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Constitutional crisis

In Search of a Way Out



In today's instalment of The Daily Star interview series on current political deadlock, Salma Sobhan, Executive Director, Ain O Salish Kendra, a human rights and legal aid centre, maintains that the current constitutional crisis was not created by Opposition's demand for holding elections under a caretaker government but resulted from the government's intransigence to the Opposition demand.

Details on page 5

We request our readers to send in their suggestions towards resolving the crisis.

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NEWS BRIEFS

ALCWC meet

A meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held at the Bangabandhu Avenue office tomorrow. Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, reports UNB.

2 children drown

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 4: Two children drowned when a small country boat capsized in a canal at village Char Tebaria of Ullapara thana this morning, witnesses said. The victims were identified as Sumi, 8, and her brother Zahed, 5. The incident occurred at about 11 am - UNB

Massive Croat offensive against rebel Serbs

ZAGREB, Aug 4: The Croatian army is within a few kilometres of Knin, the Serb separatist stronghold, the spokesman for the Croatian defence ministry said, report AFP, AP.

General Ivan Tolj said Croatian troops had advanced five to 10 kilometres through Serb defences in about 30 locations on the front line on the first day of its major offensive against the breakaway Serbs of the Krajina region.

Earlier Croatian troops overran two Serb towns in the breakaway Krajina region today, Bosnian Foreign Minister Mohamed Sacirbey said.

Sacirbey said Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic had told him Croatian forces rolled into the Serb-held town of Petringa 40 kms

ZAGREB, Aug 4: A missile slammed into the outskirts of Zagreb today amid a Croatian army offensive against Serb-held territory, Croatian radio reported, reports AFP.

south of Zagreb and also seized the town of Obrovac in southwest Croatia.

Parts of the Serb stronghold of Knin, a railroad junction town near the Bosnian-Croatian border and home to an estimated 10,000 people, were reported afire

this morning. The bombardment began shortly after 5 am (0300 GMT Friday), with shells hitting the center of Knin and front lines in the nearby mountains. Serb forces stationed in the hills returned fire.

Debris-littered Knin was deserted by mid-morning, its people cowering in shelters, its houses burning. Smoke from artillery battles rose from the surrounding hills, and three fires burned in the town center.

Croatian jets bombed the town of Gracac, about 40 kilometers northwest of



Moment after Aslam's (not in picture) match winner, Abahani players celebrate while beaten Muktiyoddha keeper Arun remains grounded. Abahani with 23 points finished a top on completion of the first leg. (Story on page 10). — Star photo by Enamul Haq

One killed, 300 hurt as AL, BNP clash in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Aug 4: One person was killed and around 300 were injured in armed clashes between activists of the BNP and the Awami League at Abdulpur Bazar of Lalpur thana this morning.

Abdus Salam, 15, a tea stall boy, was killed in a cross-fire during the two-hour long clashes, reportedly as a sequel to an earlier incident.

Of the injured, 53 were taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and others were admitted to Lalpur and Baghatpur thana health complexes.

The clash erupted following a protest rally organised by Lalpur thana unit of the

BNP at Abdulpur Bazar at 10 in the morning.

The rally was organised to protest an attack by AL activists on Abdul Ratan Azad, a Juba Dal leader, on July 30, said Ruhul Kuiddus Talukder, General Secretary of Natore district BNP.

Witnesses said, both the sides used fire arms in the clashes today and police lobbed five tear gas shells to disperse them.

Natore district AL president Shanker Gobinda Chowdhury alleged that the incident took place before the very nose of police.

The SP of Natore told this correspondent that four po-

Situation tense at Rayer Bazar

By Staff Correspondent

A tense situation was prevailing at Rayer Bazar in the city yesterday following Thursday's violence in the area that left at least five persons including four police personnel injured.

Contingents of police were deployed in the area and detective police was trying to trace those involved in the violence. None was arrested till last night.

Meanwhile, a senior police official said that it would take time to book those *mastaans* as most of them were floating criminals. They were involved in extortion and many other criminal activities in Mohammadpur and Dhanmondi areas, he added.

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PM should step down 90 days ahead of polls: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated the demand for resignation of the Prime Minister 90 days ahead of the general elections to facilitate formation of a caretaker government to conduct the polls.

"What is the problem in resigning 90 days ahead of the elections since she (PM) agreed to resign 30 days ahead?" she asked while talking to newsmen at Zia International Airport on her return from the United States.

Hasina said the PM should do this if she had respect for democracy. "We are opti-

mistic that the government would concede to our demand, otherwise it would be compelled to do so through a movement," she added.

Asked to give her reaction to the gazette notification on the vacation of 87 parliamentary seats, the AL leader accused the government of ignoring the reality.

"We resigned from Parliament much earlier, it is our fundamental right," she asserted and alleged that the government violated the Constitution and undermining parliament by depriving the opposition MPs of their rights. The Leader of

Parliament would have to answer for it, she added.

About the proposed formulae for a caretaker government, she said the Opposition had outlined its formula on November 28 last year.

When asked why had she left the country when it was in the grip floods, she said, "I went to meet my children, since I am a mother too. But I have an organisation here which is working for the people. I keep contact with the party wherever I go."

Replying to another question, she said the govern-

Ruling party's emergency meet today

By Staff Correspondent

The National Executive Committee of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will hold an emergency meeting from 9 this morning at 30 Hare Road in the city.

BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting which is likely to continue for the full day.

It is learnt that all the 381 members of the committee have been requested to be present.

