

US asks Bonn authorities Halt Indian chemical delivery to Syria

WASHINGTON, Sept 21: The United States has intervened to block a shipment from India to Syria of chemicals that could be used to manufacture nerve gas, an official said today, reports AFP.

Washington learned of the shipment, being carried aboard a German transport ship, and asked Bonn authorities to halt the delivery, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

German authorities ordered the shipment, which had been unloaded in Cyprus, returned to Germany, the official said. The United States also complained to India about the shipment.

The New York Times, which first reported news of the shipment, said US intelligence last month discovered that a shipment of trimethylphosphite — a chemical that can be used to produce pesticide or nerve gas — had been sent from India to Syria on July 17 aboard the German Senator.

It said the US administration was convinced that the shipment was meant to be used for Syria's chemical arms programme.

The newspaper said United Phosphorous of Bombay had sold 90 tonnes of the chemical earlier this year as part of a large sale and had been pressing "day in and day out" for delivery of the second instalment.

Syria is widely believed to have an arsenal of chemical weapons, some of which could be put into artillery shells and bombs. Israel has warned that they could be also loaded onto medium-range missiles that could reach Israel.

The United States and its allies have encouraged chemical producing countries to develop stricter controls on "dual-use" chemicals that could be used not only for agriculture or industry but for chemical weapons.



READYING FOR REPATRIATION: (Anti-clockwise from top right) Rabita Trust and Pakistan High Commission officials enlisting names of stranded Pakistan nationals for issuing identity cards, leader of the group, Md Nasim Khan talking to some of the stranded moments before they had their photographs taken, pictures being taken for ID cards, Shamsheer, Zarina and Sofia are all smiles as the prospects of being repatriated getting stronger. — Star photo by Mohsin

Kidnapped girl recovered, three held

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered a kidnapped school girl from a residence at Ibrahimpur in the capital and arrested three alleged kidnapers from the area Monday morning.

The school girl, Umme Kulsam (Kamala) was sent to her father Emdadul Haq while three arrested persons were detained in the Dhaka Central Jail, said police.

Kamala, a student of the class six of Muslim Modern High School, Cantonment, while returning home at Kachukhet, Dhaka Cantonment after her school, was kidnapped Sunday afternoon.

According to Dhaka Cantonment police, on a secret tip off police raided a house No-170 at Ibrahimpur at 7 am yesterday and recovered the school girl.

Later police arrested Habibur Rahman alias Liton, 21, Tajul Islam, 20, and Ratan, 18, from the area in connection with kidnapping the girl.

Police said the three arrested persons were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday from where they were sent to the jail.

Three bodies recovered in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Police recovered three bodies including one of a minor boy from Uttara, Gulshan and Dhaka Cantonment in the capital Monday.

Jamal Uddin, 25, son of one Ashraf Ali, was found dead on a brook at the village Bhatuaria under Uttara police station yesterday morning.

Family members said Jamal was missing since he went to his sister's house at Sripur along with his cousin, Khokon on September 17.

Khokon returned home at the village Uttarakhan at Uttara on the following day and told family members that Jamal was staying back at Sripur.

Gulshan police recovered the body of a seven-year-old boy, Liton, from a road at Baridhara yesterday morning.

Witnesses said, Liton was crushed under a speeding truck at Baridhara at around 11:15 am yesterday.

An unidentified woman was found dead on a street at Kachukhet yesterday morning. She was about 55.

Local people identified the old woman as a street beggar, police said.

Three unnatural death (UD) cases were lodged with Uttara, Gulshan and Cantonment police stations in these connections and the bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue.

5-party stages sit-in Sept 24

By Staff Correspondent

Central five-party alliance will hold a three-hour long sit-in strike in front of the Secretariat on September 24 for withdrawal of anti-terrorism ordinances and to condemn conspiracy to protect the assassinations of Rashed Khan Menon.

A Steering Committee meeting of the alliance Sunday urged all to make the strike successful.

The meeting presided over by Khalequzzaman was also attended by Nirmal Sen, Bimal Biswas and Hasanul Haque Imu.

The meeting also urged all progressive democratic forces to build up strong movement against the anti-terrorism act.

Dhaka-Yangon next meet Sept 29

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 21: The ninth round of official-level talks between Bangladesh and Myanmar on the stalled repatriation of Rohingya refugees will be held on September 29 at Akyab in Arakan, reports UNB.

Official sources said today a 10-member Bangladesh delegation led by Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Omar Farook was expected to submit another list of 10,000 refugees to the Myanmar side for repatriation, which yet appears to be uncertain.

