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Policy for optimum use of agri land underway

By Chapal Bashar

The ministers of these four ministries will attend the meeting and discuss adoption of a policy for coordination, which is virtually absent at the moment.

The source said that the government has been feeling the necessity of a coordination policy among these ministries. The authorities believe that a good coordination will help better utilisation of land ensuring increased agricultural and shrimp production.

A highly-placed source told The Daily Star that an inter-ministerial meeting — of Agriculture, Irrigation, Fisheries and Land ministry will be held in the last week of this month.

The government will soon adopt a policy to coordinate activities of the Ministries of Agriculture, Irrigation, Fisheries and Land for ensuring optimum utilisation of agricultural land and increasing shrimp production.

In a related move, the Irrigation Ministry is now drafting a new law to protect coastal embankments from the damage caused by some shrimp cultivators.

While mentioning about the heinous acts of some unscrupulous shrimp cultivators who often cut the coastal embankments illegally for the inflow of

Govt urged to reform film policy

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the film makers and artists to improve the standard of the cinema to compete with the international films, reports UNB.

"The present age requires novelty to compete...", she said while speaking to a delegation of Association for Maintaining Standard of Films, which called on her at Sugandha last evening.

The film makers called upon the government to reform the film policy with a view to improving the film industry that contributes about Taka 30 crore to the government exchequer every year.

The delegation comprising members of four associations of producers, distributors, directors and artists, included Azizur Rahman Buli, Wahid Sadeq, Amjad Hossain, Chashi Nazrul, Razzak, Ujjal, Alamgir, Ahmed Sharif, Subhash Datta, Baby Islam, Jashim, Ilyas

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Pro-repatriation Rohingyas announce Tk 10000 for capturing violence ring leader

By Farid Hossain

As police are continuing their hunt for a suspected mastermind of last week's bloody violence in Rohingya refugee camps, a Cox's Bazar-based group announced on Friday a reward of 10,000 takas for tracing the alleged terrorist.

Mahmudul Huq Chowdhury, a leader of Rohingya Repatriation Action Committee (RRAC), said by a telephone that his organisation is cooperating with the police to find out Nurul Huq Majhi, who allegedly is leading a group of at least 150 terrorist Rohingyas in their anti-repatriation campaign.

"We have a reward of 10,000 takas for helping the police in capturing the ring leader of the terrorists," Huq said reached by telephone in Cox's Bazar.

Huq's group is campaigning for early repatriation of 265,000 Muslim refugees who are living in 20 makeshift camps of mud-and-straw huts and canvas tents along Cox's Bazar-Teknaf region. The refugees have fled to Bangladesh during past one and half years to escape persecution by Myanmar (Burma) soldiers.

Though government officials claim that only a handful of refugees are obstructing the voluntary repatriation, it is unclear if the majority of the refugees are really willing to return home under the present arrangements.

The government has been able to repatriate only 216 refugees since September under a Bangladesh-Myanmar pact signed in April. In latest anti-repatriation violence at least eight refugees were killed last week.

Officials sources said another 200 refugees are awaiting repatriation.

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Rao invited to SAARC summit

NEW DELHI Nov 13: Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman today called on the Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at his official residence here, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister handed over the formal letter of invitation from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to Rao to attend the SAARC summit in Dhaka.

The Foreign Minister conveyed the warm greetings of Begum Zia to the Indian Prime Minister.

While accepting the invitation, Rao reciprocated the greetings and said he was eagerly looking forward to visiting Dhaka. He said he felt very much at home in Dhaka.

They discussed various matters relating to the SAARC summit.

Later Mostafizur Rahman met R L Bhatia, Indian State Minister for External Affairs at New Delhi.

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Medical college hospitals ordered to open renal and dialysis units

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf has ordered that arrangements be made in all medical college hospitals to treat the mysterious kidney disease called acute renal failure (ARF) victims of which are babies.

