

Over 300 feared dead in Pak flood

KARACHI, July 23: More than 300 people were feared dead as monsoon flood in Pakistan washed away some 500 small and large villages in southern Sindh province, residents and rescue workers said today, reports AFP.

Troops have been called out for rescue and relief operations in Sindh and south-western Baluchistan. Local officials said many people believed missing may eventually be found, hoping that the number of casualties may turn out to be less than feared.

Sanskritik Jote urges British HC not to grant visa to Golam Azam

By Staff Correspondent The Sammlita Sanskritik Jote has urged the British High Commission in Dhaka not to grant visa to Jamaat leader Golam Azam for his planned visit to UK. The presence of this war criminal in UK will also hurt the feeling of the Bangladeshi community living there, the Jote said in a memorandum given to the High Commission yesterday.

It said, "Recently the issue (of war criminals) was raised in Britain with the telecast of 'War Crime File'. The film exposed the presence of three war criminals of 1971 in UK."

"Against this backdrop, the planned visit of Golam Azam to UK will certainly be viewed as a get-together of war criminals to hatch new conspiracies to escape justice," said the memorandum, handed over by Jote leaders Fayez Ahmed, Ramendu Majumder, Nasiruddin Yusuf, Mofidul Haq, Golam Kuddus, Hasan Arif and Kamal Pasha Chowdhury.

It said, "The head of fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami and their cohort Al-Badr, Prof Golam Azam, has been accused by our people as the principal war criminal responsible for genocide, arson, rape, loot and torture in 1971."

Nizami blames JCD

Jamaat Secretary-General Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami yesterday alleged that the government-backed terrorists had attacked the Shibir activists at Rajshahi University in a planned manner to oust them from the campus, reports UNB.

HC rule on govt

From Page 1 rected to show cause why the authoritative action would not be considered a violation of fundamental rights according to Article 33 (1) of the Constitution.

Barrister Rafiqul Huq, a former attorney general, appeared for the petitioner. Danis, a former minister and deputy speaker of Canadian Parliament, was hired by the Jatiya Party to defend Ershad in the Major General Manzur murder case in which Ershad is the principal accused.

The Canadian lawyer came to Dhaka on July 17 and submitted an application to the Home Ministry seeking permission to consult Ershad about legal matters relating to the murder charge.

The government in its reply on July 20 turned down the foreign lawyer's prayer citing no reasons. Ershad, now serving 20 years' prison terms in three other cases, appeared before a court in Chittagong on July 16 in the process of trial of Manzur murder case.

Moving the petition Ershad's counsel, Barrister Huq told the court that the refusal curbed the fundamental rights of the deposed president. Confining his argument to the right of consultation between legal practitioner Marcel Danis and Ershad, Barrister Rafiq said Danis wanted to consult his client as a legal practitioner and not for defending him (Ershad).

"There is a difference between consultation and defence," he said, adding "all advocates are legal practitioners but all legal practitioners are not advocates." He further contended that for consultation no enrolment as an advocate with the Bar Council is necessary. The provision of the Bar Council Order 1972 did not arise for and during consultation, he added.

Citing example, the former Attorney General said: "Judges of the Supreme Court can advise but cannot appear before the court." The government was unable to accord permission to Danis for meeting Ershad as he is yet to enrol as an advocate with the Bangladesh Bar Council, said Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, appearing on behalf of the government.

The foreign lawyer, Bhuiyan said, has to be an advocate even for consultation prior to defence. Danis applied for permission to have consultation interview with Ershad for discussion on legal matters relating to the Manzur murder case and he (Danis) has been engaged and brought to defend Ershad, so he has to be an advocate, the Additional Attorney General said.

A case was filed with Araahazar thana.



