

## Mostafiz to talk BCCI fate with Nahyan Regularisation of Bangladeshi workers in Iran discussed

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani expressed his country's resolve to cooperate with Bangladesh in bilateral as well as international matters for developing relations with countries of the Islamic Ummah, reports UNB.

Rafsanjani voiced his government's policy when Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman called on the Iranian President in Tehran on Sunday, the second day of his visit to Iran.

During his meeting with President Rafsanjani, the Foreign Minister conveyed greetings of Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, according to a message received in Dhaka on Monday.

Mostafiz also expressed Bangladesh government's happiness over the steady development of bilateral relations in all fields, including political, economic, cultural and technical cooperation.

The Foreign Minister had fruitful talks in the afternoon with Iranian Labour Minister Hossain Kamali on matters relating to regularisation of status of some 10,000 Bangladeshis now working in that country.

They also exchanged views on finding ways to remove the difficulties of expatriate Bangladeshis workers.

The Iranian minister assured that all possible efforts would be made to alleviate their problems.

The Foreign Minister also discussed the possibility of providing more skilled and semi-skilled personnel from Bangladesh in near future to

assist in reconstruction efforts of Iran.

The Iranian Labour Minister showed interest in the proposal and said the matter would receive positive consideration of his government.

Earlier, Mostafiz visited Beheste Zehra to lay wreath and offer fataha at the mazar of Imam Khomeini.

AFP adds from Abu Dhabi: Rahman arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) today for talks expected to include the fate of operations in Bangladesh of the troubled Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).

A spokesman at the Bangladesh Embassy in Abu Dhabi said the minister was likely to meet UAE President and ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan and Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

## Brindaban College closed sine die

HABIGANJ, Aug 12: Brindaban Government College was today declared closed sine die following an armed attack on its hostel Sunday night, reports UNB.

College sources said the Academic Council decided the campus shutdown in an emergency meeting with Principal Murtaza Mian in the chair at 11 am.

Witnesses said an armed group of youngmen attacked the college hostel midnight last night and damaged 14 out of the 20 rooms. None was hurt, as all residents fled shortly before the attack.



Government employees, who are continuing their movement to press for the announcement of the Pay Commission report and change in office timings, held a rally inside the Secretariat on Monday.

## Kaifu links aid to human rights record

BEIJING, Aug 2: Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, on a ground breaking visit to China, said today that Tokyo examined arms sales by developing countries and their human rights record when deciding on how to dispense foreign aid.

Kaifu was the first head of government of a major industrialised nation to visit China since the army cracked down on dissent on Beijing in 1989 with heavy loss of life.

It was significant that Kaifu explicitly outlined his aid poli-

icy while in China, whose record of arms sales to the Third World has provoked anger in the United States and concern in other Western nations, Japanese sources travelling with him said.

"We seek the understanding of all aid recipients of our four-point principle on aid," Kaifu, whose country is one of China's main aid donors, told a news conference in Beijing.

"Our basic philosophy... is that a nation should not waste its own human, natural and other resources on too much military spending," Kaifu said. Japan's four-point principle is to examine a country's arms trade, military spending, development of weapons of mass destruction and human rights when deciding aid.

In talks with Kaifu earlier today, China's Communist Party chief, Jiang Zemin, said he understood the basic philosophy behind Japan's arms control proposals, Japanese officials said.

## Water transport

With the price of diesel doubled and fares unchanged, owners of vessels told reporters at a press conference at Hotel Purbani in the city Monday.

"Fuel prices in the world market are now below the pre-Gulf-war level. However, the prices in Bangladesh are still at the war time level," a statement read out at the press conference said.

"Despite repeated appeals to the government, prices of fuel-oil were not reduced," the statement presented by Group Captain (ret'd) Shamsul Haq said.

Representatives of six associations of the owners of launches, cargo, coasters and trawlers attended the conference and replied to reporters' queries.

Abdus Sattar Khan of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport (passengers) Association, KMM Rahman of Launch Owners' Association, Gias Ahmed of Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association, Fakir Mahbul Alam of Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association, Abu Bakar Siddique of Coaster Owners Association of Bangladesh and Nurul Haq of Bangladesh Jute and Jute Goods Water Transportation Association were present.

