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NEWS BRIEFS

Bangladeshis in Yemen safe

About 300 Bangladeshis nationals, now living in Yemen, are safe, according to the latest available information received in Dhaka yesterday. The Bangladeshis have been advised to contact the nearest British Embassy and consulates if they need advice and consular assistance, reports UNB.

Opposition rejects JS Secretariat Bill

By Staff Correspondent

The Opposition parties yesterday rejected the Parliament Secretariat Bill, passed by the House on Wednesday, saying "the bill had lost its spirit".

The Opposition parties boycotted the nine-day session—which was prorogued yesterday—to press home their demand for early general elections under a caretaker government.

"The bill has lost its spirit. It is not possible to establish an independent secretariat with a bill passed by the ruling party in our absence," Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim said at a press briefing.

He said the bill curtails the powers of the Speaker and empowers a minister to run the Parliament secretariat.

"The bill has been passed to make Parliament a rubber

stamp," he alleged.

Mohammad Nasim said the government pushed the Opposition parties to a point of no return by creating crises one after another since the last session of Parliament when Information Minister Nazmul Huda made derogatory remarks about the Opposition members.

The Magura by-election proved that no fair election is possible under this government, so the Opposition parties demanded constitutional provisions for a caretaker government to hold general elections, he said.

The Opposition Chief Whip said that the situation was further complicated by passing the Parliament Secretariat Bill in the absence of the entire Opposition.

"It is unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh that such an important bill was passed with all the Opposition parties absent from the House," he said.

Nasim reiterated that the Opposition parties would not deviate from their demand for a caretaker government and therefore the ruling party should table the bill.

The press briefing, held at the conference room of the Leader of the Opposition, was also addressed by the Jatiya Party's Moudud Ahmed, Jamaat-e-Islami's Mufti Maulana Abdus Sattar, IOJ's Maulana Obaidul Huq, the Ganatantri Party's Suranjit Sengupta and the Awami League's Tofael Ahmed.

Moudud Ahmed said that See Page 12 Col 6



Police recovered ten stolen paintings by Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin from Mohammadpur in the city yesterday. Mrs Abedin identified the recovered pieces. Two persons detained in connection with the theft are seen squatting on the ground. — Star photo

10 stolen works of Zainul recovered: Two held

By Staff Correspondent

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police late Wednesday recovered 10 stolen paintings of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin from the possession of one of his students in Dhaka after a long-drawn investigation.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury told the Jatiya Sangsad Thursday that 10 out of the 17 stolen pieces of the Shilpacharya have been seized by the police while the remaining art works would be recovered soon.

Atiqur Rahman, an Assistant Superintendent of the CID in charge of the investigation, told The Daily Star that his men had recovered the paint-

ings from the Mohammadpur residence of one Iqbaluddin Ahmed, a long-time student of Zainul Abedin.

The wife and sons of the country's best-known painter identified the recovered pieces, which included two famous paintings of the 1943 'Famine' series.

A group of armed robbers broke into the Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Museum in Myemensingh town — the painter's birthplace — on May 2, 1992 and fled with 17 art works in oil, pen-ink, charcoal and brush.

The CID took over the investigation of the art theft — first in the history of the coun-

try — on May 19, 1993 after the local police investigation failed.

After the paintings were stolen, the family members and the country's intelligentsia had appealed through the newspapers to the thieves not to destroy the invaluable works.

The matter was also discussed in Parliament and the Home Minister, in a statement, gave the assurance that the works would be recovered.

Talking to The Daily Star, ASP Atiqur Rahman said a break through in the investigation came only on Wednesday when they arrested Abdul See Page 12 Col 4

JS session prorogued

By Staff Correspondent

The nine-day 14th session of the country's fifth Jatiya Sangsad (JS), boycotted by the entire Opposition, was prorogued yesterday.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, before reading out the prorogation order of the President in the House at 9:15 pm, said it was unfortunate that the House had to do its business with the Opposition seats empty.

The Speaker hoped that the members of the treasury and Opposition benches would be able to work together in the next session.

Earlier, ruling party Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder also expressed the hope that the Opposition would return to the House during the next session for the budget and

Akhtaruzzaman seeks JS leave of absence

Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury (AL-Chittagong) who is not attending Parliament sessions since June last year has applied to the Speaker to obtain leave of the House for his long absence, reports BSS.

Informing the House of receipt of the application from Akhtaruzzaman, the Speaker, Shaikh Razzak Ali, said after five sittings of the House during the 1993 budget session (10th session of Fifth Jatiya Sangsad) the member remained absent for 76 sittings so far.

