

Rwandan refugees returning home

GOMA, Zaire, July 24: Rwandan refugees started trickling home after Zaire reopened the border Sunday, and the death toll from cholera, exhaustion and dehydration skyrocketed in the filthy makeshift camps, reports AP.

US food and medical supplies were on the way to the refugees, but aid workers say it won't prevent more deaths this week.

There were estimates that as many as 10,000 people have died since Wednesday.

"Everybody is dying here," Jean de Dieu Kadogo, a farmer from the border near Tanzania said as he led a small boy across the border. "We'd rather go home."

Cholera is spreading rapidly through the camps, the result of critical shortages of clean

drinking water, while other people are dying of other diseases and malnutrition.

There are 8,000 corpses from the last 48 hours, French Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said Saturday in Goma in an interview with France-2 television.

Thousands of refugees massed at the Rwandan border, hoping to return home and escape the camps, which are filled with decomposing corpses, the smell of excrement and smoke from cooking fires.

5 Sarbaharamen held in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, July 24: Three top leaders and two activists of the Sarbahara party were arrested by Kotwali police Saturday evening, reports UNB.

Party leaflets, other important papers like diaries, pocket tape recorders and some audio tapes were recovered from their possession.

In a press briefing this evening Police Superintendent Fazlur Rahman said acting on information OC of Kotwali thana M K M Kabir intercepted a private microbus at the Daulatdia ghat road-crossing July 23 evening.

From inside the microbus, three leaders and two active members of the outlawed party were arrested and brought to the thana under strict police guard.

They gave their identities as Atiar Ali Biswas of Goloknagar village in Saikupa thana of Jhenidah district, Nazim Ahmed of Basandia village in Kotwali thana of Jessore, Badiul Alam of PTI Para, Magura, Zakir Hossain Raja of Berait village in Magura and Mukul Ahmed of Pipalita village in Jhalkathi district.

Bangladesh Bank clarification

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has denied that it had proposed to the Finance Ministry withdrawal of the commercial bank's Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).

The BB felt that the present level of SLR was justified for prudent and healthy banking, according to a clarification issued by it on a report published in The Daily Star on July 23.

Our sources, however, said the SLR issue was discussed in different bank forums, though it was not formally proposed. The error is regretted.

Abu Hena

From Page 1 Col 8

have condemned the arrest of their secretary general alleging it was done as part of the design to harass the members of the professionals' body.

"This is a conspiracy," commented Dr M A Majed, chairman of the Prokrichi.

At a meeting, the Council observed that a section of bureaucrats has resorted to "administrative terrorism."

Prokrichi leaders criticised the government for "bowing to the bureaucrats and not taking any action against the G-10 members in the administration."

The council also demanded immediate removal of the secretary to the Prime Minister and the Director General of the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Strike in Kathmandu

From Page 1 Col 5

until elections in November after he resigned on July 10 following the defeat of the government's annual plan in parliament.

Renegade members of Koirala's Nepal Congress party joined hands with the Nepal Communist Party (United Marxists and Leninists) in demanding Koirala's resignation and the restoration of parliament.

After the demonstrations, the demonstrators converged for a public meeting at the open theatre in the centre of Kathmandu township.

Leftist leaders took turns criticising Koirala's "anti-constitutional" move to get parliament dissolved.

A former NCP member of parliament, C P Mainali, charged that there was an "unholy alliance" between the King and Koirala to eliminate democracy in Nepal, urging the monarch to immediately dismiss the premier and restore parliament.

Another report says: Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala faced a rebellion from within his Nepali Congress (NC) party today and new demonstrations against his contested government.

NC General Secretary

Maheendra Narayan Nidhi sent a letter to King Birendra on behalf of the party central committee demanding the Prime Minister be sacked and parliament restored; a party source said.

The Nepali Congress is even to join the Communist opposition to campaign against Koirala. Seventy extreme left wingers were arrested Saturday night in new protests against the dissolution of parliament.

King Birendra ordered elections for November after Koirala's government programme was voted down on July 11. Koirala now leads a bitterly contested caretaker government.

The beleaguered Prime Minister is one of 27 members of the NC central committee that agreed the letter blaming him for the current crisis.

"Despite the humble requests of the NC President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and the NC supreme leader Ganesh Man Singh, Koirala has repeatedly refused to step down," Nidhi said.

The six main Communist factions have meanwhile changed their call for a 72-hour general strike to a twelve-hour dawn-to-dusk strike.



