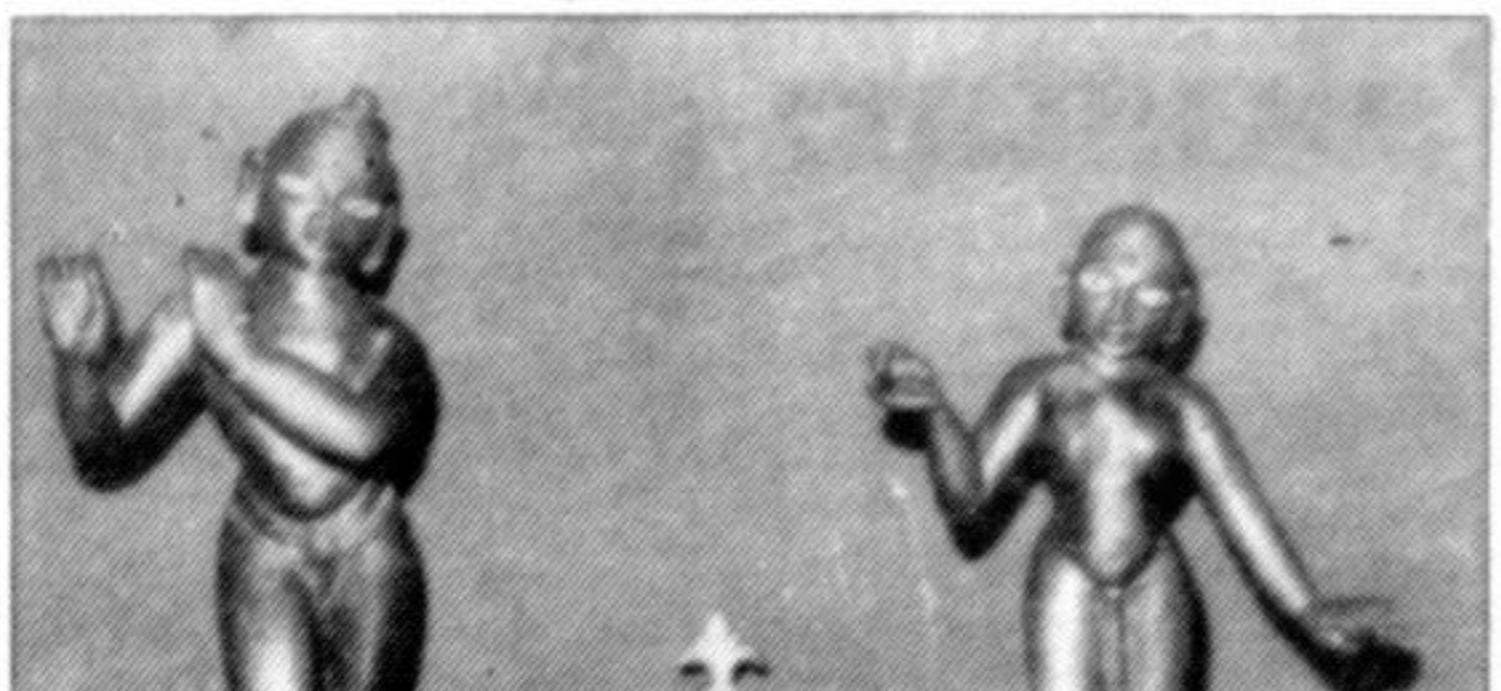


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Police recovered idols of 'Radha' and 'Krishna' and an altar from a dustbin in the city yesterday. — Star photo

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US urges India not to veto CTBT

NEW DELHI, Aug 10: The United States has assured India that it will not be punished with sanctions if it refuses to sign a global treaty banning nuclear test blasts, diplomats said today, reports Reuters.

The US assurance, communicated in a letter from Secretary of State Warren Christopher, was aimed at persuading Delhi to drop a threat to block the test ban pact being negotiated in Geneva, they said.

Washington has urged Delhi not to veto the treaty even if it decided it could not sign the accord.

Christopher's letter, delivered on Friday to Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral by the US Ambassador to India, Frank Wisner, addressed India's concerns that it might suffer punitive measures if it refused to ratify the treaty.

India has said it will not sign the proposed accord because it would not commit the five declared nuclear powers — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — to a nuclear disarmament timetable.

