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Inside Today

Article



US Puts Pakistan on 'Terrorist' List Probation
Page 4

International

US urges Arabs to accept Israeli formula
Page 5

Business

IMF chief assures continued support
Page 7

Women on the Move

Contraception: Let it be a woman's choice, Diary of a working mother, Women's health in Bangladesh and role of NGOs, Sufia's story
Page 8

National

Across the Country

The child hawkers of Bogra
Page 9

Metropolitan

Spirit of Ekushey Lives on



Of Crusades and Names
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

DUTA condemns RU incident

The Dhaka University Teachers Association yesterday condemned the February 6 armed clash at Rajshahi University which left 6 students dead and many injured. In a statement, DUTA President and General Secretary Dr K M Mohsin and Dr Badrul Alam respectively expressed sympathy to the bereaved families. The DUTA leaders demanded the authorities to identify the culprits irrespective of party affiliation and punish them to bring back congenial academic atmosphere at the university, reports UNB.

Sandhani motor cycle rally Mar 2

Motor cycle rally between Dhaka-Calcutta-Dhaka scheduled to be held on February 21 has been shifted to March 2. The rally was jointly organised by Sandhani, a voluntary organisation and West Bengal Blood Donors Forum, to encourage voluntary blood donation and to bring general awareness for resistance against AIDS, reports UNB.

Ration shop owners postpone programme

The Dhaka Ration Shop Owners Association has announced the postponement of its 'Gherao programme' scheduled for today for a week. The decision for postponement was taken following a discussion of the office-bearers of the association with the Director General of Food Md Matkur Rahman at Khadya Bhaban here yesterday, reports BSS.

Matin under opposition fire over RU incident

By Staff Correspondent

The Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury came under intense fire from the Opposition excluding the Jamaat last night when the House discussed an adjournment motion on the recent student clash at the Rajshahi University-campus.

The dreadful armed clash between the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the student wing of the Jamaat and rest of the student organisations on the campus on February 6 has so far left five students dead and more than hundred severely injured.

The government has formed a judicial inquiry committee into the incident and conflicting groups have registered two separate cases against each other with the concerned police station.

Police, however, are yet to arrest anybody. The House last night finished a two-hour discussion on the issue with a total of 18 MPs participating in the deliberations. Of the 18 parliament members six belong to the Treasury bench while 12 to the Opposition.

All the Opposition members barring Matinur Rahman Nizami of the Jamaat observed that the Shibir had been resorting to cruel attacks on the student organisations of different democratic political parties especially since the BNP took over power.

The Opposition MPs deliberating on the issue specifically accused the Home Minister Matin Chowdhury of showing a soft corner for the Jamaat and its student wing

the Shibir. The Opposition MPs observed that the BNP, to form government, had sought cooperation of the Jamaat which was now resorting to killing students belonging to the Chhatra Dal, the BNP's student wing.

"This is what happens when somebody backs an evil force," the Opposition MPs observed adding "the BNP has made the Jamaat its Frankenstein."

All the Opposition benches and two, out of six of the Treasury bench members strongly condemned the Shibir for its heinous act on February 6 at the Rajshahi University campus.

Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, expressed her surprise over

RU students' procession baton-charged: 10 injured

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Feb 10: At least 10 students were injured when police charged batons to break a procession of the All-party Students Unity (APSU) here this afternoon, witnesses said.

Two APSU leaders were also arrested from the Shaheb Bazar Square where they were leading a procession violating a ban on meetings and processions until February 13, police said.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police imposed the ban following last Saturday's clashes on the Rajshahi University campus that left five students dead and several hundred injured.

The injured included central leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra Union Shariful Islam

Dissidents for Rao's resignation as Cong-I president

NEW DELHI, Feb 10: A group of Congress-I leaders, described by the party as 'voices of dissent' met here today to review the decisions taken yesterday by the Congress-I Working Committee (CWC) on one-man-one-post norm, reports PTI.

The two-day meeting of the CWC, the highest decision making body of the party, which concluded here late last night decided that Rao continues both as Prime Minister and the party president. It also grappled with the question of mounting indiscipline in the party.

Former AICC-I General Secretary K N Singh, who has been in the forefront in demanding the resignation of Rao from party presidency, yesterday recalled Rao's earlier

announcement not to keep the post for long.

He was critical of the resolution adopted by the committee on the enforcement of discipline. "Discipline is not one way traffic and having the sword of discipline on the head of the worker shall kill the party," he said.

Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh made it clear to newspapers last night that the sole objective "of mine and others" was to evolve an "effective and pointed" action plan to combat forces of communalism and not anything else as projected in certain circles.

Arjun Singh had asked for a change of guard at the top, saying the leadership had failed to check a Hindu nationalist upsurge.

Over 100 hurt in Dhaka, Sirajganj Death, firings mark hartal

By Staff Correspondent



A minor boy was killed and over 50 people injured, many of them with bullets, in the capital during the eight-hour countrywide hartal Wednesday.

