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NEWS BRIEFS

PM condoles deaths in Philippines

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed her profound grief at the loss of valuable lives in the recent typhoon in the Philippines, reports BSS.

In a message to President Corazon Aquino the Prime Minister conveyed her deepest sorrow and heartfelt sympathies to the Filipino people and through her to the members of the affected families.

Bakerganj by-polls December 21

By-election to the vacant Jatiya Sangsad seat of constituency 125 of Bakerganj-5 will be held on December 21, reports UNB.

The seat fell vacant following the taking of oath of its sitting member Abdur Rahman Biswas as President of the country.

Mujahideen team meet Rutskoy

MOSCOW, Nov 11: A delegation of Afghan Mujahideen rebels met Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoy here today at the start of an unprecedented visit aimed at breaking the deadlock in the Afghanistan conflict, reports AP.

Navy launches drive against smugglers 63 pirate boats seized in coastal areas

Star Report

The Bangladesh Navy has launched a drive against pirates and smugglers in the Bay of Bengal and seized 63 boats from the coastal areas of Chittagong and Khulna Sunday.

High-speed naval ships, which began patrolling the country's marine border in the south, impounded those boats for suspicious movement in the Bay and lacking valid documents.

The confiscated mechanised and country boats with their crew were handed over to police for necessary legal action.

The drive against the pirates and smuggles followed as growing incidents of piracy threatened marine fishing forcing hundreds of trawlers and mechanised boats to moor. The country witnessed an unprecedented rise in piracy in the Bay during the last few months that left scores killed and hundreds of fishermen injured.

According to reports, at least 35 fishermen were killed or missing in September and

October while 22 trawlers and 300 fishing boats fell victim to attacks by pirates.

A high-level meeting in the capital Sunday ordered a crackdown on pirates.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury asked the Navy to step up its action against smugglers as well as pirates. "Pirates threaten our frozen food sector as fishermen are now scared of them," he told the meeting.

Coastal areas in Sitakunda, Kutubdia, Galachipa, Charfashion, Daulatkhan, Lalmoan, Khepupara, Shahpur Island, Ujantia, Matarbari and the Sundarbans have become permanent sanctuaries of the Bay pirates who swoop on boats during the hauling season.

In Barguna district alone, pirates attacked on 162 trawlers during the last 15 days leaving 18 people killed and hundreds injured.

They looted marine engines, costly fishing gear and fish preservers worth Taka five crore during that period,

according to officials.

Pirates looted 23 trawlers in the Bay off Patuakhali coast Friday and injured 30 fishermen. They took away engines and fishing gear worth Taka one crore.

Last month, pirates slew 14 fishermen of a trawler off Cox's Bazar coast in the Bay. The trawler was also hijacked.

In September, five trawlers of Galachipa and Charfashion came under attack. The pirates took away the boats and demanded Taka one lakh each as ransom.

Fishermen allege that inadequate security measures have given rise to piracy in the Bay. They say that the pirates work in the shelter of a section of local influential quarter and the law enforcing agencies were helpless against them.

Piracy scare in the fishing community has plunged it into an economic shambles because the community is dependent on the loans taken from the local mahajans.

Authorities in the coastal See Page 12 Col. 1



Warm clothes including blankets have made their appearance on wayside shops with the advent of the winter. But there is yet no noticeable buying spree. —Star photo

The postponed SAARC summit-III What happened in Colombo

By Amanullah Kabir back from Colombo

The decision Bangladesh took to visit Colombo in response to Sri Lankan President Premadasa's appeal following the collapse of the SAARC summit was a political one in the context of the subcontinental situation.

The advance team led by the Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman, attending the meeting of the SAARC Foreign Ministers preceding the summit, advised Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia over telephone that she respond positively to the Sri Lankan appeal and pay a bilateral visit to Colombo.

He however kept the option open for the Prime Minister that she might leave for Colombo on November 7 instead of November 6 as the Maldives President Gayoom

and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were scheduled to arrive in Colombo on that date. But the Prime Minister preferred to keep the earlier schedule unchanged and left for Colombo on November 6 evening.

Her arrival in Colombo made the worried Sri Lankan leaders heave a sigh of relief and brought additional political gain for her in the subcontinental politics.

But Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia appeared to be too cautious about her statement at the "formal get-together" attended by delegates of the four participating countries including the host country. Her political decision to go to Colombo was not reflected in her address as it should have been. See Page 12 Col. 5

\$ 125m ADB loan discussed in cabinet meet

The regular weekly meeting of the cabinet was held at Bangabhaban Monday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, reports BSS.

Ministers and state ministers-in-charge of different ministries attended the meeting. Principal finance secretary, cabinet secretary and secretaries of different ministries and divisions were present.

The meeting, inter alia, discussed the proposed 125 million US dollar Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan for industrial development and employment generation in the country.

In response to the request of the government of Bangladesh, the ADB has expressed willingness to provide the money as the Second Industrial Programme Loan under its loan programme for the year 1991.