Visitors at the photo exhibition on Jahanara Imam at the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Photo exhibition on Jahanara Imam opens

By Staff Correspondent

Ekatturer Jatree, an organisation of freedom fighters, opened a photographic exhibition on Jahanara Imam at the Fine Arts Institute, Dhaka University, yesterday.

The exhibition of a collection of 200 photographs, mostly taken after Jahanara Imam set up "Gono Adalat" for the trial of Golan Azam and other collaborators, was inaugurated by poet Begum Sufia Kamal at the Zainul Gallery of the Institute.

Photographs taken by Rashid Talukder, Dr Shahidul Alam, Pavel Rahman, Shamsul Haque, Rakib Khan and Yusuf Saad are on display in the exhibition which will remain open for all from 2:00 pm to 8:00 pm everyday until July 30.

Some rare collections from the family album of Jahanara Imam are also on display.

21 JP men acquitted

SIRAJGANJ, July 24: Twenty-one Jatya Party members, including the Pura Chairman of Shahjadpur, were acquitted today of terrorism charges, reports UNB.

Abdul Aziz, general secretary of the Jatyatadabi Chhatra Dal Shahjadpur Government College unit, filed a case against them on November 27 last year under the Anti-Terrorism Act after a clash between the supporters of the JCD and JP.

Police chargesheeted the 21. Among them, Shahjadpur Pura Chairman and President of the JP thana unit Hasibur Rahman Swapan appeared before the Judge's Court and prayed for bail on July 19.

The prayer was rejected and he was sent to jail. The 20 other accused are still absconding.

Hartal was observed on July 20 at Shahjadpur in protest against the arrest of Swapan.

N'ganj market

From Page 1 Col 6

Witnesses said eight to ten young men aged between 20 and 30 went on the rampage for half an hour beginning around 9:30 at night at Khwaja Super Market. They exploded some 40 crackers and fired 10 rounds of shot into the air during their operation.

The electric supply was cut off. None could apprehend the youngsters. They damaged whatever they got in front," said an eye witness.

The wounded people were admitted to the Narayanjanj General Hospital. They were Milon, Pompy, Monir and David. All the three except David were shop owners. David is a vice president of the Narayanjanj unit of Jatyatadabi Jubo Dal. All the victims suffered splinter and stab wounds.

None could say why the gunmen attacked. Some shop owners thought it might be the consequence of a long-running rift between the bullies of Chashara and Deobhog.

Police visited the spot after the gunmen had fled. No arrest was made. A case was lodged with the Narayanjanj Police Station.

Jamaat, APSU

From Page 1 Col 5

In the back-drop of such a tense situation, the law-enforcing authorities today held separate meetings with the leaders of Jamaat, APSU and other political parties to persuade them to withdraw their programme of public meeting at the same venue. But the negotiations failed as the rival groups reportedly refused to relent.

Meanwhile, the authorities are planning to deploy BDR and Riot Police in the city from tomorrow evening to prevent any outbreak of violence, administration sources said.

Bangladesh likely to be warmer, wetter

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh is likely to get warmer and wetter in future, with food and fish production increased, due to the possible impact of the climate change that may take place in the country.

The boon may, however, turn into a bane if the country's population continues to swell at the present rate, over-exploitation of resources goes unchecked and natural disasters show no sign of letting up, a set of books on the impact of the Green House effects and climate change on Bangladesh pointed out.

The books, fruit of a study conducted by a group of scientists from home and abroad, disclosed that the country's average monsoon rainfall might increase by 10 to 15 per cent than at present and the winter rainfall by five to 10 per cent.

The increased rainfall is likely to reduce the period of drought, raise the level of ground water table and meet the demand for irrigation water, the study pointed out. The increased rainfall could, however, increase the frequency and the severity of floods in the country, it added.

The study, titled "Bangladesh: Green House Effect and Climate Change" was conducted by the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad in cooperation with Centre for Environmental and Resources Studies of the University of Waikato, New Zealand and Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia, UK.

The seven-volume study said that the Kharif crops such as Aus, Aman and jute production would benefit from the higher temperature while the rabi crops like wheat, potato and pulse might suffer reduced yield.

Speakers at the launching ceremony of the books in the city yesterday called for raising the public awareness of the possible implications of the climate change in the country.

