

Poor facility hurts elementary edn

Says Nat'l Education Commission report

STAR REPORT

Inadequate infrastructure and shortages of teaching staff in both the public and private schools of the country blunt the prospect of ensuring a quality education in the elementary level.

The National Education Commission in its report, made public on Wednesday, observed this. The commission report found that most of the schools that have only three classrooms and a teaching staff ranging between three and four, are run in two shifts leading to a low teacher-student contact hour in comparison with that in many neighbouring countries. Lack of classrooms and other facilities, along with the fewer than required number of teaching staff are contributing to this impoverished quality of primary education, the report stated.

In light of the findings, the report recommended for raising the number of teachers to five or six, so that schools could be run in a shift, it would also help increase the teacher-student contact hours. The report suggested that the

teacher student ratio be raised to 1:30 within next eight-year and 1:25 by next 10-year. The commission also recommended for encouraging private sector to establish primary schools, simplification of school registration, and bringing every infant to school at the age of five. The report said the number of primary schools is inadequate in comparison with that of students. The school buildings are built unplanned with insufficient classrooms and other facilities like toilets, playground and so on. The commission also noticed a scarcity of safe drinking water for the students. Besides, in most of the schools, classroom environment is not congenial due to lack of reading materials and necessary furniture, it added.

Introduction of reward among the pupils for higher attendance is another recommendation by the commission. It also suggested strengthening of academic supervision and monitoring.

Hasina starts southern region tour today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina begins a five-day organisational tour of southern region today. Hasina, accompanied by some central AL leaders and opposition lawmakers, leaves the capital at 7:00am for Barisal and over the next four days she will be visiting Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakathi and Pirojpora, AL sources said. The opposition leader will address six public rallies and seven street-side gatherings during the tour. Political quarters consider the AL chief's visit to five southern districts 'very important' as it is scheduled just ahead of the party's planned back-to-back countrywide hartals on April 7 and 8. She is scheduled to return to the capital on April 6 afternoon.

PBCP operative hacked to death in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A gang yesterday hacked to death an alleged member of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) at Baghmara in Rajshahi. Identifying themselves as members of Mujahidin Alliance Council, an anti-PBCP underground outfit, about 50 masked criminals swooped on Babu at around 11:00am when he was gossiping at a crop field in Palashi village, witnesses said. The gang slaughtered Babu, 30, son of Mohsin Ali of Naldanga in Nature, and fled the scene chanting slogans in favour of their organisation, they added. Later, police recovered some PBCP posters and 11 bullets beside the victim's body. Raising three neighbouring villages, police held school-teacher Wahidul Islam, grocer Fazlu and an unidentified man and recovered three bombs, locals said.

Nor'wester hits Barisal, Netrakona

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 25 people were injured and 500 houses damaged as nor'wester lashed Barisal and Netrakona districts yesterday and on Wednesday night. Dr Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, associate professor of archaeology at Jahangirnagar University and leader of the excavation team, found a 600 by 600-metre area housing the citadel a few days after kicking off the current mission on March 4. He believes the citadel formed the eastern limit of the Mauryan Empire. "I think the citadel ran very organised administrative activities with trade activities around it," he added. "Discovery of the road will revolutionise the early archaeology of eastern India as a whole since no road was found in the Trans-Gangetic valley earlier," Prof Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, who teaches archaeology at Cambridge University, told The Daily Star from Cambridge by phone. "The carbon dating of previous finds here is enough proof of the age of the site. We don't need to test the age of the road anew," said Chakrabarti, who is involved with the Narsingdi quest since 1992 and currently helping Mustafizur's excavation team. The finds dwarf Bangladesh's ancient huts of Pundrabardhan in Bogra's Mahastangarh that dates back to 370 BC, the Buddhist seat of learning in Paharpur, Comilla of the 8th century and Buddhist centre of Mainamoti that flourished between 7th and 12th century.

