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NEWS BRIEFS

PM plants sapling at office premises

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday planted 'Nageswar' sapling at her office premises as part of the countrywide national tree plantation programme. Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary and other officials of the Prime Minister's office followed her in planting saplings at the office premises, reports BSS.

French envoy hosts reception

A largely-attended grand reception was held on the occasion of the National Day of France in Dhaka yesterday evening. Hosted by the French Ambassador and his wife Mrs Jean-Michel Lecombe, the reception was attended, among others, by the Finance Minister, M Saifur Rahman, the Jute Minister, Brig (Retd) A S M Hannan Shah, the Acting Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad, the Jatiya Party leaders, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Barrister Moudud Ahmed and high ranking civil and military officials, diplomats and journalists, reports BSS.

Ferry services suspended

The ferry services of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) on Sirajganj-Bhauapur route were suspended from yesterday morning due to fall of water level near Bhauapur Ghat, reports BSS.

RU exams postponed

RAJSHAHI, July 14: The part three examinations of degree honours courses of the Rajshahi University, scheduled for July 19, have been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. The dates of other examinations will, however, remain unchanged, reports UNB.

CHT talks : No progress on Chakmas' repatriation

Amnesty for tribal rebels until Dec 31

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, July 14: The government today declared a general amnesty for all tribal insurgents known as Shantibahini, until December 31, 1993. The declaration came in the fourth round of peace talks held today between the parliamentary committee headed by the Communications Minister Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed and the Shantibahini leaders at the Khagrachhari Circuit House, officials said. The dialogue was attended by a 5-member Shantibahini delegation led by J B Larma alias Shanto Larma, president of the Parbatyia Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS),

the parent organisation of the armed tribal rebels. In today's talks both parties also agreed to extend the ceasefire up to October 31 and to hold another round of dialogue on or before September 20, to find out a political solution to the long-drawn Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) issue, officials added. The officials said that the talks, beginning at 11:30 am, continued till 4:30 pm in a cordial atmosphere marking considerable progress in the discussions between the parliamentary committee members and the rebel leaders. However, no specific decision or date on starting the stalled

repatriation of Chakma refugees from Tripura state of India could be finalised although the issue came up for discussion in today's talks. The government also announced a grant of Tk 10,000/- in cash along with free ration for six months to each returning refugee family instead a sum of Taka 5000/- announced earlier. Each family will also be given two bundles of C.I sheets for house building in addition to the return of lands belonging to them, the announcement added. Other facilities offered today to the returnees include exemption of agricultural loans up

to Taka 5000/-, re-admission in schools and colleges of students and possible reinstatement in previous employments. Besides, the government declared that all pending cases and warrants against the tribal people related with the insurgency would be withdrawn. However, in today's negotiations, both parties also blamed each other for violation of the ceasefire, originally scheduled to expire August 31, sources said. Among the parliamentary committee members who attended today's dialogue were Rashed Khan Menon (Workers Party), Barkat Ullah Bulu, Syed See Page 12 Col 7



UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata is welcomed by Belgian General Francis Briquemont, Commander for the UN forces in Bosnia, upon her arrival at Sarajevo airport yesterday. Ogata is on a one-day official visit to the besieged Bosnian capital. — AFP photo

Ogata in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, July 14 : UN refugee chief Sadako Ogata arrived in the besieged Bosnian capital of Sarajevo on Wednesday for an emergency visit to see for herself the city's sorry plight after 15 months of war, reports Reuter. Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, will assess the immediate needs for international financial support to keep food and other supplies going into Bosnia-Herzegovina. "I wanted to see for myself the state of the victims here and to assure the people of Sarajevo that we are here to stay," she told reporters at Sarajevo airport. Ogata, wearing a protective plaid jacket, will report on conditions in Sarajevo at a meeting of donor countries in Geneva on Friday. She will appeal for more funds to help Sarajevo, where stockpiles are available for only a few days. "I think we are okay through the end of this month but I need a lot, at least another 200 million US dollar," she told reporters.

N-safety Bill passed

JS session to be prorogued today

By Staff Correspondent

The budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) that began on June 6 will be prorogued today. This was decided by the members of the Business Advisory Committee of Parliament, headed by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, last evening. Meanwhile, the JS yesterday adopted the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Bill, 1993 by voice vote. Education Minister Barrister Jamruddin Sircar had moved the bill in the House November last year. The minister, in his statement on the objectives and reasons for moving the bill in the House, said it would provide measures to ensure appropriate and effective transfer of technology from the developed nations to the country. Thirty-one Opposition legis-

lators criticised certain provisions of the bill and demanded it be sent either to the Select Committee or to elicit public opinion. A few Opposition members also suggested that the government should seek opinions of nuclear scientists before considering the proposed bill in the House. They argued that the bill concerned some very delicate issues on which none of the legislators had much idea. The minister, replying to the criticisms, told the House that the scientists of the country were consulted while drafting the law. The House rejected all but one amendment to the bill. The only amendment that was accepted was moved by Awami League MP Rahmat Ali. The bill empowers the See Page 12 Col 6

