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NEWS BRIEFS

ALWC emergency meeting today

An emergency meeting of Awami League Central Working Committee will be held today (Sunday) at 8.30 am at Bangabandhu Bhawan. Party General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, has requested all members present in the city to attend the meeting, reports UNB.

Wakil Ahmed acting VC of DU

Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Wakil Ahmed has been appointed the acting Vice-Chancellor due to illness of VC Prof M Maniruzzaman Miah. Prof Miah, who underwent a complicated operation in Singapore, returned home on May 19 but was yet to recover. Prof Wakil Ahmed told UNB over telephone Saturday that he had received a letter from the Chancellor of universities about his appointment as acting VC.

BOI placed under PM office

The Board of Investment (BOI) has been placed under the Prime Minister's office. The decision to separate the BOI from the Ministry of Industries was taken long before but executed mid last month, officials said. BOI's new status was planned as per World Bank suggestion to make the agency more efficient and effective, reports UNB.

UP chairman candidate murder Nine to die, 18 get life terms

BARISAL, June 6: Bholu District and Sessions Judge today sentenced nine people to death and another 18 with life imprisonment in the sensational Abdul Alim murder case in Lalmojan upazila of the district.

In a crowded courthouse, Judge NK Chakraverty at 12-35 pm today also fined each of the 18 convicts, sentenced to life imprisonment Taka 1000 each and ordered a month's imprisonment to each without labour in default.

The persons sentenced to

From Our Correspondent

death are: Abdul Hai Mia, his son Harunur Rashid, Saidul Haq, Mahmudul Haq, Nazir Ahmed, Abu Syed, Abu Taher, Nuruddin and Abul Kashem.

The prosecution story in brief is that Abdul Hai and other convicts on February 10 of 1988 chopped to death a union parishad Chairman candidate Abdul Alim in presence of a Magistrate at the Lord Harding High School ground at Lalmojan upazila during the elections.

The Judge in his 40-page verdict said that during the

long hearing it was proved that the convicts were guilty of murdering Abdul Alim.

The names of the 18 life term-awarded convicts are: Abul Kashem, Belayet Hossain, Nurunnabi, Bashirullah, Rafiqul Islam, Jebal Haq, Mohammad Farukh, Mohammad Shahjahan, Abdul Azim, Abdur Rahman, Abdul Kader, Shamsul Haq, Majbul Haq, Majbul Haq, Abdul Gani Patwari, Tajul Islam, Hatem Ali, and Amanullah whose trial took place in absentia.

DU teachers begin strike

By Staff Correspondent

No classes or examinations were held in the Dhaka University on Saturday as the teachers of the university went on an indefinite strike from yesterday.

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) called the strike on Thursday demanding arrest and punishment of a student, Sheikh Ansar Ali, for assaulting Dr Badrul Alam, Associate Professor of Department Physics of the university last week.

The teachers of the university also refrained from official activities of the university on the first day of the strike.

The DUTA sent a letter to the Ministry of Home Affairs incorporating its demand for arrest of the student.

Meanwhile, the university authorities constituted three-member body to probe into the incident.

Security Press becomes a company

By Sohel Manzur

Bangladesh Security Printing Press (BSPP), a project under the Bangladesh Bank, has been converted into a company with a view to running it on a commercial basis, according to concerned officials.

It has already been given registration as a commercial company under the Companies Act, 1913 and a Board of Directors of the company has also been formed under the chairmanship of the governor of Bangladesh Bank Shegufa Bakht Chowdhury.

The entire ownership of the

company will belong to the government, the sources said, adding that the government was also planning to disinvest the company partially to private entrepreneurs.

The disinvestment plan was, however, at a preliminary stage, the sources mentioned.

According to the sources, the BSPP will be an autonomous company and will run on the decisions of its Board of Directors.

The Board in its first meeting to be held today (Sunday) is likely to take major decisions. See Page 12 Col 8

No illegal migrants: Assam CM

GUWAHATI, June 6: The Assam Chief Minister, Hiteswar Saikia, today said that there was no illegal migrants in Assam from neighbouring Bangladesh as per the census conducted last year contrary to the union Home Ministry report of the presence of 30,00,000 illegal foreigners, reports PTI.

Talking to reporters here, Saikia clarified that he had made a statement in the last assembly session about presence of 30,00,000 migrants based on the central report which had been prepared on normal population growth rate pattern.

The Home Ministry had projected a population of 2.52 crore in the state, while the state census report showed the existence of 2.22 crore only, eliminating the excess 30,00,000 considered to be migrants, he added.

Shantibahini attacks VDP camp: 1 killed

RANGAMATI, June 6: A man was killed when tribal insurgents attacked a VDP camp in Nantiarchar upazila of the district Friday night, reports UNB.

