

WI tour opener today

FROM PAGE 1 mention in the calendar of events for the month of May in the official tourism brochure.

Bangladesh team management yesterday named the playing eleven for the match with Shahrir Hossain and Manjarul Islam likely to open the batting.

With just one warm-up game before the demanding one-dayers, Bangladesh captain Habibur Bashar hinted yesterday that the side that plays in the tour opener could be retained for the first ODI.

"We are basically going into the first fixture with the one-day international in mind. So, it could be the same team that takes the field on May 15. We are trying to play 12 cricketers in the warm-

AL asks govt

FROM PAGE 12 The meeting alleged that without any investigation the home ministry tried to describe the killing of Ahsanullah Master as an outcome of intra-party feud of the AL in a bid to protect the real killers and mislead people.

The press note issued by the home ministry showed an evil move by government high-ups to hamper proper investigation and trial of the murder case, the AL presidium.

"It will not be possible for any official under the home ministry to conduct proper inquiry into the murder and identify the real offenders after the issuance of such a press note," it said, adding the real killers will escape trial.

The West Indies Board Eleven players flew in on Monday from different parts of the Caribbean. The biggest name in the side is out of favour left-hander Wavell Hinds. Other internationals include a remodelled Jermaine Lawson, who will be desperate to show that he is as quick as ever after his struggles with injury and a suspect act, Sylvester Joseph and Ryan Hinds.

The match will start at 9:30am local time (7:30 BST). Local radio will carry live commentary throughout the Caribbean region. The weather is bright and sunny with occasional sprinkles of rain.

BANGLADESH TEAM Habibur Bashar (captain), Rajin Saleh, Shahrir Hossain, Mohammad Ashrafur, Alok Kapali, Mushfiqur Rahman, Khaled Mahmud, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Manjarul Islam, Tapash Baisya.

"It proves the government has become desperate to protect the real killers," the meeting said.

The AL presidium alleged that instead of arresting any accused even four days after the murder, the government resorted to mass arrest of AL leaders and workers and other people to put them on speedy trial. Police were searching the houses of AL leaders and harassing their family members without any reasons, it said.

4 killed in Ctg incidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Four people including a woman were killed in different incidents in the city and district yesterday and on Monday.

Police said, muggers stabbed Muminul Haq alias Shiplot, 22, and snatched money and mobile set from him in Shubhapur bus terminus under Double Mooring Police Station in the city at around 1.30am yesterday.

Shiplot was taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to injuries at around 3:30am.

In another incident, a housewife identified as Yeasmin Akter, 30, was stabbed allegedly by her brother-in-law Idris Mia following a family feud at Mohona under Patiya upazila in the district at around 11.30pm on Monday night, sources said.

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed for four months the proceedings of a case of theft against six Awami League (AL) leaders including Saber Hossain Chowdhury and the recently slain AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master.

An HC divisional bench comprising Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Farid Ahmed also issued a rule nisi upon Manikganj district commissioner, asking him to show cause within four weeks as to why the case should not be dismissed.

The case filed with Shibganj police station on August 16, 2002, by Kazi Abdul Haq accused eight AL leaders of stealing 12 plates from a ferry on way to Tungipara in Gopalganj and abusing ferry employees. Charges against two of the accused were later dropped.

Third class magistrate of Manikganj Md Zakir Hossain started case proceedings against the accused. Former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru and his associates

proceedings of theft case against six AL leaders stayed by HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has constituted election tribunals to settle disputes relating to the just concluded pourasabho polls.

The district magistrates of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban and joint district judges of the respective districts have been appointed tribunal chiefs, an EC press release said yesterday.

According to the election regulations, within 30 days of the gazette notification, the candidates or their representatives will file the dispute cases with the tribunals after depositing Tk 500 with any of the branches of Sonali Bank or government treasury in favour of the respective returning officer to meet the expenses of the cases.

AL on course to join JS

FROM PAGE 1 "We are very much positive," a presidium member told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity, about the possibility of joining parliament today.

