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NEWS BRIEFS

President assents to two Bills

President Abdur Rahman Biswas on Monday assented to the two Bills, according to a Parliament Secretariat press release yesterday. The two Bills are the Consolidated Fund (Supplementary and Appropriation) Bill, 1996 and the Consolidated Fund (Grant in Advance and Appropriation) Bill, 1996. The House passed the Bills on August 3.

Hasina goes to Jhenidah today

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Aug 6: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Jhenidah tomorrow, according to district administration sources. During the visit the Prime Minister will inaugurate Jhenidah TV relay station and address a public meeting at the government boys high school. She will also meet government officials at the Jhenidah Circuit House.

Lankan Health Minister in city

Sri Lankan Minister for Health, Highways and Social Services A H M Fowze arrived in Dhaka on a 3-day official visit to Bangladesh yesterday. Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf received the guest at the Zia International Airport. Health and Family Welfare Secretary Mohammad Ali and the high commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh S B Atugoda were present. Later Salahuddin Yusuf called on the Sri Lankan Minister at the state guest house 'Maghna', reports BSS.

RU staff continue strike for 2nd day

From RU Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Aug 6: On the second day of the 13-day strike called by the officers and employees of Rajshahi University, almost all offices remained closed on the campus. The University Authorities and the Officers and Employees' Okiya Parishad (OEOPE) were continuing their discussions to end the strike.

Indian goods worth Tk 60 lakh seized

RAJSHAHI, Aug 6: BDR personnel of 14 Rifle Battalion seized Indian contraband worth Taka about 60 lakh and arrested 20 persons in special anti-smuggling drive at different areas of the districts of Rajshahi, Natore, Pabna and Noagaon during the last fortnight.

AL-15: BNP-15: JP-13: Independent-34

86 nominations for JS by-polls valid

Nomination papers of 86 candidates for the September 5 by-elections to 15 Jatiya Sangsad seats were found valid after scrutiny yesterday, reports UNB.

Election Commission Secretariat sources said only two nomination papers of two independent candidates were rejected during the scrutiny. They are: M Abu Hossain Sarker (Rangpur-6) and Mir M Abul Kalam Azad (Laxmipur-2). Nomination of Abu Hossain Sarker was rejected for his bank loan default while that of Azad was cancelled as voter number and address of his

proposer and seconder were wrong.

A total of 88 candidates on Monday submitted nomination papers for contesting the by-election to 15 vacated seats.

The final list of candidates is expected to be published after August 12, the last date for withdrawal of candidature. By-election to another constituency, Bhola-1, vacated by Tofael Ahmed of Awami League, has been withheld due to a stay order of the court.

After scrutiny of nomination papers yesterday the number of candidates in the 15 seats are: Three each in Bagerhat-1,

Pirojpur-2 and Shariatpur-1, four each in Rangpur-2, Bogra-6 and Sirajganj-1, five each in Khulna-1 and Chittagong-13, six in Bogra-7, seven in Chittagong-1, eight each in Rangpur-6, Kurigram-3 and Sylhet-4, and nine each in Rangpur-5 and Laxmipur-2.

The constituencies scheduled for by-election were vacated by nine top leaders of the three major parties, who won more than one seat in the June 12 election but kept one each and vacated the other seats as per election rules.

Of the 16 constituencies, See Page 12 Col 7

News Analysis Coming by-polls litmus test for ruling AL

By Nazmul Ashraf

Holding of September 5 by-elections to the 16 vacant seats of the Jatiya Sangsad will be a litmus test for the ruling Awami League as all the previous ruling parties faced the allegation of manipulating polls.

The agitation that finally toppled the BNP government of Begum Khaleda Zia had its root in the charge of polls rigging. The then opposition parties — the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami — launched a combined agitation against the BNP government after the party failed to maintain its neutrality to a large extent in holding the first phase by-polls to 11 parliamentary seats in 1991.

