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PAGE 15

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PAGE 8

BANGABANDHU SATELLITE

Waiting in the wings

Launch likely next month; service not before July



MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Bangabandhu-1, the first commercial satellite of the country, is likely to be sent into orbit next month and it will be ready for use in three months after the launch.

The satellite is all set for the launch, said Shahjahan Mahmood, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), which is dealing with the much-talked-about project.

French company Thales Alenia Space, designer and maker of Bangabandhu-1, has already carried out several test runs. It is now waiting to hand over the satellite to the launching station in Florida, US.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina claps as a child impersonating Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman waves at her at a children's rally and cultural programme at the Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex in Gopalganj's Tungipara yesterday.

Let's give our kids healthy, peaceful life

PM tells event marking Bangabandhu's 98th birth anniversary

BSS, Tungipara, Gopalganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reiterated her call to teachers, guardians and religious clerics to motivate children against all evil forces, including militants, terrorists and drug traffickers.

"We have to take steps to give our children a healthy life and ensure their peaceful stay with their parents so that they do not go astray," she said.

Hasina was addressing a children's rally and cultural programme on the Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex premises here yesterday.

The women and children affairs ministry and the Gopalganj district administration jointly organised the event marking the 98th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

MG!

"The situation in this country is such that if I were the prime minister, I would have committed suicide."

HM ERSHAD
JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN AND SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE PM

US-BANGLA PLANE CRASH

Official joint probe starts today

Bodies of 17 Bangladeshis identified; likely to be flown in on Tuesday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint probe into the US-Bangla disaster officially starts today.

Head of Aircraft Accident Investigation Group (AAG) of Bangladesh Capt Salahuddin M Rahmatullah is set to leave for Kathmandu today for the joint investigation.

"I have already visited the spot after the accident. I returned home to take some documents," he added.

Apart from the Nepalese probe committee, he said representatives of the aircraft and engine manufacturers would be in the probe team.

"There will be no representative from the US-Bangla Airlines in the investigation procedure to make it non-biased," he added.

A joint-team of experts would soon sit to decide where the plane's flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorders would be decoded, Yagya Prasad Gautam, chief of the probe committee formed by the Nepalese government, told The Daily Star.

A team of investigators from Bangladesh would join the Canadian and Nepalese officials in a day or two, he added.

The Canadian and Nepalese investigators have, however, started collecting information, talking to stakeholders, and analysing CCTV footage linked to the crash, he said.

Canadian aviation experts joined the Nepalese team yesterday.

Bangladeshi and Nepalese authorities had earlier said the recorders would be sent to Bombardier, the manufacturer of Dash 8, for decoding.

"We will find out the best place to decode the black box. It could be Canada or Singapore or any other country where we will find it convenient," Capt Salahuddin yesterday said.

Final hurdle, toughest too

MAZHAR UDDIN from Colombo

The stat of not winning a single game against India in their seven T20I meetings so far, including the two defeats in the Nidahas Trophy, may not hang as heavy on the shoulders of Bangladesh players after their scintillating and morale-boosting two-wicket victory over Sri Lanka on Friday as the Tigers take on India in the final at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo today. It will be their fifth multi-nation final appearance across all formats.

Following a win like Friday's, it seems that all that transpired at the R Premadasa Stadium -- skipper Shakib Al Hasan's angry outburst against the umpires and him pleading with Mahmudullah Riyad to come off the field to Mahmudullah smashing a monster six of the penultimate delivery to snatch a win from jaws of defeat -- will work as confidence booster for the Tigers when they take on in-form favourites India.

And that was probably what the Bangladesh players have been labeling as the Bangladesh brand of cricket -- playing in an exciting and fearless way.

'Save family land' now his struggle

Police say AL men attempted to evict 'save Buriganga' campaigner from his house; two arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have found two Awami League men and their associates involved in the abduction of green activist Mihir Biswas in the capital's Shyamoli on March 3, investigators said yesterday.

It was an attempt to grab 8.5-katha land on which Mihir's house was built, they added.

Some followers of Towfik Ur Reza Mishul and Kamran Shahid Prince Mohabbat abducted Mihir, member secretary of Buriganga Bachao Andolon, along with his wife, aunt, friend, caretaker and house help at gunpoint, according to police.

Towfik, vice-president of Mohammadpur thana AL, has been arrested while police are looking for Kamran, health affairs secretary of central Jubo League.

The gang also looted valuables from the house and took away furniture on a pick-up van, officials said.

All the victims were released after about four hours of the abduction, police said following the arrest of Towfik and Jubo league activist Rajon in Mohammadpur two days after the incident.

Interrogating the two, police came to know about Kamran.

"We have conducted a couple of drives to arrest Kamran at his Banani house but he managed to flee," Biplob Kumar Sarkar, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division Police, told The Daily Star, on Friday.

Lawyers denied permission to meet Khaleda

SC to hear her bail petition today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's lawyers were denied permission to meet her in the capital's old central jail yesterday.

A five-member team of lawyers, led by Masud Ahmed Talukder, sought permission from the authorities concerned to meet Khaleda around 3:00pm to have her signatures on vakalatnamas in several cases filed against her in Dhaka and Narail.

"The jail authorities informed us that they didn't have the documents relating to the cases and that is why we have been denied permission to meet her," Masud told The Daily Star.

Khaleda landed in jail on February 8 after she was handed a five-year jail sentence by a Dhaka court for misappropriating a donation fund of the Zia Orphanage Trust.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court is set to hear today four petitions filed in connection with a High Court order that granted bail to Khaleda in the Zia Orphanage Trust case.

Two of the petitions were filed challenging the HC order and two others to vacate the SC's stay order on the High Court ruling.



Children of underprivileged Hindu families take lessons at Swapnanagar school in Kachuai Hills in Chittagong's Patiya upazila. The school's new approach to teaching has been able to retain students who were struggling to stay in traditional schools. The photo was taken recently.

Primary school with a difference

Innovative approach wins disadvantaged community's support

AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR with ANDREW EAGLE

Among the low-caste Hindu families of the distant Kachuai Hills in Chittagong's Patiya upazila education has rarely been a priority. Busy with income-earning chores, many children struggle to maintain an interest in school. Yet in more recent years, a new approach to learning has broken ground. Swapnanagar is a primary school with a difference.

"Usual teaching methodology in Bangladesh isn't very practical," explains Dhrubajyoti Hore, the convener of the school's committee. "But our students have tough, very practical lives. They have a lot of other work to do and little time for self-study. They don't have anybody at home to help them either. We want lessons to be engaging. School mustn't feel like a burden."

Offering classes one to five, Swapnanagar has developed its own student-centred methodology, which they call 'active learning'. Teachers consider tailoring practices to community reality as paramount.

To visit the school is to find young students, many of whom are descended from tea garden workers, learning the alphabet by sculpting letters from mud. Teamwork is taught by investing responsibility for keeping the school tidy and tending its garden. Books are regularly awarded for achievements, with students encouraged to keep them on a shelf at school. In many homes there isn't any suitable place to store a book. Besides, the shelf is the beginnings of a library.