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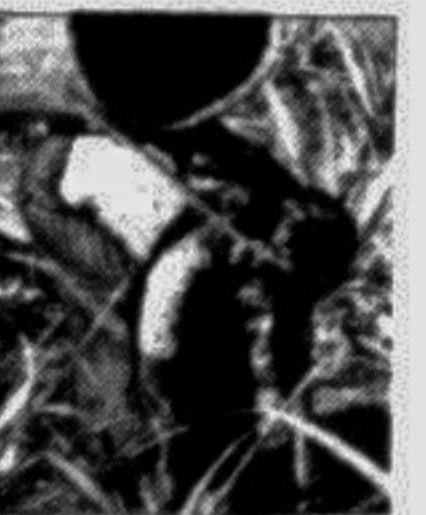
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NEWS BRIEFS

Noor Uddin leaves for India

A military delegation led by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, left Dhaka yesterday for a goodwill visit to India. During the visit, General Khan will make a courtesy call on the Indian Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao. He will also exchange views and discuss matters of mutual interest with the Indian Defence Secretary and the Chiefs of Staff of the Services, reports UNB.

New 100-taka note from tomorrow

Bangladesh Bank will issue a new 100-taka bank note from tomorrow. The 100-taka notes, presently in circulation, will also remain valid simultaneously. The new notes, bearing the signature of bank Governor Khorshed Alam, will be initially issued from the Bank's Motijheel office. Other offices of the Bank will issue the notes later. Excepting the Governor's signature, all other components of the new notes like colour, watermark, security thread, design and size will be similar to the existing 100-taka notes, reports UNB.

Chaos in JS as BNP, AL trade insults

By Staff Correspondent

Parliament yesterday witnessed a Pandemonium when leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League (AL) accused each other of undermining the Jatiya Sangsad by making untrue statements in the House.

The situation nearly led to scuffles among rival members in one corner of the House when Jatiya Party (JP) MP, Manrul Haque Chowdhury, trying to draw the attention of

the Chair, was being shouted down by ruling party member Azizur Rahman so that State Minister for Communications Fazlur Rahman could finish his statement.

The situation aggravated when ASM Feroze of the AL rushed to the noisy corner, taking the side of the JP member.

Although interventions by Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah, BNP whips Mahbulul

Alam Tara and Abdul Karim to some extent, helped pacify the situation, it needed a ten-minute break in the proceedings to restore a healthy atmosphere in the House.

Earlier, the bitter debate between the treasury bench and the AL-led opposition began when Rafiqul Islam Miah, taking part in a discussion between the chair and some opposition members, including Mohammad Nasim, on the legal authority of the House to implement an accord signed between certain components of Parliament, said that the four-point accord was not a property of the House.

Rafiqul Islam also accused the AL-led opposition, specially Abdul Razzak, MP of the AL, of Making a 'false statement' in the House relating to the Bangla Motors incident the day before.

The Works Minister said that the opposition Sunday

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HC dismisses writ regarding sub-judges' promotion

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court division of the Supreme Court Monday rejected the writ challenging the government decision on the promotion of sub-judges, on the ground that the petitioners are not aggrieved.

In summarily rejecting the writ, the court, comprising Justice Md Abdul Jalil and Justice Md Fazlul Karim, held that the petitioners were not aggrieved either in person or as a member of the bar.

The writ, by 12 members of different bars from around the country, was filed in November last seeking a rule to declare as illegal the government decision to ignore a Full Court decision relating to the promotion of sub-ordinate judges.

Representing the petitioners, Barrister Amir-ul Islam, however, told newsmen that the petitioners would appeal against the ruling in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Hannan Shah threatens legal action

Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah yesterday said stern legal action will be taken if production in any of the mills is hampered due to any strike, reports BSS.

He said this in a statement issued in Dhaka and called upon the workers and employees to maintain peaceful atmosphere and sustain smooth production in all mills and factories.

He said the government is not bound to pay wages and salaries to the workers and employees for keeping mills and factories closed. Workers will be responsible for closure of the mills and thereby hampering the normal production and retarding the economic growth of the country.

Meanwhile, the jute minister held a discussion with the leaders of the Patkal Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) Sunday at the BJMC headquarter here.

