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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina leaves for Nepal

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday left for Nepal to attend an international seminar in Kathmandu. A party press release said, Sheikh Hasina would address as the chief guest the seminar on Lord Goutam Buddha's philosophy of welfare, peace and progress for mankind to be held today. She was seen off at the airport by Nepalese Ambassador M.B. Bista and party leaders, reports BSS.

3-day function on Buddha Purnima

A three-day function on the occasion of 'Buddha Purnima' began at the Dharmarajik Buddhist Monastery in the city. Mahasanganayak Ven Vishuddhananda Mahathero, President of Bangladesh Bouddha Krihsiti Prachar Sangha, inaugurated the function. Noted writer Bipradas Barua attended the morning session as the chief guest while Dr. Sasana Rakkhiti Bhikkhu and Dr. Sunanda Barua were present as the special guests, reports BSS.

One protester killed in firing at Balukhali camp Repatriation of Rohingya refugees postponed

By Staff Correspondent

One Myanmar refugee was shot dead at Balukhali camp on Thursday while repatriation of more than 2.5 lakh Myanmar refugees was put off until May 17 (Sunday), according to messages received in Dhaka last night.

Police and officials in Cox's Bazar district said Ansar used baton and then fired on about 2000 refugees who attacked and smashed the office of the in-charge of Camp-2 at Balukhali in Teknaf upazila in the district.

The refugees were protesting their repatriation to Myanmar which was scheduled to begin from today (Friday).

Bangladesh and Myanmar officials meeting in Teknaf Thursday decided to postpone repatriation until Sunday.

An official said over telephone that lack of preparation was the main reason for postponement.

He said officials of both the countries would meet again at Teknaf on Sunday to finalise how the repatriation should

begin.

A BSS report last night said the meeting noted that it was nearly impossible to start repatriation of the Rohingya refugees according to schedule as "firm physical barriers" were yet to be removed.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Omar Faruque Bhuiyan led the 10-member Bangladesh delegation while Director General of Myanmar Immigration Division Maung Aung led the seven-member Myanmar delegation at the official level meeting at Teknaf today.

It was agreed in the meeting that the Rohingya Muslims would get their houses and land back after the repatriation to their homeland. Both sides also exchanged lists of officials to be posted at the 10 transit points inside Bangladesh and five receiving points inside Myanmar.

It was also agreed in the meeting that the officials of both the countries would meet

thrice a week during the repatriation.

The Bangladesh side handed over to the Myanmar officials a list of 9,880 Rohingya Muslims to be repatriated in the first batch.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Giving details on the violence, the police officials in Cox's Bazar district said the refugees gathered in front of the office of the camp in-charge at about 3 pm Thursday to protest their repatriation but they turned violent after a rumour that police beat and killed three leaders of the refugees.

Police said at least 20 refugees and 12 Ansars and officials including the in-charge of the Balukhali-2 camp, Abdul Huq were injured.

Tension has gripped the other refugee camps where scattered processions were brought out.

Officials said a large contingent of police was posted at the camp and the situation was under control.



Fire Service personnel along with the local people searching for the bodies of three BUET students in the river Buriganga (above) and body of a student, Ahmedur Rahman, (below).

Three BUET students killed in boat mishap

By Staff Correspondent

Three students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) including the Vice-President of the University Central Students Union (EUCSU) Mir Ruhul Kabir were drowned in a boat capsized in the Buriganga yesterday, according to Fire Service sources.

The incident that occurred in the early hours of yesterday, also left Kazim Ahmedur Rahman Arif, a fourth year student in See Page 12 Col 7



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed deep condolence at the tragic death of three BUET students, including the Vice President of EUCSU Mir Mohammad Ruhul Kabir in a boat capsized, reports BSS.

Khaleda, Hasina condole death

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed deep condolence at the tragic death of three BUET students, including the Vice President of EUCSU Mir Mohammad Ruhul Kabir in a boat capsized, reports BSS.

Begum Zia expressed her heart-felt sympathy to the See Page 12 Col 6

3 acquitted in gold smuggling case Two foreigners, former ZIA manager get life terms

A special tribunal yesterday convicted and sentenced two foreign nationals to suffer life terms in prison after finding them guilty of smuggling 38 kilograms of gold into the country in 1990, reports BSS.

One local, Major (ret'd) Ashrafuddin Sikandar, was sentenced to 14 years R I for abetting in the offence.

Special Judge A.T.M. Fazle Kabir found David Anthony Chalkar (British) and Bernhard Rudiger (German) guilty of smuggling the contraband item and convicted them under Section 25(B)(1) of the Special Powers Act of 1974.

