

Hasina asks partymen not to meddle with BCL affairs

By Nurul Kabir

Awami League Working Committee (ALWC) in an emergency meeting last night decided to observe a country-wide 'anti terrorism day' on May 17 in protest against what it said Jamaat's armed attack on Chhatra League conference Friday which left three party workers killed.

The meeting also decided to postpone central council of the party scheduled to be held on May 30, meeting sources said.

Mohammad Nasim MP while talking to The Daily Star said, the party council session had to be postponed because the proposed venue of the council was not available on the scheduled date.

Another AL leader attending the Working Committee meeting said that the council meeting, would, however, be held by the first week of the next month.

The date of the meeting would be fixed this afternoon, the AL leader added.

The meeting was adjourned at 11-30 last night and will resume at 4 this afternoon.

Presided over by the party chief Sheikh Hasina the yesterday's meeting was attended, among others, by Abdus Samad Azad, Tofael Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Abdul Mannan, Sajeda Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim, Matia Chowdhury, Shudhansu Shekhar Halder and AKM Jahangir. According to sources, the meeting also discussed the central conference of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of AL, beginning today.

TCB sugar scandal

Kazi Zafar chargesheeted

Former Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed was chargesheeted Sunday for illegal acceptance of higher rate for importing 20,000 tons of sugar through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Stranded Pakistanis

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Trust for Repatriation and Rehabilitation of the Pakistanis Stranded in Bangladesh headed by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is far away from the target.

Even the 'token' repatriation of some 2000 families of stranded Pakistanis — that is some 10,000 persons — within the next few months as decided by the Trust Board at its first meeting on November 11 in Islamabad seems to be uncertain.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired the meeting which was attended by several Pakistani ministers and the chief of the Muslim World League, Dr Abdullah Omar Nassef, also a vice chairman of the Board.

But Nasim Khan, the Chief Patron of the Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGR), refutes the idea that fund shortage is any cause for the delay.

Money is not the problem, the problem is the political will on the part of the Pakistan Government, Khan, undergoing treatment at the Rabita Hospital at Mohammadpur, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Dhaka deposes

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the mission in Yangon, a Foreign Ministry official said yesterday.

With only four days to go, Dhaka was yet to receive the similar gesture from Yangon officially.

According to an agreement on the physical arrangements of the repatriation signed Thursday in Dhaka by the ambassadors of the respective countries, the process is to begin May 15 but according to official sources it would start 'in full swing' not before May 21.

As the preparations go on, the Rohingyas are still crossing into Bangladesh territories, giving rise to fears about the success of the repatriation initiative.

According to the Thursday's accord, a total of 5000 refugees will be taken home every alternate day from each of the 10 exit points on the Bangladesh side.

Myanmar is to set up five centres to receive them.

Bangladesh has deputed 20 officials — one as in-charge and one as alternate designate for each camp.

UNB adds: As many as 1677 Rohingyas Muslims from Myanmar crossed into Bangladesh on Saturday to escape the persecution of the Myanmar army, raising the total number to 2,48,284.

Muslims in the Arakan state of Myanmar are still being subjected to torture and oppression committed by the Myanmar troops, according to information trickling in.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the inaugural function of a two-day national seminar on "Policy Options for Economic Breakthrough" at hotel Sonargon in the city yesterday. — PID photo

PM : Seminar

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communication for ensuring balanced uplift of all regions. "Construction of Jamuna Bridge is our election commitment," she added.

She stressed the need for national consensus for development and said "in democracy there may be differences of opinion. But we should be united on national issue." "Government is nothing perennial" she said, adding "the country and the people are ever-lasting".

Recalling the glorious armed struggle for the country's independence, the Prime Minister said "we did not fight for merely a separate land-mass, or merely for a flag of our own. We, as a nation, wanted to lead a decent life and fashion our lives according to our free option," she said the prime objective was to achieve economic emancipation alongside political independence.

Begum Zia said the biggest challenge of today was to accelerate the pace of national economic development. "Free and open-hearted threadbare discussions of various opinion groups and segments of the society are the sine qua non for successfully meeting this challenge."

Saifur Rahman stressed the need for improving both the market and state saying "neither of the two are perfect in Bangladesh."

MCCI president Morshed Khan described the existing power sector as alarming and disgraceful and expressed the hope that the government would finalise a long-term energy policy in consultation with the trade and industry.

