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Status of MPs

changing sides

still unclear

Star Report

liament who have so far quit

their original parties and joined

other platforms will be deemed

to be representing their

respective constituencies in

This was the reported view

expressed by Jatiya Sangsad

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali in

response to queries made to

him by some of the MPs who

changed their allegiences lately

According to Parliament

Secretariat sources, letters

signed by the Speaker were is-

sued to the concerned seven

MPs yesterday explaining the

legal position and their present

quoting relevant articles of the

However, the letters, while

their personal capacities

All seven members of Par

– Inside Today –

Article

Isolated Iran Woos New Muslim Republics

by Anthony Hyman Page 4

International

50 killed as Afghan jets bomb town near Kabul



Actor-comedian George Burns signing a contract to play an engagement at Caesars Palace Hotel in Las Vegas November 20, his 100th birthday

Page 5

Business

High fuel price costing country's paper mills dear

White House seizes NAFTA momentum on eve of vote. Pages 6, 7

Feature

Women On The Move

Death, Birth and Women: The Life of Gender in the UN; Can Women Voice Development Agenda? Women Choose Army for Safety, not

Glamour; The Lady who Saw with Her Inner Eye Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



A Hand? Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

ALPP meets Nov 20

A meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party will be held on November 20 at 6:00 pm at the Sangsad Bhaban in preparation for the coming JS session. Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will preside, reports UNB.

Mostafiz greets Pak FM

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman congratulated Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali on his appointment as Foreign Minister of Pakistan. He hoped the existing cordial relations between the two countries would strengthened further. reports UNB.

Cigarettes seized

Police in two drives recovered 81 cartons of contraband Benson & Hedges cigarettes worth about Tk 40,000 from Begum Bazar yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

515 Rohingyas return home

COX'S BAZAR, Nov 17: Another batch of 515 Rohingya refugees voluntarily went back to their homes in Myanmar raising the total number of repatriated people to 48,090. Official sources told BSS here to night that this 104th batch of refugees were seen off by local UNHCR and Bangladesh of

Tokyo team on JMBP visits Dhaka soon

Japan convinced but stops short of a 'yes' to co-financing

By A Special Correspondent

Japanese Finance Minister Hirohiza Fuji assured Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman of Tokyo's continued support and assistance to Bangladesh's development programmes and projects and said he was fully convinced about the importance of the 700-million dollar-plus Jamuna Bridge project.

Rahman, now in Tokyo on a five-day official trip, yesterday met his Japanese counterpart and had a lengthy discussion about the significance and timing of the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge construction. sources in Tokyo told this correspondent last night over tele-

The coming winter session

of Parliament is expected to

witness heated debates on a

number of political and legal

issues which are now sparking

controversy in the country's

scheduled to go into session

Sunday. It will be the 12th

session of the country's Fifth

to be debated in the House in-

clude a constitutional amend-

ment seeking that all national

level elections be held under a

caretaker interim government

a ban on religion-based poli-

tics, the Opposition's allega-

tions of government repres-

sion against its political oppo-

nents and the Prime Minis-

ter's reported observations

about the moral standards of

some special parliamentary

committees dealing with is-

sues like a repeal of the In-

demnity Ordinance, the probe

into Opposition allegations of

corruption in the Agriculture

Ministry, and separation of the

judiciary from the executive

branch of state machinery, are

also likely to generate some

Parliament Secretariat, the

committee relating to the in-

demnity and judiciary issues

According to sources in the

Discussion on the fate of

the Opposition lawmakers.

However, the issues likely

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) is

various political camps.

Parliament.

The Japanese Finance Minister, during the discussions, responded positively but did not give a clear green signal of Tokyo's participation as a cofinancer of the Jamuna Bridge project, the sources added.

Fuji reportedly told his counterpart that a Japanese team would be sent immediately as part of the formalities of co-financing the project, considered indispensable by Bangladesh.

During the meet, the sources said a number of irritating issues including the KAFCO deal had also been raised by the Japanese Finance Minister.

Contentious issues likely to

make JS session stormy

By Nurul Kabir

failed to reach a consensus

following dozens of meetings

over two years while the JS

body on the probe is yet to fix

its terms of reference, al-

though the members have met

more than six times since the

formation of the committee

during the last budget session

under a caretaker government.

two opposition MPs - Abdur

AL observes

Jt Declaration

Day tomorrow

serve the Joint Declaration

Implementation Day through-

out the country tomorrow, re-

then 8-party alliance led by the

Awami League, 7-party alliance

led by the BNP and leftwing 5-

party alliance simultaneously

made the declaration at three

separate rallies in the capital at

the final stage of the oust-au-

the constitutional guidelines for

dent Ershad and transfer of

power to a neutral caretaker

government to conduct parlia-

Sec Page 12 Col 6

the resignation of former presi-

The declaration envisaged

ports UNB.

tocracy struggle.

mentary elections.

