

CHT truce extended till December 31

CHITTAGONG, Oct 25: Leaders of the government sub-committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) affairs and the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS), an apex body of the Shantibahani today unanimously agreed to extend the ongoing truce in CHT till December 31, reports BSS.

Representatives of the two sides met at a remote border hamlet of Dudukchhari thana under Khagrachhari hill district.

The government sub-committee was headed by Rashed Khan Menon, while PCJSS was represented by chairman of the PCJSS Jyotindra Bodhi Priya alias Shantu Larma.

The sources said that the meeting which continued for about three hours was held in a cordial atmosphere.

Malaria claims 447 since January

Malaria, a tropical disease spread by mosquito and believed to have been eradicated, has returned to Bangladesh, infecting the country's nearly four lakh people in last few months.

Officials said 1,278 people died of the disease against the affected 1,66,564 in 1994. 519 people out of 1,25,402 affected died in 1993, 447 out of 1,15,660 died in 1992 and 218 out of 63,578 in 1991.

In Bangladesh, some eight kinds of mosquitoes out of 34 species have been identified as carriers of malaria germ. Malaria fever is produced when germs are injected into blood by certain mosquitoes through biting.

Malaria was brought under control through a government-sponsored Malaria Eradication Programme launched in 1961.

Among the malaria endemic zones, 81,390 people were affected in Khagrachhari, 54,999 in Sunamganj.

Iraqi dinar seized

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Oct 25: One thousand Iraqi dinar equivalent to Tk one lakh was recovered by Customs and Excise Department personnel from a Patuakhali-bound bus of Sugandha Paribahan here this evening.

The foreign currency notes packed in a polythene bag were hidden under the seat of the driver.

Farakka Body stages rally at UN Plaza

NEW YORK, Oct 25: Hundreds of expatriate Bangladeshis from different areas of the United States and Canada yesterday demonstrated at the United Nations Plaza in support of their demand for fair share of the Ganges water, reports BSS.

Organised by the International Farakka Committee, the demonstrators who gathered here from 3 pm raised various slogans including "we want proper share - Ganges water Ganges water". The demonstration lasted for three hours.

Addressing the gathering later, Atiqur Rahman Khan Eusufzai, senior vice-president of the committee, said that India's unilateral withdrawal of water from the Ganges, an international river which flows from the Himalayas through Nepal, India and Bangladesh, affected 40 million people of the five south-western districts of Bangladesh.

Presided over by Khan, the gathering was addressed among others by Prof Abid Bahar (Canada chapter of the committee), Dr Gulam Farid Akhter, joint convener of the South Asian Society for Environmental Protection, Washington, DC (SASEP) Dr Shajahan Mahmood (Boston chapter of the committee), Dr Abdur Razzak, Sheikh Selim, Dr Iffat Hossain (New Jersey chapter of the committee), Shahidul Islam Talukder, Dr A Wadud Bhuiyan and Mohammad Hossain Khan.

Later, the leaders of the committee handed over a memorandum to the Indian consulate here for Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, who is here to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

They called upon the Indian Prime Minister to resolve the issue on a mutually agreeable basis immediately and permanently. They also expressed concern in the memorandum at a news that India is going to build two other major barrages, one on the same Ganges river at Kanpur, and another on the upper reaches of the river Brahmaputra.

Loan defaulters

From Page 1 identified as a loan-defaulter. Top-ranking officials concerned are now examining the definition of the 'defaulters' used in the proposed law. They are expected to finalise the draft within a week.

A high-level meeting of the Election Commission (EC), the Law Ministry and the Finance Ministry officials on Wednesday examined different aspects of the EC proposed legislation.

The meeting observed that such a legislation would in no way be inconsistent with the spirit of the country's Constitution.

A section of the business community has been claiming that enactment of a law debarbing the defaulters would be ultra vires of the Constitution.

