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Business leaders speak out
 Today: Khandaker Ruhul Amin, President, Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association.
 Tomorrow: S. M. Soye, duzzaman, Khandar, General Secretary, Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables and Allied Products Exporters Association.
 See details on page 6

Inside Today

Article

Hangovers from Colonial Bureaucracy

Column: Making Government Work by Analyst Page 4

International

DPRK threatens to fight 2nd war with US on Korean peninsula

India likely to have another hung parliament Page 5

Business

Country has vast potential sources of nuclear power, says Atomic Energy Commission official

Follow model business principles, Clinton asks US companies Pages 6, 7

Travel & Tourism

The Chittagong war cemetery; Tourism — Expansion through foreign investment; Travelling through Chittagong city and Travel editor's note Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Deals are made but few talk about them Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

PM returns home

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia returned home yesterday afternoon ending her three-day official visit to South Korea. On arrival, she was received by LGRD and Cooperative Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar at the gateway of the Zia International Airport. Ministers, diplomats, secretaries, chiefs of three services, IGP and other senior officials were present, reports UNB.

Minor boy die in road accident

From Staff Correspondent
 SYLHET, May 27: A minor boy was run over and killed by a speeding private car on airport road this morning. The victim Nurul Islam, 10, hails from Kalugah of Sylhet Sadar thana. Police seized the vehicle (Brahmanbaria-BA-212) while the driver managed to escape.

11 Russian marines killed in Chechnya

MOSCOW, May 27: At least 11 Russian marines have been killed and 19 wounded in the latest battles with separatist rebels in breakaway Chechnya, ITAR-Tass news agency said today. The agency quoted the Pacific Fleet's press office in the far eastern city of Vladivostok as saying the marines had been killed or wounded on Friday in fighting south of the town of Shali, which itself is south-east of the Chechen capital Grozny, reports Reuters.

NATO for tougher UN force in Bosnia 220 peacekeepers taken hostage by Serbs

SARAJEVO, May 27: The United Nations said today the Bosnian Serb army had seized control in its confrontation with NATO and the UN after taking scores of peacekeepers hostage as human shields against air strikes, reports Reuters.

A French soldier died in a battle for control of a Sarajevo

bridge captured overnight by rebel Serb commandos disguised as peacekeepers. A second French soldier was fatally wounded in another clash.

With UN and NATO countries in disarray amid threats by Paris to withdraw its troops from Bosnia, UN spokesman Gary Coward told Sky Television

Almost all our people on Bosnian-Serb held territory, as far as we can tell, are under the control of the BSA (Bosnian Serb Army). They are surrounded, threatened and disarmed and effectively, as I've said, control is being exercised by the Bosnian Serbs.

Serb forces held 220 UN soldiers and unarmed military observers at UN weapons dumps and observation posts around Sarajevo and in the Serb stronghold of Pale near the Bosnian capital. More than 150 are French.

French Major Guy Vinet said 93 of the men were human shields against renewed air attacks by NATO whose jets pounded a BSA weapons dump near Pale on Thursday and Friday.

BSA television pictures of eight hapless military observers chained to potential NATO targets including the ammunition dump, a radar site and a bridge in Pale on Friday undermined western resolve to challenge the Serbs.

A Polish observer was seen under guard by a masked BSA soldier wielding a Kalashnikov and a Ghanaian tied to the bridge said: "We require that NATO ceases bombing of BSA targets and Serb territories so that our lives will be spared."

Sources in Pale said hostages were taken to some of the installations again today.

The UN mission ploughed into familiar territory, taking on the Serbs without being able to match their determination to threaten UN forces with politically unacceptable casualties.

There was no sign of the precautions against hostage-taking which UN spokesmen



TV picture shows one of the three UN peacekeepers, wearing a Czech uniform, taken as human shields in the Serb stronghold of Pale Friday. The Bosnian Serbs threatened to kill the UN soldiers if NATO war planes carried out more airstrikes. — AFP/UNB photo

News Analysis

The Unannounced Election Campaign

By Farid Hossain

The nation-wide registration of voters and the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies are part of preparations for fresh general elections. The main opposition parties — they have right now no immediate anti-government programmes like hartals — have also launched parallel efforts of their own to ensure a flawless voters' list. The activities centering the preparation of the voters' list are likely to dominate politics during the coming weeks, including allegations of irregularities and incompetence.

