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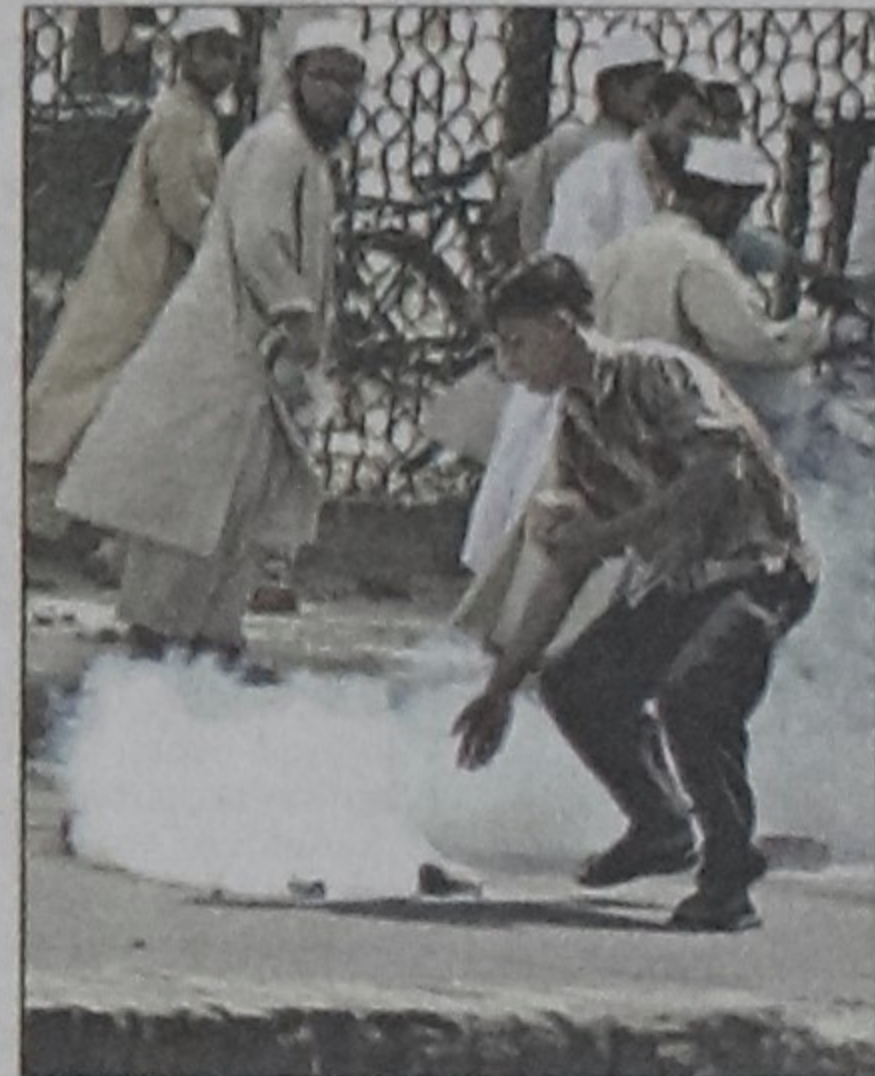
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FROM LEFT... Members of Islamist outfits pelt law enforcement personnel with brickbats during a clash in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers yesterday. An agitator picks up a teargas canister to hurl it back towards police. A policeman comes to the aid of an injured colleague. Journalists shelter themselves from the flying brickbats and teargas shells at a nearby foot-over bridge.

It's our duty to inspire youths with spirit of Liberation War Says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called upon the freedom fighters (FFs) to inspire people, especially younger generation, with the spirit of Liberation War for building a nation free from all sorts of exploitation.

People embraced martyrdom in the Liberation War for building such a nation but their dream is yet to be materialised, he said. "Let us now inspire people with the spirit of the war and remove any obstacles to making the martyrs' dream a reality."

Dr Kamal was speaking at the publication ceremony of a book titled 'Swadhinata Sangrame Rangunia (1711-1971) - Ekatturer Smriti' at the Liberation War Museum in the capital.

Unveiling the cover of the book, authored by freedom fighter Saleh Ahmed, Dr Kamal said the country achieved independence with its people making immense sacrifices for it. "It is our, particularly freedom fighters' duty, to let the younger generation know the history of independence. They do not know this history," he observed.