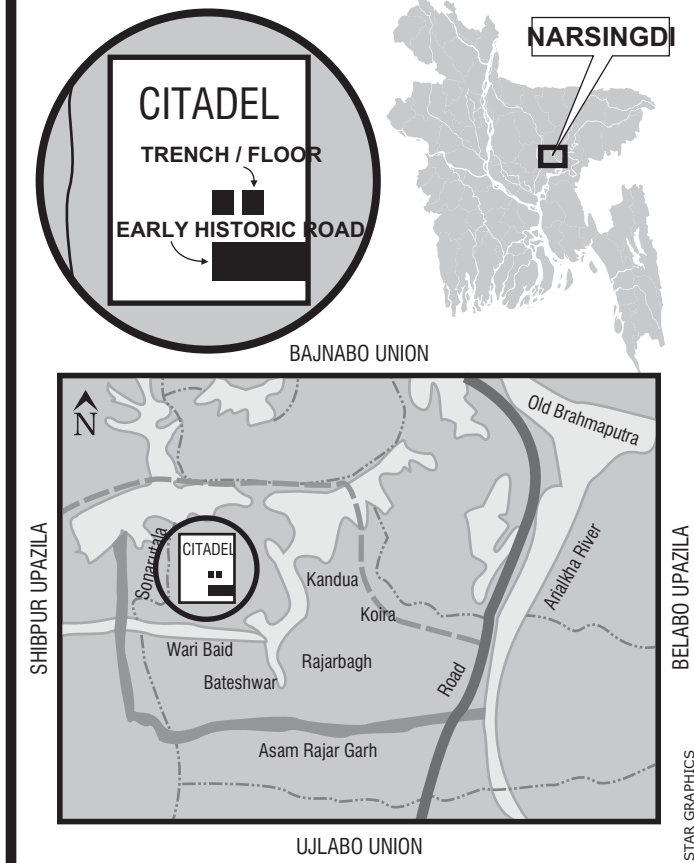
Foreign ministry

STAFF PAGE 12 at charge d'affaires level. Yesterday's meeting also discussed the possibility of expanding trade and manpower export to countries in West Asia, Africa and Central Asia. Chaired by Ziaur Rahman, the meeting held at the Jatija Sangsad Bhaban was attended by committee members and officials concerned.

7 doctors

STAFF PAGE 12 lab technician, Md Selim Uddin, Osman Gani, (MLSS) Md Suja Mia (cook) missing from duties and ordered for their instant suspension for negligence of duties. Suspended doctors and staff of Chouhali upazila health complex would be transferred to the Chittoagong Hill Tracts, the source added. On the same day Prof Rahman paid a surprise visit also to Nagarpur upazila health complex under Tangail district, where he found Dr Muzammel Huq on unauthorised leave since March 1 this year. A show cause notice was served on Muzammel Huq yesterday.

Oldest civilisation



The floor of a citadel fortified by bunkers and connected with country's oldest road reinforces the Brahmaputra civilisation theory and puts Narsingdi on the list of ancient urban centres in the world.

FROM PAGE 1 in the two villages in Belabo lending colour to the conviction that the region was a cradle of the Brahmaputra civilisation. The finds of the 18 by 16-metre road and a citadel fortified by bunkers in Wari village, reinforced the conviction this month. Dr Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, associate professor of archaeology at Jahangirnagar University and leader of the excavation team, found a 600 by 600-metre area housing the citadel a few days after kicking off the current mission on March 4. He believes the citadel formed the eastern limit of the Mauryan Empire. "I think the citadel ran very organised administrative activities with trade activities around it," he added. "Discovery of the road will revolutionise the early archaeology of eastern India as a whole since no road was found in the Trans-Gangetic valley earlier," Prof Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, who teaches archaeology at Cambridge University, told The Daily Star from Cambridge by phone. "The carbon dating of previous finds here is enough proof of the age of the site. We don't need to test the age of the road anew," said Chakrabarti, who is involved with the Narsingdi quest since 1992 and currently helping Mustafizur's excavation team. The finds dwarf Bangladesh's ancient huts of Pundrabardhan in Bogra's Mahastangarh that dates back to 370 BC, the Buddhist seat of learning in Paharpur, Comilla of the 8th century and Buddhist centre of Mainamoti that flourished between 7th and 12th century.