The Awami League (AL) called the countrywide hartal from 6:00 am to 2:00 pm Wednesday to protest alleged 'media coup by the government' to manipulate the February 3 Mirpur-by-election result and harassment of AL activists on election day.

Hartal was almost peacefully observed elsewhere in the country except Sirajganj where around 50 people were injured in clashes between AL workers and anti-hartal elements.

In the capital, armed men aboard minibuses fired at the AL central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at around 7:45 am yesterday.

The armed men went round the AL office several times until 10:30, fired scores of shots and blasted crackers in presence of hundreds of police including senior officers on duty to maintain peace, witnesses said.

Over 20 people were wounded in the incident. Fourteen of them were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with bullet wounds.

Immediately after the armed attack on the AL office, tripartite clashes spread out among police, AL workers and anti-hartal elements.

Police resorted to baton charges and lobbed several tear-gas shells to disperse the mob.

Witnesses said that the armed men from the minibuses being driven recklessly chanted slogans in support of the ruling party. Most of the minibus riders were carrying firearms openly, they added.

At Bagicha, Khilgaon, seven-year-old boy Sumon was run over by a police van patrolling the area at around noon.

Sumon was identified as a son of Abdul Hamid, an employee in the Finance Ministry. Sumon was crossing the road, witnesses said.

Sporadic clashes also took place in different parts of the city during the hartal hours with police resorting to baton charges to disperse picketers at Farmgate, Tophana Road, Park Avenue and Moham-madpur.

Acting president of the Jubo League Professor Fazlul Haq was also beaten by police

US ready to send troops for peace in Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Feb 10:

The Clinton administration plans to announce this week its strategy for ending ethnic warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is prepared to commit US troops to help ensure peace, senior administration officials said Tuesday night, reports AP.

Secretary of State Warren M Christopher intends to announce a four-part peace initiative — with diplomatic, military, economic and humanitarian components — either Wednesday or Thursday, the

officials said.

"It is an initiative by President Clinton to engage the United States directly and aggressively in trying to bring about peace," said one official.

The administration has no intention to insert US troops in the fighting, which has claimed more than 18,000 lives in the last 18 months, said the officials, who spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The United States is not contemplating any direct use of US force at this point," one

official said.

But they said American military personnel — possibly ground forces — could be sent to shattered former Yugoslavia as part of a United Nations or NATO operation to enforce a peace settlement.

Under no circumstances, the officials said, would any US military personnel be sent there unilaterally.

The officials stressed that US military forces would be sent to the Balkans only if



by Mahfuz Anam

Four days after the tragic incident at Rajshahi University, the ruling BNP appears to be still groping as to how it ought to handle the sudden attack of Jamaat's student wing, the Shibir, on its own student front, the JCD. The fact that it was taken totally by surprise on the first couple of days is now known. But that the party is still to chalk out a common strategy to respond to this very important political development, became evident in the way the Treasury bench handled the two-hour debate on the adjournment motion placed before the House by the Opposition AL.

It was rather bizarre for the Home Minister, who came, not surprisingly, under intense criticism of the Opposition, to get up and say that he did not expect the House to debate on the incident. How could he not, when the Speaker had made his decision clear at least 24 hours before the event? Was he trying to express his displeasure at the Speaker for allowing the debate? Minister Matin read out a report of the incident.

Debate over hartal in House

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition Awami League members in parliament Wednesday demanded adjournment of the day's proceedings to discuss the violent incidents during the 8-hour hartal across the country.

Referring to the notice submitted for the adjournment AL MP Abdur Razzak sought the Speaker's permission to initiate the debate but Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali said that the Business Advisory Committee had given two hours to discuss the Saturday's Rajshahi University incident.

Taking the floor Opposition leaders Sheikh Hasina, showing a bullet claimed to have been collected from near the AL office, alleged that the ruling party armed supporters attacked the AL office and injured many of its supporters.

Five bills placed

By Staff Correspondent

Five amendment bills were introduced in the parliament Wednesday for changing certain functions of the Union Parishad and four city corporations of the country.

The bills are: The Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Bill 1993, the Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1993, the Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1993, the Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1993 and the Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1993.

Local Government, Rural

PM opens North-South Varsity Govt encourages private ventures in education

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called for greater private initiatives in education sector to make a success government's priority programme for educating the country's population, reports UNB.

"Legal framework has been provided for private and individual ventures in the field of education," she said referring to the Private University Bill passed recently by the Jatiya Sangsad.

Begum Zia was speaking on the occasion of formal launching of North-South University (NSU), country's first government-approved degree-awarding private university, at Banani in the afternoon.

The university started on January 11 its first session with nearly 200 students in the faculties of Economics, Business Administration and Computer Science. The students, about 50 of them girls, had to pay Tk 1.1 lakh for four semesters of a total of three year's course needed to complete their bachelor's degree.

Welcoming the private initiative, the Prime Minister said it was not possible for the government alone to accomplish the gigantic task of educating the nation overnight.

The present government has attached top priority to the development of education and

is striving to give the drive the shape of a social movement, she said.

