

PM tours Ctg tomorrow, Hasina Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visits Chittagong tomorrow to inaugurate the 49th convention of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), while Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina attends the port city's re-elected mayor's victory rally the day after.

Hasina, also president of the Awami League (AL), will attend the concluding session of the IEB convention on May 16 during her five-day stay in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

BDR boss visits Tinbigha, talks with BSF DIG

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Director General (DG) of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Major General Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday visited Tinbigha corridor at Pathgram in Lalmonirhat district and had a meeting with Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) Harish Kumar.

After the meeting, the BDR DG told newsmen that border tension, BSF's firing on the innocent Bangladeshis and other cross-border issues were discussed in the meeting.

He said the BSF DIG assured of extending cooperation to keep the

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

SAVAR FACTORY COLLAPSE

Spectrum MD, director refused bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Managing Director (MD) of the collapsed sweater factory at Savar Sayeed Hossain Shahriar and one of its directors Abul Hashem Fakir.

Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam of the Court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka in rejecting the bail petition observed that the accused did not produce any papers in support of constructing the nine-story building, neither did they tell the court how they had constructed the building.

It is more than clear that the incident took place not by chance,

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Dhaka-Ctg link snapped for 10hrs as freight train derails

UNB, Comilla

Train services on the Dhaka-Chittagong route remained suspended for ten hours after a freight train derailed at Lalmai Station on Wednesday night.

Railway sources said the engine and two bogies of the Chittagong-bound train from Comilla derailed at 10:00pm due to "faulty rail tracks".

After derailment, all trains on the route came to a halt, leaving hundreds of passengers in misery.

On information, a salvage train from Akhaura arrived at Lalmai. It took about two hours to clear the line.

MEGHNAGHAT-3 PROJECT

Ministry now seeks PM's opinion on unsolicited deal

SHARIER KHAN

The power ministry has backtracked on seeking the law ministry's opinion to justify the unsolicited Meghnaghat-3 power project deal, violating government policy, and is now turning to the prime minister for her guidance and directive.

Side by side, it has prepared a proposal for the cabinet purchase committee's approval for the project.

Due to lack of policy support, the power ministry last week wrote a letter seeking the law ministry's opinion whether an exception could be made about the Meghnaghat-3 project.

Late last month, the state minister for power had committed to parliamentarians to process the project through open tender. But on

Saturday, he claimed to The Daily Star that he did not make such a commitment.

Following press reports on its move, the power ministry on Saturday postponed sending the letter to the law ministry. Instead, it drafted a letter to the PM describing the policy crisis over the project.

The letter says that on April 25, the 29th meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources ministry took a resolution on the Meghnaghat-3 project.

The meeting resolved that the move to award the Meghnaghat 500 megawatt power project to Cadogan Manning Group through negotiation will seriously tarnish the transparency of the present democratic government.

The meeting unanimously

resolved that this project should be implemented through international tender instead of unsolicited negotiation. The power ministry should take initiatives in this regard and inform the standing committee before its next meeting, the letter said, seeking the PM's decision in this regard.

On March 24, the Cadogan Manning Group submitted a proposal for a 500 mw (or 450 mw) combined cycle power plant. The developers will start generating 360 mw power through simple cycle operation from November 30, 2006 and go for full operation in January-March, 2007.

The power ministry plans to sign the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Cadogan Manning on May 15.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6



The ongoing sultry weather forces this Royal Bengal Tiger to take refuge in the water of a tank at Dhaka Zoo yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUSBANGLA

2 'outlaws' killed in 'crossfire'

STAR REPORT

Two regional leaders of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were killed in separate incidents of 'crossfire' between law enforcers and the outlawed party operatives in Rajshahi and Chuadanga early yesterday.

The two, Baki Billah, 35, and Atiar Rahman, 45, died hours after the government had decided to carry out enquiry into alleged extrajudicial killings by Rapid action Battalion (Rab) and police.

Our correspondent from Kushtia reports: A Detective Branch (DB) of police team arrested Atiar at Pantapur village in Harinakundu upazila of Jhenidah on Wednesday, said police.

Under interrogation at the police

office, he admitted to having firearms hidden in places throughout Chuadanga.

A police team started for village Sambhunagar of sadar upazila to recover the arms at about 10:00pm. Atiar was with the policemen during the drive, said police.

As they reached the village, PBCP men fired on them. Police returned fire that escalated into a gunfight.

Atiar got shot trying to flee the police van. He was taken to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital at around midnight. But shortly afterwards doctors declared him dead, added police.

Three policemen—Sub-Inspector Jaman Ali and two constables—were also injured in the shootout.

Atiar hailed from village

Sambhunagar, and was accused in eight cases including six for murder.

BDNEWS adds: Baki Billah was killed in 'crossfire' between Rapid Action Battalion and his accomplices at Rajshahi in the early hours yesterday.

