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NEWS BRIEFS

Oahab meets

Hasina today

Staff Correspondent
Charge d' Affaires of Saudi Arabia in Bangladesh Ali Ahmed Oahab will call on Awami League chief and leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina today (Friday) at 11 am at her Minia Road office, says a press release.

Businessman

shot dead

JHENIDAH, July 3: Unknown assailants Thursday night shot dead a businessman at Narayanpur in Sadar thana of the district. Police said Abdul Mannan (48) was killed on the spot when about 15 armed men opened fire on him at his shop at around 9 pm, reports UNIL.

Comilla bypass

blocked for 4 hrs

COMILLA, July 3: The Comilla bypass on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway remained closed to traffic for four hours Friday following a road accident near Chashapara at 11 am. All vehicles were diverted through Comilla town as the road was blocked when a truck turned turtle after colliding with a BRTC truck, reports UNIL.

Govt can scrap Scimitar deal, legal experts say

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The Scimitar Exploration Limited that has hit headlines once again with the sensational forged letter affair stands to get its contract terminated.

Legal experts, including ones in the government's legal arm, said the authorities have shown enough goodwill even after it failed to fulfil its 'mandatory contractual obligations' but, with the latest forgery scandal, the government has a stronger ground to scrap the deal after giving proper notice.

A senior government law official, speaking anonymously, said the authorities should not have any difficulty in doing away with the deal.

Barrister Amirul Islam, an eminent lawyer and a member of the 1988 public enquiry committee, said the government could scrap the contract citing Scimitar's failure to 'perform the mandatory obligations'.

The deal, Islam told The Daily Star, was worked out in an unfair manner, without 'exploring other possibilities'.

'The job could have been done by Petrobangla itself,' he asserted quoting the findings of the enquiry committee.

and a Director, after the latter's arrest Tuesday on charges of forgery, sources said.

A senior Dhaka-based foreign diplomat met a top government leader to plead Lakhani's case. Lakhani, a Pakistan national, is married to a Bangladesh woman.

However, investigations into the allegation are on. The Home Secretary said last night that police were probing into the affair.

The then Government defied public protests to sign a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) with the Scimitar away in Abu Dhabi on Dec 28, 1987 for exploration of petroleum in 1650 square kilometers in

Sylhet district. The final stages of negotiation were held in the UAE capital and the then Petrobangla chairman late Habibur Rahman and Energy Ministry Joint Secretary Nuruddin M Kamal travelled to the Middle-Eastern city to initial the contract.

The deal drew fierce protests from public and politicians alike and the 'Public Enquiry Committee' headed by eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain prepared a report that suggested termination of contract after further verification of facts. The report, on Scimitar activities in Bangladesh, was submitted to

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Floods in 2 major river basins likely this month

The country is likely to have moderate floods in the Brahmaputra and Meghna basins as one or two monsoon depression may develop in the southern Bay of Bengal during the current month.

Floods are likely due to the 'almost normal' rainfall usually experienced in the month of July, caused by the monsoon depression, Met office director Hamiduzzaman Khan told UNB last night.

He, however, said that the country may have 10 per cent less than the normal rainfall recorded in July in last 30 years.

Crop experts believe that the expected rainfall will be favourable for crops.

The Met office long-range forecast said Chittagong division may have the highest rainfall 600 mm followed by 400 mm in Khulna division.

Dhaka division is likely to experience 360 mm rain while Rajshahi division 350 mm.

Last month the country had less rain than forecast the highest 439 mm being recorded in Chittagong.

Meanwhile, some 150 families of four villages in Shahjapur thana under Sirajganj were rendered homeless due to flood and erosion of the Jamuna in last 24 hours, officials said yesterday.

They said although the water level of the Jamuna came

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The building, near completion at 30, Hare Road in the city is most likely to be the official residence of the Prime Minister. Costing about 10 crore taka, the building is expected to be ready for use by the end of this year. The building was originally planned by the Ershad government for use as the official residence of the Vice President. — Star photo by Mohsin

Nine killed as riots erupt in Ahmedabad

NEW DELHI, July 3: Police fired bullets and tear gas at Hindus and Muslims rioting in a western city Friday, a day after clashes left nine people dead and dozens hurt, news reports said, reports AP.

The clashes started Thursday during a Hindu religious procession, and some of the rioters fired guns and stabbed people. Police immediately imposed curfews in some neighborhoods.

The violence in Ahmedabad came after a year of relative peace in India between Hindus and Muslims, who repeatedly clashed across the country in 1990, leaving 1,000 people dead.

The mistrust between the two religions has been smouldering for all 45 years of India's independence. Muslims form 12 per cent of India's 844 million people. Hindus comprise 82 per cent.

On Friday, United News of India said, police fired about 700 bullets in the air and more than 200 tear gas canisters in six areas of the city where Hindus and Muslims defied curfews and fought with daggers, knives, iron rods and stones.

At least six houses and shops were set afire Friday in Ahmedabad, 750 kilometers (465 miles) southwest of New

Delhi in Gujarat state, United News of India said.

Another news agency, Press Trust of India, said Thursday's violence killed eight people and one woman died later of injuries. Eighty people were injured, it said.

Pioneer, a national newspaper, said there were conflicting reports about the cause of the fight.

One report said the Hindus in the procession shouted anti-Islamic slogans while passing through a Muslim area, causing some Muslims to throw stones from rooftops.

