

## Manpower export fetches Tk 391 cr in Jan

A parliamentary committee yesterday took stock of the current workers' agitation in private sector jute, textile and spinning mills and suggested a negotiated solution to the dispute, reports UNB.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and Manpower Ministry in its 26th meeting observed that the problem should cordially be resolved between the mill owners and the labourers concerned with a spirit of understanding and cohesion for creating an atmosphere congenial to increasing productivity in both public and private sector mills.

The meeting, held at Sangsad Bhaban with Minister for Labour and Manpower Mir Shaukat Ali in the chair, was apprised that 97.34 million US dollar equivalent to Tk 391.79 crore was earned from wage earners remittances through exporting manpower in January.

This is 15.26 and 14.72 per cent higher than the amounts earned in the corresponding months of 1994 and 1993 respectively.

Whip Ashraf Hossain, Begum Khaleda Rabbani, MP, and Mirza Muraduzzaman, MP,

attended the meeting. Labour and Manpower Secretary Dr Shah Mohammad Farid, senior officials of the ministry and the Labour Directorate were present.

As many as 16,899 workers were exported in 1st January, which is 3.99 per cent higher than that in January 1994 when 16,251 were sent abroad.

It was also informed in the meeting that the figure of earning in this sector in January 1994 was Tk 339.91 crore and in January 1993 about Tk 336 crore.

The meeting was further told that Tk 4635.08 crore was earned as wage earners' remittances in 1994 by exporting 186,326 workers. It was 16.26 per cent higher than the amount earned in 1993 when the figure was Tk 3987 crore 57 lakh.

It was also informed that in the first seven months from July to January of the current financial year Tk 2737 crore 52 lakh had been earned as wage earners' remittances by exporting 119,386 labourers. This amount is 13.46 per cent higher than that earned in the last corresponding period of 1993-94.

## Morarji Desai turns 100 on Feb 28

BOMBAY, Feb 25: A 101-member citizens committee, headed by R Venkataraman, former president of India, has been formed to organise year-long birth centenary celebrations of Morarji Desai who turns 100 on February 28, reports PTI.

The beginning of the celebrations will be marked by a vedantic function with Ganesh Puja, Mrutyunjaya Homa and Stabdi Vedic Asheerwad at the residence of Desai here on February 28.

The co-chairman of the committee are C Subramaniam, President, Bhartiya Vidy Bhavan, Sadiq Ali, chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi, Dr Sushila Nayar, Chairman, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, Sevagram, Pravinchandra Gandhi and Nanji Palkhivala, Vice Presidents, Bhartiya Vidy Bhavan.

The secretaries are Usha Mehta, Chairperson, Bombay Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Prof Ramlal Parikh, Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapeeth and S Ramakrishnan, Executive Secretary and Director General, Bhartiya Vidy Bhavan.

Desai is founder member of Bhartiya Vidy Bhavan, holding Trustee of Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapeeth. All these organisations have come together to constitute the Bharat Ratna Shri Morarji Desai citizens centenary committee which has planned to organise functions in India and abroad during the centenary year — February 28, 1995 to February 29, 1996.

## Roushan Ershad becomes JP member

Former First Lady Begum Roushan Ershad yesterday gave her consent to be a member of the Jatiya Party, a party source said, reports UNB.

The source said the JP President in a recent meeting unanimously resolved to include Begum Ershad as a member subject to her consent.

She is likely to attend a Presidium meeting today at the residence of party's acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury.

## 2 Lankan Muslim parties merge

COLOMBO, Feb 25: An influential Muslim party has consolidated its power base in north-eastern Sri Lanka after merging with a rival Muslim group here Friday, reports AFP.

This is a significant development in Muslim politics in Sri Lanka. We feel the Muslims can be stronger only when we are able to speak with one voice," the head of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Mohammed Ashraf, told reporters here.

## Hartal in Ctg

ments remained closed during the hartal but offices and banks functioned. Rickshaws plied here and there but picketers interrupted their movement. Buses stayed off the roads.

Activities in Chittagong port went on as usual, port sources said. All domestic flights to and from Chittagong airport operated on time, Biman sources said.

Railway sources said all inter-city and local trains moved uninterrupted. In the metropolis educational institutions remained closed during the hartal.

No untoward incident was reported from any part of the city during the hartal hours, metropolitan police control room sources said.

The sponsors of the hartal brought out processions and held rallies where they demanded punishment for those responsible for the death of their worker.

