

Myanmar junta meets leaders June 23

YANGON, May 28: Myanmar military junta will hold talks with political parties next month on preparations for drafting a new constitution, the state radio announced Thursday, reports AP.

The talks on June 23 will be aimed at preparing for the convening of a national convention to establish guidelines for the constitution, the broadcast said.

The junta, under new chairman Gen Than Shwe, had announced on April 24 that such talks would be held within two months. It was part of the new leadership's liberalisation measures, which have included the release of some political prisoners and permission for the family of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to visit her in detention.

The junta, which has been criticized by many countries for human rights abuses, abolished the 1974 constitution.

when it took over in a 1988 coup.

It held an election for Parliament in May 1990, but refused to recognize the results after the majority of seats were won by Ms Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

The new constitution is expected to be adopted next year. Thursday's broadcast made no mention of elections but it was understood that new polls would be held. The junta has said that power would be transferred to a constitutionally elected government.

Call to recover stolen paintings of Shilpachariya

By Staff Correspondent

The 16th death anniversary of Shilpachariya Joyntul Abedin was observed yesterday with due solemnity.

In observance of the day wreaths were laid at the grave of the artist and discussions organised where speakers highlighted his invaluable contributions to the national culture.

Diplomatic row India cancels invitations to Pak singers

NEW DELHI, May 28: India has withdrawn invitations to two popular Pakistani singers because of the diplomatic row over the alleged torture of an Indian diplomat in Islamabad, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Thursday, reports AFP.

PTI said the Pakistani High Commission (Embassy) had already been informed that the invitations to Urdu love ballad king Ghulam Ali and singer Reshma, invited to perform at a summer festival, had been cancelled.

The organising committee of the five-day Shimla festival, which starts Friday, made the decision, the agency said, but added that similar invitations to Bangladeshi singers Farida Parveen and Baby Najveen were unaffected.

The row over the alleged torture and expulsion of Indian diplomat Rajesh Mittal has led to the tit-for-tat expulsion of two Pakistani diplomats from New Delhi and the indefinite postponement of scheduled Indo-Pakistan talks.

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Joint communique

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The two Prime Ministers agreed to arrange speedy repatriation of all Chakma refugees to Bangladesh in full safety and security.

In this context, the Bangladesh side agreed to set up a representative political-level committee that would encourage the refugees to return. The Indian side assured that its authorities would cooperate fully in the process of repatriation.

They expressed their determination to stop illegal movement of people across the border by all possible means including the strengthening of existing arrangements and mutual cooperation in this regard.

Both sides resolved to take effective measures to maintain peace and tranquillity all along the border and to refrain from unfrivolous activities.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the recent exchange of letters regarding the modalities for implementation of the terms providing for right of passage for Bangladesh citizens through Tin Bigha area which will become effective from June 26, 1992.

Based on this understanding, it was agreed that efforts should be intensified to resolve the other outstanding issues emanating from the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

It was also agreed that discussions on delimitation of the maritime boundary would be resumed at an early date. Moreover, the communique said the two sides noted the need for discussions in due course concerning the question of South Talpatti Island for an in-depth examination on the basis of all relevant facts and principles.

The two Prime Ministers directed that special focus should be placed on increasing and diversifying trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

They agreed that the authorities concerned would meet at an early date, preferably August-September this year to hold trade review talks with a view to renewing the existing trade agreement.

The two sides agreed that the Joint Economic Commis-

sion between the two countries should meet in October this year. The existing cooperation in the fields of culture, education, information and defence could also be expanded.

The two Prime Ministers expressed their determination to further consolidate the friendly, harmonious and good neighbourly relations between Bangladesh and India, in the larger interest of the peoples of the two countries and of peace and stability in the region. A significant opportunity was now available for the purpose based on the mandate of the people.

The two leaders reiterated their belief that SAARC represents the faith and aspiration of the countries of South Asia to enhance regional cooperation in the interest of greater understanding and well-being of the peoples of the region.

Towards this end, they felt that a further momentum should be given to SAARC activities in the core areas of economic cooperation.

The two Prime Ministers felt that the Seventh SAARC Summit to be held in Dhaka at the end of this year assumes special significance as the beginning of the second cycle of SAARC summits. They expressed the hope that it would not only lead to the consolidation of the past achievements, but also identify new meaningful avenues to achieve its objectives.

Reviewing the recent momentous and unprecedented changes in the international situation, they expressed satisfaction at the more positive developments and expressed the hope that these would be built upon in the interest of the international community as a whole.

The two Prime Ministers called for a simultaneous democratisation of international relations, and a greater thrust on alleviation of poverty.

