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Inside Today

Magazine



Smuggling is now no longer a hide-and-seek operation, reports S. Bari in Dhaka. Another supplementary report on smuggling along Bangladesh-India borders, from Sumanta Banerjee in Calcutta. Page 9

Article

A former secretary to the government of Bangladesh and a former UNIDO advisor for the Asia and Pacific region AS H K Sadique writes

In defence of a parliamentary system of government Page 4

Metropolitan



The Bangladesh Photographic Society has now got its sight on having show at Paris. As a preliminary attempt the society had an exhibition in Dhaka recently. Page 3

International



Saddam promises democracy for Kurds, says Talabani Page 5

NEWS BRIEFS

Team to join UNIKOM leaves

A seven-member Bangladesh Army contingent led by Major Mohammad Shahidul Islam left Dhaka Thursday to join the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), reports BSS.

Tagore song confice

The 10th Tagore Song Conference begins in Dhaka today (Friday) at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Eminent educationist Ferdous Khan will inaugurate the 3-day conference in a simple function in the morning, reports UNB.

Storm hits Netrokona again

NETROKONA, Apr 25: A violent storm hit the district again Wednesday night, injuring some 50 people and extensively damaging houses and crops, reports UNB.

Velayati leaves for S. Arabia

RIVYADH, Apr 25: Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran headed to Saudi Arabia on Thursday.

Private member's resolution for autonomous status rejected

Heated discussion on role of Radio and Television

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) on Thursday rejected a private member's resolution for transforming Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television into autonomous organisations free from government control.

Earlier, the Treasury Bench requested the resolution's mover Rashed Khan Menon to withdraw it since the Government was examining how Radio and Television could be turned into truly neutral bodies and it would place a bill in parliament in this regard.

Sixteen members took part in the four-and-a-half-hour stormy discussion on the bill.

At times Speaker Abdul Rahman Biswas found it difficult to control the House as comments from the participants were protested by shouts and counter shouts.

State Minister of Information Nurul Huda said the Government welcomed the resolution in principle. But the task of turning Radio and Television into autonomous bodies was not easy and needed careful scrutiny.

He invited shouts from the Awami League members when he said the BNP government had to shoulder the responsibility of turning all black laws white. Television was made a

SPA will go, PM reassures House

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia reiterated her commitment to repeal the Special Powers Act of 1974. She assured independent member Nurul Islam Monty Thursday in the House that the act would be annulled at an appropriate time.

Nurul Islam Monty brought a private member's bill yesterday seeking complete annulment of the Special Powers Act (SPA), but he withdrew the bill

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Drought threat looms large

Star Report

The country is experiencing a freakish weather with rainlessness and the sweltering heat threatening a severe drought.

Weathermen at the Dhaka Met office said that the rain making Mediterranean winds were veering off in other directions before reaching Bangladesh.

Without those winds, a weatherman said, rains cannot be expected. This is an unusual weather, he added.

During this period last year the country had recorded a precipitation of 693 mm in only 40 days, the Met office said.

This year rainfall has been recorded at 190 mm in 55 days.

In this period last year Dhaka division recorded rainfall at 144 mm in 12 days compared to 40 mm in 13

days. Chittagong division in this period last year recorded rainfall at 357 mm in 11 days compared to 97 mm in 16 days this year.

The above data means that although the frequency of rainfall was higher this year, the showers were much below normal, the weatherman said.

The present situation can be dubbed as a prelude to a drought and if the weather does not change its whims the situation may turn grave, he added.

A leading hydrologist of the country also said that ground water levels in different parts of the country have receded alarmingly because of the scant rainfall.

"We have reports that the water-level fell below 7 meters in most of the

diarrhoea hit areas where many hand tube-wells have become inoperative," he said on condition of an anonymity.

The falling of the water levels in the rivers of the country is another cause of the receding ground water levels.

The Ganges water level near Hardinge Bridge was recorded at 5.51m on Wednesday which should be at least 7m during this season.

Rainfall and river water are closely related to ground water levels.

The scarcity of pure drinking water is the main cause of diarrhoea which has already claimed over 600 lives in the country.

The situation will not improve without heavy rainfall, sources said.

DUCSU polls July 18

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University authorities have decided to hold elections to the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) and the hall students unions on July 18.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the leaders of the All-Party Students Unity (APSU) with the Vice-Chancellor Prof Maniruzzaman Miah and the Hall Provosts held Thursday afternoon at the office of the Vice-Chancellor.