## G 7

The text offers few specific proposals, but it invites the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to launch a study on the impact of information services on jobs.

It says national authorities should meet regularly within groups such as the OECD to exchange information about ways to cooperate on preventing anti-competitive behaviour by new global business alliances.

It calls for further cooperation in the areas of frequency allocation for international mobile and personal phone services and technical standards that ensure the new networks can talk to each other.

The text says standards work should be based on "private sector-led dialogue" and that international standards bodies should be reformed so they can produce "timely and market-responsive standards."



A journalist records a statement of an injured person who was shot in the central district of Karachi by sniper fire early yesterday. At least 18 people were killed as gunmen opened fire towards worshippers at two Shi'ite mosques in the biggest Pakistani city. — AFP photo

## 20 shot dead in Karachi

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young men spoke angrily of revenge. More than 1,000 people came to the mosque shortly after the shooting and funerals for the victims were planned for Saturday afternoon.

The modern, blue-domed Mehfil Murtaza mosque is only three kilometers from the site of the first massacre. It seemed likely that the two massacres were carried out by the same gunmen, said Nazim Haji, co-chairman of the Police-Citizens Liaison Committee, a private group that assist law enforcement officers.

Many recent attacks, including previous shootings at mosques, have taken place in Karachi's poor neighbourhoods. But Saturday's attacks were in prosperous, middle-class areas.

This was a brutal act of terrorism," Haji told an Associated Press reporter at the Mehfil Murtaza mosque. "These people have not been involved in any conflict."

The shootings may also have

been retaliation for the Friday night attack on the Baitul Mukaram mosque, where Sunnis worship. There have been numerous shootings at mosques in recent months, many of them blamed on Sipah-e-Sahaba, a hard-line Sunni group, and Tehrik-e-Jafria, a rival Shi'ite faction.

Despite the wave of killings in Karachi, arrests and prosecutions are extremely rare. Citizens have little faith in the police and sometimes throw stones at the officers who often arrive long after attacks take place.

The Karachi violence involves rival political factions as well as the militant religious groups. It has been worsening since Ms Bhutto pulled the army off the streets at the end of November.

She said the police could maintain law and order, but the killings have soared in recent months. At least 135 people have been killed in Karachi this month.

## City road mishaps claim 5

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons, including two minor boys were killed in separate road accidents in the city yesterday.

The two minor boys aged about 7 died instantly when a Dhaka-bound train Surma from Sylhet, knocked them down at the Khilgaon rail crossing in the morning.

They could not be immediately identified.

An auto-rickshaw driver was killed when a speeding minibus knocked his vehicle at the rail gate crossing on the Airport road in the morning.

Driver Mohammad Sadek, 25, died on the spot.

Police seized the minibus but its driver escaped.

A pedestrian was killed under the wheels of a speeding truck at Rampura at about 12:15 pm.

The victim, Mohammad Khorshed, 40, breathed his last soon after admission in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

In another road accident, an unknown person, aged about 20, died on the spot when a speeding bus ran over him at Bishwa road in the afternoon.

Police sent all bodies to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

## Water crisis

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als from the Indian state of Tripura.

She said Bangladesh is very much interested in maintaining a friendly relationship and wants to strengthen bilateral ties with its neighbours.

Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister for her government's cooperation during his tenure here, Raghunath said India was aware of the problem created by Farakka and not neglecting it.

He termed the Farakka issue a common concern and emphasised a long-term agreement for resolving it.

Begum Zia said it needed a long time to reach a long-term accord. "We need water immediately. So, a short-term arrangement is urgent before a long-term agreement," she observed in view of the situation in the water-scarce dry season.

Raghunath said India sincerely wanted to see Bangladesh as a developed and prosperous country. "We wish Bangladesh well."

## The Midnight File

### Fire continues to rage in Indian gas well

NEW DELHI, Feb 25: The fire continued to rage in a southern Indian gas well today as Neil Adams, an American firefighter, accused state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Commission of not paying for his services to cap the well. United News of India news agency said, "I had enough of frustration in dealing with the commission and its red tapism." Adams told reporters in the southern city of Madras on his way back to Houston, Texas. He did not say how much the commission owed to him, reports AP.