Minister, members of parliament, political leaders, diplomats, Editors of national dailies and agencies and economists attended the seminar.

Hoodlums storm Bangla College, assault Principal

By Staff Correspondent

A group of youngsters stormed the Mirpur Bangla College and assaulted three teachers, including the Principal, Prof Ishak Hossain at the college compound at noon Sunday.

The miscreants also ransacked several rooms and damaged furniture during the half-an-hour rampage.

A group of youngsters attacked the teachers when they went to visit an under-construction building at the college.

Later, the miscreants stormed the college building and ransacked the rooms.

According to sources, a group of local hoodlums was trying to take possession of a plot adjacent to the college which was earlier given to the college by the government.

Mirpur police said they went to the spot immediately after the incident but could not arrest any one.

The injured teachers were given first aid at a private clinic.

BCI challenges

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half of BCI.

The hearing of the case may begin today, said BCI sources.

The central bank ordered the suspension of BCI activities on April 29.

Barrister Ishfaq Ahmed has denied a report published in The Daily Star yesterday, stating he will be moving the bail petition of the Chairman of BCI, Mustafizur Rahman.

This was done by Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud in his own capacity, and not as a partner of the law firm of which Barrister Ishfaq is a member.

Our Court Correspondent adds: The case record of the BCI was transferred to the District and Sessions Judge Court, Dhaka yesterday.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka sent the record to the Judge Court.

Meanwhile, a bail petition for Alhaj Abdul Wadud, one of the directors of BCI, was moved yesterday at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court.

The court, however, rejected the bail prayer and fixed May 12 for the next hearing.

Russian space industry chief blasts US for 'waging trade war'

MOSCOW, May 10: Russia's space industry supremo

Alexandre Dunayev has accused the United States of waging a trade war to smash space programme cooperation between Russia and India, Interfax news agency reported, reports AFP.

Washington has threatened to impose economic sanction on both countries if Russia delivers rocket boosters to India, arguing that an agreement on rocket technology transfer would infringe the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which restricts proliferation of the rockets able to carry nuclear warheads.

Dunayev, president of Russia's Glavkosmos Space Complex, said the boosters in question — designed in the 1960s for the Russian moon programme — could not be adapted to military purposes.

He added that Russia and India are both willing to cooperate with an international inquiry to determine whether the exchange would break the AIM Treaty.

He pointed out that the United States is close to clinching a similar space technology transfer agreement with China, and is worried that India might join the ranks of countries able to put geostationary communications satellites into orbit.

About 65,000 people work on the Russo-Indian project, and the contract is worth 700 million rupees (25 million dollars) to Glavkosmos, said Dunayev.

But US officials say the deal is worth about 200 million dollars.

Meanwhile, India has begun

final preparations to launch a rocket in the next few weeks

amid a row with the United States over Russian plans to sell it space technology, the Press Trusts of India (PTI) said today.

India intends to launch its indigenously built augmented satellite launch vehicle (ASLV) "within a few weeks time" in either May or June, officials said. Pre-flight checks on the modified ASLV have begun at a launch pad in Sriharikota off India's southeast coast, PTI said.

Two previous bids to launch the rocket in 1987 and 1988 both ended in disaster.

"The pre-countdown checks in progress at the launch centre will be followed by a countdown about 48 hours before the actual blast-off," said Suresh Chandra Gupta, director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, the builders of the ASLV.

The announcement coincides with a row over the controversial plan by Russia to transfer its rocket technology to India.

New Delhi has said it will not bow to pressure from Washington, arguing that the planned deal did not violate the MTCR as the technology was meant for civilian purposes.

The Russian technology is vital for the second phase of India's fledgling space programme, New Delhi has said, adding that it was not against buying the know-how from the West if it could match Moscow's price tag.

Gupta said the modified 24-metre (79-foot) ASLV is de-

signed to place a 150-kilogram (330-pound) satellite into

space, adding that it will orbit earth at an altitude of 450 kilometres (280 miles) and could civilian data.

Faults, which led to the two previous crashes, have been rectified in the latest ASLV, he said.

When India launched the ASLV in 1987 and 1988 the vehicle and its payload crashed both times minutes after lift-off into the Bay of Bengal, dealing a blow to the country's ambitious space programme.

According to military experts, the ASLV will be capable of carrying medium-range missiles, but New Delhi has not commented on this.

