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NEWS BRIEFS

Chief Adviser calls on President
Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman made a courtesy call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday evening. The Chief Adviser stayed with the President for sometime. Begum Biswas and Begum Rahman were present on the occasion. Reports UNB.

Jamaat MPs take oath Sunday
The three newly elected Jamaat-e-Islami MPs will take oath at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban at 11 am tomorrow, said a party press release yesterday. The three Jamaat MPs-elect are: Moulana Delwar Hossain Saidee from Pirojpur-1, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury from Nilphamari-3 and Kazi Shamsur Rahman from Satkhira-2. Reports UNB.

GF extended meet tomorrow
A two-day extended meeting of the Gano Forum Central Committee begins at hotel Sundaram in the city at 10 am tomorrow. In a press release yesterday, Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik requested the district committee president, general secretary, convenor and candidates participated in the election to attend the meeting. Reports UNB.

RU budget session tomorrow
From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, June 21: Budget session of the Rajshahi University will be held on June 23 in the Senate Hall at 9 am with Prof. Yousof Ali, Vice Chancellor of the University in the chair.

One murdered in Sylhet
From Staff Correspondent SHLHET, June 21: A young man was killed and two others were injured in the hands of a rival group of villagers at Charchand of Biswanath thana last night. Previous enmity caused the murder, police said but failed to give any detail. Police sent the body of the victim, Ashabuddin, 32, to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College morgue for autopsy today. The body bore a number of wounds of sharp weapon, police added.

132 MPs-elect take oath on first day



MPs-elect of the Bangladesh Awami League taking oath at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

One hundred thirty-two newly elected members of Parliament including Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina were sworn in at a simple ceremony at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali administered the oath at the Committee Room-1 of the Sangsad Bhaban.

Oath of the MPs-elect, 129 of them from the AL, was administered under Article 148, Clause 5 and Schedule 3 of the Constitution.

Earlier, Shaikh Razzak Ali himself took oath as an MP. He was re-elected as a BNP nominee.

Swearing-in of more MPs-elect will take place tomorrow.

The AL chief, clad in a white saree and her head covered with a scarf, earlier entered the committee room along with her party stalwarts. She and her party colleagues gave the Speaker a standing ovation when he entered the committee room. They also exchanged greetings and pleasantries.

The 14-minute oath-taking ceremony started at 4:45 pm with recitation from the holy Quran. The Speaker then administered the oath. Earlier, Abul Hasem, Secretary of the JS gave a brief introductory speech.

Besides the AL MPs-elect, Maktul Hossain the only independent MP, who joined AL after the election, took oath with the AL members.

JSD leader ASM Abdur Rab — the lone member from his party was administered oath in the Speaker's chamber. Senior AL leaders were also present at that time. JSD has extended its support to the AL to form the next government.

Before the oath taking ceremony, those who were elected from more than one seat vacated other seats

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Repolling in Comilla-3 today

By Staff Correspondent

Repolling at Brahman Chaitola Primary School Centre under Muradnagar thana in Comilla 3 constituency will be held today amid tight security. Election Commission (EC) sources said.

Polling was withheld at that centre during the June 19 re-election due to deterioration of law and order. Election will be held from 8 am to 5 pm without any break.

EC sources said that Police, HDR and Ansars would be deployed at the centre to maintain law and order during the polling. No member of the Armed Forces, will however, be present at the site. EC sources added.

A member of the task force concerned to monitor law and order during repolling will be present at the centre. EC sources had earlier confirmed.

Local and interested foreign election observers would also be present at the centre, sources at the EC said, adding that the DIG, police and the Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong along with other district level high officials

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Legal steps as regards rigging decided BNP to join Parliament

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has decided to join the new parliament and also go for legal steps as regards 'rigging and other irregularities' in the June 12 election.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the party's MPs-elect yesterday with party chief Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The BNP MPs-elect would perform their duties for the sake of maintaining democratic and constitutional process in the country and implementing their pledges to the people, a party press release issued late last night said.

Originally scheduled to be held at BNP's Kakrail office, the meeting was held at another place which the party did not disclose. Some party sources, however, said that the four-hour meet was held at the Park Road (Baridhara) residence of party leader Maj. (ret'd) Quamrul Islam.

The meeting also decided that the MPs-elect from BNP would take oath tomorrow.

In a resolution, the meeting blamed the caretaker government for 'failure to hold the June 12 polls in a free, fair and neutral manner.' It said the party would take legal steps towards realising its demand for re-election in 111 constituencies and recounting of votes in some other constituencies, where massive rigging took place.

The meeting also accused Awami League workers of attacking BNP activists in different parts of the country and filing 'false cases' against them and demanded immediate release of the BNP activists and withdrawal of the cases.

BNP expressed deep gratitude to the people for casting votes in favour of its nominees 'despite various acts of repression and threats,' the press release said.

The meeting prayed for salvation of the departed souls of those killed in by Awami Leaguers and expressed deep sympathy for the members of the bereaved families.

