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WB Assembly sets aside counter-move on Tinbigha

CALCUTTA, June 9: The West Bengal Assembly today failed to adopt unanimously a motion supporting the implementation of the Tinbigha agreement, as the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) brought a counter-motion opposing the leasing of the Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh, reports PTI.

The motion, jointly moved by the Congress (I) chief whip, Gyan Singh Sohanpal, Lakshmi Dey, chief whip of the Left Front, and leaders of other Left Front partners in the assembly, was passed by voice vote.

The counter-motion of the SUCI, moved by its member, Debaprasad Sarkar, was defeated by 136-2 votes.

The joint motion said: This house believes that the implementation of the Tinbigha agreement will help in strengthening the friendship between the two countries. This house is also of the opinion that this is an appropriate and timely step taken by the government of India and will help in strengthening the social, political, economic and cultural cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

The SUCI motion read: This house through the state government demanded of the central government that the undemocratic step of leasing of Tinbigha corridor by force should be immediately stopped.

The joint resolution said: The understanding arrived at between the two countries makes it clear that sovereignty over the leased area shall continue to remain with India... there is, therefore, no ques-

tion of the people being isolated from the rest of the country. As regards the question of dealing with offences on the corridor, the existing arrangements will continue.

It further said, 'the modalities also imply that the question of movement of Bangladesh traffic including movement of military and para-military forces without the knowledge of Indian authorities does not arise. India's sovereignty over Tinbigha corridor has been ensured and will continue to remain, and the Supreme Court of India has also reiterated this and Bangladesh fully recognises India's sovereignty over the corridor.'

Speaking on the motion, the Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, said that he wholeheartedly supports the motion which was supported by all other parties except the SUCI.

Stating that there was no cause for any confusion regarding the agreement, Basu said that earlier there was a one-sided propaganda against it. There were difficulties in Left Front parties which were sorted out later.

Basu said that a party thinking along 'communal' lines was determined to 'create trouble' in Tinbigha. 'I again appeal to them from this forum to desist from any such move.'

Basu said that he had met the BJP leader, LK Advani, and asked him what was wrong in the agreement. He also said that it was now necessary to explain to the people that 'we are not losing our sovereignty, neither the people of Kuchlibari would be cut off if the

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What has Saifur got up his sleeve?

Star Economic Report

With only eight days left for the Jatiya Sangsad session the nation is eagerly awaiting the budget proposals for the next financial year.

This will be the first budget of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia since it came to power. The current budget, government claims, was product of the caretaker government.

Saifur Rahman, the 11th Finance Minister of the country, is expected to place the 21st budget before the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) on June 18 afternoon. Rahman would also have the privilege of announcing fourth national budgets. He announced three other budgets in 1980, 1981 and 1991.

Tajuddin Ahmed, the first Finance Minister under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sayeduz-zaman, Finance Minister under



Ershad, announced three budgets each.

The Cabinet, in a special meeting on June 18, would finally approve the proposed budget, after which no one would be allowed to leave the meeting room before the budget is made public. Every year, the Finance Minister gets a new briefcase to carry the budget documents. Sources in the Ministry of Finance could

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Haj rituals in Arafat today

JEDDAH, June 9: The rituals of Haj, the fifth pillar of Islam, began early this morning as pilgrims started proceeding toward Mina, near Makkah, after Tawaf of Khana Kaaba and Sa'ee between Safa and Marwa hills, reports BSS.

Standing in Arafat, the main part of Haj, will take place tomorrow, the tenth of Zilhaj.

Meanwhile, Saudi Minister for Pilgrim and Endowment, Abdul Wahab Abdul Waseel received the official Haj goodwill delegations from different countries, including Bangladesh, and discussed with them ways to strengthen fraternal relations among the Muslim Ummah and Islamic issues of common concern.

As usual, the events of the Haj will be transmitted live to the outside world tomorrow.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, accompanied by her husband Dr Abdul Wajed Mia, is here to perform Haj. They are the guests of the royal Saudi Government.



The fourth class employees of Dhaka University and students of Nilkhet School brought out a procession on the DU campus demanding arrest of terrorists and protesting Sunday's incident in which three school children were injured. — Star photo.

Corruption must be checked: PM

MAHESHPUR (Jhenidah), June 9: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called upon the people to unite against the "conspirators" out to destroy the country, with the same spirit as they had demonstrated in ousting autocracy, reports UNB.

"Beware of moves designed to divide and destroy the country," she told a huge public meeting at Maheshpur High School ground this afternoon.

Begum Zia stressed checking cross-border trade for flourishing of indigenous industry. Also, she said, corruption and irregularities at all levels have to be stopped.

Referring to nine years of autocratic rule, the Prime Minister said people's wealth and money had been grabbed and deposited in foreign banks.

Village is the focal point of her government's development efforts, she told the meeting, and listed various programmes including canal digging. These were taken to break the shackles of dependency.

