

The Daily Star PUBLIC DEBATE



Today, on Page 4, Rashed Khan Menon, MP and General Secretary, Workers' Party of Bangladesh, argues why the next general elections should be held under a caretaker government.

The Daily Star invites readers' views on the subject.

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NEWS BRIEFS

AL advisory body, presidium meetings

A meeting of the advisory council of Bangladesh Awami League will be held at 10:00 am on June 1, at 29 Minto Road in the city. AL President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting. Another meeting of the Awami League Presidium will be held at 10:00 am on June 2 at 29 Minto Road, reports BSS.

Hanif returns

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif returned home last night after attending an international seminar on 'natural disaster reduction' in Japan. Hanif was received at the Zia International Airport by high officials of the Japanese Embassy in Dhaka, ward commissioners, leaders and workers of the city unit of the Awami League, BSS.

Over 8 lakh girl students to get stipend No alternative to edn for development : PM

More than eight lakh girl students of secondary schools and madrassahs will be given stipend this year as part of government steps to enhance women's participation in education and the country's development, the Prime Minister announced yesterday, reports UNB.

"It will be difficult to bring changes in the social and economic fields unless the participation of women in secondary, technical and higher education can be enhanced. This is why we have taken steps to spark a social revolution within the shortest time by providing stipends to girl students at the secondary level," she said.

She was inaugurating a two-day workshop on the "Role of Secondary, Technical and Higher Education in Human Resource Development and Poverty Alleviation" organised by the Education Ministry at the International Conference Centre in the city.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said there is no alternative to education for transforming the huge population into a resource and making the poverty alleviation programmes successful.

She hoped the country would be able to become self-

sufficient in the education sector very soon and the huge population transformed into a resource as a result of the programmes taken by her government.

The Prime Minister said primary education is the foundation of human resource development and secondary, technical and higher education are the tools for such development.

Begum Zia told the inaugural session of the workshop that her government had undertaken various programmes for the development of secondary, technical and higher education. "The main object of our government is to improve the quality of education to make it purposeful and to use it as a tool for poverty alleviation and economic development", she said.

Many think that the education system of the country has become aimless, the number of unemployed educated people and unrest on campuses are increasing and the lack of values is deepening.

But, the Prime Minister noted with satisfaction, "We have been able to reverse the trend in the last three years. The various programmes adopted for the development

of education have been yielding positive results."

She said women, who constitute half the population, should be involved in secondary, technical and higher education to generate dynamism in the country's socio-economic uplift. "In the developed world, the ratio of female teachers in the secondary level is 55 per cent, but in our country, this ratio is only 10 per cent."

Stressing the need for teachers' training, Begum Zia said it is impossible to bring changes in the education sector unless the teachers are prepared for training.

Presided over by Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar, the inaugural function was also addressed by State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, State Minister for Education Principal Mohammad Eunos Khan, Education Secretary Irshadul Huq and Additional Secretary Begum Khodeza Azam.

The working sessions of the workshop are being participated by senior government officials, policymakers, educationists and representatives of the development partners (donors).

Banks may get interest on SLR shortfall cash

By Inam Ahmed

The government may consider providing interest on the commercial banks' additional funds kept in the current account for shortfall in the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR), according to highly placed officials sources.

However, the non-interest-bearing cash reserve ratio (CRR) will remain as it is.

This new line of thinking has emerged mainly because of an acute shortage of government approved treasury bills and bonds in the market. This situation has forced most banks to deposit cash to the Bangladesh Bank instead of buying bills and bonds.

The banks are forced to keep five per cent of their liabilities in cash with the central bank and another 15 per cent in different government ap-

proved bills and securities against which they get some interest. In the absence of government instruments in the market, the banks have been meeting their SLR requirement in cash, for which they do not get any interest. This whole system is a safety measure for the banks to guard against any sudden heavy withdrawal from any particular bank.

According to sources, the current situation has arisen because some banks and development financing institutions (DFIs) have gone for a policy of holding their bonds. The philosophy behind floating of these transferable bonds was that the banks were to sell these to other banks whenever in need of cash for investment.

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Khaleda holds closed-door meet with party leaders

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister and Chairperson of the BNP Begum Khaleda held a closed-door meeting with two of her party leaders yesterday afternoon to discuss the ways and means to bring back the Opposition to Parliament, party sources said.

Party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder and Chief Whip Delwar Hossain discussed with party chief the options left to them to win over the Opposition, the sources said.

They said that so far the Opposition parties ignored the proposal for a dialogue and stuck to their demand that the government bring a bill seeking a care-taker government for holding general elections.

