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UN aid convoy heads for besieged city

US warship moves closer to Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Aug 15: The US Navy has ordered the aircraft carrier Saratoga and its escort into the Adriatic closer to Bosnia as a 'prudent precaution', Pentagon sources said Friday, reports AFP.

The Saratoga, which carries 80 warplanes, recently ended a port-call in Greece and had been scheduled to conduct exercises in the central Mediterranean.

It is accompanied by the cruiser Biddle, and is now expected to enter the Mediterranean Saturday.

The move follows a vote Thursday by the UN Security Council authorizing the use of force if needed to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

They are edging a little closer to the scene as a prudent precaution, a Pentagon source said, speaking on condition of anonymity, 'they will do something, they will do something.'

Two other US navy ships have been in the Adriatic since last week, the cruiser Thomas Gates and the Trenton, an amphibious landing vessel carrying a contingent of marines.

Dhaka backs UN resolution on Bosnia

Bangladesh fully supports the United Nations Security Council resolution on use of military force, if needed to provide humanitarian aid to civilians in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including those in detention camps and jails, a Foreign Office spokesman said yesterday, reports BSS.

Dhaka also supports the other Security Council resolution which strongly condemns 'ethnic cleansing' in what was Yugoslavia and urges authorities to end all human rights violations, he said.

The spokesman said Bangladesh has co-sponsored a call for extra-ordinary session of the human rights commission to consider the question of human rights violations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Security Council Friday

Eastern Bank starts operation today

By Staff Correspondent

Eastern Bank Limited, a new bank floated with the assets and liabilities of the Bangladesh chapter of Credit and Commerce International (CCI), goes into operation today.

The depositors of CCI, the operations of which was suspended on Aug 20, 1991, would be allowed to draw money from their accounts after certain deductions, and adjustments, according to the restructuring scheme notified by the Bangladesh Bank (BB).

However, no deductions will be made in the case of non-resident foreign currency accounts.

Depositors having upto taka one lakh with the bank will face no cuts. However, for deposits above Taka one lakh and upto Taka two lakh, ten per cent of the sum will be deducted.

For deposits of the next two lakh Taka, 22.5 per cent for the next two lakh Taka, 35 per cent for the next four lakh Taka, 45 per cent for the next five lakh Taka and 50 per cent for the rest of deposits. The date for allowing withdrawal would be decided by BB, according to the scheme.

Deposits of the first one lakh will be allowed to be drawn after one month of the notified date. The next one lakh will be allowed to be drawn after six months.

The scheme, however, said

Khaleda may drop UN visit

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

With Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia still undecided, speculations are rife in the Foreign Office that she may finally drop her plan to visit New York next month to address the 47th UN General Assembly (UNGA) session.

The UN desk at the Foreign Office is, however, making preparations on the assumption that the Prime Minister will speak at the 179-member UNGA session that begins Sept. 15. Concerned officials are drafting the Prime Minister's speech and arranging programmes for her in New York.

In case the Prime Minister decides against the visit, she will send Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman to



Pickets blocking a BRTC bus along with police escort vans at Farmgate area during hartal hours yesterday. —Star photo

Matia Chowdhury hurt

Sporadic clashes mark half-day hartal

By Staff Correspondent

A half-day countrywide hartal demanding trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed Saturday disrupting normal life in the capital.

Barring some stray incidents the hartal was peaceful.

Matia Chowdhury, an Awami League MP received minor injuries in Farmgate when police baton charged a group of pickets who stoned and damaged a BRTC bus there, witnesses said.

In other parts of the capital, pickets damaged at least half a dozen vehicles that ventured onto the streets ignoring the hartal.

A police minibus also came under attack by a mob near Joykali Mandir, they added.

The Awami League (AL) called the dawn-to-noon hartal demanding repeal of Indemnity Ordinance that bars the killers of Bangabandhu from being tried.

The hartal coincided the 17th anniversary of the assassination of Sheikh Mujib. Most of his family members were also killed on the day August 15, 1975.

During hartal hours the city streets were free of traffic excluding a few rickshaws. People had to walk to their destinations.

Shops, business establishments, private offices and educational institutions stayed closed until 12pm. During hartal hours, there was no transaction at banks while attendances in government offices were thin.