The AL has been boycotting parliamentary proceedings since June 25 last year and since then has been unbent on its decision not to return to the House. But after its April 30 deadline for pulling down the BNP-led coalition government fell flat on its face, the party decided to return to parliament, but no date was set. The assassination of its lawmaker in Tongi on May 7 however prompted the party to ponder about joining the session today.

The latest political development was discussed at yesterday's AL presidium meeting following a directive from party chief Sheikh Hasina who is scheduled to fly back home on May 13, cutting short her 10-day tour to the US.

"A decision on joining the session will be taken after discussing the issue at the parliamentary party meeting," Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House Abdul Hamid Advocate told The Daily Star yesterday.

AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta said yesterday's presidium meeting left it up to the parliamentary party to decide whether to join the session.

Hasina returns tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina will return home tomorrow morning curtailing her USA trip because of Friday's killing of party lawmaker Ahsanullah Master.

A British Airways flight from London carrying Hasina, also leader of the opposition, will arrive in Dhaka at 5:30am, said a party press release. Hasina, who left Dhaka on May 6, was earlier scheduled to return on May 15.

The opposition leader will visit the Tongi residence of Ahsanullah Master in afternoon the same day to offer condolences to the bereaved family members. She will also visit the village Hydrabad of Joydebour, home village of the slain lawmaker.

Both Mannan and Mahi submitted the nominations yesterday to contest in the by-elections from their new party -- Bikaipa Dhara Bangladesh. Mannan Submitted nomination at Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's office while Mahi at the office of the Returning Officer in Munshiganj.

The BNPPB, comprising members of the BNP Standing Committee, the highest decision making body of the party, approved the nominations of Falu and Momin after interviewing 24 nomination-seekers, said a press release.

Little growth

FROM PAGE 1 year's Tk 8,484 crore. This reduction was made as the government has been unable to utilise foreign aid due to various reasons, including donors' conditions, inefficiency in project implementation, a new procurement policy and bureaucratic bottlenecks.

According to the latest data of the Economic Relations Division (ERD), \$6.2 billion in foreign aid is now piled up in the pipeline.

Meantime, this year's ADP was revised down to Tk 18,934 crore from Tk 20,300 crore in April. But now the planning ministry has estimated the figure at Tk 19,000 crore with Tk 12,000 crore in local component and the rest in foreign currency.

About the last minute enhancement, a planning ministry source said, "The local component utilisation has increased recently. This is why we believe the final ADP implementation figure will be better than what we thought in April."

Only 36 percent of this year's ADP has been utilised in the first eight months of the current fiscal year. Utilisation of local currency component is 42 percent compared with only 30 percent of project aid utilisation.

The World Bank in its Bangladesh Quarterly Update of April, 2004, wrote, "The slow pace of development spending is primarily due to weak implementation capacity and poor disbursement of the foreign aid component."

"Every year the government chalks out an ambitious ADP and then revises it due to poor implementation," said a source.

"The potential Bangladesh has is far greater than what it is achieving now. Your best resource is your people, whose resilience is the reason why Bangladesh has survived the difficult times."

"If you look at the country's self-sufficiency it is a big achievement for Bangladesh that no country in Africa has matched. In fact, Bangladesh is the envy of nearly every African country in terms of those things."

He said Bangladesh needs to make itself globally competitive. This involves a trade regime that fosters competition and for it to become more liberal. There are a lot of problems here. There is a strong anti-export bias that needs to be removed. If you don't move on these things, the market share you will lose in global trade would be lost forever. You cannot reclaim it again."

He said lowering tariffs, removing all sorts of quantitative restrictions, freeing up the restrictions on foreign investment in the most promising sectors like the readymade garments are now critical, he observed.

"We have done an analysis and found that even if the political situation is stabilised you would still not be ready to grow at 7-8 percent because of another binding constraint -- poor infrastructure," Patel noted.

Because of poor telecom, power,

Seven BNP leaders seeking nominations for Dhaka-10 and 17 for Munshiganj-1 seats appeared before the interview board. Falu and Momin will be considered as nominees of the ruling four-party alliance, according to a decision of the component parties of the alliance, the release added.

Falu will submit his nomination at Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's office at Segunbagicha at 10:00am today and Momin at Munshiganj.

