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NEWS BRIEFS

DC 10-30 arrives

The first of a couple of DC 10-30 aircraft taken lease by Biman Bangladesh Airlines landed at the Zia International Airport Sunday afternoon. High officials of Biman welcomed the crew and engineers of the aircraft on their arrival at the tarmac. Biman has taken delivery of the aircraft on dry lease for 6 months from Douglas Aircraft Company, the manufacturer of DC 10-30, reports UNB.

ALCWC emergency meet tomorrow

An emergency meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held at the party office tomorrow at 5 pm. Party General Secretary Zillur Rahman has requested all members of the central working committee to attend the meeting, reports UNB.

Call money rates

Money rates in the call money market during the week ended July 14 ranged between 4.25 per cent and 8.00 per cent, a Bangladesh Bank press release said yesterday. During the same week interest rates offered by the bank on certificate of deposits varied between 5.00 per cent and 10.25 per cent. The bank rate, however, remained unchanged at 6.50 per cent, reports BSS.

CMC 1st-yr classes start tomorrow

CHITTAGONG, July 18: Classes of the first year (1992-93) of Chittagong Medical College will start from July 20, a college press release said today, reports BSS.

Govt concedes to many labour demands SKOP calls off strike

By Staff Correspondent

The planned 48-hour country-wide labour shutdown and rail-road barricade, which was scheduled to start at 6 this morning, has been postponed.

An announcement to this effect was made late last night in the capital after last-minute discussions between the government and the strike-callers resulted in a consensus on the disputed labour demands.

The labour leaders agreed to the postponement at 11.05 pm, 45 minutes after the bilateral talks began at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

However, the meeting continued until filing of this report at midnight to complete signing of the agreed minutes.

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuyan assisted by Jute Minister ASM

Hannan Shah and State Minister for Textiles Major (ret) Abdul Mannan represented the government side while all central leaders of the SKOP and four other sectoral workers' federations who called for the shutdown, were present.

Earlier on the day, the Jute Minister and the Textiles Minister had lengthy dialogues, separately, with the jute and textile workers' leaders.

According to the Labour Minister's announcement after last night's hard bargaining, the already announced minimum basic pay of Taka 950 for the nationalised sector industrial workers would be reviewed after six months and may even be increased depending on the government's financial position. However, every worker would be paid a monthly advance of

Tk 1000 against the enhanced salary and any rise in basic pay would be linked with productivity.

On the demand of a national minimum wage, the minister announced that the government would complete fixing the minimum wages in the major sectors, which might eventually lead to national minimum wage policy within the next six months.

He told the labour leaders that warrants against the labour activists during and after the Ershad regime would be withdrawn with seven days while cases pending before the courts would be withdrawn in three weeks. Those convicted would be freed in six weeks' time.

No public enterprise would See Page 12 Col 6



A police officer and a plainclothes investigator examine the debris after a low intensity bomb exploded under a car in the offices of a district commissioner of the central sector of Karachi yesterday. Story on Page 12

Foreign banks discourage small, fixed deposits

By Inam Ahmed

Most foreign banks in the country have of late been discouraging small and fixed deposits.

The banks have been doing this under their strategy to discourage costly fund and to keep operations within a control level, according to banking sources.

According to market information, the ANZ Grindlays Bank had witnessed withdrawals of about Taka 50 crore deposits while the American Express had witnessed withdrawals to the tune of about Taka 70 crore during the last two years.

Yet, despite such cold shoudering of small and fixed de-

posits, these banks had not faced any liquidity crisis, sources said.

Banking experts observe that this was mainly due to the weak capital market and good services offered by the overseas banks.

The FBs have recently also cut down the interest rates on short term deposits (STD), savings and fixed deposits. According to market information, the STD rate which was about 4.5 per cent before is now around two per cent. Interest rates on savings and fixed deposits have also been brought down from around nine and 12 per cent to five and seven per

cent to five and seven per cent See Page 12 Col 7

Half-day hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

An opposition-sponsored eight-hour country wide hartal begins at six this morning.

