

Dhaka, Delhi

FROM PAGE 1
"Both sides agreed that terrorism posed a threat to both the countries and that there was a need to cooperate closely to tackle this menace," said the Indian home secretary as he was reading out the joint press statement after the meeting at State Guest House Meghna.

The two sides agreed to examine the possibility of instituting a bilateral mechanism for combating terrorism and organised crime, he said.

The talks took place in an atmosphere of utmost cordiality, candour and friendship, Duggal, flanked by his Bangladeshi counterpart, said.

The two sides reiterated their commitment to full implementation of the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) 1974, he added.

To avoid unprovoked incidents and resolve situations arising out of such incidents, the two sides agreed to exercise utmost restraint along the Bangladesh-India border and avail themselves of the existing institutional mechanism.

The delegations agreed on the need to sensitise their border forces, populace along the border and the media to maintain peace and tranquility along the border.

As the Indian delegation drew attention of Bangladesh side to the drafts of 'Extradition Treaty', 'Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters' and 'Bilateral Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organised

Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking', the Bangladesh side said they would give their reply "at an early date".

The delegations underscored the need for greater vigilance and cooperation between the two countries to prevent illegal movement of goods and people, flow of illicit drugs, narcotics, arms and explosives across the border and smuggling of fake currencies.

Agreeing to comply with the Revised Travel Arrangements (RTA) to promote people-to-people interaction, the two sides looked forward to the next meeting of the RTA to be held at an early date to finalise a more liberal RTA.

Both sides agreed on holding regular meetings at all levels for effective border management.

"It was fully recognised that the betterment of bilateral relations was in the vital interest of both countries. Towards this end, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation and work closely in all spheres of bilateral relations," Duggal said.

Neither of the delegation chiefs replied to any single question from the media personnel who had been waiting for over three and a half hours for the briefing.

The next home secretary-level meeting will be held in New Delhi next year.

20 hurt

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Thirteen of the wounded were admitted to Muladi Upazila Health Complex.

They are -- police constables Abdus Sattar, Abdur Rashid, Altab Hossain, Fazle Ali Khan, Shahjahan, Md Ali Sardar, Wazed Ali Howladar of Mongu group and Miraj, Mohiuddin, Rashid Sikdar, Montu of Joyndai group and teenagers Alamin and Bachhu.

Joyndal was forced to leave the stage by other leaders after the meeting started upon arrival of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The meeting was presided over by Abdus Sattar Khan, president of Muladi municipal BNP and chairman of the municipality with lawmaker Mongu as chief speaker.

These two factions of BNP of Hizla-Muladai (Barisal-3) constituency clashed several times earlier.

Tension had been running high in the town since the declaration of the Muladi visit programme of the BNP chairperson with both the groups' show-downs including processions, gatherings, hoisting banners and feasts, constructing welcome gates etc.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Muladi Police Station, was stand released on Thursday and transferred to Patuakhali police lines for having failed to control the show-downs of Joyndal group.

Abdul Hannan, OC of Patuakhali Sadar Police Station, who took over from him on Friday said that the situation is under control and additional police forces have been deployed in the area to avert any untoward incident.

Drought

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deputy director Bogra Agriculture Extension Department, said if it does not rain sufficiently within a week the Aman production will be hampered largely. He said if there is no rainfall before the first week of September the harvest might drop by 15 percent.

The production may reduce further up to 50 percent depending on areas and position of land, Bashar added.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said no rainfall was recorded in the last week across the Rajshahi agriculture zone. Around 3,553 millimetre (mm) of rainfall was recorded in July, 2005 but last July it was only 1,711 mm.

Rangpur agriculture zone recorded 4,948 mm of rainfall during July, 2005. Around 2,402 mm of rainfall had been recorded in Rangpur areas in last July. In 2005 August, Rangpur zone recorded 4,553 mm of rainfall but this year 1,149 mm of rainfall was recorded up to August 22.

Meanwhile, Shahjahan Ali Sarkar Putu, Phulbari Poursabha chairman and convener of Phulbari Protection Committee, said they had no involvement in Saturday's programme.

He said he had lodged a general diary (GD) with the Phulbari Police Station on August 2 saying the Phulbari Protection Committee will not be responsible for any untoward incident during the programme.

Phulbari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Hasan Sarwar said what happened on Saturday was totally beyond their control. The BDR fixed 70 rounds while the police shot 30, he said.

Syed Saiful Islam Jewel, Phulbari unit convener of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Electricity-Port, severely condemned Saturday's incident and said the administration opened fire on the common people to protect the interest of the looters.

