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Top business leaders honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four prominent business personalities and corporate houses were awarded Bangladesh Business Awards 2003 yesterday in recognition of their excellence in different fields of business.

Chairman of PHP Group Mohammed Mizanur Rahman received the Businessperson of the Year 2003 Award, while country's first indigenous woman entrepreneur and proprietor of Bain Textile Manjulika Chakma received the Outstanding Woman in Business of the Year 2003 Award.

Details on Business Page

MM Ispahani Limited got the Enterprise of the Year 2003 Award while Coats Bangladesh Limited got the Best Joint Venture Enterprise of the Year 2003 Award.

Jointly introduced by the DHL Worldwide Express and The Daily Star four years ago, SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



From left: Shafiq Uz Zaman, MD of Coats Bangladesh, Best Joint Venture Enterprise; Mirza Ali Behroz Ispahani, chairman of MM Ispahani Ltd, Enterprise of 2003; Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman; PHP Group Chairman Mizanur Rahman, Businessperson of 2003; Bain Textile proprietor Manjulika Chakma, Outstanding Woman in Business; MD of DHL Bangladesh Anselm Quiah; and DHL Country Manager Desmond Quiah at the Bangladesh Business Awards 2003 ceremony in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MIRPUR RALLY TODAY 200 welcome arches for Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP leaders have built over 200 welcome arches on Mirpur roads ahead of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's public rally today, ignoring an official order and her office's requests to give up such indulgences.

The premier's recent political rallies in Dhaka have seen a growing competition of putting up the bamboo arches, each costing Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000, and gathering of schoolchildren to line up roads hampering their academic activities.

Such excesses have fuelled public outcry and brewed resentment even in BNP ranks.

An official circular issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on April 20, 2002 barred all government, semi-government, autonomous and private organisations from putting up ceremonial gates to greet the premier.

It also prohibited gathering of schoolchildren for the prime minister's visits upsetting their academic routine and offering of gifts, bouquets to the head of the government

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Power cuts make life miserable

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Acute power crisis amid rising summer heats has brought sufferings to people, disrupting treatment facilities, stopping irrigation and plunging cities and towns in prolonged brownouts across Bangladesh.

The crisis, triggered largely by the breakdown of 450-megawatt (MW) capacity Meghnaghat power plant and glitches at 200 Ghorashal power plant, resulted in 500 MW power cuts yesterday, a weekly holiday when demand usually drops.

Power authorities said 2,780 MW of electricity were generated yesterday, against the demand of 3,300 MWs.

They said the crisis would continue to smother life for a week during which they expected the glitches would be fixed.

The Meghnaghat power plant that produces 450 MW of electricity stopped operation on Tuesday because of a glitch that could not be found out until yesterday.

A 200 MWs unit of state-run six-unit Ghorashal Power Plant was shut down because of gas crisis.

A 55 MWs gas-turbine unit of the plant was also hit by technical faults yesterday, but its authorities said they would overcome the problem later in the day. The unit was inoperative until writing of this report last night.

Power Development Board sources said the 700 MWs Ghorashal plant had been producing 500 MWs since Wednesday.

CANDLELIT AUTOPSY
Frequent power cuts hit hospitals and clinics in big towns and cities yesterday and forced country's largest treatment facility, Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), to perform candlelit autopsies on 11 bodies in the morgue verandah amid a nine-hour outage from 8:00am.

The DMCH operated a 200-KV generator to ensure minimum power to essential units.

PDB Chairman Syed Abdul Moyeed said: "The PDB was planning to raise the numbers of brownouts in cities and towns outside Dhaka to ensure supply to irrigation pumps for boro crops in the northern region."

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Policymakers divided over tele-talk tapping

Bugging by intelligence agents seen to breach civil rights

STAR REPORT

Policymakers are divided on the issue of amending the telecoms law to provide for intelligence agencies to tap telephone calls and pry emails.

Officials of post and telecommunications ministry and Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) are under pressure from security agencies to change the Bangladesh Telecom Act 2001.

"But no-one except for the agencies wants to change the act," a senior government official said.

It will breach privacy of all -- be those in power or in the --, opposition, said a telecoms ministry official, asking not to be named.

"It's not acceptable. The move will infringe on civil rights. It's an encroachment on the freedom of

communication," Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury said.

The academician fears it may abuse civil liberty and people may be harassed. Nor will the law help trace real criminals.

The move is also detrimental to the growth of ICT (information and communication technology), designated as a thrust sector, Professor Chowdhury pointed out.

Impatient at the delay in amendment to the law and in a bid to bug telephone conversations for "national security", security agencies asked the BTRC to make police verification mandatory for getting new cellphone connections.

The National Security Intelligence (NSI) wants the telecoms regulator to obtain undertaking from the would-be subscribers to the effect that they will not object to security agencies tapping their telephonic conversations for the sake of national security.

Telecoms subscribers and operators reacted sharply to the proposal which they said would be an additional hassle. "It'll bring no good to the country but will only drastically

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ONE YEAR OF IRAQ INVASION

Bush defends but people, allies split over his role

AP, Washington

One year after ordering the first military strikes against Iraq, President Bush marks the anniversary with a fresh defense of his actions for a voting public that remains split over his decision and international allies who are growing weary of continued postwar violence in that country.