Fourteen opposition parties including the Awami League (AL) jointly announced the agitation last week in a show of solidarity with the SKOP (Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad)-led agitation for implementation of an accord relating to wage hikes for industrial workers signed by the government last year.

On June 30 the SKOP and four sectoral workers' federations simultaneously an-

Sajjad, Moeen Qureshi interim President, PM Ishaq, Sharif both quit

ISLAMABAD, July 18: Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan announced his resignation Sunday, a short time after his political rival Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also stepped down, ending a four-month long crisis, reports AFP.

The President said he would proceed on four months' leave. He made the announcement after giving the oath of office to former senior World Bank vice president Moeen Qureshi, who steps in as caretaker Prime Minister.

"In order to uphold the national interest and in the firm belief that it shall help resolve the political crisis, I have decided to voluntarily resign my

office," the President said. The official APP news agency said he handed in his resignation after accepting formal notice from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to dissolve the National Assembly, and swearing in Qureshi as caretaker Prime Minister.

He also announced the dissolution of the four provincial assemblies and set elections for October 9. Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad took over as acting President, the semi-official PPI news agency reported.

Earlier, in a nationwide speech Sharif hoped that his policies would be maintained by his successors.

"I do not want to remain an inactive Prime Minister," Sharif said. He said he had hoped the Supreme Court's verdict restoring his government after Ishaq Khan dissolved it three months ago would be respected, but what actually happened was a 'bitter story', adding that 'conspirators' were after his government.

"My heart is full of secrets. If I reveal all, a multitude of people will take to the streets in expression of anger," Sharif said in a hard-hitting speech.

He said an 'artificial crisis' was created to cause difficulties and 'punish the poor for their love of Nawaz Sharif'. See Page 12 Col 4

Japanese polls: Record low for SDP LDP's 38-yr monopoly ends

TOKYO, July 18: Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost its parliamentary majority in today's election, winning 223 seats in the 511-seat Lower House, final returns quoted by the Japan Broadcasting Corp (NHK) showed, reports AFP.

But the LDP, in power for 38 years, managed to achieve its pre-election goal of winning at least 220 seats, putting it in a position to form a coalition with a single opposition party.

NHK showed non-communist opposition parties and independents certain of gaining at least 273 seats.

The main opposition Social Democratic Party (SDP) was assured of winning 70 seats, a record low, while Shinseito, the Japan Renewal Party set up by former Finance Minister Tsutomu Hata last month, was assured of 55 seats.

The Buddhist-backed Komeito was certain of 51 seats, while the Japan New Party, formed last year by another disaffected LDP member, was assured of 35.

The centrist Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) was certain to win 15 seats followed by 13 for the Sakigake, or 'Pioneer Party'—another LDP splinter group formed last month. The centrist Shaminren (United Social Democratic Party) was certain of four seats.

Independent candidates, of See Page 12 Col 7



Japanese Prime Minister and president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Kiichi Miyazawa casts his ballot for the lower house election yesterday. — AFP photo

Nuclear proliferation in South Asia worries US

By Staff Correspondent

The primary concern of the United States in South Asia is nuclear proliferation and the need to convince both India and Pakistan to roll back their nuclear programmes, according to a top US foreign policy expert now in the city.

"We believe that both India and Pakistan now have nuclear weapons and also possess the means to deliver them through their aircraft and both sides are seeking a better delivery capacity through missiles," said Sidney Sober, chairperson of the South Asian Area Studies seminar at the Foreign Service Institute of the US Department of State.

He added that the US and even Japan, if asked by both

sides, can play catalytic roles to promote the resolution of disputes between these neighbours and convince them to roll-back their nuclear programmes.

Speaking at a seminar on "US position on South Asia after the Cold War" at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) auditorium yesterday, Sober talked about the US position towards Bangladesh, US policy in South Asia during the Cold War period and possible ways of checking nuclear proliferation in the sub-continent.

