

# AL, JP are old friends, says Khaleda

BOGRA, July 21: Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia today branded the Awami League and the Jatiya Party as 'old friends' and said the present coalition government is the outcome of clandestine relationship they have nourished since 1982, reports UNB.

"Awami League was not sincere in the movement against the autocratic regime. They took part in the anti-autocratic movement only to save themselves from total alienation from the people," she said.

Addressing a public meeting at Government Azzul Huq College ground, Begum Zia said that in the name of 'government of national consensus' the ruling party was trying to release the autocrat on the basis of 'consensus among partners of the government'.

Begum Zia alleged that the ruling party was not willing to run parliament according to rules. "They want to conduct it by dint of force and it is a threat to democracy."

"If you want to continue the democratic trend, you have to allow the Opposition to express their opinion in Parliament," she told the ruling party and claimed that during the fifth parliament, the Opposition were given 70 per cent

time to express their views.

While visiting the flood-hit areas of Dhunat thana of the district today, the BNP chairperson addressed public meetings at 17 places and distributed relief materials there.

Leader of the Opposition alleged that supply of relief materials was inadequate in the affected areas and the party in power was not giving proper attention to the flood victims.

Begum Zia said the people in the flood-hit areas are passing their days in distress for want of food, pure drinking water and medicine. "The ruling party is not carrying out their responsibilities to mitigate their suffering," she alleged.

She said within one month of its assumption of power, the Awami League has exposed its real face. "They are harassing opposition workers, arresting and even killing them."

She alleged that a certain quarter set fire to a government office at Chandpur and burnt ballot papers and documents when BNP demanded recounting of votes in Chandpur-6 constituency.

Begum Zia visited Rampur, Manikchowk, Pallmangal Hat, Gokul, Noongola, Mamuja, Nishindira, Etulia, Sapore, Timmatha, Ashkupur, Ranirhat, Gohali, Banani, Ariabazar, Shaharabari and Karakbari in Sadar and Dhunat thanas.

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The World on Time



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went round different stalls at the closing ceremony of National Tree Fair '96 at Parade Square in the city yesterday. — PID photo

## Distressed FF's will be rehabilitated: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government would rehabilitate the distressed freedom fighters who fought in 1971 for liberating their beloved motherland, reports BSS.

Addressing the freedom fighters, who under the banner of the unified 'Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad' called on the Prime Minister at her office in the morning, Sheikh Hasina said her government is pledge-bound to materialise the ideals and spirit of the War of Liberation and the hopes and aspirations for which the

tijoddha Sangsad in 1972 to involve the freedom fighters in nation building activities as well as to translate into reality the ideals and spirit of the War of Liberation.

In this connection, she referred to the grand convention of the freedom fighters held at the historic Suhrawardy Uddyan where the Father of the Nation entrusted the valiant freedom fighters with the great task of bringing the "economic emancipation of the masses."

The Prime Minister said, the vested quarter assassinated Bangabandhu right at a moment when he was out to launch the second phase of his struggle for economic emancipation of the people. After that tragic incident, she said, 21 years has elapsed but there is no progress at all.

"Go straight to the villages — tell the new generation the heroic tales of the freedom struggle in which you were the architects — you were the heroes," Sheikh Hasina said.

## BJMA urges PM Ensure capital for purchasing raw jute

Jute mills owners said survival of the jute industry was at stake for lack of proper policy and urged the Prime Minister to take proper measure to save it, reports UNB.

A delegation of Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA) yesterday called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office and made the appeal.

The 17-member delegation, led by BJMA president A M Zahrudin Khan, apprised the Prime Minister of the problems the jute sector is facing.

Khan requested her to ensure working capital ahead of raw jute purchasing season and to form a high-power task force to look into the problems.

"In the past, we got step-motherly attitude," the former minister of Begum Zia's government, Zahrudin Khan, said and pointed out to the Prime Minister that jute sector could play a vital role in alleviating poverty.

The Prime Minister assured them that her government would take pragmatic steps to solve the problems and directed State Minister for Jute A K M Faizul Huq, present there, to sit with the BJMA and chalk out necessary steps to solve the problems.

The other delegation members were Kamran T Raeman, M A Sattar, Syed Mohsin Ali, Dr Naimur Rahman, Mirza Mehdi Isphahani, Mirza Ali Berouze Isphahani, S Y Bakht, M Nasir, S M Emdadul Hossain, Md Sayefullah, Nurul Islam Patwari, Chowdhury A K M Shamsuddoha, M A Rahim, Sk Kabir Uddin, Serajul Huq Khan and Nawab Khwaza Habibullah Askari.