The Awami League will ob-

On this day in 1990, the

On the issue of elections

Rahman cleared most of the misunderstandings and listed the measured undertaken by the government to attract more overseas investment, including Japanese capital.

Fuji highly acelaimed the macro-economic successes of Bangladesh and hoped that the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries would grow further in the coming years.

The Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary League president Hiroshi Mitsuzaka. MP also expressed his league's total support for the Jamuna Bridge project yesterday at a luncheon

Rahim of the Awami League

(AL) and Munirul Haque

Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party

(JP) - have already submitted

separate private members' bill

to the JS Secretariat. Both the

notices have sought constitu-

tional amendments for holding

parliamentary polls under an

interim government headed by

the Chief Justice. The Jamaat-

e-Islami, Bangladesh, too, had

submitted a similar bill during

the first, session of the Fifth

and the Jamaat will strongly

demand for the constitutional

amendment, arguing that this

is needed for ensuring free

and fair elections, sources in

demand for a caretaker gov-

a strong rebuff from the lead-

ers of the treasury bench on

the ground that the issue is ir-

relevant when an elected gov-

ernment is running the state.

sources in the BNP said. They

will also argue that an inde-

pendent Election Commission

is already there to conduct the

press the ruling party to come

out with a specific stand on

the question of banning reli-

gion-based politics. In this

connection, the AL will stress

See Page 12 Col 7

The opposition will also

polls neutrally.

ernment is likely to meet with

However, the Opposition

The leaders of the AL, JP

Parliament in 1991.

the three parties said.

he hosted in Rahman's honour. Rahman, who is leading a high-powered six-member Bangladesh delegation to Tokyo. had spent three hectic days in the Japanese capital pleading for the Jamuna bridge, a natural gas exploration, development and production project and inviting Japanese investors

ture projects in Bangladesh. The Finance Minister met Japanese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Syozo Azuma Tuesday and told him that his current trip was mainly aimed Sec Page 12 Col 7

to set up industrial units, en

terprises and finance joint ven-

Servant found dead

Actress held for questioning

By Staff Correspondent A film actress was arrested yesterday by police in connection with the mysterious death of her servant at Tallabagh in the city.

Tania Rahman was arrested when she went to Mohammadpur police early yesterday morning to inform them about the mysterious death of one Nayan, 22, who she claimed was her servant.

The actress, who appeared in bit roles in some local movies. told police she found Nayan lying unconscious in her bedroom at around 8:30 pm Tuesday.

She took Nayan to the Suhrawardy Hospital and then shifted him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead. Nayan had a severed tendon and a scar on his neck. sources said. Tama, estranged from her

husband Russell Rahman for the past two years, reportedly lived with the victim. But neighbours of the actress said Tania had introduced Nayan as her servant when hiring the second floor apartment. A cousin of the victim said

that Nayan had also acted in some films. The body of Nayan was sent

to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. Meanwhile, police were

questioning Tania till writing of this report late last night. Police said she will be produced before the court today.

100 hurt in Rangamati clash One killed as police open fire on mob

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 17: At least one person was killed and about 100 others were injured in a clash between police and several hundred supporters of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad this morning at Naniarchar bazar in Rangamati hill district. sources said.

Bodies of four more persons have been recovered according to an unconfirmed source. The DIG, Chittagong Range confirmed the death of one person and said he was yet to receive further details.

The injured, including some police personnel, were mostly admitted into local hospitals at Naniarchar and Rangamati.

The clash erupted when po-

lice attempted to remove a barricade put on the road at Naniarchar bazar by the supporters of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (Hilly) Students Council demanding the withdrawal of a security outpost from there, sources said.

But the tribal students' move was also countered by the Pahari Gana Parishad, formed with non-tribals, which led to skirmishes between the opposing groups at 8 am.