However, the police superintendent of Phulbari told him that the police did not shoot.

Meantime, leaders of the committee demanded judicial inquiry into the matter and punitive measures against the responsible. They also demanded compensation to the families of Saturday's victims.

The hartal in Phulbari will continue until stoppage of all activities of Asia Energy and its removal, Saiful said.

Claiming that at least 10 were killed in Saturday's shootout, he

alleged that the BDR dumped the rest of the dead bodies.

"The police have prevented the people of Phulbari from seeing the dead bodies of their relatives. They are also not saying clearly if the dead bodies will be returned," he said.

Our correspondent in Dinajpur adds: Two more of the seven killed were identified yesterday: they are Amin, 14, son of Abdul Hamid of Barokona village, and Salekin, 24, son of Abdul Hashem of Jharapara village of Nawabganj upazila.

The identity of another deceased could not be known as of 9:30pm yesterday.

At least seven to eight people of Janpara, Barokona and Jholapara, including SSC candidate Ekrumul, son of Mokbul Hossain, have been missing since Saturday.

Meanwhile, the BDR raided and ransacked several houses in Jholapara, Dhanapara and Sajalpur on August 26 night. They even assaulted some women, sources alleged.

The designated magistrate snatched the film of a local photojournalist when the latter tried to take his snaps in Nimalta area.

Sources said the BDR asked for the approval from the Phulbari UNO for shooting. The UNO, however, denied it.

The movement committee held a protest rally at Noapara during the hartal hours yesterday.

The Workers' Party of Bangladesh also held a protest rally in Jessore town with Prof Afsar Ali in the chair. Party leaders Iqbal Kabir Zahid, Zakir Hossain and others addressed the rally.

Verdict of graft case

FROM PAGE 1
The judge said he could not complete preparing the judgment of the graft case and fixed the next date to deliver the verdict.

During the hearing, Ershad along with his party leaders, activists and lawyers was present in the court.

Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) Golam Mostafa Khan submitted a petition seeking time for adjournment of the gold smuggling case, as witnesses did not appear before the court yesterday.

Moving the petition, the APP told the court that three witnesses including the complainant of the case had earlier appeared before the court and gave their statements. But as vital witnesses, including the investigation officer (IO) of the case, were yet to appear for giving their statements, he prayed for adjournment of the hearing of the case, the APP added.

On the hearing from the prosecution and the defence, the judge fixed September 20 for next hearing of the gold smuggling case and issued non-bailable arrest warrant against six witnesses, including the IO of the case, to have them appear before the court on the next scheduled date.

The trial of the plot-allotment case began in 1998. The court completed its hearing on August 13 and fixed yesterday for delivering the verdict.

The court framed charges against Ershad and acquitted the then Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) chairman Rahmat Ullah on March 9, 1992 as no conclusive evidence was found against him.

Ershad was acquitted in three graft cases last week while a negotiation is going on about his joining the ruling BNP-led alliance ahead of the next parliamentary election.

Rudiger, Chalmar Chaker, Ashraf and Taher were convicted and sent to prison on different terms on May 14, 1992.

The trial against Ershad did not start due to a stay order from the higher court.

The investigation officer (IO) of

the case pressed charges against Ershad and Rahamat Ullah on December 9 the same year.

The then president Ershad directed authorities concerned to allot plots in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Uttara residential areas to 49 people during 1988-1990, violating the government and Rajuk provisions, said the prosecution.

The court has so far recorded statements of only four prosecution witnesses although the trial began on April 23, 1998.

The court could not complete arguments of the case as the prosecution and the defence had sought time on different excuses since August 2002.

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE
On August 13, the same court adjourned the hearing of the gold smuggling case against Ershad until August 27 following a time petition from the prosecution.

A team of customs officials held four persons including two foreign nationals at Zia International Airport (ZIA) on July 17, 1990 when they were attempting to smuggle 3,000 tola gold worth around Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh, the prosecution said.

A smuggling case was filed against the four -- Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmar Chaker of England, the then manager of ZIA Major (rt) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and security guard of ZIA Abu Taher -- with the Cantonment Police Station the same day.

During the investigation, the IO found evidence of Ershad's involvement in the smuggling and his name was included in the charge sheet.

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Judges killing

FROM PAGE 1
members Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal and Khaled Saifullah, suicide bomber Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun and Asadur Rahman Arif. All except Arif are in jail.

The death reference bench of the HC on August 23 fixed today for delivering judgement on the completion of the hearing that had begun on August 1.