JP postpones today's rally

By Staff Correspondent

The public rally of Jatiya Party which was scheduled to be held today (Monday) near the Baitul Mukarram Mosque has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, party sources said.

The date of the rally was announced more than a fortnight ago, but it was postponed without citing any specific reason.

Party acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury told The Daily Star that they were not given permission to hold the rally at the venue announced earlier.

A fresh date of the rally will be announced later on, he added.



Chhayonot programme on the Shilpakala Academy stage yesterday in observance of Rabindra Jayanti. — Star photo

3000 illegal foreign workers in Taiwan surrender

TAIPEI, May 10: Hundreds of foreigners working illegally in Taiwan surrendered to police today the last day of an amnesty before a crackdown on illicit immigrant labour, reports Reuter.

About a thousand foreigners reported to police stations in Taipei and a smaller number surrendered elsewhere, bringing the total involved in the 10-day amnesty to more than 3,000, a police spokesman said.

Labour officials estimate at least 30,000 foreigners are working illegally in Taiwan, mostly Thais, Filipinos, Malaysians and Indonesians drawn by the island's labour shortage and booming economy.

Workers turning themselves in under the amnesty will be deported in July without being detained and fined and will have an opportunity to apply for legal employment in Taiwan.

Taiwan lifted its ban on the hiring of foreign labour by the private sector late last year, agreeing to admit 15,000 workers from Southeast Asia under a strict quota system.

The government fears an influx of foreign labour could cause social problems and hold back modernisation by sustaining old-fashioned, labour-intensive industries.

BCL

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Parliament, Sheikh Hasina, will inaugurate the conference at the Institute of Engineers at 10-30 am.

A central leader of BCL (S-A) said that the committee could not be finalised till Sunday, even after a series of meetings with the AL chief.

Party insiders said that at least twelve candidates were vying for the post of President and about twelve others for that of General Secretary.

The contestants who are in leading positions include Golam Mostafa Sujan, SM Kamal, Wahiduzzaman Chand, Mosharraf Hossain incumbent President Shah Alam, Jahangir Sattar Tinku, Montajul Huq Mehdi, Sabir Hossain Sagar, Ruhul Amin and Ashim Kumar Ukil.

BB directed

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received by any non-banking institution, as may be specified by general or special order."

Under the same Article, the central bank has also necessary powers to "give other directions" to such finance companies on its own, without necessarily going through the Ministry of Finance.

Despite these provisions the new law was felt essential by the Finance Ministry as the BB repeatedly complained that it was inadequately equipped to deal with the non-banking financial institutions.

The Midnight File

Taiwan to maintain ties with South Korea

TAIPEI, May 10: Taiwan will maintain diplomatic relations with South Korea despite Seoul's growing time with Beijing, a senior Taiwanese official said. "South Korean leaders assured me they will work with us to strengthen our bilateral relations," Tsing Yen-Si, Secretary-General to President Lee Teng Hsi, told reporters of his return from Seoul late on Saturday. Tsing led the highest level Taiwanese delegation in years on a four day visit to South Korea amid media speculation that Seoul was preparing to break off diplomatic relations with Taiwan and recognise its arch-rival China, reports Reuter.

Sikhs kill 10 more in Punjab

NEW DELHI, May 10: Sikh militants firing automatic guns drove through a street Sunday in a Punjab village, killing 10 people, at least seven of them Hindus, news reports said. In New Delhi, suspected Sikh separatist rebels killed a top government official, DS Tyagi, hours before his daughter's wedding Sunday. United News of India said two Sikh youths rang the doorbell of Tyagi's home and shot him from point blank range when he opened the door. The killers escaped on a motor scooter, reports AP.

New AL policy

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mondi Rotary Club at Sonargon Hotel Sunday evening. She received the Paul Harris fellow Recognition Certificate of the International Club on behalf of her slain father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, at the function.

The award, named after the founder President of Rotary International, was given to Bangabandhu in recognition of a contribution of 1,000 US dollars made on his behalf by Dhanmondi Rotary Club President Azam Khan.

Describing the economic policy of Awami League announced in March, the Awami League president said that the objective of the policy was to encourage and protect private entrepreneurship for increased productivity.

Alleviation of poverty generation of employment and increase in the standard of living on a priority basis were also the goal of the economic policy of her party, she said.

The policy, she added, also emphasises reduction of allocation for the unproductive sectors and suggests diverting the funds to education, technology, human resource development.