The situation took a serious turn when police swung into action to disperse the clashing groups and to remove the barri-

> The militant supporters of See Page 12 Col 6

See Page 12 Col 5 Bangladesh admn most stable in Asia: BBC British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has described the administration of Bangladesh as most stable among the Asian countries, reports BSS. In a report broadcast on Tuesday night in the Bengali programme, Serajur Rahman, a noted journalist of BBC, observed that foreign investors are scared to invest in Bangladesh because of frequent calls for "hartals." "Are the people who call the hartals, aware of the adverse

to make it difficult to run the country by bringing disaster for the nation and hardship for the people?" In his "Dhakar Chithi" Rahman said the task for developing the economic infrastructure and progress for the nation cannot begin if the attention at the moment is concentrated to bring down unconstitutionally

effects of frequent hartals, pro-

cessions and rallies?" he asked

and posed further questions:

"Do they want to create such a

situation for the administration

an elected government. Sec Page 12 Col 8

Glowing tributes to Bhashani

The 17th anniversary of the death of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani was observed yesterday with glowing tributes to the leader of the downtrodden, reports UNB.

Leaders and workers of different political parties and socio-cultural organisations thronged his mazar premises at Santosh in Tangail yesterday morning to pay due respect to the memory of Bhashani.

The programme, taken up in commemoration of his death. include offering wreaths and fateha at the mazar of the great leader at Santosh, milad mehfil, Quran Khwani, discussions, sessions of mass songs and public meetings.

Leaders and workers of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) placed wreaths and offered fateha at the mazar of the Maulana in the morning. Party Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder led them to Santosh.

Bhashani Smriti Sangsad members placed wreaths and offered fateha at the mazar in the morning. It arranged Quran Khwani and milad mehfil at its Dhaka office at 3:00 pm. It will also organise a discussion and

See Page 12 Col 1

Thousands protest disinvestment of National Tubes

From Our Correspondent GAZIPUR, Nov 17: Several thousand labourers at Tongi today brought out a hunger-procession in the afternoon that paraded the main streets of this

industrial town. The rally organised by the Jatiya Sramik League began from the local Awami League office and terminated at the Meghna Road where a meeting was held by the workers.

The rally leaders claimed that the National Tubes, a government organisation was being sold at TK six crore only, while its value was around Tk 125 crore.

They demanded payment of arrear salary of the nationalised mill workers and stoppage of further denationalisation. They also threatened to hold a hunger-procession by foot to Dhaka and gherao the Secretariat if their demands were not met.

Importers of toxic fertilizer yet to be penalised By S Y Bakht

The Ministry of Agriculture is yet to take any action against

those responsible for the import, from the United States, and distribution of toxic fertilizer last year, although a probe body report recommending punitive measures was approved by the Prime Minister's office some time ago. Meanwhile, a US Federal Court recently penalised two American companies, involved in manufacturing the contami nated fertilizer, a total of one

million US dollar. According to informed sources, the Agriculture Ministry has not initiated any step to implement the approved actions

Senior ministry officials, when contacted, remained tight-lipped about the whole affair but said that it is being handled

rebels, reports AFP.

pre-dawn surrender.

Sabherwal said.

der Nath Sabherwal said his of-

ficers released the pilgrims, who

left the shrine on Tuesday after

tants gave themselves up in a

reached their homes by now."

troops are holding 32 militants.

shut down this Kashmir sum-

mer capital today as Indian

army troops dismantled bu-

nkers and prepared to withdraw

from around the Hazratbal

"Some of them may have

Police and paramilitary

Meanwhile a general strike

the entrenched Muslim mili-

at the "highest" level. They declined to elaborate.

Earlier in June the Prime Minister's office had approved the report by a 3-member enquiry committee, headed by the Vice Chancellor of the Open University Dr Shamsher Ali, recommending legal and punitive actions against the suppliers and officials involved in the import and distribution of the fertilizer containing high levels of toxic lead and cadmium sub-

Initiated by the Environment Ministry the probe body recommendations were later forwarded to the Agriculture Ministry for implementation.

The Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) imported 3150 tonnes of zinc-oxy sulphate fertilizer from the US in January last

year, chemical tests of which later revealed that it was contaminated with toxic industrial

The corporation went on to distribute 1113 tonnes of the toxic fertilizer after just a preliminary test at the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI), which was done without proper standards. BARI recommended the use of the fertilizer and opined that it would not be harmful to the environment or to human health.

By doing so, both BADC and BARI also completely ignored a timely warning, well before the consignment reached Chittagong port, from the US Embassy, quoting the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). that the fertilizer may contain toxic industrial wastes.

90 pc against hartals

Human Rights Commission, reports BSS.

The survey was conducted from October 15 to November 16 and its finding was released yesterday.

The commission interviewed a total of 401 people belonging to 11 professional groups which include lawyers, students of colleges and universities, workers of different industrial enterprises, teachers of schools and colleges, rickshawpullers, drivers of buses and trucks. physicians, journalists, service holders, housewives and some mastans.

sations. See Page 12 Col 7

interrogation.