The BNP NEC includes 169 party MPs, 75 district committee presidents, 14 members of the party's

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Puran Bazar area of Chandpur town, threatened with erosion by river Dakatia. — Star photo by Shirin Akhter

Biman's flight grounded

CALCUTTA, Aug 4: Bangladesh Biman's Fokker F-27 flight BG-096, which was to have taken off at 1335 hours yesterday did not do so because of hydraulic failure. The passengers were asked to wait while the snag was being rectified, reports PTI.

Twice the passengers boarded the flight and had to be disembarked each time. When even experts flown in from Dhaka could not rectify the matters, the flight was finally grounded and the passengers put up in a hotel for the night.

This afternoon, the flight took off with the passengers on board only to return a few minutes later because of

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'Political stalemate only barrier to investment'

By Staff Correspondent

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Salman F Rahman yesterday urged the political leaders to resolve the political crisis "since it is the only barrier to foreign investment in Bangladesh."

"Our trip to promote Bangladesh's image abroad was highly successful," Salman, who returned from a trade promotion mission in Europe and North America Thursday, told a press conference. "But foreign investors and Bangladeshi expatriates expressed their deep concern at the political

instability in Bangladesh." "At least we should have a consensus that after any political change, the on-going economic policy will continue," the FBCCI chief said.

The 21 member FBCCI Trade and Investment Promotion Mission led by Salman visited and met chamber leaders and Bangladeshi expatriates in Stockholm, Paris, Hamburg, London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Toronto, Montreal, New York, Washington, Houston and Los Angeles during its June 25-August 2 visit.

The foreign investors ex-

Pharmaceutical marketing code may come into effect shortly

By SSMC Correspondent

The Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (CPMP) is likely to come into effect shortly.

The code was formulated by a nine-member experts committee headed by Director of Drug Administration Prof. Chowdhury Mahmud Hasan. The experts were from various organisations in the healthcare sector including Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association, Bangladesh Medical Association and Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society.

The Ministry of Health

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DDT still being widely used in dried fish

A highly hazardous insecticide, internationally banned for its harmful environmental impact, is still being widely used in dried fish of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

It was reported from Barisal and Chittagong that dishonest traders used DDT in dried fish to protect it from insect attack and to preserve it for longer period.

Official sources said Atomic Energy Commission found DDT in dried fish during laboratory test. The toxicity that gets through dried fish cannot be washed away with hot water before cooking.

Referring to a report based on field investigation, the officials said the use of pesticide in the dried fish began when it became an export commodity. Other pesticides that are used in dried fish include Nogos, Robral,

Boric Powder.

"Use of insecticides in the dried fish, meant to be exported, is controlled by the exporting agencies," a senior official told UNB on condition of anonymity.

Some 2,473 tons of dried fish worth Tk 41.83 crore were exported in 1993-94 fiscal year against 1,042 tons worth Tk 12.20 crore in fiscal 1992-93. Dried fish importing countries are mainly the Middle East, Myanmar and UK where most of the consumers are Bangladeshis.

Director General of the Fisheries Department Liaqat Ali told this agency that harmful DDT is being used in dried fish due to absence of any law. He stressed that adequate laws should be enacted to contain the use of the harmful pesticides.

DDT, the insecticide, ul-

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Hole in ozone layer getting deeper

LONDON, Aug 4: The hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica is getting deeper, allowing more harmful radiation through the Earth's surface, according to new research by one of the scientists who discovered the hole's existence 10 years ago, reports AFP.

Jonathan Shanklin of the British Antarctic survey returned to halley research station in Antarctica recently to discover that stratospheric ozone, the shield against harmful ultra-violet sunrays, has fallen to less than 40 per cent of its 1980s levels.

His findings, revealed Thursday in Nature Magazine, show that ozone losses are no longer restricted to the Antarctic spring but extend

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Story of unconsumable foods — III Hazards from unhygienic storing

By Morshed A Khan and Krishna P Roy

A wide variety of food items found in the market are tainted because those are stored in improper and unhygienic conditions.

A dangerous fungus, *aspergillus flavus*, grows quickly in food items like rice, ground nuts and corn stored in such conditions.

This fungus produces a highly toxic substance known as 'aflatoxin'. "Anyone consuming these contaminated food items is very much likely to be a victim of cancer or other fatal diseases," said a senior scientist of the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR). "This fungus is quite rampant

in different food items available in the market."

This happens as the food stuffs are kept in an incorrect temperature, especially

BSI monitors 49 food items

By Staff Correspondent
 The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) has a total of 130 items including 49 food items to monitor.

The law of the land requires every manufacturer, producer or supplier to obtain a certificate from the

in the wet seasons. The food items absorb more than the required amount of moisture from the atmosphere and the fungus grows," said the scientist.

This is also adulteration because the manufacturers or traders deliberately store these food items in unhygienic conditions to raise the profit margin.

He further said that only "four parts in billion" of this fungus can be tolerable to human beings and livestock. "It is unknown how many people are being affected by this deadly fungus," he said.

Many food items are sold

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Three killed in road accidents

Three persons including a child and a woman were killed in separate road accidents in Savar and Sherpur yesterday, reports UNB.

Two people were killed in two road accidents on Kaliakoir-Bahadi road in Savar yesterday, police and witnesses said.

They said an eight-year-old boy, Bidyut, was run over by an auto rickshaw near the Savar police station at about 8 am.

Another auto rickshaw hit a woman at the same place two and a half-hours later. Batashi, 50, succumbed to her injuries at Kaliakoir Thana health complex.

Police seized the two vehicles.

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