Begum Zia sought cooperation of all in implementing various development programmes taken up by her government, saying Bangladesh would become a self-reliant and exporting nation if these programmes go through successfully.

Chaired by Shahidul Islam, MP, the meeting was also addressed by Social Welfare and Women's Affairs Minister Tariqul Islam, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khondker Mosharraf Hossain and MPs Begum Shamsunna-har, Begum Farida Rahman, Mashtur Rahman and Abdul Wahab.

The Prime Minister assured the local people that the Pilot High School here would be nationalised and other demands including rural electrification fulfilled in phases.

Later, Begum Zia addressed another big meeting at Naldanga Vhushan Pilot High School.

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2 killed, 25 hurt as Ansars fire on sugarcane farm workers

BOGRA, June 9: Two workers were killed and 25 injured, eight critically, when Ansars fired on a procession in a government sugarcane farm in Gaibandha district today, reports UNB.

Officials and witnesses said Dulu Mia (30) died on the spot while Mehedul (20) succumbed to his injuries on way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Eight others in critical condition were also sent to the RMCH.

More than 100 workers brought out a procession in Sahebganj Sugarcane Farm of the Rangpur Sugar Mills, this morning demanding change in the contract-based work system.

The Ansars on duty intervened and opened fire as the processionists turned violent, the sources said.

The mill management alleged the processionists ransacked and put fire to its office.

NEWS BRIEFS

Indian sarees seized
 By Staff Correspondent
 The Task Force, during an anti-smuggling drive at Dhanmondi Hawkers Market in the city Tuesday, seized Indian cotton and silk sarees worth about Taka 1,70,500, according to Customs Intelligence Department.

23 arrested with duplicate tickets
 Railway Police arrested 23 passengers with duplicate tickets of Sulabh class of the Noakhali bound Upakul Express at Kamalapur Railway Station here Tuesday morning. Railway Police said the passengers were later released on bail, reports BSS.

Ustad Fazlul Huq hospitalised
 Noted classical and Nazrul geeti singer Ustad Fazlul Huq, who has been suffering from various serious complications for a long time, was admitted to P G hospital. He has been suffering from kidney, liver and diabetes complications, family sources said, reports BSS.

Dhaka, Yangon to work for confidence building

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh and Myanmar have resolved to work together to persuade the Rohingya refugees whose unwillingness to return has made their repatriation uncertain.

Senior officials of the two countries, at Monday's meeting at Maungdaw, listed several 'confidence building measures' that both sides would undertake immediately.

Briefing newsmen yesterday on the Maungdaw talks, Additional Foreign Secretary AH Mahmood Ali said that the Myanmar officials were "positive" in their approach and that they assured that the exodus of Rohingyas would "stop completely in a week or so".

All noted that "things are changing" and added the influx had already slowed down substantially. According to officials, the number of refugees registered till Monday was 268551.

The Bangladesh team, led by Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Omar Farooq, suggested that Yangon start a motivational campaign to ward off fears among Rohingyas that they would again be subjected to persecution. Myanmar officials entertained the idea.

Dhaka team made a plea to let Bangladesh officials visit the Arakan villages from where the refugees have fled. Myanmar side, led by Immigration Ministry Director General Maung Aung, consented to the proposal but tagged approval from higher authorities.

On a Bangladesh suggestion that representatives of UN specialised agencies based in Yangon be taken on an on-the-spot evaluation of the situation prevailing in the area, the Myanmar officials said it would require approval from authorities in Yangon.

Responding to queries from Bangladesh officials, they assured that the refugees on return would retain their religious and cultural rights.

They are entitled to all facilities — education and government jobs — and there were no 'restrictions', the Myanmar officials told their Bangladesh counterparts.

The meeting decided to hold senior official level talks once in every month and between the repatriation officials "as and when necessary".

Police raid three DU halls

By Staff Correspondent

Police made an early-morning swoop on three residential halls of Dhaka University Tuesday in a bid to round up the 'terrorists' involved in Sunday's incident in which three school children were injured.

On Monday Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia instructed the Home Ministry officials to find out the culprits responsible.

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Student's tendon severed

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified youths attacked a polytechnic student on the Dhaka University campus Tuesday and cut the tendon of his right wrist.

Witnesses said that the youths attacked Shafiqul Islam, 20, at the Arts Faculty building of the university at about 7-30 in the morning and cut his wrist with a sharp weapon.

The victim was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition from where he was shifted to a private clinic after first aid, they said.

BCIC case Zeenat, Mosharraf get 2-yr jail term

Former BCIC Chairman and Industries Secretary AKM Mosharraf Hossain and his wife Zeenat Mosharraf were convicted in a corruption case by the Special and Fourth Additional Sessions Judge Court, Dhaka, yesterday for abusing official powers and illegally using official cars, refrigerators and air coolers, reports BSS.

Mosharraf Hossain was found guilty under Section 5(2) of the Anti-Corruption Act of 1947 and sentenced to suffer simple imprisonment for two years and to pay Taka 500,000 in default to suffer six months simple imprisonment.

