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VOL. II NO. 56 REGD. NO. DA 784

FALGOON 27, 1398 BS,

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 11, 1992

RAMADAN 5, 1412 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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NEWS BRIEFS

PM's iftar with army officers

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had her iftar yesterday with the army officers at the Senakunja in Dhaka. She talked to the officers and exchanged greetings. Ministers, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, members of Parliament, Chiefs of Air and Naval Staff, diplomats from Muslim countries and high civil officials were present, reports BSS.

BSC to sale out 'Banglar Swapna'

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation has taken decision to sale out 'Banglar Swapna', a vessel of its fleet. The decision was taken at the board meeting of the BSC with the Minister of State for Shipping Harun-ur-Rashid in the chair Tuesday, reports BSS.

Two arrested for kidnapping

Police Tuesday arrested a woman and his brother from Bogra in connection with kidnapping a minor boy from the Uttara in the capital. Hriday, 2 1/2, son of Moinul Haq, was recovered from Sherpur upazila of Bogra district 10 days after he had been abducted from near his house at Alaul Avenue in Uttara, reports UNB.

Shri and Iftar timings

Ramzan	March	Shri	Iftar
5	11	6:12	
6	12	4:51	6:13

Ogata expresses concern to Myanmar

UNHCR calls for \$27.5m funds



Sadako Ogata UNHCR photo by E Brissaud

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) yesterday appealed to the international community for raising a 27.5 million US Dollar Fund in aid of the Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

A UNHCR source in the capital said this indicating that the financial requirement was foreseen for a planned assistance programme for 1,50,000 refugees for a period ending December 31, 1992.

This was in response to an appeal made by the Bangladesh government, last month for supporting the gigantic task of bringing succour to the tens of thousands of Muslim refugees fleeing atrocities and oppression in Myanmar.

The emergency programme announced from the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva yesterday includes supplementary food and distribution US dollars 360,000; transport and logistic 2,025,000; domestic needs and household goods and fuel 5,000,000; water 390,000; sanitation 768,000; health and nutrition 3,284,000; shelter and other infrastructure 11,592,000; community services 134,000; education 333,000; forestry 118,000; legal assistance and protection 80,000; agency and operational support 337,000; administrative and programme support 3,074,000 and costs and project personnel expenditure.

The UNHCR has so far re-

leased US dollars 3.5 million from its emergency fund to meet the most immediate needs of the refugees.

Besides, the Rome-based World Food Programme (WFP) has donated rice, dal and edible oil worth Taka 20 lakh, official sources said yesterday.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society is also distributing food supplied by the Government and the Federation of International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The UN agency is airlifting blankets and plastic sheets to provide rudimentary cover for the refugees.

Long row of houses and temporary shelters are being constructed in the camps by

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Dhaka City Corporation workers kept the garbage carrying vehicles locked in the garage during the strike hours yesterday.

Taka devaluation fails to boost exports

Star Economic Report

Repeated devaluation of the Taka to boost the country's exports has failed to achieve its goal.

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) in its recent write-up on the export situation viewed that such steps would not solve the growing problems in price competitiveness of the country's exports.

It said that complementary policies and well-designed incentives were equally critical, specially if export growth was to take place within a broad-based development process.

The MCCI views that labour cost, product quality and terms of financing are also important factors for competitiveness.

During the last 12 months, the Taka value in relation to the US dollar has been devalued by 7.8 per cent, but instead of proving to be of any help, exports suffered and earnings from major export items declined.

During the first seven months (July-January) of fiscal 1991-92, export earnings

showed a shortfall of 13.39 per cent compared to the proportional target for the year.

During the seven months, export earnings were con-

Govt asks banks not to prosecute sick industry owners till Apr 30

By Sohail Manzur

The government has requested concerned banks and financial institutions to postpone prosecution of cases filed against the entrepreneurs of sick industries up to April 30.

It also requested them not to file any new cases against the entrepreneurs until that time for not repaying overdue loans.

The request was made in response to the recommendations of the Sick Industries Revival and Rehabilitation Cell.

The Ministry of Industries served letters on February 25

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verted into Taka proceeds at an average exchange rate of Taka 37.11 a US dollar as against Taka 35.22 during the corresponding period of last year.

It means a devaluation of 5.36 per cent in the value of the Taka in relation to the US dollar. But during the period, export earnings from major items declined.