Swimming

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two silvers and two bronzes at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics when she was just 14.

American Tom Dolan will seek a gold medal in the men's 400 metres individual medley to match the one he won in the 1994 world championships in world record time.

European champion Jani Sievinen of Finland is likely to be his most dangerous adversary.

Australian world champion Samantha Riley, who escaped with a warning after testing positive from a headache pill given by her coach, faces a battle in the women's 100 metres breaststroke from South Africa's Penney Heyns and American Amanda Beard. Heyns took the world record from Riley in March.

Cycling starts with the women's road race where veteran French rider Jeannie Longo, the most successful female in the history of a powerful French team with the potential to pull off a medals sweep over powerful American, Russian and Italian squads.

British rower Steve Redgrave aiming to win a fourth consecutive gold medal to cap his career when the Olympic regatta begins here on Lake Lanier.

Redgrave, 34, will retire after the Atlanta Games, breaking a partnership with Matthew Pinsent that has dominated the coxless pairs event since 1991 and has been unbeaten since May 1992.

The main challenge to the British should come from Jean-Christophe Rolland and Michel Andrieux of France, bronze medalists at last year's world championships.

## JMB likely to be completed by Dec 1997

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju yesterday said the Jamuna Bridge is expected to be completed by December next year, reports UNB.

Replying to a question in parliament, he said 33 per cent of the construction cost of the bridge, including rehabilitation of those affected, would be provided from domestic resources.

Sharif Khasru of Awami League raised the question on behalf of Jafrul Islam Chowdhury of BNP in absence of the opposition MP during the question.

## Second escapee

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During the interrogation, the two under-trial prisoners gave some contradictory statements to police and the members of the inquiry committee, the sources said.

But according to an official, their statements were almost the same. "However, some differences were found as both of them tried to save themselves," the official said.

Both the three-member committees also interrogated the four arrested wardens of Dhaka Central Jail, also under CID custody.

## Flood

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in Manikganj deteriorated further as the mighty Jamuna and Padma rivers continued to swell inundating fresh areas.

Nearly 5,000 people have taken shelter on the flood-control embankments as flood onslaughts damaged their homes.

District Flood Control room sources said 410 villages of 36 unions of Shibabala, Harirampur, Gheor and Daulatpur thanas had been affected by the flood that damaged property worth about Tk 4 crore.

Meanwhile, two helicopters of Bangladesh Air Force have been engaged in carrying relief materials for the flood affected people.

In Jamalpur district, three people, including a minor girl, drowned in flood water in Melandah thana.

District Relief Office sources said 51 unions in six thanas of the district have been affected by the flood.

In Sherpur, flood situation deteriorated with inundation of fresh areas of 16 unions of three thanas. Flood water damaged Aus paddy, jute and Aman seed-beds and disrupted communications as the roads were inundated in many places.

Overall flood situation in Faridpur district worsened further for the rise of water level in the Padma and Arialkha inundating 50 more villages in Sadar, Charbhadrashan, Sadarpur and Bhanga thanas.

## 2 children killed in Moheshkhali road accident

COX'S BAZAR, July 21: Two minor boys were killed and five people critically injured when a jeep skidded off the road in Moheshkhali thana of the district today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, Sumon, 1, and Mizan, 2, died on the spot after falling from laps of their mothers when they tumbled into a wayside ditch near Hoanali College in Moheshkhali at about 11 am.

Their mothers, Rehana, 30, and Mobin Ara, 26, and three others identified as Noor Kashem, 45, Abdul Karim, 16, and Shafullah, 32, were critically injured and admitted to Sadar Hospital.

The bodies were sent to the hospital for autopsy and a case was lodged with the local police.

## Undefeatable mother

ATLANTA, July 21: US table tennis player Todd Sweeris has an impressive string of victories, but one player he has never defeated is his mother, Connie Mae Sweeris, a former national champion, reports Reuter.

"My parents used to play me, and they would beat me as heavily as they could," Olympic medal hope Sweeris said on Saturday. "They wanted me to know that when I won, I had really won. I never beat her."

He said his mother stopped playing him when he started to improve about five years ago.



