

Khulna jail revolt takes serious turn

KHULNA, Mar 21: Khulna jail revolt took a serious turn today with two groups of agitating prisoners fighting each other, reports UNB.

Several prisoners were injured in the clash in the evening over split opinion on hunger strike to press their demands, jail sources said.

More than 500 out of the total 870 prisoners went on hunger strike this morning on the fourth day of prison revolt, to press for fulfillment of their 14-point demand.

Some rowdy inmates, they said, also took over the entire jail, its hospital and women's ward amid the evening trouble, throwing the female prisoners into panic.

Some convicted prisoners broke the fetters of their legs this morning, while some others broke the windows of different wards of the jail.

The prisoners, "armed with lethal weapons", brought out procession inside the jail in support of their demands. Their demands include release of prisoners detained under the Special Powers Act, quick disposal of pending cases, improved diet, better health and sanitation arrangements.

Hasina leaves for Kushtia today

Awami League President and leader of Eight Party Alliance Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka today (Friday) for a two-day mass contact visit in the district of Kushtia, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament, will address projection meetings at Bheramara and Mirpur upazilas on March 23 and 24 where Jatiya Sangsad polls will be held on March 28.

The elections in the Kushtia-2 constituency was rescheduled due to the death of one of the candidates.

Budget preparation

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Giving a resume of the economic situation obtaining in the country with particular reference to food sector, the Acting President said that the food stock of the country was satisfactory to meet any emergency.

Justice Shahabuddin emphasised the need for immediate formation of cabinet committees on ECNEC, purchase and council committee for senior appointments. He also emphasised the necessity of austerity in all spheres within the limits of the budgetary provisions.

In the meeting, which lasted over one hour, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia thanked the Acting President and the administration for holding free and fair elections which earned recognition and acclamation in the world.

She also thanked the Acting President for smooth running of the administration in the interim period. Begum Khaleda Zia also recalled the sacrifices of the people who laid down their lives during the mass movement against autocracy.

Closeness

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with India in a spirit of friendship and good neighbourlyhood.

Bangladesh has been continuing efforts for peaceful solution of outstanding bilateral problems with India. The problems include the Ganges water sharing, transfer of Tinbigha corridor, determination of the ownership of south Talpatty island, repatriation of Chakma refugees and demarcation of land and maritime boundary.

Regarding Dhaka's relation with Muslim countries, Mustafiz asserted efforts would be stepped up to further strengthen it to the mutual benefits of the people of Bangladesh and other Islamic countries.

Country's closeness with Muslim countries is a constitutional obligation as per provisions incorporated in the constitution by Ziaur Rahman.

"Bangladeshis have bright employment prospect in the war-ravaged Gulf region, and the government will try to avail of the opportunity at the earliest convenience," the Foreign Minister told reporters at his Ministry.

Hasina

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of the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat, the Speaker has recognised Sheikh Hasina as the Leader of the Opposition under Article 2 (8) of the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was presented with bouquets on arrival at Osmany Airport, Sylhet Thursday. —PID photo

Task Force reports

Industries in dire straits

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The Task Force observed a great many "ills" in the industrial policy framework and its implementation which had largely frustrated industrial development efforts in the 1980s.

These ills relate to areas like disinvestment and privatisation, institutional finance, import substitution industries trade liberalisation and export promotion.

About disinvestment and privatisation, the Task Force pointed out that the total shift towards privatisation seems to have been made without adequate pre-analysis. This was mainly induced by the desire to get rid of a large portion of public enterprises at any cost.

Units were thus sold at prices lower than their real value. Divestitures were made to persons, with no entrepreneurial background, on "clientelist" interests.

A few disadvantageous legacies of the public sector such as large and inefficient labour force and wages policy as well as inappropriate working environment were passed on to the disinvested units, according to the Task Force. There were high default rates in payment of dues in major sectors.

On institutional finance, the Task Force observed that attempts at developing private entrepreneurship through large-scale infusion of institutional credits, underwritten by donor agencies, in the late '70s and early '80s, had largely been unsuccessful.

Credit was made available with little stake from the borrowers. Large amounts of loans went to non-genuine entrepreneurs. The funding

agencies had been grossly inefficient in project appraisal, end-use monitoring and loan recovery. Another lopsided development of the past was inadequate provisions for working capital.

About import substitution industries and trade liberalisation, it noted that the tariff structure (customs duty and sales tax) in many cases has made imports of inputs for production of goods costlier than imports of finished goods.

