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Deadlock in talks

From Page 1 Col 7

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan led the government side in the discussions with the Sramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP) at the Bureau of Manpower Employment Training in the evening. Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah held his talks with the Patkal (Jute) Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad leaders at the BJMC office, also in the evening, while State Minister Major (ret) Abdul Mannan talked to the Bangladesh Suta-Basarakal (textile) Sramik Karmachari Federation representatives at the BTMC office in the afternoon.

The meetings, lasting between one-and-a-half hour to two hours, yielded no tangible results as none of the sides changed their original positions.

The Labour Minister will again meet the SKOP leaders at four this afternoon and the Textiles Minister at 2 pm today while the Jute Minister did not give any fresh appointment to the Jute Mills leaders.

Leaders of all the three trade union bodies termed yesterday's talks 'fruitless' and, seeing no indications of reaching understanding with the authorities on the implementation of the MOU, ruled out any possibility of abandoning the shutdown programme.

Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan reportedly told the SKOP leaders that the government agreed to fix Taka 950 as the minimum wage for the public sector units and was ready to announce minimum wages for 15 industrial sectors. But the SKOP leaders rejected the offer and demanded immediate announcement of the National Wages and Productivity Commission report that proposed a minimum of salary Tk 1000 for the public sector workers.

The minister felt that a few more months were needed for the announcement of the said report.

Commenting on the outcome of yesterday's talks, SKOP coordinator Dr Wajedul Islam told this correspondent that the government was repeating its proposal only to defuse the labour movement.

He also termed the government offer of sector-wise minimum wages as 'vague' since it mentioned no specific time-frame on the modalities for fixing the wages.

Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah, after his two-hour talks with the Patkal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad leaders, emphatically said that yesterday's session would be the concluding one unless the labour leaders agreed to the Taka 950 minimum wage offer. "You can do whatever you wish", Hannan Shah reportedly commented in the meeting.

He also offered a 15 per cent increase to the jute mills workers subject to the workers' agreeing to increase production to meet the enhanced supply.

State Minister for Textiles Major Abdul Mannan (ret) reportedly assured the Suta-Basarakal Sramik Karmachari Federation leaders that the labour leaders and workers arrested in connection with the March 15-16 strike would be freed and the cases against them would be withdrawn very soon.

The discussions did not touch upon the May 11-13 strike and the labour demands. The minister will meet again with the federation leaders today at 2 pm.

Meanwhile, the SKOP and the jute-textile-cotton-sugar-BSEC workers organised rallies and brought out processions in and around the city yesterday to drum up support for the shutdown.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her Cabinet colleagues seen during yesterday's opening session of the Jatiya Sangsad. —PID photo

Walkout marks JS opening

From Page 1 Col 5

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the largest opposition in parliament the Awami League last year, includes settlement of the Golam Azam issue according to the law of the land, and bilateral initiatives of the lawyers of both sides to withdraw the cases against 24 persons connected with the 'people's court'.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, taking the floor, told the House that the opposition's claim of police firing at the Bangla Motors crossing was 'baseless and motivated'.

"Police has neither opened fire nor lobbed any teargas canister on the Nirmul Committee demonstrators this afternoon", the Home Minister said, adding "the opposition had produced a fabricated story only to implement a previous plan to stage a walk-out."

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, the Works Minister, rebutting the opposition allegation that the government had violated the constitution, told the House, "Rather it was the Nirmul Committee and its political patron the Awami League which violated the constitution by setting up 'courts' parallel to those created under the constitution."

With the AL-led opposition benches empty, Matin Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House, in his winding up speech on the issue, attacked the Jamaat and defended the government against the AL-led opposition allegation relating to the said four-point understanding.

In a bid to refute the opposition allegation that the government was reluctant to im-

Ex-DFI chief's bail petition rejected

A district court yesterday rejected the bail petition of former DFI Chief Brig (ret) Nasiruddin, held in connection with wrist watch smuggling and murder of a customs official in 1983, reports UNB.

"The case is under investigation and hence the prayer is rejected," observed District and Sessions Judge Nasiruddin Ahmed while dismissing the petition.

The case was revived after the wife of the dead customs officer Abdur Rouf met Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and sought justice.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 5

right of the citizens to hold rallies and stage demonstrations to press for their demands.

"But the government had been resorting to police atrocities against the Nirmul Committee activists agitating for the trial of Golam Azam as a war criminal," she said.

The government had disrupted at least three Nirmul committee rallies in the city during last three months, she observed.

Hasina claimed that police had opened fire and lobbed teargas shells on the peaceful Nirmul Committee demonstrators yesterday when they were trying to reach the elected representatives of the people in Parliament.

"We staged the walkout to register our protest against this police atrocity," the AL chief said.

"As the elected representatives of the people, we are committed to upholding the constitutional rights of the people," Hasina said adding "We wanted to discuss the issue in the House but we were refused permission to do so."

Begum Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Shudhangshu Shekhar Halder, Rahmat Ali and Abul Kalam Azad were, among others, present at the briefing.

