

Quit for failure

FROM PAGE 12 becomes usual then our independence would turn out to be untrue.

Kamal said, "The government has been plagued with several maladies. Recently it has been afflicted with one more malady -- of denying everything by saying we have not seen or heard of the words like 'no-existence' and so on so forth. Such are the words and terms being used by finance, home and law ministers.

He said according to the ruling coalition leaders everything in the country is in disorder. "Homicide is not right, terrorism is not right, and we hope the government would be healed soon from its maladies."

The leaders of Jatiya Oikya Mancha then joined in the 'Shantir Pakkhe Nileema' (blue for peace), a peaceful programme initiated by slain Kibria's family demanding trial of Kibria's killers and perpetrators of every bomb and grenade attack in the last several years.

Hundreds of people from every walk of life started thronging in front of the slain former finance minister's Dhanmondhi house after 2:00pm. Men and women in blue dress lined up to join a silent procession that marched to the programme's venue, Abahani playground.

Noted poet Shamsur Rahman inaugurated the programme at around

Abbas, Hamas to hold talks in Yemen

REUTERS, *Sanana*

Yemen plans to host talks this month between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the exiled leader of the militant group Hamas on a ceasefire with Israel, the Yemeni state news agency SABAA has reported.

"President Mahmoud Abbas will visit Yemen with Khaled Meshaal in the next few weeks to bring the points of view of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority closer," SABA quoted Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh as saying late on Wednesday.

It said Saleh voiced support for dialogue to cement a ceasefire agreed upon by the Palestinian Authority and Israel at a summit in Egypt on February 8.

Abbas, elected in January to succeed the late Yasser Arafat, is under pressure from Washington and Israel to rein in armed factions spearheading a four-year-old Palestinian uprising.

Embezzlement

FROM PAGE 12 impossible to ply the route towards Ashulia in dry season," some BIWTA officials who attended the inauguration ceremony at Ashulia Thursday, told BDNEWS.

"The navigation condition of the river Turag is the worst," Monwar Hossain, Director (port) of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) said, "If the flow of water is not increased, it will be tough to run vessels in the river Turag."

According to official sources, more than Tk 20 crore was allocated for dredging and construction of dikes. A top-level official said the project officials misappropriated about two-thirds of the amount, as in

Indigenous woman raped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Fatikchhari police rescued an indigenous woman, abducted and violated by miscreants, from a remote place close to border yesterday afternoon.

Police arrested two suspects. The woman, 22, was kidnapped by some unidentified men on Wednesday night from Balutia village of Dantmara union in Fatikchhari. She was taken to a remote hilly area where the gang left her abandoned after raping.

On information, police rescued the woman at around 3pm yesterday and admitted her to Fatikchhari health complex for treatment.

Tata firm

FROM PAGE 12 He said the study would be completed by the end of this month (March) or by April this year. "We are in the process of completing the study."

Ratan Tata said he did not find any problem with investing in Bangladesh. "Our proposals are still there. We just want to take it forward. But if there is any problem outside our control, that's different," said the industrial tycoon.

The world in recent years has witnessed the Tata Group setting its sight on foreign shares, taking over Daewoo automobile plants in South Korea, acquiring a steel plant in Singapore and listing the company with New York Stock Exchange.

The group of industries plans to invest up to US\$ 2 billion in Bangladesh in projects covering steel, fertiliser and a power plant.

Ratan Tata had visited Bangladesh last October to discuss the investment proposals with the Bangladesh authorities.

4:30pm by flying white pigeons.

Addressing the gathering, Shamsur Rahman said Kibria was a unique and peaceful character and played a significant role in country's development as the finance minister.

The poet urged all to take part in the non-violent programmes initiated by Asma Kibria, wife of SAMS Kibria, to build a peaceful country free from bomb and grenade attacks.

Asma said the programme is aimed at creating mass awareness and public opinion against bomb and grenade attacks, reiterating her demand for punishment of the perpetrators.

AL presidium members Suranjit Sengupta and Motia Chowdhury, AL leaders Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Dhaka University Teachers Association President AAMS Arefin Siddique also spoke at the programme.

In a bid to create public opinion around the globe for the trial of perpetrators of Habiganj grenade carnage, the Kibria family has launched a website. The website address is www.kibria.org.

They also urged all to continue the programme 'Shantir Pakkhe Nileema' every Thursday, wearing blue clothes.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 12 14 after her weeklong visit to Spain. The source added that Hasina has postponed her scheduled US visit due to ongoing anti-government movement and changed political situation.

She was scheduled to go to the US in the second week of March for treatment of her ear affected by the bangs of August 21 grenade blasts on an Awami League rally.