The Non-Aligned Movement, based on its abiding principles of independence of judgement and freedom of action and its emphasis on equitable international economic development, has come to acquire a renewed relevance in the light of these developments, the communique said.

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West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at Calcutta airport during her stopover there yesterday. — PID photo

Police yet to receive Dalia's autopsy report

By Staff Correspondent

Police did not receive the autopsy report of the noted drama artist, Dalia Ferdous till Thursday.

Dalia, wife of a play wright, Major Akter Ferdous Rana, reportedly burnt herself at her Kachukhet residence Tuesday night and succumbed to injuries at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) the following morning.

Cantonment police said that they would not comment until they received the autopsy report which was performed at the Forensic Department of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Wednesday.

However, it was suspected that a relationship between Rana and a drama artist Konkon developed during the last few months which led to Dalia's committing suicide.

Dalia's brother-in-law, AKM Noor Hossain told the Daily Star, that they were informed late Tuesday night that Dalia burnt herself. "We are yet to find any evidence of a murder", added Hossain.

Dalia first met Rana at the time of acting in a play, "Sheik Gaen" by Rana on television

Khaleda : Delhi realises

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trade gap between the two countries was also discussed and Rao agreed to lift the quota on import of Jamdani saris from Bangladesh and added that the duty on the item would also be exempted.

Asked about her talks with West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu during her brief stopover in Calcutta, Begum Zia said "Tin Bigha" issue and other matters came up for discussions.

She told a questioner that issues like railway transit facility through Bangladesh or the 25-year Friendship Accord with India in no way figured in the talks.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman and Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda were present when the Prime Minister spoke to the press.

Asked when the Indian Prime Minister would pay a return visit to Bangladesh, Begum Zia said that he had told her that he would like to make the visit before the SAARC summit, scheduled in December this year.

"You will come to know of it when it materialises" was her reply to a question as to when she would visit Pakistan.

10000 refugees enter in a week

COX'S BAZAR, May 28: More than ten thousand Rohingya Muslims crossed into Bangladesh from Myanmar through different border points during the past seven days, official sources said here Thursday, reports BSS.

The influx of Rohingyas continued in spite of assurances from Myanmar side that Rohingyas would not be allowed to leave Arakan when discussions on their repatriation were on.

India, US hold war games

NEW DELHI, May 28: The Indian and US navies began their first joint exercise in the Arabian Sea Thursday to improve communications between the fleets, a defense spokesman said, reports AP.



Sheikh Hasina addressing AL Working Committee meeting at party's central office yesterday. — Star photo

New taxes

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taxes were not likely to be imposed on luxury items in this budget. The idea behind not imposing new taxes was to encourage consumption of luxury items that would increase tax realisation.

Ministry sources said that the protection element as demanded by different chamber bodies had been studied and the level of protection was being adjusted for the local industries.

Meanwhile, the new budget will bring in about 12 items that had been exempted from VAT in this budget. These items are now under excise duty. This will be done to relieve the tax burden of other sectors, sources said.

The VAT system will be made more dynamic in the new budget. The procedure of VAT collection will be improved for better enforcement and realisation.

The Finance Ministry termed the coming budget as a reform budget as it would have reforms on direct taxation system. Sources said that the ceiling of the income tax may be increased further so that the low income people could be exempted from it.

The income tax law would be amended to make the system easier so that the general fear about the tax would be removed and self-assessment system would also be improved, sources said.

AL council session

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While elaborating on the problems to hold the council session on the scheduled dates the party source said that it would require a few more days to complete drafting some amendments to the party constitution and the manifesto to be proposed in the session, and the report of the party General Secretary to be placed there.

A senior leader of the party, requesting anonymity, also told The Daily Star that the party needed time to take an initiative to resolve problems arising out of internecine conflicts at both the central and the district level units of the party.

UNB adds: Despite Hasina's insistence to hold the conference on scheduled, some senior leaders of the party requested her to defer the date for completion of all pre-council preparations.

Besides non-completion of about 12-13 district conferences, the General Secretary's report was incomplete while the Reception sub-committee, Publicity sub-committee and Office sub-committee also could not complete their preparatory work.

The meeting sources said the burning issue arising out of the suspension of Mostafa Mohsin Mantu was raised by Presidium member Dr Alauddin. Majority of the members were learnt to have expressed their opinion to expel Mantu from the party. They also called for identifying the party

Punjab radio, TV stations go off air

CHANDIGARH, May 28: Government-owned radio and television stations across Punjab state went off the air Thursday as employees demanded more security following the brutal killing of a radio official by Sikh militants, reports AP.

The radio stations of Chandigarh, Patiala, Bathinda and Jalandhar, which serve 20 million listeners, fell silent a little after 5 pm (1130 GMT).

