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11 hurt in clashes during Kushtia volleyball semis

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Apr 4: At least 11 people were injured, five of them needing hospitalisation, in a free-for-all during the national volleyball championship semifinal between Bangladesh Rifles and Bangladesh Navy at the local stadium this afternoon.

Those hospitalised are P K Mullick, three students of the Islamic University here — Reza, Shamim and Nurul Islam — and one spectator Bazur Rahman.

Besides, referee Abul Hossain, line judge Mintu Dutta, Shamsul Huq Tenku, a photographer of the daily Bhorer Kagoj from Dhaka, and Khwaz and Shamsul Huq were released after first aid. Tenku hurt his collar bone.

Witnesses said the brawl started during the second semifinal of the men's competition in the afternoon when the two Services teams were tied two sets- all after the first four sets.

In the nail-biting fifth and deciding set, the BDR spikers, after being locked 16-16 with the sailors, claimed victory when they took the next point to lead 17-16.

When the referee pointed out that they needed one more point to win, because the margin had to be of a clear two points, the BDR team protested the rule and went on a rampage by first tearing up the net, witnesses said.

They said in the Pandemonium that followed, the BDR players and supporters started beating up opposing players, officials and spectators. The shamiana, or the canopy, at the stadium and furniture were damaged.

The BDR players also beat up the Ansars and VDP personnel, police and the Islamic University students present at the venue.

Enraged, the local people began brickbating and a pitched battle began with the riflemen.

Pension rules simplified

From Page 1 Col 4

tions within a month of its receipts of the relevant papers.

The cabinet meeting also approved two new welfare-oriented steps in case of family pension. Sick and retarded children of the dead pensioner who are incapable of earning will get life-long pensions and the widow of the pensioner, if she does not remarry, will also get a life-long family pension.

The cabinet decided that the last authority under which the dead employee worked will determine his or her successors in case of the family pension and gratuity and the certificates of the widow of the dead employee stating that she did not remarry would be accepted.

The certificates of the local union parishad chairman or poura commissioner or ward commissioners will also be acceptable in this regard. From now on restrictions on issuance of success on certificate from the court will be eased.

In case of family pension, the age limit for the sons of the dead pensioners has been raised to 25 years from the existing 21 years due to the raising of the age limit for entry into the government service.

The family of a pensioner will get pension at the same rate both in cases of his or her death after retirement or before retirement.

No employees will require to submit their ACR (Annual Confidential Report) before the sanctioning of pension.

The cabinet meeting decided that the concerned employees will also be able to surrender cent per cent of their pension if they so desire.

Presently, only 50 per cent gratuity can be taken by surrendering 50 per cent of the gross pension.

The audit office will send post-dated cheques equivalent to the basic salary of the allotted leave (highest 12 months)

The people also set ablaze two vans of the police and the Navy, a bus of the Islamic University and a private car. Barricades were set up by the angry students on the Kushtia-Jhenidah highway adjacent to the stadium.

To protest the incident, the local All-Party Students' Action Council has called a half-day hartal in the town today (Tuesday) from 6 am until noon.

(Related story on Page 10)

The Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia, Police Superintendent and the BDR Sector Commander were in a meeting at the Kushtia District Sports Association with other KDSA officials till late night and the fate of the match could not be known at the time of filing this report.

The BDR players and team officials were confined to the stadium for their own safety under police protection.

Police raid two DU halls : 3 held

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested three outsiders from the Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University and recovered two knives and rifle bullets from their room yesterday.

The arrested were identified as Nayan, Jahangir Hossain and Saiful Islam, who were allegedly sheltered by a student organisation. It could not be confirmed immediately to which student organisation they belonged.

Police also raided the Jagannath Hall of the university. However, no arrest or any recovery was made.

The hour-long early morning police raid yesterday at the Mohsin Hall and the Jagannath Hall, strongholds of the BNP-backed Chhatra Dal and the pro-Awami League Chhatra League respectively, were conducted six days after the authorities postponed the DUCSU polls.

Marriage fee lowered

The Council of Ministers at its regular weekly meeting yesterday approved various proposals for removing obstacles in the way of application of the Child Marriage Prohibition Act for preventing persecution of women and children, amending the Muslim Marriage Registration Act-1994 and providing legal assistance to distressed and oppressed women, reports BSS.

The proposals included introduction of a punishment of three years' rigorous imprisonment or a fine of Taka five thousand or both for not registering marriages.