The last DUCSU election was held on June 6, 1990.

The DUCSU, is at present functioning without five of its office-bearers including its Vice-President Amanullah Aman, elected MP from Dhaka-3 and its Social Welfare Secretary Manir Hossain, who

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One doctor for every 5448 people

By Staff Correspondent

One doctor is available for every 5448 people in the country and the number of registered doctors is 19,632.

This was stated in the Jatiya Sangsad Thursday by the Deputy Leader of the House and Education Minister Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury. He was replying to questions on behalf of the Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf who was absent in the House yesterday.

Prof Chowdhury told independent member Nurul Islam Monty that 369 doctors were employed abroad and that none of these doctors was sent by the government.

In reply to a supplementary question, Prof Chowdhury said that the BNP government under late President Ziaur Rahman had a programme of setting up medical colleges in Khulna, Comilla, Dinajpur, Pabna and Bogra, but the Ershad government postponed it.

The present government would revive the programme and would set up medical colleges in those five places.

New health, drug policy in the offing

A new health policy and Drug policy will be formulated in consultation with all concerned quarters, Education Minister Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury informed the House Thursday, reports UNB.

He was replying to supplementary from Shamsuddin (CPB) on behalf of the Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf who is now on a tour of diarrhoea affected areas.

The government of deposed President HM Ershad had formulated a health policy which was later annulled by the interim government of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Replying to a question from Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali (AL) Chowdhury said that the government was considering to set up separate wards for contagious diseases in the district hospitals and upazila health complexes.

In reply to a supplementary from Rashed Khan Menon (Workers Party) he said three AIDS (Acute Immune Deficiency Syndrome) patients have been detected in the country so far and one of them died recently in a village of

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DU JCD joint convenor expelled

Zakir Hossain Jamal, joint convenor of the Dhaka University unit of the Jattayabadi Chhatra Dal has been expelled from the organisation for misbehaving with the teachers of the university, reports BSS.

A decision to this effect was taken Thursday at an emergency meeting of the central committee of the Dal.

The meeting in a resolution demanded exemplary punishment to what it said the armed cadre of Mujibbadi Chhatra League who allegedly attacked the provost of Zohurul Haq Hall within seven days time. The Dal also warned to go for a bigger movement if the authorities failed to take action to protect the prestige and dignity of the teachers.

Hasina holds talks with Moudud on form of govt

By Moinuddin Naser

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina had 50-minute talks with the acting leader of the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party (JPPP) Moudud Ahmed at the Jatiya Sanghad (Parliament) on Thursday. The talks were held on the form of government at the office of the Leader of Opposition during the recess in the evening.

Awami League sources said, in the process of mobilising support to the form of government, the party has decided to discuss the issue with all political parties. Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azad earlier notified the Parliament Secretariat about the Constitution amendment bill which will be scrutinised

Committee Saturday next. When asked, Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star that Sheikh Hasina invited him to exchange pleasantries over a cup of tea and wanted to know the views of his party on the Constitution amendment bill for changing over to parliamentary form of government.

Moudud Ahmed said he appreciated the merit of the bill but reminded her that Jatiya Party believes in the presidential form of government.

He said, if he wanted to support the bill he would require prior approval of the party. He said he would discuss the matter with other party leaders.

Awami League leaders

Speaker's ruling Private member must submit English text of amendment bill

The Deputy Speaker, of the Jatiya Sangsad, Sheikh Razzak Ali, on Thursday gave a ruling that a private member was required to furnish an English text of an amendment bill of which the Bengali version had already been submitted to the Sangsad Secretariat seeking amendment to certain articles of the Constitution, reports BSS.

The Deputy Speaker, ruling came on the bills submitted by several members to bring about amendments to various clauses of the Bangladesh Constitution.

Recalling the controversy in the House on Wednesday over submission of these bills to the Sangsad Secretariat in Bengali and English languages.

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Workers' interests to be protected: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said on Thursday that the present government would take all measures to protect the interest of the industrial labourers of the country, reports BSS.

Talking to the leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) at her Secretariat office, the Prime Minister said "We have unitedly fought against the autocracy and now we shall initiate the movement of increasing production together."

Begum Zia expressed her belief that only a democratic government could solve the accumulated problems of the nation and said, autocracy could create problems and make them more complicated instead of solving those.

