

## ROK youths to volunteer services in development

Bangladesh and South Korea signed here yesterday notes of exchange on Korea Youth Volunteers programme administered by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), reports BSS.

The ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, Sung Oh Shin and the joint chief, Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance, ABM Siddique, signed the notes on behalf of their respective governments.

Under the newly signed agreement, a six-member team of Korean volunteers will arrive in Bangladesh at the invitation of Bangladesh government some time in September this year.

The team comprises five women volunteers and one man volunteer who will impart instructions in the fields of agriculture, food processing, water analysing, animal husbandry and dress making. They have already been made familiar with the historical and cultural backgrounds of Bangladesh including the Bengali language by a Bangladeshi scholar.

The next year, Bangladesh is

likely to receive over a dozen Korean youths for voluntary services under KOICA's annual volunteers programme which will continue as long as Bangladesh desires to receive the agency's cooperation.

The Korean government formed Korea Youth Volunteers (KYV) in 1989 and since then 150 youths from Korea have been sent to many developing countries in Asia such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia as a gesture of friendship and goodwill for rendering social services.

At present, around 133 members of Korea Youth Volunteers are actively participating in the socio-economic development in Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The range of the Korea Youth Volunteers activities includes cooperation in the fields of technical cooperation, agriculture, forestry and fishery, education, community development, health and nursing and youth and sports.



Police seizing a basket of mangoes while evicting pavement hawkers from the city's busy Motihel Commercial Area yesterday. —Star photo

## Commentary: History

From Page 1 Col 7

It is because the two crore figure was given during Awami League government? So it has to be 'debunked' regardless of the fact that it belittles our struggle, hurts the sentiments of millions of families who lost their near and dear ones and brings into question the most important reason for wanting independence — namely, the committing of genocide against our civilian people?

We have told the world, more importantly ourselves, that a genocide had been committed against our people. Yes, there were political, economic, social and cultural arguments behind our wanting to go our separate ways from Pakistan. But the single most important factor that turned a constitutional and non-violent, non-cooperation mass movement into an armed struggle was the fact that the army of the country to which we belonged, an army that was maintained with our tax money, launched an attack against us. The military was waging war against the people. It was the genocide that made each and every Bengali into a freedom fighter.

In 1971, a conservative estimate of our population was 7.5 crore. The number of 30 lakh martyrs amounts to 4 per cent of the population. Take the fact of a Pakistani army of nearly one lakh, well-armed troops with all the machines of human butchery at their command; add to that a huge number of paramilitary force and then, add further the auxiliary forces like Al-Badr, Al-Shams, Razakars and the like. Then the figure of 30 lakh martyrs does not seem improbable. Remember, we were 'not good Muslims' and 'racially inferior'! When a regular army is given such motivation they can commit any atrocity — see what Serbian soldiers are doing to Muslims in Bosnia. The Pakistani army had a similar motivation — land, race and religion.

It is not my intention to suggest that historical facts should

not undergo scrutiny. By all means. But is Col Akbar doing so? Is he qualified, either as a historian or as a researcher, to question such an important and tragic event of our history?

Every family in Bangladesh lost somebody during the Liberation War. My brother's father-in-law, a renowned physician in Bogra, was taken from his house and killed. My childhood neighbour and friend died as a Mukti Bahini. Several of my university teachers were butchered just before our victory.

All these tragic but inspirational stories are there to give us a sense of honour and dignity in ourselves and build a strong sense of nationhood.

The Liberation War, in which Col Akbar participated, is our greatest source of pride and it sets us apart as people who actually took up arms to gain independence. To say today that it was three lakh and not 30 lakh, who laid down their lives to free this country is to humiliate our war heroes.

The nameless, faceless millions who fought for our independence in every nook and corner of this country, in every lane and back alley of our cities, in every bazar and bamboo bush in our villages deserve our highest respect. The unknown soldiers of freedom who regained, inch by inch, this beloved land and saved us from the genocide; but for whose sacrifice this Parliament from where Col Akbar made his arrogant claim, could as well be running in the Urdu language, should not be subjected to ridicule through instant history, that too mixed with a budget speech. (I am still groping to see the link.)

