

North's troops capture main airbase near Aden

DUBAI (UAE), May 8: Troops loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh today captured the South's main military airport, 50 kilometres from the port city of Aden, Western diplomatic sources said, report AFP.

The sources in the region said Al-Anad was the only military airport around the southern stronghold of Aden, although the South has a second base in the Hadramaut, 700 kilometres to the east.

The northern forces have the port city trapped in a "pincer movement", one diplomat said.

A northern military spokesman earlier said the South, desperate to save Aden, fired more than five Scud missiles at "vital and strategic targets," in Sanaa on Saturday night, but without causing damage apart from panic among civilians. According to the North, the South has fired almost 20 Scuds at the capital since the civil war broke out on Thursday.

Southern Yemen was mobilised today to defend its stronghold from the northern assault, as the President warned only the South's surrender could halt the war. The north said the President's troops also broke down southern resistance in the Abyan region.

An armoured division had joined up in Abyan with northern troops posted in the South to form a "military bridge". Four northern brigades were locked in a fierce battle with southern forces.

The fighting has come after four years of a union between the tribal, heavily Islamic former North Yemen and the Marxist South that was blighted by political assassinations, feuds and economic collapse.

On the political battle-front, Saleh accused his southern rivals of stealing 375 million dollars in oil revenues, the official news agency Saba reported.

Saleh told Parliament that southern leaders, and mainly Oil Minister Saleh Abubakar Ibn Hussein, had stolen 375 million dollars in revenues from the southern Massila oil field.

Yemen's total oil output is nearly 320,000 barrels per day, more than half of the amount from Massila.

In the skies, the North's air force carried out 20 raids on Saturday, destroying Aden airport and another southern airport as well as a missile base in Abyan, a northern spokesman said.

The aim was not only to cripple the southern air force but also to "prevent the southern secessionists... from fleeing the country," said one spokesman. So far, 15 southern planes had been shot down.

To counter the threat on Aden, a city of more than 500,000 residents at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula, the southern leadership ordered a general mobilisation.

Defence Minister Hattam Qassem Taher, a southerner, called the mobilisation in all the South's provinces and said soldiers were to report to their units within 24 hours.

The two sides each have 30,000-strong armies, which have not been merged despite unification. The South is counting on its larger air force, as well as Scud missiles, to hold off the North.

With the conflict escalating each day, Germany and the United States on Saturday flew out almost 500 foreigners from Sanaa, two French warships arrived in Djibouti on Saturday carrying 577 people.

The neighbouring six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, meanwhile, issued a call for Riyadh for ceasefire and called for both sides to show restraint.

But at an emergency session in Cairo, the 22-member Arab League decided not to intervene, after the northern-led government rejected an Egyptian proposal to send Arab peacekeepers.

Star Quiz draw

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Road, Mohammadpur; Munira Sharmin of 58/27 North Mugdipara and P Murad of 10, Wyre Street, Wari, Dhaka.

The first prize winner, Shahed Latif, when informed of the result over telephone last night, said he did not at all expect to win the prize. "To me it seems an incredible news," a delighted Latif said.

Latif sent as many as 47 entries. He regular reads The Daily Star with special interest in sports news. He is a fan of tennis, cricket and football.

Son of a banker, Latif participated in both the Quiz-1 and 2 and was preparing to send 65 entries for the current Quiz No-4, he informed.

Speaking on the occasion, poet Shamsur Rahman lauded The Daily Star's Quiz initiative which, he said, would help foster the people's interest in the coming World Cup beginning in the United States June 17.

He also recalled his attachment with The Daily Star's founding-editor late S M Ali and mentioned his contribution to journalism.

A S Mahmud, Chairman, Transcom Electronics, the sponsors of The Daily Star Quiz, speaking at the function said, "We hope to arrange more such programmes under the auspices of The Daily Star."

"The Daily Star believes in its social responsibilities in various fields. The current Quiz competition aims at promoting sports and encouraging the youths," he said.

The Editor of the newspaper, Mahfuz Anam, welcomed the guests and all participants in the competition.

As many as 19,616 entries were received for the third of the six-part Quiz competition out of which 2,143 were found correct, he informed the audience.

Stating that the number of participants in the third round of the competition had increased significantly, the Editor said, "We are overwhelmed with the participation." He hoped there would be more participants in the coming Quizzes.

The News Editor of The Daily Star, Afzal H. Khan, conducted the function.