ROAD ENCOURAGES DIGGERS

"Spotting an extended part, we began digging the site that exposed the 18 by 16-metre, 27-centimetre thick road," Mustafizur said, adding the road, Bangladesh's ancient, was made of crushed brick and potshots (black slipped ware) and cemented by brick dust. "In the two-layered road, potshots were used as chief raw material," he said, adding in the distant past the material was used to build roads as it was available and harder than crushed bricks. "The eastern end of the two-layered road gradually widened and stretched up to the eastern bunker (of the citadel). Two layers hint the road was either renovated or used after it was abandoned once." Comparing the finds with Pundrabardhan citadel's, he said there were four entrances to Pundrabardhan citadel, but no road. He said the Wari citadel floor was made of crushed bricks, dust and lime that resembled with early historic Indian and Horropan practices. The fortification was similar to those in Mahastangarh, Chandaraketugarh and Bahngarh (West Bengal), Shishupalgargh (Orissa).

20 injured

FROM PAGE 12 PSA, a forum of left-leaning Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) and Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCU), ensued at around noon when processions of both groups met face to face before Social Science Faculty. Assistant Proctor Liakat Ali, Mahfuz Alam, officer-in-charge of Hathazari Police Station, and Sub-Inspector Atiqur Rahman were injured in the clash. Mahfuz, was admitted to Hathazari Upazila Health Complex while BCU leaders Quamrul and Sumi and Nipun, SCF leaders Monzu, Russell, Suchanda, Sudhanshu, Nandita, Nirjhar, Chandan and JCD activists Joyнал, Sumon and Fazlul were admitted to Chittoagong Medical College Hospital, sources said. Protesting the incident, the PSA announced an indefinite siege programme on CU campus from today. The university authorities were holding an emergency syndicate meeting at Registrar's office till the writing of this report at 6:30pm.

Political violence kills 152 in three months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 152 people were killed, 1,929 injured, 14 abducted and 1,314 arrested in politically-motivated incidents in three months. Odhikar, a rights organisation, yesterday in a press release revealed the figures compiled from national dailies. The organisation in its quarterly report said 194 women were raped in that time. Of them, 35 were killed and three forced to commit suicide. Besides, 44 women were killed, 11 tortured, three acid-burnt and two forced to commit suicide for dowry. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, 18 were killed, 40 abducted and 10 arrested. The report further said 21 people were killed by law-enforcers and another 31 died in different police stations and jail custody. Two journalists were killed, 30 injured, one was abducted and three were arrested during the period. Moreover, 10 journalists were assaulted, while 60 received threats and 29 were accused in several cases. The report added 442 children were tortured, 104 children killed, 90 injured, 69 raped and 75 abducted. Besides, 14 children were arrested, 14 acid-burnt and 10 trafficked, while 16 children committed suicide and 50 went missing.

BNP MP blasts

FROM PAGE 1 committee on the energy ministry directed the PDB to ensure electricity supply in the area for continual irrigation. It also suggested load-shedding, if need be, for the cities instead of rural areas for proper irrigation. The PDB chairman told State Minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmud that power production has declined due to gas shortage. He assured the minister of necessary steps to solve the problem, meeting sources said. Shahidul Islam, chairman of the committee, presided over the meeting held at the Jatija Sangsad Bhaban.

Tarique

FROM PAGE 12 his skin, Saber told reporters. Saber was commenting on recent statements of Tarique, the eldest son of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, made during his recent visit to a newspaper office. Saber claimed that by his own statement Tarique acknowledged government's negative actions when he said he (Tarique) would bring about positive changes if and when he wields power. He accused Tarique of instigating criminal activities by labelling the attack made on former president AQM Badruddza Chowdhury as a 'staged drama'. Saber wondered how could Tarique bring about positive changes by giving responsibilities to a section of youths who believe only in making money and flexing muscle.