Meantime, Hasina yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat-led government has no moral right to stay in power as it has completely failed to deliver, reports UNB.

"The government has misled the people by resorting to falsehood. It doesn't spare a thought for controlling price hike of essentials that made people's life miserable," she told different district-level party leaders called on her at Sucha Sadan.

Hasina blamed the government for destroying the country's image by violating human rights, killing journalists, repressing women and unleashing corruption.

On Bangla Bhai, she said, "He was not arrested despite directive from the prime minister that means the government has no control over administration or it was an eyewitness."

Hasina also demanded the proper investigation into all grenade attacks and punishment of culprits involved.

reality little dredging has been done.

The project authorities have shown on paper that they dredged 16.50 lakh cubic metres from Sadarghat to Ashulia Bridge at a cost of Tk 19.80 crore at a rate of Tk 120 a cubic metre.

Of which, 5.40 lakh cubic metres of soil was dredged from Sadarghat to Mirpur Bridge and 11.40 lakh cubic metres from Mirpur to Ashulia Bridge. The officials in the BIWTA termed figures imaginative. If the shown figures are true, there should not be any problem regarding navigation in the river Turag, the officials added.

Despite availability of means for verifying dredging works, the employees submitted false and motivated reports in exchange of bribe, a BIWTA official said requesting not to be quoted.

Besides, they embezzled a large amount by showing excessive use of fuel for dredging. "Of the 3,000 litres of oil they showed as requirement for one-day-dredging, only 500 litres were used while the rest were sold." The project officials pocketed also about Tk 40 lakh by showing construction works of 10 to 11 dikes (ditches to keep dredged-mud). But, there was no dike in existence. The officials earned extra money by selling the mud.

The BIWTA director (port) admitted that he had heard about the misuse of the project funds. "We heard it frequently and in some cases, actions were taken," he said, adding, "But it continues unabated."

BNP men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

The house of a Krishak League leader was looted and damaged and his family members were injured allegedly by the activists of ruling BNP and its front organisations Wednesday night.

Family sources said up to 15 armed men of ruling BNP and its front organisations attacked the house of SM Abdur Rab, president of Krishak League ward No. 9, in Nilganj Tatipara in the town.

Led by BNP activists Sajjad, Kalam Mollah, Munna, Salahuddin and Shah Alam, they ransacked the house, looted cash and valuables said to be worth about Tk 2 lakh, the sources said.

They also beat up Rab's daughter Ayesha Akhter Rumi, 17, his wife Taslima Begum, 57, daughter-in-law Reshmi Akhter and son Ariful Islam Riyad.

Critically injured Ayesha, a first year student at Upashahar Mohila College, was admitted to Jessore 250 Bed Hospital.

The sources added that Kotwali police refused to file a first information report (FIR) in this connection.

Charges pressed

FROM PAGE 1 the accused picked up a 25-year-old housewife from Bishnupur village while the woman was waiting for a rickshaw to return home from Chuadanga town at about 8pm. They took her to Gokulkhali police camp and gang raped her.

Following the gang rape, Kuddus and Rokunuddin took the victim to the house of one Farhad, who lives in the area, and asked him to send her to the hospital. Before leaving, the policemen warned the victim against reporting the incident.

Human rights organisations from Dhaka and Kushtia formed a joint cell and launched a movement demanding a proper probe into the incident as well as the immediate arrest of the rapists.

Police then formed a probe body headed by Additional Police Superintendent of Chuadanga Awlad Hossain. The police authority suspended all 14 police of the camp and arrested five.

The human rights organisations, however, rejected the police probe report, calling it a fabrication that overlooked the true incidents as the report said the woman had not been raped at all. They demanded a fresh investigation by a judicial committee and started a countrywide campaign on the issue.

The victim, meanwhile, filed a case against 14 police of the camp after fresh medical tests at Khulna Medical College Hospital produced evidence of rape. Police arrested all 14 and sent them to jail, but nine later received bail.

On December 27, a Chuadanga magistrate court handed the woman over to the safe custody of Mahila Parishad, a Dhaka-based woman rights protection organisation, following an appeal by the organisation. The woman is now being treated there.

6 realtors

FROM PAGE 1 owned by ruling BNP lawmaker MA Hashem of grabbing 38.70 acres and Jamuna Group of 4.40 acres of forestland.

Of the rest of the organisations, Rahat Real Estate reportedly g l o m m e d 29.14 acres, Chhayakunja 5.17 acres and Savar Model Town 7.61 acres of forestland.

