

Afghanistan bans communist party

KABUL, May 12: Afghan authorities banned the former ruling communist party and ordered the seizure of its property on Tuesday, sources in the interim administration said, reports AFP.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the leadership council comprising all Mujahedeen party chiefs.

The council also decided to remove all "anti-religious" literature from Afghan libraries, the sources said.

The council meeting was attended by chiefs of the various Islamic Mujahedeen factions and their representatives.

It ordered that books and literature related to communism should be seized and destroyed.

Another report says, gunmen shielding their faces with handkerchieves stormed the unoccupied residence of the Saudi Arabian embassy, stripped the bungalow of all its valuables and drove away two

Mercedes-Benz cars, diplomats said today.

About 40 heavily-armed men were involved in the raid late Monday night and encountered no resistance from the three Afghan guards whom they tied up with rope and held at gunpoint, the diplomats said.

"They took everything," said a guard at the residence, being looked after by the French Embassy here since Saudi Arabia pulled out its diplomats from the Afghan capital in the months preceding the Soviet troops withdrawal completed in February 1989.

The French Embassy lodged a strong protest with the Afghan Foreign Ministry against the robbery.

The embassy residence is located on a lane behind the heavily guarded Interior Ministry and diplomats expressed surprise that the raid had gone unnoticed.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting in Shailakupa College premises yesterday. — PID photo

Rohingya repatriation

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Rohingya refugees that they would not be subject to persecution on their return home.

There should be maximum pressure from the world community, especially the United Nations, to change the situation from which they (refugees) have fled", the member of the House of Lords told a press conference yesterday at the conclusion of a week-long visit to the country.

The Chairman of the Asia Committee of the British Refugee Council insisted on the 'physical presence' of the UN at various stages of repatriation upto resettlement to restore confidence among the Rohingyas.

Speaking on the 'indigenous people' of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the renowned British human rights activist compared the Shantibahini to Irish Republican Army (IRA) and said, "I strongly condemn the raids by the Shantibahini that have killed innocent people".

The former British MP, who later spoke to The Daily Star exclusively, said that both Shantibahini and the IRA were being aided by forces beyond the borders and hence 'have international connotation'.

Welcoming the institution of an enquiry committee on the April 11 CHT incident, he disclosed that the Chakma issue would be raised at an international conference on the

rights of 'indigenous people' scheduled to precede the Rio Earth Summit in June.

Lord Ennals, whose trip is sponsored by the Campaign for Disaster Prevention in Bangladesh (CDPB), will also prepare a report for the CDPB on status of the World Bank-coordinated Flood Action Plan and the implementation of the cyclone and disaster preparedness programme.

Lord Ennals, who visited the cyclone-hit areas accompanied by CDPB General Secretary Ayub Korom Ali, said that the construction of about one-tenth of the cyclone shelters were completed.

A total of 5,000 shelters are to be built.

On the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis, on which he will report back to British NGOs interested in refugees, he observed that 'much more international aid would be necessary to promote the project'.

Roughly some 2,37,000 stranded Pakistanis have been registered, he said citing the recently concluded survey in the camps. The final report is yet to be completed.

During his stay in Bangladesh, he visited the Rohingya camps, Pakistan's camps in Dhaka and Chittagong and met with the Speaker, the Foreign Minister, senior officials of Foreign Ministry, GOC of Chittagong and NGO leaders.

Zardari attends NA session

ISLAMABAD, May 12: Asif Zardari, husband of Pakistan former Prime Minister and Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto, attended the ongoing National Assembly session here today, reports Xinhua.

Zardari, who is under trial in criminal charge in Special Court, was brought to Islamabad from Karachi under the arrangement of the federal government and the Sindh provincial government.

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Hasina doubts repatriation without UN involvement

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina Tuesday called for involving UN agencies in the repatriation process of Rohingya refugees, reports UNB.

Hasina put forward the demand while talking to Lord David Ennals, Chairman of the Asia Committee of the British Refugee Council, who called on her in her parliament chamber.

Criticising the agreement signed by the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar on repatriation of the Burmese refugees, she expressed doubts about success of the accord without involvement of UN bodies.

The Awami League President also demanded release of Burmese leader Aung Sun Suu Kye and transfer of power to the elected representatives to restore democratic atmosphere in that country.

Party sources said other issues like the problem of the trouble torn Chittagong Hill Tracts also came up for discussion.