He urged the leaders to accept the minimum wage of Taka 950 which would amount to a total of Taka 2088 including other allowances.

The minister said further enhancement of wages could be linked with the productivity and income of the individual jute mills. The leaders of the workers declined the offer.

The minister, however, proposed a further meeting with the labour leaders with a view to resolving the issue keeping the national interest above any sectarian interest.

The minister regretted that unfortunately the labour leaders did not turn up for discussion Monday. The agitating labour leaders avoided the proposed meeting.

The minister, in his statement, further said that the labour leaders were more interested in organising the strike which would enable them to realise subscriptions for personal gains.

He apprehended that Bangladesh might lose its export market to its competitors in case the present pace of production was retarded. He said that the demand for Bangladeshi jute goods are on increase in the European market. He mentioned that on May 5 last, in one day, the Adamjee Jute Mills alone produced 237.59 tonnes of jute goods. The present average production of the mills is 200 tonnes daily.

Talks with govt fail

72-hr SKOP strike from today

By Staff Correspondent

The planned 72-hour labour strike begins across the country at 6 this morning as the final round of the three-day talks with the government to avert the strike yesterday failed.

The Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who led the government side in yesterday's dialogue, told reporters, "the proposed shutdown would have a devastating effect on the economy which the country cannot bear."

"We requested the labour leaders to postpone the programme and continue negotiations on the labour issues, but they did not heed our request," the minister told waiting reporters after his 35-minute discussions with the SKOP leaders at the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training in the afternoon.

SKOP coordinator Dr Wajedul Islam, commenting on yesterday's bilateral talks, said "We are compelled to go ahead with the strike since we found the government not sincere and reluctant to settle the issue."

"The government's rigidity prevented progress in the talks. We could have been flexible had the government changed its stance," another SKOP leader Abdus Salam Khan commented.

The Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), an umbrella body of 18 trade union federations, and five other federations in the jute-textile-cotton-sugar-BSEC sector simultaneously called for the three-day strike demanding the implementation of the separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) the

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Confrontation feared

Star Report

The three-day labour shutdown, beginning across the nation today, may result in confrontations between the organisers, adamant to enforce the work-stoppage, and the government determined to maintain normalcy in public life.

Organisers of the 72-hour strike by the country's public and private sector labour units, informed they had taken sufficient preparations to ensure that no work is done in the industries, in the government, semi-government and autonomous bodies. Trains and motorised vehicles would also be halted, they asserted.

Pickets will be deployed at the strategic points in the capital to stop the plying of vehicular traffic, SKOP sources told The Daily Star.

Besides, demonstrations will be organised in all the industrial belts by the pro-strike workers, they added.

According to some top leaders of the SKOP, a section of the transport owners had talked with the authorities seeking police protection for undisrupted movement of

their vehicles. However, the strike leaders said no transports could run as both the factions of the Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation had supported the work-abstention programme.

Meantime, the government had threatened legal action against the callers of the strike which it termed 'illegal'.

Commenting on the threat, SKOP coordinator Dr Wajedul Islam told this paper that the warning itself was illegal since a strike was a recognised democratic action.

Employers' Assoc hails govt

President of the Employers Association Anisuddowla last night congratulated the government for not yielding to the pressure of the so-called SKOP as was advised by them, reports BSS.

In a statement Dowla said they had already called upon all political parties to come forward in resolving the situation.

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UNHCR chief due tomorrow

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata arrives in Dhaka tomorrow to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Bangladesh spelling out a formula to expedite repatriation of the Myanmar refugees, reports UNB.

Of the 2.65 lakh Rohingya Muslims who entered Bangladesh from Arakan province of Myanmar in 1991, only some 24,000 had returned to their homes in one year since May last under a bilateral agreement.

Under the agreement signed between Dhaka and Yangon in April last year, UNHCR officials are only allowed in Bangladesh territory to supervise the repatriation of the refugees.

During the four-day visit, taking place at the invitation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Ms Ogata will visit some refugee camps and discuss with officials matters relating to the problem.

The MOU "to determine the character of voluntary return of the refugees" will be signed tomorrow afternoon, the day Ogata arrives.