The proposals also provide for appointment of one Kazi at each union to make marriage registration easier and lowering of the minimum fee for marriage registration to Taka five from the present Taka thirty.

JCD rescinds expulsion of 5

By JU Correspondent

The expulsion orders on five Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders of the Jahangirnagar University unit were rescinded at a party meeting Sunday.

The re-induction of the JCD men followed a dialogue among the feuding factions — better known as 'locals' and 'non-locals' — in the presence of Information Minister Nazmul Huda and JCD central leaders Nazimuddin Alam and Fazlur Rahman Milon on April 1.

The negotiations, according to campus sources, helped defuse the tension prevailing on the campus.

The 'locals' — hailing from Savar and adjacent areas — and the 'non-local' factions earlier clashed on several occasions, leading to the closure of the institution.

The JCD men of the local group who have been absolved of anti-party charges are: Saiful Islam, Shaiful Islam, Arshed Ali, Walid and Rafiq. Two of them — Arshed and Shaiful — are now in police custody for their alleged involvement in February's violence that left the varsity closed for 50 days.

30 hurt at N'ganj

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rival faction of Narayanganj District Awami League with firearms, sticks and other lethal weapons stormed the auditorium and attacked the audience.

They fired several rounds of shots and exploded fire-crackers.

Chases between the two factions continued for about half an hour, police said.

AL sources alleged that the regional secretary Shamim Osman was involved in the attack.

A case was filed against him.

Thai visa policy

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thing in writing.

"We are trying to find out the facts and have already asked our mission in Thailand to look into the matter," a top official of the Foreign Ministry said on condition of anonymity.

The official, however, added: "Visa regulations are normally the domain of the host country, unless there is a reciprocal agreement."

Foreign Ministry officials, however, indicated Dhaka would try to impress upon the Thai officials that the new visa regulations should not become effective.

A senior official of the Home Ministry said, "We are waiting for the documents from the Foreign Ministry or our mission. We will act when we get the documents."

Local Thai embassy officials when contacted, refused to comment on the new directive but said they were processing visa applications with "as much speed as possible."

Nearly 8000 passengers travel each way on the Dhaka-Bangkok route every month. Many of them are transit passengers who have to make an over-night halt to get connecting flights to other east Asian, Pacific or American destinations.

Thai Airways operates six flights a week while Biman operates four weekly flights and has plans to start another flight shortly.

Senior officials of both Thai Airways and Bangladesh Biman said the new regulations are an embarrassment for their airlines.

Civil Aviation authorities said three flights to Bangkok, one of Thai and two of Biman, in the last two days saw a significant drop in the number of passengers bound for Bangkok.

A Biman official said, "We are trying to minimise the sufferings of the passengers by informing them while they come for re-confirmation of tickets."

Aviation officials and leaders of trade and industry who frequently use the Dhaka-Bangkok route apprehend that the visa restrictions, if not withdrawn will not only hamper the passenger traffic with Thailand but also seriously affect the business of Bangladeshis. The large expatriate community in Dhaka are equally worried that the visa restrictions will force them to consider alternate destinations, leaving out Bangkok for their frequent travels on weekends or holidays.

PM consults key BNP men

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During the second round of parley, the BNP leaders discussed the implications of the Awami League (AL)'s proposed April 7 siege of the Secretariat, the prospects and efficacy of a dialogue with the Opposition in Parliament and the strategy to counter the Opposition's tactics.

During the first round of talks, the Prime Minister called 12 leaders to her chamber one by one and separately sought their opinion on the best possible candidate for the post of party Secretary General.

According to at least two cabinet ministers, the Prime Minister even said the leaders could mention their own candidacy for the post.

However, several party insiders confided to this correspondent that Begum Zia had little option but to retain Salam Talukder as party secretary in the face of stiff competition for the post among the two joint secretaries general — Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and Rafiqul Islam Mia, Bar-at-Law.

After this the Prime Minister started a second round of talks with her top aides and reviewed the current political situation.

According to sources, Secretary General Salam Talukder had sharply reacted to some ministers' bids to clarify to the press the party positions on different issues. Talukder felt that the Secretary General should be the official spokesman of the party.

The BNP chief, 'accepting Talukder's contention, asked the others not to discuss the party's policy matters with newsmen.

About the AL's proposed siege of the secretariat on April 7, the meeting resolved that there would be no provocations from the government side during the AL's agitation around the Secretariat.