The JMB killed Shahid Sohel Ahmed, senior assistant judge of Nalchhiti upazila, and Jagannath Pandey, senior assistant judge of Jhalakathi sadar upazila, in a bomb attack on the judges' vehicles at Chandkathi in Jhalakathi on November 14 last year.

Immediately after the lower court's verdict on May 29, the government took steps for quick disposal of the militants' death reference case as over 500 cases still await paper-book, history of case, preparation and death reference hearing before the HC.

On the government's instructions, the attorney general's office in June petitioned to the HC to give priority in preparing the paper-book for the death reference case.

The HC granted the prayer on June 15. On completion of the paper book reading, the government moved in the death reference bench for hearing the case.

15 hurt

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Shibli Noman triggered the clash. The Shibir activist allegedly insulted Rubel, JCD's secretary of KMC unit and both locked into using abusive language towards each other in the dormitory dining area.

A group of JCD loyalist interns attacked Shibir activist Shibli Noman at around 9:30pm on the campus and soon after this, a large number of Shibir activists including non-students swooped on the JCD activists inside the dormitory.

Both Shibir and Chhatra Dal activists used sticks and bricks during the violence that continued for over forty minutes, said the witnesses.

Saifur blames

FROM PAGE 16
The working paper submitted by the Bangladesh Bank suggested effective administrative measures to eliminate obstacles and different pressures against competitive market system for different products at import and distribution stages.

The paper also advised the government to find new internal sources of revenue to offset an accumulated loss stemming from petroleum fuel and fertiliser subsidies, adding that the government continue the ongoing tight monetary policy.

An immediate initiative to check the smuggling in subsidised fertiliser and diesel and maintain smooth supply of products will help curb inflation, the central bank said.

Saifur favoured the government's current tight monetary policy and said the ministry will not allow anymore subsidy from the budget to adjust accumulated loss stemming from petroleum fuel.

Although the price of fuel was increased slightly in the last budget, it is still far lower than the international price, the minister said adding "We will have to adjust the fuel price." He, however, did not make any specific comment as to when it will be increased.

Sources said the meeting asked the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to increase revenue collection in a bid to reduce public sector borrowing from the banking sector.

Hartal observed

FROM PAGE 16
at Bhabadaha by August 26.

The leaders of the committee threatened to enforce a half-day hartal if the government fails to meet their demand.

The movement committee held a protest rally at Noapara during the hartal hours yesterday.

The Workers' Party of Bangladesh also held a protest rally in Jessore town with Prof Afsar Ali in the chair. Party leaders Iqbal Kabir Zahid, Zakir Hossain and others addressed the rally.

Fazil, Kamil

FROM PAGE 1
with its chief LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

The committee recommended giving the three-year Fazil course a status equivalent to the degree level. As per the recommendation, the total marks of the course will be 1,400 including 600 for Arabic subjects and 800 marks for general subjects.

In the general subjects, Bangla and English with 200 marks will be compulsory and the rest 600 marks will be for two optional subjects. The Fazil degree will be called as BA (Fazil) and the Kamil degree with 500 marks for Arabic subjects as MA (Kamil).

The cabinet committee has recommended introducing the courses under the National University from the 2007-08 academic year. It also recommended separate campus, infrastructure facilities, and efficient teaching staff for these courses.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk, Water Resources and Commerce Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Cabinet Secretary Abdul Halim and Education Secretary Montajul Islam attended the meeting.

8th Expert Group

FROM PAGE 16
poverty-mitigated middle-income country; to have a health-endowed nation; to have a skilled and a creative workforce; to become a globally integrated economic and commercial regional hub and to be environmentally sustainable.

Ensuring a socially just society is central to building a participatory democracy and to advancing the development process. High rates of economic growth need to be coupled with policies and institutions that allow the sharing of the benefits of development by all irrespective of income class, gender, religion or ethnicity. Cultural accommodation is also the only sustainable approach to future progress because the alternative is cultural suppression.

Promotion of cultural and religious diversity as a national heritage; guaranteed access to educational and health-care opportunities by the poor; minimum employment guarantee for the rural poor; property rights for the poor and marginalised groups; no gender-based discrimination and inequality; safety

nets for vulnerable groups; reduced regional inequality through local economic development; economic and social inclusion of minorities and many more relevant issues will be deliberated and consulted upon at the session.

The outline of the Vision 2021 for Bangladesh has been drafted on the basis of recommendations and aspirations propagated by a large number of people attending the regional civil society dialogues at various places of Bangladesh, which are being organised collaboratively by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel-I. The Nagorik Committee 2006 is now going through a process of consultation with expert groups about the draft outline.