Zeenat Mosharraf Hossain was found guilty of abetment under Section 5(2) of the Anti-Corruption Act of 1947 and 109 of the Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC) and sentenced to suffer simple imprisonment for two years and to pay of Taka 5,00,000 in default to suffer six months simple imprisonment.

As soon as the judgement was pronounced, both the accused filed two petitions before the court — one praying for bail and the other for division status in the jail.

The court granted the petition for division status in the jail but rejected the bail petition.

The case in brief is that Mosharraf Hossain and his wife Zeenat, in collusion with each other and by abusing official power, illegally kept and used a dozen of official cars, half dozen refrigerators and air coolers of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation in their possession for their family use and thus caused huge financial loss to the Bangladesh Government.

In this connection, the Bureau of Anti-Corruption had filed a corruption case with Motijheel Police against them after the fall of the Ershad Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman and Advocate Mokhlesur Rahman Badal appeared for the petitioners.

Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzag, Assistant Public Prosecutors, AKM Mostafa and Faruq Umar appeared for the State.

Press Note Body to probe BDR firing in Jessore

The government has decided to make a judicial probe into the June 7 incident of BDR firing that left one person killed and two others injured in Chowgacha upazila of Jessore district, reports UNB.

A Home Ministry press note yesterday said that a one-man enquiry committee was formed for the purpose with Jessore District and Sessions Judge Ruhul Amin Majumder.

The firing took place at Pularpara cattle market in Chowgacha upazila following a clash between BDR personnel and the local people over the seizure of cattleheads, the press note added.

Lohani pays for bandying words with minister

By Staff Correspondent

Row over distribution of invitation cards has resulted in the change of the Director General of Shilpakala Academy. Kamal Lohani received the order of transfer yesterday that placed his job under the Ministry of Information for appointment at the Press Institute of Bangladesh, the organisation he had served as Associate Editor prior to his joining the Academy.

Informed sources said Lohani developed a bitter relationship with his minister over selection of invitees to the programmes arranged by the Academy, leading to the sudden transfer.

The dispute took a sharp turn when the concerned minister accused him of not sending invitation card to a senior minister to witness the performance of a Chinese acrobatic team held at the Academy auditorium recently.

Lohani and the minister exchanged hot words at a meeting prior to the celebration of Nazrul Jayanti last month.

New UN body to monitor environmental progress

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 9: Earth Summit negotiators struggled today to bridge North-South gaps and agree on funding and forest protection in time for the meeting's weekend finale, reports Reuter.

Discussions on both topics bogged down at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on Monday after Third World nations demanded that richer countries pledge large new sums of foreign aid to translate promises of a greener world into practice.

Gloom clouded conference talks over funding for Agenda 21, the summit's ambitious blueprint for green development into the next century.

AP adds: Negotiators approved the creation of a new UN body to monitor compliance with environmental treaties and review progress toward the goals of the Summit.

"I think it's one of the most important accomplishments" of the Earth Summit, Kathy Sessions, an analyst with the United Nations Association of the United States said Monday night after the vote.

Scott Hajost of the Environmental Defense Fund was more circumspect, saying that the commission will be only as powerful as countries allow it to be.

"The proof is going to be in the follow-up by government," said Hajost, a former State Department attorney. Nevertheless, he said, "I'm pleased we've got this on the table."

He praised the United States for its role in establishing the commission, called the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. "The United States was fairly constructive on this issue," Hajost said.

It was the first good news to emerge from the Earth Summit concerning the United States. Washington has been criticised for its opposition to many of the Earth Summit's plans. Europe and Japan have deserted it on most issues, leaving the United States nearly alone in its opposition.

The destruction of tropical forests increased by 50 per cent during the past decade, a UN study released Tuesday at the Summit shows.

The European Community also pressed ahead Tuesday with its own declaration on curbing carbon dioxide emissions, saying it will adopt limits that the United States opposes.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and six other heads of state were due to arrive at the summit Tuesday. Another 67 are expected over the next two days.

The report by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization said about 17 million hectares (41 million acres) of forest land are destroyed annually, mostly in South and Central America. About 70 per cent of total deforestation takes place in rain forests.

About 16.9 million hectares (41.7 million acres) were destroyed last year, compared to 11.3 million hectares (27.9 million acres) in 1980.

The United States has proposed increasing its aid for saving rain forests by \$ 150 million. The initiative has been slowed as poorer nations, which have most of the world's forests, want to control how the money is spent.

The latest statistics confirm the alarming tendency of recent years, said FAO official Hollis Murphy. "There is an urgent need for improved conservation, management and sustainable use of forest resources."

The UN study said the world has 4.9 billion hectares (12.25 million acres) of forests, but the amount of forest land destroyed annually surpasses the amount that is replanted.

Half of the Latin America's land is covered by forests, as is 33 per cent of Asia and 27 per cent of Africa.