Bangladesh witnesses the highest number of such patients attacked with the disease, a seasonal one, especially during summer, according to Dr Moazzam Hossain, in-charge of the eight-bed paediatric nephrology unit at the Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research (IPGMR).

The only other hospital in the country, the Shishu Hospital, has four beds to treat ARF patients.

The disease is unknown in most developed countries, and also rarely found in other developing nations. A British paediatric nephrologist has termed the Bangladesh phenomenon "mysterious" due to the unusually high figure of victims, Dr Hossain said.

During a visit to the IPGMR Wednesday, the Health Minister asked the authorities that another eight-bed ward be made available for treating the ARF patients when their number rose.

The Minister has ordered to open a renal and dialysis unit at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on a priority basis.

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One of the fortunate few, a two-year old baby, who received treatment at the IPGMR and survived the disease.— Star photo

Press Club incident Probe body holds eight persons responsible

A judicial enquiry commission has held eight persons, including seven police personnel, responsible for the June 21 incident at Jatiya Press Club and recommended punitive action against them, reports UNB.

The report of the one-man enquiry commission headed by Justice Kazi Shafiuddin, formed immediately after the incident, was published here yesterday, said an official handout.

Twenty five journalists and many others were injured in police action and violent clashes at Press Club and its adjoining areas during a dawn-to-dusk hartal called by Chatak Dalai Nirmla Committee on June 21.

Among those held responsible for the incident are: Deputy Police Commissioner Abdul Quayum, Deputy Police Commissioner Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury, Assistant Police Commissioner Aminul Islam, Police Inspector Shahabuddin, Police Inspector Delwar Hossain, Police Sergeant Shifur Rahman and Police Sergeant Anwar Hossain.

The handout did not mention the name of another person who, according to the enquiry commission report, was involved in spearheading incident.

The judicial enquiry commission accused the acting Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Mirza

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RU teachers meet PM, hail steps against terrorism

Rajshahi University Teachers Association yesterday hailed the government's steps towards curbing terrorism and called for proper and impartial enforcement of the anti-terrorism law, reports UNB.

A 13-member delegation of the association led by its President Prof Shamsur Rahman met with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and appreciated the enactment of anti-terrorism law at a time when terrorism made public life miserable.

During the meeting at the Prime Minister's office yesterday evening, the association leaders said that chaos and anarchy would have pervaded the whole society had the stringent anti-terrorism steps were not taken by the government.

They, however, stressed the need for impartial enforcement of the law so that the innocent were not victimised.

Referring to the campus situation, the delegation observed that nearly 95 per cent students were now against deferring of examinations and they want to complete their education within the stipulated time.

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Energy Minister Prof Khandkar Mo-sharraf Hossain, Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah and State Minister for Education Prof Yunus Khan were present at the meeting.

The Prime Minister said the situation in educational institutions had improved to a great extent. She assured of all possible government help in maintaining congenial academic atmosphere.

The association submitted a 12-point demand to the Prime Minister, which included removal of time-scale anomalies of the teachers of Rajshahi University and allocation of funds for research work.

It also demanded construction for academic buildings, solution to teachers' housing and transport problems, modernisation of laboratory, setting up of a central library and installation of telephones.

The Prime Minister gave a patient hearing to the teachers' problems and assured of solving those in phases.

The delegation included General Secretary of the association Faisal Islam Farooqi.

Altaf Hossain laid to rest

By Staff Correspondent

Syed Altaf Hossain, founder President of Ganatantri Party, was laid to eternal rest at the Jurain graveyard in the capital Friday afternoon.

Party colleagues, followers, admirers and relatives were present to pay their last respect to Syed Altaf who died of cancer Thursday night at his Ram Krishna Mission Road residence in Dhaka.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after the Jumma prayers.

