

Inside Today

Sport

Special World Cup '94
 Coverage
 Pages 5, 6, 7

Article

Evolving a Security Perspective for Bangladesh

by Brig (Retd) M Abdul Hafiz
 Page 4

International

OIC team rushes to Islamabad with Afghan peace plan



Arafat goes to Gaza tomorrow
 Page 9

Business

USAID to provide \$2.35m for rural electrification programme in Bangladesh

BCCI scandal: Pakistan won't extradite Abedi
 Pages 10, 11

Supplement

Tabloid-size Computer Special

Science and Technology

When Going to School Could Save Your Life: UK-Continental Europe Gas Link Moves Closer; Affordable Automation; 'Queer Fish' and Feminised Crocodiles Set off Fertility Alarm; Eurofighter Makes Official Debut; Science Briefs
 Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Silent Drama in Driftwood
 Page 3

BNP places bill for electoral reform

By Staff Correspondent

A bill seeking authority for the Election Commission (EC) to issue identity cards to the voters and suggest punitive measures against officials found guilty of violating rules while conducting elections was introduced in Parliament yesterday.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, while moving the proposed legislation — the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill 1994 — said, it would further strengthen, improve and empower the EC to ensure free, fair and impartial general elections.

The bill also suggests the formation of an electoral in-

quiry committee (EIC) with judicial officers for prevention and control of pre-poll irregularities.

The committee, to be established by the Election Commission, shall inquire into any matter or situation which may constitute an offence or which may involve any act or omission constituting intimidation, obstruction, coercion or publication of false information, intended to or actually resulting in the obstruction or frustration of the preparation for or conduct of free and fair election.

The committee shall inform the Election Commission with-

in three days of the inquiry and may recommend corrective measures. Non-compliance with any one of the corrective orders may be punished with fine not exceeding Tk 5,000.

The bill also proposes that no government official, including judicial officers below the District Judge, Deputy Commissioner, the Superintendent of Police or officers subordinate to any of the said officials in a district, shall be transferred without prior consultation with the EC authorities two weeks before and after elections.

However, according another

JS okays budget

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Sangsad (JS) yesterday passed the national budget for fiscal 1994-95 by adopting the Appropriation Bill, 1994 by voice vote.

The Appropriation Bill granted a sum not exceeding Taka 28,793 crore 89 lakh 5 thousand, out of the consolidated fund, to meet the grants and the charged expenditures of various ministries during fiscal 1994-95 ending June 30 next year (1995).

The amount included a non-volatile expenditure of Taka 5,601 crore 2 lakh and 74 thousand.

The bill was adopted, with the opposition benches empty, without any discussion on the cut motions.

Finance Minister M Saifur See Page 12 Col 8

Rival groups call hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

A countrywide hartal has been called today by rival groups separately in support of their conflicting demands creating a tense situation in the city and elsewhere.

While both the groups have announced programmes to agitate on the streets today, the law enforcing agencies have taken all out preparations to prevent any untoward incident. Several thousand BDR personnel, police and Ansars will be posted at strategic points in the metropolis on the day.

Jamaat-e-Islami and some other organisations have called a half-day hartal demanding trial of controversial writer Taslima Nasreen, declaration of Kadianis as non-Muslims, banning of NGO activities and

enactment of blasphemy laws. Some of these organisations have also raised demands to ban several national dailies.

Anti-communal Students Society, an alliance of pro-liberation student organisations, have called for a dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal today demanding trial of Jamaat leader Golam Azam as a war criminal and ban on religion-based politics and parties.

Awami League, left-leaning political parties, Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and various socio-cultural organisations including Sammita Sangkritik Jote have extended support to the hartal call of the students urging all to resist

fundamentalists and communalism. See Page 12 Col 7

FRIDAY'S WORLD CUP MATCHES ON TV

Group D: Greece vs Nigeria 05:30 (BST)
 * Group D match between Argentina and Bulgaria at 05:30 will not be telecast live

Clashes mark campaign for today's hartal

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, June 29: A clash between two rival groups here today left at least 50 people injured.

The fight between the activists of the Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannaya Committee and the 'NGO Apatatpara O Nastik Murtad Protirodh Committee' occurred after the two organisations brought out processions, both supporting tomorrow's hartal.

The hartal call was given by the Protirodh Committee demanding capital punishment for writer Taslima Nasreen and a ban on NGO activities. The Samannaya Committee gave the hartal call to press the demand for the trial of Golam Azam as a war criminal and resisting fundamentalism.

During the 45-minute fracas in the heart of the town, both groups exploded crackers and used sticks and bricks. Police lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the rioters. None was, however, arrested.

According to sources, Delhi. See Page 12 Col 4

Thousands mourn Jahanara Imam's death

By DU Correspondent

Thousands of people from all walks of life joined the procession of the Nirmul Samannaya Committee yesterday afternoon to mourn the death of Jahanara Imam.

The procession, brought out from the Central Shaheed Minar at about 5 pm ended at the Zero Point.

The processionists wore black badges.