The loan which is of structural adjustment type, primarily aims at augmenting contribution of the industrial sector to national growth and generation of employment.

General amnesty brings new polarisation in Ctg Hill Tracts

By Moinuddin Naser

A new polarisation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is shaping up following the announcement of a general amnesty for an indefinite period from October 22.

The most formidable development is that on one side the Shantibahini has reinforced its watch along the border area while on the other it has expressed its willingness to talk with the government about the disputes.

Meanwhile, a five-member committee has been formed by the local administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts to keep contact with the Shantibahini high command.

Earlier, the unilateral declaration of a general amnesty by the government was highly criticised by tribal leaders associated with the local government.

But the leaders who opposed the local government councils and demanded its dissolution hailed the decision.

The Shantibahini is now contacting the government through persons opposed to the local government councils.

Meanwhile, the local government councils have framed a 11-point charter of demands and demanded of the government to handover all the 22 administrative subjects provided in the Hill Tracts Act to the local government councils before 31st December, to make the Hill Tracts councils more effective.

On the other hand, the tribals against the incumbent leaders of the local government councils have got an upper hand in the process of dealing with the situation.

Observers feel that the division among the tribal leaders will sharpen as the date for the next election of the local government scheduled to be held by March or April next year nears.

It is reported from the border area that after the announcement of general amnesty the BSF and the Shantibahini members have become active and have taken some measures to isolate the Shantibahini members and refugees in India from being influenced by the measures taken by the Bangladesh government.

The Shantibahini high command has stopped new recruitment and removed the families of the members of the Shantibahini to 15 new camps in Tripura.

The Shantibahini high command is also withdrawing arms from a section of its cadres.

It has also arranged a special watch in and around the refugee camps so that none could escape from them.

Reports from the border area further said that the Shantibahini has also set up 12 towers in the border area alongside the towers of the BSF.

Steps to reconvene SAARC summit

COLOMBO, Nov 11: South Asian leaders are to discuss holding a summit later this year after their meeting in Colombo was postponed at the last minute last week, reports Reuter.

Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom is sending his Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel to India, Nepal and Bhutan to discuss rescheduling the summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Maldives High Commission said.

The three-day summit of the leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, The Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was called off after Bhutan's King Jigme Singye Wangchuk said he was unable to attend because of domestic problems. India insisted that the summit could not be held unless all the heads of state or government were present.

The Maldives is current chairman of the group, due to meet to discuss ways of alleviating poverty among up to one billion people in the region.

The High Commission said in a statement that Jameel would discuss convening a summit "at the earliest convenience." It did not say when Jameel would visit the three countries but official sources said they expected it to take place within the next few days.

They said the Maldives was proposing "a one-day businesslike summit" before the end of the year.

The statement said Gayoom had already discussed the proposed meeting with the leaders of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh during their visits See Page 12 Col. 1

Teachers threaten indefinite strike from Jan 1

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Federation of Teachers' Association (BFTA) on Monday announced a month-long action programme including indefinite strike to press home its 15-point demand which include pay rise and increase in other benefits.

In a press conference at the National Press Club, Acting Chairman of BFTA Sheikh Amanullah said that some 2,23,000 teachers of schools, colleges and madrasahs would go on an indefinite strike from January 7 if the authorities fail to fulfil the demands.

He said that the late President Ziaur Rahman had formed a committee to narrow the differences in pay-scales between the government and non-government teachers and accordingly a similar pay scale was announced for the non-

JCD-BCL gunbattle rocks BAU : students flee halls

From BAU Correspondent

AGRI-VARSITY (Mymensingh), Nov 11: At least two students were injured in a clash between two rival groups in front of the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of the university Monday afternoon. During the clash at least 60 rounds of fire were exchanged.

The clash ensued after two activists of Chhatra League (S-A) were reportedly beaten by Jattayabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists in the Shahjalal Hall and the Suhrawardy Hall of the university Sunday night.

Panicky resident students of the university have started leaving their halls.

In the morning, Deans, Provoosts and the Proctor of the University and the leaders of Bangladesh Agricultural University Central Students' Union (BAUCSU) and the JCD

Politics at RMC banned

From BAU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Nov 11: Rajshahi Medical College authorities today banned all political activities and police was deployed this afternoon outside the college campus for a round-the-clock vigil, reports UNB.

The decision to ban politics together at the TSC to settle the dispute and to neutralise the tension prevailing among the activists of the two organisations.

At a stage of the meeting, activists of both the groups waiting outside the TSC began attacks and counter-attacks against one another.

Immediately after the incident police rushed to the campus and controlled the situation. No one was arrested.

Following the untoward incident, the university authorities convened an emergency Syndicate meeting and the Syndicate members were in meeting till the writing of this report Monday night.

Police have been deployed in the different parts of the campus to avert fresh clashes between the two groups of student.

Russian parliament overturns Yeltsin's decree

MOSCOW, Nov 11: The Russian Parliament voted overwhelmingly today to overturn Russian President Boris Yeltsin's state of emergency decree for the Muslim Republic of Chechen-Ingushetia, reports AFP.