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, State Minister for Sports and Youth Sadek Hossain, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abul Samad Azad, Amir Hossain Amu, Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Amirul Islam, Ganatantri Party President Ahmedul Kabir, CPB President Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and leaders of the Five-Party Alliance, NAP and other political organisations were present at the namaz-e-janaza.

Earlier, the body of Altaf Hossain was taken to the Ganatantri Party office at Siddikbazar.

His qulshwani will be held tomorrow after Asr prayers at his RK Mission Road residence.

NEWS BRIEFS

Mild tremor shakes city

A mild tremor shook the city around 9-56 last night. However, there was no report of damage caused by the tremor which lasted for about three seconds. Residents from different areas including Mohammdpur, Dhanmondi and Kalabagan said they felt the tremor shortly before 10 pm. But it stopped after three seconds and before they could go out of their buildings, reports BSS.

DUJ meet today

An emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will be held at the union office at National Press Club today at 11 am with its President M Shahjahan Mian in the chair. All EC members have been requested to attend the meeting in time, reports BSS.

101 more held on various charges

Police arrested 101 people from different parts of the city Friday on various charges, a DMP press release said yesterday. Of the arrested, eleven were wanted criminals, two accused of kidnapping, one in arms case, nine for stealing and one on charge of robbery, reports UNB.

Quake jolts Peshawar

PESHAWAR, (Pakistan), Nov 13: An earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale jolted this northwestern Pakistani city and surrounding areas early today, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported. There were no reports of any casualties or damage. The meteorological office located the epicentre of the quake, which struck at 2041 GMT Thursday, at 300 kilometers (187 miles) north of Peshawar in the Hindu Kush mountain range, reports AFP.

Sharif govt appeals in SC to retain interest-based banking

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: Pakistan's government has appealed in the Supreme Court to retain its interest-based Islamic banking system, declared un-Islamic by a lower court, a court officials said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

"Any such change will result in chaos and confusion," said the appeal filed by the government on Wednesday against a decision in May by the Federal Shariat Court, Pakistan's Highest Islamic Court.

Financial institutions could not withstand the change in the present circumstances, the appeal said.

The Shariat Court has rejected 32 financial laws it says are not sufficiently Islamic, including one that supplies the framework for make-up, an Islamic alternative to interest payments by borrowers that has proved compatible with western banking.

The Court had given the government six months to November 11 to change the banking system, or appeal.

Challenging the decision, the government appeal said the Shariat Court's interpretation of the Koran was incorrect.

It was also mandatory for the government to honour its internal and external fiscal obligations unless a suitable alternative was found, the appeal said.

It pleaded that the present system should continue until a workable alternative had evolved.

The Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA) government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had previously postponed an appeal because of pressure from fundamentalist allies in the ruling coalition.

However, the religious parties recently quit the alliance, leaving the way open for a government appeal.

Government officials speaking privately have said they expect Sharif's government to work out a compromise. Foreign bankers say most of the laws the Shariat Court rejected had little or no impact on commercial banking.

The crucial ruling was against mark-up. The Court

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Jhenidah Transport Syndicate calls strike today

JHENIDAH, Nov 13: Jhenidah Bus Transport Syndicate has called for a day-long transport strike on Jhenidah-Chawdanga route tomorrow (Saturday) protesting an attack on a bus by a rival association, reports UNB.

Eight people were injured when supporters of Old Kashba Charuparu Bus Owners' Association allegedly attacked the bus at Dakbanga Bazar in Sadar thana this morning.

Leaders of the transport syndicate at a press conference here this evening warned that it will stop movement of vehicular traffic in all the routes from the district headquarters if the administration failed to resolve the crisis within 24 hours.

People won't tolerate autocracy: Hasina

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 13: Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has warned that people will not tolerate autocracy in the name of democracy.

She was addressing a big public meeting at Shahid Hades Park here this afternoon.

Stressing the need for unity of the democratic and pro-liberation forces she said that the hard-earned democracy was still in its nascent state and it must be protected at all cost.

