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Khaleda to brief media today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will brief the media at the Party's Gulshan office at 3:30 pm today about her party's stand on the outcomes of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India. The BNP chairperson is likely to explain the "failures of the government and negative aspects of the deals signed with India during the visit of the prime minister," a BNP source said adding that she would announce programmes, including forming human chain and bringing out processions, protesting the agreements and memorandum of understandings. She is also expected to announce her party's decision whether they will return to the parliament or not. BNP leaders however did not say anything about the

INDIA VISIT

PM bins criticism, defends deals

Invites opposition to JS for discussion; says tour outcomes to help cut S Asian poverty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday strongly defended the deals signed with India, and said the outcome of her recent visit to the neighbouring country would help the region in efforts to eradicate poverty. Dismissing criticism by the main opposition BNP as political rhetoric, she urged them to join parliament and debate on her India trip. The prime minister was speaking at a crowded press conference held on her office premises in the afternoon. Hasina, also president of



Sheikh Hasina briefs media on her recent visit to India at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: PID

Home ministry ready to give Kibria probe report to CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has the copy of the government probe report on the assassination of former finance minister SAMS Kibria, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star yesterday. On the reports published in different newspapers about "disappearance" of the probe report, the home secretary said, "I can assure that the home ministry has a copy of it." The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) did not find the copy of the probe report when they started further investigation into the killing and asked the ministry for a copy. Sikder said as CID has applied for a copy, the home ministry has no problem in providing it. Meanwhile, investigation officer (IO) of the killing cases Rafiqul Islam, CID's assistant

49 essential drugs may get costlier

Recommends Drug Admin as manufacturers cite price hike of raw materials

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Prices of some 49 essential drug items will see an increase soon as the technical sub-committee of the Price Fixation Committee of Drug Administration (DA) has put forward a proposal to hike the prices of those items. On the plea of increased prices of raw materials at the international market the members of the committee recommended hiking the prices of the drugs at a meeting on November 15. The proposal is expected to get a nod from the next meeting of the Price Fixation Committee to be held soon. However, insiders of some pharmaceutical companies said that from the very beginning there had been a huge gap between prices of raw materials and the prices of finished drugs resulting in unusually high profits of the companies. This is applicable to more than 1400 generic drugs the prices of which are fixed by the drug manufacturers. However, in case of only 117 essential drugs,

the companies make comparatively little profit. This is why the drug manufacturers very often put pressure on the government to increase prices of these essential drugs, insiders say. The government controls the prices of these essential drugs. Drug companies often show inflated manufacturing cost in the cost list of these items in a bid to substantiate their claim for increasing the prices of drugs. According to the proposal, prices of some items will be almost doubled due to the re-fixation while some new 16 items will be on the market. Ibuprofen suspension, amoxicillin injection, salbutamol syrup, folic acid, metronidazole tablet, mebendazole tablet, vitamin B Complex capsule, prednisolone tablet, theophylline tablet, Chloramphenicol eye drop, dextrose, ascorbic acid, aluminum Hydroxide Gel, sodium chlorine IV infusion and insulin are among the items in the list. These drugs are used for asthma or inflammatory diseases, scabies, allergy, diabetes, eye

Connectivity won't lead to market loss in NE India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Mustafizur Rahman of CPD yesterday ruled out the notion that connectivity would cause loss of Bangladesh's market in India's northeastern states; rather it would create more business opportunities for the country. "Those states are like LDCs [least developed countries]. They will become our captive markets only if they are developed," said Prof Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). He was addressing a

Indo-Bangla summit marks bold shift in ties

Success to depend on follow-up actions, say experts in The Daily Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign policy analysts, economists and former diplomats yesterday said the Bangladesh-India summit marked a bold shift in the relationship between the two countries and the success of it would depend on proper implementation of follow-up actions. However, some others regarded the summit as disappointing and said Bangladesh had lost its bargaining position by conceding to Indian demands for allowing use of its ports and signing deals on terrorism. They said Bangladesh got little against its demand for a deal on Teesta water sharing and scrapping Tipaimukh dam project. They were talking at a roundtable organised by The Daily Star yesterday on the summit and its outcome at the newspaper's conference room. It was felt that the agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) would create new frontiers of economic activities if implemented properly. For the first time, Bangladesh would be able to trade its service in the form of transportation of Indian goods and thereby reduce the huge trade gap between the two countries. But some others felt that instead of surprising the nation with some of the agreements, the government should have discussed the issues in parliament and reached a consensus. They also felt that the immediate task now is to form a high-level ministerial committee and move towards implementation of the agreements. Prof Rehman Sobhan said the Bangladesh-