Law Secretary Mirza Asaduzzaman Al-Faruque, who chaired Wednesday's meeting, told The Daily Star last night that the meeting had started scrutinizing the proposed law. "We are now basically examining the definition of the term default-

ers," he said, adding that he would convene the second meeting very soon to further discuss the issue.

Secretary of the Banking Division Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda, who also attended the meeting, told this correspondent yesterday, "We shall prepare the final draft for the approval of the cabinet within a week."

The definition of loan defaulters in the Banking Company Act is not 'very clear', said an official who attended the meeting.

In international banking practices, if a person fails to repay loan instalment within the first stipulated date, he or she is treated as a defaulter.

The next meeting would review in detail a verdict of the Indian Supreme Court which had dwelt on the definition of loan defaulters, the Law Secretary told The Daily Star.

Earlier, the EC had sent the draft of the proposed law to the Prime Minister's Secretariat and Begum Khaleda Zia approved the draft on October 16.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had a meeting with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic at the UN headquarters in New York on Tuesday. — PID photo

Youths brandishing arms centring tender at DU

By DU Correspondent

Tension mounted on the Dhaka University campus as some youths continued to brandish arms for the last two days centring a tender for construction of a Tk 4.54 crore building for the Business Administration Faculty.

Huge police forces have been deployed in the administrative building area, specially in front of the room of the Chief Engineer to avert any untoward incident.

Md. Amir Hossain, Executive Engineer of the University told The Daily Star yesterday that the tender was opened at about 12.30 pm but did not say when the name of the successful bidder would be announced. Four bidders had submitted schedules.

Mentionable, Jinna, a student was murdered on November 1, 1994 following a disagreement among rival groups over a Tk 4 crore tender for construction of the multistoried Sir AF Rahman Hall.

The youths who fight over tenders on the DU campus are mostly activists of different political parties.

Bosnian president lauds Bangladesh's stand

NEW YORK, Oct 25: Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic today expressed his sincere appreciation to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for all that Bangladesh had done in support of Bosnian people, reports BSS.

The appreciation came during his half-an-hour meeting with Begum Zia at the UN headquarters this afternoon.

The two leaders, attending the UN super summit, discussed in details the latest development in Bosnia.

Izetbegovic lauded Bangladesh's position on Bosnia and for the stand taken by it in support of lifting the UN arms embargo on his country.

Begum Zia said that Bangladesh was the first country to lend full support for an independent Bosnia.

She recalled that she herself had presided over the OIC summit meeting at Casablanca in Morocco when Bosnia was admitted as an observer.

She said the valiant struggle of the Bosnian people was well known and strongly supported by the people of Bangladesh.

Later addressing a recep-



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing the party's central working committee meeting at the Bangabandhu Foundation at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Five cultural establishments to be set up

The government has decided to set up five cultural establishments at the national level, reports BSS.

They are national theatre, national art gallery, national music centre, national archives building and a cultural complex at Cox's Bazar, an official handout said yesterday.

The proposed models of these establishments and a report thereon were presented at a high level meeting yesterday at the conference room of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

FEMA concerned at govt attitude

By Staff Correspondent

The Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), a coalition of some 130 national and local organisations, yesterday expressed concern over the government's "indifferent attitude" in approving its proposal for monitoring the general elections.

FEMA sources said, its application in this regard has been pending with the government for clearance for almost five months. The proposal however, has been cleared by the Election Commission, sources added.

This delay in approving the proposal is hampering the work to organise and train thousands of volunteers it plans to mobilise for election monitoring FEMA said.

AL sees no alternative

From Page 1 The resolution said that the PM's "obstinacy" and "disregard" for people's demand for a non-party caretaker government had forced the opposition to resort to repeated programmes of hartal.

It also said, "There is no alternative to a neutral non-party caretaker government for establishing freedom of voters and ensuring their rights to food."

Because of unbridled corruption, prices of essentials including rice, pulses, oil and salt, went beyond the purchasing capacity of the common man, the resolution said.