Hasina also accused the ruling BNP of enacting anti-people laws. "Passing of the Anti-terrorism Bill has once again unveiled the autocratic character of the government", she said.

Organised by city and district Awami League jointly, the meeting was addressed among others by Talukder Abdul Khaleq MP, Sheik Harun ur Rashid MP, Salah Uddin Yusuf and Abdul Jalil. The meeting was presided by Advocate Monjurul Imam, president of City AL unit.

Condemning the unilateral passage of the bill, she alleged that the government had enacted the bill to snatch people's fundamental rights, freedom of expression, in turn, their right to protest.

Terrorism could easily be curbed with the existing laws if the government prevented itself from giving the terrorists

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BSD blames govt for breaching commitments

By Staff Correspondent

Convener of a faction of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan yesterday accused the BNP government of betraying the causes of the commonman and breaching its joint declaration commitments.

"... This government is merely protecting the interests of the looter class," he told a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital. The meeting was organised to celebrate the 12th founding anniversary of the party and to observe the 75th anniversary of November revolution.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Bhuiyan viewed that people's triumph, once against the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971 and then against the autocratic rulers in 1990, was cashed in by a section belonging to the rich class. The general mass gained nothing from the two national victories, he added.

The BSD leader said that despite a change in the form of government, the ruling BNP promulgated the 'notorious' anti-terrorism ordinance and was keeping intact all the black laws.

He criticised the government for not giving autonomy to radio and television, spread of violence, inaction against the loan defaulters or the corrupt persons.

Regarding the demands of Jamaat leader Golem Azam's trial, he threatened that the people would launch movement against the government terming it an accomplice to the anti-liberation forces if Azam was not tried by December 16.

Advocating for socialism he observed that collapse of socialist state mechanism in the former Soviet Union and in the East Europe did not prove socialism to be a wrong ideology.

Prejudices against contraceptives rampant

By Masud Hasan Khan and Sharier Khan

Besides, objections by religious leaders, health concern, objections by the husbands, fear of side-effects and lack of contraceptives were the other reasons for the people for not using the family planning programmes of the government.

It pointed out that opposition to the use of contraceptives was higher among the Muslims than among the non-Muslim populace of the country.

The report titled "Literature Review for the Development of the National Family Planning-Mother and Child Health and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Strategy," said that the use of contraceptives was considerably lower in the districts of Chittagong division than in the other regions of the country.

In Chittagong division, only 27.1 per cent of the married women below 50 years of age used family planning methods while it was 46.1 per cent in Rajshahi division, 45.7 per cent in Khulna division and 41.8 per cent in Dhaka division, it said.

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jointly for the Center for Communication Programme of the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The six-person team headed by Dr Barkat-e-Khuda presented the draft findings of their research at a seminar organised by the JHU Oct 24 in the capital.

The paper identified children desire for additional children was the most important reason for non-use of family planning materials in both rural and urban areas of the country.

"The birth control pills will take up the shape of snakes on the Day of Judgement," "Condoms cause the male genitals to become thinner," "The earth will not accept the dead body of the sterilised person,"

These are not instructions from any religious book, but a few of the deep-rooted superstitions and misconceptions among the country's people about the family planning methods.

These notions were unveiled in a research paper by a group of experts prepared

Enam elected vice-president IDB raises fund for rural electrification

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said that the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) had raised its assistance to 15 million dollars for the country's rural electrification project from the existing level of five million dollars.

Talking to BSS at the Zia International Airport on arrival after attending the 17th meeting of the Board of Governors of the IDB at Tehran, the Finance Minister said Bangladesh would get facilities from 100 million dollar IDB fund for least developed countries.

Rahman said that an IDB delegation would arrive Dhaka on November 20 to assess a number of development projects for the IDB financing including Feeder Road, Faridpur Rural Electrification, primary school and madrasa development and long term financing in the railway sector particularly for the rehabilitation of the railway wagon and locomotive

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