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NEWS BRIEFS

Judge removed

Md Shahjahan, Assistant Judge of Kulara thana, under Moulvibazar district, has been removed from service for specific misconduct and corruption under Government Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Regulations 4 (3) (C) of 1955. The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, in consultation with Bangladesh Public Service Commission and Bangladesh Supreme Court, has recently taken this punitive measure against this judge, an official announcement said, reports BSS.

Govt officials' exam deferred

The first half-yearly departmental examination of 1993 for government officials scheduled for July 19 has been deferred to July 23 due to unavoidable circumstances. A government handout said yesterday the examination will now be held at the hall room of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission Secretariat from 9 am to 12 Noon and 2 pm to 5 pm on the day, reports UNB.

Weekly Benapole Barta launched

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, July 17: The publication ceremony of the 'Weekly Benapole Barta' edited by Jamal Hossain was held at Benapole here today. It is the first ever newspaper from Benapole.

Assemblies to be dissolved: Sharif's address today

Ishaq Khan resigns



Opposition leader Benazir Bhutto chaired a meeting of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) at her residence yesterday. — AFP photo

ISLAMABAD, July 17: Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan resigned tonight to end a months-old political crisis, convener of the All Parties Conference (APC), Nawabzada Nasrullah announced here, reports AFP.

Nasrullah told reporters that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had also advised the President to dissolve the National Assembly.

The Assembly would be dissolved late tonight or early Sunday, he added.

He said the breakthrough was achieved in a second round of talks between the President, Prime Minister and the Army Chief General Abdul Waheed.

The two decisions taken simultaneously marked the end of a power struggle between the Prime Minister and President which has been going on for several months.

Nasrullah said Provincial Assemblies would also be dissolved and caretaker governments installed in the four provinces.

He said elections would be held later this year.

Earlier, the squabbling leaders met again with the country's powerful Army Chief today but remained deadlocked over whether the Prime Minister or President should resign first to end a political crisis.

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Nawaz Sharif

Minimum basic pay refixed at Tk 950

By Staff Correspondent

The government has refixed the minimum basic pay for public sector workers at Tk 950 against the National Wage Commission's recommendation of Tk 1000.

The Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan announced this at a news conference yesterday although the government-labour bodies' dispute over the wage refixation remains unresolved.

The SKOP and other labour bodies enforced a nationwide shutdown twice previously and another 48-hour strike is scheduled from July 19 demanding implementation of the commission's proposals.

Announcing the new pay structure at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, the Labour Minister disclosed that with the new basic pay the minimum salary of a nationalised sector industrial worker would rise to Tk 1493 from the existing Tk 1103. This figure would stand at Tk 2076 if other benefits including bonus, gratuity and leave pay were added, he mentioned.

Giving a breakdown of the gross pay, the Minister said the new structure would provide for 35 per cent house rent, Tk 150 as medical allowance and Tk 60 for conveyance.

The refixed basic pay would

be effective from July 1 of 1991 while the other benefits from July 1 of 1992, the Minister said, adding the new wage structure would be adjusted soon after necessary formalities.

The Labour Minister was assisted at the press conference by State Minister for Textiles Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan and officials of his ministry. Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah, who was also supposed to attend could not turn up due to pre-occupations at his own ministry, Mannan Bhuiyan said.

Mannan Bhuiyan hoped that

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SKOP to go ahead with 48-hour strike

Four workers-employees' federations yesterday said they would push ahead with the 48-hour strike and road-rail barricade planned for July 19-20 to "protect" the country's mills and factories from "impending ruination," reports UNB.

A written statement read out by veteran labour leader Abul Bashar at a press conference, said their programme was not to destroy indigenous industries but to protect the country's greater interest from the "design" of the World Bank, the IMF and other foreign

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JS probe body may sit July 21

By Staff Correspondent

The Parliamentary Special Committee formed to examine the Opposition's allegation of corruption against the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control and the minister concerned is likely to hold its first meeting on the 21st of this month, committee members said.

Jatiya Sangsad (JS) constituted the 15-member probe body headed by Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali on July 13.

Members of the committee representing both the ruling party and the Opposition, quoting the Speaker's office, told The Daily Star last night they had been verbally informed about the schedule of the meeting.

"We are yet to receive the notice of the meeting but the Speaker told us about it," one member said, adding: "The

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Govt-jute workers' talks end without result

The talks between the government and the jute workers ended yesterday night without any result toward avoiding the July 19-20 countrywide strike called by Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP).

"We will sit again today (Sunday)" Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah told UNB on coming out of the 190-minute meeting with labour leaders at Adamjee Court.

He said the talks would continue till today afternoon as "we want to resolve the problem."

14-party call to make tomorrow's hartal a success

By Staff Correspondent

Fourteen opposition parties yesterday jointly called upon the people to make the countrywide half-day hartal on July 19 success.