Artistes of the Chhayanat rendering songs at a function at the British Council in the city yesterday in memory of poet Nazrul Islam. — Star photo

SAARC MPs complain of judicial encroachment on the executive

NEW DELHI, July 23: Divergent views were expressed on the relationship between the executive and the judiciary by the speakers and parliamentarians of the SAARC member nations here today with most of them complaining of frequent judicial interference in the functioning of the executive, reports PTI.

They were speaking at the resumed discussion on SAARC parliaments — their relations with the executive and the judiciary, on the second day of the first ever conference of SAARC speakers and parliamentarians.

The Bihar assembly speaker, Deve Narain Yadav, his Himachal Pradesh counterpart, Kaul Singh Thakur, and Congress-I MP Ram Nivas Mirdha, charged the judiciary with encroaching on the executive wing. However, the West Bengal speaker, Hashmi Abdul

People deprived of benefits

From Page 1 but the good of the poor consumers as well. About pulses that topped the price spiral list, the meeting was informed that prices of essentials had risen recently because of the flood which hindered transportation of trucks from the northern districts to the capital.

Briefing the meeting about the prices of essentials, Commerce Secretary M Asafuddin mentioned a trend of hoarding and stockpiling of pulses by a section of traders that also caused the price-hike. He said a consignment of 10,000 tons of masur pulses will reach the country from Nepal within a week while two ship-loads with 25,000 tons of other pulses have already sailed for Bangladesh from Australia.

The official, drawing the meeting's attention to production shortfall of pulses in the growing countries, said that India, Pakistan and Myanmar — the major suppliers of Bangladesh — declined to meet Bangladesh needs. They are contemplating to import from other sources due to short production, he said.

BRAC staff stabbed to death in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, July 23: A BRAC employee was stabbed to death at Bhuterdia village under Babuganj thana this morning. Police and witnesses said, Mamun Hasan, 25, was attacked by three persons while he was returning to the BRAC office at Babuganj bandar after collecting money from a Mahila Sanity.

They tried to snatch the money but Mamun tried to resist them. The miscreants then stabbed him several times. He died on the spot. A case was lodged with Babuganj thana.

Lift arms ban on Bosnia

From Page 1 Serbs. Dhaka was also vehemently opposed to the withdrawal of the UN Protection Forces. Rather it wanted that the UNPROFOR be strengthened. It also supported extensive deployment of ground forces for peace enforcement. The Foreign Secretary explained that the "participation of Bangladesh at the London conference was essential since Dhaka had a very active interest in Bosnia. Our troops are in the frontline in Bihac. We wanted not only to take part in the meeting but also to make ourselves heard."

He said the OIC contact group was in touch with Bangladesh prior to the Geneva conference and the members were "fully supportive of our participation." Farooq Sobhan said "our Foreign Minister was able to convey the mood of the London meet to the OIC meeting in Geneva." Bangladesh, he mentioned, was not one of the eight-member OIC contact group on Bosnia, but was invited as an observer. The OIC contact group comprises Senegal, Malaysia, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. Indonesia and Bangladesh are observers.

The Foreign Secretary quoted the communiqué of the ministerial level of the meeting of the OIC contact group in Geneva as saying: In case of withdrawal of the UNPROFOR, the OIC-member states would consider keeping their contingents in Bosnia-Herzegovina in accordance with the arrangements with the government. These contingents could be increased in number and better equipped with arms. A new mechanism for coordination of their actions will be established with the legal authorities of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

One of the recommendations also called for the convening of a consultative meeting of ministers of defence, accompanied by armed forces commander-in-chiefs of the OIC contact group countries as well as OIC countries contributing troops to the UNPROFOR, to consider and adopt appropriate strategies. At present nearly 40,000 troops from various countries are on peace-keeping mission in the Balkan peninsula. Of them, nearly 9,000 are from the OIC countries, including Bangladesh which has some 1,223 troops. Jordan has 3505, Pakistan 3039, Malaysia, 1595, Turkey 1479, Egypt 492, Senegal 18 and Tunisia 12 troops.

