



Mirza Abbas and Tofael Ahmed having a chat at EC Office yesterday. —Star photo

### 40 hurt as JCD, BCL resume feud in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 15: Some 40 people were injured, seven seriously, as the student activists of ruling BNP and opposition Awami League resumed their feud here today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Police fired 5 teargas shells to disperse the militants as the activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League clashed with dao, iron rod, cocktail and handbomb on the Mujib and Victoria roads. The seven seriously injured were identified as Sukhen Kumar Das, Abu Masum Rana, Jahid and Rafiqul of JCD and Aurun and Alauddin of BCL. They were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital.

The clash erupted as a sequel to Sunday's fighting between the two groups that left at least 19 injured in Saydhangara area in the town.

To retaliate yesterday's alleged attack on them, JCD workers reportedly swooped on the bastion of BCL on the Victoria Quarter road at 11 this morning.

### Barricade

From Page 1 Col 7

disinvestment policy and re-trenchment in mills and factories.

Our Narayanjanj Correspondent adds: Police fired rubber bullets, lobbed teargas shells and charged batons to disperse several thousand agitated workers of Adamjee Jute Mills near Shidhirganj power station, injuring more than 40 workers, six seriously, witnesses said.

The workers pelted stones and made their way towards the Kanchpur Bridge but were unsuccessful in their effort in the face of stiff police resistance, they said.

After more than one hour of clashes four bullet injured workers were rushed to Dhaka Medical Hospital and two others were admitted to Narayanjanj Sadar Hospital, sources said.

Police alleged that the workers had hurled cocktails at them. Near the Kanchpur Bridge several thousand workers from Latif Bawani and Ahmed Bawani Jute Mills barricaded the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and clashed with police who went to clear the road.

At least 30 people were injured in clashes before the workers left the place. Communication became normal in these routes after several hours of disruption, witnesses said.

In Adamjee Jute Mills production was almost normal on the day despite the barricade programmes, official sources said. Leaders of the Adamjee Collective Bargaining Agents (CBA) reportedly urged the workers to resume duties at around 10 am, mill sources said.

On the Dhaka-Aricha Highway, textile workers put barricades near Nayarhat but they were removed by police. The workers stoned and damaged a number of vehicles during the clashes and afterwards.

There was no agitation in Tongi area, a traditional stronghold of the textile workers, and road and rail communications stayed normal.

Railway sources said that there were minor disruptions in the Dhaka-Chittagong, Kishoreganj-Bhairab and Khulna-Jessore routes, but that train services were normal.

Clashes were also reported from Khulna and Jessore where more than 50 people were injured.

Later in the evening, leaders of the Jute and Textile Workers Action Committee claimed at a press conference in the city that the programmes were completely observed across the country.

They accused the government of breaching a previous agreement with the workers and said that their agitation would continue until the demands were met.

They told reporters that police and BDR action on the workers at Kanchpur, Shidhirganj, Kishoreganj and Savar left at least 300 wounded, some with bullet. Police also picked up a number of leaders and workers enforcing the blockade, the leaders claimed.

Convener of the Jute Workers Action Committee Abul Bashar, textile workers leader Iqbal Majumder and other leaders including Lutfar Rahman, Shah Alam, Anwara Begum and Badrul Alam Khan were also present at the press conference.

He also suggested that the ruling party show respect to political opponents with a view to commanding Opposition respect for the incumbents.

Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League told the House that the police attack on Nasim February 6, the ransack of the AL office February 10 by masked people with arms, the police atrocities against wage labourers proved that the political situation of the ousted Ershad regime was yet to be changed.

The AL leader felt that the



A section of demonstrating Union Parishad chairmen in front of the National Press Club in city yesterday. —Star photo

### PM: UP chairmen

From Page 1 Col 7

She emphasised the need for developing the local governments as the basic institutions for evolving dynamic and people-oriented leadership at the national level.

Referring to the Constitution of the high-powered 'Local Government Review Commission', Begum Zia said as per the recommendations of the Commission the Union Parishad had been made the basic unit of the local structure in Bangladesh.

Union Parishad has been given the status of administrative unit, its term been raised from three to five years, she said adding steps are being taken to place 14 specific areas under union parishad jurisdiction for raising taxes. Necessary laws and rules would be framed soon, she added.

The conference was also addressed by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Abdul Hye, Secretary of Local Government Division Mushfiqur Rahman, Joint Secretary of Local Government Division Nazmul Alam Siddiqui. One Union Parishad Chairman from each division of the country also spoke on the occasion. They were Habibur Rahman of Melandaha under Jamalpur district from Dhaka Division, Nurul Alam of Jhalakati district from Barisal Division, Nazim Uddin Ahmed of Magura from Khulna Division and Abdul Momin Talukder of Char Ghat from Rajshahi Division and Golam Kibria Chowdhury of Sandwip from Chittagong Division. Anil Tong Chongia Chairman of Chandrona Union Parishad also addressed the conference.