Deputies voted 177-4 in favour of a six-point resolution that described the adoption of the decree as "impossible" and called for the crisis in the republic to be resolved by "political means."

There were 15 abstentions. The resolution also called for a parliamentary investigation into why the State of

Emergency decree was issued and called for strict border control measures around Chechen-Ingushetia to prevent arms imports.

A number of the deputies suggested Monday that Yeltsin may have taken the decision to declare a state of emergency in Chechen-Ingushetia as the result of a "provocation" and faulty information from aides.

The parliament, "in the current situation, considers impossible the adoption of the decree of the Russian President on the state of emergency in the Republic of Chechen-Ingushetia," the reso-

lutions stated. It said the Russian government and parliament should continue efforts to resolve the crisis but should use no "extraordinary measures" to do so.

The parliament also voted for the creation of a delegation representing the Russian government to open talks "with all political forces in the Republic of Chechen-Ingushetia."

Under Russian law, the parliament would have until 3 pm Monday to ratify Yeltsin's decree, but following Monday's vote the decree will automati-

cally be cancelled if no further action is taken.

The debate remained heated Monday but there were no further calls for the resignation of Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoy.

AFP adds: The crisis threatened to badly damage the authority of Yeltsin, who emerged as the most powerful Soviet leader after the failed hard-line coup in August against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Yeltsin did not attend the legislative session and had no immediate comment on the resolution.

But who of his close allies, Vice President Alexander Rutskoy and speaker of the legislature Russian Khasbulatov, backed the resolution, signaling that the Russian President had decided to retreat from a confrontation.

The situation remained tense in the Republic's capital, Grozny, where militants fired automatic weapons in the air and honked car horns to celebrate a military victory. Militants on Sunday had forced the retreat of nearly 1,000 Russian troops sent into the enclave Saturday to enforce

emergency rule. Immediately before the legislature voted, the president of the Republic said he would order terrorist attacks on nuclear power stations and subways in Moscow if Yeltsin did not back down.

"Around Moscow, there are very many nuclear power stations," the President, retired Soviet Army General Dzhokar Dudayev, told Western reporters in Grozny.

He did not say how such attacks would be carried out, but noted several times that he once commanded strategic nuclear bombers.

Protests to greet Jyoti Basu in Tinbigha today

RANGPUR, Nov 11: Indian extremists, opposing transfer of the Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh, plan to demonstrate before West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu who is due to visit the area tomorrow, according to information from across the border, reports UNB.

Jyoti Basu's visit to the corridor follows Thursday's finalisation of details of the transfer at talks between the central and West Bengal government officials in Calcutta.

The extremist Indian nationals, backed by fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and left-wing Forward Bloc and also assisted by the Border Security Force (BSF), launched a campaign against transfer of the corridor after the verdict of the Indian Supreme Court was announced September last year.

They intensified the campaign during the last few weeks.

Forward Block leader Kamal Guha-led extremist group observed hartal in Indian Mekliganj subdivisional head- See Page 12 Col. 5

India extends permit to visit enclaves

The Indian government has extended the permit for the passage of Bangladeshis to the Dahagram and Angarpota enclaves up to January 22, 1992, reports BSS.

With the extension of the permit, Bangladeshis would now be able to visit freely to the enclave, an official source said, adding that the agreement had expired on October 22 this year.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, has reportedly left Calcutta Monday on way to Tinbigha, where he is likely to reach today (Tuesday) to finalise the process of the transfer of the corridor to Bangladesh.

"With the centre and West Bengal government committed to implementing the Indira-Mujib agreement providing leasing of Tinbigha to Bangladesh, senior state and union ministry officials finalised the modalities of transfer of small plot to the neighbouring country," said "The Statesman" in a report on November 8.

Bangladesh not aiding ULFA : Indian Press

A number of Indian newspapers including "The Statesman" have dismissed as "wrong" the allegation by certain Indian quarters that Bangladesh has hands in the activities of ULFA guerrillas who are fighting for cessation of Assam from India, reports BSS.

In a commentary "Waiting for peace in Assam" published in The Statesman, noted Indian columnist Kuldip Nayar said, "There is no concrete evidence of Dhaka's involvement in training or arming the ULFA". Nayar, while giving an in-depth analysis on the present situation of Assam, presented certain arguments in favour of his assessment, saying "the weapons recovered from ULFA rebels by the army are ancient, mostly of the days of World War II. Had the Bangladesh government been involved there would have been some modern arms, as in Punjab and Kashmir".

Jute mill workers disrupt Dhaka-Ctg communication

CHITTAGONG, Nov 11: Thousands of jute mill workers barricaded the Chittagong-Dhaka highway today disrupting communication of the port city with rest of the country, reports UNB.

The workers from 12 jute mills in the region, protesting deduction from their salary the money taken in advance after the late April cyclone, also blocked train movements in the Chittagong-Nazimhat section for 121 hours since 6 am.

The rail barricade, put up near the Ameen Jute Mills, continued till 5.30 pm.