Master plan to make Dhaka modern city soon: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia yesterday said the government is undertaking a master plan for trimming Dhaka into a modern city, reports UNB.

She said the low-lying areas around the capital went under water during the rainy season as many people had filled up drains, ditches and canals and built houses.

"Though it is a very tough task to save people in the areas from flooding, we'll take up plans to resolve the recurring problem," she told the affected residents during an extensive tour of the flooded localities around the city yesterday morning.

Begum Zia visited the inundated areas like Uttar Badda, Basaboo, Kadamtala, West Rajarbagh, Konapara, Matuati and Demra. She distributed relief among the poor people of those areas.

Illegal workers

From Page 1 to investigate and find ways to stop the flow of illegal Bangladeshi workers going to Malaysia, primarily through Bangkok and Singapore. It was also decided at the meeting to identify the recruiting and travel agencies involved in the process and take legal measures against them.

The flow of sending workers to Malaysia legally has slowed down considerably in recent months due to frequent changes in visa policy, the sources said. Till April 1993, the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka used to issue entry visas to workers, and after their employer cleared the levies following their arrival in Malaysia, they were given work permits.

Later a "calling visa" system was instituted under which the Malaysian Mission issued entry permits based on a "work visa" issued by that country's immigration department. However, following requests from the Bangladesh government, the Malaysian government changed the system and started issuing one-year work visas at the point of entry. But recently that process was stopped and a one-month entry visa system was instituted.

The sources noted that the frequent changes have slowed down the process of acquiring visas for new Bangladeshi workers. According to the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agents (BAIRA), there is a backlog of visa applications for an estimated 14,000 Bangladeshi workers already recruited by Malaysian companies.

The Bangladesh delegation is expected to request Malaysian authorities to provide Bangladesh workers with one-year entry visas and to extend the employment term to three years from two years now, the sources added.

Industrial pollution Govt starts taking legal actions against units

The Environment Directorate, has started taking legal actions against the industrial units failing to inform it about the measures taken by them to maintain pollution-free environment in the factory premises, reports BSS.

The Directorate had already served notices to 1317 industrial units responsible for creating pollution to inform the authorities at the plan taken by them to maintain environment. Of these, only 196 industrial units responded. The Directorate has requested the rest of industrial units to provide the necessary information without delay.

Tannery waste

From Page 1 also emit Hydrogen Sulphide, they said. "If you visit the area, you will see corrugated tins used in structures get rotten so quickly. The brick structures wear away and colour of the gold ornaments worn by ladies there change," said an engineer of the DOE. "The WASA authorities simply failed to realise the gravity of the problem," he observed.

Before the flood, the toxic deposit used to flow into the Buriganga river. But now, as the river has swelled, the deposit cannot flow out into the river, local people said. The local people also said WASA people told them that the decision to divert the toxic water into the water retention point was taken so that it could be pumped out of the embankment through the pump-house near Gabtoli.

The Midnight File

Condition of injured hostage in Kashmir is critical

SRINAGAR, July 23: Kashmiri rebels holding five Westerners hostage said today that one of the two captives wounded in a gun battle between separatists and soldiers is in critical condition. The Indian government said no such gun battle occurred Friday as claimed by the militants, reports AP.

Russia, Chechnya sign military deal

GROZNY, July 23: Russian and Chechen negotiators signed a military deal today in talks to end a bloody conflict in Chechnya, but there was still no word of a deal on political issues which lie at the heart of the conflict. "We have signed a deal on military issues," said Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov, speaking at the end of today's talks in Chechen regional capital Grozny, reports Reuters.

Supreme Court hearing

From Page 1 not empower the Speaker to do so," he said and pleaded "this matter should be examined by the court." Dr Zahir, who earlier showed interest in addressing the court on the issue, concluded that there is no question of law involved within the meaning of Article 106. But a question of fact may have arisen whether the Opposition members had in fact resigned in December last and whether the resignation letters had reached the office of the Speaker, he added.