The meeting also expressed concern over deterioration of law and order repression on women, politicization and misappropriation of relief materials in the flood-hit districts.

Hartal observed at Feni for release of Hajari

FENI, Oct 25: A dawn-to-dusk hartal for the release of an Awami League leader was enforced in the town today amidst massive violence that left 10 people injured, reports UNB.

The district Awami League enforced the hartal demanding release of former MP Jinal Hajari and also removal of the Deputy Commissioner.

Witnesses said pickets damaged some 40 vehicles, including the car of a Japanese tourist, and set fire to two rickshaws near Feni bypass.

Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka programme tomorrow

By Staff Reporter

The Rotary Club of Dhaka and Bangladesh Scouts will jointly organise a 'tree plantation-nursing and cleanliness programme' at the Rotary Cancer Detection Center, Mohakhali at 10:30 am tomorrow as part of the 'Save Dhaka Clean Dhaka' campaign.

Prof Dr AKM Shamsuddin Siddique, Director General (DG), Ministry of Health, will be chief guest, while Manzurul Karim, Chief National Commissioner of Scouts, Bangladesh and Dr Monwar Binte Rahim, the former DG, Health, will be the special guests on the occasion.

The 'Save Dhaka Clean Dhaka' campaign was launched by the Bangladesh Scouts, BUET, DCC, Youth Ministry and The Daily Star newspaper on September 15, with the objective of cleaning the city every Friday between 9 and 11 am.

Transport owners firm to go on non-stop strike

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity and its affiliated associations of 54 routes at a joint meeting in the city yesterday expressed their firm determination to go ahead with the non-stop transport strike programme from October 29 if the government did not meet their 12-point demand.

The meeting, held with Harun-ur-Rashid Bhuiyan in the chair, resented the government's "indifferent attitude" towards their demands even after a 48-hour transport strike on September 29-30 last.

The Sarak Paribahan Samity, one of the two associations of transport owners, is led by ruling party MP Mirza Abbas. Its demands include lowering the prices of spares and fuel, withdrawing enhanced ferry fare and bridge toll and protection from illegal toll collection.

Aricha Ghat

From Page 1

Padma-Jamuna inflicting suffering on thousands of passengers.

The situation further deteriorated as the large-sized ferries Keramat Ali, Ketaki and Kamen went out of order four days back.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Shipping Shajahan Siraj, Deputy Minister ABM Jahidul Hoque and Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain visited the Aricha ghat in the afternoon.

The State Minister asked the authorities concerned to maintain two queue — one for bus and another for trucks — to avert traffic congestion at the terminal.

Police and ansar have been deployed at the terminal to ease congestion and restore normalcy.

Winter

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But the hot and humid climate is getting dry and cold.

Md Sazedur Rahman, Deputy Director of the Storm Warning Centre of the Meteorological Department explained: "As there is too much moisture in the atmosphere, we feel cool at night and dew drops are formed."

The cold northerly wind that comes to Bangladesh in the winter originates from the polar-continental wind that comes from Central Asia and Siberia.

He said that polar-continental wind is slowly approaching towards Bangladesh. It is now intensified over the ionosphere of Kabul and the western regions of Pakistan.

The polar-continental wind loses much of its intensity when it comes to Bangladesh as it gets during the long journey through the tropical region, he said.

The country's lowest ever temperature was recorded at 2.8 degree Celsius at Srimongal on February 4 in 1968. Bangladesh experienced a bone-shivering cold in last winter also when mercury fell to 4 degree Celsius at Ishurdi and Srimongal. The lowest ever temperature in Dhaka city was 4.5 degree Celsius recorded on February 18 in 1953.

According to Met statistics, average mean temperature during the winter (December-February) is 19.9 degree Celsius. The mean temperatures during the three other seasons are -27 degree in summer (March-May), 28.3 degree in rainy seasons (June-September) and 25.5 degree in autumn (October-November).