The elite force came under attack when they went to the area to recover firearms and arrest the outlaw leader's accomplices, said Rab.

Earlier on Wednesday evening, Rab nabbed Baki at Shahjadpur of Sirajganj. He was accused in at least 30 criminal cases including five for murders.

Regional leader of PBCP, Baki hailed from Faridpur upazila of Pabna and was listed as a criminal by Pabna police.



A dilapidated culvert at Telikhal has created a bottleneck on the Sylhet-Companyanj road forcing trucks and other vehicles to wait for hours in long queues every day.

PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Fair start to HSC exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first day of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations passed without any major untoward incidents and disorder anywhere in the country yesterday.

Sixty-eight candidates were expelled from different centres under five educational boards for adopting unfair means on the day of English 1st paper examination yesterday.

The exam was by and large peaceful under the Dhaka general education board except that 21 candidates were expelled, according to the board's exam control room.

Deputy Controller of the Jessore board Abdul Haque Molla said examination under his board was held without any problems in law and order, but 14 candidates were

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

FM goes to Washington May 17

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan is expected to leave for Washington on May 16 to hold talks with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley.

The meetings may take place on May 18 or May 19, an official source told the private news agency yesterday.

Khan had earlier told reporters that he would be travelling to the United States on a private tour. During his stay in the US, he would attend the graduation ceremony of her daughter.

India test-fires 250km range missile

AFP, Bhubaneswar

India yesterday successfully tested a nuclear-capable missile from a test range in the eastern state of Orissa, a defence ministry spokesman said.

The test of the Prithvi-1 (earth) missile took place at the Chandipur-on-Sea test site in the eastern state of Orissa at 1:04pm (0734 GMT), the spokesman said.

The missile has a range of 250km and can carry conventional or low-yield nuclear warheads.

Nuclear-capable India and Pakistan, which have fought three wars, two over the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir, routinely carry out missile tests and

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

Prayer Timing		
May 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

CCC POLLS

BNP workers blast ministers for defeat

Rival groups brawl at meet with Nasir

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Ctg

Ruling BNP activists yesterday at a post-polls meeting with Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin lambasted party ministers and lawmakers from Chittagong for his defeat in the May 9 mayoral race in Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) election and demanded their resignation.

The 80-minute meeting at Enesel Bhavan witnessed a brief pandemonium and brawl between supporters of two rival groups of party loyalists and Mir Nasir left the scene abruptly, sources said.

The rivals were known to be either supporters of Mir Nasir or Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman and other ministers.

Earlier, BNP-led four-party alliance mayoral candidate Mir Nasir, also state minister for civil aviation and tourism, arrived the city from Dhaka to attend the meeting in the afternoon, initiated by him to review the polls results and give solace to the party activists now in

frustration. City BNP General Secretary Dastagir Chowdhury, party leaders Abdus Sattar, Rosy Kabir, Chittagong University Pro Vice-Chancellor Mohammad Shamsuddin, Jatiyababadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) City unit President Mosharrif Hossain Dipti addressed the meeting. Except Mir Nasir, no other local minister or lawmaker were present.

BNP and JCD activists alleged local ministers and lawmakers were greatly responsible for Mir Nasir's 'humiliating' defeat to Awami League-backed Nagorik Committee candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury. Mir Nasir would have surely won the mayoral race had they not 'betrayed' him from behind the curtain, they shouted.

The ministers and lawmakers did not want victory of Mir Nasir fearing this might affect their present position and status in the party.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

KIBRIA KILLING Hunger strike at N'ganj for justice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

People of all walks of life yesterday observed a symbolic hunger strike demanding punishment of the real killers of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria at Chasarahat Central Shaheed Minar in the town.

The peaceful protest was arranged under the 'Blue for Peace' programme initiated by Asma Kibria, wife of the slain former finance minister.

Asma and her family, lawyers,

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

21 injured as villagers clash with BDR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least 21 people, including six Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel, were injured in a clash between the paramilitary troops and villagers near Kulia Bridge in Debhata upazila yesterday.

Police quoted witnesses as saying a group of BDR men led by Captain Mahmud raided several fry agencies in the morning on information that some smugglers were selling Indian shrimp fry.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

BANGLADESHI TRAFFICKERS

Italian cops nab gang leaders

AFP, Rome

Police in the south of Italy said yesterday they had arrested the leaders of a gang that made a million euros (\$1.28 million) a year smuggling Bangladeshis into the country.

Three brothers, aged 31, 30 and 29, were arrested in the southern central town of Campobasso with five other people on charges of conspiracy, exploitation of foreign-

ers, extortion and violence. A fourth brother escaped.

The arrests came at the end of an operation dubbed "Adom Pachar", which means "human trafficking" in Bengali, police said.

The operation began in July 2004 after a complaint by an immigrant of Bangladeshi origin that he had been the subject of an extortion attempt by some of his fellow Bangladeshis.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

