

Suu Kyi never to seek exile, says husband

TOKYO, Nov 23: Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest in Rangoon, will never seek exile overseas as suggested by the country's military regime, her husband said in an interview published today, reports AFP.

Michael Aris, a guest professor at Harvard University, also told Japan's Jiji Press on Friday that he and the couple's two sons, Alexander and Kim, would represent Aung San Suu Kyi to accept the Nobel Peace prize for her.

The ceremony will take place in Oslo on December 10. Alexander, 18, will make a speech at the ceremony on behalf of the resistance leader, who has been under house arrest since July 1989, her British tibetologist husband was quoted as saying.

The couple were married in 1972 when Aung San Suu Kyi was living abroad after studying at Oxford University in Britain.

Aris said in the interview in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that he had been unable to communicate with his wife by any means since July last year.

But he added that Aung San Suu Kyi had been so concerned with the Burmese people's struggle for freedom that she would in no way agree to be banished abroad forever as suggested by the military regime in Rangoon, according to Jiji.

Aris said he had repeatedly tried to obtain a visa to enter Burma but had been turned down on the ground that the time was inopportune.

Ershad's trial I don't like Martial Law: defence witness

A defence witness and a former member of Parliament from Maulvibazar, Ebadur Rahman Choudhury, told the special tribunal Saturday that he had been in politics for long and that he did not like martial law, reports BSS.

Choudhury was answering questions asked by Attorney General Aminul Haq in the court where deposed President Hussain Muhammad Ershad is facing trial for amassing wealth beyond his known source of income.

The eight witness said "I don't know" when the Attorney General asked if Tikka Khan queried whether the then Lt Col Ershad was looking after 7th battalion in difficult conditions and his army required in Rajshahi Sector in 1971 "proved such."

The Attorney General asked, in an abnormal day on 13.10.90, how could the subscription money be given to the Chairman of the Jatiya Party Ershad. He said it was true that the money was handed over to chief of party on that day in the evening.

Choudhury said he had joined JSD in 1972 to continue till 1976 and did not do any politics between 1976 and 1984. In 1984 he was chosen as a delegate to the United Nations.

Answering a question from Advocate Yussuf Hossain Humayun, he said in 1984 he joined "Janadal" and finally joined Jatiya Party in response to the call Ershad's commitment that rural development was the development of the country.

Choudhury heard it from the members of the JP central committee that there was a decision to buy the Dhanmondi building where the party office was housed. The decision was taken by the committee with party chief Ershad in the chair.

He said the members of the last Parliament was to give Taka 500, state ministers Taka 750 and ministers Taka 1,000 each. He collected Taka 11,500 from January '89 to November '90 and handed it over to the party chairman.

In July, 1990, Choudhury said a decision was taken to collect subscriptions. He estimated that about Taka two crore might have been necessary to buy a house. Fund was handed over to Office Secretary Tajul Islam Choudhury.

Answering a question from Humayun he said money so collected by Tajul Islam Choudhury were handed over to the party chairman and former President Ershad. Funds were collected from the members of the Parliament, state ministers and ministers.

Ebadur Rahman Choudhury said, on December 6, 1990, Ershad handed over power, in reply to a question by Advocate Yussuf Humayun.

Later Choudhury said that he heard from acting chairman of the party that there were attempts to get the money back which was seized from the Sena Bhaban where Ershad was staying, adding that he heard it from Mizanur Rahman Choudhury and A B M Shahjahan, the acting chairman and acting secretary general respectively.

Asked if he heard of any illegal method to recover the money, he said it was so, which was seized from Sena Bhaban.

The court rose for the day to reassemble tomorrow (Monday).

Besides the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General Hasan Arif, Amirul Kabir Choudhury and Mohammad Azad appeared for the prosecution.

Vehicle owners call strike in northern dists

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 23: Vehicle owners today called for a nonstop transport strike in 16 northern districts from November 29 demanding action against rowdy workers, reports UNB.

The strike call was given by the North Bengal Transport Owners Association after a meeting held here with representatives from the 16 district transport owners' associations, meeting sources said.

President of the Sirajganj district unit Alaf Hossain was in the chair.

All modes of transport, excepting rickshaws, will be off the road during the proposed strike, which snap road communication of the region with other parts of the country.

The transport owners' four-point demand include measures against the transport workers of Rangpur reportedly involved in assaulting an owner-leader and ransacking the district transport owners' association office recently and halt to illegal toll collection in terminals all over the country.