Official sources said outlawed Shantibahini men started firing on the VDP camp near Pampine at the upazila headquarters shortly after midnight but they retreated when security forces encountered them from a nearby army camp.

Udayan Dewan (20), a tribal shopkeeper of Sadar Bazar, died in the cross-fire.

The insurgents set fire to the VDP camp before they fled the scene.

Workers Party fronts plan merger in July

By Nurul Kabir

The newly-organised Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) that came into being through a unity congress of three left-leaning political parties last May is now preparing to unite different factions of all its front organisations separately by July this year.

Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB), United Communist League (UCL) and Sammayad Dal (SD) of Ali Abbas staged a merger styled the Workers Party of Bangladesh on May 4 and resolved that the leaders of different front organisations belonging to these parties would try to unite the party organs within three months of the merger.

The front organisations of the concerned parties include those of peasants, agricultural labourers, students and youths.

According to sources close to the WPB high command, See Page 12 Col 2



Leaders of BFUJ, DUJ, BSP and Editors' Council called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. —PID photo

Problems of newspapers discussed with PM

An eight-member delegation comprising Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP), Editors Council of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office, reports BSS.

They discussed various matters relating to newspaper industry including advertisement rate, price and improvement of the quality of newsprint and other relevant matters.

The Prime Minister said the newspapers have a great role to play in consolidating the hard-earned democracy and building the nation. She See Page 12 Col 2

Discussion on June 7 Repeal Indemnity Ordinance in budget session: AL

Awami League central leaders made a strong plea Saturday for scrapping the Indemnity Ordinance in the coming budget session of parliament and holding trial of Jamaat chief Golam Azam to ensure rule of law and safeguard the country's sovereignty, reports UNB.

Speaking at a discussion on historic 7th June arranged at the party central office in the afternoon, they accused the government of conspiring against Awami League leaders by instituting "false cases" and warned of serious consequences for "playing with fire".

Acting Awami League President and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament

Abdus Samad Azad presided over the meeting. Party leaders Zillur Rahman, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil, Abdur Razzak, MP, Tofael Ahmed, MP, Momtaz Hossain and Mozaffar Hossain Paltu took part in the discussion.

The speakers described the historic six-point movement under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the renaissance of the Bengali nationalism which inspired the whole nation towards the 1971 liberation war.

They paid homage to martyrs of the six-point movement, including Manu Mia who See Page 12 Col 1

Commentary Three cheers for Saifur — but it is now time for action

By S.M. Ali

A frank admission by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman that he is "disgusted" with the way the government offices are run and that this is one of the reasons why development projects fail to meet their targets has grave implications which should be carefully studied by the administration of Begum Khaleda Zia, particularly by the Prime Minister herself.

While we commend Rahman for being so forthright in his statements during the wide-ranging "Conversation" with The Daily Star, published

last Friday, we wonder if the Finance Minister has placed these views, in the same forceful manner, at cabinet meetings and initiated a discussion on a possible reorganisation of the administration.

Three cheers for the Minister if he has done so and got the Prime Minister involved in a plan to raise the efficiency of the administration, with the active support of the entire cabinet. But if he has not, all one can say is, for reasons of sensitivity of the subject, he has failed the country and, indeed, the government.

In fact, there are signs that the Finance Minister may well have avoided taking it up before the cabinet or that the administration has no firm plan as such to deal with the situation, beyond the government leader's issuing "clarion calls" (as the BSS would put it) to office employees to work harder. One sign that the situation may well have worsened in recent months is provided by the Minister himself during the same conversation.

When asked if he saw any improvement in the administration, See Page 12 Col 7

'Retrenchment no remedy for sick industries'

By Staff Correspondent

President of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Saifuddin Ahmed Manik said yesterday that retrenchment was not a remedy for the ills of the nationalised industrial sector of the country.

The CPB leader identified mismanagement, corruption and inefficiency of the authorities concerned as the main reasons for huge losses being incurred by the state-owned enterprises.

Addressing a public meeting at the Purana Paltan crossing in the city yesterday afternoon, Manik commented the BNP government had started See Page 12 Col 5

1000 houses of AJM colony gutted

NARAYANGANJ, June 6: A devastating fire at the Dhaka-Bazu workers' colony of Adamjee Jute Mills gutted some 1,000 kutchas houses leaving nearly 10 thousand people homeless Friday night, reports UNB.

Local people and officials said at least 30 people were also injured as the midnight blaze raged through the sprawl for two hours.

Twenty of the injured were rushed to different hospitals at Adamjee, Narayanganj and the capital with serious wounds.

Unofficial sources estimated the extent of damage to property could run up to Tk 3 crore in the fire, the cause of which is "mysterious".