Besides sentencing them to suffer rigorous imprisonment, they were also fined Taka 20,000 each, in default to suffer R I for another six months.

The foreign nationals, who came to Bangladesh on July 16 1990 from Singapore by a Bangladesh Biman flight were found to possess 3000 tolas of gold worth Taka 2.40 crore.

They pleaded guilty during the confessional statements, the judgement stated.

The foreigners were among the six accused in this biggest gold smuggling case in the country.

Former President H M Ershad was also indicted in this case as an abettor in the supplementary charge sheet. But on a prayer of Ershad for quashing the proceedings against him, the High Court directed the prosecution to proceed with the hearing of the case exempting Ershad. The quashing petition has remained pending in the High Court Division.

Of the court locals charged with abetting in the offence, two including one absconder were acquitted.

Accused Major (ret'd) Ashrafuddin Sikandar, former Manager of Zia International Airport, was found guilty of abetting offence and sentenced to 14 years rigorous imprisonment. He was also

asked to pay a fine of Taka 10,000 failing which to suffer another six months of R I.

Another accused Abu Taher Mia, Security Officer at the Airport, was also held guilty of abetting of the offence under Section 25(D) of the Special Powers Act of 1974 and was sentenced to suffer 7 years rigorous imprisonment. He was also fined Taka 5,000 failing which to suffer additional 3 months R I.

Maksudur Rahman, Private Secretary to the Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and air Commodore (ret'd) Mainul Islam, former Chairman of CAAB who remained absconding, were acquitted of the charges levelled against them as they were not found to be guilty.

The Judge ordered that the seized gold weighting 3000 tolas and foreign currencies recovered from the foreigners be confiscated. He also ordered See Page 12 Col 8



The convict: Two foreigners (left) and former Airport Manager (right). —Star photo

Govt undecided over suing Ershad for seizing power

By Nazmul Ashraf

The government is undecided about starting a case against former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad on charges of illegal seizure of power and sedition, sources said.

The sources said the Attorney General had already informed the government that there was no legal bar on taking the case to court.

According to ruling party sources, there is a conflict of opinion within government circles as to the political implications of bringing charges related to usurping power through coup d'etat.

The General Secretary of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) Hasanul Haque Inu, lodged a case with Motijheel police, accusing the deposed president of various seditious activities, including taking over state power at gunpoint.

He lodged the case six days after the Ershad government was overthrown on December 6, 1990 following a mass movement.

"One Hussain Muhammad Ershad conspired against Bangladesh and its established government in March 1982. Ershad, aided by a group of army personnel, being involved in a conspiracy to occupy the country, forcibly entered into 'Bangabhaban', the official residence of the President, on March 24, 1982, and attacked the then President, late Justice Abdus Sattar, compelling him to resign at gunpoint," Inu stated in the general diary recorded with Motijheel police.

Inu further alleged that Ershad illegally entered the Radio Bangladesh office the same day (March 24) and forced the on-duty staffers there to broadcast his speech through which he announced seizure of state-power. He also suspended the Constitution illegally, promulgated orders contrary to the people's legal rights, and had those executed by threatening the public servants.

Inu also accused Ershad of smuggling crores of Taka out of the country.

The JSD leader submitted a written appeal to the former Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, on August 6, 1991, requesting him to initiate investigations into the case with a view to ending the process of usurping power See Page 12 Col 8

Deregulation of project loan sanctioning process urged

By Staff Correspondent

Deregulation and decentralisation of the process of sanctioning project loans and various support service facilities for the small and medium enterprises (SMES) have been suggested in a study report presented at a workshop Thursday.

The report also recommended abolition of the system of issuing approval certificates for factory building layouts and certificates from the Office of the Inspector of Boiler.

The study report on the ex- See Page 12 Col 1

No decision yet on retrenchment Railway to be made self-reliant by '95 :PM

PARBATIPUR, May 14 : Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here today that the government was planning to make the Bangladesh Railway a self-reliant organisation by 1995 by removing mismanagement, corruption and wastage from this important communication sector, reports BSS.

Begum Zia was addressing the opening ceremony of the first most modernised more than Taka 200 crore Central Locomotive Workshop of Bangladesh Railway at the workshop premises here.

The function was also addressed by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, State Minister for Communications Fazlur Rahman and the representative of the Saudi Fund for Development Saleh al Masud.

The Prime Minister said a proper system of communication was the pre-requisite of development and so her government was laying emphasis on a coordinated and efficient communication infrastructure in the country. See Page 12 Col 3

Hearing of BCI writ BB has power to regulate credit system: AG

The hearing of the writ petition filed by Shahabul Hossain, Principal Officer of Bangladesh Commerce and Investment Limited (BCI), challenging the Bangladesh Bank order suspending operations of BCI continued yesterday before a High Court Division Bench, reports BSS.

