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12 hurt : 40 houses burnt : Sec 144 clamped

Tribal, non-tribal students clash in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, May 20: Authorities today clamped section 144 on Rangamati town for an indefinite period as day-long clashes between two groups left about a dozen injured and 40 houses and shops torched.

Police fired tear-gas and resorted to lathicharge to disperse a procession of Sarbadaliya (all-party) Chhatra Parishad (SCP).

The trouble erupted in the morning when the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) arranged a function to observe its founding anniversary and its rival group (SCP) demonstrated against the assault on one of its activists on Tuesday.

Chairman of the Local Government Council Gautam Dewan told UNB over telephone that he took responsibilities for failure to contain the flare-up and decided to resign.

The Deputy Commissioner held a meeting in the evening with local officials, politicians, elite and prominent tribal leaders and took stock of the situation.

Officials said the meeting decided to take necessary measures to prevent re-eruption of the orgy.

Gautam Dewan also addressed a press conference in the evening, giving the causes of his decision to step down. He gave details of the incidents in the last two days.

"I think, being in the highest position of power in the district, I should shoulder the responsibilities of failure to contain such sad incidents," he told newsmen.

The PCP first went to hold its programme in the Rangamati Government College this morning. But the college authorities declared the campus closed for 7 days fearing trouble.

PCP men then shifted its venue to the local Shilpakala Academy premises.

When their function was over, they decided to march towards the town.



Merchants' men forcing hawkers out of Baitul Mukarram pavement yesterday. Story on back Page. —Star photo

B Chowdhury may quit politics

By Mahfuz Ullah

Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House, is planning to quit active politics, according to sources close to him.

Prof Chowdhury, who has been tipped as the next director general of the United Nations (UN) body, World Health Organization (WHO), has already indicated to his close associates and followers his intention.

Sources told The Daily Star that the offer came to Prof. Chowdhury a month back from a visiting UN top notch Dr Ko Ko. The election to the post of director general, WHO, is scheduled for January 1993.

Sources close to President Abdur Rahman Biswas said that during a courtesy call on the President, Dr Ko Ko requested him to see to it that Prof Chowdhury was nominated as the country candidate for the post.

Besides, Dr Ko Ko informed that Prof Chowdhury's election to the post was almost sure because of his stature and contribution to primary health care movement.

Sources close to Prof Chowdhury said that he made his intention of quitting politics clear yesterday to a group of BNP leaders from his constituency including the Deputy Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Abdull Hye. Prof. Chowdhury told the group.

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Shantibahini kills five more

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 20: In one of its bloodiest attacks in recent months, activists of the outlawed Shantibahini gunned down five non-tribals, aged between nine and 11, in the Panchhari upazila of Khagrachhari district Wednesday afternoon.

According to district officials, the attack took place in a field near the Golak Pratachhari village some seven kilometres from the Indian border.

A group of Shantibahini men opened fire on 15 non-tribal cowboys as the youngsters took a break from grazing cows in a field near the village, officials said.

Shahin Akter, 11, Abdur Rahman, 10, Mohammad Jamaluddin, 9, Hasina Begum, 11, and Shahi Ran, 10 were killed on the spot while 10-year old Offia Begum was taken to Khagrachhari hospital in a critical condition.

Security forces combed the area soon afterwards, but failed to locate the Shantibahini men who managed to disappear into the hills.

Wednesday's killings brought the death toll from insurgency violence in Chittagong hill tracts to 16 in the past nine days. A family of three, including a minor boy, were chopped to death Tuesday by insurgents in the nearby Ramgarh upazila of the same district.

Probe body formed, says Press Note

Eight persons were injured including one policeman Wednesday following clashes between two rival student groups in Rangamati town, said a Press Note, issued by the Ministry of Home in Dhaka, reports BSS.

During the clashes some unruly youths set on fire two or three houses.

However, the fire spread to between 30 and 35 houses and shops, the Press Note said.

According to the Press Note, Pahari Chhatra Parishad held a function at 10 am the same day at Shilpakala Academy in celebration of its founding anniversary. About three thousand tribal students brought out a procession at 11 am. After the function at around 12 pm the clash started when a rival student organisation brought out a procession.

The police opened tear gas shells and resorted to lathicharge to bring the situation under control. Later, the feuding student organisations fought for the second time, the Press Note said.

An enquiry committee, headed by Additional Deputy Magistrate, Rangamati, has been formed to investigate the matter and fix the accountability. The government hopes that all concerned would extend cooperation in the restoration of discipline and peace.