The Prime Minister said her government had initiated a new wave of rural-based and people-oriented development programme and the responsibilities of Union Parishad Chairman have increased manifold as the entire development of the country depended on their effective role. Referring to the various programmes taken up by her government including poverty alleviation, mass education, compulsory primary education,

expansion of female education, free female education upto class eight in rural areas, Begum Zia asked them to motivate girls in rural areas to make use of the new educational opportunities and bring all the children under compulsory primary education. In her motivation speech, the Prime Minister said the UP Chairman should set up examples by involving themselves in the task of ensuring pollution-free environment, healthy living and use of pure drinking water, controlling population growth, and tree plantation programmes.

The Prime Minister underlined the need for encouraging the people to set up cottage industries, small dairy, poultry and pisciculture farms, adopt modern agricultural methods and pursue rapid income-generating and employment-oriented activities.

Begum Zia felicitated the newly-elected chairmen, who hold the leadership at the grass root level, and told them that the prolonged colonial subjugation was the main cause of our present extreme poverty and dependence.

She said every nation has its own development tradition and it can neither be imported or exported. The people are the driving force behind development, she said and stressed the need for effective coordination between people and the soil for uplift.

The Prime Minister reminded the chairmen that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had perceived the idea of 'Swarnivar Gram (self-reliant village)' and carried out various programmes for building representative and development-oriented leadership at the grass-root level.

About the problems of the Chairmen, the Prime Minister said these would be solved in phases. 'Let us first solve the problems of the people one by one and then all other problems will be taken care of,' she said.

Salam Talukder, in his speech, said the government would consider to fulfil the demands of the Chairmen of increasing their honorarium among other things.

### JS: CMM to probe

From Page 1 Col 7

Speaker of the House that virtually tantamounted to an attack on democracy.

The House must ensure protection of the rights and privileges of the people representatives, the Opposition MPs said, adding how dare the police beat the Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament?

Formation of a parliamentary committee headed by the Speaker to probe the incident and ensure exemplary punishment to those responsible for the heinous act was the only way to put the police atrocity against a people's representative to an end, the Opposition MPs observed.

The Treasury benchers were also sympathetic to Mohammad Nasim and expressed their regrets over the incident.

Rashed Khan Menon MP of the Workers Party while discussing the issue said that it was not an isolated incident.

Menon said that the Prime Minister seemed busy resenting people who observed hartal. But she should recollect that it was hartal against autocracy that took her to power, Menon argued.

### Ekushey

From Page 1 Col 8

was not stimulating the new generations to build up the country, they remarked.

The programme began at 4 pm in the Bangla Academy premises with the song 'Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano Ekushey February, Ami Ki Bhulite Pari...' while Prof Mamtazur Rahman Tarafder gave the first lecture of the Ekushey Boktritamala series of Ekushey lecture at the function. Director General of Bangla Academy Prof Harun-Ur-Rashid delivered the address of welcome while advocate Gazi Shamsur Rahman presided over the inaugural function.

Mamtaazur Rahman Tarafder recounting the story of the emergence of the nation said that time had come out in the street to establish their right to rule themselves. But their interest coincided with that of the mass people, leading to an all-out movement throughout the country, he mentioned.

The medium of education of most of the educated people during the British rule was English, but they were practising Bengali in all other aspects, he said, referring to the factors that created an atmosphere for the emergence of a nation way before the movement.

Prof Harun-ur-Rashid said the need of the time was to build the nation utilising the spirit of Ekushey.

As part of the Ekushey programme organised by the Sammilite Sangskritik Jote, Sanglap Group Theatre staged 'Ora Kaiba Bale' at the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has planned a two-day Ekushey programme from February 20. The programme will include discussion meeting, recitation, musical soiree and laying wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Today's programme of Bangla Academy: Discussion on an article titled 'Development of Books in Bangladesh: Role of Library'. Prof Mohammad Sharif Hossain will present paper while Sadat Ali, Prof Amirul Alam Khan, Mohammad Shamsul Islam Khan, AF Fazlul Majid and Hasina Begum will take part in the discussion. The meeting to be presided over by Abdun Noor will be followed by a musical soiree.

### Dock workers

From Page 1 Col 8

Fire Brigade personnel and port officials on receipt of information rushed to the spot and fought the blaze that began at 9 am for one and half hour.

The general cargo ship caught fire as the dock workers were engaged in unloading the cargo, port officials said.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Port Authority constituted a three-member enquiry committee to assess the incident and extent of damage. The committee has been ordered by the Authority to submit a report on the incident within the next ten days.

