

COMMERICAL BANK OF CEYLON PLC
 Double your Capital...
 Double your Reach...
 www.combank.net

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Star Insight

PHILIPS 21" Ultra Slim TV

- Philips Crystal Clear Technology
- AV Stereo with Surround Sound
- Digital Noise Reduction
- Component Video Input
- Ultra Slim TV With Stylish Look

5 Years Picture Tube Warranty
 2 Years Free Parts & Service
RSP: Tk. 19,500/-
 Customer Service Department: 8855366-8, 01712 665463

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XX No. 17

DHAKA SATURDAY JANUARY 30, 2010

www.thedailystar.net

MAGH 17, 1416 BS

SAFAR 13, 1431 HIJRI

28 PAGES PLUS STAR INSIGHT PRICE: Tk 10.00

AL's extended meeting today after a break of 20 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After around 20 months, the ruling Awami League holds an extended meeting today in efforts to revamp the organisation.

Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the meeting at Ganobhaban at 11:00am.

In her address, she will instruct leaders of different tiers on how to go about strengthening the party and countering the opposition's anti-government propaganda.

Before that, AL central working committee will meet at Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi. ALCWC, the highest decision-making body in AL, is expected to approve

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

EXECUTION Special prayers offered at mosques

UNB, Dhaka

Shukrana munajat was offered in all mosques across the country after Juma prayers yesterday expressing gratitude to the Almighty Allah following the execution of the death sentence of five killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Special prayers were also offered in other worship places of the country at their convenient times.

Five convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were hanged at Dhaka Central Jail early Thursday.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Performers display a spectacular routine at the opening ceremony of 11th South Asian Games at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, left. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the sporting carnival releasing pigeon.

6 Nepali athletes injured in lift crash

SPORTS REPORTER

Six Nepali players and an official have been injured when an "overloaded" elevator at Hotel Imperial adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium crashed just hours before the start of the opening ceremony of the 11th South Asian Games yesterday.

The injured were immediately taken to Square Hospital and three of them have been admitted there. The remaining four were released after given first aid.

The incident took place around 12:30pm, leaving the Games organisers heavily embarrassed. The elevator came down to the ground with

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

SA Games kicks off

ANISUR RAHMAN

The 11th South Asian Games got underway with a dazzling opening ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday with thousand of athletes and performers taking part in the three-and-a-half hour programme.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared the 12-day regional sports extravaganza open. Bangladesh had hosted the event in 1985 and 1993.

The colourful opening ceremony started with the march-past led by Afghanistan and completed by host Bangladesh with huge cheers and fanfare from the invited crowd.

Commonwealth Games gold medal winning Bangladeshi shooter Asif Hossain Khan hoisted the red and green flag to lead the 453-strong Bangladesh contingent.

A total of 1,793 athletes including 478

women from eight participating nations will fight for 156 gold medals in a record 23 disciplines that would see three fresh ones--cricket, golf and handball--included for the first time in the 27-year history of the games.

Renowned singers Sabina Yasmin, Andrew Kishore and Shuvro Dev sang the welcome song riding on a caravan along the athletic track of the big bowl and Bangladesh football team's captain Aminul Haque and Bangladesh's fastest woman Nazmun Nahar Beauty conducted the oath taking ceremony.

Following the games declaration of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, thousands of balloons and pigeons were released to symbolise peace. Legendary footballer Kazi Salahuddin kindled the torch of the games.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, also the chairman of the organising committee of the games, urged the athletes to uphold the spirit

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

BD women booters lose opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women football team's bid to win the gold medal of the South Asian Games suffered an early blow when they were beaten 1-0 by Nepal at Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Jamuna Gurung struck the all-important goal in the 36th minute for the visitors.

Before the Bangladesh-Nepal match, favourites India handed a thumping 8-1 defeat on Sri Lanka, thanks to a hat trick from Moirangthem, who

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Commentary

Victory of the rule of law

MAHFUZ ANAM

Seldom has a founder of a new state and the supreme leader of any independence struggle met so brutal an end as Bangabandhu. Not only was he gunned down at the prime of his life (he was only in his mid-fifties) his whole family was also killed including his 10-year-old son Russell. Both Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana would have also been killed but for their fortuitous trip to Germany. There have been other instances of assassination of leaders in history, but seldom if ever, can we find anything remotely similar as the barbarity, the brutality and ruthlessness shown in this case where the whole family was eliminated, including the two newly wed wives of Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Jamal.

Not only did the nation have to suffer the pain of seeing its leader slain but also the indignity of not being able to prosecute the killers for long 21 years, till the return to power of Awami League in 1996. Lt Gen Ziaur Rahman, Lt Gen HM Ershad, and Khaleda Zia were in power from 1975 up to 1996 successively, without ever making any attempt to try the killers. In fact the very opposite was done. The self confessed killers were first allowed to escape abroad, then given diplomatic posts with periodic promotions, and some were even given the status of heads of missions. In a final mockery of justice and the memory of Bangabandhu, the arch killers were allowed to form a political party and contest elections. One even sat in the sacred House of the

Politics of killing should never again raise its ugly head

and the protection and patronization of Bangabandhu's killers would remain forever as among the most inglorious and shameful.