Earnings from raw jute fell by 6.34 per cent, tea by 33.27 per cent, leather by 16.20 per cent, frozen food by 16.96 per cent, jute goods by 8.72 per cent.

However, the total earnings rose by 8.69 per cent because of higher earnings from garments. The phenomenal growth in garments was 37.98 per cent.

The MCCI views that if the problems facing the exporters continue, the balance of payment will be against the country. It said that issues like high rate of interest for export financing and the cumbersome duty drawback system must be streamlined if stability in the country's balance of payment is to be maintained.

Clashes mark DCC employees' strike

By Staff Correspondent

Chases and counterchases between the employees of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and a group of unidentified youths marked the second day of the strike by DCC employees Tuesday.

Police sources and eyewitnesses said that a group of youths claiming themselves 'unemployed' brought out a procession at Sayadabad demanding jobs.

They locked in a clash when they reached the zonal office of the DCC at Sayadabad where several hundred cleaners and DCC drivers were demonstrating in support of their strike.

Police soon intervened and brought the situation under control. Some unruly sweepers allegedly threw excretion at the police.

Some 120,000 employees of four city corporations and 107 pourasavas started an indefinite strike Monday demanding a separate pay scale.

The authorities expressed their inability to increase salaries saying that it was beyond the capacity of the corporations.

The DCC authorities pressed 50 hired trucks and some sweepers into service as

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Golam Azam issue

Why public trial, why not go to court, Nizami asks

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday termed the campaign for the so-called public trial of its Amir Golam Azam as an attempt to create anarchy.

'Jamaat-e-Islami thinks the government will resist the attempt in the interest of the rule of law and democracy,' said party Secretary General and Jamaat Parliamentary Party leader Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami at a press conference.

The press conference, to explain the Party position on the public trial was arranged at the party central office.

The Coordination Committee for the annihilation of the killers and collaborators of 1971 has called for a public trial of Golam Azam on March 26 at the Suhrawardy Udyan. The issue of Golam Azam became the focal point of controversy after he was elected Amir of the Jamaat last December.

Terming the issue a non-issue, Nizami told the press conference 'a particular quarter has been attempting to push the country towards a crisis by turning a non-issue into an issue bypassing the people's main problems.'

Nizami complained that those propagating to hold a public trial of Golam Azam were in fact taking law into their own hands and attempting to emerge as an alternative force to the government.

Explaining six reasons against the public trial Nizami said 'the few lawyers, intellectuals and cultural workers who have initiated the act are by no means representatives of the people.' He further said, 'the set politicians, who had rallied behind the move were suffering from frustration.'

He said that the question of a public trial did not arise in the place of taking recourse to due legal procedures as there

existed the state and the government.

He also asked the initiators of the public trial why they were not going to file cases in the court against Golam Azam according to the law of the land. Nizami observed 'By their act they are proving that Golam Azam did not commit crime that could be proved in a court of law.'

Nizami alleged that the proponents of the public trial had resorted to provocative statements and slogans and were designing to push the country towards a civil war with 'ulterior motive.'

He cited some 'baseless and indecent' press reports on Golam Azam's role in 1971 and claimed that all allegations against the Amir were 'cent per cent false.' He added 'Nobody can prove these allegations.'

Nizami said that the Jamaat believed in the existence of an independent Bangladesh and vowed to safeguard the national independence at any cost.

Expressing doubts he asked whether the forces that had maintained silence over Farakka, Talpatti, Tinbigha and Hill Tracts issues, would come forward in defending the country if it was exposed to any external threat.

Referring to the debate over the liberation and anti-liberation forces as 'unrealistic,' Nizami said 'We consider all as pro-liberation forces and all should accept the verdict of the people.'

Nizami said that during its three-and-half-year rule the Awami League could not convict any member of the cabinet of killing, raping, hijacking and arson. The amnesty by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a pragmatic step, he added.

He told a questioner 'We

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Montu firm to hold meet today, may go to court

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Executive Committee of Dhaka District Awami League has been convened today by Shamsuddoha Khan-Majlish, the President of the committee.

In a press release issued yesterday, Majlish requested all the members of the committee to attend the meeting at his residence at 10 am.

Meanwhile, Mostafa Mohsin Montu, General Secretary of the district committee, whose party membership has been suspended, has said that he is determined to hold the meeting of the district committee today at 5 pm at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue. Montu, who convened the meeting earlier, was requested by party leadership to refrain from holding the meeting.