The call came from a joint meeting of the parties held at the central office of the Awami League (AL) last evening.

The opposition parties called the hartal to press their three-point charter of demands including implementation of the government's accord signed with the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), probe into allegations of corruption against different ministries and a stop to all alleged government repression against opposition activists.

The parties' hartal call was

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Russia shelves rocket deal with India

WASHINGTON, July 17: Russia has agreed to freeze a contract to sell rocket engines to India, State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said Friday, reports AFP.

Moscow agreed late Thursday to freeze a planned sale of rocket engines and to refuse to sell India other technology linked to rocket engine development, said McCurry, who declined to give further details.

But the agreement reached Thursday allows Moscow to sell some engines, with the exact number to be decided in negotiations in coming days, said McCurry.

In exchange for freezing the contract, the United States will not implement sanctions against Moscow, making it possible for a US-Russia space agreement to be wrapped up in the near future.

Washington had wanted the sale annulled because India could have used the technology to develop its ballistic industry in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Moscow's about-face could set back the Indian space programme by two years, force New Delhi into collaboration with China, delay future satellite launches and introduce technological and payload changes.

There will be a setback of couple of years in developing our satellite launch capability," said Jasjit Singh, director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysts here.

In an interview a day after the freeze was announced in Washington, the strategic analyst said the US-Russia agreement dented Moscow's credibility as a reliable partner.

He expected India to search for alternative — and inexpensive — sources to put its satellites into orbit while developing its own technology to launch heavy payloads.

New Delhi had been hoping

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Jamaat policy planners meet today

By Staff Correspondent

The Majlis-e-Shura, the highest policy-making body of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh, is holding an emergency meeting today to discuss the current national and global political situations, party sources said.

Members of the 141-man body will meet at the Magh-bazar Al-Falah auditorium at 10 am, party sources said, adding that although just-freed party chief Prof Golam Azam will attend, the meeting will be chaired by acting Amir Abbas Ali Khan.

Jamaat's publicity secretary Abdul Kader Mollah told The Daily Star that the present situation in Bosnia would dominate the Shura meeting, being

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Krishak Dal's extended meet

Ensure rights of farmers: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here yesterday that the farming community should be made aware of the government's welfare measures aimed at checking the middlemen and vested quarters from reaping the farmers' share of profit and benefit, reports BSS.

Addressing the extended meeting of the Jatiyataabadi Krishak Dal central committee at the auditorium of the Institute of Engineers' Bangladesh, the Prime Minister called upon the peasant leaders of the BNP to streamline the disorganised farming community and make them conscious

and ensure due reward for their labour.

Farmers do not resort to hartal or launch movement for realising their demands. They only work hard for increasing production. "We will extend all-out support for those who work for production," the Prime Minister said.

Citing some examples of the deprivation of the farming community from getting the benefit of the welfare measures, the Prime Minister said the government had reduced the price of fertilizer by Tk 650 per ton but the farmers were not

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Japan's unpredictable polls

by S Y Bakht, who recently visited Japan

Japan goes to polls today under the shadow of a possible parliamentary instability, the first of its kind to be faced by this giant industrial power in its Post-War history.

More than 90 million voters will go to the polls to elect a total of 511 lower house members in a multiple-seat constituency system, which is at the centre of the debate surrounding the issue of political reform.

Political analysts and observers, whom this correspondent talked to during his recent month-long stay in Japan, widely speculated on the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) losing the majority in the all-powerful Diet for the first time since the party was formed in 1955.

The thrust of the opposition parties' campaign is focussed on the urgency to reform the existing scandal-plagued political system in the country, commonly referred to as "money politics."

On the other hand, the LDP, is harping on the stability card and the importance of having an experienced government in power at a time when important global political changes are taking place.

News Analysis



Tsutomu Hata

In case of a hung parliament, analysts predict two possible scenarios: the LDP retaining power with the support of one or more of the smaller parties; or the major opposition political parties, advocating political reform, forming a coalition government led by former Finance Minister Tsutomu Hata, the renegade LDP leader who, along with 36 lower house members, bolted out of the party last month and formed the Shin-seito or the Renewal Party.

Earlier on June 18, Prime Minister Kichii Miyazawa was forced to call the snap polls following defeat in an opposition no-confidence motion accusing him personally of reneging on a promise to push for political reforms.

Moved by the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), the 'Kometo' or 'Clean Government Party' and the Socialist Democratic Party (DSP), the no-confidence was supported by nearly 50 members of the ruling party

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Japan goes to polls today

TOKYO, July 17: Japan's political parties issued their final campaign appeals today, on the eve of crucial national elections, with most opposition groupings united in their call for an end to the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) 38-year rule, reports AFP.

