

THE MUJIBNAGAR ETHOS

It united all Bangalees; even those abroad to aid the cause back home

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ICE CREAM MARKET

New brands are coming, as people's income marks a rise

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AMBITION CRUSHED

Musharraf has been disqualified from contesting the polls

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NEW GAS LINK

Legal bar goes

Govt yet to decide, considers legalising illegal connections

SHARIK KHAN and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The High Court yesterday withdrew its order to stop issuing new gas connections.

But the government committee concerned is yet to lift its 2010 restriction on new gas connections, citing no improvement in supply.

In November last, the court ordered the government not to issue further gas connections until the committee withdraws the restriction.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Zafar Ahmed yesterday vacated the court order after hearing a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh on March 11.

Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Manzill Murshid claimed the government had initiated a process for giving new gas connections since sufficient gas was now being reportedly produced.

But the committee, formed by the energy ministry, reviewing the recent recommendations of the parliamentary standing body has also ruled out giving new connections.

Energy experts also oppose any decision on awarding new gas links, saying the country's gas reserves will be exhausted soon at the present rate of consumption.

Energy Secretary Mozammel Haq Khan has told The Daily Star that the committee is reviewing whether to

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CRISIS ALSO IN WASTE

While many households in the capital remain deprived of gas connection, a woman applies gas stove to dry wet clothes. The photo was taken at the capital's Moghbazar recently.



PHOTO:
STAR

APRIL 17, 1971

History's first Bangalee govt

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The emergence of the provisional Bangladesh government in Mujibnagar, 42 years ago on April 17, 1971, was a seminal moment for the Bangalee nation. In Meherpur of Chaudanga, senior leaders of the Awami League, close associates of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, came together to proclaim before the world that out of the fury of a swiftly enveloping war had emerged a government, the overriding purpose behind it being the liberation of an oppressed country.

Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansoor Ali and AHM Quamruzzaman informed their fellow Bangalees and then the world that

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KAMARUZZAMAN'S WAR TRIAL

Verdict any day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 may deliver verdict in the war crimes case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman any day as the trial proceedings concluded yesterday.



many women raped during the Liberation War in 1971.

Two tribunals, dealing with the war crimes cases, have already delivered verdicts in three cases. Kamaruzzaman's case is going to be the fourth one to have seen the verdict delivered.

The Tribunal-2 awarded expelled Jamaat member Abul Kalam Azad death sentence and life sentence to Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah, while the Tribunal-1 awarded Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeede death sentence.

Five other Jamaat and BNP leaders are facing trial in the two tribunals for their alleged crimes against humanity.

The three-member Tribunal-2 led by

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Press freedom not violated

Insists Inu; says Mahmudur held for criminal offence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of Bangla daily Amar Desh, had been arrested on charges of cyber crimes and that was not a breach of press freedom, Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu said yesterday.

He is not a professional journalist and has turned the newspaper into a third class leaflet only to use it as a tool of propaganda, Inu said while speaking at a press conference at the secretariat.

The government might arrest anyone for committing criminal offences, Inu said, urging all not to link the arrest to the matter of press freedom.

The government believes in press freedom and has not cancelled the

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NEWS ANALYSIS

AMAR DESH

Govt virtually banned it

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The government has virtually banned Amar Desh. Its acting editor, Mahmudur Rahman, has been arrested. The press has been put under lock and key without any explanation. It tried to bring out the paper from another press. But the attempt failed since it has not got permission to do so.

Officially, both the newspaper and the press had to apply to the government to print from a different press. But the government has so far stalled its republication on the plea that only the paper had applied and not the press.

Let there be no doubt that the journalism practised by Amar Desh leaves much to be desired. It often used fabricated, motivated and maligning news, inciting religious hatred. The role it plays can be reproachable.

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Blasts at Baishakhi fair, 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were injured in cocktail blasts at a Baishakhi Mela in Atrai upazila of Naogaon last night.

The condition of three victims was critical, Qayumuzzaman, superintendent of Naogaon police, told our Chapainawabganj correspondent.

The injured could not be immediately identified.

Three cocktails went off around 8:30pm at the fair on Mollah Azad Degree College premises, witnesses said.

Police were yet to ascertain who were behind the attack, but said they were investigating the incident.

According to news agency UNB, the injured included three children. The injured were all rushed to Atrai Upazila Health Complex for treatment.

Earthquake rocks Iran, Pakistan

34 killed; hundreds of houses destroyed

AGENCIES

A major earthquake centered on a border area of southeast Iran killed at least 34 people in neighboring Pakistan, destroyed hundreds of houses and shook buildings as far away as India and Gulf Arab states yesterday.

The earthquake struck in the Iranian province of Sistan Baluchestan at about 15:14 local time, close to the cities of Khash, at a depth of 82 kilometers.

Communications with the area, a sparsely populated desert and mountain region, were largely cut, leading to conflicting preliminary reports of casualties in Iran. An Iranian provincial governor later said there were no deaths there.

The epicenter was far

from any of Iran's nuclear facilities.

Pakistani officials said at least 34 people were killed and 20 injured in the town of Mashkeel in the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, which borders Iran.

The 7.8-magnitude quake also damaged more than 1,000 mud houses there.

Iran appeared to have emerged relatively

unscathed. A local health official in Iran told the Fars news agency that more than 20 villages were probably "severely damaged", based on initial reports.

At least 27 people were hurt in Iran, according to a local governor speaking to IRNA, but there was no immediate confirmation of any deaths.

Experts said the depth was the likely reason for

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No use of religion in vote-seeking

Pak EC warns ANI, Islamabad

The Election Commission of Pakistan has warned candidates against seeking votes in the name of religion or sect.

A senior ECP official on Sunday said political parties, candidates and their supporters must not campaign against any person on the basis of religion, ethnicity, caste or gender during May 11 elections.

He said that candidates and their supporters shall refrain from speeches arousing parochial and sectarian emotions and controversy between gender, community and linguistic groups, the Dawn reports.

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Gloom over GDP growth

IMF too forecasts dip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Monetary Fund forecasts that the country's GDP growth this year will fall to six percent, mainly due to lack of any sign of recovery in the US and Eurozone economies.

Bangladesh's GDP growth was 6.1 percent last year.

The IMF made the forecast in its World Economic Outlook released yesterday.

Earlier, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank forecast that Bangladesh's GDP growth will fall below six percent in fiscal year 2012-13 due to political unrests and the sluggish world economy.

Zahid Hussain, WB's lead economist in Dhaka, told The Daily Star that the IMF forecast is similar to that of the WB.

He added the IMF forecast for the current FY is 5.8 percent.

According to him, political unrests and lack of investment are to blame for the fall.

On Saturday, the WB released its Bangladesh Development Update where it said the country's GDP in the current fiscal year would decline due to decreasing exports and investments because of the adverse impact of the Eurozone crisis and the political uncertainties ahead of the parliamentary elections.

About the Euro area crisis, the IMF World Economic

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HARARE TEST Tigers open Zim tour today

SAKEB SUBHAN from Harare

Bangladesh begin their Zimbabwe tour today with the first Test against the hosts at the Harare Sports Club. The sides will start the Test in contrasting moods as Bangladesh have been riding a wave of new-found competence in Tests while Zimbabwe have had five consecutive losses after their heady success against Bangladesh in their return from Test exile in August 2011.

The match will start at 2pm Bangladesh time and will be telecast live by satellite television channels Maasranga and Ten Cricket.

Tempering this contrast in moods will be the teams' respective records at the ground. Bangladesh have lost all their three Tests against the hosts at

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