JCD CU unit expels 4

CHITTAGONG, Sept 21: Chittagong University unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) today expelled its four leaders for their involvement in terrorist activities, reports UNB.

Bus dacoity in Srimongal

MOULVIBAZAR, Sept 21: Armed dacoits halted a passenger coach, forcibly took the steering, drove it for five miles and finally decamped with cash and goods of about Taka 2 and a half lakh near Dulki of Bahubal thana on Dhaka-Selhet Highway Sunday night, reports UNB.

Sources said the dacoits, numbering 8 to 10, halted a coach (Dhaka Cha-1464) near Lansa of Srimongal thana after putting barricades on the road at about 8 pm.

Saudi reforms

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chaired by his brother, Interior Minister Prince Nayef, to meet next Sunday to start adapting current laws and procedures to the requirements of the new basic law that guarantees some personal freedoms and security from arbitrary search and arrest.

King Fahd "underlined the importance of these measures that are based on Islamic principles" and spoke of the "necessity of implementing them as soon as possible... and adapting existing regulations in line with the basic law," SPA said.

AL Constitution, manifesto amended : Dr Kamal dropped from Presidium

Hasina reelected, Zillur new GS

Star Report

The Awami League Council re-elected Sheikh Hasina president unopposed, but belied most media speculations by choosing Zillur Rahman as General Secretary Monday morning.

The councillors had authorised the Subject Committee Sunday night to name the new Central Working Committee (CWC) including the General Secretary, but the Subject Committee passed the authority on to the re-elected chief.

Sheikh Hasina after a more-than-seven-hour discussion with the Subject Committee members finalised the Central Working Committee that would take office for three years.

The Subject Committee, comprising the outgoing CWC members and presidents and secretaries of district bodies, began its session at 8.30 Sunday night and continued until 3.50 Monday morning.

About 2500 councillors readily endorsed the proposed CWC when Sheikh Hasina made the announcement before them.

Three much-talked-about aspirants for the coveted party post of General Secretary — Tofael Ahmed, Abdur Razzak and Amir Hossain Amu — got accommodation in the 15-member highest policy-making body, the Presidium.

Abdul Jalil, another reported aspirant, retained his position of Joint Secretary.

Sheikh Hasina left two positions vacant in the Presidium as she announced 11 names. The party President and the General Secretary are the ex-officio members.

From midnight onwards, thousands of weary AL leaders and workers waited outside the Engineers Institution, the venue of the two-day council meeting that stretched to the third day as the Subject Committee had gone into the marathon session.

The AL Central Council session, although a biennial affair, was held after five years. It last met in 1987.

In a major change, Dr Kamal Hossain did not retain his Presidium membership. Salahuddin Yusuf MP was also dropped. Both did not attend the meetings as they are out of the country.

However, there are speculations that they would fill in the two vacant positions in the Presidium.

The office-bearers are: President: Sheikh Hasina, Presidium members: Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Kamruzzaman, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury, Pulin Dey, Dr Alauddin, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak and Tofael Ahmed.

General Secretary: Zillur Rahman; Joint Secretaries: Muhammad Abdul Jalil, and Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Organising Secretary: Mohammad Nasim, Publicity Secretary: Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Assistant Publicity Secretary: M Abdul Mannan, Office Secretary: Fazlul Huq B Sc, Finance and Planning Secretary: Ataur Rahman Khan

Kaiser, Agriculture Secretary: Matia Chowdhury, Labour Secretary: Mannujan Sufian, Education and Culture Secretary: Obaidul Kader, Industries and Commerce Secretary: Akhteruzzaman Babu, Information and Research Secretary: Prof Abu Sayeed, International Affairs Secretary: Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Health, Population and Environment Secretary: Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, and Women Affairs Secretary: Advocate Iy Rahman.

The names of the other members of the 65-member CWC would be announced soon. UNB adds: Earlier, the Awami League Council Sunday night approved the party's amended manifesto, constitution and economic policy.

Under the amended constitution, strength of the central working committee — party's highest policy making body — was increased to 65 from 59.

A new Advisory Council will be set up with pro-Awami League intellectuals, bureaucrats and technocrats to advise the party chief on different national and international issues.

The Awami League President will nominate the members of the Advisory Council whose strength will not exceed 15.

The number of National Committee members was increased to 21 from 11.

The amended constitution also provides for two new posts of Secretary, two of Assistant Secretary, one member of the Presidium and one member of the central working committee.

There will be a sub-committee under each departmental secretary. Such sub-committees will be headed by a member of the presidium while the concerned secretary will act as member secretary.