The Bench comprised Justice Anwarul Haq Chowdhury and Justice K M Hasan.

Attorney General Aminul Haq, appearing for the government, argued that the Bangladesh Bank had started the criminal case against BCI under Section 109 of Bank Companies Ordinance. The warrant of arrest has been issued by the court and order passed to seize the papers and documents of BCI. The writ petition was filed by BCI only See Page 12 Col 3

Pak police, PPP men clash: Hundreds held

KARACHI, May 14: Pakistani police clashed violently with opposition supporters across the southern province of Sind today and arrested hundreds of supporters of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), reports AFP.

Police used teargas and baton-charges to disperse PPP supporters who marched through the city of Hyderabad chanting slogans against the government and demanding the release of opposition activists.

The PPP also staged rallies throughout the interior of the province to protest alleged ballot rigging in recent by-elections and the abuse of PPP supporters.

According to PPP sources, some 25 people were detained in Hyderabad, while hundreds of other were rounded up in other parts of the troubled province.

AP adds: Police swept through Pakistan's southern Sind province arresting more than 1,000 supporters of Benazir Bhutto, a party official said Thursday.

Hundreds more have gone underground, said Abdul Salam Tahem.

Several hundred members of the Pakistan People's Party were arrested late Wednesday after Mrs Bhutto announced protest rallies to be held Thursday, said Muzafar Shah, Sind's chief minister. The protests were against alleged vote rigging in local elections two weeks ago.

The arrests were the part of government's drive against anti-social elements," said Shah. "All of them are involved in heinous crimes."

Mrs Bhutto has repeatedly accused the Sind government of harassing and intimidating See Page 12 Col 7

One killed, 100 hurt as nor'wester hits 3 dists

Nor'wester hit three districts yesterday leaving at least one dead and about a hundred people injured, reports reaching here said, reports UNB.

The storm also demanded around 1,000 houses in Pabna, Lalmonirhat and Kushtia districts.

A middle-aged man was killed and at least 25 people were injured as the storm lashed two unions of Pabna Sadar Upazila, officials and villagers said.

Mohammad Mofizuddin of Khashchar village died instantly as his Kutcha house caved on him.

The storm with a speed of 60 to 70 kmh also destroyed 100 kutcha houses and damaged about 300 others partially in Bharara and Dougachi unions.

In Lalmonirhat, a 15-minute storm lashed four upazilas of the district, leaving at least 50 injured and more than 200 houses pounded.

The nor'wester coupled with rains started at 4:15 pm and blew at 50-60 km per hour. The telecommunication and power supply lines snapped in the town.

The affected upazilas are Sadar, Aditmari, Kaliganj and Hatibanda.

Communication on Dhaka-Aricha road resumes

By Staff Correspondent

The communication on the Dhaka-Aricha highway resumed Thursday after three days of disruption following a clash between transport workers and the students of Jahangirnagar University on Monday.

Mirpur police said that the vehicles from Cabtali bus terminal started operating from Thursday afternoon without any announcement of the workers union.

The workers union, on Wednesday had said that it would withdraw the blockade from the highway for 72 hours to help negotiation bid.

Meanwhile, the JU authorities and transport union leaders met for the third day at the residence of Home Minister for an amicable settlement of the matter.

The government has decided to form a judicial enquiry committee to probe in- See Page 12 Col 1

Master plans to develop Dhaka, Ctg on the anvil

By Asiuzzaman

A project has been undertaken to prepare new master plans for the development of Dhaka and Chittagong cities, a reliable source of the Works Ministry said Thursday.

United Nation Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) is providing logistic support to Bangladesh government for the project financed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The first master plan for Dhaka city was prepared in 1959 but became invalid as it was not implemented timely.

An office for the Taka 15-crore project has been set up at the annex building of the Rajdhan Unnayan Katrpkkha (Rajuk) and the UNCHS has sent a project co-ordinator See Page 12 Col 3

First Hajj flight leaves for Jeddah today

The inaugural Hajj flight of Biman Bangladesh airlines with 301 ballottee pilgrims will leave Dhaka for Jeddah today (Friday) at 8 pm, reports BSS.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan will be present to see the pilgrims of the inaugural flight off at the airport.

Biman will operate 16 special Hajj flights for ferrying 4,600 ballottee pilgrims to Jeddah for performing Hajj under government arrangement this year.

Arrangement has already been made at Gazipur Hajj Camp so that pilgrims could get all pre-flight formalities completed prior to their departure.

The operation of ballottee Hajj flights will continue till 27th of this month.