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NEWS BRIEFS

Industrial, export, tea policies approved

The council of ministers at a meeting held Saturday night at Bangabhaban with Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in the chair approved the industrial policy 1991, the export policy 1991-93 and the tea policy 1991-93, reports BSS.

AL extended meet Aug 2

An extended meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee will be held at 10 am on August 2 (Friday) at the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, says a press release, reports UNB.

Indian copter crash: 4 killed

JAMMU (India), July 27: An Indian Air Force helicopter crashed in Kashmir, killing four officers, defence authorities said in the state's winter capital here today. The crash took place near the town of Udhampur Friday evening, reports AFP.

Wage Board in India demanded

BHOPAL, July 27: The National Federation of Newspaper Employees (NFNE), an all India organisation of non-journalists and journalists, today demanded setting up of a fresh wage board by the union government, reports PTI.

BNP, Opposition groups reach consensus

Amendment Bills cleared, to be placed in JS today

By Mustafa Kamal Majumder

The ruling BNP and the Opposition in the Parliament Saturday ironed out their differences and reached consensus on the Constitution Amendment Bills for switch-over to parliamentary form of government.

The 15 member Parliamentary Select Committee drawn from both the ruling party and the opposition unanimously adopted a report giving final shapes to the seven Constitution Amendment Bills including the 11th and the 12th tabled by the BNP.

The report will be submitted to the Parliament today, an announcement from the Parliament Secretariat said.

The report proposes to incorporate with the Treasury Bench bills certain provisions of the Private Member's Bills of Abdus Samad Azad and Rashed Khan Menon.

The consensus fulfils the November 18 joint declaration of the eight, seven and five party alliances for establishing parliamentary form of government on which united movement was launched.

The bills are expected to be

passed by the House after three to four days of extensive discussion. After the passage by a two-third majority, the bills will be forwarded to the Acting President. The Acting President will, within seven days, refer the 12th Amendment Bill to a referendum.

No referendum will be required for the 11th Amendment Bill which seeks to validate the appointment of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as Vice-President, and all his actions as Acting President. Meanwhile, the Referendum Bill introduced by the ruling party will be passed before the prorogation of the Parliament. A referendum will be organised on the basis of this law.

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz who is the Chairman of the



Saidabad bus terminal (above) wore an almost deserted look during the first day of the indefinite transport strike Saturday while (below) a group of passengers rides a rickshaw van to their destinations. — Star photo

Anomalies in cadre services to go : PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has said her government would take all possible steps to bring to an end the existing anomalies in different cadre services for ensuring an effective and efficient service system, reports BSS.

As the democratically elected government we want to start a new era in the country's cadre service by solving their genuine problems, Begum Zia told a delegation of BCS Coordination Committee (23 cadres) when they met her at the Secretariat office on Saturday morning.

The delegation was led by Mohammad Abu Hena, president of the committee.

Begum Khaleda Zia said the overall development of the country could only be attained with the sincere and combined efforts of all including the government and the people involved with it.

PM to be briefed on trade, industry problems

Star Economic Report

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the apex trade promotion body, decided on Saturday to meet Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to apprise her of the overall problems in trade and industry and the national economy.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of the executive committee of the federation, leading members of trade and industry, leaders of different chamber bodies and trade associations and some directors of banks at the Federation Bhavan, FBCCI President Al-haj Md Akram Hossain was in the chair.

The federation will suggest some remedial measures to help overcome the situation.

The representatives of See Page 10 Col. 2

Low over Bay: Squalls in Ctg, Mongla likely

The low over north-west Bay off Orissa and West Bengal coast has become well marked and is likely to intensify further and move towards north-westerly direction, reports UNB.

Due to steep pressure gradient over north Bay, squally weather is likely to affect maritime ports of Mongla, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. Met office said on Saturday night.

These maritime ports have been advised to keep hoisted Local Cautionary Signal Number 3. All fishing boats and travelers over north Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution.

Lawyers refuse to defend Ershad as they feel insecure

By Staff Correspondent

Deposed President HM Ershad yesterday relieved all the lawyers defending him after they refused to plead his case.

