

Emergency lifted in Tajikistan

Nabiyev agrees to form coalition

MOSCOW, May 7: Tajikistan President Rakhman Nabiyev agreed to form a coalition government with Muslim opposition groups and lifted a state of emergency in his central Asian republic, a news agency reported Thursday, reports AP.

Interfax said Nabiyev ended the 3-day-old emergency conditions, including a dawn-to-dusk curfew, because tensions had eased in the capital city, Dushanbe.

Membership in the new government had not yet been determined, Interfax said.

Commonwealth television reported that government opponents fired gunshots into the air when the agreement was announced.

Nabiyev previously had refused to consider opposition representation in his hard-line government, and the compromise appeared to be an effort to hold on to power and avoid further bloodshed.

Reuters earlier said Nabiyev and his supporters fled the capital Dushanbe today, leaving the city under the control of the Muslim and liberal opposition, eyewitnesses said.

They all ran away half an

hour ago," said Obido Safullah, a collective farm worker standing in front of the abandoned and looted parliament building.

Muslim groups are seeking greater religious and political freedoms in Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic bordering China and Afghanistan. Nabiyev, a former communist, has resisted, and the two sides have been locked in a power struggle for months, says AP.

Fighting between government troops and the opposition flared again in Dushanbe this week, after ousted parliamentary chairman Safarali Kenzhayev was reinstated. His appointment as security chief had enraged the opposition.

The opposition seized control of the Tajik Supreme Soviet and republic's radio station at midday Thursday, Commonwealth TV reported. They seized Nabiyev's presidential palace and the TV center on Tuesday.

News reports said at least 14 people died this week, although they quoted opposition groups as saying the figure could be as high as 40 to 60 people.



Students brought out a procession in city yesterday demanding reopening of Rajshahi University. — Star photo

American-style private university planned

By Asiuzzaman

"This will be a small American university in Bangladesh. Teachers will be appointed from abroad mainly from the United States and we will have collaboration with a number of American universities," Chairman (vice-chancellor) of the country's first proposed private university said Thursday in an interview.

Talking to The Daily Star in his New DOHS residence Muslehuddin Ahmad said that the university would begin admissions from January if Parliament approved the charter of the university in the upcoming budget session. The charter would be considered the ordinance of the university.

The university is named North South University (NSU) and primarily being housed in a seven-storey building at Kamal Ataturk Avenue in Banani, Ahmad, a former ambassador said adding that the campus would be shifted later to some convenient place.

The NSU would start with three subjects in three faculties (schools) with 40 students in each subject. The subjects are economics, business administration and computer science and the faculties are the school of arts and social science, the business school and the school of applied science.

"As we will follow the American system the Honours course (majoring in a subject) will be for four years instead of country's three years and the Masters will be completed in two years instead of one year," Ahmad said adding that "there will be two semesters — January to May and September to December."

Ahmad who was also a teacher of Dhaka University said that the NSU has already had contracts with the University of Illinois, University of Pennsylvania, George Washington University, and the University of Kansas of the United States and was going to sign agreements on mutual interests and exchange programmes.

"The agreements will be like this; those American university will supervise, monitor and recognise our degrees," the NSU Chairman said and added that "If a student completes one part of his syllabus in the NSU, he will be accepted by those American universities if the situation arises."

Replying to a question whether the university was only for the rich, Ahmad said "No, a number of poor but meritorious students will be given scholarships and interest-free loans subject to be paid after employment."

"Considering the standard of the university the tuition fees will naturally be higher than those in other universities of the country," he said without elaborating.

The NSU will be an independent degree awarding university and not under any university of the country. It may be under the University Grants Commission (UGC) but the NSU management proposed to the government to set up an independent 'accreditation council' to look after the private universities.

Recalling the past Ahmad said that he first had the idea of a university of the type in late 1988 which he discussed with his friends and acquaintances.

Fresh voters' list preparation afoot

The Election Commission has decided to prepare the voters' list afresh throughout the country, according to a press release of Election Commission here yesterday, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of high officials of the Commission Secretariat with Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf in the chair.

The meeting reviewed different aspects of the existing voters' list.