The Speaker said he would place the application before the House during the next session for its consideration under the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

Power policy for private sector to be framed

By Staff Correspondent

A 'pragmatic' power policy for the private sector will be formulated soon for 'sustainable growth' of the energy sector.

This was announced by Energy Minister Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday. The minister was presiding over the concluding session of the five-day international forum on private investment in power sector of Bangladesh in the city.

The forum recommended that the government should formulate a power policy for the private sector which will offer an 'attractive package of incentives' for investors.

The forum further recommended that the policy should aim at taking 'full advantage of the Asian investment wave by adopting laws, implementing

policy and by setting in place a regulatory framework that sends the correct and positive signal to the international lending community.

The closing session was addressed by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman as chief guest. Special Envoy of the Prime Minister M Moshed Khan, State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan, Energy Secretary M Faizur Razzak and FBCCI President Mahbubur Rahman, and forum rapporteur and USAID adviser Ronald Somers.

Officials from India, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines attended the five-day forum to share their experience on private power.

The forum's recommendations included 'increasing and rationalising the power tariff which is presently heavily

subsidised and withdrawing subsidy in phases.'

The PDB and DESA should undergo reforms and they should be equipped to compete efficiently with the private power sector in the future. Ronald Somers said while reading out the recommendations. The power policy should be backed up by appropriate law and the financial, administrative and legal environment must be made attractive for the private entrepreneurs, he added.

A private power cell must be formed within the Ministry of Energy with technical assistance from multilateral or bilateral sources. The cell should be legally empowered to serve as one-stop information clearing house, assist the PDB and See Page 12 Col 4

'Rly containers to reach city from Ctg in 12 hours'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Railway will ensure that its containers from the port city of Chittagong reach the capital in 12 hours safe and secure.

Communication Minister Col (rd) Oli Ahmed said this during a meeting with the members of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) at its auditorium yesterday.

A tangible progress in Railway management will be made in the next three months, he said.

In the first such meeting between the Railway Division and the MCCI, industrialists and businessmen — the users of Railway transportation of raw materials and finished goods through container service — took part in the open discussion.

Special Envoy of the Prime See Page 12 Col 6

Memo to VC : Fresh probe body Strike paralyses DU

By Staff Correspondent

The students of Dhaka University observed strike yesterday protesting the rape of a female student by a group of miscreants at the Zahurul Huq Hall on May 2.

All the gates to the academic buildings, libraries and the Administrative Building of the university were closed. The strike was called by the general students demanding punishment to the persons involved in the incident.

The Awami League's student front, Chhatra League (M-I) and the left leaning student alliance, Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) extended support to the strike.

During the strike, the activists of the Chhatra League (M-I) brought out a procession on the campus. At a rally after the procession, the BCL blamed Montu-backed Chhatra League for the incident and

demanding immediate action against those responsible.

The students of the Rokeya and Shamsunnahar Halls also brought out a procession on the campus. They submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor.

In their memorandum, they said the order issued by the university authorities banning the entry of female students into the halls of the male students was insulting to the female students and also a violation of human rights.

The students of the Rokeya and Shamsunnahar Halls demanded immediate withdrawal of the order and punishment to the miscreants.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, assured the students that appropriate action would be taken against the culprits.

See page 12 Col 3

Delhi postpones missile test

NEW DELHI, May 12: The government Thursday conceded that it was postponing a ballistic missile test, but denied jettisoning the ambitious project under pressure from Washington, reports AP.

"There was no pressure on the country to abandon its missile programmes", Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao told Parliament.

Rao's statement came two days before he was to fly to the United States for a summit with President Clinton.

Opposition lawmakers this week forced a debate in Parliament after newspapers reported that Rao had asked Indian scientists to delay the test launch of a surface-to-surface ballistic missile. Lawmakers had accused Rao of buckling to the US and putting off the 285 million dollar project.

"There was and is no intention of stopping the trials," M Mallikarjun, junior defence See Page 12 Col 7

Thai envoy offers assistance for cyclone victims

Thai ambassador in Bangladesh Sunthorn Vidhyameth called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday and offered his country's assistance for the cyclone victims, reports UNB.

The envoy also conveyed sympathy for the loss of lives and property in the recent cyclonic disaster during his first meeting with the Prime Minister at her office.

The Thai government is willing to cooperate with Bangladesh in overcoming the losses, he said.