Dr Kamal, also President of Gono Forum, said, "It will be a

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BUDGET FOR PARLIAMENT, LOCAL POLLS

Govt to slash amount demanded by EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to allocate Tk 425 crore in the next budget for holding elections to parliament and local government bodies while the Election Commission (EC) sought Tk 570 crore for the job.

The EC sought Tk 250 crore for holding the stalled ninth parliamentary election, Tk 100.50 crore for elections to upazila parishes, Tk 200.50 crore for union parishes, Tk 12 crore for city corporations and Tk 2.10 crore for polls to municipalities.

But the finance ministry agreed to allocate Tk 425 crore, sources in the EC Secretariat said.

The ministry however assured the EC of providing more funds if it

needs after spending the amount to be allocated in the budget for fiscal 2008-09.

Moreover, the finance ministry is to allocate over Tk 100 crore in the next budget to meet the EC's administrative expenditures from central to field level.

Senior officials of the ministry and the EC Secretariat at a meeting last month finalised the election budget for next fiscal year, the sources said.

According to the electoral roadmap announced by the EC on July 15 last year, parliamentary election will be held by the year-end and long over due polls to upazila parishes any time in November-December this year.

Besides, the EC will have to hold elections to over 4,000 union

parishads immediately after parliamentary election as their tenure will expire.

The estimated expenditure for holding the ninth parliamentary election increased by over Tk 100 crore as Tk 146 crore was already spent for the election, which was finally suspended just 10 days ahead of the scheduled polling.

Officials of the EC Secretariat said expenditure for holding the polls would increase mainly due to price hike of materials, increase in the number of voters and polling stations and engagement of more manpower in the polls process.

Of the estimated expenditure, a significant amount will be spent for security forces to ensure law and order on the election day and

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4 of a family, 2 others killed in road accident

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A head-on collision between a bus and a people carrier left six people, including four of a family, dead and 26 others injured at Harisarder in Choudagram upazila on Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred around 12:30am when the bus heading for Chittagong from Chandpur collided with the people carrier heading to Dhaka from Comilla. The accident left four passengers of the people carrier, the driver and his assistant dead while 26 others on the bus were injured.

The deceased were identified as Fazlul Haque, his son Ashique and nephews Rubel and Rabin, driver of the people carrier Ahsan Miah and his assistant Kawsar Ahmed.

Fazlul, Rabin and the driver died on the spot while Ashique and Rubel succumbed to their injuries at Choudagram Upazila Health

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'NSC must be civilian dominated and help strengthen democracy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed national security council (NSC) must be dominated by civilians and should work as a helping hand for strengthening democracy by advising the cabinet on various national security issues, said Bangladesh Heritage Foundation Chairman Wali-ur Rahman yesterday.

The former ambassador made the comment at a discussion organised by the foundation on the occasion of publication of a book titled 'National Security and Development Council' edited by him. The book is a compilation of observations on NSC by academics, former bureaucrats and journalists.

Speakers at the discussion suggested formation of an NSC comprised of appropriate repre-

sentations from politicians, experts from the civil society, and the military.

Involvement of military in an NSC is a matter of civilian-military cooperation for strengthening democracy and ensuring national security, which is more of a matter of fending off internal threats nowadays instead of traditional external threats, they said.

At the ceremony held in Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (Bilia) auditorium in the capital, the speakers said successive governments failed to establish social justice and to institutionalise democracy because of a lack of proper planning.

"Appropriate civilian-military relationship is very important for a country's development," said

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Indian cabinet okays train service deal

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian cabinet yesterday approved the agreement with Bangladesh to resume passenger train services between Kolkata and Dhaka after a 43-year hiatus.

The approval came at a cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh three days before the "Moitree Express" chugs off from Kolkata's Chitpur station at 7:00am this Monday on the occasion of Bangla Nababarsha in Bangladesh and West Bengal.

The corresponding inaugural train from Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka will also begin its journey to Kolkata on April 14.

Earlier in Dhaka, the Council of Advisers with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair approved the draft of Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train service on April 6.

A formal agreement between Bangladesh and India to this effect was signed in Dhaka on April 10.

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RICE PRICE TO KEEP RISING: IRRRI 'Raising yields the only long-term solution'

AFP, Manila

Rice prices are likely to keep rising for some time as production of the staple fails to keep up with soaring demand, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) said yesterday.

The Philippines-based institute earlier warned of potential civil unrest as governments struggle to provide cheap rice amid a sustained rise in prices over the past two years to near-record levels.