They also suggested evolving indigenous adaptive mechanism to face the assortment of problems that may crop up from the climate change. Chaired by Prof Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Chairman of the BUP, the launching ceremony was addressed by Syed A N M Wahed, Director General of the Department of Environment, Dr Anun Nishat of the BUET and Ann Doris Capistrano of the Ford Foundation.

Seminar on SAPTA

From Page 1 Col 7

tion, we are making a political commitment towards each other."

The press briefing was also attended by Mukesh Gulati, regional representative of Friedrich Naumann Stiftung FNST, the German organisation that jointly organised the seminar.

The seminar earlier suggested preparation of request list for the items which each of the SAARC countries wants to export.

The seminar maintained that joint ventures in air, rail and sea transport could benefit all the countries concerned.

The seminar said that investments in the energy sector also could be initiated and service sectors should be covered by the SAPTA.

BSS adds: Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam in his inaugural speech said the success of the SAPTA would depend on how best the governments and trade and industries of the member nations strived to translate it into a reality.

SAPTA has immense potentials to foster closer economic ties and trade relations and to gradually integrate and transform the economies of the South Asian countries into dynamic ones, the Minister said.

The seminar is the fourth of its kind being organised under the banner of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the member countries to create awareness of the arrangement and elicit support from the business communities. Similar seminars were already held in Kathmandu, Karachi and New Delhi and are due to be held in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

The recommendations and suggestions emerging out of the national seminars will be pooled together at the concluding regional seminar which will be held in Kathmandu in November this year.

The inaugural session of the seminar was also addressed by FBCCI President Mahbubur

Taslima can't speak for Muslims, says Saudi Gazette

Taslima Nasreen's pronouncements against the Quran are blasphemous and she cannot claim to speak for the Muslims, according to an article published in a Saudi Arabian daily, reports BSS.

Taslima's pronouncements against the Quran, are doubtless blasphemous, but again her allegations are without proof," the article published in the Saudi Gazette on July 22 said. It said "Taslima and her likes cannot claim to speak for the Muslim community, for the millions of Muslim women around the world. She cannot speak even for herself as a Muslim."

Terming her as "part of the global conspiracy to malign Islam and Muslims and to keep them involved in one or the other controversy," the "Radiancy" article carried by the daily said the "Muslims would do well to remember that Taslima is just the tip of the iceberg."

The article advised Muslims not to "allow themselves to be part of the controversy by making Taslima a heroine." Instead energies and efforts should be directed towards another factor which has emerged from the issue — the misinformation about Islam amongst non-Muslims, the paper said.

Referring to Taslima's recent interview with Australian television in which she stated that women were treated as slaves in Islam, the article said mere allegations are not enough. Proof must be furnished for such mindless statements, it stressed.

"The fact is that in Islam, in Muslim society, women live like queens, not slaves. Islam is a religion of equality and justice, equality not only between men and women, but between all men," the article said.

As for Taslima's statements and utterances the article said "Her outbursts against Islam is nothing new, history has seen far greater attacks and the humiliation of the attackers against Islam."

US ship carrying Jawara heading for Dakar

BANJUL, July 24: A US warship carrying ousted Gambian President Sir Dawda Jawara steamed out of Banjul today, diplomats said, reports Reuter.

They said the US navy tank-landing ship La Moure County carrying Jawara, members of his family and senior officials was believed to be heading for Dakar, capital of neighbouring Senegal.

AFP adds: Gambia remained virtually cut off from the outside world today following an overnight curfew imposed after the military ousted long-time leader Jawara in a bloodless coup.

Businessman

From Page 1 Col 8

assistant commissioner Abdus Salam raided 27, Dilkusha Commercial Area in the city and arrested Hayatullah around 4 in the afternoon.

According to police, the Customs surveillance men had held one Nazmul Haque at Zia International Airport (ZIA) on March 3 this year with dollar, pound, dollar-draft and money-order equivalent to Tk 1.5 crore and the arrest of Hayatullah was a follow-up of its investigation.

Nazmul disclosed to police that the money belonged to Hayatullah, a DB source said.

Police said Hayatullah was also involved in gold-smuggling but did not specify any case.

Earlier police confiscated the property of Hayatullah following an order of a city magistrate. A case was lodged with Cantonment police. Hayatullah was detained in the city's DB office for further interrogation.

ALCWC

From Page 1 Col 8

agitation, the AL central committee is expected to discuss the issue of the Jamaat and make its stand on Jamaat clear to remove any confusion among the people.