Finance Minister S A M S Kibria presiding over a meeting of representatives of donors' group at the ministry's conference room yesterday. — PID photo

## BOI: Legal framework

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JICA has completed a study. Representatives of many of the Japanese firms who attended the meeting pointed out that the image of Bangladesh was still negative and suggested that the country should launch a vigorous move to promote its image.

"Image of Bangladesh is not so good. It's better for Bangladesh to do something for the improvement of its image," said Kazuko Kanado of Japanese Embassy in Dhaka, and suggested holding seminars to apprise the entrepreneurs about the potentials and incentives available here.

The BOI chief executive replied that his organisation was planning to arrange an investment seminar sometime this year in the capital to address the question of image building.

As some entrepreneurs pointed out different bottlenecks in doing business in Bangladesh, Chowdhury acknowledged, but assured that the government was attaching top priority to removal of all snags in attracting foreign investment.

He also informed that the new government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had assured that all commitments regarding investments by foreign companies and agencies would be honoured.

He termed the present gas shortage as "temporary short-supply" caused by the delay in implementation of the Ashuganj-Bakhrabad Gas Pipeline. "But I can assure you that if there is any shortage of gas in future, KAPCO will be last to face the shortage," he said.

The BOI chief did not agree with Shunsuke Satomi of Mitsubishi Corporation that it is too early to invest here. "Bangladesh is in the top of the Bay of Bengal growth triangle and a member of SAARC which is trying to develop a preferential trading arrangement. So the potential market is bigger than Bangladesh," he said.

The Japanese businessmen also suggested the Board to bring small and medium-scale entrepreneurs from Japan and to make available the data about the existing incentives and facilities for foreign investors.

## JP to field candidates in all 16 seats

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad has said his party will nominate candidates for all the 16 vacated seats of the Jatiya Sangsad where by elections will be held on September 5.

"We will place our candidates in all the 16 seats in the by-elections," Ershad said adding that the party was yet to finalise the nominees.

Ershad was flanked by his wife and party MP Begum Roushan Ershad and another JP presidential member Kazi Zafar Ahmed while he was talking to newsmen at the lobby of the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Ershad said the reason for his not attending the second day of the session on Thursday was not "hunger strike" as reported in a section of the print media. "I was sick," he explained.

After attending yesterday's session, Ershad also held a meeting with his party MPs in which Kazi Zafar Ahmed also attended.

Asked about a cleansing drive in the JP, Ershad said, "It is no more required, as they are no more around," Moudud Ahmed, a senior party

## Body soon to probe ballot gutting in Chandpur

By Staff Correspondent

A high-powered enquiry committee will be constituted soon to probe the alleged gutting of some ballot papers in a fire in Chandpur recently.

Disclosing this at a press conference yesterday, Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena said that according to a preliminary report, the fire was caused by electric short circuit.

It was reported in a section of the press that some ballot papers were burnt in a fire in Chandpur-5 (Hajiganj-Shaharshi) constituency and a group of local people alleged that it was pre-planned.

The CEC said the enquiry committee would examine whether any ballot papers were gutted and identify those responsible.

He, however, said that the Election Commission had not received any complaint in this regard.

Replying to a question whether the Home Minister, who got elected from Chandpur-5, was in anyway linked with incident, the CEC said, "No comment, please."

## 5 bills tabled

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nanced by the World Bank.

The council tasks will be research, planning, preparation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation on agricultural science through institutes and their affiliated organisations considering the national interest.

The institutes are: Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture, Sugarcane Research and Training Institute, Livestock Research Institute, Fisheries Research Institute, Bangladesh Tea Research Institute, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute and Soil Resources Development Institute.

The agriculture minister tabled the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (Amendment) Bill 1996 for further amendment to the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Ordinance 1976.

The Jute Research Institute (Amendment) Bill 1996 was aimed at further strengthening functional linkage among agricultural research institutes and ensuring coordination among various research activities.

The Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (Amendment) Bill 1996 aims at expansion and modernisation of nuclear agriculture research while the Livestock Research Institute (Amendment) Bill 1996 will help expansion and modernisation of research in livestock resources.

## Dacoits attack

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run as they realised that they have stopped the car of a minister.

District protection force of the minister, following in another car, tried to open fire on the fleeing dacoits, but Mosharraf asked them not to open fire. The dacoits escaped in a boat kept in the nearby river, Khiro.

