



YESTERDAY IN THE SANGSAD

'Talks with Delhi on for a just share of water'

Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister Major General (Retd) Majidul Haq told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that Bangladesh and India were in continuous negotiation at the highest level to evolve a just, coordinated and long-term water sharing system of all common rivers including the Ganges, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from a Khaleque Talukder (AL-Bagerhat), the minister said the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water since the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage in 1975 by India has caused serious adverse effect on Bangladesh.

He said the water flow of the Ganges in Bangladesh has been gradually decreasing in dry season resulting in adverse effect on agriculture, industry, fish-

eries, forest and public health of one-third area of the country. He further told the House that ecological balance in the country's south and north-western areas has been threatened following increase in salinity and sharp fall in water table. As a result of unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water in the upstream through Farakka Barrage, the situation, the minister said, has aggravated after the expiry of the water sharing accord between Bangladesh and India in May, 1988.

Dwelling at length on adverse effects of the Farakka Barrage in various sectors of the country's economy, the minister said the annual loss in agriculture sector alone would be about Taka 2,300 crore. The loss in fisheries sector, he said, was approximately Taka 400 crore during 1991.

Bill raising pension of SC judges passed

The Jatiya Sangsad last night passed unanimously an amendment bill raising the pension of the Supreme Court Judges, reports BSS.

Piloted by the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Mirza Golam Hafez, the amendment bill enhanced the extra pension at the rate of Taka two hundred and fifty from Taka 139 per month for each completed year of service as judge, subject to a maximum total pension of eight thousand and five hundred (in place of Taka five thousand) per month for the judges who do not covered by the relevant section of the 1982 Act.

The act will deem to have been in force with effect from July 1, 1991.

Opposition

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nothing to do with it till the concerned constitutional provision was in vogue," the Law Minister argued.

"Besides, the ordinance was an excellent one upholding the dignity, honour and privileges of the Supreme Court judges," the Law Minister observed, arguing that the Opposition move to disapprove the ordinance would not increase their popularity.

The Opposition members at this point told the House that they did not oppose the contents of the ordinance. What they opposed was the government's tendency towards avoiding Parliament.

However, the resolution seeking disapproval of the ordinance was rejected by voice vote.

Financial sector reforms

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sure on the NCBs to improve their operations."

Indicating that the high interest rates are likely to have a restrictive influence on investment and economic growth, the report noted that the quality of the new loans are also somewhat suspect at the present lending rates.

The report, however, observed that the reform steps already taken in the financial sector do show potential benefits and advantages that are likely to come with the completion of the project.

"The starting conditions of the reform programme have been achieved," the report said and identified the steps taken as interest rate flexibility, accounting for bad debt, putting some monetary policy instruments in place and significantly reducing government intervention in the sector, while the central bank has strengthened its bank supervision efforts.

It also identified five critical areas which will determine the success of the FSFR including encouraging profit maximisation of the banks, evolving a system of reward and punishment for individuals in the banks, allowing the growth of non-banking institutions and developing the capital markets.

The report suggested further action in a number of areas which are of 'great importance' including monetary policy, improvement in the management of NCBs and developing a private banking system.

"We suggest that the current reform programme could benefit from more support for the private banking and less emphasis on the improvement of the NCBs," it said. "Furthermore, the best path to increased private banking is probably not privatisation of the NCBs."

Sangsad only violence-free area: Siraj

By Staff Correspondent
Opposition MP Shahjahan Siraj identified the Jatiya Sangsad as the only violence-free area in the country.

Taking part in the discussion on Friday's attack on the Ajker Kagoj newspaper office Siraj, who recently joined the Gano Forum from the JSD, said "Violence is rampant everywhere except the Jatiya Sangsad."

He said "It is a sad experience for us that we are again discussing terrorism so soon after the debate on the Jahangirnagar University situation."

"We signed a memorandum after an all-party meeting with the Prime Minister but two students were killed at a college on the following day," he mentioned.

He also demanded a discussion on the role of police in the country.

9 posts of judges in HC vacant

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafez told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that nine out of a total of 40 sanctioned posts of judges in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court were lying vacant, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from M Shamsul Huq (AL-Mymensingh), the minister said the government had a plan to fill up vacancies after the completion of repair work of the old High Court building which has recently been handed over to the Supreme Court by the Ministry of Works. The building was earlier under the Ministry of Defence, he said.