Earlier, Barrister Rafiqul Huq concluded his submission which he started Thursday while Justice T H Khan added some new points to his previous submission. Justice Maksudur Rahman also made a submission after the Chief Justice announced Thursday that "if anybody is interested to address the court on the issue, he is welcome."

Justice T H Khan said that Article 67 (1) (b) of the Constitution should be read along with Article 123 and Article 70 which deals with by-election and floor-crossing. Framers of the Constitution did never contemplate that nearly half of the seats could fall vacant overnight. If they (framers) could think so, they could have inserted a prohibitive clause like Article 70 in the Constitution to avert such vacation of seats, he added.

Justice Khan said that none would dispute that absent means not present but the present unusual situation should be taken into consideration in deciding the matter. Concluding his submission, Barrister Huq said that if a member remained absent from Parliament without leave of the House, he would be considered absent and would vacate his seat automatically.

Citing provisions of the company law, he said a board member loses his membership if he fails to attend three consecutive meetings and in this case an MP would lose his membership if he remains absent for 90 consecutive sitting days. Justice Maksudur Rahman maintained that the opposition lawmakers should be considered absent from March 2 last year, with their walkout and boycott of Parliament.

"Walkout and boycott means absent and not present," he added. The court will hear today Advocate Sudhangshu Shekhar Haldar, MP, and the summing up submission of government-appointed lawyer Barrister Ashrarul Hossain.

ID card plan

From Page 1 primary reason. Of the respondents 39.7 per cent said criminals should be meted out with exemplary punishment which would deter others. 13.4 per cent felt that criminal activities would be reduced if scope for employment expanded.

On a question regarding the usefulness of parliament elections, 51.1 per cent of the respondents said that the destiny of the nation would improve through parliamentary elections while 32.9 per cent said that elections would not improve the lot of the people. Of the respondents 19.9 per cent felt that political parties often give promises, but seldom keep them.

Some 84 per cent of the respondents do not support inviting foreign mediators to resolve the country's present political impasse. Of the respondents 65.6 per cent said they would like to see that the war criminals of 1971 be tried like the Nazi war criminals who are still being tried 50 years after the Second World War. 52.5 per cent of the respondents said the government was responsible for this year's fertilizer crisis, while 35.2 per cent said profit seekers created the crisis.

Major ROK companies

From Page 1 leading Korean companies are actively looking into these," he said. Ambassador Fazlur Rahman said response from relatively smaller companies are very bright and forthcoming since "they are seriously interested in relocating."

He said that decisions from big companies would take some time as they have to look into both the production and the marketing aspects. Asked if there were stumbling blocks in the investment process, the Ambassador replied, "Nothing, except that the Koreans are tough business negotiators. They would like to see what best facilities they could get in terms of tax incentives, zoning and marketing. They are making many queries."

The Ambassador pointed out that the keen interest shown by the South Koreans "should be explored seriously and put to use."

Presently, there are nearly 40 Korean enterprises having investments in the Dhaka and Chittagong EPZs and outside. These investments are in diverse fields like ready-made garments, footwear, leather, electronics, plastic flower and souvenir products.

Rahman mentioned that there are nearly 3500 Bangladeshis working legally in Korea and they are the second largest manpower force after the Indonesians. Speaking about the trade imbalance between the two countries, Ambassador Rahman said that while the two-way turnover of trade totalled 410 million dollar, Bangladesh's share was only around 10 million dollars and South Korea's share was 400 million dollars. Bangladesh exports mainly comprised of jute, some textiles, footwear and frozen fish.

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All Guardians are invited to meet the Executive Council of the BMSRI on Thursday, 27th July, 1995 at 2.00 p.m. in the College premises to discuss college affairs.
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Printed & Published by A. B. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrai, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmondi R/A Dhaka-1205. PABX: 600092-4, Commercial: 600091 (Direct), Fax No: 86-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.