The joint movement became intensified by the accusation of rigging in the Dhaka-11 by-polls and reached its peak when the BNP clearly appeared to use its power as the

ruling party to influence the outcome of the Magura-2 by-election.

Angered and aggrieved by the farcical by-polls, the AL and its allies were compelled to resign en masse from the parliament in late 1994 and took to the streets demanding all following national elections to be held under a neutral non-party government. They argued that free and fair polls were impossible under the BNP government.

Winning the by-polls at all costs, particularly in the opposition vacated seats, was considered a priority task by a section of the BNP leadership. This was done to prove that the then government was gaining popularity because of its good work.

This tactic of trying to show rising popularity by means of ruling party to influence the outcome of the Magura-2 by-election. See Page 12 Col 1

6 candidates are relatives of party leaders

By Staff Correspondent

Six of the candidates nominated by Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party for contesting the September 5 by-elections are relatives of top leaders of the parties.

Sheikh Helaluddin, cousin of AL Chief Sheikh Hasina has been nominated to contest for the Bagerhat-1 Jatiya Sangsad seat, one of the two seats vacated by her following the general elections. Prof Wahed Miah, brother-in-law of Sheikh Hasina has also been nominated to contest in Rangpur-6 constituency on AL ticket. The seat was vacated by JP Chief H M Ershad.

Dr Mohammad Selim, elder brother of Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim, has been nominated by AL for the Serajganj-1 seat vacated by Nasim.

In Chittagong-13, BNP has nominated Montaz Begum, wife of Oli Ahmed. The seat was vacated by Oli Ahmed. Jatiya Party has nominated... See Page 12 Col 3



The Theatre Centre for Social Development brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday marking the Hiroshima Day. — Star photo

Two Bills passed

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) yesterday passed two Bills seeking restructuring of two agricultural research organisations of the country to ensure improved research facilities in the agriculture sector.

The Bills adopted by voice vote are: The Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (amendment) Bill, 1996 and the Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (amendment) Bill, 1996.

Piloting the bills, the Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury told the House that the two legislations would help the organisations to conduct effective research and studies for modernising the country's agriculture.

She said, the World Bank (WB) would provide the institutes with financial assistance for research work and studies.

Some Opposition members while stressing the need for extensive research in the agriculture sector, however expressed their apprehension that the WB would not cooperate. See Page 12 Col 3

JS discussion on budget continues

General discussion on the national budget for 1996-97 continued on the second day yesterday at the Jatiya Sangsad in the city, reports BSS.

Initiating the discussion Abdul Alim (BNP-Jaipurhat) termed the budget as a copy of the budget technique followed by the BNP finance minister in the previous budgets and that was why he did not oppose it.

He said the budget could not give any new direction about the future though the finance minister claimed it in his budget speech. The budget speech was an echo of the past, he said.

Alim criticised the activities in the post-independent period of the Awami League government and said in the name of socialism they nationalised mills and factories overnight and ran those by politically appointed inexperienced people.

In the midst of shouting and table thumping of Treasury bench members Alim read out some reports from the daily

Janakantha published during post-liberation period which quoted Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman saying 'I am surrounded by flatterers, corruption all around, etc...'

The Speaker said no newspaper or any other unauthentic quotations would be included in the proceedings of the House.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury said there was no provision to read newspapers in the House but could be quoted and the Speaker could verify the authenticity later.

Taking the floor Awami League member Sajeda Chowdhury said, Alim also spoke about the past and if one goes to the past in 1971 the role of Alim was that of a 'razakkar'.

When the Speaker gave the floor to S M Akram (AL) to speak on the proposed national budget Post and Telecommunications Minister... See Page 12 Col 4

'Surrender illegal arms by Aug 10'

The government has issued a four-day ultimatum for surrender of illegal arms and ammunition from 6 am today to 6 pm on August 10, reports UNB.