Among the individual encroachers, former Birulia Union Parishad chairman Abdus Sattar was accused of grabbing 23 acres, Siraj Doctor 4.93 acres, Julmat Ali 3.10 acres, Jaman Uddin 3 acres and Alauddin 4.67 acres of forestland.

On another issue, the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) body yesterday asked the city planners, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk), to file cases against all developers conducting construction or housing work without their permission.

CNG STATION PLOTS The members of the parliamentary committee at yesterday's meeting at the JS Bhaban expressed their dissatisfaction with the communications ministry for violating the land rules in allocating plots for building CNG stations.

The land laws do not provide the communications ministry with any authority to lease out public land, the committee observed. "The communications ministry should have handed over the lands to the land ministry for allocation to install CNG stations, for the land ministry holds all authority to do that," committee chairman Mahbubur Rahman told reporters after the meeting.

The committee yesterday formed a sub-committee to examine the existing laws on land allocation and also to identify the area of lands leased out by the communications ministry for CNG stations.

ADP projects

FROM PAGE 1 items against the previous 67.

The new guideline will require the process of project paper preparation and approval to be completed in a maximum of 67 days, instead of the current 120 days, though in some cases in the past it took the officials concerned even four to five years to finalise project proposals.

The Planning Commission will have to check out the project proposals with the line ministries for any queries in 10 days and the ministries are to send back the proposals with their replies in seven days.

Under the guideline, the planning minister will have the authority to okay projects worth up to Tk 25 crore, instead of the current ceiling of Tk 10 crore.

Projects involving more than Tk 25 crore will go to the Executive Committee on National Economic Council (Ecneec) for approval.

The guideline authorises a line ministry to approve technical assistance projects up to \$1 million, against the present limit of around Tk 1 crore.

In case of revisions, a line ministry will have the power to approve up to 10 percent rise in the total project cost and the planning minister up to 20 percent. If the cost exceeds by more than 20 percent, it has to be approved by the Ecneec.

For revisions, the line ministries will not be needed to change all project documents but to mention the amount of the excess cost and the reasons for that.

Plagued by pollution

FROM PAGE 1 goods, garment, dyeing, metal, paper goods, plastic goods and hardware.

EPZ authority sources admitted the alleged discharging of untreated waste and said they would take measures to prevent it as early as possible.

The most affected villages are Modhupur, Santaki, Kanda, Kaika Bari, Basak Bari, Dagortali, Sukandi, Bashbari, Majibari, Namopara, Nayapara and Nalam, where as a result of the polluted water the cultivation of boro in winter gets hampered and fishing by the villagers in other seasons has come to an end.

Abu Reza Khan, a member of the engineering board of EPZ said, "All the industries have effluent treatment plants, but they do not use them as we do not monitor regularly." The operation cost of the plant is high.

"It is mandatory for the industries to use the treatment plants and buyers quiz us sometimes about it," he added.

"The World Bank is supporting the EPZ authorities to set up a central effluent treatment plant within one year, to divert sewage discharge from the affected water bodies," he said.

In the meantime, the untreated sewage discharge has dramatically altered some of the traditional means of livelihood in the village, preventing crop cultivation, harming cattle and forcing villagers to adopt new sources of income.

Bholanatha Rajbonshi, a fisherman of the Mahjipara in Savar, said, "Just 15 years ago, people like us made a living by fishing in the beel and the Bongshi river. But there is no question of getting any fish in the beel now a days."

Presently the villagers depend on water from tube-wells for day to day drinking, washing, and bathing,

Galib's top aides

FROM PAGE 1 is now considering his suspension.

Intelligence officials at JIC are now working to confirm the apparent link with militancy that led to Galib's arrest. "Now we are trying to confirm whether he was really involved in militancy and if some of the arrestees intentionally gave confessional statements saying they carried out attacks against NGOs and cultural functions at the directive of Galib," the source said.

Meanwhile, RU register Abdus Salam said that none of the files and documents relating to Galib's trip to India were available at the register's office, and that he was unaware of their location at present.

The documents were last referenced in 2002 when, following a complaint from one Shamim Al Mamun of the Kajla area, the RU authority served a fresh show cause notice against Galib for travelling to India without first obtaining the RU authority's no objection certificate. The process continued till mid 2004, our sources said.

But since then the concerned files have gone missing from the register office in RU, where they were personally maintained by the RU vice chancellor, reliable sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the RU VC Prof Faisal Islam Faruki denied knowing anything about the files. "I have not even heard of the incident," said the VC.

A believer of Ahle Hadith, Faruki also said, "Ahle Hadith is a movement and I am with it."

Meanwhile, the RU authority has already discontinued Galib's salary since his arrest and official sources added that a process was underway to suspend him.