Under the proposed MOU,

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Chakmas to start returning within a month

The repatriation process of the Chakma tribal refugees encamped in south Tripura will start within 30 days, as per an agreement between India and Bangladesh, reports UNB.

A joint statement issued simultaneously in Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday following Communications Minister Oli Ahmed's week-long visit to India said the two sides agreed to arrange speedy repatriation of all the tribal refugees from Chittagong Hill Tracts in full safety and security in pursuance of a recent accord between the Prime Ministers of the two countries.

According to the statement, based on formal talks at Agartala in Tripura on Sunday, Bangladesh has reiterated its commitment to take back its tribal refugees and India renewed its will to render full cooperation in their return home.

A Bangladesh delegation

headed by Oli Ahmed and an Indian team led by its Minister of State for External Affairs Salman Khurshid held the talks and visited three refugee camps — Takumbari, Pacharampara and Karbook — on Sunday. They also talked to the refugees.

The camp inmates were responsive to the proposal for their speedy repatriation and expressed their eagerness to return to their homelands.

The Bangladesh delegation included five MPs, the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of Special Affairs Division.

The Bangladesh side, according to the joint statement, has agreed to undertake all measures that would encourage the refugees to come back with full assurance that they would be resettled in their homes, their legitimate property returned and allowed to

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Supply of boulders for Jamuna Bridge

India unwilling to let Nepal, Bhutan transit facilities

India has agreed to supply boulders and stones to Bangladesh for the Jamuna Bridge Project.

Quoting a joint press release issued Sunday at the end of talks between the Bangladesh Communications Minister and the Indian Railway Minister in New Delhi, BSS reported that India, however, had not immediately agreed to the proposal to allow transit facilities to Nepal and Bhutan to also supply boulders and stones for the project.

The joint press release said that the government of India would intimate its position with regard to the transit facilities for Nepal and Bhutan to the government of Bangladesh later.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed held "comprehensive and wide ranging" discussions with the Indian Railway Minister C K Jaffer Sharief, covering bilateral issues "in an atmosphere of friendship, harmony and cordiality" in New Delhi, the

press release said. The Communications Minister paid the visit to India from May 2 to 9 at the invitation of the Indian Railway Minister, it said.

The joint press release also said that the Indian Railway Minister, during the talks, said that the SAARC countries can come together and make joint efforts to participate in projects.

The Communications Minister returned to Dhaka Sunday night.

Oli Ahmed indicated to his Indian counterpart that Bangladesh Railway would give preference to the Indian Railways on projects in Bangladesh, the press release said.

The Bangladesh Communications Minister told his Indian counterpart that his country could supply, through proper tender, boulders and stones to Bangladesh needed for the Jamuna Bridge river protection works.

Bangladesh would need boulders and stones worth

more than 100 million dollars.

He requested the government of India to indicate its willingness to supply boulders and also sought its permission to allow two other SAARC countries, Nepal and Bhutan, to supply the same using transit through India, the press release said.

The Indian Railway Minister, the press release said, agreed in principle to supply the boulders and stones through the state-owned Indian Railways Construction Company (IRCON) or private enterprises of India through proper tender subject to prevailing laws.

The two ministers noted that there is "tremendous scope" for joint-cooperation between the railways in the two countries. The Indian Railway Minister said that two construction and consultancy organisations under his ministry had expertise in execution of projects, construction, workshop rehabilitation and

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Indonesia hopes to breathe new life into NAM

NUSA DUA, Indonesia, May 10: Indonesia, Chairman and host to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at a ministerial gathering this week, hopes to breathe new life into a grouping better known for rhetoric than concrete action, reports Reuter.

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, speaking to reporters ahead of a preparatory meeting of senior officials here today, said he hoped to avoid the pitfalls of previous NAM sessions by stressing concrete measures and action on economic issues.

"We hope that with this approach, which can be characterised as more businesslike

and less confrontational.

At least 67 delegations were expected in the tourist resort of Bali, including Foreign Ministers from the 108-member grouping, observers and guest delegations, for a three-day session of the Standing Ministerial Committee.

The meeting, which will be officially opened by President Suharto tomorrow (Tuesday) is the first hosted by Indonesia since it held the 10th NAM summit in Jakarta last September.