Col Akbar's unfounded and unsubstantiated claim is an insult to our martyrs and an example of a very disturbing attitude, on the part of some — names need not be mentioned — of trivialising the memories of our Liberation War.

Please, leave the martyrs alone, and go on with the task of developing the country.

## Akbar's figure debated

From Page 1 Col 8

Yesterday's debate began when Shudhangshu Shekhar Halder of the AL drew the attention of the chair to Akbar's remarks and demanded the figure 'invented' by the BNP MP be expunged.

Halder argued that it had been an established fact, both nationally and internationally, that at least 30 lakh people were killed by the Pakistani army during the nation's Liberation War.

As soon as Halder was finished, Akbar took the floor to defend his contention.

He told the House that not more than three lakh families were granted shaheed (martyrs) family allowances and the figure was indicative of the number of martyrs in the Liberation War. Akbar also said that the number of martyrs was put at three million (30 lakh) by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in an interview with David Frost, a British journalist, in 1972.

The BNP law-maker, however, believed that the difference in the figure of the people killed did not really make any difference in the degree of feelings for the sacrifice the nation made for its independence.

Akbar himself was a freedom fighter and was awarded a 'Bir Pratik' (a war gallantry medal) for his role in the war.

At this point, acting leader of the opposition in parliament Abdus Samad Azad took the floor to express resentment at Akbar's remark.

Samad Azad said that it was not clear to him as to why the treasury bench had attempted to create a controversy over the number of martyrs.

"It is beyond any controversy that a total of 30 lakh people were brutally killed by the Pakistani army," the opposition leader said, adding that late Ziaur Rahman himself had never raised any question over the figure.

Samad Azad also felt that one should be cautious about implications while making such statements on sensitive issues.

Akbar's statement on the issue virtually undermined the Liberation War, Samad Azad felt.

The opposition leader urged the chair to switch over to the budget discussion and said that there should be a day-long debate on the issue, in case the treasury bench was really interested in challenging the accepted figure relating to the number of martyrs in the war of independence.

No treasury bench MP, however, stood to back Akbar Hossain and Humayun Khan Panni, the Deputy Speaker, picked up the order of the day.

## Soweto Day observed

By Staff Correspondent

The International Solidarity Day with the people of South Africa, popularly known as the "Soweto Day", was observed in the city yesterday with a call for establishing peace and racial harmony.

The United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB), in conjunction with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), organised a symposium in the city to mark the day.

The speakers at the symposium, describing white rule over blacks as "A classic case of repression", said that blacks were slowly getting their democratic rights in South Africa as a result of growing pressure of the international community and the United Nations.

The symposium was chaired by Salahuddin Ahmed while acting Resident Representative of UNDP W Fischer and Prof Nurul Momen of the Dhaka University were present as guest speakers. Economist Prof Muzaffar Ahmed was the main speaker. Secretary General of UNAB S Ahmed Hossain and Prof Rashiduddin Ahmed also spoke.

## Cut in duty on powder milk slated

By Staff Correspondent

The dairy farm owners of Dhaka district termed the reduction of import duties on powder milk from 45 per cent to 30 per cent as an "evil conspiracy" to destroy the country's dairy industry.

In a press statement issued by the president of the Dhaka Zila Dughda Khamar Samity Shahe Alam, dairy owners said that dairy farming had emerged as a profitable venture after the present government increased import duties on powder milk from 28 per cent to 45 per cent in 1991-92.

The country had spent nearly Tk 450 crore in '89-90 for importing powder milk. The present government, by enhancing the duties, succeeded in limiting import expenses for milk to about 250 crore in '91-92.

The samity said, "Hundreds of dairy farmers will be deprived of the actual price of milk if the proposed duty reduction is implemented. Many farmers will shut down their farms as a consequence."