While import liberalisation during the past decade facilitated access to imported inputs and benefitted some domestic industries particularly export-oriented ones, this had an adverse effect on an already low capacity utilisation level, particularly in the cases of smaller industries.

The Task Force pointed out that import liberalisation in many cases resulted in speculative trade of imported raw materials by domestic firms to feed the over-designed capacity without taking into account market limitations.

There has also been widespread smuggling of imported goods like synthetic textiles, electronics and a number of other items to neighbouring countries where prices are significantly higher due to high tariff rates. In many cases, high rates of protection has encouraged smuggling while perpetuating inefficiencies in some industrial sectors, it stated.

On export promotion, the Task Force noted that successes were confined to two main items, readymade garments and frozen sea-food. But little has been achieved even in those sectors in the way of broadening the export base. The country has also failed

to take advantage of changes in the international division of labour by developing a wider base for export-oriented industries.

It pointed out that the critical missing element in the existing export promotion measures is the absence of a well-prepared export development strategy.

The essential ingredients of such a strategy are identification of market opportunities on a dynamic basis, technology diffusion, Research and Development (R&D) and human resources development, it noted. It further stated that the current incentives for exports are still not considered to be adequate and there appears to be a policy bias against exporters using domestically produced tradable inputs.

The members of the Task Force included: Zaed Bakht of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Syed Yusuf Farouq of Board of Investment (BOI), Sabid Ali of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI), Salahuddin Kashem Khan, former President, Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), Khondoker Ibrahim Khaled of Foundation for Rural Employment Generation, A. Salam Bhuiyan of Planning Commission, Gias Uddin Ahmed, former Chairman, BSEC, Waliul Islam of BTMA, Habibur Rahman of BOI, S. S. Chowdhury of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sharif M. Afzal Hossain of BCI, Abul Bayes, Chairman, Economics Department, Jahangirnagar University and Md. Abul Kashem of Planning Commission.

(Another report on sick industries appears on Business page.)

Khaleda warns against smuggling

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the people. "Service to the nation is the ideal of BNP," she said adding the sincerity of the BNP workers was a must for the fulfillment of the people's hopes and aspirations.

The tour of Sylhet was the first after Begum Zia became the Prime Minister of the country. She had also started her election campaign from Sylhet through offering Fatcha at the mazar of Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA).

The Prime Minister left Osmany Airport at 5-45 pm and reached Dhaka at 6-15 pm.

She was accompanied by Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman, Communication Minister Oli Ahmed, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Dr. Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Textiles M. A. Man-

nan, and State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof. M. A. Man-

Besides Prime Minister's aides Ahmed Nazir, Yousof, Kamal, Mirza, Mosaddek Ali and Giasuddin Ahmad Khokan were also in her entourage.

The Prime Minister's entourage members also include Selima Rahman, Nawab Begum Ahsanullah, Prof. Jahanara Begum, Amanullah Choudhury MP, Salahuddin Ahmad MP, Niamatullah MP, Abdul Haris Choudhury and Ilyas Ali.

Earlier, local BNP leaders and thousands of jubilant people greeted the Prime Minister shouting "long live Begum Zia, welcome to Sylhet," when she alighted from a Bangladesh Biman aircraft. As she stepped on the Osmany Airport, two tiny tots came forward and presented her bouquets.

AL move

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The AL working committee also asked the secretariat to fix the date for the party's biennial council which could not be held in the last four years. The council of the party was held on January 1, 1987.

A three-member sub-committee was also formed at the AL working committee meeting to look into some inter-party disputes that took place during the elections in some constituencies, particularly in Narayanganj.

The members of the sub-committee are: Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Amr Hossain Amu and Tofail Ahmed.

Indefinite curfew in Lanka

COLOMBO, Mar 21: The armed forces have imposed an indefinite curfew on a northern Sri Lankan district to prevent Tamil Guerrillas fighting for a separate state from moving forces to defend a strategic area, military sources said today, reports Reuter.

About 300 men of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were seen moving south with their weapons from northern Jaffna during the

Khaleda invited to visit Pakistan

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has been invited to visit Pakistan, reports UNB.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Thursday extended the invitation in his message felicitating the new Premier of Bangladesh.

This is the first invitation to Begum Zia to go abroad after she became Prime Minister of the country.

British Airways offers free travel

By Staff Correspondent

British Airways Thursday launched a free travelling offer on April 23 simultaneously from all its stations throughout the world.

Bruce Campbell, Acting Manager of British Airways, Dhaka revealed this at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton in the city.