A decision on the fate of the

crucial Third Inland Water

Transport Project (IWT-3),

which is also being considered

as a determining factor for the

government's relations with the

World Bank, is likely to be

net, according to official

whether the government would

go ahead with the project ac-

cepting the conditionalities

imposed by the bank or refuse

to accept those leading the pro-

by the World Bank in the form

of action plan for the

Bangladesh Inland Water

Transport Corporation (BIWTC)

were opposed mainly by the

Ministry of Shipping, although

other concerned government

agencies feel there is little scope

The conditionalities imposed

ject towards cancellation.

The cabinet will decide

taken on Monday by the cabi-

More than 89.5 per cent people of Dhaka city and its surrounding areas are against hartals, according to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh

Out of the 401 interviewed. 360 people were against the hartal and 41 of them supported hartals called by different political and other organi-

See Page 12 Col 8 33 freed, Hazratbal reopens today

dian authorities today released Brigadier SP K S Kanwar. all 33 Kashmiri Muslim pilgrims the army officer who com who were trapped in the shrine manded the 32-day siege of the of Hazratbal for more than a mosque, said the shrine would month with a group of Kashmiri reopen on Thursday. Kashmir police chief Mahin-

"The army is to hand over the area to the Border Security Force by this evening," he told reporters. "The shrine is to be turned over to the public sometime on Thursday."

A curfew imposed in the neighbourhood surrounding the mosque remained in force for the 33rd straight day on Wednesday but Kanwar said that residents evacuated by the army would be allowed to return home later in the day. Soldiers remained in force in

large numbers around the

shrine on Wednesday although

witnesses said they had begun

to remove sandbag bunkers and

other gun emplacements in preparation for a withdrawal.

Despite the end of the siege. shops, businesses, offices and schools were shut here Wednesday in response to a call for a general strike by the Allparty Kashmir Freedom Conference, an umbrella group opposed to Indian rule.

Conference leaders said the strike, which has paralysed the Muslim-majority Kashmir valley since the siege began, would continue until the Hazratbal mosque reopened for prayers and underwent a "purification" ceremony. Meanwhile allegations of

army brutality and fears of further conflict over Hazratbal were raised today, a day after the siege ended. Though government figures. including Prime Minister P V. victory.

Narasimha Rao, denied any deal was made to end the standoff, militant, military and official sources said a compromise was thrashed out.

Kashmiri police officers told Reuters that army soldiers insisted on interrogating the mili tants late on Tuesday and beat some of them severely, despite an agreement that they should be questioned only by local po-

Residents living nearby sald they heard screams. No official comment on the allegation was immediately available. The militants had already accused the government of bad

faith, sending messengers to the media to convey their anger not recur at the airport. at government statements and media reports presenting the end of the siege as an official

against Customs man against Customs men By Staff Correspondent

wrongfully confined by Customs officers and sepoys Tuesday and senior vice president of the BGMEA Fazlul Hag. Redwan Ahmed, MP said.

press reports of Tuesday's sad incident were distorted by the Customs people. These untrue reports had tarnished the personal image of Sikder, a commercially important person (CIP) of the country owning over 16 industries.

According to Redwan and, Sec Page 12 Col 3

Tuesday's untoward incidents at ZIA BGMEA demands action The Bangladesh Garments

Fate of IWT-3 project

hangs in balance

By Sohel Manzur

the bank.

for opposing the conditionalities

since the government has al-

ready signed the Development

Credit Agreement (DCA) with

by the WB as precondition to

disbursement of aid (both credit

and grant) for the 64 million US

dollars project include organi-

sational restructuring, fleet re-

structuring, manpower rational

isation and financial restructur-

government approve the techni-

cal assistance for the project

provided by the Finnish gov-

ernment and appoint the man-

agement consultants and the

local consultants within the

shortest possible time to pave

the way for disbursement of the

See Page 12 Col 1

But the Ministry of Shipping

The WB also insisted the

ing of the BIWTC.

The action plan as suggested

Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) yesterday protested the harassment and assault of industrialist Md Nurul Haq Sikder by Customs officials at the Zia International

BGMEA president Redwan Ahmed, a BNP MP, in a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, urged the government to ensure that such incidents do

The press conference was also attended by BGMEA vice president Nurul Haq Sikder who was severely beaten up and

Airport (ZIA) and demanded punishment of those responsi-

> The BGMEA chief said Sikder's Pall Mall Group of Companies had earned at least US 100 million dollars in exports for the country.

Actress Tania Rahman, who had gone to the Mohammadpur police station yesterday to report the unnatural death of her male servant Nayan, was instead detained by the police for - Star photo

Can We Lend Sufia