Soon after the incident, three men in civil dress appeared at the scene and identified them as members of Trishal thana police, challenged by the minister and the protection force.

Later, an on-duty ASI of Trishal thana, Nurul Islam, also arrived at the spot and identified the plainclothes police as his colleagues.

The state minister took all the four law enforcers to Bhaluka and handed them over to police there.

The minister's police protection force, while returning to Mymensingh, lodged a case with Trishal thana in connection with the robbery bid.

Another report says: The authorities here today suspended four policemen of Trishal thana whom Rashed Mosharraf found on the highway immediately after coming under a dacoity bid.

## BIRDEM strike

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The Employees Welfare Association in the BIRDEM representing 1700 general employees called the strike demanding right to form union, regularisation of some staff members and cancellation of the contract system of recruitment.

A court had earlier ruled that the employees association in the BIRDEM could not be allowed to form union since the BIRDEM was a charity organisation and the association enjoyed the status of a collective bargaining agent (CBA).

The 25-member BIRDEM Council, comprising 16 elected members including six eminent persons from different organisations, yesterday urged the employees to withdraw their strike saying that their demands would be reviewed at a meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

Nearly 2000 patients receive treatment at the outdoor of the 400-bed hospital everyday, hospital sources said adding that doctors faced difficulties in dealing with patients yesterday.

According to Honourary Director, Research and Development of the BIRDEM Prof A K Azad Khan, "the contract system is applicable for fresh recruitments only."

BIRDEM Secretary General Dr Fasih Uddin Mahtab in a press release last night noted that if the organisation accepted the demands of the employees welfare association, the BIRDEM would not be able to expand the welfare programmes for patients.

He termed the activities of the association as "totally illegal." Yet the Council met its (association) leaders in the greater interest of the patients and the people.

Dr Mahtab said that at a meeting between the association leaders and some BIRDEM consultants and officials, an agreement was reached on some issues of the employees Saturday. Since the agreement required the Council's approval, it could not be implemented. The next month meeting of the Council is scheduled for July 28, he said.

"A proposal to hold an emergency meeting of the council was given. But they closed the door for negotiation and decided to stop work," he claimed.

The Secretary General pointed out that the doctors and officials of BIRDEM did not support the movement of the employees but a section of the employees were trying to bar them from performing their duties.

## BNP

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tunity to bargain for some concessions to the Opposition, competent sources in the BNP said.

A ruling party delegation led by the Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad that met the BNP leaders at the chamber of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, however, failed to bring them back to the House on the day as the latter insisted on a tripartite talks, also involving the Speaker.

The BNP lawmakers walked out of the House on Thursday protesting, what they said, denial of their rights by the Speaker.

The party had earlier decided to join yesterday's session to ventilate its views inside the House, a top leader of the party said, seeking anonymity.

Leader of the Opposition and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia, who returned to the capital yesterday after three-day visit to Bogra, endorsed the decision of her party's return to the House, taken by her colleagues on Saturday, the leader added. Begum Zia, however, did not go to the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

According to the decision taken on Saturday, BNP legislators would meet at the Sangsad Bhaban before yesterday's session to chalk out their strategy as to how to protest 'violation of rules and denial of their rights by the Speaker inside the House' and accordingly they started the planned meeting. But, sources concerned said, the ruling party offer for 'bilateral talks' led the BNP to abandon its earlier decision to join the session yesterday. The meeting was also adjourned soon after Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury received a phone call from Abdus Samad Azad on the latter's plan to meet the BNP leaders.

The four-member AL delegation comprising AL Deputy Leader Samad Azad, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim and K M Jahangir, MP turned up at Prof Chowdhury's chamber at about 6.15 pm and had a 35-minute close-door meet.

## 4 JS committees

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Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury will also announce the Business Advisory Committee, set up in the House today.

The four committees to be proposed by the Chief Whip are: Privilege Committee, Committee on JS Rules of Procedure, House Committee and the Committee on Private Members Bills and Motions.

"I had a plan to propose four important committees today, but the Chief Whip of the Opposition informed me that he would give me the list of their representatives tomorrow," Chief Whip of the House told the Chair.

On the formation of the standing committees on various ministries, Abdullah told the House that it would require amendment to the JS Rules of Procedure.

Speaker Chowdhury, who is to announce the JS Business Advisory Committee, said, "I am deferring the announcement till tomorrow as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition told me that he would send me the list of their representatives in the body tomorrow (Monday)."