Fire Brigade units from

three stations — Demra, Narayanganj and Adamjee — fought at least 2 hours to bring the fire under control.

The Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police of Narayanganj visited the spot this morning and distributed 5 tons of wheat, 350 pieces of lungi, 500 pieces of ganji, 100 pieces of sarce and 300 baby wears in immediate relief to the destitute.

Local administration appealed to the government for dispatching relief supplies, including Tk 50,000 and 50 tons of rice and wheat.

The Executive Director of the mills claimed only 30-32 of the burnt houses were authorised. See Page 12 Col 7

Rio summit: 175 nations sign 2 key treaties

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 6: Earth Summit delegates from 175 countries have put the first signatures on two landmark environmental treaties, but after three days of talks the main ingredient missing was still money, reports Reuter.

The 12-day UN Conference on Environment and Development wound down on Friday for a weekend of festivities after delegates heard innumerable pledges to save the planet.

There were still few concrete plans for backing up the grand environmental plans with funding. Various organisations and countries had offered to commit money to help poor nations develop their economies in an environmentally sound manner, but few details were given.

Typical was the speech on Friday by Japanese Environment Minister Shozaburo Nakamura.

Disappointing some delegates who had been hoping for more specifics, Nakamura said Japan was prepared to make a contribution through agreed mechanisms concomitant with its status in the international community.

He did not say what the contribution might be.

Similarly, earlier in the week, World Bank President Lewis Preston said the lending agency would allocate funds from its profits to aid environmental projects if member nations agreed. But again, he gave no idea of how much.

Most attention at the con-

ference, which seeks to blend the needs of the environment with the demands of development in the Third World, focused on the Summit's two treaties.

One treaty seeks to combat global warming, which scientists say threatens the earth with catastrophic climate changes, and the other is a biodiversity convention to protect plants, animals and natural resources.

Both were opened for signature during the week by Fernando Collor de Mello, president of hats -nation Brazil.

By late Friday, 17 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Finland, had signed the climate treaty, while 15 countries, including Pakistan, India, Indonesia and

Italy, had signed the biodiversity text.

A notable absentee on the biodiversity treaty will be the United States, which supplied the summit with its first flap on Friday, and has said it will not sign the treaty.

Washington fears the treaty will have an adverse impact on the US biotechnology industry, since the treaty would affect access to plants and animals whose genes could provide valuable products.

The flap came when a private memorandum from chief US delegate William Reilly, suggesting ways in which Washington might change its mind on the treaty, was published in the New York Times, along with a report about how

he was rebuffed by his superiors.

The results was embarrassment for Reilly, who is also US Environmental Protection Agency chief, and lots of grist for US President George Bush's many critics at the conference.

"I think the president should accept the advice of Reilly," said Senator Al Gore, a Tennessee Democrat who is a congressional observer with the US delegation in Rio.

But not all the Earth Summit's activities were hard fought negotiations or political roes. In a show of celebration on Friday, dignitaries from around the world gathered to plant a tree. It was a gesture to honour the earth they are here to save.

38 killed in separate incidents in city last month

By Farid Ahmed

Thirty-eight people died and around 200 wounded in separate incidents of murder, suicide, clash, robbery, mugging and accident in Dhaka during the month of May.

Of the total dead, eight people were murdered while four committed suicide, 16 were killed in road accidents while 10 others were drowned in the river Buriganga.

Besides other incidents, at least four dozens of robberies

and muggings were committed in the city last month while at least a dozen clashes occurred.

Out of the eight murders, three alone were committed under the Dhanmondi Police Station areas within a span of 36 hours on May 23 and 24.

A 15-year old school boy, Shahabuddin, was murdered at Jigatola in broad daylight on May 24 and a businessman Nizamuddin was also stabbed

to death in West Dhanmondi at about midnight the same day.

In two separate incidents, Jahangir, an autorickshaw driver was punched to death near Ghausia Market while an auto tempo driver Anwar Hossain was killed at Tejkonipara on May 23.

In the city's posh Gulshan area, a businessman, Afzal Ahmed, was shot dead at a residence by his younger brother, Wali Ahmed May 11.

four committed suicide follow-

Of the others, a salesman-cashier of Sonali Tobacco Limited, a project officer of National Dockyard Engineering and Service Limited and another young man were murdered in Lalbagh, Keraniganj and Demra areas last month.

Police are yet to identify the 'killers' other than those of the businessman, Afzal Ahmed and the auto-rickshaw driver Jahangir in which Afzal's

younger brother Wali Ahmed and an auto-rickshaw driver were arrested and produced before the court. But police are yet to frame charge-sheets in all the cases, according to concerned sources.

At least four housewives, including a noted drama artiste, Dalila Rahman, reportedly committed suicide in the city last month.

It was reported that all the See Page 12 Col 1

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