"We are considering his (Galib) suspension as we learned in the newspapers that he was implicated in a number of criminal cases including a sedition charge. Yet we might have to wait until his conviction in a court," said RU register Abdus Salam.

Faulty launches

FROM PAGE 1 Azha, while its design was approved just a few weeks ago, said a source.

He is now trying to get the vessel surveyed and then registered for regular service, the source added.

Officials at the government's Vessel Survey Office told The Daily Star that they mainly examine whether the vessel was built according to approved design. "What can we do if the design itself is faulty?" asked an official.

He admitted that a large number of vessels were registered without proper surveys due to shortage of surveyors as well as pressure from various quarters. But now the surveyors are more careful, he claimed.

The shipping department at a meeting last Wednesday decided to make it mandatory for the passenger vessels, which are less than 50 meters long and have triple decks, to have a ballast weighing 20 percent of their total weight, since this would help them to maintain balance during rough weather. Captain AKM Shaquillah presided over the meeting attended by the high officials of

but the number of tube wells is insufficient compared to their needs.

In a survey it was also found that many farmers of Savar no longer cultivate paddy, and have instead built houses on their land that they rent out to the EPZ workers.

"I used to cultivate paddy in the Dholai beel in winter, but now I live on the income of my rented houses that I made at my yard," said Hasan Ali, from the Modhupur village.

During floods and monsoons, contaminated waters spread throughout the villages, diminishing the fertility of cropland.

"We used to get at least 50 mounds of rice per acre of land around the Dholai beel, but today we hardly get 25 mounds but we still cultivate as we have to feed our family," said Ramjan Ali of Chhantek village.

To cope with the problems, some farmers, especially of the Konda village, have also started selling out the topsoil of their crop fields to developers at the rate of Tk 500 a truck.

The cattle mortality rate is extremely high in the area and the villagers blame it on the pollution, even though they do not let their cattle drink the contaminated water.

"There is severe pollution in our locality but we do not know to whom we should complain. If you can do anything for us by your writing, God will bless you," said Md. Almas, a farmer from Aluboddi village.

The villagers said they suffer from a number of diseases spread by the polluted water, including typhoid, diarrhoea and hepatitis.

"Once the chairman of EPZ came to visit our villages and he assured us that there will be no discharge of polluted water in the water bodies. But nothing has happened so far. Still we are suffering as bad as before," said Almas, a villager.

Foreign currency

FROM PAGE 1 The customs men searched Azad's luggage and found Saudi riyal, Malaysian ringit, Singapore dollar and local currency hidden in a pair of sandals.

During primary interrogation, Azad claimed that he did not know about the currencies.

He said one Mostak Ahmed of Tangail gave him the pair of sandals for his nephew living in Singapore. It has been learnt that his nephew's village home is in Comilla.

In another recent currency haul, the ZIA customs seized foreign currencies worth about Tk 2 crore from the luggage of a Singapore-bound passenger on February 23.

The currencies included euro, pound sterling, Singaporean dollar, Brunei dollar, Saudi riyal and some Singaporean metal coins.

Chief whip's son

FROM PAGE 1 Amin, who is also investigating the case, mentioned that during the one-day remand, Paban disclosed some names of his accomplices and gave important information about his illegal firearms, which was used in the shooting. So he should be confined in the jail custody until the investigation completes, the investigating officer said in the report.

The defence lawyers submitted a bail petition saying their client was implicated in the case as part of conspiracy to harass him falsely.

The prosecution opposed it saying that the charges brought against Paban were primarily proved.

A team of DB police arrested Paban on February 28 for firing on a phone-fax shop owner at Bangshal.

Speaker, MPs

FROM PAGE 12 Earlier, a number of lawmakers, including Manzur Qader of BNP, expressed concern over the frequent load-shedding and apprehended that it might hamper the study of the students preparing for the exams.

In response, the state minister said he is helpless because there is a shortfall in power generation during every summer. He however assured the House that he would take special care during the SSC examinations.

The state minister said special arrangements have been taken for uninterrupted power supply in the rural areas to facilitate irrigation.

OBSCENE FILMS AND POSTERS

A number of lawmakers including Mashuri Rahman Ranga of Jatiya Party (Ershad) and MA Jinnah of BNP yesterday drew attention of the information minister about indecent Bangla films and posters.

In reply, Information Minister Shamsul Islam said legal actions have already been taken against a number of obscene films.

He said the government plans to take stern action against the people who produce obscene films and posters. "If necessary, a new law will be enacted to stop obscene films and posters," said the minister.