As the government is drafting a new national budget for the fiscal beginning July 1, it will try to avoid hurting the people, especially the poorer section of the society. It is likely to be a vote-winning budget, according to some analysts.

In its election strategy the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party will try its best to heal the wounds the recent fertilizer crisis had inflicted on the farmers. The ruling party's debacles in the mayoral polls in Dhaka and Chittagong will also be high on the strategy. In addition, there will be usual attacks against the Opposition

with repeated allegations that the frequent hartals sponsored by the Opposition have damaged the economy and slowed down the process of consolidating democracy.

The Opposition, especially the main contender for power, the Awami League, is no sitting silent. In conducting whirlwind tours of the country, Sheikh Hasina is speaking about her party's agenda if voted to power. She is offering better deals to the farmers and promising to ensure Bangladesh's due share of the Ganges water — she has accused Begum Zia of failing to make a deal with India. Also, Hasina is promising to let the 25 year Friendship Treaty with India die its natural death.

Her concentration on India is understandable. India is the trump card all anti-Awami League parties have used against it during elections. In a desperate move to end this weak point Hasina is trying to use the card against Begum Zia.

If the voting comes, how is going to be held? Who is going to be in power to supervise the polls? That question still

remains with no clear answer. The government's latest offer of a dialogue with Opposition raised some hopes. That optimism faded after the BNP and the Awami League started fresh bickering.

No doubt the prospect for a dispute-resolving dialogue has once again been covered by clouds of uncertainty, yet, Optimists still see a sun hiding behind the clouds.

In spite of the mutual accusations the government has not taken its dialogue offer back from the table. Though the Opposition has not accepted it, it is neither opposed to negotiations, provided it receives an agreement-in-principle announcement from the government. Such an announcement is not being totally ruled out.

Both parties seem to be convinced that public pressure for a negotiated settlement will increase as balloting is becoming more and more a reality — no matter the main opposition parties accept or reject it. Hence, without saying so, all political parties, including the Opposition are involved in activities that is nothing short of an election campaign.

EC's advice

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday advised people to fill up the forms for registration as voters only from the areas where from they desire to become voters, reports BSS.

A press release of the Commission yesterday said the registration of voters has begun from May 25 and the enumerators are visiting house to house for collection of information which are necessary for enlisting eligible voters.

The enumerators are collecting information in the scheduled No 2 form of the third phase of the process.

In this context, the EC said that many persons have drawn the attention of the Commission to the Clause 11 of the information form which provides a scope for the eligible voter as to where he wants to be enlisted as a voter — permanent address or the present address.

See Page 12 Col 8

Voter registration time may be extended

By Krishna P Roy and Morshed A Khan

Slow progress of the voter registration may force the Election Commission (EC) to extend the time limit — due to expire May 31 — by one week, sources in the commission disclosed yesterday.

The voter registration process, which began on Thursday, slowed down due to various complications ranging from a time-consuming paper work to an overload of information requirements.

Over three lakh enumerators began house-to-house visits throughout the country. Each enumerator is assigned to collect information about 200 voters by May 31.

Many people in the city alleged that no enumerator visited their houses yesterday though they remained avail-

able, taking advantage of the general holiday, declared by the government to enable officials and employees to get enlisted as voters.

As the enumerators have to collect detailed information for each voter in triplicate, it has become difficult to complete the process within the stipulated time, sources said.

Besides, the areas for the enumerators were selected in accordance with the voter list prepared in 1992. But the number of voters in many areas in the city has gone up by this time.

EC officials said they would ask the enumerators to collect information on all voters of their areas whatever the number might be. The enumerators

See Page 12 Col 7

Transport strike from today

The Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Federation has called a two-day country wide transport strike from today to press its 11-point demands.

Talking to UNB on the eve of the strike, executive president of the federation Shahjahan Khan said about 10 lakh transport workers, including drivers, helpers, supervisors, cleaners and terminal labourers would observe the strike.

The demands include implementation of the recommendations of the 'Accident Prevention Committee' of 1984 as well as the 'Road Transport Policy' jointly framed by representatives from the government, transport owners and labourers.

The federation also demands that legal action should be taken against not only the drivers but all those responsible. See Page 12 Col 3

BDR arrests 5 for illegal entry into Bangladesh

JESSORE, May 27: Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel today arrested five people, including two women and a child, for illegally entering the country, reports UNB.