Protapuddin, a workers representative attended the conference on behalf of the Water Transport Workers Association.

About 20,000 water transport workers and their dependents would face an economic crisis and a large section of the country's population using water transports would be seriously affected when the vessels went out of operation, association leaders informed.

## BCCI branches

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the action taken against the bank in different countries of the world.

Earlier the government designated the Agram Bank to operate letters of credit (LCs) of BCCI clients to facilitate exports and imports.

In another decision, the government allowed all categories of the BCCI depositors in Bangladesh to draw a maximum amount of Tk 50,000 as interest-free advance against their deposits.

Such advances would be the first lien on the BCCI's statutory deposits with the Bangladesh Bank as the central bank. This will involve an amount of Taka 70 to 80 crore which will be adjusted against the deposits of individual account-holders with the BCCI.

BCCI's cash deposits and other statutory reserves in the form of bonds and securities stood at about 28 per cent of its total deposits of about Taka 500 crore in Bangladesh as on July 4. The normal requirement for such reserves of any operational bank is 23 per cent of the total deposits.

There were 29,700 clients of BCCI in the country at the time of its temporary suspension of transactions. Of them, 25,000 were local Bangladeshi clients.

## Treat HIV infected with love

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In the United States where the incidence of the disease is the highest, experts have even suggested that people might get infected with HIV from dentists not using sterile surgical equipment for each patient.

If an HIV positive person is treated as a social outcast, he or she will just suppress the information, thus creating more risks of spreading the virus.

Such patients should be persuaded to burn the syringes they have to use any time they examine their blood.

Such persons should be persuaded not to have sex. In some countries governments openly advocate the use of condoms to avoid the risk of getting infected with HIV, according to information received from around the world.

In Bangladesh one aids patient has so far died, and three HIV cases have been identified. In all the instances except one they contacted the disease from abroad.

Another HIV positive case, the first in Bangladesh, was a foreigner arrested in connection with smuggling. He was released last year.

The aids patient who died in a rural area of Bangladesh used to serve a commercial liner. He was deported to

Bangladesh as he was having repeated bouts of diarrhoea and was diagnosed as a full-blown aids case a couple of years ago.

The authorities concerned have found that the wife of the aids patient has also become a HIV positive case.

Two other HIV cases have come from Dubai — both of them deported following detection of the presence of the virus in their bodies through routine medical check-up. Both of them are in their twenties. The first one detected last year was not married. The second is only recently married.

It is gathered that after being deported from Dubai recently the second case was referred to AIDS experts who advised him to go to his village home and bring his wife to Dhaka for a check up. They also persuaded him not to have sex with his wife without safeguards and to see to it that needles and syringes used by him were not used by others.

The experts said they were not sure whether the AIDS scare now being reported from Sylhet is due to the same HIV case.

They say it is a pity that police have been sent to haul up the patient. 'By doing so we will only encourage him to hide his identity and cause havoc in the society', they said.

## Khaleda

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tivities at the grass-roots level to help realise the cherished dream of national self-reliance.

Begum Zia said Shaheed President Zia introduced multi-party democracy. 'We have established parliamentary democracy following his path to improve the lot of the common man who had struggled for long,' she said.

Terming terrorism as one of the major hindrances in the way of growth of democracy, Begum Zia called upon all parties to take measures against this.

She said, 'We want to protect and nourish democracy which we have achieved through a hard struggle and bloodshed.'

The Prime Minister said the defeated accomplices of autocracy were resorting to destructive activities to foil the democratic process of the country. She said, we have to resist the planned violent activities to ensure a bright future for our posterity.

The Prime Minister stressed the need for bringing back congenial atmosphere in educational institutions and sought cooperation of all parties in this regard.

## Memo to Speaker

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ing through the VIP Road, was obstructed by police near Sheraton Hotel.

But the students broke the police cordon and reached the Bangla Motor crossing where they held a brief rally. The rally was addressed by Zenabul Islam Babu and Ahmed Shaheen Jewel.

The representatives of the action committee were however allowed by the police to go to the Sangsad Bhaban where they handed over the memorandum to the Speaker.