Jahanara Imam, the chief of the Committee, died of throat cancer at a US hospital last Sunday (June 26).

Teachers, students, intellectuals, politicians and activists of different socio-cultural, political, professional and feminist organisations participated in the procession.

Sticks, stones seized from Jamaat office

By Staff Correspondent

In a surprise early morning raid yesterday, the police seized a large number of sticks and stones from the Purana Paltan office of the Jamaat-e-Islami.

The raid by law enforcing agencies is being seen as a pre-emptive action against any possible violence feared during the day-long hartal, called by opposing forces, today.

Acting on a tip off that 'ammunition' for use during the hartal were being stored, a contingent from the Mottijheel See Page 12 Col 1

PM renews call to Opposition Return to JS to resolve issues



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia making a statement in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday calling upon the opposition MPs to return to the House and participate in the discussions on the Bill for electoral reforms. — PID photo

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday renewed her call to the Opposition parties to return to Parliament and help resolve various national issues.

"We once worked together to restore democracy and I am hopeful that we will be able to work together to strengthen the electoral process," the Leader of the House told Parliament without referring to the Awami League and Jammata-Islami.

"It is a conspiracy of the deposed autocratic rulers. I hope the major Opposition parties will come out of the clutches of the autocrats," she said taking the floor after the national budget for fiscal 1994-95 was passed.

Turning to the bill seeking amendment of the electoral process, introduced just before her speech, Begum Zia said that suggestions from the Opposition parties would make the bill a complete one to enable the Election Commission to conduct any election in a free and fair atmosphere.

She ruled out the idea of a caretaker government and said See Page 12 Col 1

SDP chief new Japanese PM

TOKYO, June 29: Putting aside a half-century of often bitter rivalry, Japan's leading conservative and liberal parties joined forces Wednesday in an unlikely alliance that gives the country its first Socialist prime minister since 1948, reports AP.

Cutting short an intense power struggle that left Japan's foreign and economic policies in limbo, Parliament's 511-seat lower house elected Socialist chairman Tomichi Murayama prime minister 261 to 214.

Japan's fourth prime minister in a year, he succeeds Tsutomu Hata, who was forced to resign because his coalition lacked a majority in Parliament.

Murayama will head a coalition dominated by Japan's largest party, the Liberal Democrats, who ruled the country from 1955 until they were forced from power last summer.

"This is my first time to speak from such a position,"

Murayama said after the vote. "My heart is throbbing."

Murayama's selection provided a temporary reprieve from the political pandemonium that followed Hata's resignation Saturday. But it brings to power an unlikely alliance of Japan's most left-leaning and conservative political forces.



Tomichi Murayama

Like Hata, who resigned after only two months in office, Murayama is likely to have a brief tenure in office; he said before Wednesday's vote that he planned to dissolve Parliament and call general elections.

But he is unlikely to do so for at least a few weeks, given the high priority Tokyo places on attending the annual summit of major industrial nations, scheduled to begin July 8 in Naples, Italy.

A Socialist-led government is bound to raise doubts about Japan's policies toward North Korea as well as its other foreign policy commitments.

The Socialists have maintained close ties with North Korea's Communist leaders and they initially opposed international moves — put aside pending a summit between the two Koreans planned for next month — to impose sanctions against North Korea over its refusal to accept nuclear inspections.

See Page 12 Col 7

JS boycott right of MPs: Tofael

By Staff Correspondent

A top leader of the Awami League yesterday said the Opposition's boycott of Parliament is aimed at ensuring people's right to vote in a free atmosphere which is possible only under a non-party government.

Talking to UNB, Tofael Ahmed, MP, said the Opposition was compelled to go for an indefinite boycott of the House to press for the demand as the ruling party failed to bring a bill seeking constitutional provisions for a neutral caretaker government to conduct national polls.

He said there are lot of instances of boycott in parliamentary history in different countries of the world. In the recent past the Opposition in Japanese parliament boycotted the budget session till the resignation of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa.

In Pakistan, he said, the Opposition led by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif See Page 12 Col 6

Holland top Group F Saudis stun Belgium

WASHINGTON, June 29: The Netherlands and World Cup debutants Saudi Arabia went through to the second round on Wednesday, report agencies.

The Netherlands beat Morocco 2-1 to finish level on six points and also on goal difference with the Saudis, shock 1-0 winners over Belgium.

But the Dutch won Group F by virtue of having beaten the Middle East team in their head-to-head clash, the Saudis taking second place.

The Belgians also had six points and a similar goal difference to the top two but had to settle for third spot because they scored fewer goals. However, they went through as one of the four best third-placed teams.

Morocco did not gain any points, finished bottom and were eliminated.

In the second round, the Dutch will face Ireland in Orlando while the Saudis will meet Sweden in Dallas.

Dennis Bergkamp put the Dutch ahead against Morocco two minutes before halftime but Hassan Nader equalised two minutes after the interval. Substitute Brian Roy sealed victory for the Netherlands with a 78th minute strike.

A stunning goal by Saeed Owairan gave Saudi Arabia a surprise fifth minute lead.