ALWC

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seen eating decomposed bodies on the shores as no arrangements were made for their burial, the resolution said and pointing out that the environment was being polluted by decomposed bodies.

It said cyclone victims were suffering from different diseases for lack of pure water as people were not adequately provided with medicine, relief materials and drinking water.

There is no conformity between the reality and the government publicity of relief and rehabilitation works, the resolution said.

Referring to the rehabilitation work of the post-'91 cyclone, Awami League said the government had been able to complete only 40 per cent relief and rehabilitation works in the coastal districts since that great disaster.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Let's profit from Tagore's philosophy: Sk Razzak



Dancer Shibli Mohammad performing at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday on the occasion of Rabindranath Tagore's 133rd birth anniversary. —Star photo

A four-day national level Rabindra Jayanti celebrations began yesterday afternoon with a call to the experts and researchers on Tagore to discover the great poet's pragmatic thoughts about the socio-economic development of society, reports BSS.

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzak Ali inaugurated the programme in the capital at the Shilpakala Academy by saying, "Bangladesh and Tagore are inseparable."

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof. Jahannara Begum presided over the function while Prof. Anisuzzaman attended as a special guest.

The state sponsored programme in celebration of the 133rd birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore was organised simultaneously in Dhaka and at Shalaidah, Shahzadpur and Pantisar, where the poet spent a considerable part of his early life.

Paying tributes to Tagore, Shaikh Razzak Ali said Tagore's influence in the life of the people of this land is quite pervasive. He said the great poet is our unlimited source of strength.

The Speaker said people of this land have accepted Tagore for various reasons. He urged all to derive benefits from Tagore's philosophy, especially at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

He praised the government initiative to celebrate Rabindra Jayanti to honour death poet and philosopher. He said the 12 crore people of Bangladesh had accepted Tagore in various perspectives.

Describing Tagore as the greatest poet of his time, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof. Jahannara Begum observed that Tagore devoted his whole life to the cause of humanity and had left an indelible influence on the lives of the people of this country.

The State Minister called upon all quarters to be imbued with the philosophy of this great man who was also a great social reformer of his time.

The inaugural ceremony was followed by a cultural function which was participated by noted singers of Tagore songs. Later, the Speaker inaugurated the Rabindra Mela and an exhibition at the Shilpakala Academy premises.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia formally opened the Institute of Technology for Women in Dhaka yesterday. —PID photo

PM: Women's role in dev

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said addressing the inaugural function.

"Our woman community is neglected. They are confined to domestic life. This is why we have given emphasis on women's education and are implementing various programmes for productive use of their skill and potentiality."

She said technology is the main element of development. "We have natural resources and manpower. But we cannot properly use the resources and manpower due to lack of technology," Begum Zia observed and said this is why the government has given emphasis on acquisition of technology for the country's uplift.

The Prime Minister said the government has adopted technology as one of the main strategy to alleviate poverty and increase the facilities of science and vocation-oriented education in the country.

Begum Zia underlined the need for overall development of atmosphere for ensuring the birth right of every man. She further stressed the need for creating overall awareness, responsibility and the attitude of accountability among all in society.

"It is the duty of all of us to rear the new generation properly. Let's come forward to share this great responsibility of offering a happy and prosperous Bangladesh to our posterity," she urged all, specially the well-off ones.

"It is not possible for the government alone to resolve all problems," the Prime Minister said and called upon the affluent section of society to come forward to the development of the ITW.

Presided over by ITW chairman Dr Shahida Rafiq, the function was also addressed by Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar, Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia and vice chancellor of the National University Prof. M A Bari.

Begum Zia also presented certificates to the students who have completed diploma course in the computer science at the institute. She assured the ITW authorities that the government would donate the entire building for the institute and has granted Tk 5 lakh for its development.

The authorities of the ITW apprised the Prime Minister that they would open BSc (Hons) course in the computer science from next session. Presently, the ITW is giving diploma in computer.

They further said the students of the institute were getting good jobs in different government, semi-government and non-government organisations, and hoped that the Institute would get international recognition in future.

Azam's citizenship prayer unduly delayed: AG

The hearing of the appeal against the verdict of the High Court Division restoring the citizenship of Golam Azam continued yesterday for the second day before the Appellate Division, of the Supreme Court, reports BSS.