The Midnight File

Britain won't give asylum to nationals of 3 states

LONDON, Oct 25: Refugees from countries including Algeria, Nigeria and Sri Lanka will automatically be refused political asylum in Britain, as part of measures to cut welfare costs, the Guardian reported Wednesday, reports AFP.

Bangla-Iran JEC meet from Nov 11

Dhaka and Tehran are in a process to expand cooperation in different fields under the seven MOUs the two countries signed in the second week of this month. Foreign Office sources said yesterday, reports UNB.

Bangladesh and Iran signed the Memoranda of Understanding on bolstering Smugglers' leader held in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Oct 25: The alleged ring leader of smugglers in Patenga area, Hashem Mollah, was arrested by Chittagong Metropolitan Police today from his hide-out at Halishahar.

Detective branch of the CMP said Hashem was given detention after arrest.

Hashem is the leader of all the smugglers at Patenga zone and he was wanted in six smuggling cases, the DB said.

Sher-e-Bangla

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The programmes include placing of wreaths, offering fatha and milad-mahfil at the mazar of the late leader.

It will also hold a discussion on "election under a neutral caretaker government in the present political perspective and Sher-e-Bangla" at the mazar premises at 8:30 am.

Presidium member of the Awami League Abdus Samad Azad will attend as chief guest. Awami League leaders Abdul Mannan, Mahiuddin Ahmed, Salahuddin Yusuf, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofael Ahmed, former Secretary Kazi Azhar Ali, former minister A K Faizul Haq, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, K M Jahangir and Prof Khaleda Salahuddin will take part in the discussion.

Sher-e-Bangla National Smriti Sangsad and Bangladesh National Personality Research Centre have jointly organised a discussion on contribution of Sher-e-Bangla in establishing democracy at 4 pm.

Justice A K M Nurul Islam, former Vice President, will attend the function as chief guest while former minister M Matiur Rahman, M A Haq and Barrister Amirul Islam will be present at special guests which will preside over by Smriti Sangsad president Justice Ruhul Islam.

BB directive

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chief executives of banks said they have already formed special cells empowered to contact the top 20 defaulters through the branches concerned.

"The cell is expected to submit its detailed report soon and then we will go for actions," said the Managing Director of a private bank on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, the central bank has expressed its concern at the upward trend of overdue loans and observed that the steps taken by the banks concerned are not adequate to realise the dues.

"We want to set the country's banking sector on a firm footing," a senior Finance Ministry official told The Daily Star. "A prerequisite to that is to stop the defaulting culture," he noted.

The banks are already under pressure for provisioning the bad debts," he said, adding, if the non-performing loans were realised it would improve the health of the banks.

The amount due from the top 20 defaulters of each of the banks has not been calculated till now. But earlier the Bangladesh Bank had prepared a report on the top 10 defaulters of each of the banks.

According to that report, the top 10 defaulters owe Taka 3,206 crore to 18 banks and financial institutions. The defaulters include both sector corporations and private enterprises.

Four of G-5

From Page 1

the four eminent citizens met the CEC to know the Election Commission's polls preparation that would help the group broker a solution to the crisis.

The CEC explained the Commission's powers and its present activities including finalisation of voters' list and preparation of voters identity cards and informed the group that it was working to prepare a flawless voters list enrolling all eligible voters.

The CEC was assisted by Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdul Jalil, Secretary Ershadul Huq and Additional Secretary S M Zakaria during the meeting.

For Attention of all Members of BGMEA

This is for information of all members of BGMEA that the Government have taken the following measures to ease the congestion in Chittagong Port and Benapole Land Port on priority basis:

a. Operations in Chittagong Port and Benapole Land Port will henceforth go on round the clock.

b. All the offices of Customs Department, Banks and other related agencies would remain open until 10:00 P.M. every day. All these offices will remain open also on Friday next.

All member units of BGMEA are requested to avail of the above facilities.

Secretary BGMEA

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