US, UK seek while his government said some soldiers implicated in the mistreatment could soon face prosecution.

A February 4 Red Cross report that appeared on the Wall Street Journal Web site on Monday said delegates of the international relief agency saw US troops keeping Iraqi prisoners naked for days in darkness at the Abu Ghraib jail in October, and were told by the intelligence officer in charge it was "part of the process."

The report also described British troops forcing Iraqi detainees to kneel and stomping on their necks in an incident in which one prisoner died.

Electoral reform

FROM PAGE 1 encourage the government here to hold public officials accountable by making them declare their assets transparently," Patel told The Daily Star in an interview yesterday.

Citing Pakistan as a success case, he said there every elected member is made to declare their assets to increase transparency.

Patel said Bangladesh needs an extra 2-3 percentage points in GDP growth to make a perceptible impact on the life of people. A streamlined law and order is a precondition for that, he added.

"Law and order in Bangladesh is not conducive to development, foreign investment, and not really what the citizens deserve," he added. "When you cannot assure the public of basic safety, when you do not feel secure, that is not good."

"It all leads to one thing: the environment is not conducive to development and is costing the country hugely in terms of underdevelopment."

Patel warned that Bangladesh might not reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if it continue to lose 2-3 percent of its GDP due to poor law and order.

"If we fail to track where the resources are going and find no secure environment for projects to be carried out, aid will be reviewed and maybe pulled out."

"Bangladesh had the same GDP as South Korea and Malaysia. Both have GDP around twice Bangladesh's size now. Since these countries could achieve with less resources overcoming the same problems as in Bangladesh, that is definitely doable here."

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Falu, Momin

FROM PAGE 12 with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The two seats felt vacant as Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan, elected from Dhaka-10 (Ramna-Tejgaon), and Mahi B Chowdhury, elected from Munshiganj-1 (Sreenagar), resigned from their respective constituencies on March 10 to join the former president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury's newly floated political platform. They also resigned from the BNP the same day accusing the ruling alliance of its failure to govern the country properly.

Both Mannan and Mahi submitted the nominations yesterday to contest in the by-elections from their new party -- Bikaipa Dhara Bangladesh. Mannan Submitted nomination at Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's office while Mahi at the office of the Returning Officer in Munshiganj.

The BNPPB, comprising members of the BNP Standing Committee, the highest decision making body of the party, approved the nominations of Falu and Momin after interviewing 24 nomination-seekers, said a press release.

Blow to Vajpayee

FROM PAGE 12 could fall aflutter by 24 to 42 seats.

As the BJP and the main opposition Congress party looked to woo small parties to support the next government, media reports said the ruling party was divided on how to deal with a worst-case scenario.

The Times of India reported that Vajpayee favoured sitting in the opposition if the BJP-led coalition fell below 250 seats.

However, Congress, which ruled India for 45 years but has been out of power since 1996, won a boost yesterday with an offer of support from the Communist Party of India-Marxist, the third largest party in the last parliament.

"We will all work together. It will be a coalition government and not that of any party," communist leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet said after a meeting with Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born Congress chief.

In a bid to lure smaller parties, Congress late Monday announced it would select a prime ministerial candidate by consensus with its partners if they mustered a majority.

O, A-levels

FROM PAGE 12 start across the globe on May 17. Candidates for both forms of examinations in the country currently number 4,813.

Nafisa Haq, whose daughter is sitting the O-level examinations, told The Daily Star, "We urge the politicians not to call hartal during the exams and help avert waste of valuable time from the academic lives of our kids."

General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level and Advanced Level exams of EDEXCEL (formerly University of London Examinations and Assessment Council) and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) are held twice a year.

The British Council administers the examinations.

A recent announcement of the British Council has caused yet more worries for the guardians; it informed the examinees of its inability to hold the examinations in case of a 48-hour shutdown.

In that case, the examinees will have to wait for at least six months for the next available slot to sit the examinations, the guardians said.

The British Council, however, has worked out an alternative schedule to take the examinations.

"We will shift the examinations of morning session to 7:30pm and afternoon session to 10:30pm should there be a 12-hour hartal," a British Council official said.

The council has also requested the opposition parties not to call hartal at least during the examinations, the official added.

