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REGD. NO. DA 781

Vol. XIV No. 102

DHAKA MONDAY MAY 3, 2004

BAISHAKH 20, 1411 BS

RABI-UL-AWAL 12, 1425 HURI

20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

www.thedailystar.net

ANTI-GRAFT COMMISSION

Donors want search body this month

ADB country director tells newsmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Donors want the government to appoint a committee this month to select the members of an independent anti-corruption commission, as they identify corruption as a key

impediment to the country's economic growth.

"Not only the ADB, other donors also want to see that the government forms the selection committee of the anti-corruption commission within this month," announced

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director Toru Shibuichi yesterday while releasing the bank's quarterly economic update on Bangladesh for January to March 2004.

The report maintains that the

wide prevalence of corruption has its roots in "Weaknesses in public financial management, low salaries and lack of incentive structures in the civil services, complex regulatory rules and procedures." It also

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HC orders lower court to drop case against baby boy

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday ordered the city's lower court to drop three-year old boy Iman Ali from the attempted murder case in which he was earlier granted bail.

Issuing the order, the division bench comprising Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice AKM Asaduzzaman cautioned the lower courts to take care in dealing with such cases.

The order came on hearing of a suo moto rule issued earlier following the media report that Iman Ali was granted bail by a magistrate court.

Duluri Begum, neighbour of Iman's family, in the old city, filed the case with Sutrapur Police Station.

Counsel of Duluri Begum submitted that Iman Ali was not named in the First Information Report (FIR). Therefore, Iman Ali's appearing in the magistrate court to secure bail was done with an ill motive.

Court on April 24 ordered the Sutrapur Police Station's officer-in-charge to produce Iman's father Anwar Ali and the complainant Duluri Begum before it yesterday.

CTG GUNRUNNING Key suspect held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested a key suspect in the largest ever gunrunning case on a road near KAFCO residential area in Chittagong, on Saturday evening, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police blocked the road and arrested Jasim Uddin, younger brother of pro-Jamat labour leader Din Mohammad, who was riding on a motorcycle.

Both Jasim and Din are accused of offloading the biggest arms haul including rockets, rocket launchers, grenades, AK-47 rifles and ammunition on the Kamaphuli coast on April 2.

Jasim was taken to a court yesterday which remanded him in police custody for two days for questioning.

Police said they obtained important information and whereabouts of Din grilling him, but declined to give details.

Din went into hiding after arms seizure.

Police said they were also looking for Hafizur Rahman, Haji Sobhan, Abul Kasem Modhu and Barmaiya Jahur, a Rohingya businessman, for their links to the gunrunning.

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INTERNET TELEPHONY LICENCE

BTRC may seek bids by next week

STAR REPORT

The telecoms regulator is likely to invite proposals from private operators by next week to award licence for the internet telephony six months after the cabinet approved its legalisation.

"We are at the final stage to set modalities and hope to seek proposals by next week," Chairman of

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Syed Marghub Murshed told The Daily Star yesterday.

The cabinet on November 10 last year gave the go-ahead to legalisation of internet telephony, popularly known as VoIP (voice-over internet protocol), aimed at reducing international call rates.

Introduction of the internet

telephony will drastically cut overseas call charges and enable value-added services such as call centres, video conferencing and telemedicine, industry stakeholders say.

The BTRC would hold its final meeting on the VoIP on May 6 to lay down the licensing criteria for seeking proposals, officials said.

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4 to die for killing Sultana Panni

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday sentenced four youths to death for killing Sultana Khan Panni, wife of former deputy speaker Humayun Khan Panni, on May 19 last year.

The convicts are the cook of the house, Alauddin Munshi, 24, caretaker Mehedi Mamun Rana, 23, and their two friends Mohammad Nasiruddin, 22, and Emdadul Haq, 22.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 read out the highlights of the 54-page judgement in 35 minutes in a jam-packed courtroom with the convicts in the dock. The convicts protested their innocence and broke down in tears.

The convicts can appeal to the High Court against the verdict in 30 days.

"We don't expect recurrence of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Four convicts, given the death sentence for murdering Sultana Khan Panni (inset), being hauled off to jail after a Speedy Trial Tribunal in Dhaka handed down the verdict yesterday.

3 PCJSS men abducted in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An armed gang Friday abducted three activists of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) from Rangamati.

According to a PCJSS press release, 12 armed cadres of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), an anti-peace treaty organisation, drove a microbus in Alutia village at about 9:00pm and kidnapped Martin Chakma, Vendra Sing Chakma and Jibon Chakma at gunpoint.

Condemning the incident, it asked local administration to free its three activists and arrest immediately the culprits.