BDR sources said the five crossed into the Bangladesh territory without any valid documents and claimed that they were Bangladeshi citizens. The intruders, who claimed to hail from Barisal and Patuakhali, were sent to the Jessore jail after a case was filed with the Sharsa thana.

Meanwhile, BDR has imposed a curfew along the Sharsa-Benapole border from dusk to dawn everyday for an indefinite period.

Entry of trespassers has increased following the start of the country-wide registration of voters on May 25, BDR sources said.

BSF pulls back from Asalong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 27: Tension along the Asalong border area under Khagrachhari hill district has been defused after India withdrew its freshly deployed Border Security Forces (BSF) personnel from the section this morning, official sources said.

India pulled back about 200 BSF guards from Tripura, in line with the decision reached at the May 25 flag meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles and BSF at Jalia, a border village in India's Tripura state.

India had deployed the para-military forces and dug about 20 trenches along a 13-kilometer stretch in the Asalong sector of Khagrachhari district when two groups of farmers from India and Bangladesh clashed for cultivation over a disputed land in the Fenichhara river catchment last week.

The BSF and BDR battalion commanders also decided in the flag meeting to maintain the status quo over the disputed piece of territory.

Hearing of Zia murder case resumes today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 27: The court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Chittagong will hear the case relating to the 1981 assassination of President Ziaur Rahman (Case No 2(6) 81) tomorrow, court sources said.

President Ziaur Rahman was killed in an abortive army coup on the night of May 30, 1981 at the Chittagong Circuit House (now the Zia Museum) under Kotwali thana.

During the last hearing, on April 13, the CMM issued a fresh reminder to Kotwali police via the Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police for filing the probe report in his court.

2 bodies recovered from Bay

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, May 27: Bodies of two youths, who drowned in the Bay while taking bath yesterday morning, were recovered today from the beach.

After a relentless search for hours together, the relatives of the missing boys, found the body of Sayed Masud Kabir, a second year student of the Chittagong University, from Moheshkhali coast and the body of his college-going cousin Belal Uddin from Chowsaldandi seaside.

South Korean entrepreneurs keen to invest

SEOUL, May 27: South Korean entrepreneurs have shown keen interest to make large-scale investments in different industrial sectors in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Heads of the country's top industrial complexes called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her hotel suit here this morning and expressed their willingness to involve themselves in industrial progress in Bangladesh.

The chairmen of Kabool Textiles, Hyundai, Daewoo, Samsung, Sangyong, LG Youngone Corporation, met the visiting Bangladesh leader.

Korean heavy industrial complexes are engaged in large-scale industrial production and construction works in and outside the country.

A delegation, comprising representatives from the leading Korean companies, is expected to visit Dhaka shortly to explore possibilities investment. Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan said.

During her Korean visit, Begum Zia had a vital meeting with President Kim Young Sam on investment in Bangladesh and employment of

See Page 12 Col 5

Agri growth stagnated, loans grew in '93-94: BB

Star Report

Agricultural growth had stagnated during fiscal 1993-94 but crop loans had increased significantly, according to the Bangladesh Bank Annual Report, 1993-94.

The growth rate in the agriculture sector during 1993-94 was 1.8 per cent, as in the previous fiscal. The disbursement of crop loans by different banks had, however, increased by 34.83 per cent, the report said.

The disbursement of all forms of agricultural loans, which include crop, irrigation, the livestock loans etc, had increased by 30.76 per cent to Tk 1100.79 crore from the previous year's Tk 841.85 crore.

The report released to the press last week said that the total food production in 1993-94 was less than that of the previous year due to bad weather.

Production of *aus* and *aman* rice fell by 10.8 and 2.7 per cent respectively. However, production of *Boro* rice was 2.8 per cent higher than that of the previous year. The *aus* production was 18.50 lakh tonnes, *aman* 96.80 lakh tonnes and *boro* 67.72

lakh tonnes.

The total rice production in '93-94 was about 180.42 lakh tonnes — 1.6 per cent less than in the previous year.

Similarly, production of wheat in the year stood at 11.30 lakh tonnes, which was 46,000 tonnes or 3.9 per cent less than that of the previous year.

The report noted that due to decrease in the production of rice and wheat the total food production in '93-94 went down by 1.8 per cent to 191.72 lakh tonnes from the previous year's 195.17 lakh tonnes.

In contrast, food production during 1992-93 had increased by 1.0 per cent from the previous year's.

The other crops that showed a downward trend in production include jute 9.5 per cent, sugarcane 5.3 and sweet potato 1.5 per cent.