Hasina stressed a political solution to the CHT problem.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, and Tofael Ahmed, MP were present.

5 killed, 12 hurt in road mishaps

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 12: Three members of a bridal party, including a woman and her minor son, were killed and another four injured in a head-on collision between a baby-taxi and a speeding truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway today.

According to police, three people died on the spot when the baby-taxi they were riding in collided with a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction at around 12 noon near Shitakunda Upazila.

The dead were identified as Rowshan Ara Begum (30), her son, Kalam (7) and the driver of the baby-taxi, Kamal (27).

All the injured were admitted to the upazila health complex.

Our Comilla Correspondent adds: Two people were killed and eight others injured when a Chandpur-bound bus from Chittagong collided with a truck yesterday (Tuesday).

The driver of the bus, Abul Bashar, (40), of village Hirapur, of Chatkhill upazila, Noakhali and the unidentified helper died on the spot. Eight critically injured people were admitted to the local hospital.

A case has been registered with Choudhagram PS.

2 held for forging signature of PM's secy

The police have arrested two persons on charge of forging the signature of one of the private secretaries of the Prime Minister recently, reports BSS.

The persons were taken into custody in two separate cases. One of the accused, Mohammad Litonuzzaman alias Liton forged the signature of the private secretary for getting the daughter of Abul Kashem, Superintendent Engineer of BWA, admitted into a city school. Liton is the son of Bashir Mian of House Number 5, Block C, Road Number 9, Section 12, Mirpur and presently living at 574/2, South Goran, PS Sabujbagh, Dhaka.

In the other case, Sheikh Mehdi Hasan alias Saikat forged the signature and official seal of the private secretary for securing a job for his younger brother Sheikh Yusuf Ali at Eastern Refinery at Chittagong. He is the son of late Abdul Awal, village Gava, PS Banaripara district Barisal presently of Mark International, 129 Jubilee Road Chittagong.

Legal actions are underway against both the accused persons.

40 hurt as Jamaat, trial body clash

SIRAJGANJ, May 12: At least 40 people were injured, ten arrested and an office of Jamaat-e-Islami was set ablaze following clashes between rival groups at Mukundagati Bazar of Belkuchi upazila today, reports UNB.

Police fired teargas shells and resorted to baton-charge to disperse the angry mob, and booked ten people on charges of disturbing the law and order situation.

Khaleda

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and sovereignty.

She said the programmes of BNP were directed towards people's welfare and it would fulfil all its election pledges, one by one. In this connection, she referred to the various steps already taken in that direction.

Begum Zia criticised the past autocratic regime and said it had wanted to make Bangladesh a foreign-dependent and import-oriented country. She said her government wanted to increase production in the fields and factories so that it could attain self-reliance and ultimately become an exporting country.

Stressing the need for making canal digging programme a success, Begum Zia said "we have to store water for dry season since the level of water in the river is fast receding".

The Prime Minister called upon the people to remain alert against conspiracy to foil the on-going development process and said her party did not believe in destruction and would not maintain any relations with those who resort to terrorism and disrupt peace and discipline.

Referring to local demands, Begum Zia said all genuine demands would be met.

Earlier, the Prime Minister went to Shailakupa Upazila and addressed a public meeting at the college ground. She also inaugurated the building of the Pourashava and planted a coconut sapling at its premises.

Addressing a meeting there, Begum Zia called upon the people to curb smuggling across the border for the growth of national economy.

She said her government wanted to set up medium and small industries in the rural areas to bring about balance in the development. "We want to build Bangladesh as an industrial nation", she said.

Security beefed up Left front-BJP clash over Tinbigha feared

SILIGURI, May 12: Security measures have been beefed up to face any unprecedented situation with the ruling Left Front and opposition BJP in West Bengal, together with the Kuchlibari populace at loggerheads over the leasing of the Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh, reports PTI.

While the state government is more than willing to lease out the corridor, the BJP together with some political parties has made it clear that it would not allow even an inch of Tinbigha land to Bangladesh.

However, the Left Front is faced with an uneasy situation with its constituent partner the RSP, directly opposing the

state government stand on the issue and denying the Left Front Chairman, Salfen Dasgupta's claim that the Left Front partners were 'unanimous' in leasing out the corridor.