Bush's speech yesterday in the East Room of the White House ends a weeklong administration effort to boost support for the war on terrorism at a time when cracks are forming in the US-led alliance that toppled Saddam Hussein from power.

The president was offering a favorable progress report and issuing a call for support in a "time of testing."

Aides said Bush's remarks would echo the warning he delivered Thursday at Fort Campbell, Ky., when he said the deadly train bombings in Madrid showed that

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PHOTO: AFP

US Marines enter the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah, where allied troops found stubborn resistance in their northbound advance towards the Iraqi capital Baghdad on March 23, 2003.

Jubo Dal leader shot dead in Sutrapur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jubo Dal leader was gunned down in the city's Sutrapur area last night.

Bulbul, 35, organising secretary of ward No 81, was sitting at Dhupkhola BNP office. Jubo Dal ward unit president and three others reportedly called Bulbul out of the office at about 10:30pm, took him to nearby playground and shot him point blank in the chest and right thigh.

Hearing the news, Bulbul's brother Arif rushed to the spot from their house at Gandaria Battikhana Lane. He took Bulbul to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at 11:50pm.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately, but some locals linked it to internal feud.

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B Chy leads hunger strike today amid police hard line

Restriction on rally, procession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former president Badruddoza Chowdhury is set to lead a mass hunger strike in Dhaka today amid a police hard line on the programme against an attack on key figures of the alternative political stream.

Police said they would not allow the 10:00am to 5:00pm strike of Bikalpa Dhara, the alternative platform for politics, in front of the National Press Club. The strike came after ruling BNP activists aided by law enforcers ruined a rally at Mukhtangan on March 11.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in a last-minute notice asked all political parties not to gather on the road and sidewalks in front of the press club today for what it said was people's interest.

On the DMP notice, Badruddoza's son Mahi B Chowdhury, member of the national convening committee of the new organisation, said: "The police restriction shows the undemocratic attitude of the government. We scheduled our programme long before the notice was issued."

"The government is desperate to

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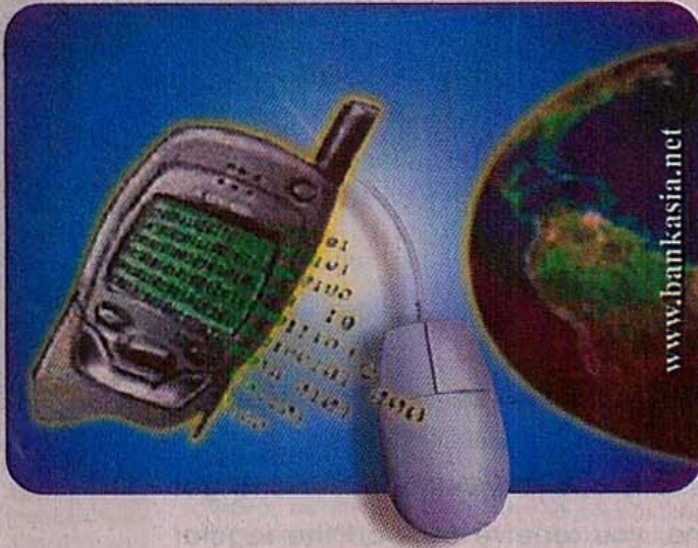
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Hameed fashions Pakistan's win

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistan's Yasir Hameed and Abdul Razzaq combined to lead Pakistan to a four-wicket win over India in the third one-day international here on Friday.

Hameed scored 98 as Pakistan overtook India's 244-8 with 16 deliveries to spare and take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Pakistan, who were themselves struggling at 173-6 in the 35th, prospered through an unbroken stand of 74 for the seventh-wicket between Abdul Razzaq and Moin Khan.

Razzaq followed his 2-44 in India's innings to remain unbeaten on 53 off 52 balls. Moin made 22 not out.

Lanky seamer Shabbir Ahmed set

up the win when he removed three top batsmen, including Sachin Tendulkar, in a hostile opening burst after Pakistan elected to bowl first on a rare seaming wicket.

The win gave Pakistan the psychological edge going into the remaining two games to be played under lights at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday and Wednesday.

Bowlers finally had something to smile about on the greenish wicket, unlike the perfect batting strips laid out for the first two matches that produced more than 300 runs in each innings.

India slipped from 37-3 to 140-6 before Yuvraj Singh cracked a defiant 65 off 76 balls late in the innings to boost the total.

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FIRST SEVEN-HOUR DRIVE IN CITY Undercover teams nab 25 'criminals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninety-nine armed undercover teams comprising police, members of Detective Branch (DB), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Rapid Action Team (RAT) arrested 25 alleged criminals in the first seven hours of their operation in the capital Thursday.

Fifty-nine teams with detectives and other police personnel carried out the operation in every ward of

the east and south zones of Dhaka from 4:00pm to 11:00pm.

The plainclothes police teams were asked to arrest killers, extortionists, listed criminals and car lifters and seize illegal arms, drugs and stolen vehicles.

As many as 700 police, DB, Rab and Rat members are in the 99 teams. Each team consists of at least

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