BNPPP decides to face issues politically

The ruling BNP Parliamentary Party yesterday took stock of the situation prevailing in the country and decided to face all political issues politically, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a BNPP meeting held at the Sangsad Bhavan which discussed the political and economic situation of the country.

Significant recent political incidents figured prominently in the meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who is chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), sources said without elaborating.

Reduction of fertiliser price and the water crisis faced by the country due to the dehydrating impact of the Farakka barrage on the Ganges also featured in the discussion.

At the start of the meeting a minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect to the departed soul of Shri Lankan President and SAARC leader Ranasinghe Premadasa who was assassinated by a suicide bomber in a May Day rally in Colombo.

Agreed minutes

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mittice comprising parliament members, on the last leg of his seven-day official visit to India visited the relief camps to see the conditions of the tribal refugees.

State Minister for External Affairs of India Salman Khurshed, members of the committee Rashed Khan Menon MP, Shahjahan Chowdhury MP, Mushtaq Ahmed Chowdhury MP, Syed Wahidul Alam MP and Md Shahjahan MP were also with the Bangladesh minister and addressed the refugees.

Ahmed, referring to the goodwill and sincere commitment of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, emphatically said, the tribal people would get back their land and homesteads on their return.

He added the government will ensure their safe and honourable return.

Salman Khurshed said, the government of India will extend all possible assistance to expedite the return of the refugees.

Benazir denies 'personal deal'

LONDON, May 9: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said today she believes she is standing by the people of Pakistan in putting her party behind her former foe, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, reports AFP.

Speaking in an interview with BBC Television, Bhutto denied that she had made any 'personal deal' with the president in throwing the support of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) behind the ouster of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

Denying charges of deal-making, she said legal cases were still outstanding against herself and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, who has joined the interim government appointed to oversee elections scheduled for July 14.

"The cases against my husband have not been thrown out... we did not make a personal deal at any time," she

NAM ministers meet in Bali today

JAKARTA, May 9: Representatives of 37 member countries of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), meeting in Bali from Monday, will try to lay the foundations for a resumption of North-South dialogue, diplomats here say, reports AFP.

Rainfall

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other parts of the capital, with squally winds forcing most of their equipment inoperative.

Electricity was not restored until around midnight. The Met Office could not give the rainfall records of other parts of the country.

It said that most parts of the country experienced rain on Sunday and the wet weather would continue for another two to three days.

A trough of a westerly low stretched over Assam and across Bangladesh caused the rain but the Met Office said this was normal at this time of the year and quite consistent with their monthly forecast.

Work at The Daily Star was severely affected last night with repeated power disruptions, some lasting over an hour, until 1:45 am.

Scimitar

From Page 1 Col 5

The government has appointed former Chief Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury and Dr Kamal Hossain to conduct the case, filed on April 6, on its behalf.

Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury has received Tk 97,000 in two instalments as his legal fees but Dr Kamal has not yet taken any fee, the minister informed the House.

On December 28, 1987, Scimitar and Petrobangla entered into an agreement for oil exploration in the country, which invoked a lot of controversy. A case was also filed against the deal, stalling its operation.

PSC

From Page 1 Col 5

per cent was filled in 1985, five per cent in 1986, four per cent in 1988-89, 0.3 per cent in 1989-90 and none in 1990-91.

The commission suggested that out of the 25 per cent, available from the reduction of the gazetted posts, 10 per cent should be allocated for women while the remaining 15 per cent should be filled on merit.

In case on non-gazetted posts, the 25 per cent reserved entry-level positions available after reducing the quota for freedom fighters, the PSC recommended that 10 per cent of that should also be reserved for women candidates while the other 15 per cent should be allocated on the basis of population.

In support of its recommendations for raising the quota for women candidates, the PSC pointed out that women, constituting nearly 50 per cent of the population, are more sincere in pursuing studies and perform better in public services examinations.

Indian judge

From Page 1 Col 8

and Haryana High Court from 1987 to 1989.

He has been charged with spending five million rupees (166,666 dollars) on carpets and other furnishings, of running up exorbitant telephone bills and of taking money against false bills for car repairs and petrol expenses.

Seen from the Gallery

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Samannya Committee.

The House was proceeding smoothly when suddenly Md. Nasim raised a point of order and said "Police has fired on the peaceful demonstration of the Nirmul Committee at the Bangla Motor area and has used teargas to break up the gathering."

He made a passionate plea about the immorality of deliberating inside the Parliament when people were being killed.

Abdur Razzak said he had just come from the Nirmul demonstration and there was a rain of teargas shells. He suggested that the parliament should adjourn its business and rush to save the people under attack.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali pointed out that none of the above issues could be entertained under 'point of order.' He offered to permit statements on it, after the question and answer (Q and A) hour. The Speaker stuck to his position, continued the Q and A session, and later permitted the statements on the Nirmul meeting.