The RSP delegation led by Sourin Bhattacharjee which visited Tinbigha and nearby Dhaprahat area yesterday, alleged that implementation of the Tinbigha Accord was an 'international issue' and there was no reason for the West Bengal Chief Minister to be 'over enthusiastic' over its implementation, specially when the accord was 'against the sentiments of the local people and posed a threat to the nation's sovereignty'.

Velayati due Sunday

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati arrives in Dhaka Sunday on a two-day visit to Bangladesh, it was officially announced Tuesday, reports UNB.

Commerce Minister M K Anwar will receive him at the airport.

Velayati, who is coming to Bangladesh at the invitation of Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, is expected to call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Four injured as students clash in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, May 12: Four persons were injured in clashes between Chhatra Maitre and Chhatra Dal activists in the town yesterday.

Of the injured, three persons were hospitalised and condition of one Habibur Rahman was stated to be critical.

The clash occurred when processions of the two students' groups confronted each other first, near Sadar Hospital at about 11 am and then near the Surbitan Cinema on the Rail Road in the evening.

The clash continued till 10 pm paralysing normal activities in the town.

Situation turned very serious at Bejpara when a group armed with deadly weapons were seen openly moving about the area.

Another reports said that a group of employees of local municipality armed with lethal weapons attacked sweepers colony and destroyed it completely.

The attackers beat up women and children before driving the inmates out of the colony.

Earth summit

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of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) representatives is expected to join the conference.

The Bangladesh NGO statement to the Earth Summit has already been prepared incorporating 27 points. One of the important points of the declaration says 'UNCED be a turning point from a growth-oriented, one sided economic thought to a health-oriented, education-oriented, poverty alleviation-oriented one. Let an appropriate institutional framework be built up through which such a change can be given effect'.

Environmentalists feel that with the growing demands for the cutting of carbon emissions by the United States, an uncertainty looms large over the participation of President George Bush in the conference. If George Bush failed to turn up in the conference it would lose much of its importance, they added.

Last month the US Senate passed a resolution 87-11 calling on Bush to attend the conference.

Road link snapped

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the workers took them for students. Heavy police contingents were deployed in the area.

The incident of clashes first occurred on Monday noon following an accident in which a truck collided with a university bus near Ballapur area of Savar, 18 kilometer away from Dhaka. The clashes left 20 people injured from both sides.

Several rounds of talks between the university authorities and transport workers' leaders at Gabtali following the incident, failed to restore normalcy on the highway.

Our JU Correspondent adds: About 700 first year examinees could not return home yesterday from the Jahangirnagar University.

Few students who tried to go home by public buses were reportedly assaulted by some transport workers at the Gabtali bus station.

Meanwhile, the JU students burned two truck near the campus yesterday evening.

Students brought out processions and held rallies under the auspices of All Party Stu-

dents Unity at the Jahangirnagar University.

Following a news that transport workers had detained five students at Gabtali, the students held a rally in front of the office of the Vice Chancellor demanding release of the students.

The students postponed the rally at 4.45 pm when the police source informed them that no student was held by the transport workers at Gabtali.

The JU VC in a statement said, "No expected result has been achieved through repeated contacts with the authorities regarding the situation." "This complicated situation has been created by rigid attitude of the transport leaders," the VC said.

JU teachers association and other university organisations demanded punishment to the transport workers responsible for the incidents.

Later in the evening the VC, the Proctor, JUCSU leaders and other student leaders left Jahangirnagar University for talks with the Home Minister before the transport workers' leaders.

Commentary

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One explanation is that the sight of a huge crowd at a mass rally cheering the leader, whether she is Begum Zia or Sheikh Hasina, has distorted the perspective. Then, the leader succumbs to the temptation of saying just what evokes the loudest applause, including the bogey of conspiracy.

Another explanation is, neither Begum Zia nor Sheikh Hasina has the benefit of advice from seasoned politicians who could say where the leader might have gone wrong. The elderly ones feel too insecure to, rock the boat; the younger ones are too inexperienced to gain the attention of the leader.

In fact, there is a growing concern within both BNP and AL that their leaders may have isolated themselves from those who were once their close political associates.

As a product of the so-called conspiracies, the infighting does its inevitable damage to the country's political life. Many insiders are now convinced that it has also spread to the ministries, with secretaries and deputy secretaries, and officers down below, fighting among themselves for "saving their skin", as the saying goes, often accusing one another of conspiracies and plots, just like politicians.