The commission will prepare new voters' list of pauras areas in the first phase and prepare the voters' list of rural areas in the second phase.

All concerned have been directed to accelerate the preliminary preparation aimed at starting the work for preparing the voters' list.

The Election Commission expressed the hope that preparation of correct voters' list is possible with the united efforts of the people of all walks of life.

The Commission was determined to prepare a correct voters' list at any cost.

My main task is to strengthen ties with India: Farooq Sobhan

Bangladesh High Commissioner designate to India Farooq Sobhan said here yesterday that his main task would be to further strengthen relations between the two neighbouring countries, reports UNB.

"I will do my best to bolster the Dhaka-Delhi ties on the basis of mutual understanding and sovereign equality," said Sobhan, who is due to leave here for New Delhi on May 13 to take up his new assignment.

"I am going to head the country's mission in the Indian capital at a time when there is an ample scope for placing the bilateral relation at its best form," he added.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's planned visit to India is likely to take place after he joins the Bangladesh mission in New Delhi.

Sobhan, who joined the diplomatic service in 1964, held several important posts at home and abroad and attended a number of international conferences.

Before joining the Ministry as Additional Foreign Secretary Sobhan had been the country's Ambassador to China.

Asia Watch

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ridding the country of ethnic Rohingyas by any possible means.

It said the persecution of the Muslim minority surpassed even that of the Karen guerrillas in the eastern part of the country, which sparked off an exodus of refugees into Thailand.

The sheer scale of the human disaster resulting from the Muslim persecution, with hundreds of thousands fleeing to one of the poorest countries in the world (Bangladesh), has no parallel elsewhere in Myanmar," the report said.

The Rohingyas crowded in 13 refugee camps in Bangladesh, administered by the under-funded UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the report said.

Unless the UNHCR receives 27 million dollars from donor countries — it had received only eight million dollars as of mid-April — Bangladesh may be tempted to force the refugees to return to their homes through a policy of starvation, Asia Watch said.

In 1978, some 10,000 people of Myanmar starved to death in Bangladeshi camps before all the refugees decided to return home.

The group urged Bangladesh not to repatriate any refugee against his or her will until safeguards were in place for international monitoring of their safety and well-being.

Asia Watch urged the United States and Japan to spearhead an international strategy to improve the human rights situation throughout Myanmar by curtailing military aid, trade and investment benefitting the military junta.

For such a strategy to be effective, the report said, it "must involve those key Asian countries which provide Myanmar with the bulk of its economic and military support," chiefly China, Thailand, Singapore and Japan.

The United States should promote an international arms embargo against Myanmar under the auspices of the United Nations and encourage the Association of South East Asian Nations to support such an embargo at its foreign ministers' meeting scheduled to be held on July 22-27 in Manila, Asia Watch said.

He expressed surprise at Hasina's remarks about oil tanker and sea vessel. "I am not at all involved in such business, nor any other else associated with me," he said and called upon Hasina to substantiate her allegation.

He, however, said he started business in 1988 and had built a commercial firm by dint of toil and mool. "Doesn't the Zia family have the right to run business?"

HC orders return of Humayun Rasheed's passport

Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court Thursday ordered the return of the passports of former Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury and his wife Mahjabeen Chowdhury, reports BSS.

The bench comprising Justice MA Jalil and Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq passed the order directing to return the passports to the petitioners if not already returned.

Appearing on behalf of the government, Deputy Attorney General AFM Hasan Arif informed the court that the government has already decided to return the passports and direction in this respect has been given.

Advocate Mohammad Nurul Huda appeared for the petitioners.

Ishtiaq demands withdrawal of case against trial body

By Staff Correspondent

Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Thursday demanded withdrawal of case against the 24 public trial personalities and urged the people to unite against the politics of Jamaat-Shibir.

He was addressing as the chief guest the inauguration of a 'public stage' in the Central Shaheed Minar premises organised by the Sammilita Sangakritik Jote.

He said the public trial personalities fought for the country and democracy but were being repressed by the government.

The function presided over by Fayez Ahmed was also participated by Poet Shamsur Rahman as special guest.

CHT incident

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Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region.

Lord Ennals, a former junior minister in the British Foreign Office, arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a week-long visit and was talking to reporters at the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon.