Repolling credible: C'wealth team

The Commonwealth Observer Group, which visited seven centres of 27 constituencies during repolling on Wednesday, said the revoting was credible, reports UNB.

The overall process of the election, including the repolling on June 19, enabled the vast majority of voters to exercise their franchise freely, said a concluding statement of the group yesterday.

The statement said the people of Bangladesh have demonstrated an impressive commitment to democracy and they (the observers) look forward to further consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh.

Although there were shortcomings we believe that the validity of the outcome was not affected,' the statement said.

The group, which arrived in Dhaka on June 4 to observe the election, thanked the Caretaker Government, Election Commission and all concerned.

Concluding its task of election monitoring, the statement said the Commonwealth Observer Group would submit a full report on the election to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Hasina takes oath as PM tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Sheikh Hasina will take oath as the new Prime Minister tomorrow evening.

Disclosing this to newsmen yesterday, top Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed said, 'Upon an invitation from the President, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will take oath as Prime Minister Sunday evening.'

Swearing-in of the other members of the new cabinet is likely to be held on the following day, June 24, Tofael said emerging from the first meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) held at the Sangsad Bhaban last night.

The meeting unanimously elected party president Sheikh Hasina the leader of the ALPP. Tofael said. The ALPP meeting followed the oath-taking ceremony of MPs-elect earlier in the afternoon.

Sheikh Hasina will be the second woman prime minister after Begum Khaleda Zia, whose BNP ruled the country for the last five years.

AL presidium member and former deputy leader of the Opposition in the Fifth Parliament, Abdus Samad Azad proposed Hasina's name as the leader of the ALPP and the proposal was seconded by another AL leader Salahuddin Yusuf.

The meeting also empowered the AL president to choose the deputy leader and the secretary of the ALPP as well as the Chief Whip and the whips of the party, Tofael said. Mohammad Nasim, Prof. Abu Sayed and Abul Hasnat Abdullah were among others present at the press briefing.

Talking to The Daily Star later, AL general secretary Zillur Rahman said it was likely that Hasina would finalise her choices by today.

Tofael said that at the outset, the ALPP meeting observed one-minute silence to pay tribute to the memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the four national leaders, and others killed in

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Repolling results of 26 seats to be gazetted today

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to gazette the official results of the repolling in 26 constituencies today, EC sources said.

Repolling in those 26 seats was held on June 19.

The Returning Officers of those constituencies have already sent to the EC their consolidated reports in prescribed forms, an EC official said.

The gazette notification on the results of repolling in the remaining one constituency Comilla-3, today would be published as soon as the RO sends the consolidated report, the official added.

6 killed, 70 hurt in Manikganj road accidents

MANIKGANJ, June 21: Six people, including two women, were killed and 70 others injured in three road accidents on the Dhaka-Archa highway today, police said, reports UNB.

They said a bus collided head-on with a truck in front of Radio office at Dhamral at about 5 pm killing a bus passenger, Aslam, 40, and an unknown youngman aged about 28. At least 40 people were injured in the accident.

A speeding truck crashed an unidentified woman, 35, at Dhulivita bus stand while she was crossing the road.

In another accident at Hari-rampur thana, three people were killed and 30 wounded when a Dhaka-bound bus from Hari-rampur skidded off the road and plunged into a ditch.

The injured were admitted to Dhamral and Hari-rampur health complexes.

Airbus passengers go by DC-10!

By Reaz Ahmad

Some 230 passengers of a Biman flight remained stranded for over four hours at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday before they could finally fly to their destination, Kuala Lumpur.

The passengers were waiting for Biman's new addition — Airbus — which was scheduled to take off at 10:30 am. But the passengers were later told to board a DC-10 aircraft that took off at 2:45 pm, according to flight enquiry at ZIA.

When contacted, official sources said that due to overflow of passengers and some technical problems in the Airbus, the aircraft was changed and the flight was delayed.

An Airbus A310-300 that joined the Biman fleet on June 15, was scheduled to fly on its second commercial flight yesterday, after the first one on Thursday to Abu Dhabi.

According to some official sources, a minor technical problem developed in the aircraft during its first flight. It was sorted out instantly, they claimed.

The Public Relations wing of Biman, when contacted said that the Airbus would be 'perfectly alright by today.'

'Technical flaws were not the only cause of changing the craft as there was also an overflow of passengers, exceeding capacity of the Airbus,' it added.

Biman's Managing Director Omar Farooque told this correspondent that the inconvenience to passengers was

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MPs-elect of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in a meeting at a house in Baridhara in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Cairo summit to press Israeli govt to soften stance

CAIRO, June 21: Arab leaders began arriving here today to a red carpet welcome for an historic summit aimed at forging Arab solidarity and pressuring Israel's new right-wing government to soften its stance on the Middle East peace process, reports AFP.

Mubarak met the heads of state while Egyptian prime minister Kamal al-Ganzuri received the other heads of delegations.