In the memorandum they held some student organisations and their parent organisations responsible for campus violence and demanded effective measures for an end to the situation.

They also blamed the government for the existing situation in the educational institutions.

The committee will hold a sit-in tomorrow (Wednesday) in front of the office of the Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor to press for immediate reopening of the university and its residential halls.

## AL leaders urge BNP to help repeal Indemnity Act

Leaders of Bangladesh Awami League and Krishak League Monday made a strong appeal to the ruling party to help pass the Bill placed in Parliament for repeal of Indemnity Ordinance of 1975 paving the way for trial of the killers of Bangabandhu, reports BSS.

They urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to demonstrate the spirit of unity and consensus in Parliament as shown by Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina during the passage of the 11th and 12th Constitution Amendment Bills, to glorify the transition to democracy through passage of this Indemnity Ordinance (repeal) Bill placed by Oppositions' Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim.

The leaders were addressing a discussion arranged by Bangladesh Krishak League at the Bangabandhu Avenue as part of the Jatiya Shok Dibas marking the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his family members and others on August 15, 1975.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad was present in the meeting which was presided over by Krishak League President Rahmal Ali MP.

Awami League presidium member Mohammad Kamruzzaman said Leader of the Opposition and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, staying on the Opposition Bench, had set a rare instance by helping the passage of the 11th and 12th Constitution Amendment Bills with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

He urged the Prime Minister to show the same gesture with Sheikh Hasina to repeal the Indemnity Ordinance and create another example of unity and consensus for the greater national cause.

He said repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance was the most necessary task now for giving democracy an institutional shape which was achieved after great sacrifices.

However the parliamentary Select Committee dropped the issue from the bill and decided to hold the president election under a separate law which could be changed from time to time and would not be a part of the Constitution.

The BNP in its Fifth Schedule proposed an open election of the president conducted by the Speaker.

But the Awami League vehemently opposed it saying that it would be an encroachment on the jurisdiction of the Election Commission. It demanded the election of the president through a secret ballot conducted by the Election Commission.

If the election is held through a secret ballot the members of Parliament will be able to exercise their rights secretly and will be able to vote even against their respective party nominee.

But in an open election the party MPs will have to obey the Whips of their respective parties.

The bill on the president election which may be introduced today may not be passed today as the Treasury Bench and Opposition may sit again to scrutinise it.

The Chief Whip of the BNP Khandaker Delwar Hossain said the BNP would introduce the bill on Tuesday but that the House would take a decision on whether it would be passed.

An Awami League source said that it would oppose the bill if the BNP proposed an open president election as it mentioned in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution Amendment Bill.

Another source said that the bill might be sent to the Select Committee again to narrow down the differences between the Treasury and Opposition benches.

## The Midnight File

### Coup plot: Mozambique interior minister detained

MAPUTO, Mozambique, Aug 12: Interior Minister Manuel Antonio has been detained on suspicion of involvement in a coup plot that was uncovered in June, Radio Mozambique reported on Monday, reports AP.

### 15 hurt in Jammu blast

JAMMU, Aug 12: A bomb concealed in a fruit vendor's cart exploded in a crowded market Monday, injuring at least 15 people. The explosion occurred in the heart of the city of Jammu, the summer capital of the strife-torn Jammu Kashmir state. Soon after the blast Monday evening, mobs of angry young men pelted stones at police personnel near the site of the explosion. Divisional Commissioner A Saharsanaman said, reports AP.

### Kurdish talks bog down

BAGHDAD, Aug 12: Four months after Kurdish leaders first voiced optimism for reaching an agreement with Baghdad on autonomy for their mountainous region, negotiation have bogged down and there are suspicions Saddam Hussein may be stalling. Kurdish leaders Massoud Barzani and Jalala Talabani have little option but to seek a compromise with Saddam since they cannot be sure any future Iraqi leadership would grant the country's 3.5 million Kurds autonomy. —AP.

## India may have diplomatic ties with Israel soon

NEW DELHI, Aug 12: India is moving closer to establishing diplomatic ties with Israel, a senior Foreign Ministry official said Monday.