The Awami League Central Working Committee suspended Montu on March 5 for his alleged 'anti-organisational activities' and later served a show cause notice on him asking to explain why he would not be expelled from the party.

The ALWC is expected to meet again this morning to re-

view the situation.

UNB adds: Suspended Awami League leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu has said he may move the court to contest the show cause notice served upon him by the party's Central Working Committee.

'I have been punished without trial,' Montu told UNB last night. 'The suspension order is contrary to party constitution... I was not allowed to defend myself.'

He said he had discussions with some senior leaders, including Dr Kamal Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Zillur Rahman and Tofael Ahmed, on the letter of suspension. 'I'll take my decision in consultation with my guardians in the party.'

Answering a question, he said that he would reply to the show cause notice only after withdrawal of the 'illegal' suspension order.

Another report says: Awami League Central Committee will continue discussion today on draft proposals for liberalising the party's economic policy.

Awami League which was in power on Independence in

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DPRK freighter 'with Scuds' reaches Iran

WASHINGTON, Mar 10: A Korean cargo ship believed to be carrying Scud-C ballistic missiles for Iran and Syria has arrived at the Iranian port Bandar Abbas, US Defence officials said today, reports Reuter.

The officials, who asked not to be identified, said they did not know at this point if the freighter Dae Hung Ho was permitted by the US navy to enter the port at the entrance to the Gulf or had evaded American warships taking part in the UN embargo against Iraq.

AP adds: US and Israeli officials have expressed deep concern about the possible de-

livery of the medium-range missiles and their potential destabilizing effect on the volatile Middle East.

The US source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the freighter had not begun unloading its cargo.

'It's just sitting there' in waters outside the southern Iranian port located near the Strait of Hormuz, the source said.

The source confirmed that US officials have also been tracking a second ship, believed destined for the same port and carrying similar weaponry.

The United States has

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Windies beat India

BRISBANE, Mar 10: South Africa and the West Indies both scored important victories Tuesday to keep themselves in the heart of the race for the semifinals of the World Cup cricket tournament, reports AP.

Captain Kepler Wessels combined with consistent Peter Kirsten to spearhead South Africa to a seven-wicket win over northern neighbour Zimbabwe at Manuka Oval in Canberra.

South Africa dismissed Zimbabwe for 163 in 48.3 overs and then made 164 for three in reply from just 45.1 overs.

The two-times champions West Indies team cruised to a five-wicket victory over India in a rain-affected match at the Basin Reserve in Wellington.

The West Indies dismissed India for 197 and then raced to 81 for one from just 11 overs before rain reduced the overs to 46 and the victory target to 195.

The West Indies then collapsed to 112 for five before Keith Arthurton rescued the team with an unbeaten 58, while Carl Hooper was not out 34. The winning runs came off the third ball of the 41st over.

Unbeaten New Zealand lead the tournament with 10 points from five matches and are assured of a semifinal spot. England are second with nine from five and South Africa third with eight from six.

The West Indies now have six points from six matches to be in fourth spot.

Five teams - South Africa, the West Indies, Sri Lanka, India and defending champion Australia - are locked in a five-way struggle to join New Zealand and England in the semis. Pakistan also have a slim chance. (Details on Sports Pages).

Private limited companies given more investment powers

The government has either simplified or exempted some of the provisions and rules containing in the Capital Issues (continuance of control) Act 1947 for encouraging capital investment in the country enabling the authorities of the limited companies to take many important decisions without prior permission of the government, an official handout said Tuesday, reports BSS.

According to the Act of 1947, no private ownership (private) limited company could withdraw more than

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23 injured as villagers, BDR men clash in Jessore

JESSORE, Mar 10: A clash between members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and villagers at Basatpur Hat of Sharsha upazila today left 3 BDR personnel and at least 20 local people injured, reports UNB.

The BDR opened several rounds of blank fire to disperse an angry crowd and arrested three local businessmen - Mohammed Jahan,

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Prof Saleh Ahmed reappointed JU VC

The President and Chancellor, Abdur Rahman Biswas, Tuesday appointed Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, to the post of Vice Chancellor of the same university for a further term of four years, reports UNB.

Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed polled the highest 82 votes in the election to three-member VC panel held Sunday. Two other members of the panel were Prof Mustahidur Rahman (44 votes) and Prof Imam Uddin (40).