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# Shortage of cylinders cuts oxygen supply at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The short supply of oxygen at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) is mainly due to shortage of the hospital's oxygen cylinders. The supplier, BOC Bangladesh Limited, did not stop oxygen supply to DMCH.

DMCH authorities told The Daily Star that they have only 350 oxygen cylinders against the actual demand for over 750 and of those 350 a good number of cylinders are now unusable.

When contacted, Managing Director (MD) of BOC Bangladesh Ltd Wali Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that they had installed a large tank at DMCH compound to supply oxygen to some wards

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# BCL's DU UNIT Post-seekers demonstrate against top leaders

NAIMUL ALAM NOBIN and RAKIB AHAMMED

The post-seeking leaders and their followers of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Dhaka University unit have started demonstrating against their leaders demanding formation of hall committees.

Around 1,000 aspirants yesterday staged a demonstration on the campus showing their grievances against the BCL DU unit president and general secretary for their "failure" to deliver.

BCL sources say clashes were quizzed.

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# CTG ARMS HAUL Arms-laden truck hired for 'carrying salt'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Investigators yesterday questioned a truck owner and the manager of a transport agency in connection with the sensational 10-truck arms haul case in Chittagong five years ago.

Sources said Taslim Mallick, manager of Greenways transport agency that is located near Dewanhat footbridge in the port city, and truck owner Abdul Motaleb were quizzed.

During the questioning, both Taslim and Motaleb informed that one Abul Hossain hired the trucks from them in the name of carrying

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# 67 more BDR men shown arrested

12 others remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday showed 67 more members of BDR arrested in the BDR carnage case.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court placed 12 BDR men on seven-day remand each. Four others also confessed to their involvement in the mutiny before the magistrates.

BDR Director General (DG) Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam yesterday said the complete list of fugitive BDR men with photographs would be sent to districts, upazilas and different intelligence agencies within a day or two.

"We will send the complete

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Prayer Timing		
April 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Quake hits Italian town: 150 killed

AFP, L'AQUILA, Italy

A violent earthquake rocked central Italy yesterday killing at least 150 people, injuring 1,500 and devastating a walled medieval town where buildings and homes were reduced to rubble.

More than 1,700 rescuers scrambled in driving rain to find victims trapped under collapsed dwellings in the regional capital of L'Aquila, the quake's epicentre, and officials warned the toll would rise.

Some 50,000 people were made homeless, emergency services said. Many residents fled L'Aquila, some even on foot.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi declared a state of emergency and cancelled a trip to Russia in order to visit the Abruzzo region's main town, about

100 kilometres (60 miles) northeast of Rome.

Rescue workers said at least 150 people were killed, Italian media said, while Berlusconi told a news conference here that 1,500 people were injured, adding that a student from the Czech Republic was among the dead.

"No one will be abandoned to his fate," he vowed, adding that a tent village was being set up that could accommodate between 16,000 and 20,000 people and would be ready by nightfall.

In the late afternoon police began going door to door in L'Aquila, checking that people who had decided to stay in the crippled town -- most of them elderly -- had what they needed for the night.

"We're also patrolling to prevent thefts from empty homes," an officer told AFP

after reports of looting.

The quake struck just after 3:30 am (0130 GMT) and lasted about 30 seconds, bringing down many Renaissance era and Baroque buildings, including the dome on one of L'Aquila's centuries-old churches. The city's cathedral was also damaged.

Roofs caved in on sleeping inhabitants and boulders fell off mountain slopes blocking many roads. At least five children were among the dead in L'Aquila, according to police quoted by ANSA news agency.

The earthquake measured magnitude 6.2, according to the Italian geophysical institute.

The quake, whose epicentre was five kilometers (three miles) directly below

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PHOTO: AFP

Italian police, volunteers and rescuers work on a collapsed house yesterday in the Abruzzo capital L'Aquila, the epicenter of a 5.8-magnitude earthquake that hit the city.

# HATIRJHEEL-BEGUNBARI PROJECT Land acquisition finally completes next week

HELEMUL ALAM

The Begunbari-Hatirjheel project is set to gain pace with the completion of the stalled land acquisition process by next week, say project officials.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) officials told The Daily Star Friday that they expect to get the land required for the project as they have received the long-awaited cost estimate from the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office.

