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VOL. 1 NO. 99 REGD. NO. DA 781

BAISAKH 16, 1398 BS,

DHAKA TUESDAY APRIL 30, 1991

SHAWAL 15, 1411 HIJRI

10 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 3.00

Inside Today Metropolitan

When Beatles Cut No Ice



Ethnomusicologist Pierre Bois is in Bangladesh to choose some folk singers and musicians to give six concerts in Paris

113 members of '86 Parliament allotted RAJUK plots Page 3

Articles

Serious questions have been raised by experts about conditions which are sought to be imposed on Bangladesh by aid agencies and donor nations. A former Finance Minister takes a look at the scenario and offers his answers to some of the questions



The shadow that Major may not be able to cast off Page 4

Business

Banking Company Bill needs revision : DCCI Page 8

Feature

National Day of the Netherlands Page 6

NEWS BRIEFS

Debt cut for LDC's urged

WASHINGTON, Apr 29: French Finance Minister Pierre Berezgoy on Monday urged more reduction of debt for African countries — and for Latin Americans too, if the United States wants, reports AP.

Saddam awarded highest honour

NICOSIA, Apr 29: The Iraqi government awarded President Saddam Hussein the country's highest honour today in recognition of his historic role, and noble services to Iraq, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. The award is the Rafidain medal, reports Reuters.

Pulin Dey's memorandum

Pulin Dey, a member of the Awami League Presidium from Chittagong and Mustaque Ahmed, MP, met the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at the President's Secretariat Monday and submitted a petition seeking redress of some grievances of the minority community, reports BSS.

Hunger strike

About 50 students of country's different Vocational Training Institutes (VTI) and Technical Training Centres (TTC) began a token hunger strike Monday to press home their 8-point charter of demands.

Severest cyclone hits coasts

By Staff Correspondent



Satellite picture of the severe cyclone taken at 6 pm Monday. —Courtesy Meteorological Office

The severe cyclonic storm formed in the Bay of Bengal crossed the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar coasts near the Meghna estuary at midnight last night leaving a trail of destruction, affecting at least seven million people.

The cyclone with a core of hurricane speed winds of upto 210 kilometres rising to 235 kilometres in gusts and squalls - battered the entire coastline from Satkhira to Teknaf razing houses, uprooting trees, and whipping up storm surges.

Under the peripheral effect of the cyclonic storm the coastal districts in Khulna zone started experiencing a storm accompanied with a downpour from the afternoon. By the evening the coastal districts in Chittagong zone were affected.

The cyclonic storm uprooted electricity and telephone poles disrupting supply of electricity in the entire coastal belt. By midnight telecommunications of the coastal upazilas with respective district headquarters was snapped.

Hamiduzzaman Khan Chowdhury, Director, Bangladesh Meteorological Department told The Daily Star that the cyclone was the severest in 20 years.

He said that although all the

coastal districts were affected the real brunt of the cyclone had been borne by islands like Hatiya, Sandwip, Kutubdia, Moheshkhali, Patuakhali, and the low-lying areas of Chittagong, Feni, Cox's Bazar

its winds was felt within 74 kilometres of its centre.

The cyclonic storm had developed from a depression which was detected on April 24 beyond the southern edge of the Bay of Bengal. Initially it

Mongla were asked to hoist great danger signals 10, 9 and 8 respectively.

Riverine ports in fourteen districts of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Feni, Lakshmipur, Chandpur, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barisal, Barguna, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira were asked to hoist great danger signal number four.

The Cyclone Preparedness Programme CPP started alerting administrations and people of 24 coastal districts from Sunday. Over 20,000 volunteers of the Programme transmitted messages using sirens, microphones and megaphones advising people living in low-lying areas to move to cyclone shelters.

The Director of the Programme Emdad Hossain and volunteers of the Programme succeeded in taking 3.2 lakh coastal people to about 250 cyclone shelters. Some people were also taken to privately owned pucca buildings in upazila headquarters.

He said that the CPP also maintained contact with 26 off-shore islands through recently installed Very High Frequency (VHF) wireless communications. In some areas See Page 10 Col. 2

Worst in 20 years

By Mostafa Kamal Majumder

The severe cyclonic storm packing hurricane-force winds which crossed the coast west of Chittagong at midnight last night was the worst ever in the history of Bangladesh experts say.

The maximum windspeed of the cyclone was over 148 miles per hour 235 (kilometres) compared to the maximum windspeed of 138 miles per hour recorded during the November 12, 1970 cyclone which claimed half a million human lives.