Madhyapara project : Drilling in December

The execution of the Taka 700 crore (equivalent to 179 million US dollars) Madhyapara Hard Rock Mine Drilling Project begins in December next, reports BSS. The decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) held here yesterday with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair. Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Petrobangla will undertake the execution of the project which is expected to be completed by six years. North Korea will provide Tk 470 crore as suppliers' credit for the project, the meeting sources said. The drilling project having enormous potential on completion is expected to yield 1.65 million tons of hard rock per See Page 12 Col 1

Dhaka will send 1225 troops to Bosnia

Bangladesh will send 1,225 troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina to help the Muslims of the republic defend themselves against aggression, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman said here yesterday, reports UNB. The Bangladesh contingent under the UN umbrella will be despatched as soon as the "physical condition permits and logistic supports are available," Mostafiz told newsmen at the airport on his return home from Islamabad last evening after attending a special OIC meeting there. The two-day OIC meeting, opened by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday, decided to send 18,000 troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina to protect the Muslims there. Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan, the PLO, Malaysia, Turkey and Tunisia pledged to contribute the troops. Bangladesh has already despatched an advanced team to the war-torn republic of former Yugoslavia. Mostafiz, who led a four-

member Bangladesh delegation in the OIC meeting, expressed his satisfaction at the outcome of the moot, saying "the OIC meeting has taken a positive step towards ending the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans." The Foreign Minister said that Bangladesh had played a constructive role in mapping out a multinational plan of action at the Islamabad meeting to face the Bosnian crisis. Mostafiz said that the meeting participated by 16 countries had called for immediate ceasefire among the warring groups in Bosnia for paving the way for bringing about a political settlement of the problem. He reiterated that the political settlement could only be reached by protecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina which is a member of the United Nations. The Foreign Minister said the OIC meeting had urged the Security Council to provide both economic and financial help for the Muslim victims of See Page 12 Col 7

AL asks govt to relieve Majid for fair probe

The Awami League yesterday asked the government to relieve Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Majid-ul Haq of his responsibilities for a 'fair and impartial' investigation by the special parliamentary committee into charges of corruption against him and his ministry, reports UNB. The demand was made at an emergency meeting of the Awami League working committee held at its central office with acting party president Abdus Samad Azad in the chair. The meeting said it was necessary to relieve the Minister of his portfolio since officials and employees of the Ministry might feel intimidated while extending cooperation to the probe committee. There were precedents in many democratic countries of relieving the incumbent in case of corruption charges against any minister, the meeting said. A resolution of the meeting called for immediate functioning of the special parliamentary committee to probe the allegations against the minister. The meeting urged the peo- See Page 12 Col 5

Sharif seeks Army help to thwart Friday's march

ISLAMABAD, July 14: Just two days from the opposition's planned 'long march' on Islamabad, it was unclear today as to how the army would respond to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's request for it to defend the capital, reports AFP. A government spokesman said Sharif was seeking army assurances that it would halt the opposition's plan to lay siege to the capital Friday with some 500,000 marchers in a bid to force the Prime Minister's ouster. A meeting was in progress between senior army and interior ministry officials to adopt the same strategy used in November to block the city's entry points during a previous opposition march, a government spokesman said. The planned march comes amid a deepening power struggle between Sharif and

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, prompted earlier this year by Sharif's attempt to reduce the president's powers. In Islamabad there were contradictory reports about how the powerful army — which has seized power in Pakistan in the past — would respond to Sharif's request, with opposition sources saying army Chief Abdul Waheed had turned him down. However, a government spokesman said the army would comply with the federal government request. "All necessary arrangements have been taken" to meet the situation, an official spokesman here said. He added that the army response to Sharif's request was "positive," pointing to the army's constitutionally defined role of defending the government. Army sources said a formal government request had not yet

been made, but 'we are subservient to the constitution' a senior officer said on condition of anonymity. He said any call to deploy troops would be responded to in view of the constitutional provision invoked by the federal government. The opposition plans to bring its marchers from the Punjab capital Lahore, 270 kms away, in trucks, buses and other forms of transport, in a demonstration of 'people's power' aimed at forcing Sharif's resignation following his rejection of demands for early elections. Caravans from North West Frontier Province (NWFP) are also expected to join. An opposition leader, Kauser Niazi, urged residents on Tuesday to stock up on food and other essential items, saying the marchers would cut the capital off from the outside See Page 12 Col 1

Today's The Daily Star is 20 pages

We announce the launching of the "Star Computer Special," a monthly special issue devoted to the advancement of Information Technology in Bangladesh. Today's number, in addition to the normal 12 pages, also includes an 8-page "Computer Special" containing the transcripts of the Daily Star Round Table on the 'Role of Computers in the Economic Development of Bangladesh.'