The defence lawyers in a letter submitted by Yousuf Hossain Humayun to the Special Judge Mohammad Ali Khan on behalf of Ershad stated: "I am informed by my lawyers that they are suffering from a sense of insecurity after various news items coming out in the daily newspapers on the unprofessional activities of some of the appointed lawyers and thus they are reluctant to act as my lawyers in the interest of their honour and professional dignity."

Therefore, he prayed that the defence lawyers be relieved of their duties.

He further said, "I hereby withdraw my Okalatnama (power) for all the appointed Advocates. I shall try to give a fresh list of lawyers after consulting my relatives. So I pray for seven days time and for this act of kindness I shall ever pray."

Judge Mohammad Ali Khan then sought the opinion of Chief Defence Counsel Sirajul Haque. Sirajul Haque agreeing to the contents of Ershad's

prayer said "We are apprehensive to some activities of some lawyers."

In an oblique reference to Advocate Jinnat Ali who was taken into custody last week for attempting to carry letters from Ershad, secretly, Advocate Sirajul Haque said, "We are feeling insecure. Our lives and honour are at stake. The reports being published in different newspapers about the

unethical behaviour of some of the lawyers are touching our professional dignity and honour."

"In order to uphold our professional dignity and honour we have decided to withdraw from the case," he added.

Advocate Sirajul Haque and the same set of lawyers had earlier defended Ershad in the arms case but lost, earning the former President 10 years rigorous imprisonment on June 12.

After hearing Ershad's petition Special Judge Mohammad Ali Khan allowed three days time and set July 30 for the next hearing.

Before the court resumed hearing at 10.30 am Saturday in front of the Central Jail, Advocate Haque had a meeting with Ershad in the rest room of the court.

He returned to the courtroom saying, "We can't be responsible for his misdeeds, I shall not conduct the case anymore."

Defence Counsel Sirajul Haque was assisted by Barrister Kazi Shahdat Hossain, Advocate Yousuf See Page 10 Col. 6

Stranded Pakistanis' second Long March on August 14

Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC), at their general meeting on Friday, decided to go for second Long March programme on August 14, reports UNB.

Stranded Pakistanis from all branches attended the meeting.

They urged the Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka to "utilise the opportunity and avoid disastrous consequences" of the march, according to a SPGRC press release.

SPGRC will also hold a rally in Chittagong on July 30 to press home their demand.

30 killed in fierce fighting between Croatians, Serbians

SISAK (Yugoslavia), July 27: Thirty people have been killed since fierce fighting broke out Friday between Croatian forces and Serbian nationalists in eastern Croatia, the local police chief said here today, reports AFP.

In the Adriatic coastal resort of Dubrovnik meanwhile, Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic said that he was calling a "mini peace conference" Tuesday in Belgrade involving the federal government and the six republican leaders.

He hoped the European Community (EC) "troika" which brokered the earlier Brioni agreement that ended hostilities in the other break-

away republic of Slovenia would also attend.

The clashes in the Glina, Kostajnica and Kozobrod regions continued despite a government ceasefire announcement late Friday and its decision to order the Serbian dominated army back to its barracks.

Sisak police chief Djuro Brodarac told an AFP reporter that 13 of the dead were Croatian police officers and 17 were civilians.

Most of the local people killed were in the Croat-dominated villages of Jukinac, near Glina some 60 kilometres (37 miles) south of Zagreb, and in

Struga and Kuljani, near Dvor na Uni, some 30 kilometres (18 miles) southeast of Glina.

Five police officers were killed today in villages around Glina, Zagreb Radio reported, while the Tanjug news agency that provisional Serbian casualty figures for the two days of fighting showed four dead and 20 injured, including five seriously.

The death toll was likely to rise, said the news agency, as emergency health teams visiting the village of Struga and its environs reported numerous dead and injured, mainly civilians, outside homes, on the road and in the undergrowth.

Indefinite transport strike cripples city life

By Staff Correspondent

City dwellers faced immense sufferings Saturday as buses, minibuses and tempos stayed off the roads because of an indefinite strike by the transport workers.