The local agent of the vessel Progati Shipping Ltd sources said that MV Horn arrived Chittagong Port February 13 with 2516 metric tons of general cargo including chemicals from a South Korean port and was scheduled to sail tomorrow for Calcutta port. But due to the fire incident its sailing will be delayed, sources said.

The 106-meter-long ship with DWT 6542 MT captained by a Korean National Choi Dae Jull has about 25 crew members on board, agent sources said adding that they were all safe. However it could not be known whether the victims' dependents would be provided with any compensation.

### Basanta Mela begins in Khulna

KhULNA, Feb 15: Week-long Basanta Mela began at Khulna Zila School ground today. Organised by Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) the fair was formally inaugurated by Khulna City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman, reports BSS.

### JP calls hartal in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent RANGPUR, Feb 15: Jatiya Party (JP) has called hartal here tomorrow having failed to secure bail for the newly elected municipality chairman of Rangpur town, Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu today.

## The Midnight File

### Delhi's fresh move to solve Kashmir problem

SRINAGAR, Feb 15: The centre today initiated a fresh move to find a solution to the Kashmir problem with the Minister of State for Home (Internal Security), Rajesh Pilot, establishing contact with the people in the valley soon after his arrival here on the first day of the three-day visit of the state, Pilot flew to Sopore, 55 km from here in north Kashmir, the scene of firing and arson last month and later to Anantag, reports PTI.

### Germans to adopt children from Bosnia's raped women

BONN, Feb 15: Hundreds of German couples want to adopt children from women raped in war-stricken Bosnia and Croatia, German Television said today. The documentary panorama quoted the leader of the central Adoption Bureau in Northern Germany, Rolf Bach, as saying he had received at least 50 adoption applications from parents who were hoping for babies rejected by their real mothers, reports Reuter.

### Saifur: Slow pace

From Page 1 Col 4

ted, 'We have achieved bringing down the system loss in the power sector from 44 per cent to 36 per cent within a very short time.'

He added that the World Bank would 'seriously consider a 136 million dollar project for the power sector, if 'further improvement' could be achieved.

He noted that the Bank also asked the government to reduce the system loss in the water supply networks in the cities.

On private sector participation, the Finance Minister agreed that they should be allowed in the power, telecommunication and the energy sectors.

'We should seriously look into the four or five private sector proposals in the gas sector and also allow private sector participation in the telecommunication sector.' He added that private sector participation in the power sector similar to those undertaken in neighbouring countries could also be considered.

Describing his visit as an 'excellent' one, the Finance Minister said: 'The purpose of the visit was to review the progress of the ongoing World Bank funded projects and to set a stage for a fruitful and productive aid consortium meeting' in Paris in April.

The Finance Minister said that the World Bank is seeking optimum utilisation of aid with 'more emphasis on effective implementation', rather than making big pledges.

This, he added, would most likely be reflected in the upcoming aid consortium meeting. 'Attention this year would be on aid disbursement rather than on pledges.'

Saying that 'sufficient' improvement would be made to create conditions for higher disbursement, Rahman added 'our disbursement level next year will be much higher than this year.'

He said that the Bank may disburse about 700 million US dollars during the next fiscal year (1993-94) and added that donors had given indications of a volume that can help the country in sizing its annual development budget to the tune of Taka 10,000 crore, in line with the government's projected growth rate of five per cent. Rahman noted that the World Bank had endorsed a Bangladesh proposal to re-allocate Bank funds from least absorptive projects to priority ones.

The Annual Development Plan for the current fiscal year stands at Taka 8,600 crore while the total aid disbursement including that from the World Bank is likely to reach 1,200 million dollars.

Because of a bumper production this year, the Finance Minister said, 'the country would not seek food aid at the next Aid Club meeting.'

He made it clear to the World Bank, he added, that the country would not accept any conditionalities from the donors that did not conform to the development needs of Bangladesh.

'We will only receive commodity assistance that conforms to our development programmes in poverty reduction, employment generation and in the health and education sectors.'

As an example, he cited that during his visit he rejected the proposed Bank credit on agriculture sector on condition of withdrawing the government decision on waiving farm loan up to Taka 5,000. The proposed amount of credit was to the tune of 70 million dollars.

On the jute sector restructuring programme, expected to be initiated from July next, Rahman said that the World Bank has accepted a government proposal and that a bank mission led by its country director was expected in the capital soon to hold further discussions.

He said that the Bank had offered 150 million dollars for the programme, but he added, 'the government had asked for more.'

The Finance Minister said

that the jute mills 'would be provided with 'interim support consistent with their financial viabilities and with the resources of the banks.'

He cautioned that continued wage hikes would render the restructuring programme ineffective. Quoting World Bank Vice President Joseph Woods, as having written in a recent letter, Rahman said 'further wage increases would undermine the (jute sector) reform programme and the staggering losses in the sector would continue.'