The process of development, aimed at economic emancipation, formation of capital and investment in the country have come to a stop since the assassination of Bangabandhu, she said.

"Every development planning has its own philosophy and logic. One must give a plan enough time before judging it... however, it was not allowed to happen in Bangladesh," Hasina said in reference to the development efforts by the Awami League government immediately after the country's 1971 War of Independence.

"The inevitable impact of changing government by the unconstitutional means has created a state of anarchy, irregularities and confusion in the country's economy and administration."

She called for increased democratic practice in the local government and in the social welfare organisations for giving the newly-achieved democracy a firm footing.

Hasina thanked the Rotary International for honouring her father with the Paul Harris recognition certificate and said, "This award has also honoured the whole nation."

The function was also addressed by Rotarian MNG Azam Khan, Rotary Club District Governor Jalal U Ahmed, Vice President of the club Syed Noor Islam, past president Nurul Islam, and Sheikh Abdul Hafiz.

Later, the president of the Rotary Club of Dhanmondi handed over the certificate to Sheikh Hasina.

20000 to perform hajj this year

A total of 20,000 pilgrims from Bangladesh are expected to visit Saudi Arabia this year for reforming Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, state minister for Religious Affairs Prof M A Mannan said here yesterday, reports BSS.

Inaugurating a seminar on the 'significance and dimensions of Hajj', organised by Hajj Committee, Bangladesh, the State Minister said of the 20,000 pilgrims, 5000 would be sent under government arrangement while the rest about 15,000 would go on their personal arrangement.

Presided over by Professor Emeritus, Dr Serajul Haque of Dhaka University and Convenor of the Hajj Committee, Bangladesh, the inaugural session of the seminar was addressed, among others, by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Alhaj Muhammad Gajdarloo, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Prof Shamsul Haq and Iranian Cultural Attache H Ali Madadi. Home Minister M A Matin sent a message on the occasion.

Tinbigha issue

Forward Bloc MLA suspended for violating directive

CALCUTTA, May 10: The controversies over the proposed transfer of the Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh took a new turn as an influential Forward Bloc MLA and former Minister, Kamal Guha who spearheaded an unrelenting movement over the issue was suspended today, reports PTI.

The Forward Bloc leadership took the step as Guha had 'violated' the party's directive not to carry on the movement opposing the proposed transfer of the Tinbigha corridor in Coochbihar district.

The secretary of the state unit of the party, Ashoke Ghosh said that decision was taken at a meeting of the party secretariat.

Meanwhile, describing the suspension of Guha as 'unconstitutional', Amar Roy Pradhan, a party leader and Lok Sabha member from Coochbihar and Bimal Basu, a party MLA from the district said that since Guha was a member of the central committee of the party the secretariat cannot take such a decision.

Orissa liquor tragedy toll crosses 200

CUTTACK, May 10: The death toll in the liquor tragedy in Cuttack city and its neighbourhood crossed 200 this morning, while total confusion prevailed at the SCB Medical College Hospital, reports PTI.

Unofficial sources, however put the toll at a much higher figure.

Hospital authorities said that since the fateful day on Thursday last a total of 684 victims had been admitted to the casualty department, at least 128 of whom were brought either dead or died on arrival.

Many others admitted into the wards died subsequently, but their exact number was not available on account of the chaotic situation prevailing in the hospital wards and post-mortem halls.

Meanwhile, the toll in the capital hospital at Bhubaneswar rose to seven this morning with the death of one of the 14 victims admitted there since Friday evening.

Rohingya

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leaving the camps.

Meanwhile, the prospects for the repatriation to start from May 15 seem to be slim.

There has been no word from the Myanmar side if they have set up any reception centre to welcome the refugees as stipulated in an agreement signed Thursday.

The Bangladesh side is yet to handover the first list of refugees for the repatriation.

Meanwhile, officials admitted that some groups were motivating the refugees against agreeing to go back home. This motivation is taking place as more and more refugees are coming everyday.

According to official sources, about 2000 fresh refugees arrived today that swelled the number to two lakh 50 thousand.

But unofficial sources estimated today's arrival at about 3000.

Gunbattle

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the BREL office. Awami League held a meeting in front of Doeth Building during the hartal hours with Chittagong Uttar Awami League Vice-President Abul Quasem Master presiding.

It was addressed, among others, by party city unit Secretary ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, district unit (South) Secretary Moshleuddin Ahmed and ATM Pours Islam. (Editorial on Page 4)