Thousands of passengers were stranded in the blazing heat of the day at different bus stations in the capital.

The first day of the transport strike passed off peacefully barring some stray incidents.

The strike was called by the Transport Owners and Workers Action Committee in protest against the Saidabad clashes on Friday and to realise the five-point demands.

A group of BNP-backed workers had allegedly attacked and occupied the terminal Friday chasing out opponent groups. The clash left at least 40 supporters of both groups injured.

Action Committee sources said that the strike will be observed only in Dhaka till Monday and from Tuesday it will be observed nationwide.

Besides private vehicles, rickshaws and baby taxis were the only means of transportation during the strike.

The rickshaw pullers and the baby taxi drivers charged the passengers unreasonably

high fares. The baby taxi fares were almost double the normal on the day.

Many office-goers were seen waiting by the roadside in the morning and after office hours for transports.

No inter-city and inter-district buses, minibuses and trucks left Saidabad, Mohakhali, Gabtoli and Fulbaria terminals while the movement

of auto tempos was also subjected to blockades.

However, some tempos operated in the afternoon.

During the strike, some agitated transport workers set a minibus ablaze at Tikatuli and damaged some other vehicles including two minibuses in different parts of the city. However, the leaders of striking workers denied the responsibility of the incidents saying that the group that forcibly occupied the Saidabad terminal was involved in the incidents.

Organising Secretary of the Action Committee Osman Ali told The Daily Star that Friday's incident had occurred as the ruling party tried to establish its domination of the terminal with the help of one Belayet, who was expelled from Transport Workers Union earlier.

"Our organisation is a non-political one but most of the ruling parties have tried to dominate us on different pleas which generated trouble in the country," he said adding, "We only struggle for our demands and we do not serve any political party".

Meanwhile, the Action Committee leaders held a meeting with the Communica-

Bus owners, workers threaten strike all over country Tuesday

By Staff Correspondent

The Road Transport Owners-Workers Action Committee on Saturday called for continuing the transport strike till the demands placed by the Committee are met.

Md Ashraf Khan and Abdur Rashid, Joint Convenors of the Action Committee in a statement congratulated the transport workers and owners for observing the strike throughout Dhaka city peacefully. They demanded arrest and punishment of those who are responsible for the attack at Saidabad

See Page 10 Col. 6

Dawn-to-dusk hartal observed in Chittagong

From Our Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 27: A complete dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in the port city today. Chittagong city unit of Awami League gave the hartal call to press home its 32-point demand for development of Chittagong. The 32-point demand includes declaring Chittagong as disaster area, exemption from all arrears taxes on all civic amenities and utility services, construction of permanent embankment from Kumira to Patenga, developing Chittagong airport into an international one, construction of bus and truck terminals, development of Patenga beach for attracting tourists expansion of railway tracks from Dohazari to Teknaf via Cox's Bazar and exemplary punishment to those responsible for leakage of Comilla Board SSC examination question papers.

JCD leader stabbed : students leaving RU halls attacked

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 27: The law and order situation in the divisional headquarters improved slightly following a consensus between political leaders and the district administration on cracking further clashes between rival student groups.

However, a leader of the pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was stabbed and several students of the Rajshahi University were wounded in attacks by their rivals Friday night.

Police recovered a pipe-gun and three cocktails from the Lt Selim Hall of the Institute of Technology (BIT) today (Saturday) noon.

The gunbattles originating at the BIT later sparked off clashes between the two groups at the Rajshahi University and other areas of the city.

In the continued armed battles, over 75 students were injured and at least 125 hall rooms of the RU were set ablaze. Over 500 shots were fired by both the groups during the fight.

Hospital sources said that a JCD leader Habbibur Rahman Habib was stabbed at the Kumarpara bus stand Friday night.

He was admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). The attackers could not be identified.

Several students belonging to Chhatra Oikya Parishad in the city where fierce gunbattles took place between the activists of the JCD and the Chhatra Oikya Parishad in the last four days.

See Page 10 Col. 2

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