Overall, the Finance Minister noted that the World Bank identified Bangladesh as a 'success story' in the economic reform programmes undertaken by many countries around the world.

'But we are not getting the results because of the continued political unrest in the country.'

Referring to a series of recent hartals, which he termed as 'most discouraging and a disgrace', Rahman noted that the International Finance Corporation President Sir William Rytie, who was visiting at the time, expressed 'serious disenchantment' about the developments.

'We seem to have a hartal, non-cooperation and boycott phobia,' he said. 'Hartal is economic suicide, it's blocking all the prospects of the country to moving towards development by deteriorating the climate.'

He added that if the 'political divisiveness' in the economic arena could be contained for at least three years 'we could go a long way as fund is not a problem but it's the climate which deters our progress.'

### AL: Walkout

From Page 1 Col 8

staging of a walk out and the Awami League members followed him.

The Speaker, Shaikh Razaque Ali, said that it had become very difficult to run the house as it had become a practice of speaking outside the rules of procedure.

He pointed out that the newspapers were running stories on such discussion outside rules of procedure as unscheduled debate and pleaded that henceforth the newspapers should write objectively that such discussion had been held outside the rules of procedure.

Expressing his annoyance, the Speaker said it was giving not fair to talk about resignation and staging of walkout if the chair would not allow anyone to speak in the house beyond the rules of procedure.

The Workers Party Member Rashed Khan Menon took the floor as the Awami League members staged the walkout and wanted to discuss the reported firing incident at the Adamjee Jute Mills yesterday.

The Speaker also did not allow him to speak on the issue outside the rules of procedure. As the chair advised the Workers Party member to give a notice for discussion, Menon resumed his seat.

The Awami League members, however, returned to the house after about 10 minutes and participated in the rest of proceedings.

### Osmany

From Page 1 Col 5

committees of Jatiya Janata Party, founded by General Osmany, include hoisting of party flag at half mast and hoisting black flag at 7 am, milad mahfil and kangali bhaj at 2 pm, discussion at 3 pm and a five-day long Quran khwan and special munajat from today.

The district committees of the party have also been asked to observe the day in a befitting manner.

### By-poll: No change

From Page 1 Col 5

the Election Commissioner, came after the Awami League hotly disputed the results announced by the Returning Officer.

Though the Awami League welcomed the recounting as a victory, its candidate's chief polling agent K M Jahangir MP filed another petition with the Election Commission urging repolling in the constituency.

In his petition, filed just before the recounting of the ballots, Jahangir urged the Chief Election Commissioner to order a fresh poll 'rejecting and ignoring the ballots manipulated from the control room set up at Mirpur.'

In a joint hearing of the petition the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner rejected the plea. They said 'the Returning Officer on behalf of the Election Commission under Article 42 of People's Representation Order 1972 retained the sealed bags containing the sealed packets of the election materials in the double lock of the Dhaka Treasury. The Secretary of the Commission visited the Treasury and found these materials under proper custody and full care.'

'The petition is disposed of accordingly,' they said in their verdict.

In his reaction K M Jahangir told waiting reporters 'the Election Commission is an independent body and it has given its independent opinion. We have nothing to say about it.'

But he said 'if there is any legal scope we will consider.' In his 11-page handwritten petition Jahangir alleged that local people (of Mirpur) have recovered ballot papers from a heap of ash only yesterday which indicated that ballot papers showing the casting in favour of the Awami League nominee had been taken out of the box and it is learnt that ballot papers were sealed in favour of BNP nominee and stuffed in the ballot box with the conspiracies of the presiding officer with connivance of the Returning Officer.

In contrast to previous violence the recounting went off smoothly barring occasional exchange of arguments by the representatives of the BNP and the Awami League.

A strict Chief Election Commissioner presided over the recounting of the ballots as officials were pouring them onto seven tables manned by election officials and representatives of the candidates.

Justice Chowdhury who sat almost throughout the recounting process made it clear at the beginning that no disorder would be allowed.

'If any one has anything to say about the counting please submit it in writing. By the grace of Allah we want to complete this process in a disciplined manner.' Justice Chowdhury said as the Returning Officer ordered the ballots to be placed on the tables around 11:03 am.

'It's a quasi-judicial process One shot dead'

From Page 1 Col 5

weapons and captured two persons identified as Shaifur and Harunur Rashid. Later they handed over Shaifur and Harun to Ramna police.

### Jokes

From Page 1 Col 5

litical contents of the jokes were not for the press, said both Huda and Tofael.

Arriving at the Election Commission office almost the same time Tofael and Huda left the recounting venue together around 6 pm.

It was not known if they left by the same car. But Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah had one quip: From now on we expect to see Tofael's face more often on television.

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