Attracting Japanese Investment

From Page 1 Col 4

goody-goody to be taken seriously. There were several brochures presented by our Chambers that provided useful information to our Japanese counterparts. But most importantly, all this gave the impression of a serious, and near meticulous, preparation for the trip which itself spoke of how seriously our government took this visit. This pleased the status conscious hosts and sent out the right kind of vibes. A point could be made about more materials being prepared in the Japanese language for the benefit of the large number of businessmen and professionals who attended these events.

In the four speeches that the PM made to these groups — two during the seminars, one over lunch and one during the 7th session of the Joint Economic Committee — she repeated her government's commitment, in the strongest possible terms, to the macro-economic reforms that have been put into place. There was no turning back, and only moving further forward, she emphasised. This greatly allayed the fears of a slowdown in implementing the reforms, that was publicly voiced soon after the BNP's defeat in the mayoral polls. This the Japanese shared, and had conveyed privately to our government. The PM's repeated affirmation was thus both necessary and timely.

The Prime Minister was also very emphatic about the need for Japanese investment, and said so several times. One could even say, too many times. After all, she was the Prime Minister of a country, however starved for investment. A point could also be made that the PM needn't have been as detailed in her speech about the various economic and non-economic benefits that we were offering our hosts, leaving hardly anything for the Finance Minister to add. This made Saifur Rahman sound repetitive, and redundant.

Our newly-appointed Special Envoy, Moshed Khan, whose ideas, efforts and drive had much to do with making this visit effective and business-like, was very good in his first speech at Tokyo, and rather dull and insipid in Osaka. He attracted the attention of the Japanese business-

men by emphasising his private sector identity, and was able to touch a sympathetic chord when he said, "As a businessman I know that I will not put my money anywhere unless I was sure of a suitable return." FBCCI Chairman Mahbubur Rahman did a good job of representing his constituency, and also acted well as a bridge between our Chambers and those of the Japanese.

Japan's direct foreign investment peaked in 1989, reaching a spectacular figure of US dollars 67.5 billion. In 1992 it came down to almost half, to US dollars 34.1 billion. This decrease has mainly been in the USA and Europe. However, Japanese investment in Asia, excluding the NIEs (Newly Industrialised Economies) has been increasing, especially in China. According to a survey conducted by the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), investment in Asia, centring round electronics and automobiles, is likely to rise in fiscal 1993 (which ends in March '94). However, during fiscal '94 the investment in Asia is likely to be sluggish, as in Europe and the US.

In the context of Japan's Asian involvement, its direct investment in Bangladesh upto 1992 amounted to a paltry US dollars 125 million, which is only 0.2 per cent of the total. The investments are in small projects and are confined to marine products, shipbuilding, metals, gold supplies. Japan invested US dollars 41 million in 1990. Then it dropped to only US dollars 8 million in 1991. However, an upward turn occurred in '92 when the investment rose to US dollars 60 million. What is of significance, and one on which we can pin our hopes, is that about 90 per cent of Japanese investment in Bangladesh occurred in the last three years, 1990-92, marking a sharp increase recently.

The Japanese side in the two seminars identified five sets of issues that influence Japanese investment abroad. They are: a) social and political stability; b) effective system of law and order; c) business incentives; d) infrastructure; e) labour situation. Of these facts, the Japanese side identified THREE about which they felt

particularly concerned in the case of Bangladesh. First was the infrastructure conditions. Electric power, telecommunications, airports, harbours and roads badly needed improvement. Difficulties in these areas made it impossible to use high-tech machinery. In Bangladesh it was very difficult to move materials in and out of the country and to communicate rapidly with the outside world.

Second, the Japanese businessmen made a strong point about labour unrest. The Managing Director of the Marubeni Corporation, a partner in the KAFCO project, said that strikes and hartals made Japanese investors hesitant to come here. "Economic loss from hartals in January and February '93 has been estimated to be US dollars 128 million," he stated in his paper submitted to the Tokyo seminar. The two months' loss was more than Japan's total direct investment in Bangladesh so far.

Finally, a lot was made of our bureaucratic problems. Mention was made of the ASEAN and China, and even of India where recent changes have greatly simplified official investment procedures. "Bangladesh's investment climate and attractiveness will have to be better than these countries to attract the eyes of the investors."