Monday's cyclone, like the one in 1970 hit in the period of a full moon high tide causing the surges whipped up by it to be at their highest.

Cyclones formed in the Bay of Bengal are essentially identical to the Pacific typhoons and the Atlantic hurricanes. But cyclones are more destructive than hurricanes, although hurricanes have higher windspeeds.

According to experts several factors are responsible for this. The landmass here is See Page 10 Col. 5

Highlights

- ★ Seven million people affected
- ★ Maximum windspeed 235 kilometres per hour
- ★ Districts affected 12
- ★ Upazilas affected 24
- ★ Storm surges breach embankments
- ★ Manpura submerged
- ★ Over three lakh given shelter
- ★ Colossal loss of property
- ★ One killed in Galachipa
- ★ Power supply disrupted in coastal belt
- ★ Coastal upazilas cut off from district headquarters as telecommunication snapped.

and Noakhali. The Deputy Director of Meteorological Department Azzul Hussain observed that never before had a cyclone affected the whole, coastal belt of Bangladesh.

The cyclone had a diameter of about 300 kilometres even though the maximum fury of

moved in a westerly direction. Then it moved northwards before becoming stationary over west central Bay and adjoining east central Bay on April 26. The following day it started moving north-northeastwards.

The maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and

AL amendment bill may not be moved during this session

By Moinuddin Naser

The constitution amendment bill notified by Awami League to the Parliament Secretariat is unlikely to be moved during the current session.

Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Private Members' Bills Abdur Rab Chowdhury told The Daily Star that it would take several days more to complete the scrutiny of the draft bill.

He said the content of the draft bill is similar to that of the 1972 constitution. "But after more than 18 years the constitution cannot be a true copy of the 1972 document," Rab Chowdhury said.

He said if Awami League remains rigid on its stand it would be better either to agree or disagree on the draft bill without waiting further.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, who moved the draft, however,

told The Daily Star that the bill would be moved in due time and BNP had no option but to allow them to place the bill before the House 'today or tomorrow'.

Awami League tried to move the bill on the Private Members' Day next Thursday. But due to adjournment of the sitting until Friday next due to cyclone, it would not be possible to table the bill.

Besides, the current session of parliament may be prolonged before the next Private Members' Day.

Parliament members who are keen to negotiate with the BNP on the form of government told The Daily Star that BNP should also be given time to discuss the matter among themselves.

On the other hand, the BNP Parliamentary Party (BNP PP), which was supposed to discuss See Page 10 Col. 6

49 got RAJUK plots under special consideration

By Staff Correspondent

Forty-nine persons got allotment of plots from the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK) at the instructions or recommendations of the higher authorities of the government from 1988 to 1990.

State Minister for Land Zamruddin Sircar told the Jatiya Sangsad this on Monday. In reply to a question of Independent member Nurul Islam Moni, he state minister also disclosed the names of those persons.

When asked whether any residential plot was allotted by DIT or RAJUK in violation of the rules from 1985 to 1990, the state minister replied in See Page 10 Col. 1

Govt accepts amendment to IMF agreement

The Council of Ministers at a meeting held Monday decided to revive the Directorate of Textiles for the effective implementation of the textile policy and expansion and development of the textile sector, reports BSS.

The meeting, held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, also decided to accept in principle the third amendment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement as proposed by the See Page 10 Col. 1

Hasina urges partymen to get ready for relief work

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina Monday called upon her party MPs, leaders and workers and its front organisations to immediately undertake rescue and relief work in the areas hit by cyclonic storm and tidal surge in cooperation with the people See Page 10 Col. 2

JS adjourned for three days to face situation

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) session has been adjourned till 3 pm on May 3 in view of the emergency situation arising out of the cyclonic storm in the coastal areas.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia proposed on Monday evening this adjournment for three days to concentrate all efforts to force the natural calamity. The proposal was supported by the opposition.

Soon after the question-answer hour, the Prime Minister made a statement in the House informing the members of the latest situation about the storm which was approaching the Bangladesh coast. She said the severe cyclone with a core hurricane windspeed upto 210 kilometers was moving fast and was likely to hit the coastal belt sometime Monday night. She mentioned that a tidal surge upto 20 feet was also feared.

The Prime Minister said all necessary steps had been taken to face the emergency and people were alerted

against the storm by radio and television immediately after the indication of the storm was received. The local administrations in the coastal districts are also advising the people over microphones to take shelter at safer places, she added.

Begum Zia told the House that Bangladesh Navy and other government departments, Red Crescent and voluntary organisations had been kept on alert to face possible disaster. She informed that a control room was set up at the relief Ministry to monitor the situation round the clock.