Attorney General Aminul Huq, submitting his arguments, said Golam Azam's prayer to the court and the government, seeking restoration of his citizenship had been unduly delayed. He said Azam was disqualified from becoming a citizen of Bangladesh in 1973 and since then, the issue has been "hanging on his shoulder", and he was, therefore, not cautious, careful and prompt enough to come to the court or proper authority, praying for the restoration of his citizenship.

Though there is no specific period or limitation for filing prayer, the court can refuse where the person is guilty of laches and undue delay, Attorney General argued.

He further argued that Golam Azam's past conduct, including press reports, prove that he was a Pakistani citizen. After independence of Bangladesh, Golam Azam was staying in Pakistan and obtained a Pakistani passport as a citizen of Pakistan, he added.

Huq said Golam Azam is thus disqualified from becoming a citizen of Bangladesh by his own conduct as well as the country's citizenship law with retrospective effect.

Huq further argued that Golam Azam was not a citizen of Bangladesh because he did not continue to be resident of this country since the Liberation War of 1971 and also because of his continued allegiance to Pakistan. Golam Azam's obtaining of a Pakistani passport itself means his allegiance was to that country, Huq argued.

Hearing resumes today.

Attorney General Aminul Huq, Deputy Attorney General A F Hasan Arif, Assistant Attorney Generals Sharifuddin Chaklader and Mir Hasmat Ali appeared for the government.

A R Yusuf, Abdur Razzag and Nowab Ali appeared for Golam Azam.

15 hurt as JCD, Shibir activists clash at CU

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 8: At least 15 persons were injured on the Chittagong University campus last night during a clash between two rival student groups.

The injured were admitted to the university medical centre. Both Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibir blamed each other for the clash in which the warring groups used the fire arms and lethal weapons.

A tense situation prevailed on the campus today as Shibir activists enforced a strike and staged demonstrations protesting the incident.

On the other hand, the scheduled conference of Chhatra Dal, CU Unit was postponed because of the tense situation on the campus.

European Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The member-countries of the European Union will celebrate the 9th of May today as the European Day instead of the Schuman Day.

The Schuman Day was being observed in honour of the former French Foreign Minister whose solemn declaration on this day in 1950 inspired the creation of the European Community (EC).

The name change marks an important advance in European integration. Having grown from its original six to twelve member states (population 345 million) and having become a single market without internal borders at the beginning of 1993, the EC is ready to add new dimension.

This agreement added significant new responsibilities in external political and security relations, laid the foundations of closer cooperation in social affairs and conferred on the nationals of the member states as common citizenship of the EC.

Mostafiz leaves for S Africa

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman left Dhaka early yesterday for South Africa to attend the installation ceremony of South African president-elect Nelson Mandela, reports BSS.

He will lead a three-member delegation that includes Bangladesh Ambassador to Zimbabwe Major General Harun Ahmed Chowdhury and Director General in the Foreign Ministry Kazi Anwarul Masud.

Journalists are a rare type of chiz, BNP MP tells JS

By Staff Correspondent

Ruling party MP Abdur Rab Chowdhury said in Parliament yesterday, "I know what a rare type of chiz the journalists are. I hope my party chief will not misunderstand me."

He said this while referring to a statement by him which, he alleged, was misreported by a newspaper.

Rab Chowdhury was discussing some amendment proposals placed by him for Parliament secretariat bill.

He said he told the House on the opening day of the current session that being a ruling party member, he would consult the party high command before submitting any amendment to the bill. But the statement was wrongly reported with a 'negative meaning', he added.

Work on Madhyapara, Barapukuria projects start this year, JS told

Energy Minister Dr Khondker Mosharrar Hossain told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that the work on the Madhyapara Hardrock Project and Barapukuria Coal Mine Project would start by the middle of this year, reports BSS.

The minister was replying to a question raised by Begum Shamsunnahar Ahsanullah on behalf of Begum Rashida Khatun during the question-answer session.

Replying to a supplementary question, the minister said partial production of both the projects would start in 1998.

AL, JP

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he regretted that despite the Prime Minister's call, the opposition parties were still boycotting the Parliament session.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali asked him twice what was his point of order.

A number of senior BNP leaders requested him to refrain from making such comments. Aktaruzzaman, however, sat without telling his point of order.

The Midnight File

Int'l observer force deployed in Hebron

HEBRON, West Bank, May 8: An international observer force deployed in Hebron today under an Israel-PLO agreement on security arrangements in the town where a Jewish settler massacred 30 Muslim worshippers in February.