AL takes

FROM PAGE 1 stage street agitation in Old Dhaka on Sunday as the main opposition party builds up a campaign for the fall of the ruling coalition by April 30. The party will lead an afternoon procession from Bahadur Shah Park to the Central Shaheed Minar after meandering through Sadarghat, Patuatuli, Islampur, Chawkbazar and Nazirabazar, Jali said. The AL presidium members slated the government for renewing contractual appointments of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahudul Haque and Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ahsarful Huda and said such appointments would sideline regular officials. On IGP's contract renewal, Jali said: "The High Court convicted the IGP of contempt and his renewal of appointments is but an immoral move and runs afoul of the court ruling." The meeting described the month-long adjournment of the current session of parliament as unprecedented. "It's nothing but waste of state money. The lawmakers will take their allowances without work," Jali said. Expressing concern at law and order downside, the meeting demanded immediate arrest of the killers of Old Dhaka businessman Shamsul Haq and his son Sheikh Russell. The leader once again demanded immediate resignation of the BNP-Jamaat coalition following by snap polls.

India catch

FROM PAGE 1 the two teams in New Delhi in 1952. The Test defeat was Pakistan's first at home since March 2002, when they were beaten by Sri Lanka at Lahore in the final of the Asian Test Championship. "We've got our feet firmly on the ground," Dravid said. The series is not over. Pakistan is a good side and they'll come back hard at us." India's regular captain Saurav Ganguly missed the Test due to a back injury sustained while fielding in the final one-day international, which India won by 40 runs to clinch the series 3-2. He is also out of the second Test in Lahore, which starts on April 5.

Astronomers find 40 'dwarf' galaxies

AFP, Sydney

Astronomers using the Anglo-Australian telescope in outback Australia announced yesterday the discovery of more than 40 previously unknown "dwarf" galaxies in a constellation "on Earth's doorstep". The team of 12 scientists from five countries found the objects, so small they looked like stars, hidden in the nearby Fornax cluster of galaxies, they said in a statement issued in Sydney. The Fornax cluster is 60 million light-years away, "in astronomical terms, on Earth's doorstep", they said. Michael Drinkwater, the team leader from the University of Queensland, said the galaxies belonged to a class dubbed "ultra-compact dwarfs" (UCD). UCDS were unknown until the same team using the Anglo-Australian telescope in northwest New South Wales state discovered six of them in the Fornax cluster in 2000. The new discovery was formally announced Thursday at a meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society in Britain. Drinkwater said researchers now believe the dwarf galaxies outnumber conventional elliptical and spiral galaxies in the central region of the Fornax cluster. Eight UCDS have also been found in the Virgo galaxy cluster, he said. "It's likely that at least some are left-over examples of the primordial building blocks that formed large galaxies by merging together," he said. The scientists believe the UCDS are the nuclei of galaxies that are originally larger but have been stripped of their outer stars. "It could be that they are very common, but scientists have overlooked them because they resemble nearby stars at first sight," he said. Discovery of the existence of UCDS will help scientists trying to identify how much matter is in the universe and to understand the ways galaxies are formed. "This is very exciting -- it will significantly advance our understanding of how galaxies form and evolve in environments where they are surrounded by swarms of other galaxies," said Joss Bland-Hawthorn of the Anglo-Australian Observatory. Follow-up observations with the Hubble Space Telescope and the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope revealed that while Ultra Compact Dwarfs have masses similar to those of previously known dwarf galaxies, they are much smaller -- about 120 light years across. "Tens of millions of stars are squashed into what is a tiny volume by galaxy standards," the observatory said in a statement.