Sonargaon staff

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in the city went on a wildcat strike and locked General Manager Andrew J McBurnie since 2:30 pm Saturday to demand 'target bonus' and a stop to payment of service charge to the staff of the owning company, Hotels International Limited (HIL).

However, the employees of the hotel were now attending their guests, wearing black badges, employees said.

Leaders of the Sonargaon Hotel Workers' and Employees' Union said they would stage a hunger strike at the reception lobby tomorrow, if their 'rightful' demands were not met.

They said the decision to suspend the programme was taken following the verbal assurance by the mediator A K M Nazrul Islam, labour-front leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors of the Sonargaon Hotel held an emergency meeting yesterday afternoon to discuss the overall situation as well as the union's demands. Details of the meeting were not available.

The union leaders were scheduled to meet Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury at 9 pm but the meeting had not taken place at the time of writing this report late last night.

Clash in east London: 27 arrested

LONDON, Sept 19: Police arrested 27 people in east London on Sunday following scuffles between members of the British National Party (BNP) and anti-racism protesters, reports AP.

A BNP candidate was elected last week to a London borough council after campaigning for an all-white Britain. His election was condemned by mainstream political parties, church leaders and minority groups.

Scotland Yard said scuffles broke out Sunday morning when BNP workers started to distribute leaflets in Brick Lane, an area with a large Asian population.

The party distributes leaflets there every week. Anticipating trouble, police set up metal barriers early Sunday to try to keep the two sides apart.

Extra police in vans and on horseback were called in when the two sides broke through the barricades and started attacking one another. Ten police officers were injured.

Youth Against Racism in Europe said in a statement that 200 of its supporters occupied the site in Brick Lane normally used by the BNP to distribute leaflets and sell its newspaper.

It said the crowd later grew to 500 people, but police said there were about 200 people in the area at any given time.

British National Party candidate Derek Beackon, a former bus driver, was elected Thursday to the 50-member Tower Hamlets Borough Council.

Tower Hamlets is among the poorest districts in Britain. At least one-third of the residents are immigrants or the children of immigrants, mainly from Bangladesh.

Racial feeling is rising in the East End, which for centuries has attracted immigrants, and Beackon's victory was fuelled by resentment among whites at public housing allocations for Asians.

Growth in Asia

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remained below productive potential and price pressures eased in world oil markets. "In the industrial countries, consumer price inflation declined to 3.75 per cent while the average rate of inflation in the developing countries remained below 40 per cent; in half of the countries of this group the rate declined to below nine per cent," the report said.

The IMF continued to play a key role in the massive undertaking of supporting the transformation of the former centrally planned economies into market-based systems.

"In recognition of the unique challenges facing the economies in transition, the IMF established a temporary systemic transformation facility (STF)," the report pointed out.

"The STF facility is designed to provide financing to members facing balance of payments difficulties arising from severe disruption in their trade and payments arrangements owing to a shift from major reliance on trading at non-market prices to multilateral, market-based trade," it said.

Chakmas
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observing the situation in the hill districts in a bid to identify if there is any obstacle on the way to returning the landed property of the tribal refugees after their repatriation.

Sources said the delegation members would visit seven locations in Khagrachhari district and exchange views with the local tribal leaders.

On the first leg of their visit today, the delegation members have gone to the Tabalchhari area accompanied by Bangladesh officials and MPs including Rashid Khan Menon, Kalparajan Chakma, Mostaque Ahmed, Shahjahan Chowdhury and Md. Shajahan, sources added.

The student organisations of the Eight-Party alliance in Rajshahi have called a half-day hartal in the town from 6 am tomorrow (Monday) to protest today's violence.

The students announced the programme at a press conference at the Rajshahi Press Club in the evening after holding a protest march in the town.

Meanwhile, in a written statement to the journalists, the hall provosts listed loss of life and property, rising terrorism and violence on the campus, misbehaviour of the students with them and lack of

security for the provosts as the reasons for their wholesale resignation.

General students alleged that during the attack the police remained silent and did not act to protect the innocent students.

At 6 am, police raided the Nawab Abdul Latif Hall, but didn't find any arms or troublemakers.

At noon police picked up eight Shibir activists from the Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Hall and Sher-e-Bangla Hall on suspicion of involvement in the violence.