The Home Ministry in an announcement yesterday called upon the possessors of unauthorised arms, ammunition and explosive to surrender those to the nearest police station or Deputy Commissioner.

Those who will surrender illegal arms, ammunition and explosive during the period will not be charged only for possessing those, said the announcement.

The government hopes that all concerned will avail the amnesty and thereby cooperate with the government for the sake of the country and nation.

The Home Ministry warned that stern action would be taken. See Page 12 col 8

Ruling party politicising TV: BNP

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury accused the government of politicising the state-run television and using it against the opposition, reports UNB.

Briefing newsmen at Parliament last night the BNP leader said the government was trying to tarnish the image of the opposition in the House and using the television to mobilise public opinion against BNP.

Criticising the ruling party for its telecast policy, he said: 'Either you should televise our entire speech or refrain from a partial cast.'

The BTV only telecasts the... See Page 12 Col 7

Foreign Secy off to Delhi

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan left Dhaka yesterday on a three-day official visit to New Delhi at the invitation of his Indian counterpart Sarman Haider, reports BSS.

The foreign secretary's visit to New Delhi is a return visit to that of the Indian foreign secretary to Bangladesh in last June.

The foreign secretaries of the two countries were mandated by their respective heads of government to hold regular consultations to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relations, particularly to prepare the ground work for resolution of all outstanding issues between the two countries.

During the visit, the Bangladesh foreign secretary will hold talks with his Indian counterpart on the major issues. See Page 12 col 8

Ruling party MP Sharifuddin dead

Sharifuddin Ahmed, a Member of Parliament of the ruling Awami League, died at the PG Hospital last night. He was 5, report agencies.

Ahmed, who was elected from Habiganj-2 constituency, died at 10:50 pm. His namaj-e-janaza will be held today at 10 am at the south plaza of Sangsad Bhaban.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas expressed deep shock and profound grief at the death of the newly elected lawmaker. In a message of condolence, President Biswas said late Ahmed worked hard for the welfare of the people throughout his life.

With the death, the country has lost a dedicated personality, he said.

The President expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also expressed her deep shock at the death of Ahmed. Several other ministers also condoled the death of their party colleague.

Meanwhile, Speaker... See Page 12 Col 2

Detained PIA passengers sent back to Pakistan

Bangladesh yesterday sent back the Pakistani nationals, who remained stranded at Zia International Airport (ZIA) since their arrival on Thursday. 'All the 53 Pakistanis were sent back by a regular flight of Pakistan International Airlines yesterday afternoon,' said an on-duty immigration official at ZIA.

He said the PIA flight PK-267 that had landed at ZIA at 11:27 am took off with the Pakistani nationals at 2:56 pm. 'There was no trouble during their departure,' the official told UNB.

Officials of Civil Aviation Authority, Immigration Department, Biman, ZIA and DMP were present at the airport during departure of the Pakistani. See Page 12 col 8

JS tidbits

Star Report

After stormy sessions for two consecutive days, yesterday's session of the Jatiya Sangsad was a lively one and was marked with some lighter moments.

'How much does one kg of 'patal' (a kind of vegetable) cost?' Awami League lawmaker A S M Feroz asked Fazlur Rahman alias Patal when the latter stood on a point of order.

Abdul Hamid, who was in the chair, pronounced the BNP legislator's pet name — 'Patal' — while giving him the floor.

'Go to bazar to know the price,' a smiling Fazlur Rahman told Feroz.

The Deputy Speaker then clarified, 'I did not mean that Patal'.

Thanking the Chair, the BNP MP said, 'You mentioned it (his pet name) with good sense. But Feroz looked at the matter with AL's eyes.'

'I know, you (Patal) have a special relation with Feroz,' Abdul Haq concluded.

The House burst into laughter when the Deputy Speaker told BNP's Maj (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman, 'You're not an ugly face. Don't hide it, we want to see your nice face.'