Inter-district buses stayed parked at the three city terminals and railway and steamer services were also affected by the hartal.

In the capital the main trouble spot was the Farmgate area where the AL's central leader Matia Chowdhury was

Interest on loans

Some defaulters fail to get exemption

By Inam Ahmed

A number of defaulters seeking exemption of interest on their loans as per government instructions have failed to avail the opportunity despite completion of all formalities, according to concerned sources.

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has received about 30 applications from borrowers who said their respective banks did not give them the opportunity of exemption.

On the other hand, the BB observed that it could not pressurise the banks into giving the opportunity as the exemption scheme was only a suggestion and not a directive.

According to the BB suggestion, loan defaulters against whom cases have not been filed, could apply within December 1991 along with ten per cent of the total loan for total exemption of penalty interest and 75% exemption of

Awami League observes 'national mourning day'

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League observed 'National Mourning Day' throughout the country yesterday, the 17th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The day was marked with the observance of a country-wide half-day hartal demanding scrapping of the Indemnity Act that would pave the way of the trial of Bangabandhu's killers.

The AL-called hartal yesterday was the first such programme on Bangabandhu's death anniversary, since his killing with his near and dear ones, in a bloody political change-over August 15, 1975.

The day's programme included garlanding of the portrait of Sheikh Mujib at Dhanmondi in the capital, visiting the Banani graveyard in the city and Bangabandhu's mazar at Tungpara, offering of Faicha at both the places, offering of special prayers, distribution of food among the destitutes, holding of Qurankhani and milad mahfil in various parts of the country.

Black flags were hoisted atop the Bangabandhu Bhaban while the national flag and the party flag were hoisted at half-mast atop all the party offices across the country.

The recorded March 7, 1971 historic speech of Sheikh Mujib was played throughout the day at the camps and offices of party in the capital as well as in other parts of the country.

In Dhaka, people of all walks of life including the followers and admirers of Sheikh Mujib thronged the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi to lay wreaths at his portrait there and visit the house where he, country's first President, was killed 17 years ago.

Awami League chief and



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina garlanding the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban yesterday. —Star photo

Local Govt Commission wants MPs as advisers

By Mahfuz Ullah

The Local Government Commission has suggested that Members of Parliament (MPs) be involved as advisers in different local government institutions in their respective constituencies.

By being so, according to the report of the Commission, the MPs would be in a position to contribute to local level planning and coordinate between the central and local level governments.

The 17-member Commission with Nazmul Huda, Information Minister, was formed November 24 last, following the dissolution of the Upazila system. The Commission submitted its report to the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia August 2, suggesting a two-tier system for local government.

The Commission observed that the MPs should not get involved in day to day activities of the local government institutions. Their advisory role would activate the functioning of the local government institutions and the respective local government institution should take all decisions in consultation with the MP, the Commission further observed.

The MPs, according to the Commission, should mediate in solving the disputes between different local government institutions and should act as the contact persons between the local government at the grassroots level and the central government based in the capital.

The Commission observed that under the proposed system the ruling party would not risk alienation consequently affecting the democratic system.

The Commission observed that in the past the ruling party destroyed the democratic structure when it was alienated.

The Commission suggested that the women MPs should be involved at district level local government in view of their constituencies incorporating more than one district.

The MPs, according to the Commission, would be involved with district level local government until the expiry of term as Member of Parliament.

Comparing the role of an MP in a developed country with that of one in an underdeveloped country, the Commission observed that in an underdeveloped country an MP was not only a legislator. An MP, in an underdeveloped country, has to play an important role in local level planning and development.

Govt's autocratic attitude unveiled in House: 5-Party

By Staff Correspondent

Central leaders of the Five-Party alliance said yesterday that the government's activities during the discussion on the no-confidence motion in Parliament had 'unveiled its autocratic and undemocratic attitude.'

At a meeting on the prevailing condition of the country, the leaders observed that the present government had failed to reply to all the allegations brought in the motion.

BCL leader murdered in Khulna

KHULNA, Aug 15: Police recovered the body of a student leader from the bank of Rupsha river near Nchalpur village in Rupsha thana today, reports UNB.

According to police, there were several stab wounds on the body of Shafigul Kabir, Vice President of Rupsha thana unit of Awami League-backed Chhatra League and son of Asgar Morol of Moylapota in Khulna town.