The Lord, a member of the Upper House of the British Parliament, said that there were 'great discrepancies in facts' on the April 10 CHT incident.

He said that he had heard about a death toll of upto '1200 people' while the Bangladesh Government had given a figure of 13 dead — 12 tribals and one non-tribal.

The Government should not hide facts for its own interests, Lord Ennals insisted.

Meanwhile, Western diplomatic sources in Dhaka say that some of the Western countries have enquired about the incident and called upon the Government to 'let the world know the facts' on the allegations.

At the Aid Club meeting in Paris last month, representatives from countries including the EC, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands raised the issue and called for investigations.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, the leader of the Bangladesh delegation, however, denied the allegations.

Replying to question on Myanmar refugees who have crossed into Bangladesh to flee persecution, he observed that the refugees should not be repatriated against their will and added the UN and UNHCR should oversee 'what guarantee and security' the Myanmar authorities would ensure.

Lord Ennals is accompanied by General Secretary of the Campaign for Disaster Prevention in Bangladesh (CDPB) Ayub Karam Ali and will be visiting the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts, the stranded Pakistanis and also intends to go to the CHT.

After his 'fact-finding mission on behalf of a number of UK NGOs interested in refugees', he will report back to those organisations as well as the British Refugee Committee.

On the CHT issue, he will be working for the Amnesty International and other organisations.

He on behalf of CDPB, will also assess the disaster management activities of the government and examine current status of the World Bank Flood Action Plan.

Afghan people's court to try ex-CP rulers

KABUL, May 7: Officials of the ousted Communist government face trial by a court established to bring "Traitors and invaders" to justice, a new Islamic ruling council said. A truce between rival rebel factions seemed to be holding Thursday reports AP.

Editor: S. M. Ali

Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by S. M. Ali on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toynebee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.

The Midnight File

6 new states join WHO

GENEVA, May 7: Six newly-independent states have joined the World Health Organisation, raising its membership to 176, a spokeswoman for the United Nations agency said today, reports Reuters.

Yangon frees 8 detainees

BANGKOK, May 7: The Myanmar military junta release another eight political prisoners today, the official radio Yangon said in a broadcast monitored here. The eight, two women and six men, were released from the infamous Insein prison in the capital and Taunggyi jail in central Myanmar radio said, reports AFP.

10 Tigers killed in battles

COLOMBO, May 7: Security forces shot dead at least ten Tamil guerrillas and lost three of their own men in fierce battles that erupted today in Sri Lanka's war-torn east, officials here said. The clashes broke out when government troops ambushed and killed three guerrillas from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in coastal Batticaloa district, military spokesman Colonel Sarath Munasinghe said, reports AFP.

Hasina knows better

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Hasina that the BNP had spent Taka 300 crore in the last parliament elections and said: "Such an allegation is not only false but also insulting for the entire nation."

Barrister Salam Talukdar said: "The patriotic people exercised their franchise analysing the past deeds of all political parties and judiciously voted in favour of the BNP."

Barrister Salam Talukdar said: "It is better known to the Awami League chief that it is not possible to enjoy people's verdict by spending money, because it is not a fact that it had not tried to adopt such means during last 16 years."

He said the Awami League and its leaders had turned somersaults time and again betraying the blood of innumerable martyrs during the last 9 years of anti-autocracy movement. It had welcomed the Martial Law imposed by Ershad who grabbed power by ousting popularly elected Sattar Sahib at gun point.

The BNP Secretary General said they had shared power and resources through different means. The 1986 election was an evidence of this. The Ziaur Rahman does not benefit them, he said.

Barrister Salam Talukdar said he expected concerted efforts, responsible statements and behaviour from all concerned to make the best use of the opportunity to establish and protect the rights and fulfil the basic needs of the people through parliamentary democracy that we have achieved.

He said it was quite evident that Sheikh Hasina made an imaginary, false and personal malicious speech Wednesday picking up the thread of Begum Zia's speech. But while referring to the frequent tour abroad, taking funds from the RAW no name of party or leader was mentioned anywhere. Still why the Awami League chief became very furious on this issue was a point to ponder.