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Commentary

April's Fool

Jalil's deadline fiasco makes a mockery of his party's political programmes

By MAHFUZ ANAM

Seldom has a party leader done so much damage to his party's credibility with so few actions and in so short a time. In one go he has trivialised politics, dealt a serious blow to public faith in politicians' words and made his party look as if it is playing games with people. How will the Awami League (AL) answer to the public for the several days of hartal causing losses worth crores and crores of taka to the nation when they knew full well that their dead-

line was a farce? Didn't the party leaders understand the difference between demanding early elections and wanting to "topple" a government? The former is well within the rights given in a parliamentary democracy. The latter is quite out of bounds within the framework of constitutional governance. Didn't the AL understand that however disgruntled people were about BNP's performance they would become frightened with the talk of "toppling" the government and its attending

possibility of destabilisation? Eshad's toppling may be cited as an example. But his was a government that came through a coup and as such he was toppled by a people's movement. Elected governments are not of that category and hence cannot be removed by any other means but another election. Do we need to teach this to the AL, the very party that has to its credit such a huge legacy of struggle for democracy?

The supreme irony of the AL is

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More deadlines to come: Hasina

UNB, N'ganj

Awami League President and Opposition Leader in Parliament Sheikh Hasina on Saturday said there was no reason for the government to feel relaxed with the expiry of one April 30, as "more 30s are there in the calendar to come yet."

"The day for the end of the alliance rule has started. The day is not far when the oppressive BNP-Jamaat government must be toppled and the people will get relief," she said.

Addressing a huge workers rally marking the historic May Day at Chashara Osmani Stadium, Hasina said her party's struggle against the "repressive regime" would continue as people want rule of law, peace and stability.

"Just a single warning from Awami League unnerved the alliance government, causing their knees to shake. Being panicked, they turned the whole country into a prison by arresting some 20,000 innocent people," she told the meeting, organised by Jatiya Samikha

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BNP MPs oppose bureaucrats at local govt helm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP lawmakers at a parliamentary body meeting yesterday opposed the idea of appointing government officials to local government bodies once the tenure of the elected representatives ends.

The lawmakers, also members of the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice and parlia-

mentary affairs ministry, termed the proposal as inconsistent with the constitution and asked the government to rethink it.

The committee decided to discuss other provisions of the proposed 14th amendment to the constitution bill in detail on May 9 and invite opposition lawmakers to the meeting again to seek their opinion.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Labour welfare body in pipeline

PM says at May Day programme

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her government was planning to set up a 'labour welfare foundation' aimed at training and re-training of workers and rehabilitation of unemployed labourers.

At a May Day programme at the Osmani Memorial Hall Saturday, she declared that the foundation would

be the 'workers' own organisation having their elected representation."

She would ask the labour and employment ministry to make a detailed outline of the foundation. She hoped that workers, employers and local and foreign donors would come forward to help set up this foundation.

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Notice

In accordance with the decision of NOAB (Newspapers Owners Association of Bangladesh), The Daily Star offices will remain closed today because of Eid-e-Miladunnabi holiday. Therefore there will be no newspaper and no issue of Star Lifestyle tomorrow.

Police yesterday raided the Mirpur office of Proshika in search of documents in connection with the non-governmental organisation's alleged involvement in anti-government activities.

Proshika's culture wing sealed

Cops seize documents during raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday sealed the mass culture section of Proshika and seized documents in a raid on its headquarters in Mirpur to find proof of the non-governmental organisation's alleged antigovernment activities.

No-one was arrested in the latest police action that came after law enforcers picked up 39 Proshika staffers in an eight-day dragnet, linking them to the much-hyped April 2 deadline of the main oppo-

sition Awami League for unseating the government.

Details of the seizure are conflicting. A senior police officer, who declined to be identified, confirmed the seizure without further details, but other officials said they seized "nothing" from the office in the three-hour raid.

"We had information that there were some documents on the organisation's antigovernment activities and we raided the building

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Mugger killed in vigilante beating in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob beat dead an alleged mugger and injured four others of a gang at a kitchen market in Rampura on Saturday, police said.

Traders of the West Rampura Kitchen Market closed all entries to the marketplace and beat them with sticks after the gang went there to extort money at about 10:30am, witnesses said.

Police said Akhteruzzaman, also known as Jamal, died from wounds two hours after the 30-year-old was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Nasir, 22, Shah Alam, 22, Masud Rana, 30, and Sabuj, 20, were also admitted to the same hospital with injuries. The first two were unconscious until 6:00pm yesterday.

Jamal's mother claimed that her son was never involved in crime.

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Bangladesh, Kuwait sign deal on force deputation

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Kuwait yesterday signed an agreement on deputation of Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel to the Gulf state, according to officials.

Defence Secretary KM Ehsanul Haque and Kuwaiti Ambassador Abdullah Masoud Abdullah signed the agreement at the defence ministry on behalf of their respective governments.

A two-member delegation from the defence ministry of Kuwait comprising Colonel Saad Yacoub Al-Enezi and Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Essa Al-Selim and Defence Liaison Officer of the embassy

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