Md Nasim repeated his claim that police had fired upon the peaceful demonstration by the Nirmul Committee, and wanted the House to adjourn. Razzak repeated the same thing. The Home Minister, when asked to report on the incident, categorically denied any police firing and teargas shelling, and said nothing had happened, and that it was the police which was under attack.

On the question of adjournment, the Speaker asked for the view of the Deputy Leader of the House, who said there was no reason for such a move.

At this stage Abdus Samad Azad, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, announced that the AL members would stage a walkout.

Two diametrically opposite versions of an incident, taking place within a few miles of the Sangsad, were placed before the House. Unfortunately both were in sharp variance with the truth. Two Daily Star staffers and two photographers covered the Nirmul meeting.

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The Midnight File

Muslim militants kill 2 Egyptian policemen

ASYUT, Egypt, May 9: Gunmen believed to be Muslim militants shot dead two policemen and wounded a third in a string of attacks today in a town of southern Egypt, a police spokesman said. Lieutenant Yehia Abdel Malek was killed in an ambush as he left home for work in Kussiyeh, a town in the Asyut region near Dayrut, considered by police to be the fundamentalists' main stronghold in the south. The gunmen, three or four according to police, shot their way out of the area and fled along the town's main street, reports AFP.

Croats attack Muslim forces

ZENICA, (Bosnia-Herzegovina), May 9: Croat forces attacked Muslim troops in the southern city of Mostar today as the two nominal allies continued fighting despite a ceasefire between Muslims and Serbs, European Community monitors and UN officials said, reports AFP.

Nirmul march to JS

From Page 1 Col 7

Earlier, several thousand supporters thronged the Shahbagh crossing and marched towards the parliament at around 4-45 pm but were intercepted near the Bangla Motor crossing where riot police, donning bullet-proof jackets and newly-imported gas masks, were deployed behind a barbed-wire barricade on the road.

Following a brief scuffle with the police the protesters sat on the street and started chanting anti-Jamaat, anti-Golam Azam and anti-government slogans.

The cocktails exploded at around 5-15 pm when Jahanara Imam was addressing the supporters.

She said that it was a democratic, peaceful movement but the government tried to foil it through repression and harassment.

She urged the people to continue the agitation until 'war criminal' Golam Azam was tried.

Abdus Samad Azad said that since police and government-hired hooligans had attacked and injured the committee supporters, the opposition parties except the Jamaat had staged a walkout from Parliament.

He urged the people to make Thursday's half-day har-

tal, called by the Nirmul Committee earlier, a success.

The committee yesterday added a new point to its charter of demands: the government should stop violation of fundamental rights.

The committee convenor submitted a copy of a memorandum to Samad Azad to place before Parliament.

During the two-and-a-half-hour sit-in more than a dozen leaders including Mohammad Nasim, MP, Abdur Razzak, MP, Shahjahan Khan, MP, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Ahmad Chowdhury, Naim Jahangir, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, Maya, Hasanul Huq Inu, Nurul Islam Nahid, Col (Retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Abu Osman Chowdhury, Ahmedur Rahman Azmi, Gazul Huq, Hassan Imam and Abdul Mannan Chowdhury addressed the gathering.

UNDP chief quits

UNDP Administrator William H Draper offered his resignation on May 6 to the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali with effect from July 15, reports BSS.

According to a press release from the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Dhaka, Draper has headed the UNDP for seven years.

Affidavit filed

From Page 1 Col 3

Those articles, he said, along with Articles 99, 115 and 116 touch upon the independence of the judiciary, the same being an integrated concept of the entire judiciary.

Unless the aforementioned articles are declared as they were originally in the 1972 constitution, there is a danger of the collapse of the constitutional scheme, he added.

Barrister Islam argued that Articles 95, 98, 99, 115 and 116 as incorporated in the 1972 constitution were part of the structural pillars of the constitution and that they can only be improved upon and cannot be derogated.

At this point the court wanted to know as to how the petitioners were aggrieved.

The petitioners, Barrister Islam submitted, were aggrieved as citizens as their fundamental rights have been violated. As lawyers, he said, the petitioners were aggrieved as they could not ensure their clients equal justice and equal protection of the Law in the court.

Furthermore, he added, the petitioners were also aggrieved since officials of the court they have a duty to protect the independence of the judges and that of the judiciary.

"The community of lawyers are equal partners with the judges in the administration of justice and if independence of the judiciary is impaired the bar is aggrieved more than individual judges," the counsel for the petitioners submitted.

Barrister Islam also submitted that as per Article 116 of the constitution, consultation with the Supreme Court in appointing High Court judges should be an effective consultation.

Consultation in regard to the appointment of magistrates performing judicial duties is not at all done and is a violation of Article 116, he added.

The hearing was adjourned till today (Monday).

During the day's hearing there was no representation from the government's side and no one from the Attorney General's office was present. However, Barrister Rafiqul Rahman submitted that he had been engaged by the government for the case. But the court declined to hear him unless a rule was issued on the matter. Thereafter, Rahman left the court.