"Longer term demand-supply imbalance is clearly indicated by depletion of stock that has been going on for years, the latest edition of the IRRI publication Rice Today quoted IRRI economist Sushil Pandey as saying.

"We have been consuming more than what we have been producing and research to increase rice productivity is needed to address this imbalance," Pandey added.

Just seven percent of the annual global production of the grain, a

staple food of more than three billion people mostly living in the developing world, is traded in the international market.

This was because rice was seen as a political commodity and governments strive to maintain large stocks to guard against large price swings, IRRI said.

The institute said it had convened a group of experts to draw up a list of what could be done to solve the crisis and they agreed that raising yields was the only long-term solution.

IRRI said the crisis was affecting both the urban poor as well as rice farmers who farm small plots that cannot produce enough even for their own family's use.

"Although the current rising rice price was seen as beneficial for farmers who grow a reasonable surplus that they can sell on the market, poor farmers with small or no surplus and poor urban consumers will continue to lose out if the price continues to rise," it said.

In Bangladesh a 2kg bag of rice consumes a family's half of daily income

Says WB chief

THE GUARDIAN

Rocketing global food prices are causing acute problems of hunger and malnutrition in poor countries and have put back the fight against poverty by seven years, the World Bank said yesterday.

Robert Zoellick, the Bank's president, called on rich countries to commit an extra \$500m immediately to the World Food Programme, and sign up to what he called a "New Deal for global food policy".

Zoellick said: "In the US and Europe over the last year we have been focusing on the prices of gasoline at the pumps. While many worry about filling their gas tanks, many others around the world are struggling to fill their stomachs. And it's getting more and more difficult every day."

He said the price of wheat had risen by 120% in the past year, more

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Artefacts lie uncared for on the floor of a college

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU,

back from Gurudaspur, Natore

A large number of artefacts including terracotta plaques have been lying on the floor of a college classroom at Gurudaspur of Natore for the last 21 years.

The room of the college is known as Chalan Beel Museum as in 1987 the Department of Archaeology declared it a departmental museum. The museum was established by Prof MA Hamid at the college with the help of locals after the Liberation War.

A senior Archaeology Department official said the government has not taken any initiative so far to construct a building for the museum and so the artefacts are kept on the floor of the college.

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PHOTO: STAR

A collection of decorated earthen pots are left on the floor of a classroom in a college at Gurudaspur in Natore. The artefacts are meant for the Chalan Beel Museum, which is yet to have its own building although set up 21 years ago.

Pakistan make it 2-0

AFP, Faisalabad

Pakistan relied on an entertaining half-century by Salman Butt to beat Bangladesh by seven wickets on Duckworth-Lewis method in a rain-hit second day-night international on Friday.

The left-handed opener cracked a 72-ball 76 to help Pakistan reach 160-3 with 10 balls to spare, chasing a revised target of 158 in 25 overs after two hours play was lost due to rain which soaked the ground at Iqbal Stadium.

The hosts now lead the five-match series 2-0. The third match will be played in Lahore on Sunday.

Bangladesh owed their total to a chancy 60 by Tamim Iqbal and a career-best unbeaten 58 by Mahmudullah Riyad when rain curtailed their innings to 225-8 in 48.2 overs.

The 23-year-old Butt went on a rampage right from the outset, hitting a brisk 46 for the opening wicket with Nasir Jamshed (21) and added a further 73 for the third wicket with Mohammad Yousuf who made 32 not out.

Butt and Yousuf ensured Pakistan did not waste a good start after they lost Jamshed and Yousif

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Banyan tree at DU hall finally felled

DU CORRESPONDENT

The PG Hartog International Hall authorities at Dhaka University (DU) finally cut down the banyan tree on its premises to make way for a flower garden, without taking permission of the department concerned.

The hall authorities even ignored the pleas of the vice chancellor who asked for sparing the tree.

On March 23, all the branches of the tree and a few branches of a Krishna Chura (flamboyant tree) tree were chopped down without the knowledge of the arboriculture department whose permission is needed to cut down any tree on the campus.

The next day The Daily Star published a report with a picture of the amputated tree following which the authorities stopped felling the trunk down.

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PHOTO: STAR

The authorities of PG Hartog International Hall of Dhaka University have chopped down a banyan tree in front of the dormitory without proper permission to make way for a flower garden.