"Our relations (with Israel) have improved considerably. We are evidently on the right course. It flows naturally that formal ties look imminent — say, any time from now to within a year," the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

India officially recognises Israel but has refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state, accusing it of occupying Arab territory.

Talks between visiting Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Relations, Boutros Ghali, and Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Eduardo Faleiro, would touch on Indo-Israeli relations, the official said.

Ghali, in India to canvass

support for his candidacy to replace Javier Perez de Cuellar as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations, was expected to meet Faleiro for talks later today, the official said.

Egypt and Israel established diplomatic ties in a historic peace treaty in 1978.

India's relations with Israel have been improving steadily despite apparent differences, the officials said.

Israel maintains a trade office in Bombay, India's financial hub, that also handles some consular business.

"Our countries have established flourishing trade ties and, recently, Israeli tourists were given permission to come freely to India," the official said.

However, "diplomatic ties with Israel will not be at the expense of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)," whose representative office in New Delhi has been upgraded to embassy status, he said.

## BADC chairman

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the agitated employees demanded immediate halt to mass termination.

The employees withdrew the gherao when Agriculture Secretary KM Rabhani assured them that their jobs would not be affected and the government would look into the matter with sympathy. The secretary came to the office at night though the gherao started in the morning.

The employees became agitated following a report published in a daily on Sunday saying that 10 thousand employees of the corporation would be declared surplus.

They went to the chairman at around 9.30 am and demanded a clarification from him.

The chairman, Dr Mirza Abdul Jalil, told the employees that he had sent a message to the Agriculture Minister and the secretary seeking the exact position of the government. But, he said, no reply was sent. But his reply failed to pacify the agitated employees and they immediately gheraoed the chairman and the directors in the office.

Later, at around 3 pm, leaders of Sramik-Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP) came to the BADC office and entered negotiations with the chairman. The chairman again told them of his position. However, the employees were not satisfied and continued the gherao programme. They said they would not lift the gherao unless the government assured them of their job security.

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## White paper

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distressed people, she alleged.

The Awami League leader said agricultural rehabilitation programme would have to be taken in the cyclone ravaged areas on a priority basis by providing agro-equipment and loans on easy terms.

She said it was a matter of regret that no measures have been taken so far for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the damaged educational institutions, religious establishments, roads, bridges and cross-dams.

She demanded that arrears rent, tax, loan, power tariff, WASA bill and municipal tax be written off in the affected areas.

## AIDS

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Azizur Rahman said another Bangladeshi was deported from the same country for carrying the dreadful virus, some years ago. The government should take adequate precaution to protect thousands of other Bangladeshis living in that country from being infected with the virus, he said.

Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas, who was presiding over the sitting said that AIDS was a curse, and the entire world has panicked at the spread of the disease. Incidence of the disease was more in developed countries, he added.

As the Health Minister was not present in the House to make a statement at the time the Speaker hoped that the matter would be adequately looked in to by the government.

Referendum

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About the procedure, the Chief Election Commissioner said for 'Yes' vote that to ask the Acting President to give his assent to the 12th Amendment Bill, one has to stamp on the ballot paper, having the symbol of the parliament building. For 'No' vote, the stamp has to be put on the cross symbol. He said the Election Commission is soon going to take up a detailed campaign on the procedure of voting in the referendum.

The Chief Election Commissioner said the importance of the referendum is very great as it will determine the form of government.

Justice Rouf said this referendum is going to settle the form of government which like the parliamentary elections of February 27 will be a milestone in the nation's march toward democracy. This is for the first time that a referendum under the Constitution is going to be held on the question of amendments to the Constitution for which referendum law 1991 was passed by the Sangsad, the Chief Election Commissioner said.

The Chief Election Commissioner called upon the countrymen to take part in the referendum spontaneously and in a disciplined manner like the February 27 election which had been hailed both at home and abroad as an example of free, fair and neutral poll. He expressed his firm belief that the people who had set an example to uphold democratic tradition will not be lagging behind this time also.

Justice Rouf called upon all parties and workers, irrespective of political affiliations, and people at large to extend all-out assistance and cooperation in making the referendum a success. He prayed that the merciful Allah would help us in this great task.

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