ANOTHER DULL DAY

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed another dull day. The day's business began about 35 minutes behind the schedule. The session will resume at 4:30pm on Monday.

Chinese PM

FROM PAGE 12 Lanka and India.

"It's the new Chinese leadership's political socialisation trip to South Asia," the official said asking not to be identified.

Jiabo's visit marks the 30 years of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia may undertake a return visit to China towards the end of this year.

Earlier, Zhu Rongji visited Dhaka as the Chinese the prime minister on January 12, 2002, followed by a return visit by Khaleda the same year.

PM opens

FROM PAGE 12 At Ashulia BIWTA landing station, Khaleda said her government wants development suitable with the country's tradition and nature and utilise the geophysical and natural advantages for national prosperity.

"Through this we can find out real Bangladesh -- we can discover the country's immense potency and potentiality -- and we can do the impossible by utilising the potential," she told the function also attended by ministers, MPs, various professionals and a large number of local people.

On completion of the project, load on land routes will be reduced in transportation of passengers and goods between Dhaka and Narayanganj, the prime minister observed.

She directed authorities to start the work of the second phase of the Circular Waterways Project.

Khaleda said under the project, the Turag, Sitalakhya and Balu rivers and Tongi canal would be dredged and a river port set up at Tongi. If necessary, bus stations would also be set up along the route, she added.

She expressed the hope that tourism industry would flourish centring the waterways as tourists from home and abroad get a close touch of the tradition and aesthetic views of the historic city of Dhaka over this water-route.

Presided over by Shipping Minister Lt Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain, the function was also addressed by LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, lawmaker SA Khaleque, Shipping Secretary M Rafiqul Islam and BIWTA Chairman Dr Reaz Hassan Khandokar.

'Crossfire' kills 22

FROM PAGE 12 Principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case.

Rashid fled the country last October after Raozan's top terrorist Jane Alam and his nine accomplices had been killed in 'crossfire' with Rab. He is now in Kolkata, they said.

Habib Khan was in Dhaka a few months ago, but left for Dubai at the advice of 'Gittu' Nasir, sources said.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader and top-notch terrorist Abu Tayeb, three of his gang members Baker, Halim and Millat, city Jubo League cadre Sunil and BCL cadre Dulu are also in Kolkata. Sunil left the country after the 2001 general elections, while Dulu went to Kolkata from his mother-in-law's village home in Jessore after the death of one Mahim in 'crossfire'.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadre Morshed Khan, Shibir cadres 'Lengra' Nasir and Sajjad Khan, and members of the now defunct National Democratic Party (NDP) Fazal Haq and Bidhan Barua are now in Dubai, sources said.

Sajjad Khan, an accused in Bahaddarhat eight-murder and Liaqat Commissioner murder cases, recently obtained bail from court and left the country last month.

Sources said JCD-linked terrorists Ekramul Haq Chhuttu, 'Etim' Alam, NDP cadres Azizul Haq and

Jafar, Shibir cadres Gias Hazarika (on bail), 'BDR' Selim and Azam, sentenced to death in Principal Muhuri murder case, are roaming in Dhaka and some other parts of the country.

UP chairman Abul Kashem and Shahidur Rahman, two main accused in Jamaluddin Ahmad abduction case, have for long been hiding in Delhi and Tripura respectively.

BNP-backed top terror Osman of Fatikchhari, his second-in-command Alamgir and 'Lamba' Mahubb are hiding in Laxmichhari and some remote areas in the hill tracts, sources said.

The 22 top terror killed in Rab operations so far are 'Gittu' Nasir, Idris, Mahmuddin, Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, 'Petkata' Babar, Ahmadul Haq Chowdhury alias Ahmudya, Minhaj, Foyez Munna, Sajal Nath, Khalifa Amin, Nabi Hossain, Jane Alam and his nine associates, and Aminul Islam alias Aminya.

Among other Chittagong gangsters on the Rab hit list, 'Shibir' Nasir, 'Five Star' Jasim, 'Baittaya' Alamgir, Taslimuddin Montu, 'Baittaya' Youusif, 'Azrail' Delwar, Monzur Alam and Sarwar Alam are now in jail.

Jamaat serves

FROM PAGE 12 Janakantha and two other widely circulated national dailies and withdrawal of all copies of the book within three days.

"The book contains an appendix under the heading 'A short special report on Jamaat's extended meeting on 'evaluation and training' which purported to reveal that our client held a meeting on 11th and 12th April 2003 wherein it designed a conspiracy against the country, and against BNP with which it has formed the Government," the legal notice read.

The notice said that Jamaat denies holding any such meeting on April 11 and 12 in 2003 at Chittagong International Islamic University Auditor