Terming education and development two major elements of democracy, Begum Zia said there is no shortcut to the two goals.

The Prime Minister, citing a World Bank survey, said programmes to support basic education yield higher rates of economic return than any other investment in development.

Referring to the progress made in different Southeast Asian countries through attaching priority to higher education, she said "we can also mark progress following the examples. Emphasis has to be given on development of human resource."

Begum Zia pointed out braindrain and wastage of hard-earned foreign exchange in pursuit of higher education abroad and said institutions like NSU could help stop this trend.

The Prime Minister said the government had laid stress on productive science and technology-oriented education and noted with happiness that the sponsors of the new private university were highlighting these aspects.

"Importance should be given to attainment of high in-

Hearing of Azam's writ adjourned for a week

By Staff Correspondent

Hearing of the writ petition on the nationality of Jamaat-Islami leader Golam Azam was adjourned for seven days after a brief preliminary discussion yesterday at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

Justice Anwarul Haq Choudhury gave the stay order following a prayer from the Deputy Attorney General saying that Attorney General Aminul Haq was out of the country at the moment. "I want him (the Attorney General) to be present during the hearing, I don't want to hear it without him," Justice Choudhury said.

However, appearing on behalf of the petitioner Barrister A R Yousuf objected to the request by Deputy Attorney General Hassan Arif.

He noted that the Attorney General's office had earlier sent an application requesting

to hold the hearing of the writ petition as early as possible and added "and now it is being delayed."

Waiting for the hearing "there has been a tremendous strain and now we are going home empty handed," Barrister Yousuf said and requested the court to "reconsider" the stay order.

Noting that it was an "unforeseen situation," Justice Choudhury said, "No, let him come back as I want to hear both the parties lest we are misunderstood."

Barrister Yousuf immediately pleaded that "no further time would be given under any plea" to which the court agreed.

Initiating a preliminary discussion, Justice Choudhury pointed out that the "question

Some T & T men snapping genuine phone lines

Star Report

"Harassment" of telephone subscribers has increased since recently with a section of T&T employees evolving a "new technique" of indiscriminate line snapping, a number of subscribers alleged.

These employees have been disconnecting lines of even those consumers who had regularly paid their monthly bills.

"We are victims to their whims," one aggrieved subscriber said.

months their lines were cut without any notice.

It has become difficult to restore the lines disconnected and the subscribers have to please the "all-powerful" line-men to get the lines restored, it has also been alleged.

These new problems are in addition to the perpetual crisis of ghost-billing and cross-connections, the subscribers alleged.

A subscriber in the Motijheel area alleged that his number (833185) had been disconnected February 1 al-

Ekushey '93

Call to patronise short films

Star Report

Speakers at a discussion meeting on Amar Ekushey Wednesday called upon the government to patronise meritorious short film makers in terms of monetary and educational facilities to help them bring honour to the country.

The meeting organised by the Bangla Academy as part of its month-long Ekushey programmes was addressed among others by Khaja Sadullah Al Masud, Manjare Hasin, Tanvir Mokammel, Zakul Huq and Moshedule Islam.

They said that the young short film makers of the country were not being able to

Four more Feni blast victims die

FENI, Feb 10: Another four people injured in Tuesday's explosion of gas cylinders on a truck at Lemua on the Feni by-pass died at Sadar Hospital yesterday raising the death toll to six, reports UNB.

They were identified as Mahbubul Haq (35), Abu Bakar (55) of Lemua village, Mostafa Kamal (25) of Daulatpur village and Ashutosha Dash (40) of South Chulia village.

The explosion which occurred on a Dhaka bound truck from Chittagong loaded with chemical gas left two people killed and 75 others injured. The gas cylinders with toxic gas burst near village Lemua, seven km from here.

The injured were passengers of a number of buses, trucks and tempos behind the truck affected by the toxic gas of the exposed cylinders.

Hospital sources said today 10 people were admitted to the sadar hospital with breathing difficulties. They are under the treatment of an eight-member emergency medical team.

Local people said the poisonous gas polluted the air and water bodies of the locality and burned green vegetable fields.

Mahathir arrives tomorrow

Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Bin Muhammad arrives in Dhaka tomorrow (Friday) on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, it was officially announced here yesterday, reports UNB.

Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Mahathir would be accompanied by his wife Dr. Siti Hashima Binti Mohd. Ali during the visit, taking place at the invitation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman will greet distinguished guests at the Zia International Airport, but there will be a ceremonial welcome later at Bangabhaban.

At the ceremonial welcome at Bangabhaban, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will formally receive the Malaysian leader.

His 87-member entourage will include ministers, officials, mediamen and businessmen.

TV artistes say history distorted in 'Uthan'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Betar-Television Shilpee Sangsad (Radio-Television Artists Council) in a statement yesterday strongly resented presentation of distorted history in the TV drama serial 'Uthan'.

Eleven actors and actresses of the drama serial 'Uthan' in a statement last night also condemned what they termed the 'bypassing' of history and 'incomplete' reflection of facts in the last portion of the drama telecast Tuesday.

The last scene of the drama