The local Brigade Commander of the Army, Deputy Commissioner, Police Superintendent, BDR Sector Commander and officials of the administration have visited the place of occurrence.

The administration also held a meeting with local people's representatives to maintain law and order in the town.

Advani warns of serious upheaval

All-party meet okays Tinbigha handover

CALCUTTA, May 2: Pending off stiff opposition from the BJP, an all-party meeting, chaired by the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, today endorsed the centre's decision to implement the Indo-Bangla agreement on leasing of the Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh slated for June 26, reports PTI.

The Union Minister of State for External Affairs, Eduardo Falerio and the Minister of State for Home Affairs M M Jacob, were present at the meeting, held in the council chamber of the state assembly, at the invitation of the Chief Minister.

With the exception of the BJP and the SUC, all the nine constituents of the Left Front, the Congress (I) and the Janata Dal endorsed the state government's role in implementing the accord.

Falerio later told newsmen that it was an international obligation and India would abide by it.

He said since the 1974 Indira-Mujib Agreement on Tinbigha, all previous governments at the centre were involved in the pact. At no point of time, there was any opposition to the agreement, he added.

Briefing newsmen after about a 90-minute all-party meeting on Tinbigha, the Chief Minister said, the state government is determined to implement the international agreement and we will do whatever is necessary for honouring the accord with the support of the people of the state.

Basu said that the Left Front Government would like the centre to take up with Bangladesh 'without further delay,' the total exchange of enclaves between the two countries. There are 119 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh as against 72 Bangladesh enclaves in India.

He said that the two Union Ministers present at the meeting had assured that talks were underway in this regard.

Asked about the threatened 'physical resistance' by the BJP against the leasing of the corridor, Basu said, 'Let us see what happens. I hope good sense should prevail upon those opposing the agreement implementation,' the Chief Minister added.

Meanwhile, the BJP today renewed its demand to the government to renegotiate the agreement on Tinbigha with Bangladesh.

The leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, L K Advani, impressed upon the Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao to take urgent note of the serious upheaval that would result if Tinbigha was transferred to Bangladesh.

The BJP leader said it was in this context that Rao should renegotiate the agreement when the Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visits India next week.

A tree-member BJP team had visited Tinbigha last week and submitted a report to Advani.

Advani and the spokesperson of the BJP team, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, met the Prime Minister in this connection today and submitted a copy of the report.

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New pay scale for DCC employees

By Staff Correspondent

The employees of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) have been granted a new pay scale identical to the national pay scale, official sources said Wednesday.

Some 5,500 permanent employees will enjoy the full benefits of the new pay scale effective from last July while some 3,000 muster roll employees will also get a rise of their daily allowance.

But another 2,000 muster roll employees whose daily wage is below Taka 30 will not be benefitted by the new pay scale, the source said.

The government late last month issued an order to the city corporations and paurasavas asking them to implement the new pay scale if their budget permits.

The employees of four city corporations and 104 paurasavas went on strike early March demanding the new pay scale which was resolved following an agreement.

A DCC source said that the corporation needed additional Taka three crore to implement the new pay scale and from next year it will rise to Taka six crore.

The arrears will be paid in the next 18 months, the source added.

Rift in military over Suchinda

BANGKOK May 20: Intermittent shooting broke out in Bangkok shortly before a nighttime curfew went into force today as the beleaguered capital was bracing for its fourth night of unrest, reports AFP.

Several people were wounded when troops fired on rioters in central Bangkok near government house and at least one man was shot and seen carried away near the Thai capital's railway station according to residents.

The curfew, which runs from 9.00 pm to 4.00 am (1400 GMT to 2100 GMT) came as there were conflicting reports of possible confrontation between rival army groups.

According to some diplomats there were reports of a military build up against Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon to the north of the capital.

But other diplomats said that while there certainly were rifts in the military no clashes had yet taken place, it was premature to say that anti-Suchinda forces had begun to move towards the city, they said.

Bangkok's military authorities in a statement on television, denied there had been fighting among troops.

The curfew order was signed by Interior Minister Anan Kalmthits it was imposed, the announcement said, to enable security forces to restore law and order in the streets of the city.

Suchinda Kraprayoon to step down as Thailand's Prime Minister to end days of street violence, a high-ranking military source said.

If Suchinda did not resign there would be a blood bath, he told Reuters.

Senior officers loyal to former Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda were discussing Suchinda's removal with the high command, the source said.