However, the production of some other crops had significantly increased.

Different banks disbursed loans for crops, excluding tea, totalling Tk 515.13 crore, 34.83 per cent higher than that of the previous year.

The hazy maze of political funding

By Asiuzzaman

How do our political parties fund themselves? How much do they collect from their regular members? How much do they get from their patrons? What are the major sources of money and how much does a party spend every month?

These questions are becoming increasingly pertinent as elections draw nearer. There is now a growing public curiosity about the whole process of how the political parties fund their activities.

There is no concrete answer from the parties to these questions. But there is a lot of speculation among the public regarding the ways in which the political parties raise party funds.

To meet the readers' interest and the curiosity of the general public, The Daily Star conducted a brief investigation on this crucial issue.

All major political parties maintain stringent secrecy about the source of party funds and about their bank accounts. The treasurers and other central leaders of almost all major political parties, includ-

ing the ruling BNP, the Awami League, Jaffiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami, when asked about the main sources of party funds, gave identical answers: Affluent party leaders and wealthy well-wishers are usually their main sources of funds for running party activities.

According to insiders, the MPs and central leaders of each party pay monthly fees while the richer party members and businessmen make regular contributions.

All of them declined to elaborate, saying only: "It is a secret matter." However, everyone confirmed that each party has bank accounts.

The Daily Star investigation reveals that as regards party funds, there are a few things common to all the major parties:

a) The regular expenditures of the political parties are far beyond their known sources of income.

b) The book-keeping of most of the parties is very poor. In fact, there is no proper accounting for day-to-day expenses.

c) Most of the parties except the Jamaat are unable to collect the regular subscriptions from their general members.

d) Spokesmen of all the parties confirmed that they go for special drives for fund-raising ahead of every major party programme. But no account is kept of how much is collected on such special drives and how much is spent for the specific action for which the money was collected.

e) Parties have patrons who provide funds during the time of need. It is a highly guarded secret as to who are the patrons and how much they pay, and at what frequency.

f) Some of the parties have no regular source of income while some others have no mechanism to collect monthly contributions from the leaders and workers.

g) As a whole, accounting of the political parties' funds is extremely loose, leading to serious doubts within each party, as to how efficiently and effectively the party funds are being used.

During the investigation, contradictory statements and figures regarding the income and expenditure emerged from the party sources. Monthly regular expenditure of the major parties vary from Tk 7,000 to Tk 300,000.

Besides regular office expenditure, the parties have to pay some sort of allowances to mid-level leaders and also to dedicated full-time cadres. Mostly, the central leaders provide money for them and sometimes the mid-level leaders themselves collect funds to finance their juniors. These transactions do not have any record. There is no accounting whatsoever as to how much money flow through each party for such activities.

The investigation also reveals that the parties have to spend a considerable amount of money for holding public meetings and stage processions and print posters.

A medium-size meeting in the capital usually cost a party between Tk 300,000 to Tk 500,000.

See Page 12 Col 4

Earthquake shakes Russian Far East

MOSCOW, May 27: A major earthquake struck a sparsely populated region in the Russian Far East early Sunday, officials said. No casualties or damage were immediately reported, says AP.

The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 7.5 and was centered on the northern end of Sakhalin Island, said Eduard Kozhukhov, a Moscow-based spokesman for Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations. He said there was no apparent damage or casualties but had no further details.

The Russian agency said the tremor occurred at 11:03 pm local time (1303 GMT) with the epicenter in a remote region, 150 kilometers (90 miles) south of the town of Okha and right along the coast. US and Japanese seismological officials estimated the magnitude at 7.6.

A tremor measuring magnitude 7 or greater is considered a major quake, capable of widespread, heavy damage. But the epicenter was more than 600 kilometers (400 miles)

north of the island's capital and only real population center, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

Sakhalin Island, home to 750,000 people, is located more than 6,500 kilometers (4,000 miles) east of Moscow and north of the Japanese island of Hokkaido, on the Sea of Okhotsk. As of two hours after the quake, there were no reports of damage on Hokkaido.

Walesa threatens to resign

KESZTHELY, HUNGARY, May 27: Polish President Lech Walesa (threatened to resign today after an anti-government demonstration in Warsaw led by the Solidarity Trade Union turned violent, his spokesman said here, reports AFP.

Walesa also called for the resignation of Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy, after the Premier failed to negotiate a peaceful end to the protests, during which several people were injured.