Tagore's birthday

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long programme in the afternoon, with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof. Jahanara Begum presiding over the opening ceremony.

The Prime Minister's itinerary on the day will include a visit to the Rabindra Kachari Bari, a photo exhibition and a book fair.

Meanwhile, Bangla Academy has arranged a seminar on 'modernism and topicality in Tagore literature' at the academy's seminar room at 5 pm.

Prof. Syed Manjurul Islam will present the key-note paper on the topic while Santosh Gupta, Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque and Dr Akter Kamal will take part in the discussion. Dr Mohammad Moniruzzaman will preside.

Nazrul Academy will hold a cultural function in its premises at 6 pm.

Shishu Academy's cultural programme on this occasion will take place at 5 pm.

Rabindra Charcha Kendra will screen documentaries by Satyajit Ray based on Tagore's writing at 6 pm.

Rohingya

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The accord on the modalities stipulates that both sides will designate officials who will have mandate of their respective governments to resolve any problem that may arise in the repatriation process through mutual discussions."

Yesterday's accord says that Bangladesh will open 10 transit camps for the exit of the refugees and Myanmar will set up five reception centres 'corresponding to Bangladesh transit camps' to receive the refugees.

The accord also envisages that a total of 5000 refugees will be repatriated every alternate day — 500 from each camp.

In another development, Bangladesh and the UNHCR are set to sign an agreement providing for the latter's involvement and assistance in the repatriation.

The accord, which has already been drafted, will be signed by the Relief Ministry and the UNHCR in a few days.

On the Bangladesh side, the Ministries of Relief and Home and the local administrations of bordering districts will handle the repatriation.

According to concerned sources, the refugees will travel home by ship.

ple through parliamentary democracy that we have achieved.

Barrister Salam Talukdar said Wednesday's speech of the Awami League chief had once again proved her envious attitude toward BNP, its leaders and the people following her failure during the last 16 years to capture state power either legally or illegally.

He said a section of newspapers in the country published a story on the basis of a report appearing in the issue of the Indian Express on April 28 to the effect that the "RAW" gave four crore rupees to a defeated party. That newspaper also published the source through which the amount was given. But it did not mention to whom or to which party the amount was given. A report was published on the speech of Begum Khaleda Zia at a huge public meeting at Thakurgaon on May 6 under the headline "those undertake tour abroad frequently and take money from abroad can not be friends of the people," he added.

He said it was quite evident that Sheikh Hasina made an imaginary, false and personal malicious speech Wednesday picking up the thread of Begum Zia's speech. But while referring to the frequent tour abroad, taking funds from the RAW no name of party or leader was mentioned anywhere. Still why the Awami League chief became very furious on this issue was a point to ponder.

What can we do if the people of the country referred to Awami League or Sheikh Hasina for any conduct and behaviour of any party or its leaders? he asked.

BCI

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those houses.

Gulshan police went to the houses of Kazi Ashraf Uddin and Tahera Akhtar. The police drive was still on till the writing of this report. Gulshan police also went to the house of Fakrul Islam Munshi, the proprietor of AP Ayurbedi and owner of a travel agency. The police found that he had left the house a month back.

The same day, the court ordered the search and seizure of all liquid assets, records and documents of all branches of BCI.

The move came as the inspection team of Bangladesh Bank refused to visit the BCI branches due to security reasons.

The order was given on the basis of a petition filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka by the General Manager of the Banking Control Department of the central bank, Sultan Ahmed Mollah.

The petition said that BCI authority was trying to destroy the original records of the company lying with its head office and other branches. It was also alleged in the petition that the accused directors of the company were trying to remove the movable assets of the company.

On the other hand, the BCI authority submitted application to the Inspection Department of the bank the same day, urging them to visit its offices.

Passengers

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racket may be at work to deny bona fide passengers their right to embark.

"We have information that once these seats are made vacant in this illegal manner, they are then filled up with passengers kept on the waiting list, with these stand-by passengers paying extra money in cash to the racketeers for the privilege," the official said.

In addition to causing immense sufferings to passengers who buy their tickets in the legal market, this practice at ZIA is causing problems for travel agents and airlines operating offices in Dhaka, the official, whose airline is one of the sufferers, said.