The Vision 2021 for Bangladesh will eventually be presented to the next elected government and the parliament with a more detailed description of short and medium term strategies.

Mizanur clinches

FROM PAGE 1
size grounds for cricket, rugby and football, the college in the heart of the Sri Lankan capital has a modern indoor sports complex where the Bangladesh competitors had failed to get beyond the elimination round in the discipline's first two days.

However, the final day proved to be fruitful as the 24-year-old Mizanur produced the third gold medal for his country in the Games, which close today.

Swimmer Shahjahan Ali Rony, who will carry the national flag in today's closing ceremony at the Sugathadasa Stadium, and hurdler Mahfuzur Rahman Mithu are the other two gold medalists for Bangladesh, emulating the country's haul of three gold medals won in Islamabad two years ago.

Mizanur, who beat Sri Lankan opponent Gayan in the first round by 7-5 points, ousted Sandeep Kundu of India 6-3 in the semifinal in the morning.

In the afternoon's final, the Bangladesh Army soldier from Barisal outplayed Bhutan's Sonam Penjor 11-7 in three rounds. After a brief celebration, he was taken to a local hospital to nurse a right-leg injury but the doctors released him after preliminary checkup.

"I am fine now. There is no major problem or pain," Mizanur told after winning Bangladesh's first ever medal in the discipline, which was

introduced in the seventh SAF Games in Kathmandu 1999.

The eldest of four brothers,

Mizanur said that his farmer father has been suffering from paralysis. "I am grateful to my family and also Lt Col Shaheed, who had advised me to join taekwondo."

The 5'10" tall athlete was a basketball player but seeing no chance of him making a permanent place in a strong Army side, his coach Lt Col Shaheed, now at Bangladesh Rifles, told him to switch to martial arts three years ago, he informed.

"I won a bronze in the Islamabad Games and I was confident to do well here. I am happy that I have won a gold medal for my country in the end," he added.

Bangladesh also won two medals in judo, silver for Habibur Rahman in men's 66kg and bronze for Milton Majumder in 60kg, to take their tally to three gold, 15 silver and 32 bronze medals.

India remained distinctly ahead, establishing their supremacy with 118 gold, 68 silver and 46 bronze, followed by Pakistan (41-43-71), Sri Lanka (36-63-77), Nepal (9-14-29), Afghanistan (6-7-16), Bangladesh (3-15-32) and Bhutan (0-3-10).

Pakistan kills

FROM PAGE 16
Followers of Bugti ransacked and torched four banks, 12 buses and two ambulances in Quetta, while four banks were also set ablaze in Khuzdar district late Saturday, police officials said.

Police arrested 450 rioters who rampaged overnight through the city of Quetta, defying a round-the-clock curfew imposed Sunday, said Suleman Sayed, the city's police chief.

Violence also spread throughout Baluchistan and to the southern port of Karachi. Pakistan's largest city and capital of neighbouring Sindh province. Large crowds of Baluch people pelted cars with stones and set tires alight in Karachi, police said. Extra police and paramilitary forces were deployed.

Sporadic gunshots were heard in Quetta city and other areas till early Sunday but there were no reports about casualties.

Tension gripped the region Sunday as protesters blocked two major highways, one leading from Quetta to Iran and another to Khuzdar and southern port city of Karachi, the officials said.

Opposition leaders condemned the killing and the major political parties have convened emergency meetings to discuss the development.

"Bugti's murder is an extrajudicial killing," said Liaquat Baloch, a leader of six-party religious alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal.

"It's one of the darkest eras in Pakistan's political history," Baloch said.

"It's the worst news for the Baluch nation. I cannot say much as we are busy in collecting the bodies," spokesman for Bugti's Jamhooi Watan Party Shahid Bugti told AFP.

"It's difficult to say much at this stage," he said.

"We are still collecting details as we don't know how many people have been killed," Bugti said.

Mir Hasil Bizenjo, chief of Baluchistan National Party told AFP the death was shocking for democracy, nationalism and the politics of hatred would now increase in Baluchistan.

Glulam Mohammed, chief of Baluch National Party said agreed saying there would be far reaching implications on politics in Baluchistan while Qasim Zia, a leader of former premier Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party described the killing as regrettable and unfortunate.

US plane crash

FROM PAGE 16
find out the cause of this accident," he said in an emotional voice.

He added that there was no "weather challenge" that caused the accident.