The secretaries will be accountable to the party chief for their performance.

A seven-member advisory committee will also be formed at the district level to advise the party's district committees. The strength of district committee was increased to 55 from 49.

A 9-member committee of the party will be constituted at the village level.

The party's central council session will now be held after every three years instead of two years.

The amended manifesto retained the party's four principles but with explanations on nationalism, secularism and socialism. In the explanations, it was stated that nationalism means Bengali Nationalism, secularism as guarantee of the rights of all religious groups and socialism is replaced with free market economy for achieving exploitation-free society.

Hasina said the amendments to party manifesto, constitution and economic policy were brought in view of the changed global scenario.

Joint Secretary Abdul Jalil proposed the amendments to the constitution. Publicity Secretary Mohammad Nasim read out the amended manifesto and Finance Secretary Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser presented the new economic policy to the councillors at the Engineers' Institution.

The amended manifesto, constitution and new economic policy were passed by the councillors by raising hands when their approval was sought by party chief Sheikh Hasina who presided over the council session on the second day Sunday.

The councillors also empowered the central working committee for further amendments to the party constitution.

Earlier, outgoing General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury read out the organisational report in the morning session at the Engineers' Institution.

Art is a means of struggle

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play" in its presentation. Feroze Khan insisted. "The most exciting part is the form. You create an illusion, there is no movement on the stage, visually that is, and yet the impact has electrifying effect."

Shabana Azmi, answering questions from the press, elaborated how she believed that there was art for art's sake and the other school where plays and films were made for social awareness. "I think both can exist but I believe that in the Third World it would be a pity if art is not used for social changes. I am not imposing my ideas. I have been influenced by my father who wrote revolutionary poems."

Ms. Azmi continued, "You cannot display talent and not be concerned about the problems of the people. Due to my family background and upbringing I was concerned about the future of the people though I am not politically aligned. I feel that changing the people through art is a long struggle. They cannot be awakened to their rights overnight."

The actress of films and stage continued, "We must agitate and fight for our rights in whatever constitution we are in. In my films I have dealt with a lot of social issues. Demolishing the slums of Bombay is not the answer to the problems. These slums should be upgraded instead. The rural areas should be self-sufficient. It was only after seven years of my acting that I became acutely aware of our social problems. After having performed in 'Bombay City' and 'Paar' I realised the circumstances. I personally went to the ghettos and read a lot of literature related to it."

Ms. Azmi insisted "Art cannot bring an instant change — it is a long process to create a sense of awareness and change the sensibilities. The artist does not have a bigger role than the politicians. The only audience they have is the viewers. Yet I admit that I have a wide canvas to work on and have adequate backing."

"We have an organisation with architects to improve matters. We run adult schools and medical facility centres. We have sister organisation which we support", the lively and outspoken actress added. "We even loan money that they have to pay back in due time."

How does she enjoy being on the stage than in a film? "It is different from films but it is basically the same. I am still an actress. It is the media that is changing," she replied spontaneously and with spirit.

Gentle spoken Farooque Shaikh, speaking at the function also added that the artist had a special responsibility to the environment around him. "This responsibility is not restricted to actors. If you are doing something against your conscience there is bound to be a contradiction. In entertainment I find I do not go against the interest of the people," he insisted.

Shaikh, in response to a question, added, "Indian films are not just entertainment. To watch an Indian film is like going for a walk at a sea-side resort. You do not necessarily come back with something but you enjoy the change. One is not completely happy with the mainstream of the Indian films but one must remember that it has to appeal to the masses."

Ms. Azmi, added "For a change in the position of women one must make sure that the message in the mainstream of the cinema reaches the masses. In literature one has the choice of Shakespeare or pornography. Films too should be unchanged and for the taste of one and all."

She continued, in answer to a question, "I certainly believe in human rights and feminism. There is a difference between men and women and that fact should be celebrated."

S. Sathyu, the production designer, speaking on the occasion, dealing with censorship said "I do not think that the mainstream film should be banned. There is a lot of stress on sex and violence but I believe this degeneration will change and the censorship should come from within. The audience has a choice of films, in any way."

The programme was organised by Theatre School and Gold Leaf Theatre. It was definitely a fresh breath of entertainment, specially for those who had not had the privilege to see the American Centre presentation of the original "Love Letters" by A R Gurney.