Sources said the first phase of the Awami League's action programme is expected to be announced by party chief Sheikh Hasina from a public meeting at Pantapath in the city on August 27.

The ruling party is yet to make any headway in resolving the crisis created by the Opposition demand for a caretaker government.

The BNP has set up a three member high powered committee headed by Deputy Leader in Parliament Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury to talk to the Opposition. But the committee is yet to open talks with the Opposition.

The Midnight File

Al Gore dismisses Clinton-Jong meet

WASHINGTON, July 24: Vice President Al Gore Sunday dismissed suggestions about a possible meeting between President Clinton and Kim Jong-il, who is believed to have taken control of North Korea after his father's death. "That suggestion is not in prospect" in the foreseeable future," Gore said on NBC TV's "Meet the Press" programme, reports Reuter.

Mortar attack on Kabul: 6 die

ISLAMABAD, July 24: Six people were killed and 27 injured in rocket and mortar attacks on the Afghan capital Kabul on Saturday night and today, Kabul radio said. The broadcast, monitored in Islamabad, said 36 rockets and mortar bombs were fired by militias controlled by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, both of whom seek to topple President Burhanuddin Rabbani, reports Reuter.

Five killed in road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons were killed and two injured in road accidents in and outside the city during the last two days.

An auto-rickshaw driver was killed and two other were injured when a speeding truck knocked their vehicle at Pagla, Narayanganj at about 4:30 pm Sunday.

Driver Mohammed Shamsuddin, 27, died on the spot while Jibon, 35 and Jaynal, 28 were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The victims were going to Narayanganj. A pedestrian was killed when a speeding truck ran over him at Chaidana, Gazipur yesterday morning.

The victim, Mohammed Jahangir Alam, 28, died when a running Noakhali bound train ran over him.

Journalist Abdul Hakim dead

Senior journalist Abdul Hakim, who was the Treasurer of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), died Saturday night at his Rampura residence. He was 60, reports UNB.

Late Hakim was suffering from blood and bone cancer. His namaz-e-janaza was held at the National Press Club premises yesterday afternoon. Later, the body was sent to his village home at Baulal in Barisal for burial.

BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General M Shahjahan Mia, DUJ President Abul Kalam Azad and General Secretary Abdul Aziz condoled his death and prayed for the departed soul.

Jainul Abedin Azad and Amanullah Kabir, vice-president and secretary general respectively of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Zahirul Haq and Ruhul Amin Gazi, president and general secretary respectively of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Abdul Hakim.

Police disrupt pro-democracy march in Lagos

LAGOS, Nigeria, July 24: Police disrupted a pro-democracy march led by Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka Sunday as striking oil workers announced an extension of their 2 1/2-week-old protest against Nigeria's military government, reports AP.

Frank Kokori, general secretary of the striking National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, said industrial action would continue until Mashood K O Abiola, the apparent winner of last year's presidential election, is freed.

Bodos kill 50

From Page 1 Col 4

dominated villages. About 50 people were also killed in ethnic violence in Kokrajhar in October last year.

Seven opposition parties in Assam today urged the state government, controlled by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) party, to accept responsibility for the deaths and resign.

The massacre is "a result of the total failure of the government in maintaining law and order and it should resign," an opposition leader, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, told reporters here in Assam's main city.

Mahanta, a former Chief Minister, said it was a shame that the government had failed to save those who had taken shelter in its own refugee camps despite extensive security deployment.

"The government should quit because it has failed to protect the lives of the minorities," said Maulana Abdul Haque, General Secretary of a Muslim group, Jamiat-Ulema-Hind.

6 gas fields

From Page 1 Col 7

Petrobranga, the country's lone oil and gas exploration company, was even unable to carry out a 1991 directive by the Prime Minister asking the state-owned company to drill at least one development well each year.

An estimated 800 million US dollar investment is needed in the country's gas sector in the next four years to strike a balance between supply and demand.

The six gas-fields are among the 17 proven fields in the country. Conservative estimates place the total gas reserve at 21 trillion cubic feet of which 12.4 trillion cft is recoverable. Four of the 17 gas-fields — Kailashilla, Rashidpur, Titas and Bakhrabad — account for nearly 75 per cent of the known gas reserves.

Natural gas output increased from 11.5 billion cft in 1972 to 210 billion cft in 1993 and it now accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the country's total commercial energy needs.

The move to attract private investment in the gas sector is prompted by Energy Ministry projections that demand would outstrip the supply of natural gas by next year.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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