According to the exciting new offer, which Campbell termed the world's biggest one, hundreds of flights across the world will carry 50,000 passengers to different destinations on the day, free of cost.

The BA will also be launching a series of offers like competitions, heavy discounts on hotels, car hire, theatre, sight seeing to attract more passengers to the airlines.

Campbell said to get the whole world up and flying on April 23, 1991 every seat on every plane in every class including the Concorde to British Airways' 95 international destinations will be free. In sectors where there is no flight on the day, the date will vary, he added.

In Bangladesh, he said, on the lucky day BA will carry the winners of the offer, from those who have collected their tickets by March 21, all the way to London free. To qualify for free flight to London for about 30 remaining seats of the 373-seat flight on the day one will have to fill up a coupon scheduled to be published in three national dailies today (Friday).

The coupon must reach the BA at the address: World's Biggest Offer, British Airways, Post Box No. 3123, Dhaka-1000 by April 3.

The winners will be selected on the basis of a lucky draw and get two free tickets to and from London. The winners will be notified by post in due time. Entrants must be over 18 years and not employees of airlines or directors of BA, subcontractors or anyone else connected with the draw.

Winners and their travelling companions will be responsible for all additional expenses including transportation to and from the BA departure point and for valid passport and visas, he said.

'No rule for playing national anthem'

There is no rule for playing the national anthem before or after any oath-taking ceremony, excepting the oath-taking of the President, as per the National Anthem Act, according to an official handout here on Thursday, reports BSS.

The handout said, attention of the government has been drawn to a news item published Thursday by a section of the press under the headline "National anthem was not played" in the oath-taking ceremony. The news was not based on fact. It is clearly and elaborately stated in "the national anthem rules 1978" (amended till March 1989) act, about when, in which function and how much part of the National anthem would be played through musical instruments.

Confusion has been created in the minds of the people following publication of this news item in a section of the press. The government has requested all concerned to see that such delusive news is not published in future.

Rule issued on Moudud's bail petition

A Division Bench of the High Court Division on Thursday issued a rule upon the government to show cause why the former Vice President Moudud Ahmed would not be released from detention on bail, reports BSS.

The rule was issued by a Division Bench comprising Justice Abdul Bari Sarkar and Justice Habibur Rahman Khan. The rule is returnable in one week. The court fixed the date for hearing the bail petition on March 28.

Rafiqul Haque moved the bail petition on behalf of Moudud Ahmed. He was assisted by Shorful Islam and Azizul Huq.

Alhaj M. Shamsul Alam, Deputy Attorney General, appeared for the state. He was assisted by Shamsul Karim, Assistant Attorney General and A. K. M. Zahurul Haque.

Meanwhile, the petition for ad-interim bail of the former Vice-President, was rejected by the same court.

On the other hand the bail petition of Moudud Ahmed was rejected on Thursday by the third Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka. The bail petition was moved in the court by Shorful Islam on Wednesday.

Mixed reaction

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state ministers are not happy with the portfolios allocated to them.

Frontline BNP leaders including Abdul Matin Chowdhury, a party Joint Secretary General, who was a state minister-designate did not attend Wednesday's swearing-in ceremony at Bangabhaban. Others include former ministers L. K. Siddiqui and Akbar Hossain, Lt Gen (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali who abstained from the swearing-in ceremony.

Reliable sources say, even some senior members of the cabinet are not happy with the portfolios given to them. Some of them will have to deal with things fully alien to them.

The allocation of portfolios among state ministers, in those formed sources say, has been made without taking into account their experience.

A senior BNP leader, when asked to comment, said, the report that Abdul Matin Chowdhury did not attend Wednesday's ceremony because he was unhappy that he was made state minister was not true. Chowdhury told the party leadership that he did not pass any comment to the press on this.

The BNP leader insisted there could be hundred and one reasons for one's inability to attend Wednesday's function. The BNP leader, however, said such mixed reactions are not unlikely and nothing is final.

He said Wednesday's function was organised hurriedly and many other BNP MPs could not be there, as they did not get invitations.

Political observers feel that the function should not have been organised in a hurry. The absence of the leader of opposition in parliament did not look good because the swearing-in ceremony was a very important function in so far as it symbolised the smooth transition to democracy after nine years of movement against autocracy. They say the authorities concerned should have taken adequate care to ensure the presence of the Leader of Opposition in Parliament in the function.