### HR violations in Kashmir condemned

NEW DELHI, Feb 25: A congregation of Indian and Pakistani journalists, jurists and human rights activists today condemned alleged human rights violations by Indian soldiers as well as Muslim militants in Jammu-Kashmir state. Urging the two countries to defuse tensions in their relations, the group suggested that the governments of India and Pakistan avoid a nuclear war by 'concluding their own comprehensive test ban treaty without waiting for a global treaty,' reports AP.

## 30 killed in Burundi ethnic violence

NAIROBI, Feb 25: Nearly 30 people were killed after a military truck was ambushed in the northern Burundi district of Ruhororo. Burundi National Radio reported in a broadcast monitored here today by the BBC, reports AFP.

The radio quoted local officials in the district as saying that the killings occurred when soldiers opened fire after the attack occurred.

The radio also quoted some witnesses as saying that in another incident Friday in the Kanenge suburb of Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, a disarmament operation "degenerated into shooting," while other sources said the clashes had broken out between the gunmen themselves.

Reporters sent to the scene of the incident had not yet verified what actually happened, the radio said.

Violence has continued in ethnic strife-torn Burundi despite frantic efforts by the country's politicians to diffuse the situation and prevent a Rwandan-type ethnic mayhem, that left between 500,000 and

a million people, mainly Tutsi, massacred by Hutu extremists and soldiers. The clashes followed the suspicious death in a plane crash of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana last April.

Burundi had also been rocked by ethnic and political crises since the assassination in October 1993 of its first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, in a foiled coup by the army dominated by the minority Tutsis, which the government survived.

The coup attempt sparked a wave of killings in which around 50,000 people were massacred.

The massacres triggered a wave of refugees fleeing into neighbouring countries to escape the mayhem, with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates putting the number of people who fled from Burundi during the time at about 700,000.

Most of them returned, but 140,000 are still in exile in the Uvira region of Zaire, a UNHCR statement said Friday.

## Zahir murder trial

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Advocate Sirajul Haq was appointed as a defence lawyer by the State in view of an appeal by the wife of the main accused, Akhteruzzaman Choudhury Babu, now absconding.

Approver Alam disagreed with a suggestion made by the defence counsel that Bhulu, another accused in the case who once served in the Bangladesh Army, was present when Babu showed him the photograph of Zahir.

During the cross-examination, Alam claimed that he had no knowledge about the claim that Bhulu was a political activist of Humayun Zahir.

He further claimed that serious enmity between Humayun Zahir and Akhteruzzaman Babu surfaced soon after Babu was removed from the chairmanship of the Janata Insurance Company and United Commercial Bank Limited, two joint ventures in which the two leading businessmen were partners.

Alam also told the court that he could not recollect if he had promised anybody a sum of Taka three lakh for murdering Zahir. He also denied charges that he himself had murdered Humayun Zahir and several others earlier.

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## Jute mills

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The official said the latest offer has by far the best possible incentive package for the prospective buyers as the government has shouldered lion's share of the liabilities of the mills offered.

The private owners will be free to do away with the excess workers upon taking over the mill, and the government will bear all the retrenchment benefits to the workers.

Also, the government will pay retirement benefits — gratuity and provident fund — to the retained workers and employees until the handing over of the mills to the buyer.

All unpaid utility bills will be the government's responsibility.

As for bank liabilities, one-third of the outstanding loans will be written off while the remaining two-thirds to be paid in easy instalments spread over 12 years with a meagre three per cent interest.

The mode of payment for the mills has also been eased. The successful bidder will be given the charge of the mills, on payment of only 25 per cent of the sales price while the rest will have to be paid in five years against bank guarantee.

The successful bidder will get 10 per cent discount if the sales price is paid in one instalment.



President Nelson Mandela (C) and Deputy President FW De Klerk (L) walk with interior minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi (R) to a press conference in Cape Town Friday. The three met to discuss the crisis precipitated by Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party's walkout from parliament. — AFP photo

## Serbs launch fresh terror campaign

SARAJEVO, Feb 25: Rebel Serbs have launched a fresh terror campaign against Muslims in northern Bosnia, shooting, beating and robbing civilians in a major abuse of human rights, a UN spokesman said today, reports Reuter.

In Gradiska (northern Bosnia) for the past month, Muslim houses have been systematically robbed and their occupants terrorised," Kris Janowski of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told reporters in Sarajevo.

He said armed men in uniform

had severely beaten Muslim civilians and ransacked their houses in villages around the Serb-held region of Banja Luka, site of ethnic expulsions of non-Serbs throughout the war. Whole villages were asking to be evacuated, he said.