## Radio artistes call off strike

The staff artistes of Radio Bangladesh yesterday called off their planned two-hour work stoppage every day till July 14, reports UNB.

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## Ershad to get his salary as MP

By Staff Correspondent

Hussain Mohammad Ershad, former President and a member of the present Parliament, could be paid his monthly remuneration from the day he was voted to the Jatiya Sangsad.

This was observed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the special privilege of the law makers, yesterday.

Ershad, who is now serving jail terms on corruption charges, will also get the facility of his discretionary grants for the current fiscal year.

According to the Privilege Committee report, released Wednesday evening in the Jatiya Sangsad, the Parliament secretariat will take all necessary steps to get Ershad can properly send his list of grants from the discretionary fund.

The government abstained from paying the monthly remuneration to Ershad as an MP from the beginning.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi of the Jatiya Party (JP) submitted a notice on March 4 this year on the non-payment of the remuneration and observed that it was a violation of the privileges Ershad was entitled to as a Parliament member.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali sent the notice to the Privilege Committee on March 9 and the committee, following discussions, came out with the report yesterday evening.

Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain placed the report in the House.

The report said the committee, in its 21st meeting, made in overall review of the issue and fund that after his election as a member of the Jatiya Sangsad, Ershad had not drawn any remuneration and allowances and that Ershad could not attend any session of the Fifth Parliament as he was in jail following his conviction.

The committee examined the legal and other aspects of the issue and came to the conclusion that Ershad could be given monthly remuneration for the time being.

It, however, said there has been some legal complications with regard to the payment of his monthly remuneration and other allowances since Ershad is in jail after conviction. The matter deserved further examination, the report said.

Headed by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, the committee members include deputy leader of the House Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Chief Whip Kh. Delwar Hossain, State Minister Aminul Haq, Tofael Ahmed,

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## Gen Stackpole arrives

US Marine Lieutenant General Henry C Stackpole, Commander of Marine Forces Pacific and Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific, arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He is accompanied by a staff officer. He was received at the Zia International Airport by Principal Staff officers and other senior military officials.

The US Ambassador to Bangladesh, William B Milam and other US embassy officials were also present at the airport to greet Lt. Gen. Stackpole.

During his stay in Bangladesh, General Stackpole will pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. He will also meet ministers, chiefs of Staff of the three Services and other dignitaries.

## Concern over impasse at BIDS

By Staff Correspondent

Ten current and former Senior Fellows of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), in a statement Wednesday, expressed grave concern at the impasse arising out of the recent appointment of the new Director General of the institute.

"It is our moral obligation to support the BIDS research staff in their efforts to protect this environment where independence is cherished and efforts rewarded," the statement said.

They said the BIDS, which was acclaimed nationally and internationally for its contributions to socio-economic research, is a national institution. "The BIDS has received acclamation for its vanguard role in research for the last three decades," they said, adding that it had also succeeded in attracting the brightest talents in economics and related social sciences by offering an environment that rewarded independent and objective research.

"The BIDS is therefore recognised as a unique institution for the development of expertise," the senior fellows said.

They, however, hoped that the concerned authorities would seek out the truth without being influenced by pre-conceptions or malicious propaganda and take necessary steps to resolve the crisis for continuing the BIDS's heritage of high quality.

The statement was signed by Dr Ainun Nishat of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University, AKM Ahsan, retired civil servant, Jahanara Huq, Principal of Mirpur Bangla College, Syed Manzur Elahi, Fazle Hasan Abed of BRAC, Dr Kazi Khuliquzaman Ahmed and Profs Anisuzzaman, Muzaffar Ahmed and Nazrul Islam of the Dhaka University.

## Report on Hare Road bldg to be placed in JS, says Minister

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah yesterday informed the House that report on the building at 30, Hare Road would be brought before the Sangsad after the fourteenth meeting of House Standing Committee on the Ministry of Works to be held on June 20, reports BSS.

