdhury added.

Meanwhile, most policymakers of the ruling BNP and ministers have expressed concern at the attack on an eminent legal expert like Kamal

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25pc water shortage to cripple city life this summer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka dwellers are going to suffer a water crisis this summer when daily supply is set to see a minimum of 25 percent shortfall, a highly placed source at Dhaka Wasa said.

The perennial water crisis is likely to aggravate this time round as the ground water level, major source of Wasa's (Water and Sewerage Authority) water generation, remains static with no significant recharge, said the source asking not to be named.

"Against the total daily demand for 200 crore litres water in the capital, we can at best generate 150 crore litres and so we always have a daily shortfall of 50 crore litres," he said.

Wasa generates 85 percent of its water from underground through

tube-wells and the rest by treating surface water.

"Depletion of ground water level during summer, large scale irrigation, out-of-order tube wells and a drastic fall in production of two major water purification plants at Chandighat and Sayedabad that use Buriganga and Shitalakhya water have worsened the situation," the source added.

"Rampant pilferage, systems loss, illegal connection, and the consumers' lack of awareness add to the overall supply shortage," the source said. An estimate puts the total demand for water by 2010 at 300 crore litres, he added.

"There is no denying that water pilferage by the Wasa officials, from the field-level staff up to high

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AL rejects US envoy's request for JS return

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday turned down the US ambassador's request to shun hartal and return to parliament and reiterated that immediate resignation of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government followed by mid-term elections is the only way to resolve the prevailing political crisis and end 'corrupt and repressive rule'.

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and AL President Sheikh Hasina and top leaders of the party once again made the party stand clear when US Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry K Thomas met the AL leadership at Hasina's Dhanmondi residence and made the request.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil quoting meeting discussions told newsmen later people have lost confidence in the present government for its absolute failure to gov-

ern the country properly and that his party in asking for mid-term polls is just reflecting the people's demand.

"We are ready for immediate elections and will also accept the results even if we lose. The present rulers also have to accept the polls results if they lose," Jalil said.

Hartal is a democratic practice in the countries of this region, he observed.

The envoy said they discussed issues relating to corruption, downsides in law and order and state of democracy in Bangladesh.

"We told them (AL leaders) they should return to parliament and that hartal is not a good practice though it's a fundamental right to protest," Thomas said.

He however criticised police atrocities on opposition leaders and workers during recent hartals.

Jalil said, "The (US envoy)

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A journey begins ...

PRAN DAIRY LTD

Inaugurating PRAN Dairy Ltd, country's state-of-the-art Ultra High Temperature (UHT) dairy plant on Tuesday, February 24, 2004, at 10:50 a.m. at Pran Industrial Park, Palash, Narsingdi.

Honorable Minister of Finance and Planning, Govt. of Bangladesh
MR M SAIFUR RAHMAN, MP
will adorn the inauguration ceremony and inaugurate Pran Dairy Plant as Chief Guest &
Minister of Science and Information & Communication Technology, Govt. of Bangladesh
DR ABDUL MOYEEN KHAN, MP
has cordially consented to be the Special Guest on the auspicious occasion.

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Hartal cannot be banned, says Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hartal is indeed suicidal for the economy but banning it is also not possible, observed Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday.

"Framing law against hartal is impossible as it is a political programme," Saifur told the press emerging out of a meeting with the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI) at the planning ministry.

He took up the complex issue with the prime minister but they could not come to any conclusion, he told MCCI members.

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Tourists, fishermen barred as tiger count starts in Sundarbans Feb 26

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

The Ministry of Forest and Environment begins a tiger enumeration programme in the Sundarbans from February 26 to March 3.

The ministry has also barred entrance of tourists, fishermen and bawali (wood collector) into the world's largest mangrove forest during the tiger counting drive, sources said.

It will be carried out on the basis of pug mark survey (counting the number of pugs of tiger), Sundarbans Forest Division (SFD) sources said.

Minister for Forest and Environment Shajahan Siraj will inaugurate the enumeration work on February 26 at Chandpai Forest Range. Jogesh Chandra Barman, West Bengal minister for forest, will

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Announcement

Today's issue of The Daily Star is carrying a four-page colour supplement on its roundtable on cricket titled 'Building a more competitive team', on pages 17 to 20. The supplement contains deliberations of country's leading cricket experts that we feel will provide a guideline of taking the game forward.

U-19 WC CRICKET Canada make hosts sweat

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh were made to struggle by minnows Canada in a Plate Championship match of the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup yesterday.

In the Super League, England and Pakistan sent strong messages

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TOSHIN

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RANGS GROUP

PROUD TO BE BANGLADESHI

Special Events

- Charity Fund Raising for CRP
Cooking Demonstration by Master Chef Tommy Miah
27th February 2004
- Leap Year Celebration
Live Sitar Performance by Alif Laila
Cooking Demonstration by Master Chef Tommy Miah
29th February 2004

WE ARE OPEN

Master Chef Tommy Miah brings to you "Bangla Fusion Cuisine", for the first time in the history at the Heritage Restaurant. He is pioneer in presenting Bangladeshi food in the form of Culinary Art by creating his own unique recipe blending the taste of East and West with class. Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth-II wrote foreword for his last book "Favorite Recipes of the Raj". He is famous for preparing World's Biggest Curry (Guinness Book of Records), founder of the International Indian Chef of the Year Competition. Author of several recipe books, a pleasant & humble personality, who certainly knows how to win peoples' heart by presenting delightful cuisine.

Heritage
Bangla Fusion Cuisine
By master chef Tommy Miah

Alif Laila at Heritage
Live Sitar Performance

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