Hunt down criminals

FROM PAGE 1 "We just want to run our businesses in peace, we do not want to protest against a specific political party," Amir said. "The government has to know that we are protesting the crimes against businesspeople, if they do not take that into account, then we will have to intensify the protests." Tearing politicians to shreds for interfering with the protests of businessmen to reap political benefit, Amir said: "Politicians have tried to suppress protests of businesspeople or foment anger among them only to capitalise on their misery ... we ask them to stop this for the sake of our businesses." Sabar was commenting on recent statements of Tarique, the eldest son of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, made during his recent visit to a newspaper office. Saber claimed that by his own statement Tarique acknowledged government's negative actions when he said he (Tarique) would bring about positive changes if and when he wields power. He accused Tarique of instigating criminal activities by labelling the attack made on former president AQM Badruddza Chowdhury as a 'staged drama'. Saber wondered how could Tarique bring about positive changes by giving responsibilities to a section of youths who believe only in making money and flexing muscle.

3 US troops hurt in Iraq attack

AP, Fallujah, Iraq A roadside bomb injured three American troops in a US military convoy yesterday near Fallujah, a day after the grisly killing and mutilation of four American contract workers in the city. The top US administrator in Iraq said the deaths would not go unpunished. In Ramadi, west of Fallujah, six Iraqi civilians died and four were wounded Wednesday evening in a car bombing at a market, said Lt. Col. Steve Murray, a coalition spokesman. "The Iraqi police had not determined whether it was detonated by remote control or whether it was a suicide bomber within the car," Murray said. Associated Press Television News footage showed smoke pouring from a Humvee that had been abandoned on a roadside just outside Fallujah on Thursday. In Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said insurgents targeted the convoy with a bomb, and the injured troops were flown to a combat support hospital. Also yesterday, two explosions near a U.S.-escorted fuel convoy in northern Baghdad wounded at least one Iraqi. APTN footage showed US soldiers putting a wounded person on a stretcher inside an armored vehicle. In Fallujah, police retrieved the remains of the four slain Americans on Wednesday night, wrapped them in blankets, and gave them to US forces, said Iraqi police officer Lt. Salah Abdullah.

JP (E) throws

FROM PAGE 12 gave the assurance. "We are against all destructive activities that run counter to the constitution and parliamentary democracy," the JP lawmakers was quoted as saying during the meeting. They appreciated various steps of the government for development of the country and consolidating the democracy. Briefing newsmen about the meeting, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury said the JP MPs appreciated the recent government decisions to waive accumulated interest on agricultural loans, disburse fresh credit without collateral and reduce the rate of interest on the agricultural loans. The lawmakers said they would work in their respective constituencies so that the farmers could avail themselves of the benefits of the government measures. During the meeting, the prime minister assured them of all cooperation and said the government "believes in balanced development all over the country".

Bomber kills 1, injures self in Uzbekistan

AP, Tashkent, Uzbekistan A woman blew herself up in Uzbekistan's central Bukhara region yesterday, killing a man and critically injuring herself, police said. The blast occurred around 4 p.m. at a two-story apartment building, and police were investigating at the scene, said a duty officer in the Bukhara regional police department who spoke on condition of anonymity. She said officials were looking at possible links to a string of attacks that have struck Uzbekistan over the past week. Police released no other details. The blast occurred in the same area as an explosion at an alleged terrorist bomb workshop that killed 10 people Sunday night. Days of violence followed. Yesterday, an Uzbek anti-terror official said Thursday was linked to al-Qaida, the first time the Uzbek government has directly accused the terror network headed by Osama bin Laden. Including the latest explosion, at least 44 people have died in attacks, mostly alleged terrorists. During the meeting, the prime minister reiterated her call for keeping the Jatija Sangsad effective and thanked the JP MPs for taking part in parliament proceedings. The 12 MPs who called on the prime minister are Roushan Ershad (Gaibandha- 5), M Hafizuddin Ahmed (Tharkaurgaon-3), M Mujibur Rahman (Lalmoinihat-2), M Moshirur Rahman Ranga (Rangpur-1), Mohammad Ali Sarkar (Rangpur-2), Karimuddin Bharasha (Rangpur-4), Shah Mohammad Solaiman Alam (Rangpur-5), Noor Mohammad Mandal (Rangpur-6), Tajul Islam Chowdhury (Kurigram-2), M Motiur Rahman (Kurigram-3), M Golam Habib Dulal (Kurigram-4) and TIM Fazole Rabbi Chowdhury (Gaibandha-3).