They will, however, submit memorandum containing the demands to respective district administration on Nov 28 before embarking on the strike, the owners said.

Meanwhile, transport workers have called for an indefinite strike across the country from December 1 demanding appointment letters from their owners.

Steps against unrest in garments industry urged

By Staff Correspondent

Presidents of seven organisations in a joint statement Saturday urged the government as well as the political parties to take effective measures against the prevailing indiscipline and unrest in the garments sector.

Expressing their deep concern over the unrest, they said that some "vested quarters" were attempting to disrupt the entire industrial sector by making an issue of the lock out in a garments factory, Comtrade Apparel Limited.

The signatories to the statement are: Alhaj Akram Hussain, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Anis-ud-Dowla, President of Bangladesh Employers Association, Mahbubur Rahman, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Syed Manzur Elahi, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ali Ahmed, President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sharif M Hussain acting President of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries and Mosharrar Hussain, President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

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Rigging in Mirpur Girls' College poll alleged

By Staff Correspondent

The Mirpur Girls' Ideal College unit of the Awami League-backed BCL (S-A) and National Democratic Party-backed Chhatra Shakti on Saturday alleged rigging in Thursday's students' union election of the college and demanded fresh election.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) swept the elections but leaders of the two students organisations in separate press conferences at the National Press Club termed the results as "prepared for the JCD by the college authorities."



The Chinese military delegation led by Lt General He Qizong, Deputy Chief of General Staff of People's Liberation Army, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office on Saturday. —PID photo

Economic return from Jamuna bridge to cross WB estimates

Economic return from the proposed Jamuna bridge has been found to be much higher than World Bank estimates in the latest reassessment, brightening prospect of the project, reports UNB.

Officials said Saturday the latest assessment got a positive appraisal from the local mission chief of World Bank at a government-WB meeting here Thursday.

The reassessment of Internal Rate of Return (IRR) from the bridge will be put up at the crucial World Bank meeting at its headquarters next month where the bank will take final decision on the project, they said.

The fresh assessment by a group of local experts had revealed a "significant underestimation" of the freight forecast in the World Bank-appointed consultants' report prepared in 1989.

IRR from the Jamuna bridge would be at least by "1-2 percentage points" above the bank estimates in the year 2000 if the impact of the bridge on agricultural production in the northwest of Jamuna and its marketing are fully taken into account, according to the reassessment.

Higher economic returns were found to be possible from both the high and low

freight scenarios assessed on the basis of crop intensity and diversity to be induced in the western side by the bridge construction.

In the three-crop high-freight scenario, the local experts assessed generation of an additional 13,28,000 metric tons of freight a year across the bridge from the north-western part to the eastern part over the volume estimated by the World Bank.

Even in the low-freight scenario of two crops, the volume of additional freight would be around 8,21,000 metric tons. The underestimation of World Bank was because, the bank consultants had not fully taken into account boost in production of other agricultural commodities apart from cereal in the northwest region.

Officials expect the latest revelation of improved IRR will provide the government a firm basis to convince World Bank on the economic feasibility of the 530 million-dollar project.

World Bank Resident Mission Chief at the Nov 21 meeting reportedly assured that the recalculation of IRR would be taken into consideration during the forthcoming bank meeting exclusively on

the Jamuna Bridge. The Washington meet on the bridge is due on December 4.

The assessment expects the much-talked-about bridge to stimulate production and marketing of perishable items as it, by providing an opportunity of quick and economic transportation, will influence the farmers in the northwestern region to enter a high-price market in the eastern part of the country.

Commodity prices are higher in the eastern part by 14 per cent for cereal and 22 per cent for vegetable and fruits compared to that of northwestern region, mainly because of separation of the countries two parts by the mighty river posing serious communication hurdles.

An optimum utilisation of land would, thus, be encouraged and production of high-quality kitchen items and fruits 'be boosted in the northern and northwestern districts, resulting in increased freight flows across the bridge, according to the assessment.

The reassessment was done by Fauzul Kabir Khan and Zahid Hossain of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and G M Khurshid Alam of the Finance Division.

Upazila system abolished

From Page 1 Col. 5 as members.

The protagonists of the upazila system had said it was intended to decentralise the administration and the judiciary.

Elected chairman with the help of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) used to run the upazila administration.

Reactions
Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament criticized the government for abolishing the upazila system.