Maj (ret'd) Akhtar's face could not be seen as he was... See Page 12 col 6

Illiteracy to go within decade : PM Public, pvt sectors need uniform edn standard

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there is no alternative to 'education for all' for socio-economic and political development, reports UNB.

She reiterated her government's commitment to eradicate illiteracy within next 10 years and emphasised the need for a uniform standard of education in both public and private sectors.

Inaugurating a four-day conference on 'Universal Primary Education '96' at a local hotel in the morning, Hasina also stressed introduction of proper appointment rules to select efficient, competent and responsible teachers.

The Prime Minister categorically said that appointment of teachers and their responsibilities would be kept above political influence. The government, management, supervision, and inspection of an institution will also be freed from political interference, she added.

Hasina asserted that her government had given education sector the top priority in the current year's budget, considering expansion of education as a social movement.

She suggested that initiatives be taken for setting up new schools, expansion of

physical infrastructure, curriculum reforms, implementation of teachers training programmes and distribution of text books free of cost.

The Prime Minister said the nation cannot afford to step into the 21st century without education at a time when the whole world is preparing to welcome a new civilisation based on science and technology.

'In the last 21 years, education has become a commodity,' she said regretting that we do not have a proper education policy even after 25 years of independence.

In the absence of a proper education policy, Hasina said, the nation has been pursuing an 'immoral and valueless' education system. 'History in the curriculum was distorted in past 21 years giving birth to a crippled generation,' she observed.

Citing an example from mathematics curriculum, she said, 'We can't build up honest and patriotic citizens by teaching mixing of water with milk and earning profit by selling adulterated food.'

To save the nation from moral degradation, Hasina called for taking positive steps... See Page 12 Col 3

Bangladeshi food can be a world-class cuisine

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladeshi food enjoys much popularity in Britain and has immense potential to flourish as an industry in Europe, America and Russia, some Bangladesh restaurant owners in UK said here yesterday.

This can earn huge foreign exchange for the country and create thousands of job opportunities for our people, they said.

Speaking at an International Seminar at a local hotel, leaders of Bangladesh Caterers Association, UK, now in the city, said that with effective business planning and promotion, Bangladeshi food can be made a world-class cuisine.

They said there could not be any reason why Bangladeshi tandoori and bhuna would not be available in Toronto and Brussels while pizza was popular in Papua New Guinea. Overseas Bangladeshis have the skill and mastery in cooking and preparing international standard food but initiative and

proper guidance is needed for its expansion worldwide, they observed.

The working session of the seminar on 'Popularising Bangladeshi food worldwide and the role of probashi in the economic development of Bangladesh and UK' was chaired by Dr Moshirul Resources Division. Three keynote papers were presented by M A Rahim, president, Bangladesh Caterers Association, UK, (BCA) Saad Ghazi, secretary general, BCA and Mohammad Abdul Gaffar.

The seminar was jointly organised by Bangladesh Caterers Association, UK and the British High Commission in Dhaka.

In his paper M A Rahim said, starting in 1938, over 10 thousand Bangladeshi restaurants are now operating in Britain which provide employment to more than 70 thousand Bangladeshi people living there. Mohammad Abdul Gaffar

said Bangladeshis living in Britain are now ready to invest in this country if the present government removes bureaucratic red-tapism.

He also suggested for giving more emphasis on tourism sector and establishment of more export processing zones for attracting expatriate investment.

Saad Ghazi said that a trend had already started among wealthy expatriate Bangladeshis to invest in Bangladesh. The government should take appropriate measures to utilise this, he added.

Earlier, inaugurating the seminar in the morning, Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury said, the Bangladeshis living in UK have been making great contributions for the development of the country.

The inaugural function was also addressed by among others former chief justice Kamaluddin Hossain, Major... See Page 12 Col 3



Copies of the Princess of Wales book 'The Making of a Queen' on sale for a pound at a cut-price book stall at Woodvale Rally, Southport in the United Kingdom Sunday. — AFP/UNB photo