The arrested are: Kamal Pasha, Shamsul Alam, Sarwar Jahan, Munshi Abu Daud, Shafiqul Islam, Abdul Malek Ratan, Abdul Hye of Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Hall and Shahidul Islam of Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

The Deputy Commissioner told UNB: "The total situation has gone out of our control. We have nothing to do. That's why we have handed over control of



Some ecstatic Mohammedan players rejoice after their side ensured this year's Star Premier Division championship with a 2-0 triumph over PWD at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Mohammedans, who play their arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra on September 23 in their last league engagement, regained the title after two years. — Star photo

Ctg lawyers split over court boycott

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Sept 19: Lawyers of Chittagong court became sharply divided today over their 68-day-long boycott of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court.

Some lawyers reportedly attended the court today while others stuck to the boycott called by the Chittagong Bar Association and even made futile attempts to resist their rivals from attending the court, sources said.

Tension was prevailing and a large contingent of police was deployed in the court premises to prevent any untoward incident.

The impasse was created when the CMM and members of the Chittagong Bar Association were locked in a tug of war over the use of a court room occupied by some lawyers.

The lawyers here began boycotting the court since July 11 demanding withdrawal of the incumbent CMM and protesting the eviction drive launched by riot police on July 11 last against the lawyers occupying the disputed room. The lawyers held the incumbent CMM responsible for the police action but the CMM denied the allegation saying it was a legal action taken by the police authorities themselves.

Meanwhile, talking to this correspondent over telephone, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Matru Rahman claimed that around 150 lawyers attended his court today defying the boycott and moved cases. He admitted a small number of lawyers also stayed away.

Today's move for breaking the boycott was initiated by some 14 lawyers who also issued a statement to the press terming the programme a conspiracy by a section of lawyers to serve political interests.

These 14 lawyers protested the boycott and attended the court today aided by some more lawyers, sources said.

The 14 signatories to the statement were Kafil Uddin, Sheikh Jamal Uddin, K M Abu Zafar, Kazi Khairul Bashar, Ehsan Baki, Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Farzud Amin Chowdhury, Tarik Ahmed, Ehsanul Haque, Delwar

the Forum members also called upon all political parties, professional and social groups to forge a consensus on the proposed 'Zila government'.

The Forum also suggested that the proposed Zila Parishad on Zila Sarkar should have an advisory council comprising members of Parliament. The Zila Parishad should also consider the proposals of Union Parishads, municipalities and thana coordinating committees in formulating a district's development plans in the light of national goals, the GF members felt.

The dead were identified as Abdus Salam, 45, Kohnur Begum, 35, and her daughter Anwar, 8.

Eight seriously injured passengers were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital while 21 others were released after first aid, they said.

Two people were arrested from the nearby village for their alleged involvement in blocking the road for dacoity.

The bus was carrying 65 passengers.

60 Hindu leaders indicted for demolition of Babri Mosque

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Indian detectives have indicted some 60 leaders of Hindu groups for the destruction of the Babri Mosque last year which sparked widespread Hindu-Muslim violence, a newspaper reported today, reports AFP.

Among those indicted was Lal Krishna Advani, president of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Economic Times said.

It named other key leaders in a report prepared by the federal Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as Bal Thackeray of the Shiv Sena and Ashok Singhal of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).

The Times said the government was expected to order the prosecution of all those named in the report when Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao returns at the end of a three-day visit to Iran on Wednesday.

Khaleda-Rao

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She will lead a 35-member team which includes four Members of Parliament, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and mediators.

Responding to a question, Reaz said the Prime Minister, in her speech, would try to project the consolidation of democratic order in the country to fulfill hopes and aspirations of the people.

She will also highlight her government's achievements in promoting socio-economic condition of the people, Reaz added.

Besides, the Foreign Secretary said, Begum Zia will focus on issues relating to violation of human rights, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees and displaced people against the backdrop of the influx of Myanmar refugees into Bangladesh and violation of human rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Investment

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They said there had only been about 55 per cent realisation rate on new investments sanctioned between March 1991 and June '93. This was well below the experience of other Asian countries, they added.

The co-authors of the paper also said that a vibrant local private sector was pre-requisite to attracting foreign direct investment.

"Foreign investors will come to invest in Bangladesh when Bangladeshis themselves come forward first. In this context, it is imperative that the overall investment climate be improved to make the case for local investments," they said.

The day-long seminar, held in three sessions, was attended by 80 participants including five expatriates.

Seven more papers were presented by Dr Quazi Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Dabiruddin Ahmed, Sohail F Rahman, Nurul Huda Chowdhury, Mahmood Ahmed and Prof Abu Ahmed.