Organised jointly by the BISS and the United States Information Service, the seminar was chaired by A K H

Morshed, Chairman of BISS and was later followed by a lively question-and-answer session participated by journalists, diplomats and academics.

On Bangladesh, he said that the US has a lot of goodwill towards the country and is pleased that it is following a democratic system.

As far as future US financial assistance to Bangladesh is concerned, he expressed his inability to shed any light on the matter. However, he ventured to add: "More goodwill perhaps than assistance."

He said Dhaka had received 3.86 billion dollars in aid from the United States since 1972. Replying to a question, See Page 12 Col 3

Withdraw case against Mirza Azam: AL

Acting Awami League President Abdus Samad Azad and General Secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday demanded withdrawal of what they said false case against Mirza Azam, MP, reports UNB.

In a joint statement, they condemned filing of case by Anti-Corruption Bureau against the Awami League MP, the orders of warrant against him and attachment of his property.

The Awami League leaders alleged that the government filed the "false" case with political motive to divert people's attention when stories of unbridled corruption by different ministers and ministries have been exposed to the public.

They said Mirza Azam had moved a no-confidence motion in parliament against LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder in last year's budget session.

The case has been lodged at the instruction of the LGRD Minister to take revenge against Mirza Azam, the Awami League leaders alleged.

They mentioned that during the just concluded budget session, the LGRD Minister had said that the Anti-Corruption Bureau filed a case against Mirza Azam when he again brought different allegations against Barrister Salam Talukder.

The Awami League leaders said framing of chargesheet, warrant of arrest and the order for attachment of property fol-

Civil Aviation employees demonstrate

By Staff Correspondent

Several hundred members of the Bangladesh Civil Aviation Employees' United Alliance Sunday took to the streets to demand aviation allowances, profit bonus, pensions and removal of one official for corruption.

The procession which paraded round the Zia International Airport ended in front of the Civil Aviation Head Office at Kurmitola, witnesses said.

Speaking at a rally there, leaders of the alliance urged the government to immediately fulfil their demands and try Maksudur Rahman, Assistant Director of Administration of the Civil Aviation for his alleged corruption.

The leaders also demanded general election of the Civil Aviation Welfare Committee.

JP students' wing splits into two

Star Report

Cracks in the Jatiya Party finally surfaced yesterday with a rift in its student wing.

"The party split several months ago; it's just that the cracks have become clear only today," one leader of the dissident group told The Daily Star last night.

A faction of the Sangrami Chhatra Samaj yesterday held a press conference to announce a 71-member committee of the new organisation styled the Jatiya Chhatra Samaj.

The dissident committee of the party's students' wing, headed by Rakibul Islam Rakib, reportedly enjoys the support of the JP faction led by former Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury and his close associates.

The rebel student leaders alleged acting party chief Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and other stalwarts were running the party "undemocratically and unconstitutionally."

In reply to a question, the new student wing convenor said his organisation has no parent organisation, but would support all who believe in Bangladeshi nationalism.

JP dissidents, like the student group, accuse Mizan Chowdhury, MP and his followers of pursuing a "pro-Awami League" stance contrary to the JP constitution, which they feel has affected the credibility of the party among the people.

Troubles in the JP began several months ago when the party's Secretary General Shah Moazzem Hossain was removed from his position, allegedly for not doing enough to secure the release of jailed party supremo former President H M Ershad.

Shah Moazzem, former state minister for relief Major (ret) Manzur Kader, ex-deputy minister for education Golam Sarwar Milon, shipping minister Mayeedul Islam, and ex-religious affair minister Nazimuddin al-Azad were working in close concert with Shamsul Huda Chowdhury.

A number of other leaders, quite vocal in their demands for constitutional amendments, may also join in the dissident faction.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Dr M A Matin, who resigned from the Jatiya Party ahead of Ershad's ouster in a mass upsurge in December 1990, may take a leading position in the party.