"The government has taken this major decision by-passing the parliament and this is an undemocratic act," he said this while giving his reaction to The Daily Star Saturday night to the decision to abolish the upazila system.

He said that the government's decision would raise question about the sovereignty of parliament.

Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu also criticised the government and said the BNP government had dissolved the upazila parishad as part of its blue print of politicising the administration and the local bodies.

"The decision demonstrates the government's lack of confidence in democracy and in the people," he added.

Jatiya Party leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed MP sharply reacted to the government decision abolishing the upazila system through an ordinance promulgated Saturday.

"It's an undemocratic step by a democratic government," he told UNB Saturday night. "It only shows undemocratic attitude of the present government."

Maudud said when parliament is made sovereign through parliamentary system of government, such a nationally important matter could be discussed in the floor of the House.

The government should have consulted all opposition parties before taking such a decision, the Jatiya Party leader said. The decision also demonstrates government's lack of confidence in the parliament.

BRTC employees.

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Following detection of the embezzlement, the BRTC authorities changed its ticket system. It printed a four-page ticket instead of the previous one page one which had encouraged corruption. The source added.

BSD, JSD clash at Joydevpur college: 5 injured

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, Nov 23: A clash between two rival student groups at the Bhawal Badre Alam College at Joydevpur in the district today left five people injured.

Several vehicles on the Dhaka-Tangail highway were also damaged during the clash between the activists of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal.

Witnesses said the clash which ensued at the college campus after a hot altercation later spread around the adjoining areas.

Police was posted at the college premises where tension prevailed.

Maldives FM's stopover at ZIA

Maldives Foreign Minister Fathullah Jameel had a stopover at Zia International Airport Saturday afternoon on his way back home completing a week-long mission to three South Asian capitals, reports UNB.

Fathullah who flew in Dhaka from Thimphu, Bhutan, earlier visited New Delhi and Kathmandu to negotiate a date for holding the stalled 6th Summit of the SAARC.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman and Director General (SAARC) at the Foreign Office Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury received him at the airport.

The Summit scheduled for November 7-9 in Colombo was postponed because of the last moment withdrawal of Bhutanese King Jigme Singhe Wangchuk due to domestic complication. A parley in the Lankan capital empowered President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of the Maldives, the current chairman of the seven-nation forum, to fix a fresh date for holding the Summit at the same venue within this year.

President Premadasa of the host country, President Gayoom, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan attended the meeting.

Various projects reviewed

A high level meeting to review the progress of various projects and other related issues of five ministries was held at the International Conference Centre Saturday night with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, reports BSS.

The ministries are Industries, Jute, Textiles, Commerce, Labour and Manpower. The meeting was attended, among others, by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Planning Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan, Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan, Jute Minister Hannan Shah, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and State Minister for Textiles Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan.

Cabinet Secretary, Principal Finance Secretary, concerned secretaries and high officials were present.

DU teachers

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by DUTA President Anwarullah Chowdhury felt that the situation on the campus had not improved for resumption of classes and that the on-going examinations might be disturbed if classes resumed.

It would, however, meet on December 2 to review the situation.

Talks

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The Sramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP) supported the barricade programme.

The three separate meetings ended with no result Saturday and would resume again today, according to workers' leaders.

The workers' demands include mainly suspension of government's denationalisation of mills and factories and formation of a wages commission to review workers' wages.

Jute Minister Brig (Retd) Hannan Shah held hour-long talks with leaders of the Paikil Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad at BJMC office where the Parishad convenor Abdul Bashar and other leaders Rehanuddin Rehan, Shahidullah Chowdhury, Lutfar Rahman, S M Rumi were present.

State Minister for Textile Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan held a meeting with the leaders of Sutakal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad at the BTMC office. Iqbal Majumder, convenor of the Parishad, led the workers' side.

SKOP leaders Nazrul Islam Khan, Nurul Islam, Protapuddin and Saifur Rahman Majumder met with Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at his office and discussed the issue thoroughly but failed to reach any consensus.

The Midnight File

Palestinian team meets Shevardnadze

MOSCOW, Nov 23: Members of the Palestinian delegation met with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on Saturday to discuss the progress of the peace process. Tass said. The Palestinian group was headed by Haidar Abdul-Shafi, who led the Palestinian team to the peace talks in Madrid on October 30, reports AP.

13 Hindu pilgrims killed in bus mishap

NEW DELHI, Nov 23: A bus carrying Hindu pilgrims fell into a deep crevasse in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan today, killing 13 passengers, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. Twenty others were injured in the accident which occurred when the bus was returning with pilgrims who had been to the town of Pushker for a bath in a river there which Hindus consider holy, reports AFP.