Gano Forum

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Rahman and Mostafa Mohsin Montu.

The Gano Forum, while making the proposal for a Zila government, suggested its tenure should be for five years. It also suggested holding of elections simultaneously to the Zila Government, the Union Parishad or Municipal Parishad.

The Forum also suggested that the proposed Zila Parishad on Zila Sarkar should have an advisory council comprising members of Parliament. The Zila Parishad should also consider the proposals of Union Parishads, municipalities and thana coordinating committees in formulating a district's development plans in the light of national goals, the GF members felt.

Bus plunge

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Dhaka overturned late Saturday night after hitting a truck of a tree placed on the road by some dacoits at Mostafi village near Lalmonirhat, local officials said.

Of them, one died on the spot and two others at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The dead were identified as Abdus Salam, 45, Kohnur Begum, 35, and her daughter Anwar, 8.

Eight seriously injured passengers were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital while 21 others were released after first aid, they said.

Two people were arrested from the nearby village for their alleged involvement in blocking the road for dacoity.

The bus was carrying 65 passengers.

The Midnight File

Accord on troops pullout from Abkhazia

MOSCOW, Sept 19: Georgian and Abkhazian representatives signed an agreement today to withdraw their forces from the war zone in Abkhazia, Russia's Iar-Tass news agency said. The warring sides signed an agreement on the simultaneous withdrawal of troops and hardware from the conflict zone and on pulling out armed formations within 24 hours, Tass said, reports Reuter.

Demjanjuk free to leave Israel

JERUSALEM, Sept 19: An Israeli Supreme Court justice on Sunday lifted a restraining order delaying John Demjanjuk's deportation, clearing the way for him to leave, an Israeli official said. Justice Ministry spokeswoman Etty Eshed said that Justice Theodore Orr rejected appeals by Holocaust survivors and Nazi hunters to hold further review of Demjanjuk's case with an eye towards trying him again for war crimes. Asked whether he was free to go, Eshed said "yes." She would not say when he was to leave, reports AP.

Attack on Ajker Kagoj

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located at Zigatala, because the newspaper had been campaigning against the violent activities of the Jamaat-Shibirmen across the country.

As many as 14 members, including the Home Minister, took part in the more than an hour-long discussion during which the Opposition members sought a two-hour discussion within the next couple of days.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Pannil, who was chairing the session, said after the debate: "More than an hour has been spent debating the matter. I will think and give my decision on whether more discussion is needed later."

Tofael Ahmed said the police played a mysterious role and were mere onlookers during the attack. He said that no action was taken following similar attacks on the Banglabazar Patrika, the Banglar Bani and the Ittefaq, a fact which had encouraged the anti-liberation forces to attack yet another newspaper.

He demanded an adjournment of the regular proceedings to debate on the issue.

A number of Jamaat members protested Tofael's speech and screamed that he (Tofael) should not accuse any political party without any proof.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim alleged that the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government had failed to protect the journalists and newspapers which came under repeated attacks by hoodlums.

Quoting the speech of Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali at a recent seminar, Nasim said this

The Home Minister claimed that only this government ensured the freedom of press just as the BNP's founder President Ziaur Rahman had freed the newspaper industry from many restrictions.

Kotwali police said the NDP leader was arrested in connection with Chittagong Boarding incident of Thursday noon that left one killed and two others injured.

Professionals end strike
Professionals yesterday observed a two-hour token strike on the second day of its programme demanding implementation of their 17-point demand, including an accountable administration, reports UNB.

NDP calls hartal

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Sept 19: The National Democratic Party (NDP), Chittagong unit, has called for a half-day hartal tomorrow at Raoson and Rangunia thanas in support of their demand for release its leader Abu Bakar Chowdhury immediately.

Abu Bakar Chowdhury was arrested on Friday night from his city residence.

Kotwali police said the NDP leader was arrested in connection with Chittagong Boarding incident of Thursday noon that left one killed and two others injured.

Professionals end strike
Professionals yesterday observed a two-hour token strike on the second day of its programme demanding implementation of their 17-point demand, including an accountable administration, reports UNB.

The venue of the seminar has been selected in view of the recent incident in which some village women of Badekusha under Ullapara thana were socially outcast because of their acceptance of family planning methods to take Grameen Bank loans.

The seminar is aimed at providing the opinion leaders with knowledge about the programmes taken in Bangladesh to contain growth of population, explaining the motivation and service programmes of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the need to contain the explosive growth of population.

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