## Rao accused of taking bribe

From Page 1 Col 5

Narasimha Rao, the honourable Prime Minister of India, at his Race Course Road residence in the forenoon of November 4 in a suitcase, "Jethmalani said."

He said it was paid in two batches of 6.7 million rupees (213,333 dollars) and 3.3 million rupees (106,666 dollars) days before Rao's crucial 1991 by-election.

An Indian government spokesman in New Delhi had no immediate comment about the allegations.

Mehta, once India's biggest personal tax payer, has been charged with bribery, fraud and currency violations in the scandal, which was exposed in April 1992.

He had been seeking immunity from prosecution in return for becoming state witness to testify about his alleged pay-offs.

Jethmalani implied further revelations could be made.

## The Midnight File

### OIC asks its members to send troops to Bosnia

JEDDAH, June 16: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference has urged its 51 members to send troops to protect 'safe havens' in Bosnia-Herzegovina, OIC sources said today. Secretary General Hamid Aligabid sent messages to OIC member countries asking them to "contribute in one way or another to reinforce the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) which is to control Muslim 'safe havens' in Bosnia," reports AFP.

### India, Oman sign three accords

MUSCAT, June 16: India and Oman have signed three accords to boost oil, petrochemical and trade ties during a visit here by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao which ended today, officials said, reports AFP.

## Appeal for subsidy

From Page 1 Col 7

The Treasury Bench members however said, the national economy was being better managed under the able leadership of the present government.

This, they said was proved by the mobilisation of increasing domestic resources for development programmes, which had been calculated at 33.33 per cent for the next financial year's ADP outlay.

The budget proposed to enhance contribution from domestic resources to 33.33 per cent from 25 per cent in two years of BNP government, they said adding that only two per cent was contributed during the Ershad rule.

Maulana Shamsuddin Ahmed (BNP) hailed the budget and noted with satisfaction that 33 per cent of the development expenditure will be met out of domestic resources showing reduction in dependence on foreign aid.

He said the government has been spending lot of money on primary education without due return. He suggested appointment of adequate teachers in rural areas.

The ruling party member expressed satisfaction at the relief given to income tax payers but called for strict enforcement of rules in realising tax.

Maulana Shamsuddin suggested legal measures against those responsible for painting graffiti and slogans on the walls.

## Mahathir's special envoy meets PM today

A special envoy of Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Muhammad of Malaysia arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a two-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Dato Abu Haji Abu Hasan Bin Omar, the Malaysian Minister for Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, will call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today to deliver a letter from Mahathir to her.

The letter is understood to have contained matters relating to problems facing the Muslim Ummah, particularly the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Abu Hasan is scheduled to meet his Bangladesh counterpart M K Anwar before leaving for home today.

## Tax lawyers

From Page 1 Col 5

from financial institutions, will create 'an unusual situation' in economic transactions.

The association also urged the government to consider repeal of Section 120, 84-A and sub-clauses 21 and 22 of Section 19 of the Income Tax Ordinance.

Presided over by the president of the Bangladesh Tax Lawyers' Association M A Salam Talukdar, it was attended, among others, by Shamsur Rahman, SM Zaman, Zinnat Ali, SM Chowdhury, Abdul Halim Sarder, Kamrul Alam Chowdhury and Mosharraf Hossain.

## Sharif's govt

From Page 1 Col 7

who dissolved the National Assembly and sacked Sharif on April 18, an action reversed by the Supreme Court on May 26.

Sharif would need opposition support to pass a constitutional reform bill, for which a two-thirds majority in parliament is required.

## Pak SC rejects Punjab govt appeal

LAHORE, June 16: Pakistan's Supreme Court refused here today a Punjab provincial government request to file an appeal against a Lahore High Court interim order, court sources said, reports AFP.

The decision was seen as a setback to the provincial supporters of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in his ongoing power struggle with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, observers said.

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