Fire in textile mill in Tarabo

By Staff Correspondent

Fire broke out from electric short circuit in Padma Textile Mill at Tarabo under Narayanganj district on Thursday morning.

He said the curfew was clamped on Killinochchi district to prevent a further influx of Tigers from their stronghold in the Jaffna peninsula lying just to the north.

The Midnight File

Baghdad accused of dropping sulphuric acid on Kirkuk

NICOSIA, Mar 21: Iraqi rebels fighting to oust President Saddam Hussein said today his army had dropped sulphuric acid on the rebel-held northern city of Kirkuk, killing large numbers of people. "Many civilians were martyred when sulphuric acid was dropped on Kirkuk, which is controlled by the popular forces," Syrian Radio reported, quoting the Tehran-based Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, says Reuter.

Tanzania bans opposition parties

DAR ES SALAAM, Mar 21: Tanzania's President Ali Hassan Mwinyi banned all opposition political groups today two weeks after multi-party supporters rejected creation of a Presidential Commission to review the one party state. "Although the commission is at work, I have to warn that constitutionally this is still a one-party state," Mwinyi said, reports Reuter.

India's SOS to major donors

NEW DELHI, Mar 21: India has called its major aid donors for immediate accommodation to tide over the country's severe balance of payments crisis, local press reported today. Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha is prepared to tour the United States, Japan and Germany to explain India's position, according to the reports, says Xinhua.

Outbreak of dengue fever

SINGAPORE, Mar 21: An outbreak of Dengue Fever in Singapore has hit more than 2,000 people so far, killing four of them, the Straits Times newspaper reported today. There were 1,733 cases reported last year and another 620 have been reported so far this year, the paper quoted a Ministry of Environment spokesman as saying. Dengue Haemorrhagic fever is carried by the Aedes mosquito which breeds in stagnant water, says Reuter.

Iraq frees 1,500 Kuwaitis

KUWAIT, Mar 21: Iraq has freed about 1,500 Kuwaitis captured during its occupation of Kuwait and they will be flown home from Saudi Arabia on Friday, Kuwaiti Military sources said. The prisoners had been transferred under Red Cross auspices to a Saudi base in the desert town of Arar, in north western Saudi Arabia, over the past several days, they added today, reports Reuter.

World leaders greet Khaleda

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan of Pakistan, Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Li Peng of China, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan, President Ranasingha Premadasa of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai of Nepal and President of the Indian National Congress Rajiv Gandhi have felicitated Begum Khaleda Zia on her assumption of the office of Prime Minister of Bangladesh, reports agencies.

In his message, the Pakistan President said Bangladesh and Pakistan had worked together to establish the closest fraternal relations, which draw their inspiration from "our glorious faith, shared ideals and identical objectives."

In a message of felicitation Nawaz Sharif assured his country's genuine desire to promote and strengthen the manifold ties of mutual cooperation and understanding which reflected the shared commitment of the two peoples to a life of national dignity and better future of the whole region.

Chinese Premier Li Peng has congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia on her assumption of the office of Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Li Peng, in a message, said China and Bangladesh enjoy profound friendship and the relations have been developed satisfactorily on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

He said the government and people of China wish that Bangladesh will develop continuously with its people living and working in peace and contentment. He said he was convinced that the existing friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries would be further consolidated and developed in the years to come.

King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan conveying congratulations to Begum Zia said that the mandate to form the government received by her from the people of Bangladesh in the recent general elections was an indication of their great trust and confidence on her leadership.

In congratulatory message sent to Begum Khaleda Zia, Sri Lankan President Ranasingha Premadasa felicitated her warmly and said that the people of Bangladesh had reposed their trust on her to lead them on the path of economic and social advancement.

He further said that under her able leadership Bangladesh would now experience an era of tranquility and development. He expressed his confidence that relations characterized by warm friendship and close cooperation would be further strengthened in the years ahead.

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Prime Minister of Nepal, in his message, said, "we in Nepal have been greatly impressed by the recent demonstration by the people of Bangladesh of their commitment to the ideal of democracy and human rights."

Later the conflict spread among the supporters of two organisations and an armed clash took place in the university campus.

APSU

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Fifth and the Tenth. S. M. Kamal Hossain, President of Jatiya Chhatra League alleged many of the absconding ministers and associates of the toppled President Ershad were not still arrested, though there were specific allegations against them.

The All-Party Student Unity has taken up programmes which included observation of "Black Day" on March 24, according to reception to the advisers of the caretaker government on March 25 and observation of Independence Day on March 26.