"We on Thursday got the estimate, made by the Deputy Commissioner's office worth Tk 489 crore to get 139 acres of private land under

the project," said a Rajuk official.

He said although Rajuk has 60 days to pay the DC office for the land, it would give the money this week. Projects are usually cancelled if the DC office is not paid within 60 days of getting the estimate.

Public works ministry sources said state minister Abdul Mannan Khan has asked authorities concerned to complete the land acquisition by April 7. The public works ministry will also host a meeting with agencies concerned on April 7 to review the project.

Due to delays in acquiring land, only three kilometres out of the 11 kilometres of

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# 100 shanties gutted, 10 hurt in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people, including a fire-fighter, sustained burn injuries in a devastating fire that gutted at least 100 shanties of a slum at Janata Housing in the city's Mirpur area yesterday.

Abdur Rashid, deputy director of Dhaka Division Fire Service and Civil Defence, quoting locals said the fire originated from the kitchen of a slum house at about 11:50 am and soon engulfed other houses.

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# Pro-AL employees clash at Rajuk

Office vandalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two factions of Jatiya Sramik League yesterday clashed with each other and vandalised the main entrance of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) building over establishing supremacy, leaving at least three of its employees injured.

Sources said the infighting ensued between Milki-Jalil and Malek-Rafiq groups at about noon over beating up two employees of Milki group on Sunday.

The injured employees are supervisors Saidur Rahman and Solaiman and lower division clerk Fuad Rana.

Both the factions claimed that they represented the Sramik League and blamed each other for vandalising the Rajuk Bhaban by hiring outsiders.

The Rajuk authorities later filed a case with Motijheel police and formed a three-member committee, headed by Abdul Wahab (member administration) to probe the incident.

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# AUG 21 ATTACK CASE CID to record statement of Joj Miah today

KAILASH SARKAR

The CID will record the statement of Joj Miah today in the case filed against three former investigators of the August 21 grenade attack case.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) also summoned Abul Hasem Rana and Shafiqul Islam to the CID Malibagh headquarters on April 12 for recording their statements.

All three were allegedly forced or lured into making false statements before magistrates in the case filed in connection with the August 21, 2004, grenade attack on an Awami League rally that claimed 24 lives.

Sources said the CID investigators would ask them how

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# IMF offers help in dealing with global recession

Formal talks in June

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has offered Bangladesh assistance without any condition to deal with the global recession and will hold formal talks on the matter in June.

"The IMF stands ready to assist the government to steer through the challenges ahead and to lay a foundation for faster growth that raises the living standard of the population," said an IMF Aide-Memoire sent to the finance ministry on April 2.

After a four-day visit from March 30 to April 2, an IMF mission said the assistance could be given from a fund for low-income developing countries.

Prime minister's Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Mashiur Rahman told The Daily Star, "Against the background of global financial meltdown, discussions were held on the type of assistance the IMF can provide. IMF's Article-4 mission will visit Bangladesh after a few months when talks will be held on the issue."

Finance ministry sources said the Article-4 mission is likely to visit Bangladesh in June for holding formal talks with the government.

Under the new loan package, Bangladesh might get 800 million Special Drawing Rights (SDR), double the present 400 million SDR it gets against the quota. Besides, there will be no condition for releasing the money, the sources said.

However, the IMF would review the government's economic programmes and also consider the government moves in the next budget for granting the loan.

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# BASHUNDHARA FIRE CID starts quizzing mall employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) investigators yesterday started quizzing the officials and staffers of Bashundhara City Complex about its 'mysterious fire' on March 13 that left seven people killed and several others injured.

A team of CID led by ASP Syed Momin Hossain, also the investigation officer, visited the shopping mall yesterday.

Momin said "We visited the spot and talked to a number of

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# Cheated workers continue sit-in at airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 30 deceived workers returned broke from Malaysia on Sunday continued their strike for the second consecutive day at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

"We will not leave until we receive compensation. We had repeatedly complained to the Manpower Bureau and Bangladesh High Commission about our sufferings overseas but they remained reluctant. We have decided not to complain anymore," said Abdul Hannan, one of the workers on strike.

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PHOTO: STAR

A policeman picks up a brick that shattered the glass of a door in Rajuk Bhaban yesterday after two groups of Rajuk employees locked in a clash.