Begum Zia thanked the ambassador for the offer, but said that her government had decided to tackle the aftermath of the disaster with its own resources. "If necessary, we will See Page 12 Col 8

Reception in Tokyo

Work to promote country's image: Hasina

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has appealed to the Bangladeshis residing in Japan to contribute their mite towards building a prosperous and democratic Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Hasina, who is now in Tokyo in connection with the council meeting of the Socialist International, was addressing a reception organised by the Japan branch of the Awami League at the Edogawa Bunka Centre in Tokyo city on Wednesday.

Mrs Hayakawa, widow of late Japanese parliamentarian Hayakawa, presided over the function, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

Terming Bangladeshis living abroad as the country's ambas- See Page 12 Col 2

STAR QUIZ 3 PRIZES

With deep regret, Management of The Daily Star is obliged to cancel the following prizes of STAR QUIZ 3 (the Lucky Draw of which was held on 8 May, 1994, at the Jatiya Press Club Auditorium) for violation of Rule 1 of the Competition Rules:

First Prize

Shahed Latif
3/1, Purana Paltan
Dhaka

Second Prize

Ummey Kulsum
513, Dhania
Demra, Dhaka

Fourth Prizes

1. Md. Delwar Hossain Khan
9/13, Tajmahal Road
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

2. Munira Sharmin
58/27, North Mughdapara
Dhaka

3. P. Murad
10, Wyre Street,
Wari, Dhaka.

The other prize winners will receive their respective prizes on the occasion of the Lucky Draw of STAR QUIZ 4 on 17th May '94, at the Jatiya Press Club Auditorium.

The cancelled prizes of Quiz 3 will be added to the prizes of Quiz 5. Therefore, Quiz 5 will have 2 (two) First-Prizes (21" Powervision Colour TV) and 2 (two) Second-Prizes (17" Black & White Philips TV) and 8 (eight) Fourth-Prizes (4 dozens Philips bulbs)

— Editor

Launch strike passes second day

By Staff Correspondent

Some 25,000 launch workers abstained from duty for the second day yesterday, leaving thousands of people stranded all over the country.

The workers began their indefinite strike Tuesday night to press home their demand for a minimum wage of Tk. 900.

The National Wage Commission had announced the minimum wages for the workers in December last year but the launch owners did not implement the award. The award also included 30 per cent of the basic as house rent and Tk. 150 as monthly medical allowance.

A leader of the workers, Protap Uddin Ahmed said they went on strike since the owners did not accept the Wage Commission announcement.

"We met the owners' association leaders on Monday but the talks failed," he added.

Protap Uddin said, "We requested the owners to introduce the newly-announced wages from March although the government declared the wages effective from December last, yet the owners didn't agree."

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He alleged that when they went to hold a meeting at the BIWTA terminal at Sadarghat yesterday evening, a gang of hoodlums with rods and sticks prevented them and assaulted some of the workers.

However, the launch owners' association denied their involvement in the incident.

A launch owners' association

leader Abul Kalam Khan said the workers went on strike without giving any prior notice. "They took the decision to go on strike prior to the Eid-ul-Azha holidays when there is a tremendous rush of passengers," he added.

A source in the BIWTA said no launches left the terminal yesterday barring two BIWTA Rocket Service steamers.

According to the LOA officials, the workers had stopped some 3000 cargo and passenger-launches, thereby crippling river transportation all over the country.

The workers did not meet the owners yesterday. The Labour Director has called both the owners and workers for a meeting tomorrow in a bid to resolve the issue, according to an official source.

South's brigade falls: N Yemen

SANAA, Yemen, May 12: The north on Thursday claimed it had captured a southern brigade and was continuing its advance on the southern stronghold of Aden as Yemen's civil war entered its second week, reports AP.

The claim could not be independently confirmed. The north since Saturday has said it was on the verge of seizing Aden, an assertion that appears to have been exaggerated.

It was impossible to tell who had the upper hand, northern forces backing President Ali Abdullah Saleh or supporters of former Vice President Ali Salem al-Baidh, the southern leader.

The north on Thursday said its forces had captured the south's 25th Mechanized Brigade, seizing tanks, artillery, equipment and vehicles in a broadcast on northern-run Sana'a radio, it said a number of southern officers and men sur-

rendered.

Despite the fighting and the vitriolic rhetoric, some northern and southern officials appeared ready to launch a dialogue in a bid to end the war, though previous efforts have failed.

Sporadic fighting flared into civil war last Thursday, shattering hopes for salvaging the 4-year-old union between conservative North Yemen and the socialist south.

QUIZ-4 COUNT DOWN

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