Janowski said it remained unclear why there had been a spate of attacks again in the Banja Luka area but the assault were all aimed at outlying villages and hamlets where non-Serbs had escaped previous ethnic purges.

These are the last finishing touches of ethnic cleansing in

Bosanska Krajina (northern Bosnia). That's basically what it is," he said. "And it is being condoned by the authorities."

The attacks made a mockery of human rights in general and Bosnia's current ceasefire accord in particular, which obliged the combatants to respect human rights, Janowski said.

AFP adds: Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic warned Friday that withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from Croatia would inevitably lead to a resumption and extension of the war in former Yugoslavia.



An elderly Muslim woman walks with two children on the road near the town of Bihac while a UN vehicle carrying Bangladeshi troops patrols near its base, Friday. The Bihac enclave has been surrounded by Bosnian and Krajina Serbs armies for more than three months. — AFP photo

## Congress (I) forms govt in Manipur

NEW DELHI, Feb 25: Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress Party won the first round in a crucial set of Indian state polls today, forming a government in Manipur, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports Reuter.

PTI said, a Congress Party government headed by Rishang Keishing was sworn in by State Governor O N Srivastava after the party secured 21 seats in the 60-member assembly.

Congress and the newly-formed United Legislative Front (ULF) had each claimed victory in Manipur, in north east India, after no party secured a clear majority in elections earlier this week.

Leaders of the Congress Party and the ULF, in separate meetings with Srivastava late on Friday night, staked their claim to form a government in the state.

The ULF was formed after the election results were known. It comprises the regional Manipur People's Party, which won 18 seats, and the centrist Janata Dal, which won seven, as well as some smaller parties and independents.

Manipur is the first of six states to have counted votes after assembly elections that

could prove crucial for Rao's hold over the ruling party.

Meanwhile AFP reports: Voting ended today in the second and final phase of polls in the western Indian state of Gujarat seen as a direct contest between the ruling Congress (I) Party and Hindu revivalists.

More than 50 per cent of 14 million eligible voters cast their ballots amid heavy security to choose 86 state lawmakers, according to a preliminary turnout estimate by election officials.

## Shibir begins its 16-day agitation from today

The Islami Chhatra Shibir yesterday demanded immediate arrest, and punishment to the killers of Khairul Islam, a Shibir activist, who was kidnapped and shot dead in Chittagong on Wednesday last, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, Shibir president Rafiqul Islam Khan also made similar demand about the killers of Mostafizur Rahman and Ismail of Rajshahi University.

## Rabbani refuses to hand over power

KABUL, Feb 25: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani will not hand over power to a United Nations-proposed interim authority unless he is satisfied it is representative, a presidential spokesman said yesterday, reports Reuter.

UN special envoy Mahmud Mestiri announced plans last Wednesday to delay the power transfer to a neutral authority by one month to March 21, the start of the Afghan new year.

The transfer was to have taken place on February 21, but a last-minute dispute over the role of the newly emerged student militia known as Taliban forced the postponement.

Presidential spokesman Aziz Morad told reporters it was up to Mestiri and Rabbani to agree to the interim author-

ity's composition.

"It is not important for us that the transfer of power happens on March 21," he said. "It could even happen before that. What is important is that the interim authority is ready, and only Mahmud Mestiri and President Rabbani can agree when that time is."

"How can the transfer of power happen to an incomplete mechanism?" he asked.

His statement contradicted earlier comments by Mestiri, who said Rabbani had given him an unconditional undertaking to step aside on the Afghan new year.

AFP from Charasyab adds: Taliban fighters said today there would be fighting in Kabul if the city's arsenal was not handed over to them.

## AL for agitation

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agitation for realising the demands for dissolution of Parliament, resignation of the government and general elections under a caretaker administration," the meeting resolved.

The AL working committee reiterated that the present Parliament has become ineffective and illegal following the resignations of 147 members.

The Speaker had rejected all the resignations but the opposition parties said the Speaker had no authority to reject their resignations.

The Opposition MPs had resigned from Parliament to save the people from the "misrule of BNP, free democracy from the clutches of evil forces and compel the government to quit power," the AL said.

The AL meeting expressed deep concern over the prevailing impasse in political arena and said the people are "fed up with the misrule and authoritarian rule" of the ruling BNP. The people have lost their faith in democracy due to the