Witnesses said checkpoints had been set up on the highway north from the capital by troops loyal to Suchinda. Rumours swept the capital that other units were moving south to stage a coup.

Meanwhile Suchinda Kraprayoon today announced the immediate release of opposition leader Chamlong Srimuang and promised constitutional amendments to end four days of bloody political unrest.

Suchinda appeared on television with Chamlong alongside him.

Chamlong then appealed for street demonstrators to call off their protests.

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Give alternative jobs, then retrench : Hasina

CHITTAGONG, May 20: Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina today said that her party had declared a welfare oriented economic policy aimed at emancipating the poor masses and working class of the country, reports BSS.

She said Bangladesh Awami League had been struggling to change the lot of the poor people by providing them basic necessities like food, shelter, health and education facilities.

Addressing two big public meetings at Mirsarai and Sitakunda upazila headquarters here, the AL chief said her party stood for the rights of the common people and the workers and it would continue the struggle to realize their rights and privileges.

She reiterated that the workers and employees in the mills and factories should not be retrenched without providing alternative employment avenues for them. Indiscriminate retrenchment of workers and employees would damage mills and factories and bring about chaos and despair in the industrial sector, she said.

The meeting at Mirsarai was held with the Upazila Awami League acting President Abul Feroq Master in the chair while the meeting at Sitakunda was presided over by Upazila AL President Abul Kashem. It was addressed, among others, by AL leaders Pultr Dey, Ataur Rahman Khan, Kaiser, Mosharrar Hossain, Abdus Salam, Nurul Alam Chowdhury, BCL President.

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'Sanitation, drinking water key environmental problems'

By Staff Correspondent

'Sanitation and quality water supply — the biggest single contributor to the diarrhoea situation — is a key environmental problem in the country, said Christopher Willoughby, Resident Representative of the World Bank (WB), Wednesday.

Speaking at a press conference at the local WB office, on an introduction to the World Development Report 1992 by Sudhir Shetty, a co-author of the just released Report, Willoughby suggested that Bangladesh should select a limited number of priorities to deal with the existing environmental problems.

The other areas of prioritization, he identified, were population control, primary and secondary education for girls, community participation in development programmes, industrial pollution and deforestation.

'Particularly significant to Bangladesh,' he said 'is the management of common resources — inland fisheries and forests — because so many people depend on them.'

Entitled 'Development and the Environment', this year's subject was selected because of the importance of the upcoming summit of the United Nations.

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Azerbaijan likely to quit CIS

MOSCOW, May 20: Azerbaijan will become the first republic to withdraw from the Commonwealth of Independent States, the head of the coalition that toppled the country's president was quoted Wednesday as saying, reports AP.

Abulfaz Elchibek, chairman of the country's nationalist Popular Front, also said in a newspaper interview that there was still hope for a peaceful settlement to the 4-year-old battle for control of Nagorno-Karabakh.

And the commonwealth military commander issued a strong warning against interference by any outside country, telling a news conference that would 'obviously place us on the verge of the Third World War.'

Azerbaijan would be the first country to leave the 11-member commonwealth, which succeeded the Soviet Union last year. All former Soviet republics joined except for Georgia and the three Baltic states.

'Azerbaijan will not be part of the current Commonwealth of Independent States. This is beyond doubt,' Komsomolskiya Pravda quoted Elchibek as saying.

'All agreements signed by former President Ayaz Mutalibov are void because they have not been ratified by parliament,' he said.

Elchibek gave no timetable for withdrawal or any substantive reasons for quitting the commonwealth. Rafael Gusseinov, spokesman for the Azerbaijan mission in Moscow, said he expected the 50-member National Council that has replaced Azerbaijan's parliament to issue a statement elaborating.

Elchibek's comments follow the ouster last week of Mutalibov, Azerbaijan's former Communist Party boss, and Monday's election of Popular Front founder Isa Gambarov as acting president until new elections are held June 7.

Gambarov, a 35-year-old professor of oriental studies, is Azerbaijan's first non-Communist leader in nearly six decades.

Free import of pipes cripples NTL

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Free import of low quality pipes has posed a serious threat to the existence of the National Tubes Limited (NTL), country's lone industrial unit producing international standard tubes.

The problem began with an order dated July 28, 1990 by the Office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCIE) that withdrew the items like GI, MS, API from the list of the Import Policy Order 89-90, providing for free and unregulated import of these items, being produced in abundance by NTL.

The National Tubes, a subsidiary of the Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC), is one of the very few units in Asia which are licensed by the American Petroleum Institute (API). It

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