The names of passengers were not released, he said, pending notification of next of kin.

"We cannot speculate on the cause of the accident," he said that the crew had flown the plane for some time, and that Comair had purchased it new.

Expulsion demanded

FROM PAGE 1
ference at the office of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in the capital also declared a 3-day programme including countrywide mourning today and a half-day hartal on August 30.

Besides, the committee declared a countrywide agitation programme tomorrow and endorsed the indefinite hartal in Phulbari and its adjacent areas called by the locals demanding expulsion of Asia Energy.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)-led Chhatra Sangram Parishad and Progressive Students Alliance called a strike in all educational institutions across the country today protesting the Phulbari killings.

Addressing the press conference, the national committee's member secretary Professor Anu Muhammad said laying siege to the office of AEC in Phulbari of Dinajpur was a peaceful and democratic programme of the national committee, but the police and BDR shot to kill the participants of the programme without provocation when they were barricaded about half a kilometre away from the office.

He said there was no attack from the rally to prompt the law enforcers to shoot. "Our rally was about half a kilometre away from the AEC office and therefore, attacking that office is out of question."

Some of the demonstrators only threw some bricks at an information centre of AEC, which was empty. This can never be a reason for the government to kill its citizens when they have reasonable demands, he said.

Anu Muhammad, an Economics professor at Jahangirnagar University, continued by saying the half-day hartal that the committee called can never be comparable to any other hartal called by the political parties or other organisations. "This hartal is to establish people's authority on the property of their motherland."

AEC's coal extraction project at Phulbari coal mine is not for the development of the country, but it is intended for destroying the country's resources, he added.

Anu Muhammad said hundreds of thousands of people in the area will be without shelters, while the environment and water level in the surrounding areas will be seriously damaged if the AEC extracts coal by open mine method.

When the government did not confirm any mining contract with AEC, the company has been claiming to have one. They are bribing professionals and businesses and have begun setting up of machinery, construction of different structures including water tanks.

There are records that the successive governments have always played hide and seek with such contracts of natural resources and this is the reason why "...we felt obligated to protest the Phulbari coal mine project strongly."

"We are not against the extraction of coal, but we don't want the people's lives and the environment be endangered due to the project," Anu Muhammad said, adding that the country will not gain from the project, as the company will export two-thirds of total coal.

Answering to the question why the open method of coal extraction is a threat to the environment of the area

Phulbari firing

FROM PAGE 1
inquiry to ascertain what factors prompted the law enforcers to open firing on the angry people," Babar told reporters at his ministry.

On the killing of four policemen at a cattle market in Naogaon last Friday, the state minister instructed to strengthen police drive against the outlaws.

The inspector general of police was asked to monitor the pending cases against the underground extremists.

So far 60 police and ansar personnel were killed by members of the underground outfits since the country's independence.

"I've ordered the IGP to monitor the cases against the underground extremists through the monitoring cell at the Police Headquarters," he said.

when Australia and India are doing so, Anu Muhammad told the reporters that the geological situation and the density of population at Phulbari is not comparable to those of the countries mentioned.

He also said that the committee is disinclined to the political parties like Awami League or the 14-party in regard to their programme, but requested all to participate in their programmes.

Former PDB Chairman Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal said AEC made no comprehensive feasibility study, but it did all other studies in secret so that the results go in their favour.

Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology Professor Shamsul Alam said AEC has no water management policy in the project. If the project is implemented, it could make the water situation in the area worse.

The national committee convener engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, CPB Secretary General Mujahidul Islam Selim, CPB leader Haider Akbar Khan Rono, comrade Enamul Haque and journalist Syed Abul Maksud were also present.

Advocate Sultana Kamal of Ain O Salish Kendra, Shamsul Huda of Association for Land Reform and Development, Syeda Rizwana Hassan of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association, Taslimur Rahman of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Mahfuzullah of Centre for Sustainable Development, Mahin Sultana of Naripokkho and Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori in a joint statement strongly condemned the killings.

They also demanded an end to all AEC activities, investigation into the killings, punishment of the persons responsible and compensation to the killed and injured.

BNP's NEC meet

FROM PAGE 1
Qudus Talukder Dulu, Abul Khair Bhuiyan, Ilias Ali, Moazzem Hossain Alal, Nazim Uddin Alam, Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anny, Nasir Uddin Pintu, who are known to be very close to Hawa Bhaban, got enough chance to criticise the rebel senior leaders as the party high ups refrained from interfering during their aggressive speeches.

Sources said blasting of some senior leaders by