India summit set the climate for negotiation on unresolved bilateral issues, including maritime and land boundaries and water-sharing issues. He, however, said critical issues cannot be solved in one summit. "A summit is all about atmosphere and communication. Through this summit the climate has been set," he said, adding, "We cannot expect the prime minister to come home with a bagful of goodies." Adviser to the BNP chairperson, Reaz Rahman, described the outcome of the summit as very disappointing. "Look at the Indian gains. There are too many gifts for India. The balance of the game was seriously skewed," he said, terming the move to open up Chittagong and Mongla ports to India "mega concessions". He said Bangladesh made four "mega concessions" in bilateral security, connectivity, economic cooperation and "psychological game". "The concessions will have far-reaching implications," he said. He criticised the government for neither examining the issues nor discussing them with the opposition. On the energy sector, Reaz, who is also the former adviser to the foreign ministry, said the government made a quantum leap into the dark. Bitterly criticising the government for allowing India to use Mongla and Chittagong ports, he said, "In my opinion the Awami League has seriously endangered our nation." Foreign Minister Dipu Moni strongly protested the statement of Reaz Rahman. She said the visit should be evaluated from the South

PNEUMONIA 24 kids die in Cox's Bazar in 5 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-four children have died of pneumonia in the last five days in the hilly and char areas of Cox's Bazar. Four children died in Ukhia, five in Kutubdia, four in Sadar in Cox's Bazar, three in Ramu, three in Chakoria, two in Pekua, two in Teknaf and one in Moheshkhali. More than 300 children have fallen ill with cold-related illnesses. The children suffering from pneumonia are allegedly

Nat'l health policy in 3 months

Specialised treatment up to upazila level

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will finalise the National Health Policy 2010 within three months with an aim to take specialised treatment to district and upazila levels, Health and Family Welfare Minister Ruhul Haque said yesterday. "We shall introduce treatment facilities for cardiac and mental health problems, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases at district and upazila levels to reduce sufferings of poor patients," Ruhul Haque said at a press briefing at the health ministry's conference room. He said a large number of patients have to depend on a few hospitals in the capital for specialised treatment putting immense pressure on them. It is now necessary to have

Boycott land grabbers State minister calls upon people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan yesterday said a number of land grabbers set up newspaper houses with illegally earned money and asked people to boycott them. "I consider those newspapers as 'toilet and tissue papers'," Mannan Khan came down heavily upon unscrupulous real estate businessmen while addressing a seminar. He was speaking on education, health and housing problems of Dhaka organised

UNSC MEMBERSHIP BNP did same for Japan as AL does for India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP is criticising the ruling Awami League for supporting so early India's candidature for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), but facts show that BNP while in power supported Japan in 2005. The joint communiqué issued on July 14, 2005 following the then prime minister Khaleda Zia's visit to Japan said: "Bangladesh reiterated

Outlaws now involved in city crimes

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Outlaws holed up in the capital to evade arrest in their localities are getting involved in city crimes. Detective Branch of police recently arrested four suspected extremists from their hideouts in the capital on charge of car theft. "We are worried as these hardcore criminals might get involved in serious crimes in the city," said a top DB official wishing anonymity. Deputy Commissioner of DB (South) Monirul Islam said these outlaws flee to the densely-populated capital to take refuge whenever there is a crackdown on criminals in their localities. He said taking shelter of such outlaws in the capital is nothing new but their involvement in city crimes is a latest finding. Acting on tip-offs, Car Theft Prevention Team of DB conducted a drive in the city's Ramna area on January 3 and another in Mirpur recently.

First Test against India starts today

BISHWAJIT ROY from Ctg

Bangladesh will face a stiff challenge when they return to Test cricket after a six-month break today taking on world's number one team India at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in the port city. The Tigers go into the match on the back of a sweet memory of a 2-0 historic Test victory against the West Indies but it would be a big task for them to prove that they are an improving side when facing the formidable India, who came here with a 2-0 series victory at home against Sri Lanka in November-December last year. State-run Bangladesh Television (BTV), along with Neo Cricket and SuperSport,



An urchin with a baby in her lap on a city road shivering in yesterday's morning chill. PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Rebels bar new JCD leaders from entering DU campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Members of the newly formed central committee of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and their followers could not enter the Dhaka University campus yesterday due to obstruction by a rebel group. Some 50 leaders and workers of the rebel faction took position at the entrance point near the university central mosque in the morning. Some were carrying firearms, sharp weapons, hand-made bombs and sticks to resist the committee leaders, sources in the intelligence agencies confirmed. Sensing trouble, the committee leaders and their followers returned back from near the Public Library at Shahbagh intersection. Later, the JCD rebel group brought out a protest procession and held a rally near Ducsu building at noon. Leaders of JCD's last central committee Ahsan Uddin Khan Shipon and Abdul Halim Khokan led the rally. Agitating leaders in the rally vowed to resist the members of the committee and their followers on DU campus at any cost. They also threatened to continue their movement until the Tuku-Alim led committee is dissolved. The deprived JCD leaders claimed that deserving leaders were not included in the new committee. Those who

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