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JP won't take part in polls under BNP govt

RANGPUR, May 28: Acting Chairman of the Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury today called on the people to step up the movement for elections under caretaker government, reports UNB.

Chowdhury told a public meeting at Shapla Chattar in the town this afternoon that his party would not participate in any election under the BNP government. "Free and fair polls cannot be expected under this government," he added.

He said the present government is in no way a democratic one although it was elected democratically.

Biman engr sues two colleagues for forgery

By Asiuzzaman

The Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines have been sued for getting promotions by submitting forged certificates to the authorities, Biman sources said.

A principal engineer of Biman filed the case with the court of the Second Assistant Judge, Dhaka accusing Ahmed Monwarul Haque, Chief Engineer and Abdur Rahman, Deputy Chief Engineer (Acting) of forgery in getting promotions.

Plaintiff A K M Khairul Anam mentioned in his peti-

tion that according to aviation and Biman rules, Ahmed Monwarul Haque should pass the first licence bar, second licence bar, third licence bar, basic airframe and F-27 airframe examinations to assume the position. But while applying for promotion, he submitted a forged copy of first licence bar certificate, the petitioner alleged.

The petitioner also said that the PIA authorities in Karachi confirmed that Monwarul Haque could not pass the written examination for F-27 air-

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Indian military build up threatens war in the region, says Leghari

SAN FRANCISCO (California) May 28: Pakistan President Sardar Feroq Ahmed Khan Leghari Friday said Indian military build up had created a dangerous situation for its neighbours and a war remains a possibility, reports AFP.

"Almost all of India's military assets are deployed against Pakistan," Leghari observed while addressing a select gathering sponsored by the Commonwealth Club of California and the Pakistan American Association of San Francisco.

Sardar Feroq Leghari said Pakistan was prepared to continue dialogue with India on the Kashmir issue. But added that this dialogue could hardly succeed while the killing continues in Kashmir. The President said India had spurned various specific proposals which could pave the way for meaningful dialogue leading to resolution of outstanding dispute, on top being Kashmir issue.

President Leghari said some steps are indispensable like the release of jailed Kashmiri leaders, the removal of the

military bunkers around Hazratbal Mosque, permission to international human rights organisations and the media to visit India-held Kashmir freely, the withdrawal of some Indian troops from Kashmir, and the lifting of the infamous emergency laws to improve the human rights situation in Kashmir.

He urged the Americans to take a moral position on the human rights abuse in occupied Kashmir and go beyond partisan or national considerations. He said the United

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Brothers Union defender Moon (C) and custodian Ponir make a dual attempt to thwart a Mohammedan attack while the diminutive striker of the black and whites, Asaduzzaman (R) keeps his eyes on the ball in the first semifinal of the DMFA Cup football tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Brothers Union won the match 5-4 in the tie-breaker after the 120-minute showdown ended goalless.

— Star photo

Hasina demands writing off of agri loans

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for implementing the Prime Minister's announcement to the effect that agricultural loans up to Tk 5,000, borrowed by cooperative farmers would be exempted, reports UNB.

Talking to a delegation of the National Cooperative Action Council at 29 Minto Road in the afternoon, she criticised the government for not keeping the Prime Minister's promise to the cooperative farmers.

She alleged that the BNP has bluffed the whole nation by making false promises to the people. The ruling party leaders made false commitments at different places for gaining cheap popularity. The nation will have to be saved from de-

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Brothers in DMFA Cup final at MSC's cost

Sports Reporter

Brothers Union sent Mohammedan Sporting Club's hattrick ambition in smoke when the underdogs of the first semifinal of the third DMFA Cup emerged winners in a marathon match culminating in the tie breakers at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The Gopibagh outfit, who had earlier shared the first DMFA Cup with Mohammedans, sufficiently atoned for their poor finishing to carve a 5-4 victory after a gruelling 120-minute battle marked with eye-soring sterility.

Kaiser Hamid, Mohammedan's veteran defender and a regular member of the national team, relived a personal nightmare since his infamous failure to convert a penalty against the Maldives in the Sixth SAF Games last De-

ember when he feebly hit his team's first of the five stipulated spot kicks to the right of Ponir, allowing the Brothers custodian pull off a decisive save.

After the four shooters from each team — Shahzada, Uttam, Biplab and Bakhtiar of Brothers and Riaz, Shabbir, Roxy and Asad of Mohammedans — found the net with relative ease, skipper Satyajit Das Rupu fittingly sent the ball home with a clever left-footer to spark off a spell of delicious delight in the orange camp.