One redeeming feature of what is otherwise a dismal situation is that a number of politicians who probably form the silent majority, belonging to different groupings, have started talking among themselves about problems facing the country. Angry and disenchanted with the two parties, they still speak in negative terms. But it may not be long before they find a new language and say, "Let's forget the conspiracies and face the future."

One day, perhaps in near future, this message may be heard, loud and clear, by both BNP and AL. Herein lies our hope for the country.

The Midnight File

Bush to attend Rio summit

WASHINGTON, May 12: President George Bush today said he will attend a UN sponsored Earth Summit in Brazil next month at which world leaders will gather to discuss the environment. Bush made his announcement after US negotiators had succeeded in having strict limits on gaseous emissions removed from a treaty due to be signed at the summit, reports Reuter.

Miriam retains lead over Ramos in Filipino polls

MANILA, May 12: Partial unofficial returns compiled by television stations today after two million votes counted in Philippine presidential elections, showed that Miriam Santiago of People's Reform Party was leading over Fidel Ramos of People Power Party by over 50 thousand votes, reports Reuter.

Seven Azeris killed in artillery attacks

BAKU, May 12: Seven Azeris were killed and 77 others wounded in Armenian artillery attacks overnight at Madrakert in eastern Nagorno Karabakh, the Azerbaijani defence ministry said today. The ministry said the Armenian fighters were armed with grand rockets, reports AFP.

US recalls envoy from Belgrade

WASHINGTON, May 12: The United States recalled its ambassador from Belgrade today, one day after the nations of the European Community announced a similar move, citing Serbian aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports Reuter.

Black, white agree on forming interim govt

JOHANNESBURG, May 12: Black and white groups reached tentative agreement on the first phase of an interim government that would replace white rule, officials said Tuesday, reports AP.

Delegates at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) agreed on a 19-member multi-party "transitional executive council" to help run the country.

In other developments, the government was attacked in Parliament over a report on widespread corruption in a department. Opposition parties called for the resignation of the government or ministers who administered the department.

Nineteen black and white organizations, including the Awami League (AL) will soon announce a 54-member council preparatory committee with the party Chief Sheikh Hasina as its Chairman, sources say.

According to the AL sources, the party Working Committee meeting held Monday resolved to constitute this committee comprising all the 54 members of the working committee.

Sajeda Chowdhury MP will be the General Secretary of the preparatory committee.

In a bid to make the party council session to be held on June 1 and 2 a success, the preparatory committee will form more than ten sub-committees to look after different aspects of the session which include reception of the delegates, finance, discipline, food management, amendment to the party constitution etc.

Sheikh Hasina and Sajeda Chowdhury, President and Secretary of the party have been authorised by the AL working committee to form all these sub-committees at their own choice, sources add.

AL council preparatory body soon

By Staff Correspondent

The transitional council would be appointed by President FW de Klerk with CODESA's approval.

But CODESA delegates in another working group were still far from agreement on how to draw up a new constitution.

The government wants a guarantee of white interests in any new constitution. The ANC and other opposition groups say this would amount to a veto and oppose special rights for minorities.

If an agreement is announced this weekend, an interim government could be in place within a couple months. However, de Klerk has made clear that he will remain the most powerful figure in any transitional arrangement.

BCI MD arrested

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ment company floated by Mustafiz in 1985 was severely hit by a liquidity crisis after the eid-ul-fitr as the sponsor illegally funnelled out money from the company. As a result BCI failed to honour the claims of its depositors.

Unlike an investment company, the BCI started functioning as a bank and the Bangladesh Bank had reports of malpractices about the company.

Following the liquidity crisis, Bangladesh Bank suspended the operation of the BCI on April 29.

Mustafizur Rahman started his career in 1965 as an officer of the then United Bank Limited. He joined Janata Bank after liberation.

Later, in 1983, Mustafiz joined the country's first private bank, National Bank Limited (NBL), as the vice-president and soon became one of its directors.

He established the Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI), an investment company, in 1985 and became its Chairman and Managing Director.

Besides, he was the founder chairman of the Rupali Insurance Company, founder adviser of the Karnaphuli Insurance Company, director of the National Life Insurance Company and Chairman of the Peerless Cooperative Savings and Credit Society Limited.

The BCI Chairman also published a number of newspapers, weeklies and periodicals under the Swandip Group of Publications. He is the Publisher and Editor of the Daily Rupali and the other periodicals.

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