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NEWS BRIEFS

Biswas assents to Appropriation Bill

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday assented to the Appropriation Bill (Supplementary), 1993 passed by the Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

Saifur's winding up budget speech today

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will deliver his winding up speech on proposed national budget for 1993-94 in the parliament at 11:00 am today. He was scheduled to deliver the winding up speech yesterday, reports BSS.

Hasina goes to Sylhet tomorrow

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina will leave for Moulvibazar tomorrow by train on a two-day visit to the flood-affected areas of greater Sylhet. The Awami League president would visit Kulara, Barolekha, Rajnagar, Kamalganj and Srimongal thanas of Moulvibazar district, Sayestaganj in Habiganj district and Balaganj in Sylhet district on Tuesday. On June 30 (Wednesday), Hasina will visit Baniabazar and Golaganj thanas of Sylhet district. She will return to Dhaka the same day, reports UNB.

Newspaper holiday

All newspaper offices will remain closed on July 1 on the occasion of holy Ashura, according to a press release of Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP), reports BSS.

Curfew clamped: 50 arrested

3 killed as police open fire on protesters in Kathmandu



A crowd burning furniture in a street to prevent the police from using their vehicles in Kathmandu yesterday. — AFP photo

KATHMANDU, June 26: Three people were killed today when police fired on pro-communist demonstrators during a strike called by Nepal's main opposition party, police said, reports Reuter.

One man was hit by bullets after a group of demonstrators turned violent, setting up roadblocks and hurling stones at government buildings. No details on the other two deaths were immediately available. About 50 people were arrested.

Demonstrators stoned a United States Information Service office, breaking windows, and police fired tear gas when protesters set fire to municipal offices, witnesses said. The offices of Royal Nepal Airlines were also damaged.

Shortly after the violence the government clamped an overnight curfew on the city and warned in radio broadcasts that violators would be shot.

A highly placed Home Ministry official told AFP on See Page 12 Col 4

Row in Jatiya Sangsad Majid-ul Haq dares Tofael to prove corruption charges

By Staff Correspondent.

Major General (Retd) M Majid-ul-Haq, a senior and influential cabinet minister, Saturday offered to resign if the charges of corruption levelled against him in the House are proved.

Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League, who made the charges, took up the challenge and said that he himself would resign from Parliament if he failed to prove the allegations.

"I shall resign if the corruption charges are proved," Minister for Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control M Majid-ul-Haq told the House challenging the charges made by the Awami League member.

"I accept the challenge, and if I fail to prove them I shall resign," Tofael Ahmed retorted and demanded the setting up of a parliamentary committee.

The demand for the committee was supported by opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim who also demanded a

similar committee to prove alleged corruption in the Saipem deal under the Ministry of Energy.

Following mounting pressure from the opposition, Speaker Shakh Razzak Ali sought opinion on forming a committee from the Treasury Bench Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain who said: "The minister gave a personal explanation to you, so the matter is for you to consider."

"I will give my decision tomorrow (Sunday)," the Speaker said.

It all began after the Asr prayers when the Irrigation Minister, rising on a point of personal explanation, refuted the corruption charges made against him by Tofael Ahmed during his budget speech in the morning session.

The AL member from Bhola alleged that a construction work under the Irrigation Ministry was given to a certain See Page 12 Col 4

Kamal's meeting attacked in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, June 26: Activists of the Awami League and its front organisations allegedly attacked a meeting of the Democratic Forum in the town today, leaving at least three people injured, reports UNB.

Witnesses said about 100 activists of the district Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League stormed the local Bar Library where the Forum had arranged a meeting this afternoon. Forum leaders Abul Kashem, ATM Amir Ali and Advocate Shahidul Alam Arzu were injured in the attack.

Dr Kamal Hossain and other central leaders had not reached the venue when the incident took place. The attackers also ransacked the bar library auditorium and held a counter-rally there.

The unruly people later chased Dr Kamal Hossain in front of the meeting venue. He took shelter at the Char Bhadrason thana headquarters, some 25 km off the district town.

Talking to the UNB there, Dr Kamal said the existence of the country will be at stake if "We fail to uphold the democratic process." He said society had become hostage at the See Page 12 Col 5

Draft of new constitution ready, says Yeltsin

MOSCOW, June 26: President Boris Yeltsin announced today that a new Russian Constitution aimed at resolving his power struggle with the conservative dominated parliament had been drafted, but differences still remained, reports Reuter.

Addressing the opening plenary session of a Constitutional Assembly, Yeltsin said a single version of the new basic law was basically ready and the next full conference would probably be the last.

"As a result of intensive work, we have a single version of the Constitution," he told the Assembly.

"It is ready, using parliamentary language, for discus-

sion in a first reading," he said.