Fourteen Arab heads of state will attend the Cairo summit on Saturday and Sunday, which will group 21 out of the 22 Arab league members.

Earlier Arab foreign ministers met today to lay down the agenda for the summit.

Egyptian foreign minister Amr Moussa presided over the session attended by 19 other ministers along with a representative from Somalia, the sources said.

'What we are going to do is call for the resumption of the peace process, to protect the peace process and respect the principles on which it is based,' Moussa told journalists after the meeting of the ministers.

The ministers approved an official agenda for the summit, but did not reach agreement on a final statement to be issued by Arab leaders on Sunday.

Saudi foreign minister Saud al-Faisal described as 'negative' on Thursday the inaugural speech earlier this week of Israel's new rightwing prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

It was the first official Saudi reaction to the speech by Netanyahu, who called on Arab leaders, notably King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, to 'enlarge the circle of (Israeli-Arab) peace.'

'All Arab countries must make efforts to reach a complete peace in the Middle East and the Arab summit offers and important opportunity to reach a just and comprehensive peace,' Faisal said.

He also expressed the hope that the summit would 'produce a clear and unified Arab position, which would stimulate the peace process.'

Israel said the Arab meeting was causing unnecessary tension but Syria, key to the summit, accused Israel's new right-wing government of reneging on the very 'land-for-peace' basis of the peace talks opened in Madrid five years ago.

'We consider that the Israeli side... is the side which calls for preconditions when it says no to a Palestinian state, no to withdrawal from the Golan and no to the return of (east) Jerusalem,' Syrian foreign minister Farouq al-Shara said on arrival in Cairo on Thursday.

'We don't set preconditions but we start out from the bases ratified by the international community in the heart of the US initiative,' he said.

AIDS from bite

LONDON, June 21: A Slovenian man became infected with the virus that causes AIDS when his HIV-positive neighbour bit him, doctors reported today, reports Reuter.

They said it was the first documented case of someone getting AIDS from a human bite.

Ludvik Vidmar and colleagues at the department of infectious diseases in Ljubljana said a 47-year-old homosexual man with AIDS had a seizure.

'Frightened, he went to his neighbour, where another seizure occurred,' they wrote in a letter to the Lancet medical journal.

The 53-year-old neighbour, who had no idea the first man had AIDS, put his hand in the man's mouth to try to stop him from swallowing his tongue. The AIDS victim accidentally bit him.

Doctors later noticed the man had bitten his tongue and there had been blood in his saliva.

The neighbour was immediately given AZT to prevent infection, but came down with flu-like symptoms 33 days later and was diagnosed with HIV infection.

JP to request next govt to free Ershad

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party has chalked out a detailed strategy to secure the release of its jailed leader H M Ershad, according to legal counsels of Ershad.

'We are planning to suggest a formula to the government to secure the release of Ershad under a legal cover,' his lawyer Khandaker Mahub Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday.

Khandaker also cited some examples from the neighbouring countries where alleged convicts, after being elected as members of parliament were allowed to attend parliament sessions and subsequently released.

Jatiya party will request the incoming government for Ershad's release on parole to attend the first session of the Jatiya Sangsad and facilities for treatment outside the jail, he said.

The party also has a plan to request the government to withdraw the cases filed against Ershad in the lower courts, as, according to his lawyers, all the 16 cases filed against him in the trial courts were politically motivated.

'If the government wants not to pursue the cases under investigation, the cases can end in final report,' said Yousof Hossain Humayun, another defence counsel of Ershad.

The government can also withdraw the cases under trial under Section 494 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, said Humayun. The under-trial cases include the Holiday Inn case and the Manzoor murder case.

'On grounds of good behaviour and other related considerations, the term of sentence may also be reduced by the government,' Humayun said.

The JP has also plans to move a bill prayer in the High Court for Ershad's release.

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11 fishermen drown in Meghna

BARISAL, June 21: All the eleven fishermen drowned when a fishing trawler caught in a storm capsized at the estuary of the river Meghna under Char Fashon thana of Bhola district early this morning, reports BSS.

The bodies of two fishermen were recovered this morning and nine others in the afternoon.

The trawler could not be traced as yet.

According to another report, a fisherman drowned when a boat sank today in the Bay of Bengal, three km off Kuakata under Khepupara thana of Patuakhali district.

Seven other fishermen managed to swim ashore.

Rain paralyses Ctg: Many areas flooded

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, June 21: Normal life was paralysed in the port city and it surrounding areas following incessant rain fall that flooded most of the low-lying areas.

The low-lying areas of Chikrati, Kutalgouj, Bakalia, Bhabhat, Sholakbar, Raozan, Rengunia, Banskali and Anwara area affected.

Met office recorded 114 mm rainfall during the last 24 hours upto 6 pm today.

Rains might continue for some more days, it added.

Meanwhile, port sources said the continuous rainfall had affected the cargo handling inside the jetty.

Traffic movement became thin while most of the city people remained indoors due to torrential rains today.