Bad jute

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They said that the inspectors discovered that 1200 bales out of a total 5,000 had already been supplied to the mills and the entire lot was rotten.

Talking to The Daily Star, the Jute Minister said malpractice in jute purchase was rampant at the Adamjee Jute Mills and the latest one could be discovered because of tip-offs to him.

He promised harsh legal action against the private supplier of the rotten jute and against the employees of the mills involved in the incident.

These people cannot be friends to the jute industries and this single incident proves that certain quarter does not want that Adamjee Jute Mills survives," Shah said.

The minister did not elaborate.

N'ganj Dist AL executives

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, May 28: The biennial council of the district unit of Awami League today elected Ansar Ali and Mafzul Islam as the President and General Secretary respectively.

The election of the executive body of the district AL was held at the Ali Ahmed Chunka Auditorium.

Ansar Ali who was reelected president of the district AL presided over the council.

The Midnight File

Mojaddedi against a rushed Islamisation

PESHAWAR, May 28: Interim Afghan President Sibtghatullah Mojaddedi, now visiting Pakistan, spoke today against a rushed Islamisation of his war-devastated country and said it would be done gradually, reports Reuter.

600 radioactive waste sites in Moscow

MOSCOW, May 28: Researchers have discovered some 600 sites of radioactive contamination in Moscow, including two in Gorki Park, that pose potentially serious dangers to health, a Russian scientist disclosed today, reports AFP.

India testfires Agni missile today

BHUBANESHWAR, May 28: India will test-fire Agni, a medium-range missile tomorrow for the second time, three years after the first successful launch, officials said today. The launch from Chandipur-on-sea in the eastern state of Orissa will go ahead if the weather is fine, they said, reports Reuter.

Mantu group

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In a written statement, he told a tale of "torture and inhuman" behaviour with students, teachers and employees of the hall by the "Gopalganj-Barisal group" in the last few months.

The statement alleged former BCL President Shahe Alam hatched a conspiracy to turn Chhatra League into a sectoral student organisation and formed region-based committees.

He alleged the two regions' activists drove out bonafide students and sheltered terrorists, killers, snatchers, robbers, and extortionists in the hall.

The hall union GS said they would also work for reestablishing the glorious image of Chhatra League tarnished by the activist of Gopalganj-Barisal axis.

"We have high esteem for Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, but we will not abide by any undemocratic attitude or decision," he told a questioner.

"If Mostafa Mohsin Montu is expelled from Awami League, we'll face it politically," he said and called upon the student community to build a greater movement against what he said anti-social elements harboured by the Gopalganj-Barisal group.

The pro-Awami League Chhatra League yesterday called upon the government and the Dhaka University authorities to immediately free the Zahurul Haq Hall from occupation to avert a bloody backlash.

Biman

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ment took a move to reduce the trade unions and to squeeze their movements in different industries.

Following the amendment of the Industrial Relations Ordinance (IRO) of 1969, on November 15, 1989, the Labour Directorate cancelled seven unions of the Biman and invited application on May 17, 1990 for fresh registration.

The Directorate also divided Biman into two establishments ground service and flying service and asked the unions to show 30 per cent membership of the total employees within 90 days to get registration.

The new organisation, the Ground Service Employees Union got registered under the new rules while the Labour Directorate declared other unions invalid.

The Biman Sramik Union, elected CBA in 1973, filed a complaint with the Directorate demanding registration showing a 30 per cent membership and was given back its registration.

The Sramik Union subsequently filed a case in the High Court challenging the 'two-establishment' order of the Labour Directorate.

The other unions except the employees union also filed writ petitions in the high court and the court ordered a status quo on all union activities.

Hearings of the petitions were on, Union sources said.

A Biman official said that the situation would not improve until a fresh CBA election was held in Biman. But it depended on Court decision, he added.

Citing a recent clash between the rival groups at the airport the official said that "such incidents hamper normal work in the organisation."

An employees union source said that the Labour Directorate was greatly responsible for the present situation in the national airlines.

The Directorate made some decisions according to its whims which has complicated the situation, he added.

Bahauallah centenary celebration begins

From Page 1 Col 5

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"I think the military is trying very hard not to let the opposition have a chance (to govern). They are afraid of Chavalit, afraid that a government from the opposition would not be controllable," Surin said.

Reuter says disgraced Thai generals sent veiled threats to democracy activists demanding they stand trail for murder as rival politicians scrambled today to form a credible government after a week of bloody unrest.

"Don't force me into becoming a cornered dog," the Nation newspaper's today edition quoted army Chief General Issarapong Noompakdee as saying.

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Thai PM

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