Yeltsin has been locked in conflict with parliament for months, accusing it of blocking market reforms by tying the government's hands.

Yeltsin's opponents accuse him of trying to bypass the legislature and impose a presidential system on the country illegally. The issue could go to another referendum.

The new Constitution, replacing the much-amended Soviet-era document, is seen by 6 Yeltsin's supporters as a way of strengthening the president's hand following an April 25 referendum which showed support for him and his policies.

"Several questions have not been resolved yet. They will have to be resolved... I think this will be the last but one plenary session," he said, without giving a date for the next meeting.

The final meeting will have to decide how to pass the Constitution, a crucial issue which was not due to be discussed during today's general debate on the document, containing some 4,000 amendments.

The new Constitution would do away with the supreme legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies, replacing it with a two-chamber standing parliament.

'FAP' re-defined!

By Staff Correspondent

What does FAP stand for? Everybody knows it as the Flood Action Plan (FAP) — a million-dollar project to save the country from recurrent flood.

But Treasury Bench member Abdur Rab Chowdhury Saturday defined FAP as "Fraud And Pretextation".

He also referred to the speech of Jamaat leader Mattur Rahman Nizami who defined 'NGO' as "Non-Official Government" and proposed forming a parliamentary committee to monitor the activities of the NGOs (Non-Government Organisations).

Rab Chowdhury also blasted the so-called foreign consultants.

A royal reunion?

LONDON, June 26: A photograph of Prince Charles and his estranged wife Diana exchanging a goodbye kiss on the cheek filled Britain's tabloid front-pages today but was not seen as heralding a romantic reconciliation, reports Reuter.

Their elder son William, 11, nicknamed "Wills," was seen wistfully gazing at a rare show of affection between the royal heir and his wife of 12 years. Charles and Diana were pictured saying goodbye after attending his school sports day.

"Wills can only wish," said the Sun newspaper, holding out no hope of the couple getting back together.

The Prince and Princess of Wales, as the pair are officially known, have made a few joint appearances lately in which their once ill-concealed animosity seemed to have disappeared.

The Daily Express declared the royal kiss "was a sign that the bitter war of the Waleses is over" six months after their formal separation.

Royalty reporters say the renewed warmth could be a public relations act, or just a return to a routine courtesy.



A rally was brought out in the city yesterday on the occasion of the Day Against Drug Abuse. — Star photo

Day Against Drug Abuse observed

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was observed in the country yesterday as elsewhere in the world, reports UNB.

Different socio-cultural organisations held various programmes including discussion meeting, procession and rally to mark the day. The theme of the Day was 'Prevention of Drug Abuse Through Education'.

The Narcotics Control Department arranged a discussion at the National Museum auditorium where Home Minister Abdur Mattin Chowdhury reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to taking steps and cooperating at international and regional levels to prevent drug abuse and trafficking.

He called for integrated and comprehensive international and regional programmes to combat the drug menace threatening social security, peace and progress.

Women's Affairs Minister Tariqul Islam also addressed the meeting presided over by Acting Director General of the See Page 12 Col 5

'Budget's purpose depends on implementation'

Star Report

President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGM-EA) Md Mosharraf Hossain Saturday described the national budget for 1993-94 as a set of laudable proposals provided those are implemented properly.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star yesterday at his Gulshan office, the BGM-EA president also sought more incentives for export-oriented industries, such as exemption from income tax on their export earnings.

He said this year's budget was 'exceptional' in many senses. It did not propose any new taxes yet still managed to

increase the contribution of domestic resources to the Annual Development Programme (ADP). However, he didn't rule out the possibility of new taxes through Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs) at a later date. He felt that any new taxes imposed through SROs would only frustrate the whole purpose and objectives of the budget.

Referring to the overwhelming contribution of the garments sector in the country's export earnings, Mosharraf Hossain said the garments industries earlier used to get a 15 per cent cash incentive for using local fabrics. But despite repeated ap-

peals by the garments sector, the Finance Minister had refused to reintroduce this provision in the budget, he regretted. The budget also ignored the exporters' demand of an exemption of the 0.5 per cent tax at source, he lamented.

Mosharraf Hossain alleged that the commercial banks were not properly responding to the directions of the Bangladesh Bank to reduce the rate of interest on working capital. The government would have to take measures to implement its orders, he said.

The BGM-EA chief also believes the time limit for availing concessional facilities in See Page 12 Col 8



Mosharraf Hossain

Govt doing fine, says B. Chowdhury

By Staff Correspondent

Deputy Leader of Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday called upon the opposition in Parliament to abstain from generating a sense of despondency among the people by accusing the government of failure in making any progress.

Prof Chowdhury was refuting the opposition allegation about the government's non-performance in the House last evening.