Militants kill three in Srinagar

NEW DELHI, Nov 23: Muslim militants murdered three civilians in Kashmir and continued attacks on security forces, leaving at least 15 injured in the troubled valley, news reports said Saturday. Two men were killed overnight Friday in Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar and a third today in the outlying town of Tangmarg, the news agency said, reports AFP.

Yslav forces launch air raid

BELOGRADE, Nov 23: Croatia reported air and artillery attacks by federal forces today as Yugoslav leaders joined ceasefire talks in Geneva which may determine whether UN peace keeping troops are sent. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Federal Defence Minister Veljko Kadijevic attended the talks which diplomats said could be a last chance for international mediation in the conflict, reports Reuter.

Peace talks

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US invitation "without consulting Syria and the Palestinians." Jordan's King Hussein further separated himself from Syria when he said this month that the bilateral and multilateral talks could be held simultaneously.

Syria fears that Jordan, which has relinquishing its claim to the West Bank captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, might be tempted to strike a separate peace treaty with the Jewish state.

Israel also captured the Gaza Strip from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. The Golan Heights, which dominate northern Galilee, were annexed in December 1981 by Israel, which considers them vital to its national security.

Israel said on Friday the territories it captured in the 1967 Middle East war were vital to its security and that the importance of "strategic depth" was recognised in a recent accord between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Referring to the West Bank, Israeli UN Representative Yoram Aridor told the General Assembly: "The mountainous terrain of Judea and Samaria provide Israel with the necessary topographical advantage that would be crucial in withstanding any attack from the east."

Speaking during the annual UN debate on the question of Palestine, he said: "Even in this age of missiles, strategic depth remains important. The Western powers clearly recognise this fact."

Noting that, prior to 1967, Israel was only nine miles (15 km) wide at its narrowest point, he said: "Let no one tell us that territory is not important. We do not ask for safeguards such as those (in the NATO-Warsaw Pact treaty). But we do have the right to demand the same criteria. And the criteria is that land is important for security."

Students with 3rd div besiege Sirajganj Govt College

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 23: About 200 students with third division in SSC Saturday laid a siege on Sirajganj Government College demanding admission, reports UNB.

The students also locked the principal's office in his absence at around 9 Saturday morning.

Campus sources said the College authorities at a meeting Thursday decided to increase the number of seats from the present 550 to 650 but not to admit any third division holder. It was decided that only first and second division holders will be admitted.

They said the students, all seeking admission to HSC first year, forced the authorities to abandon the Degree test examination scheduled to begin Saturday morning.

College Students' Union GS Shaful Alam Dollar, along with other leaders of the Union, came to the spot and persuaded the agitating students to lift the siege.

And the principal's office was then unlocked at around 12 noon.

One shot dead

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Kazi Zohir, were on duty in the area during the time of the incident.

The victim was identified as Shiraj (35) by a maid servant in the boarding-house where he lived, witnesses said.

He was a carpenter who worked for a contractor in the area and lived in the boarding-house located at No.6 Fakirpool.

No arrests were made by Motijheel police till the writing of this report.

Police is suspecting that he was killed when he protested the actions of a group of extortionists.

A gang of about ten mastans demanded money from clandestine petrol and mobil sellers in the area. Six gun shots were heard in the area, witnesses added.

Local people found Taka 250, some bids and a match in Shiraj's possession, witnesses said.

The body of the victim was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for post mortem.

Anti-smuggling

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bile government is pledge bound to rootout them, he added.

Referring to the country's law and order situation, he said the government would resist all anti-social and anti-public elements with iron hand. He reiterated terrorists, toll-collectors and musclemen would be brought into book irrespective of their identity. He said the government was pledge-bound to establish and maintain rule of law in the country.

Truck borne militants shot dead six policemen of a patrol party going in a tempo near village Khant, Manpur in Roprar district Friday night.

18 killed in Punjab, 2 in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, Nov 23: Eighteen person, including six policemen and nine militants, were killed in Punjab and a policeman and a person were killed in neighbouring Haryana since Friday night, reports BSS.

Truck borne militants shot dead six policemen of a patrol party going in a tempo near village Khant, Manpur in Roprar district Friday night.



A carpenter was shot dead by an unknown assailant in broad daylight in Motijheel Commercial Area Saturday. —Star photo