Coal Directorate to be abolished

The government has decided to abolish the Coal Directorate as there is no necessity to keep it under the present circumstances, Commerce Minister M K Anwar informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Azam's detention set aside

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court division of the Supreme Court Wednesday set aside the government detention order against Jamaat Leader Golam Azam and ordered his immediate release unless wanted in connection with any other case. A division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Abdul Jalil and Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin delivered the judgement during the afternoon session after two days of hearing on a writ petition filed on behalf of the Jamaat leader. Immediately after the judgement was delivered, Deputy Attorney General Shamsul Alam sought a stay of the operation of the order till Monday next, which was refused by the court. The 72-year-old Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Azam was detained under the Foreigners' Act in the Dhaka Central Jail since March 24, 1992. Taken into custody ini-

tially for four months, the detention of the Jamaat leader was extended on three occasions. In the judgement, delivered over two hours, the court declared the detention order, under the Foreigners' Act, of Golam Azam illegal and issued without lawful authority. Giving his reaction after the judgement, Barrister A R Yusuf, the counsel for the petitioner, said: "I am personally happy that Prof Golam Azam's detention has been declared unlawful and particularly glad that he, being a pious and innocent man, got relief from the High Court." Earlier, on April 22, a single bench of the High Court Division had restored the citizenship of Azam which was taken away soon after the independence of Bangladesh for his allegedly anti-Bangladesh role See Page 12 Col 4

Saifur leaves for S Arabia, Kuwait tomorrow

By Sohail Manzur Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will leave Dhaka tomorrow on a week-long visit to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, according to official sources. During his visit, the Finance Minister will have separate meetings with the Finance Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Petroleum Minister and Agriculture Minister of Saudi Arabia and the Amir and the Finance Minister of Kuwait. He will also meet the President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Dr Ahmed Mohammad Ali in Jeddah. According to sources, an agreement on financing a rural electrification project in Faridpur by the IDB may be signed by Saifur Rahman and the IDB Chief. Under the agreement, the IDB is likely to provide 10 mil- See Page 12 Col 8

Tokyo accord boosts GATT in Geneva

By S B Chaudhuri, Columnist

Right on schedule after the conclusion of the annual summit of the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrial nations in Tokyo last week, the long-stalled Uruguay Round of world trade negotiations resumed in Geneva this week under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The pact, hammered out at the G-7 summit in Tokyo among the so-called Quadrilateral (Quad) powers — the United States, the European Community (EC), Japan and Canada — on reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, seems to have infused the much awaited new lease of life into the Uruguay Round. Major hurdles still remain before the negotiators from 116 countries if the global trade talks are to be completed by the

year-end. The original target date for completion of the seven-year-old Uruguay Round was December 1990. The vexing issue of agriculture could still wreck negotiations. The Tokyo accord did not go into the essentials in this area — it only may want the accord renegotiated. This could open the Pandora's box! Leaders in developing countries in Asia have generally welcomed the Tokyo accord. Some see in the agreement a light at the end of the tunnel for the

successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. Such hopes rest mainly on the expectation that protectionism would be curbed and that market access for products from developing countries would improve substantially. Representatives of the developing countries at the negotiating table will also look at the 'fine print' in the text of the Tokyo accord, drafted originally

by the "Quad" officials. The accord on industrial goods in respect of tariff cuts, elimination of non-tariff barriers and harmonisation of tariffs at low levels — all of it, in fact — requires the concessions granted to be matched by binding market opening measures by other participants. This is as it should be. The question is — are the developing countries capable of extending full reciprocity to the industrial nations? Many of the developing countries may find it difficult to agree, for instance, on zero-for-zero tariffs, in some of the areas covered by the Tokyo accord. Reciprocity on meaningful and concrete market access commitments, would also extend to the services trade liberalisation component of the See Page 12 Col 8

Ten thousand Rohingya refugees in Malaysia

From Chapal Bashar

KUALA LUMPUR, July 14: About ten thousand Rohingya refugees from Myanmar have entered Malaysia of whom over 5000 have already registered with the local office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). According to unofficial estimate, at least 5000 Rohingyas are also staying in Malaysia, who are yet to be registered. The Rohingyas started crossing into Malaysia since mid-92 and are getting themselves enlisted at the UNHCR office. A UNHCR official told this correspondent that the Rohingyas were turning up at his office almost everyday and the number of their registration have crossed the 5000 mark within a year.

The refugees have entered Malaysia mostly over land through Thailand and some by sea. "They are seeking asylum and assistance," said the UNHCR official, adding that the Rohingyas were yet to be recognised as refugees in Malaysia. However, their cases were under consideration of both the UNHCR and the Malaysian government. The official mentioned that the Malaysian government was sympathetic to these people from Myanmar, but the authorities have not taken any decision about them yet. The UNHCR could not also make any arrangement for the accommodation of these Rohingyas. Only a See Page 12 Col 8

Hannan Shah meets leaders of jute sector workers

A total of 150 CBA and trade union leaders of the jute sector yesterday assured the government that they would not indulge in any activity detrimental to the industry, reports UNB. In a meeting with Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah, an official handout said, they further assured that they would not support or participate in any destructive programmes. SKOP and some other trade union bodies have called a 48-hour nationwide strike and barricade for July 19. During the meeting, at the head office of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation, the leaders put forward a 32-point demand to the minister and called upon the government to realise their demands as early as possible. The minister gave a patient hearing and assured that the government would consider the logical demands. See Page 12 Col 3