The second half, however, saw Mohammedans launch an all-out assault in the first quarter with the Brothers defence seemingly surviving in an oxygen tent. Andrey Kazakov, Mohammedan's Russian forward,

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DOE's prescription for Dhanmondi lake

By Masud Hasan Khan

The Department of Environment (DOE) has recommended that the Dhaka City Corporation close all sewage lines and drains connected with Dhanmondi lake to protect its bio-diversity.

A recent report of the DOE on the water quality of the 150-bigha lake cautioned that all fish and other aquatic life would be at stake if immediate steps were not taken to seal the 44 drains and four storm sewer lines belonging to the residents of Dhanmondi, WASA and the city corporation.

Besides, the lake would be-

come unfit for recreational activities like angling because of too much contamination of its water.

Quoting results of the water quality tests, the DOE report said that at several points of the Dhanmondi lake the rate of dissolved oxygen in the water was found much below the danger line.

At one point near Mirpur Road, the rate of dissolved oxygen was estimated at zero, it said.

For survival of fish and other aquatic animals and

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Bodo tribesmen kill 22 in Assam

NEW DELHI, May 28: Indian army with orders to shoot rioters on sight took positions today after a burst of ethnic violence left at least 22 people dead and many injured in the northeastern frontier state of Assam, reports AFP.

The army joined police and paramilitary reinforcements in the riot-hit district of Kokrajhar, where fighting between Bodo tribesmen and Assamese natives broke out late Friday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia told reporters in Guwa-

hati, Assam's main city, that the security forces had been armed with shoot-on-sight orders to deter troublemakers.

The riots engulfed 10 villages in the Kokrajhar countryside as Bodos — among whom a militant group is fighting for a tribal homeland to be carved out of Assam — went on the rampage setting non-Bodo homes and property on fire.

"Some of the villages were burning throughout the night and smoke is still billowing out," PTI quoted official sources in Guwahati as saying,

Sixty missing as launch sinks in Sandwip channel

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 28: At least sixty passengers, including two women, are reportedly missing when an overcrowded passenger launch capsized at Muradpur point of Sandwip channel under Sitakunda thana this morning. The district police officials here confirmed the incident. The Chittagong-bound launch from Sandwip was carrying over 300 passengers.

The rest of the passengers swam ashore, police claimed. Sitakunda police started a search operation in the channel after the mishap but no one was rescued so far.

Most of the passengers were returning to the port city after Eid holidays. Meanwhile many people including the relatives of victims are thronging the Sitakunda ghat to enquire about the passengers.

31 Bangladeshi Hajis died, 18 still missing

At least 31 Bangladeshi Hajis died and 18 other have still remained untraced, Foreign Ministry sources said here yesterday, reports BSS.

Of the deaths, 17 were killed in the Meena stampede and other incidents while the rest 14 either died of diseases or faced natural death, the sources said.

Meanwhile, the three inquiry teams formed with members from the Bangladesh Hajj Mission, Hajj welfare delegation and Bangladesh Consulate under the supervision of Bangladesh Ambassador in Saudi Arabia so far identified bodies of 12 persons who died in the stampede and other mishaps. They are: Abdul Majid Miah, son of Mohammad Manu, son of Ibrahim, Mujibur Rahman — holder of passport No "K 81897", Mohammad Anwar Ali Chowdhury, Imam of Jamaica Masjid of New York, Sayeda Khatoon, wife of Yusuf Ali, Shamsul Alam, son of Nur Ali, Akil Mia, son of M Mozammel, Syed Mohammad Mahmud, son of Abdul Jabbar, Israfiq Khan (father unknown), Shafigur Rahman, son of Ranju Mia, Mohammad Nurul Huda, son of Eunos Pariduddin and Mansur Ahmed, son of Amin.

The teams also provisionally identified five bodies as those of Bangladeshis although it would take some more time to gather their detailed identities. The teams presume that

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GP Sylhet unit faces split

By Staff Correspondent

The Sylhet district unit of the Gonoatriti Party (GP) faced a split yesterday on the question whether the party should merge with the mainstream opposition Awami League or continue to work with its independent identity.

Sources in the GP say, the division in the Sylhet district unit was a prelude to the division of the party throughout the country.

However, Abdul Odud, president of the Sylhet district unit of the party, and his local supporters felt during the annual conference of the unit yesterday that the Gonoatriti Party should join the AL.

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Britain expels Iranian diplomat

LONDON, May 28: Britain has ordered the expulsion of an Iranian diplomat, a London newspaper said Saturday, one month after Britain alleged Iranian intelligence was in secret contact with the IRA, reports AP.

The expulsion order is the latest in a series of rows between the two countries.

Iranian charge d'affaires Gholamreza Ansari was told of the decision to expel one of his high ranking assistants on Thursday when he was summoned to see Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd, the Guardian reported. The diplomat was not identified.



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