

PM praises media

Lays foundation of media centre at Jatiya Press Club

UNB, Dhaka

Praising the journalists as partners in the movement for democracy and development, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday stressed the need for ensuring objective journalism to keep pace with the modern times.

"Objective journalism is also necessary to ensure total respect for the profession," she said while speaking at a function marking the foundation-laying of a modern media complex at the Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of its golden jubilee.

President of the club Reazuddin Ahmed and General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud also spoke on the occasion.

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Top Khulna cop closed

Intelligence agencies probe DC-North's 'links' with listed criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Deputy Commissioner (DC-North) of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Tamijuddin Ahmed has been 'closed' at KMP headquarters and intelligence agencies are probing his alleged involvement in extorting money from listed criminals on the plea of saving their lives from 'crossfire'.

The latest allegation against the DC, closed since Tuesday, is that he took Tk 3 lakh from notorious criminal Kala Amjad assuring he would protect him (Amjad) from crossfire.

Tamijuddin has been stripped of his authority as chief of KMP north zone comprising three police stations.

Kala Amjad, prime accused of the murder of Dainik Purbanchal crime reporter Harun-ar-Rashid, was arrested on November 13 from Anjuman Road under Daulatpur thana of Khulna city. He was also wanted in five more murder cases and a dozen other criminal cases with Daulatpur thana.

Amjad, second-in-command of the outlawed Biplobi Communist

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SUBMARINE CABLE BTTB's rejoinder, our reply

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has contested a report titled 'Submarine cable project missing deadline' The Daily Star ran on November 25. The board claims it has completed the land-based infrastructure on time using its own resources.

It also says it has already started working on construction of a 4.5km duct-way from Cox's Bazar coast to the cable landing station and Fujitsu will have no problem in extending the submarine cable from the beach manhole to the landing station.

"The BTTB wants to reassure all concerned that Bangladesh will be definitely linked to the SEA-ME-WE4 consortium cable as perschedule," the rejoinder states. It says the purchase proposal for Cox's Bazar-Chittagong optical fibre link project

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PHOTO: STAR

A farmer carries away bricks from Mahasthangarh in an unabated process of turning one of the country's oldest archaeological sites into farmland. Already 1 sqkm of the 15 sqkm site is being used for cultivating crops.

AHSANULLAH MURDER Contempt petition filed against IO

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A petition for bringing contempt proceedings against the first investigation officer (IO) of the Ahsanullah Master murder case was filed yesterday.

Lawyers of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Nurul Islam Sarker, the prime accused in the murder case, submitted the petition before the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1. The petitioner accused the IO of displacing and destroying evidences from the judicial record.

After hearing both sides, Judge Shahed Noor Uddin fixed December 1 as the date for order on the issue.

Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master was killed during a public meeting at Noagaon, Tongi on May 7.

Soon after the murder, Noor Ahmed, the first IO as well as officer-

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Dhaka against change in Saarc charter

Wants bilateral issues confined to sidelines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said Dhaka is against amending the current Saarc charter to avoid complications stemming from bilateral political wrangling, and would like to see more implementing mechanisms for past promises instead of new deals for the third decade of the body.

"Bangladesh is in favour of keep-

ing the Saarc charter as it is now and no country should hold the summit hostage to bilateralism," Morshed said replying to a question if amendments would be made to the charter to include bilateral political issues.

"Bilateral problems impinge on Saarc agenda and the only way out is to set aside negatives and go forward with the positives," he added.

According to the Saarc (South

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FLOODS, OIL PRICE HIKE IMPACT

Robust exports shield GDP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A robust export growth will offset the possible impacts of the devastating floods and spiralling oil prices to limit the contraction of GDP by 0.25-0.50 percent, the central bank predicts.

This year's GDP growth target has been set at 6 percent.

The Bangladesh Bank in its Annual Report 2003-04 also projects a 6.5 percent inflation rate this fiscal

year but says it is expected to come down sharply afterwards. In fiscal 2004, inflation was 5.83 percent and in fiscal 2003, it was 4.38 percent.

The overall export earnings registered a robust growth of over 26 percent in the first two months of the current fiscal year over the previous fiscal year's same period.

"Based on the performance during the first quarter and indications received from the private

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Relics in ruins

Mahasthangarh turning into farmland

PINAKI ROY, back from Bogra

Mahasthangarh, one of the country's oldest archaeological sites, is gradually becoming a farmland due to government apathy.

Instead of protecting the 2,374 year-old site, which hosts an ancient capital city named Pundranagar, local people have been seen cultivating winter vegetables, onions, rice and other crops on more than one square kilometre of land there. The 15 sqkm site is surrounded by villages.

Residents say precious artifacts, including gold coins, jewellery,

utensils and inscriptions, were dug out and smuggled away from the site, which is located 18 kilometers away from the northern town of Bogra.

"If the government does not take steps soon to establish authority over this land, we will no longer be able to protect the site," said Curator of Mahasthangarh Museum, Md Abdul Zabbar.

While unwarranted farmers have taken over one sqkm of land, the government has only acquired less than 10 acres of land in the last several years. Such apathy has encouraged some to build houses

and steal bricks thousands of years old to construct their houses.

According to land records, farmers still own over 800 acres of land in the archaeological site, archaeological officials said. But since the government has not taken any steps to acquire the land, they still farm on the area and cause damage to the site by taking away bricks and other materials, local people claim.

"We are doing everything within our means to save it. We have submitted many projects but the government could not do anything due to lack of funds," said Abdul

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JS session resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a long Eid vacation, the 14th session of the Jatiya Sangsad resumes today to deal with some important legislative business including a bill pertaining to reserved seats for women in parliament.

The session, which began on October 28, held a general discussion on the price hike of essentials before being adjourned on November 4. Beginning at 4:15pm today it will continue till December 4.

The main opposition Awami

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ACC asks ex-Bac investigators to continue with their cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly formed Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday issued an order stating that the ACC officials, who were part of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac), would keep on investigating their previous cases as usual.

Several thousand corruption cases had been put on hold for the last few months for the process of forming the ACC that came into being on November 21 dissolving the Bac.

The three-member ACC headed by Justice Sultan Hossain Khan will hold a meeting with the Commission officials at 11:00am today at its Segunbagicha office.

10 killed in road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten people, including two schoolboys, were killed and 12 others injured in road accidents in Sirajganj, Chittagong and Mymensingh yesterday and on Friday night.

In Sirajganj, five people were killed and seven others injured when a shallow engine-run vehicle collided with a motorcycle at Salonga in Tarash upazila in the morning.

Police said the vehicle, locally known as Nasimon, crashed into the motorcycle in Pukurpar area at 8:30am, killing the two bike riders on the spot and injuring three Nasimon

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TSS to assemble cellphone handsets

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) will assemble handsets, first time in the country, for German cellphone handset maker Siemens.

Managing directors of TSS and Siemens will sign an agreement in this regard on Monday.

"Siemens has a plan to have one lakh handsets a year from TSS," Siemens Bangladesh Limited sources said.

"Siemens will provide technical assistance to TSS enabling them to produce cellphone handsets in the country," said a Siemens official.

TSS will have handsets in complete knock-down (CKD) condition,

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