Police suspected foul play but could not immediately ascertain the cause of his death, nor the date since when he was missing.

Fresh rocket attacks on Kabul airport

KABUL, Aug 15: Kabul airport came under renewed fire today from a rebel Mujahideen leader but most of the Afghan capital remained quiet, witnesses said, reports AFP.

Earlier reports in Islamabad by the Hezb-i-Islami faction of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar had reported fighting in various parts of the city.

More than a dozen rockets fell on the airport, the focus of a recent missile offensive by Hezb-i-Islami, a witness said.

One military transport plane was hit by a missile, erupting in a huge fireball seen from some miles away.

Most of Kabul was quiet with shops opening again and

more people walking in the streets.

Many residents were still trying to flee the city, but witnesses said Defence Ministry forces were stopping refugees leaving along the road to the eastern city of Jalalabad.

A Defence Ministry official said the road north of the city to Mazar-i-Sharif was open. The Defence Ministry said diplomats and foreign residents could evacuate through Mazar-i-Sharif but embassies have not yet done so.

A Hezb spokesman and the Hezb-run Afghan News Agency (ANA) in Islamabad had reported exchanges of artillery and rocket fire in the south, east and west of Kabul including the area around the Khawaja Rawish Airport.

Mangal Hussain also claimed Hezb forces had seized the Mehrabuddin School in Kabul's southwestern suburbs from government troops.

They had no immediate information on casualties in the latest fighting, though rocket attacks and shelling have claimed more than 1,000 lives over the past several days since fighting erupted Monday.

Hekmatyar, whose forces have been engaged in fierce battles with the troops of the interim Afghan government headed by President Burhanuddin Rabbani, agreed Friday to reopen the Kabul airport for one hour to airlift foreigners.

Afghanistan's Islamic government has urged the United Nations to intervene to help end several days of bloody factional fighting in Kabul.

Two members of Kabul's ruling leadership council and former communist Uzbek militia leader general Rashid Dostum asked the UN to intervene late on Friday.

UN intervention could include peace keeping forces and humanitarian aid, said Dostum's deputy, General Majid Khan.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued a new appeal late on Friday for an end to the fighting.

Ban on politics extended

JCD, Chhatra Moitree clash at RU: 5 hurt

RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: At least five students were injured in clashes between activists of Jatyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Chhatra Moitree in four residential halls of Rajshahi University Friday night, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the rival groups fired about 50 rounds of gunshots, exploded cock-tails after the clash ensued over the possession of a seat at Suhrawardy Hall about 11.30 pm.

The university authorities at an emergency meeting today extended a 15-day ban on political activities on the campus, imposed on August 1, for another 15 days.

Abu Bakr Siddiqui (22), a second year student of the department of English, sustained bullet injury in the cross-fire and Raghu, a final year student of Geography, was stabbed by rivals in the Suhrawardy Hall.

They were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). The condition of Siddiqui was stated to be critical.

Rajshahi docs resume duties for 7 days

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: Doctors of Rajshahi district today decided to return to hospitals 'for seven days' ending a 96-hour work abstention.

A joint meeting of the Rajshahi unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) and doctors' coordinating council decided to join their duties following suspension of the jailor, the head warden and 10 other jail guards.

The joint meeting of the doctors was presided over by district BMA chief Dr M Abu Ahmed Ashraf Ali.

NEWS BRIEFS

PM announces relief for Bosnia
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has announced taken humanitarian relief for the distressed people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The relief materials like tea and medicines would be despatched as a gesture from Bangladesh for those people, a Foreign Office spokesman told BSS here yesterday.

Mongla Port starts operation
 From Staff Correspondent
 KHULNA, Aug 15: The operation of Mongla Port has been resumed this morning following an understanding to keep the matter pending for the tripartite meeting to be held on Aug 18 next. Earlier on Aug 14, loading and unloading operations at the port was suspended as the Mongla Port Stevedores' Association stopped booking labourers for an indefinite period.

Three with arms held in N'gang
 NARAYANGANJ, Aug 15: Narayanganj police in a pre-dawn swoop arrested three persons and recovered two pipe guns from their possession from a market place at Dcobhog in the town at 4 am today. Acting on secret information police raided the three storied market and arrested the persons with the fire guns, reports BSS.

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