Owairan went on a twisting solo run all the way from midfield to score and give Saudi Arabia a 1-0 halftime lead.

In a goal reminiscent of Diego Maradona's run through See Page 12 Col 3

BLUE CROSS SCORE BOARD

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

Group A:	Russia 6: Cameroon 1
Group B:	Brazil 1: Sweden 1
Group F:	Holland 2: Morocco 1
Group E:	S Arabia 1: Belgium 0

STANDINGS

Group A:	P W D L F A Pts	Group D:	P W D L F A Pts
Romania	3 2 0 1 5 5 6	Argentina	2 2 0 0 6 1 6
Switzerland	3 1 1 5 4 4	Nigeria	2 1 0 1 4 2 3
USA	3 1 1 3 3 4	Bulgaria	2 1 0 1 4 3 3
Columbia	3 1 1 2 4 5 3	Greece	2 0 0 2 0 8 0
Group B:	P W D L F A Pts	Group E:	P W D L F A Pts
Brazil	3 2 1 0 6 1 7	Mexico	3 1 1 1 3 3 4
Sweden	3 1 2 0 6 4 5	Ireland	3 1 1 1 2 2 4
Russia	3 1 0 2 7 6 3	Italy	3 1 1 1 2 2 4
Cameroon	3 0 1 2 3 11 1	Norway	3 1 1 1 1 1 4
Group C:	P W D L F A Pts	Group F:	P W D L F A Pts
Germany	3 2 1 0 5 3 7	Holland	3 2 0 1 4 3 6
Spain	3 1 2 0 6 4 5	S Arabia	3 2 0 1 4 3 6
S Korea	3 0 2 1 4 4 5	Belgium	3 2 0 1 2 1 6
Bolivia	3 0 1 2 1 4 1	Morocco	3 0 0 3 2 5 0

100% FULL CREAM SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK

Tk 1910 cr BB rural credit programme

Some Tk 1910 crore will be given to farmers and rural people in credit during the next financial year under an indicative policy announced by the Bangladesh Bank yesterday, reports UNB.

The amount is Tk 267 crore higher than that of the outgoing fiscal. The disbursement target of FY 1993-94 was Tk 1643 crore.

Bangladesh Bank announced the policy in consultation with the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) and Samabaya Bank.

Besides the indicative target, private commercial banks will also disburse agricultural and rural credit. Grameen Bank has already undertaken a step to operate a Tk 2273 crore credit activities during the coming 1994-95 fiscal under its rural credit expansion programme. The Government/Bangladesh Bank will

provide Tk 950 crore for this purpose.

Rural credit programmes of Pally Sahayak Foundation and other NGOs as well as credit programme under different poverty-alleviation projects of various ministries will also be operated side by side the indicative policy.

The NCBs, BRDB and Samabaya Bank had disbursed a total loan of Tk 1020.34 crore till June 15 this year, up by 33.42 per cent or Tk 255.61 crore from that of the corresponding period of last year.

A total of Tk 870.59 crore was recovered till June 15 this year, which is Tk 101.74 crore or 13.23 per cent higher than that of corresponding period of last year.

The policy directed the banks and other financial institutions to earmark 50 per cent of their total allocation of annual credit programme for short-term crop loan.

Budget to turn country into Indian market, says Moudud

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party parliamentary leader Moudud Ahmed has said that the budget passed by Parliament yesterday will turn the country into an 'Indian market.'

"It is a budget for traders, not for the manufacturers," he said in a press briefing yesterday at his Parliament office.

He said tariff rates for finished imported products and raw materials are almost the same and a big neighbour like India would be benefited by this.

He alleged that Indian goods have already flooded the local markets, and the country would have to face an economic aggression the impact of which would obviously be reflected in the national policies.

"It is an anti-people budget and the people would not accept it. See Page 12 Col 3

Today's is a BNP hartal: Menon

By Staff Correspondent

Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon yesterday called upon all democratic forces, including the Awami League, to free the country from the misrule of BNP.

He said the BNP has lost its credibility and image because of its corruption. "It has now created an atmosphere of confrontation in the country by its alliance with the fundamentalist forces," he added.

Menon was addressing a meeting of the party workers in the capital yesterday.

The WP General Secretary alleged that the June 30 hartal is in fact a hartal of the ruling party, although the BNP Secretary General has denied his party's involvement.

The BNP has been doing so to divert the attention of the people from the demand for a caretaker government. Menon said adding the government bill for strengthening the Election Commission is another attempt to 'mislead' the people.

BENGAL BISCUITS LIMITED
ANNOUNCEMENT
 At the request of the Prospective Investors, we are pleased to announce that the last date for submission of Applications for investment in the Shares of Bengal Biscuits Limited has been extended upto July 3, 1994.

The Prospective Investors are requested to please contact Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd., ICB, Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd., IFIC Bank Ltd., National Bank Ltd., Rupali Bank Ltd., Janata Bank, National Credit and Commerce Bank Ltd., and Agrani Bank Branches for Prospectus and Share Application Forms.

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