So the bottomline is, to attract the Japanese investors, we have to be competitive to the ASEAN, China, and to the newcomers like Vietnam and India. How can we achieve such a status? The answer is INCENTIVES. Incentives in terms of laws, procedures and a foreign-investment-friendly system. Added to this we have to give incentives in terms of high profitability and easy repatriation. And finally, we must come forward with incentives in terms of living conditions. We must remember that right incentives are not sufficient by themselves. These have to come at the right time. Incentives delayed amount to incentives denied. And nobody will come to Bangladesh without attractive incentives.

Permit me to repeat. The ball is in our court, and the major player is the government. The private sector can follow. But it is the government that must act NOW.

NSC lottery tickets recovered

By Staff Correspondent

The stolen lottery tickets of the National Sports Development Fund were found under a heap of garbage on the rooftop of the National Sports Council (NSC) building yesterday.

Two electricians of the NSC, while working on the rooftop, reportedly found the tickets buried under the garbage.

The police were informed and they recovered the tickets.

Some 25,000 tickets worth 2,50,000 taka were reportedly stolen from the National Sports Council office on March 26. A case was registered with the Motijheel Police who later arrested seven people for their alleged involvement in the crime.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 8
The crisis in the country can only be resolved through resignation of the government and holding parliamentary election under a neutral caretaker authority," the Awami League chief told the party leaders at her official Minto Road residence.

The meeting was attended by presidents and general secretaries of Dhaka city committee, districts of Dhaka, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Gazipur, Mymensingh, Tangail, Comilla (north), Comilla (south), Brahmanbaria and its front organisations.

Mirpur clash

From Page 1 Col 6

Police said, the injured policemen including the assistant commissioner of Tejgaon were admitted the Rajarbagh Police Hospital.

Our DMCH Correspondent says, fifteen of the injured were admitted to the casualty department.

This is for the third time police and the local men clashed in less than a week.

The Midnight File

France may sale submarines to Pakistan

NEW DELHI, Apr 4: French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said today that France was holding talks with Islamabad on selling French submarines to Pakistan. "Yes, we are having discussions (on the proposed sale to Pakistan)," Juppe told Reuters television in an interview during an official visit to the Indian capital. He declined to identify the submarines France could sell to Pakistan.

Accord with PLO by Apr 13 unlikely, says Rabin

JERUSALEM, Apr 4: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said it would take a 'miracle' for Israel and the PLO to sign an accord by April 13 to launch Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. It would need a miracle to sign (the accord) by the planned date because between now and April 13 there are only six days left to negotiate," Israeli army radio Monday quoted Rabin as saying at a cabinet meeting Sunday, reports AFP.

Govt college lecturers threaten strike

By Staff Correspondent
Lecturers of 118 government colleges yesterday threatened they would observe a day-long strike on April 9 if the authorities did not initiate filling up of more than 500 posts of assistant and associate professors of the colleges through promotions of the juniors immediately.

The Bangladesh Government College Lecturers' Association will also organise a rally at the Shikhyia Bhaban gate in the capital on April 18 to announce fresh programmes of the agitating college teachers. Over 500 posts of assistant and associate professors of the nationalised colleges fell vacant after the government promoted teachers of these two categories recently.

Arrested ward commissioner on remand

By Staff Correspondent
Monwar Hossain Dipu, known as Dwipjol, was remanded to the city's Detective Branch (DB) for one day. Dwipjol, a commissioner of Mirpur Ward No-9, was arrested Sunday for his alleged involvement in abducting a young man, Anwar Hossain.

The ward commissioner was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court yesterday from where he was taken on police remand for interrogation, police said.

Anwar was missing since March 23 and was later rescued from Sylhet and admitted to Dhaka's Monwara Private Hospital in critical condition.

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The Press Note said a seven-member cabinet committee was formed, led by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, to build up a proper, and accountable public administrative system in the country, suiting the time.

Besides, it pointed out another four-member committee headed by Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan had been formed to remove alleged inconsistencies in the pay scales of officers in different cadres and outside cadres of government and semi-government organisations.

During the course of the agitation, the leaders of the country's largest professionals body had had a series of meetings with the government and also with the Prime Minister.

Begum Khaleda Zia, at a meeting with the Prokrichi leaders on April 15 last year, accepted in principle four of the demands and assigned a special cabinet committee to review the other demands.

However, the seven-member committee failed to come up with any solution to the problem kicking off a renewed campaign by the professionals.

The secretary general of the body, M A Hena, was forcibly retired by the government on January 5 this year.

Prokrichi leaders alleged that due to the pressure from the members of the administrative cadre, the government had to cancel its decision to remove service anomalies created by the Matin Committee.

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