The Midnight File

Court asks Gorbachev to testify

MOSCOW, Sept 21: Russia's Constitutional Court issued a subpoena Monday to former Soviet President Mikhail S Gorbachev asking him to testify in the trial to determine the fate of the Communist Party, a news agency reported. It was not immediately clear whether Gorbachev's testimony would be mandatory. A secretary at Gorbachev's private think tank in Moscow said there would be no comment until Tuesday. Gorbachev was on a private trip to Germany, reports AP.

Explosion rattles Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21: An explosion louder than thunder shook houses and rattled windows in the Malaysian capital and surrounding areas Monday, but authorities did not know what caused it. It wasn't thunder or an earthquake, said a spokesman of the Meteorological Services Department, who added that its instruments registered 56 millimeters (2 inches) of ground movement at 1:50 pm (0550 GMT), reports AP.

Hasina : Proper plan

From Page 1 Col 4

man man.

She was addressing leaders and workers of Awami League, its front organisations and the party MPs who called at 29 Minto Road and greeted her with bouquet and garlands on her re-election to the top post of the party.

Hasina, said Awami League was determined to establish an exploitation-free society and guarantee people's fundamental rights to food, work, shelter, medicare and education.

The Awami League will continue its struggle for implementing the unfinished task of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib by upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and establishing rule of law by scrapping the black Indemnity Ordinance.

In the afternoon, Hasina, along with party leaders, visited the Bangabandhu Bhaban and placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu.

She also observed one minute's silence at the place where Bangabandhu was brutally killed on August 15, 1975, and prayed for the departed souls.

Party presidium members Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan and Dr. Alauddin, newly elected General Secretary Zillur Rahman, Joint Secretary Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Agriculture Secre-

Fake certificates recovered : 4 arrested

A special squad of the Dhaka district Anti-Corruption Bureau has recovered a large number of fake certificates and arrested four persons following a sudden raid at the type writers' shed at D I T Avenue in city, reports BS.

According to a press release of the Anti-Corruption Bureau issued in Dhaka yesterday the forged certificates were of S 9 C, B Com, State Medical Faculty of Bangladesh Diploma, Diploma Engineering and many other courses.

The racket engaged in printing fake certificates used to earn Taka two to three thousand by selling each such certificate to the people.

The squad also recovered pads of various forms and companions and seals of officials from them.

Manpower

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"I was given some papers by my agent Ronico Sdn Bhd, in that Malaysian city to join as a labourer in a plywood factory located far from the city," said Ashrafuddin adding that his agents took away his passport.

The agent took away other labourers' passports too.

"I felt the whole thing was a phony," he said. "When I went to the plywood factory I found many others like me crammed into a single room and soon I realised that we were being exploited by the accomplice of the Bangladeshi manpower agent."

"After dilly-dallying a lot and on my repeated requests they agreed to return my passport," Ashraf said. "But in exchange they made me sign a paper that I would not seek the help of the Malaysian police."

Ashrafuddin returned home braving the dangers of being caught.

The rest of my colleagues in Malaysia are eager to return home and there is not a chance of their becoming legal workers," he said.

Other sources who recently visited Malaysia also said that in many remote areas of that country, illegal Bangladeshi workers were desperately trying to get back home.

Ashrafuddin and 60 others had signed for 16-hour day jobs and were supposed to get 20 ringgit (Malaysian currency) each (one ringgit equals around 14 taka). But the agent's accomplice in Malaysia paid them only 7.20 ringgit.

On returning home in early August, Ashrafuddin lodged a case in this connection with Mirpur police on August 13. But the said manpower agent left Bangladesh a month earlier, allegedly with money from lakhs of people.

Pound plunge

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Sources said that Bangladesh would also have less chance of pushing up the prices of its commodities due to the weakness of the economy.

However, the country's exports to the UK market are much lower than its imports.

According to figures, the Sonali Bank, the largest bank in the country, opened LCs worth 2.10 lakh pound sterling during August, 1992, for import of commodities as against the export figure of 90,000 pounds.

The same bank opened LCs worth over four lakh pounds in July against the export figure of only 10,000 pounds.

Meanwhile, another source said that if the high European interest rates continue to arrest the falling values of EC currencies, the growth of the economy of Third World countries including Bangladesh would slow down.

Related Stories on Pages 5, 6

Arms case

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gaon staff quarters on an information that about two dozen youngsters were gathering there with arms.

As a police squad approached the spot, the armed youth poured hand-made bombs on them from the roof of a building of the staff quarters.

Four were caught with pipe-gun, chapatti, iron rods and daggers while others fled.

A case was proceeded against them under section 19 A & F of the Arms Act.

The court examined six witnesses during trial of the case and found the four accused guilty of possessing unauthorised arms.

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