Since taking over chairmanship of the grouping, Indonesia has tried hard to modernise a movement which

appeared to be in danger of losing its way after the end of the Cold War which spurred its formation in 1961.

Alatas said the three key issues were to revive a dialogue between the rich countries of the north and the poorer states of the south which dominate the NAM, to strengthen cooperation between NAM members and to refashion a role for the United Nations.

Indonesia faces an uphill struggle both to direct NAM's energies to economic matters and to capture the attention of the rich countries.

Leaders of the seven most industrialised nations, G 7,

have offered only a lukewarm response to Indonesian suggestions that NAM Chairman Suharto be invited to address a summit of the grouping in Tokyo in July.

Diplomats said the G-7, bogged down with its own economic problems and more pressing crises in Europe and Russia, was nervous of setting a precedent by inviting Suharto to air the developing world's grievances.

Alatas played down the manoeuvring, saying that leaders of the G-7 — the United States, Canada, Japan, Britain, Italy, Germany and France — welcomed a dialogue between

north and south but had not agreed on its format.

"What we are still working out today is the procedure and mechanism of such a dialogue," he said.

Instead Alatas said the Bali meeting would focus on concrete action points prepared by experts ahead of the talks, covering population growth, birth control and crippling external debts which hang over many of the members.

Alatas added that the movement was aware that a North-South Dialogue "can only be successful if South-South Cooperation is at the same

time strengthened and reinvigorated."

He said this week's meeting of the 37-member body would concentrate on the revitalisation of North-South dialogue, the strengthening of south-south cooperation and the role of the United Nations in international economy cooperation for development.

Alatas also expressed hope that the meeting would "steer away from generalized recommendations," and not "indulge in rhetoric."

However, delegation sources said petty issues had already cropped up.



By S Y Bakht

It was a sad day Monday for the nascent parliamentary democracy in the country.

An unprecedented scuffle-like situation, between a ruling party back-bencher and the Jatiya Party Whip, brought the proceedings of the House to a virtual standstill. The day's session also saw, perhaps for the first time, the Speaker striking the gavel in rage to bring the House to order.

In addition to the usual exchange of accusations and counter-accusations between the opposition and the treasury benches, the day's proceedings also witnessed, again perhaps for the first time, washing of the political dirty linen in public.

The mud-slinging match, primarily between State Minister for Communications

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All-party calls 8-hour hartal May 13

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-led 14 opposition political parties held a joint meeting Monday to discuss final plans for a half-day hartal across the country on May 13.

The meeting, held at the Minto Road residence of the Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, called upon the people to take part in the hartal to force the trial of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Golam Azam under a special 'war crimes' tribunal and to register protest against legalising his citizenship.

The leaders will start campaigning from today in support of the hartal. They will also bring out a torch procession in the capital on Wednesday and organise a public meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue after the 6 am to 2 pm hartal.

In a separate resolution, the meeting condemned Sunday's attack on the peaceful procession of the Nirmul Samannay

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Rohingya girl killed in police firing

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, May 10: A minor girl was shot dead and at least 20 people injured when police opened fire to quell a group of angry stone-throwing refugees at a Rohingya camp here today.

Hasina Begum, 11, was killed when a police bullet hit her. Another 20 people also received bullet injuries at the Damdamia refugee Camp-1 in Teknaf at about 11 am.

One police inspector and several other security personnel were also injured in the clash, officials said.

Seriously injured police inspector Abu Taher (38) and four Rohingya refugees of the camp — Abdul Rahim, 35, Abu Fayez, 42, Abu Sama, 25 and Tofael Ahmed were admitted to the Teknaf Hospital, hospital sources said.

According to witnesses, police fired 33 rounds of shots to control the mob.

They said the clash between the police and the refugees started when some Ansars intervened during a clash between two groups of Rohingyas

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Zia Parishad demands share of Ganges water

By Staff Correspondent

The Zia Parishad handed over a memorandum to the Indian High Commission yesterday demanding proper water sharing by opening up the Farakka Barrage immediately.

The Parishad in a rally held earlier in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the evening also declared that it would go for a symbolic hunger strike on June 10, along with other programmes, to protest India's "coercive attitude" towards water sharing with Bangladesh.

Presided over by Kabir Murad, president of the parti-

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