AL, pro-left parties

FROM PAGE 12 the present government have surpassed the records of all dictatorial rulers," Jali said, adding no autocratic rulers could cling to power by unleashing violence and repression in the past and the incumbent will be no exception. AL leader Tofail Ahmed criticised the US State Department's recent statement, which said the US government did not support any extra-constitutional government in any country. "The US government supported General Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan when he took power ousting Nawaz Sharif's democratically-elected government," Tofail said. AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Obaidul Kader, Mukul Bose, Abdul Manaan and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya also addressed the rally chaired by Mohammad Hanif. Left-leaning 11-party alliance took off a procession and later gathered at a rally at Muktangan yesterday afternoon to observe the rights-protection day. "When they are not in power they are all for democracy, but as soon as they are in power, they turn autocratic," said Khalequzzaman, convenor of the alliance and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), referring to both the leading political parties. The JSD also held a separate rally in the city to observe the day. Its President Inu slated the government for its "suppression of dissenting political voices". He asked all opposition political parties to unite to bring down the government and form a government of national unity.

Pak PM

FROM PAGE 12 AFP adds: Pakistani police said Wednesday they had recovered a large cache of arms, ammunition and explosives from a remote town near the Afghan border that were intended for "terrorist" activities. The cache includes several rockets, hand grenades, mortar shells, incendiary agents, detonators, anti-aircraft gun shells, timer fuses for bombs and mines, police officer Gul Khan said. Police, acting on a tip-off, found the cache buried underground in Ghazloona Badini village in south-western Baluchistan province, bordering Afghanistan, Khan told AFP. "The cache was brought from Afghanistan by unknown saboteurs for terrorist activities in Quetta," he said.

10 killed

FROM PAGE 12 spot and injuring 10 others. Five of the injured were admitted to Pabna General Hospital and seven others given first aid. On the same road at Neptune, one Anful Islam, 22, died when a minibus hit him from behind at about 9:30am. Soon after the accident, locals put up a barricade on the highway, disrupting traffic for two hours. Police seized both the vehicles, but the drivers managed to flee.

Police reshuffle

FROM PAGE 1 for subversive actions in some strategic zones and some of the police officials are loyal to the opposition, he added. He said, through the reshuffle, police officials deemed loyal to the present government were posted in important and sensitive area. The changes made Khulna Range Add'l DIG Shamsuddoha Khandaker an officer on special duty (OSD) and Add'l DIG on special duty Nayeem Ahmed commandant of Police Training College in Tangail, replacing Mohammad Motiur Rahman, who was transferred as Add'l DIG to Rajshahi Range. (OSD) M Motiur Rahman to Bhola as SP, Commandant of APBN in Mahachchari M Mahfuzul Islam in Barguna as SP, Special SP of Dhaka Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Mohammed Abdur Rahim to Satkhira as SP, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Deputy Police Commissioner (DPC) Mohammed Nazibur Rahman to PSTs in Betbunga as commandant, Special SP of Dhaka CID M Aktar Ali to Narail as SP, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) SP M Moiuul Islam to Rajbari as SP, Rab SP S M Ruhul Amin to Jhalakathi as SP, Rab SP M Rafiqul Islam to Police Headquarters as AIG, Rab SP M Helal Uddin Badri to Dhaka Special Branch (SB) as special SP and Police Headquarters AIG M Moiuur Rahman Chowdhury to Barisal as SP. Rangpur SP M Manzur Kader Khan, Naogaon SP M Obaidur Rahman Khan, Rab SP M Mazharul Haque and Special SP of Dhaka SB M Zahurul Islam Bhuiyan were transferred to the DMP as DPCs. Jhalakathi SP Sheikh Hemayet Hossain Mia and Barisal RRF Commandant M Anwar Hossain were transferred to Rajshahi Metropolitan Police as DPCs, Rab SP M Delwar Hossain Mia to Dhaka SB as special SP and Barisal SP M Mohsin Hossain to Dhaka CID as special SP.