The Prime Minister said the present government, which was elected by the peo-

ple, was not responsible alone for solving the accumulated problems. All have to help the government in ensuring equal distribution of the benefits of production among the working classes of the country, she said.

Begum Zia said the present government believed in partnership as it (the government) was not isolated from the people.

The Prime Minister reminded the labour leaders that economic development of the country could not be achieved without increasing production in the mills and factories. She said measures would be taken as soon as possible to reopen all the factories which were laid off during the autocratic rule. In this regard the Prime Minister informed the labour leaders that Delta Jute Mills

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World Bank programmes discussed

The visiting World Bank delegation led by its division chief for infrastructure development, Maktin Staab, called on LORD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder at his office in Dhaka Thursday, reports BSS.

The delegation discussed with the Minister various aspects of World Bank programmes in Bangladesh with particular emphasis on the implementation of projects in the rural water supply and sanitation sector.

Diarrhoeal death rate is increasing fast and by all indications the disease has made inroads into the capital.

Reports reaching our news room recorded 112 deaths Thursday. The Control Room was providing puzzling figures. It said only 43 people died on Thursday but gave the total figure as 672. On Wednesday the Control Room put the total number of deaths at 560.

Reports of 2381 newly affected on Thursday raised the number of people at risk to

By Staff Correspondent

40,838. But the unofficial figures for the dead and the affected were higher than those of the official figures.

The situation in Patuakhali remained worse with 19 more deaths yesterday followed by four in Jhalakathi and three in Magura.

Until yesterday thirty districts were affected across the country.

In the capital the number of patients now undergoing treatment at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal disease

Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) was three times as high as the normal number.

ICDDR,B's treatment centre in Dhaka has been receiving such unusual number of patients over the last two months, according to a press release.

The ICDDR,B has erected a large tent outside the hospital building to accommodate the increasing number of patients. The centre has also suspended its all normal research activities in the interest of

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Diarrhoeal death rate rising

New child disease claims 30 lives in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Apr 25: A new child disease has broken out in the char and river belt areas of Rangpur claiming 30 lives in the past week.

Over 100 children are also reportedly affected by the disease.

Civil Surgeon of Rangpur confirmed the deaths of eleven



Reazuddin Ahmed

Once again Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury proved himself more effective as a physician than a parliamentarian. His performance in the House during question hour on Thursday reminded one of the adage "habits die hard."

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Gorbachev dodges hardliners' attempt to oust him

MOSCOW, Apr 25: President Mikhail S. Gorbachev told Communist Party leaders Thursday that he was tired of attacks by hardliners and would quit as party chief if they could muster a no-confidence vote, reports AP.

But the party Central Committee voted overwhelmingly to reject any consideration of his resignation, on the recommendation of the top leadership in the Politburo, the independent news agency

Interfax said. The offer to resign was confirmed by three delegates interviewed during a break by The Associated Press. Interfax's report of a vote could not be independently confirmed.

Gorbachev's statement came after Russian Communist Party chief Ivan Polozkov accused him of "abandoning the party," according to one Central Committee member interviewed during a break.

In a tactic he has used before, Gorbachev made what the delegate called a "half-serious" suggestion that he would resign if the Central Committee voted that way. After a break, deputy party chief Vladimir Ivashko announced that the Politburo had rejected the idea and the Central Committee overwhelmingly agreed, Interfax said.

If Gorbachev gave up the Communist Party leadership, he would remain President of

the country. In the past year, he has built the presidency into a powerful independent post, and some reformers say he could retain power in the Kremlin even without the party job.

Thursday's criticism came the day after Gorbachev revealed a new agreement with nine republic chiefs, including his main reformist rival, Russian leader Boris Yeltsin. Gorbachev promised new elections to both the

Parliament and presidency, and the republic leaders joined him in calling for an end to crippling strikes.

The agreement also calls for the rapid signing of a treaty Gorbachev advocates on preserving the union, a new constitution within six months, then new elections. It was signed by the nine republics that want to remain in the Soviet Union: the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Uzbekistan,

Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Tadzhikistan, Kirgizia and Turkmenia.

The six separatist republics that did not sign were Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Moldavia and Armenia.

The agreement did not say if the presidency would be filled in a popular election, leaving that for the new constitution. But Kremlin spokesman said the agreement definitely included elections for the presidency.