EPZ workers

FROM PAGE 1 The revision follows a series of discussions on the subject over the last six months.

"We have unanimously endorsed the revised draft proposal and the draft law might be presented in the next budget session of the parliament," said Executive Chairman of Beppa Brig Gen (retd) Zakir Hossain while talking to reporters after the meeting.

Hossain said in the event that workers vote against trade unionism, the workers' welfare association currently in place will continue to function as it is.

The investor representative, however, declined to make any comment when journalists repeatedly asked him about the meeting.

US Ambassador Harry K

Ahmadiyya

FROM PAGE 12 The statement also asked the government to take appropriate steps to ensure safety for Ahmadiyyas in Pataukhali.

Earlier, the local branch of the AMJB sent a letter to the district administration and superintendent of police, Patuakhali and sought their assistance in maintaining law and order, it added.

HSC exams

FROM PAGE 1 at different centres under Dhaka board, 91 under Rajshahi board, 16 under Chittagong board, 11 under Comilla board, 12 under Barisal board and some 15 under Jessore board. Report of expulsion of only one examinee under Sylhet board was received till the writing of this report.

Under Dhaka board, 15 examinees were expelled in Jamalpur, five in Gopalganj, three each in Metrokona and Shariatpur, two in Madaripur and one each in Manikganj, Narsingdi, Mymensingh, Tangail, Sherpur and Rajbari.

Under Rajshahi board, 13 examinees were expelled in Gaibandha, 35 in Kurigram, one in Thakurgaon, 10 in Joypurhat, 12 in Sirajganj, 11 in Rangpur, 13 in Nilphamari, one in Panchagaj, one in Thakurgaon and one in Lalmonirhat.

Eighty-eight examinees were expelled under Madrasah board.

Meanwhile, the education ministry has taken several steps to curb cheating in the examinations that began with English first paper. The steps include summary trial of offender, imposition of fine, restriction on movement of people at the examination centres and secret video recording.

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon visited some examination centres yesterday.

ADB

FROM PAGE 12 Hasan Mahmud at the secretariat yesterday, said an official release.

During the meeting, they discussed releasing shares of Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco) in the share market, reconstitution of its board and necessary steps to make it more dynamic.

The delegation expressed satisfaction with the progress of ongoing reform programme in the power sector.

Power Secretary SM Shamsul Alam, Chairman of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) and Desco Brigadier General AAMA Rob, Desco Managing Director Saleh Ahmed and Senior Finance Specialists of ADB Mats Elerud and Chief of Energy Division Shamsuddin Ahmed were present in the meeting.

Ershad's relatives have split into two groups over the possession of his property, with Khodeja spearheading one group and Selina and Ashraf Ali leading the other. Selina and her supporters also tried to prevent Ershad's first wife Khodeja from receiving the body from jail gate, but security guards foiled her attempt.

Selina allegedly threatened Ershad's daughter with his first wife, Shaad Yasmin, to leave Swamokomol with her mother and brothers or face dire consequences.

FOLLOWING IN FOOTSTEPS Our Barisal correspondent reports from Nalchity: Ershad, who hailed from Madarghona village of Nalchity upazila of Jhalakathi district, followed in his father and grandfather's footsteps, who also died in jail.

His grand father Hafiz Sikder was convicted in a dacoity case and died in jail during the Pakistan period. His father Bande Ali Shikder was sentenced to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for murdering a man in his village and also died in jail.

Ershad's first wife Khodeja came to the Madarghona village two months ago and repaired the family graveyard there. A milad mahfil was also held then for his early release from jail.

3 artillery units **FROM PAGE 12** Two infantry battalions under 66 Infantry Division and one brigade signal company have been set up, he said.

Khaleda hoped that the members of the armed forces would further consolidate and uphold the unique dignity they had attained both at national and international level by performing all assigned duties sincerely, honestly and firmly.

She said apart from the army, the government was implementing various plans of action to make the navy and air force time-befitting, procure military hardware and expand and increase the capability of the forces.

She said efforts of her government to expand and enhance the capability of armed forces in line with the demand of time would continue along with the welfare of the armed forces' members.

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