While in power, president Ershad continued the same policy of patronizing the killers and never making any attempt to try them for murder. Being a military dictator, the people did not expect him to have any interest either in justice or in the establishment of the rule of law.

What however strikes as most surprising, is the way the elected government of Khaleda Zia acted by not lifting a finger for addressing the issue of trying Bangabandhu's killers after the fall of autocracy and restoration of democracy in 1991. Given the unity of all political forces in the anti-Ershad movement, and their resolve to restore democracy, peoples' rights and the rule of law -- it was a natural expectation that the removal of the biggest blot on our national conscience would get due attention from the elected government of Khaleda Zia. It would not have been unreasonable to expect that whatever might be the political differences, the BNP government

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Send SMS for train tickets

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Bangladesh Railway will introduce SMS ticketing service through mobile phone next month to ease sufferings of commuters.

"Initially, the service will be launched on the Dhaka-Chittagong route. If successful, it will be expanded to the countrywide rail network. All necessary technical aspects have been checked and duly completed. We hope to launch the service at the end of February," said BR Joint Director General (operations) M Shahjahan.

BR is the first organisation to introduce SMS ticketing in the subcontinent, the BR joint director general said.

Anyone can book seats and transfer credits for buying tickets by sending SMS from anywhere in the country. On completion of credit transfer, the customer will receive an SMS notification with a transaction ID number, said the official.

The software used for the service will allow mobile phone companies to check automatically whether the customer has enough credit to his or her cell phone

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

All damaged embankments to be repaired by March

DU CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to repair within March the embankments damaged by cyclone Sidr and Aila in the country's coastal areas, BBC Bangla Service reported yesterday.

They said the repair of the embankments was delayed as the authorities concerned did not get any response from construction firms despite floating tender several times.

Director General of Water Development Board Habibur Rahman said, "Since we did not get any response despite floating tender several times,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

BNP may return to JS soon

Parliamentary party meeting in a couple of days to make decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition BNP is planning to return to parliament this week, ending its long boycott of the House since June last year.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque yesterday said his party is likely to join the ongoing session of parliament to discuss current critical issues facing the country.

"We want to return to parliament. A meeting of our parliamentary party will be convened in a day or two. I hope a positive decision on joining the House in this session will come out at the meeting," he said while talking to reporters at his Gulshan residence yesterday.

Farroque said, "Party Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia is persistently consulting with her party colleagues about joining parliament. The chairperson thinks the country's interest is above party interest."

The BNP has been abstaining from parliament for 66 consecutive working days demanding more front-row seats in the House.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM

Bangla Academy decorates the Language Movement Museum to be opened on Monday. The photo was taken yesterday.

Students vandalise over 100 cars at trade fair parking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cadres of Bangladesh Chhatra League and students of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University last night vandalised more than 100 vehicles of visitors to the International Trade Fair, looted valuables and clashed with police, injuring at least 20 persons including law enforcers.

Police fired gunshots and lobbed teargas canisters to disperse the attackers, who pelted stones and brickbats at the police.

The incident occurred after police arrested a few students for teasing girls and attempting to snatch goods from stalls at the fair at Sher-e-Banglanagar without paying, said Tejgaon zone Deputy Commissioner Chowdhury Manzurul Kabir.

He said the unruly students damaged around 70 vehicles while at least eight policemen were injured among others during the clash.

Police sources and witnesses said the attackers were led by a number of leaders and activists of the university unit Chhatra League.

Many BCL leaders were seen negotiating at Sher-e-Banglanagar Police Station to get their arrested leaders released. Witnesses said around 100 BCL cadres and students of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University went on a rampage for about half an hour from 8:30pm, vandalising vehicles of visitors.

They said at least 50 vehicles parked beside the fair ground were heavily damaged. Owners of the cars were seen protesting at the incident and demanding compensation.

Niaz Ahmed from Gulshan said, "My car has been completely damaged."

Many car owners said if they are not given compensation, they would launch a movement today, putting up blockade in front of the trade fair.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

DU VIOLENCE Pasha says he was 'hired by JCD rebels'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saiduzzaman Pasha, who was photographed brandishing a firearm during the clash between Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal factions at Dhaka University, is an ex-army man, Detective Branch of Police officials said.

The DB yesterday received Pasha, who was arrested at the city's Shanir Akhra with a pistol and seven bullets, on a three-day remand to interrogate him and find out the source of the firearm and ammunition.

When Pasha was brought before reporters at the Detective Branch (DB) office, he said he was a Chhatra Dal, student wing of BNP, activist and was hired by the Chhatra Dal rebels of Dhaka University for the clash on January 18.

"Pasha joined Bangladesh Army as a sepoy in 1998. After six months in service, he left and resumed his studies," Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Shahidullah of DB said on information Pasha has given them so far.

He said they prayed for a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6