"The purpose is to try to bring the situation back prior to the massacre in the Mosque," Mission head Kjell Johansen of Norway told reporters just before the force entered the town in a convoy escorted by Israeli Army jeeps, reports Reuter.

Riyadh to send jumbo jets to Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, May 8: Saudi Arabia will send two jumbo jets to Sarajevo to fly 500 Bosnian Muslims to Mecca so they can perform the Hajj pilgrimage, a UN spokesman said today.

Major Dacre Holloway said the Serbs had agreed to allow the aircraft to fly into Sarajevo provided enough notice was given, reports Reuter.

No compromise with Delhi on Kashmir: Benazir

ISLAMABAD, May 8: Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto today ruled out any compromise with India on Kashmir, saying the country would continue to support the Kashmiris' freedom struggle," reports AFP.

"Let me assure my Kashmiri brethren that the government, the armed forces and the people of Pakistan will keep on extending support and cooperation to their freedom struggle," the official news agency APP quoted her as saying.

Bhutto said Pakistan wanted tranquility along its borders, but it would not bow before anyone for the sake of peace. "We can not compromise on our principles for the sake of friendship," she said.

In a hard hitting speech at a reunion ceremony for Pakistan's Baluch Regiment in northwestern Abbottabad city she said by resisting "the biggest army in the region," the Kashmiris were recording a new history with their blood.

"Kashmir belongs to Kashmiris and only Kashmiris can decide their future," Bhutto said stressing that the people in India's northern state wanted accession with Pakistan. "They have expressed this wish many times," she said.

Ruling out a prolonged "subjugation" of Kashmiris through "repression," she said "We have seen the fall of Berlin Wall, disintegration of the Soviet Union and now we are going to witness the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa, ending white minority rule there."

JS Sectt Bill

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the works minister but requested the Chair to fix the next date in such a way that the bill could be passed during the current session.

"If we suspend the discussion for the sake of Opposition's participation, we would be exposed to their criticism that the ruling party was not committed to the cause of parliamentary democracy," Prof Chowdhury said adding "we are in a double dilemma on the issue."

Earlier Abdur Rab Chowdhury of the ruling party spoke on some amendments to the text of the bill.

Suggesting amendments to four sections of the proposed law, the BNP legislator told the House that the amendments, if adopted, would contribute to reducing bureaucratic influence in running the Parliament.

Another treasury bench member, Abu Yousuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahman withdrew some amendments he moved earlier.

Apart from the discussion on the bill, the House had the usual one-hour question-answer session, presided over by Deputy Speaker Humayn Khan Pannu.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia was present during the entire session yesterday. The session was adjourned at 8:15 last night and will resume at 4:30 this afternoon.

Power sector

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of June 30, 1992 stood at Tk 46311 million of which Tk 41741 million (90 per cent) was on account of foreign loans," the secretary said. "The poor commercial performance coupled with the burden of foreign exchange risk, distorted or irrational capital structure, stringent on-lending terms, low load factor etc, have made power utilities financially non-viable," Razzaque elaborated. He suggested that domestic investment in the power sector will have to be supplemented by foreign investment and added, "These companies can also repatriate profits."

The energy secretary pointed out that the government has to recognise explicitly the need for private investment.

"All rules or regulations, contracts and structures have to be examined to see whether or not they act as barriers," Razzaque said.

Mark Peterson said that there was no "universal model for private power". He said Bangladesh has to devise its own model considering its unique context.

He suggested that the private investors in Bangladesh may go for small scale power plants initially. "It would reduce the risk of investment, lenders would worry less and the construction of a plant would be finished in a short time," Peterson said.

Other speakers stressed on the need for setting up of an investment promotion cell on power, urgent reform of the labour and employment law and adoption of a long term policy that would guarantee stability in the private power sector.

Red Crescent Day observed

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) yesterday observed the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, reports UNB.

The day began with the hoisting of National and BDRCS flags at the Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital premises. Chairman of the society Syed Shahidul Haque Jamal MP inaugurated the day's programme by releasing pigeons at the hospital premises.

A peace procession brought out by the society started from the Holy Family Hospital and ended at the National Press Club.

PWD employees postpone programme

The employees of the Public Works Department postponed its two-day programmes scheduled for today and tomorrow following a fruitful discussion with the Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia yesterday, reports BSS.

The discussion was held at the conference room of the Housing and Public Works Ministry.

The minister told the meeting that a summary on the issue of the cancellation of mini-PWD would be submitted before the cabinet soon.