Another group led by former Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed was active to induct former first lady Roushan Ershad as the party's acting chairperson.

Some party insiders view this move as a "patch-up" plan for stabilising the party but others feel it may create another problem by giving rise to a new leadership crisis involving Kazi Zafar Ahmed.

Jamaat's Majlis-e-Shura advises Azam to bide time

By Staff Correspondent

The policy-making body of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh yesterday resolved that their just-freed Chief or Ameer Prof. Golam Azam, should adopt a 'go-slow' strategy and maintain a low profile for now, party sources said.

In a four-hour emergency meeting of the Majlis-e-Shura, the highest policy making body of the party, the leaders agreed their Ameer "should resume full party activities at an opportune moment in the near future." Prof Azam attended the meeting.

Regarding the anti-Azam campaign by the Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Samannay Committee, they said that "The politically bankrupt committee had tried to destabilise the democratic

process in the country but the people had foiled their bad intentions."

Of the 141-Shura members 139, including a number of Parliament members, were present at the meeting, convened hastily after the release of their chief. Acting Ameer Abbas Ali Khan chaired the caucus at the Maghbar Al-Falah auditorium.

The 72-year old Golam Azam was freed from jail on Thursday, a day after the High Court declared his nearly 16-month detention illegal.

A party resolution after the meeting said the Jamaat's 'constitutional and systematic' movement had created a positive impression in the minds of See Page 12 Col 5

Cabinet okays petroleum policy

The cabinet has approved the petroleum policy proposed by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, reports BSS.

The approval was given yesterday at the regular weekly meeting of the cabinet held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The Petroleum Policy is aimed at augmenting the petroleum resources base of the country through attracting both domestic and foreign investors in this vital sector.

The policy also envisages adoption of uniform policy instrument for both public and private sector enterprises considering the development of the gas fields through private sector in consonance with the government's privatisation policy and creating a competitive environment for giving the best deal to the consumers in price and quality.

Jamuna Bridge co-financers to meet Aug 5-7 in Washington

By Sohel Manzur

A meeting of the co-financers of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project (JMBP) is likely to begin on August 5 in Washington, according to sources in Dhaka.

The meeting, which may continue until August 7, has been called to firm up the co-financing plan and agree on the implementation steps for the project, the sources said.

A two-member Bangladesh delegation comprising the ERD Secretary Lutfulah Majid and Executive Director of the Bridge Authority Mohammad Ali will attend the meeting.

Other than the World Bank, delegations of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Forum (OECF) of Japan are also expected to join.

See Page 12 Col 6

Myanmar agrees to reopen transit

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, July 18: Myanmar has agreed to soon re-establish transit links with Bangladesh in an effort to develop bilateral relation, official sources said.

Myanmar unilaterally suspended transit facilities with Bangladesh after two alleged drug traffickers — Boz Zahir Ahmed and Lal Meah — were arrested by Bangladesh border guards on July 1 while allegedly trafficking heroin into Bangladesh. Both of them were caught by the BDR from the Naaf river which demarcates the frontier between the two countries.

The two were put in jail and are to face trial, officials here informed.

Myanmar border guards identified the two as Myanmar nationals and pressed for their quick release but Bangladesh refused to return them without trial, according to officials.

The agreement for a restoration of transit links came in a flag meeting held by the border guard officials at the company commander-level at the Teknaf frontier town on Saturday, officials added.

Kuwaiti special envoy hands over message to FM

Sulaiman Majid al-Shaheen, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait who arrived in Dhaka yesterday as a special envoy of Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Jaber al-Sabah, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait, handed over a message to Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, reports BSS.

During the meeting they discussed matters of mutual interest pertaining to bilateral relations and ways and means to further strengthen the close bonds existing between the countries.

Earlier, on arrival the special envoy was received at the Zia International Airport by Foreign Secretary Reza Rahman and other senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Sulaiman Majid al-Shaheen will return to his country this afternoon.