After the statement, the Prime Minister proposed adjournment of the House for three days and urged all the members of parliament to be ready to rush to the affected areas.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad thanked the Leader of the House for their statement and proposal. He mentioned that after the cyclone of 1970, the people unitedly faced the disaster under the leadership of

Bangabandhu and stood by the side of the affected people. He said the members of parliament were unanimous to combat the disaster.

When the break for Asar prayer was over, munajat was offered in the House seeking blessings of Almighty Allah to tide over the natural disaster. Tofael Ahmed of Awami League then took the floor and requested for smooth operation of relief work. "We want to carry on relief operations jointly", he urged.

Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas adjourned the House at 5-45 pm.

Steps to face cyclone ordered

The Council of Ministers in a meeting held Monday directed the authorities concerned to take all cautionary and other measures immediately in the areas likely to be hit by the severe cyclonic storm, reports BSS.

Anwar Hossain detained

Former minister and Jatiya Party MP Anwar Hossain Manju was arrested under the Special Powers Act and sent to Dhaka Central Jail last night, reports UNB.

Police said Manju was arrested from near parliament building at around 8 pm and served with an order of detention for 120 days under the Special Powers Act of 1974.

Jail sources said the former Communications Minister in the fallen Ershad government was taken inside the central jail at 10-20 pm. He was given division.

Manju who took oath as MP on Saturday was on the wanted list and asked to surrender to the Dhaka Jail authorities. But he evaded the government order and went into deep hiding.

His dramatic entry into heavily guarded parliament building and taking oath evoked criticism in and outside parliament.

Opposition members in parliament Sunday expressed their surprise how a wanted man could enter the House

Detention of Hasan, Mushrraf, Zeenat void

The detention of former Minister Maj Gen (Rtd) Mahmud Hasan, former Industries Secretary Musharraf Hussain and his wife Zeenat Musharraf was Monday declared void by the High Court, reports UNB.

A division bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Jallil and Justice Badruzzaman ruled that the detention had been without any lawful authority.

The government was directed to set free the detenus immediately if they are not connected with any other case.

Deputy Attorney General Mudasser who appeared in the court on behalf of the state said there were specific cases against detenus Mahmud Hasan, Mosharrarf Hussain and Zeenat Musharrarf and hence there is no chance of their immediate release.

Jamuna Bridge Project : Tk 32.48 cr spent so far

Taka 259.29 crore collected as levy

Star Economic Report

The government collected an amount of Taka 259.29 crore by way of surcharge and levy on account of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project between October 1985 and April 22, 1991.

Expenditure so far on the Project, made out of such collections by various government agencies, has totalled Taka 32.48 crore.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed stated this in the Jatiya Sangsad on Monday in a written reply to a question from M. Abdur Rahim (Dinajpur-3).

Answering another question from Md. Abdus Sobhan (Pabna-5), the Minister said that the government made an allocation of Taka 9.79 crore in local currency between 1984-85 and 1990-91 under the

Annual Development Programme (ADP) for conducting feasibility studies on the project.

Besides, an amount of Taka 76.24 crore was allocated for the main project in two fiscal years, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

The site for the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project has been selected nine kilometres south of Strajganj, he said.

He added that the east end of the bridge would be at village Duria under Durgapur union in Kalihati upazila of Tangail district while the west end would be at village Barashimulla Panchasona under Syedabad union in sadar upazila under Strajganj district.

Answering a question from Nurul Islam Moni (Barguna-2) Oli Ahmed said that construction See Page 10 Col. 8

US asks Kurdish guerillas to stop blocking refugees

ZAKHO, Apr 29 : Allied officers who directed Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from northern Iraq turned to the Kurdish guerillas on Monday and told them to allow the return of refugees from the mountains, reports AP.

US-led allied forces built a tent camp in this northern city

under a plan to grant safe haven to returning Kurds after they fled by the hundreds of thousands during a Kurdish uprising.

The rebellion followed Saddam's defeat in the Gulf War and calls by Western leaders for the overthrow of the Iraqi President.


Some two million refugees fled northern Iraq as Saddam crushed the rebellion, including about 800,000 who took refuge in the rugged mountain region along Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran.

Following the exodus, the allies established the camps in a gesture to draw the refugees

back to Iraq. Military leaders said they expected a mass return to begin in about two days.

The United Nations said it would take its first step Tuesday toward assuming control of the allies camps.

US Army Maj. Gen. Jay M. Garner hosted a meeting at his See Page 10 Col. 7



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