Another report said the stone throwing started as soon as the procession reached the neighborhood.

The 1,000-year-old Jagannath festival commemorates the annual journey the gods Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra took, according to Hindu folklore.

Idols of the gods made out of wood are placed in huge chariots and taken from the temple to a place where they sit for nine days, when another procession brings them back.

The nation's main Jagannath festival was held peacefully Thursday in the eastern city of Puri, where 500,000 people followed a huge chariot as Hindus hauled it through the streets.

Rabbani to clean up Afghan capital 'at any cost'

KABUL, July 3: Interim Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani said today that armed people who had roamed Kabul at will for the past few weeks would be pushed out of the city 'at any cost' in a new clean-up operation, reports AFP.

Security would be brought to the capital and all of Afghanistan, he pleaded.

In a speech at a mosque during Friday prayers that was occasionally drowned out by the roar of passing armoured personnel carriers and punctuated by automatic weapons fire Rabbani called on those who were armed not to resist the operation which began Thursday.

Interior Minister Ahmed Shah later told AFP, he expected the operation to last about a week.

Both the Mujahideen who entered the Afghan capital on April 28 following the fall of the Communist government and the end of 14 years of civil war and other armed men who

are not Mujahideen are to be put in barracks outside the city.

'We have decided to bring peace to Kabul and to Afghanistan', Rabbani said in his speech at the Wazir Akbar Khan Mosque. 'I want all people to help us and armed people to listen closely to what is the decision by the state.'

'I want to bring security all over Afghanistan, not just Kabul,' he said.

Those people in violation must be put out of the city at any cost', Rabbani said many of the people who were looting and pillaging were common thieves and not Mujahideen.

Shah said later that his Interior Ministry was putting together a police force to ensure Kabul's security, but that in the meantime Defence Ministry forces were helping the clean-up operation.

'This operation is being very successful,' he said.

Apart from occasional shots, Kabul was relatively calm today

with armoured personnel carriers roaming the city.

Most of the soldiers conducting the operation belonged to units that had fought under the old Communist government, a Defence Ministry official said, adding that the reasons for this were 'Technical — such as the Mujahideen not knowing how to operate tanks.'

But he added that there was representation of several Mujahideen factions in the unified Defence Ministry force.

Tough Uzbek Militia, whose presence here has been bitterly opposed by some groups, and who still hold the city's adjacent military and civilian airports 'will leave when they are no longer needed,' the Defence Ministry official said.

The senior official said, adding that after security was brought to Kabul the government would try to extend its power to other cities now held by different commanders.

Expulsion issue

DU VC to talk with teachers, students

By Masud Arif

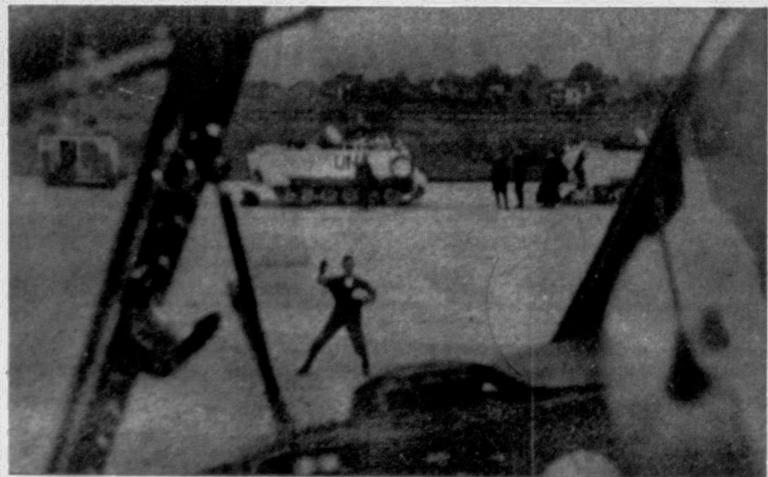
The Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Maniruzzaman Miah plans to hold talks with the representatives of the teachers and students to defuse the tension that has gripped the institution after expulsion of a student.

The VC will soon meet the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) leaders and student representatives.

Following the expulsion and cancellation of Honours Degree of a DU Physics Department student Ansar Ali, a group of students formed a committee named 'Committee for Protecting the Rights of Students' (CPRS), last week, called a day-long student strike and announced an 11-point charter of demands including return of Ansar Ali's degree, judicial inquiry into the alleged irregularities and corruption by teachers, measures against teachers' en-

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Fresh move to stop Yugoslav bloodbath



UN troops keep watch as a Royal Airforce Hercules is directed to a parking space at Sarajevo Airport Friday though the world body declared it secured. — APP photo

SARAJEVO (Bosnia-Herzegovina), July 3: British and US transport aircraft arrived at Sarajevo airport early Friday, the first of eight flights scheduled to bring relief supplies to the besieged Bosnian capital, reports AP.

Also Friday, European Community negotiator Lord Carrington reached Sarajevo. Carrington is head of the European Community's special conference on Yugoslavia and is trying to arrange peacetalks between Muslim, Croat and Serb leaders.

Carrington, refused a flak jacket offered by the chief UN peacekeeper, Maj Gen Lewis McKenzie, as he set off in an armoured personnel carrier to meet with Bosnian and Serb leaders.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic called Carrington's effort 'the only chance' to stop the bloodshed. He also acknowledged Serb forces had suffered losses recently, saying they were under orders not to

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