Giving latest statistics on different sectors, the Deputy Leader argued that the government was doing fine under the given socio-political and economic situation of the country.

The Deputy Leader said that although the government would not claim all-round suc-

cess in all fronts, it had reasons to be satisfied with its achievements in many sectors.

"Production in the agriculture sector had increased tremendously during the last three years. Credit for the bumper production must go to the peasants, but one cannot deny the fact that the government also contributed to it by making agricultural inputs available to the farmers," Chowdhury said, adding: "The theory of accident cannot explain the bumper harvest."

Chowdhury, giving latest figures, also said national savings as well as export earnings had significantly increased during the last three years of BNP rule.

Critics for the sake of See Page 12 Col 5

News Analysis

Dairy owners ignore basic contradiction

By Special Correspondent

Vicious campaign by the Dairy and Poultry Federation of Bangladesh and the recent press reports on the equalisation of duty on bulk and tinned powder milk imports bring into focus a fundamental contradiction between the interest of those who want to invest and promote industrialisation of Bangladesh and those of the indentors and the rent seekers.

At a moment when some eight milk packaging industries of the country, having made an investment in excess of Tk 150 crores — in both local and foreign currency — are about to start operating, a campaign has been launched on behalf of a vested lobby of indentors, importers and traders to stall that process.

The milk packaging industries, a prospective new addition to our economy, consider that the coming year, 1993-94, would be one of hope and new beginning as the govern-

ment, in a pragmatic move, has reduced import duty on bulk milk powder from 45 per cent to 30 per cent in the proposed budget, as industrial raw material, and as such put the bulk importer on equal footing with tinned milk powder importers, who enjoyed a tax advantage with only 25 per cent duty.

The logic behind the Finance Minister's move was to create opportunities for about 20 per cent value addition, provide milk to consumers at a cheaper price, and save considerable amount of foreign exchange in more than Tk 250 crore annual milk powder import trade.

There are three players in the milk industry. The local dairy producers, controlling a maximum 10 per cent of the market; the bulk milk power importers controlling another 10 per cent; and the rest 80 per cent of the market, which See Page 12 Col 2

Sharif may meet Ishaq

ISLAMABAD, June 26: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today said he might meet President Ghulam Ishaq Khan soon in an effort to solve the country's political crisis, reports AFP.

Sharif's statement came as over 20 opposition parties held a day long conference in the capital Saturday on the crisis, renewing demands for fresh elections but deciding against holding talks with the government.

The two leaders last met on April 14, four days before Ishaq Khan, 78, dissolved Sharif's government, capping months of a fierce power tussle between the two men.

Sharif, however, rejected opposition demands for mid-term polls, saying the historic judgement of the Supreme Court was a new mandate for his government.

The people of Pakistan have already given their verdict in favour of this government through spontaneous reaction to the presidential move to dissolve the lower house, he said.

Eight compartments of Padma Express derailed in city

By Staff Correspondent

Eight compartments of an express train were derailed at Khilgaon rail-crossing at about 8:30 pm yesterday.

However, nobody was hurt in the incident.

According to the railway police, the Padma Express train coming from Rajshahi met the accident just before entering the Kamalapur Railway Station.

The reason of the accident could not be known immediately.

Changes likely at Foreign Office

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Anwar Hashem is likely to have been appointed Additional Foreign Secretary in Charge of Multilateral Affairs, reports UNB.

The post has been vacant for more than a year since Faruque Sobhan was appointed country's High Commissioner to India.

Hashem is likely to be replaced by Q M A Rahim, Director General (SAARC), at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman is likely to join the mission in Washington or the country's permanent mission at the United Nations in New York. His posting abroad is overdue as he has been working in the Ministry for last eight years.

Speculation is rife that Reaz would be appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States.

Most probably, Foreign Office sources indicated Faruque Sobhan or country's Permanent Representative in UN Geneva office M R Osmay will succeed Reaz as Foreign Secretary.

Labour bodies defer announcing plans

By Staff Correspondent

The combine of jute-textile-yarn-sugar sectors workers' federations yesterday deferred announcement of its fresh programme until June 30.

The programme, a proposed 96-hour nationwide labour shutdown from July 11, was scheduled to be announced at yesterday's workers' rally of the combine held at Purana Paltan crossing in the city.

The postponement came after a combine-SKOP joint meeting which reportedly reached a consensus on identical agitational programmes to

be announced simultaneously on June 30.

In the joint meeting, held prior to the afternoon's workers' rally, the combine leaders reportedly implored their SKOP allies to join forces. They argued the on-going labour agitation would not achieve its goals unless combined efforts were made. The SKOP leadership agreed and responded positively.

The joint meeting, held immediately before the workers' rally, further decided that the two bodies would again See Page 12 Col 4