"We must show that democracy is alive in Japan, by ending the one-party rule of the LDP and forming a coalition government," the main opposition Social Democratic Party (SDP) said in a statement carried by the Jiji press.

The centrist Kometo and democratic socialist parties echoed the SDP call, with Kometo describing Sunday's poll as "an historic election to choose either a political reform-oriented government or the continuation of LDP policies that have stifled reform efforts."

The ruling LDP is facing the prospect of losing its majority in parliament for the first time since its formation in 1955.

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Tk 1cr govt dole for sick drug co.

By Sohel Manzur

In an unprecedented move, the government has decided to provide Tk one crore to Edruc Limited, a private pharmaceutical company in Pabna, to off-set losses incurred due to the introduction of the National Drug Policy in 1982, according to official sources.

The amount would be paid to the company's bankers, thereby closing a long standing debt account, the sources said.

An official of the Ministry of Finance, who preferred anonymity, however, refused to describe this as a "grant" for the company, insisting that it was being paid to the bank and not the company itself.

According to other sources, the money would be allocated from the Tk 100 crore earmarked by the government for rehabilitation of the sick industries.

The decision was taken Thursday at a meeting of the Review Committee, set up for considering the cases of sick industries which were denied fresh loans by the banks.

The Review Committee, headed by the Executive Chairman of Board of Investment (BOI) Mir Mustafizur Rahman, also recommended that the company be given working capital to the tune of Tk 3.5 crore for its rehabilitation and all interest on the loan taken from the Janata Bank be exempted, the sources said.

According to the sources, some 18 pharmaceutical items produced by the company and worth Tk 1.16 crore had to be destroyed because of the new drug policy that forced the closure of the industry in 1989 after repeated losses. Besides,

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Drug abuse : Malaysia's number one enemy

By Chapal Bashar back from Kuala Lumpur

Despite draconian measures, drug abuse remains a major problem in Malaysia and is considered the country's number one enemy.

Since the introduction of a mandatory death sentence for drug trafficking in 1987, over 100 persons including some foreigners have been hanged for drug offences in different states in Malaysia.

The latest execution of traffickers took place on June 18 at the Kajang Prison near the capital Kuala Lumpur when two persons, including an Australian, were hanged.

The Australian, Dennis McAuliffe, 38, was found guilty of carrying 141 gms of heroin at the Bayan Lepas International Airport six years ago. A Malaysian labourer Nordin Ibrahim, 35, was also hanged for possessing 315 gms of drugs.

Malaysian Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid disclosed last month in Kuala Lumpur that the country has 160,000 known drug addicts, of whom 100,000 were hardcore.

The Deputy Minister, who termed drug addiction as the country's biggest problem, however, mentioned that following

enforcement of the mandatory death sentence, the number of new addicts had dropped to between 5000 and 6000 a year. Before the introduction of the death penalty, the figure of addicts was growing by between 12,000 and 14,000 every year.

According to statistics available from Malaysia's National Association for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (Pamadam), 19085 drug addicts were detected in 1991, of which 41 per cent were new. Ninety-eight per cent of them were male, most by in the productive age bracket of between 18 and 34 years.

Concerned experts say that

the problem of drug trafficking in Malaysia is more serious than the problem of addiction.

Malaysia has along coastline and a border with Thailand through which dangerous drug like heroin is smuggled into the country for huge profits.

An official study shows that addicts in Malaysia spend about RM 720 million (over 1000 crore taka) a year on drugs.

It is believed that the heroin produced in the region called the Golden Triangle — located at the Thai-Myanmar-Lao border area in the north — are

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Govt college teachers begin partial strike today

Lecturers and professors of 233 government colleges of the country will begin a partial work stoppage from today (Sunday) to press for their 12-point demand, reports UNB.

But examinations will be exempted, said a press release issued by the Bangladesh Government College Teachers' Association.

The schedule of the work stoppage is as follows: July 18-24: 2 hours daily from 10 am; July 25 to August 9: 3 hours, from 10 am to 1 pm; and from August 10: 4 hours daily till 2 pm.

The programme also includes wearing of black badges and gherao of the education boards and the Education Ministry.

The teachers' demands include creation of 6,000 posts in the 233 colleges and promotion of affected teachers to remove discrepancies.

They also demanded filling up of 80 per cent posts in the Education Ministry by teachers, inclusion of teachers in the warrant of precedence and fixation of retirement age at 60 years.

RU teachers stage sit-in

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 17: The Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) today observed an hour long sit-in from 11 am to 12 noon in front of the Pro-VC's office protesting appointment of Prof Mokbul Hussain as Treasurer of the university.

About one hundred teachers participated in the sit-in demonstration. Prof Kayes Uddin, president of RUTA urged the Pro-VC who is the acting VC to remove Prof Mokbul Hussain from the post.