Delhi also objects to a provision which would require those five nations, as well as the three nuclear "threshold" states — India, Israel and Pakistan — to ratify the treaty before it would become international law.

India claims the clause, called the entry-into-force provision, would infringe on its sovereignty.

The treaty provides for the convening of a conference if, after three years, the pact has not been ratified by enough countries to bring it into force.

The conference could decide by consensus "what measures, consistent with international law, may be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process."

India fears the "measures" could include economic sanctions or other steps meant to force it into signing the document.

The United States tried to allay Delhi's concerns.

2 idols recovered from dustbin

By Staff Correspondent

Two valuable statues and an altar were found in a dustbin at Khilgaon Chowdhury Para area under Shabujbagh thana in the city late Friday.

The Detective Branch (DB) police recovered the idols of Radha and Krishna and the altar from the trash behind the government primary school at the Chowdhury Para at about 11.15 pm, police said.

Police suspected that an organised gang kept the valuable statues in the pile of garbage in the dustbin for smuggling.

The owner of the idols has been requested to contact the DB office of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said a press release of the police last night.

Trader kidnapped in Khulna

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 10: A fish trader was kidnapped on Friday night by some unidentified miscreants from his house at Koira thana in the district.

Police said the miscreants kidnapped Parimal Saha, 30, as he did not pay one lakh taka the kidnappers demanded from him earlier.

The miscreants forced him board a trawler at gunpoint and left for the Sundarbans, police added.

Faridpur Medical College students call off strike

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) police arrested two persons from Chankharpur area yesterday on charges of selling medicines stolen from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

During a raid in Fatema Pharmacy in Chankharpur area near the DMCH yesterday afternoon, police recovered some stolen medicines and seductive liquid drugs in two bottles, and arrested the owner of the shop identified as Azam Khan and Sohel, police said.

Police added that the words 'Property of the Government of Bangladesh' and 'DMCH' were printed on the foil of the medicines.

The DB suspected that an organised gang was involved in stealing medicines from the DMCH and selling those to different pharmacies in the city.

Legal action has been taken against the arrested persons, police said.

Peaceful atmosphere must for fair by-polls: CEC

Chief Election Commissioner Muhammad Abu Hena yesterday stressed the importance on holding the coming by-elections in a peaceful atmosphere and with complete neutrality and transparency, reports BSS.

Maintenance of peaceful atmosphere is the prerequisite for holding neutral and fair elections, Hena told a meeting held at his office to discuss the overall law and order situation in the light of the by-elections to be held on September 5.

Hena said it was important to ensure congenial atmosphere and security in the polling centres so that voters could exercise their right to franchise without any fear.

2 held for selling medicines stolen from DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

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BNP Feni, Tangail convening bodies formed

Feni and Tangail district convening committees of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have been formed after expiry of the tenure of the district committees, a press release said, reports BSS.

Mosharrar Hossain MP has been made convenor of the 16-member convening committee of Feni BNP while Major Gen (ret'd) Mahmudul Hasan made convenor of the 30-member Tangail BNP.

Both the convening committees have been asked to constitute full fledged committee of the district through council within next two months as per party constitution, the press release added.

Meanwhile, the expulsion order against Bagerhat district BNP leader Shamsul Alam Talukder has been withdrawn.

4 western hostages seen in Kashmir!

NEW DELHI, Aug 10: Four Western hostages kidnapped by Kashmiri separatists more than one year ago were seen last week by villagers in the insurgency wracked northern state, a news agency reported Saturday quoting the state's governor, reports AP.

Villagers in the Kishtwar area of Jammu-Kashmir had reported seeing all the four hostages who appeared to be in good health, Gov Krishna Rao was quoted as saying by United News of India.

The area is 125 kilometers southwest of Srinagar, the capital of Jammu-Kashmir state and the main theater of insurgency.

Concern about the safety of the hostages increased after a captured guerrilla told police interrogators three months ago that the Westerners were executed in December.

The Indian government says it is still searching for Donald Hutchings, 43 of Spokane, Washington, Keith Mangan, 34, of Middlesborough, England; Paul Wells, 24, of London; and Dirk Hasert, 27, of Erfurt, Germany, who were kidnapped by the Al-Far group.

A Norwegian, Hans Christian Ostro, was killed and decapitated last August. Another American, John Childs, 41, of Simsbury, Connecticut, escaped from Al-Far soon after the kidnappings began.

On August 3, Jane Schelley, wife of Hutchings, and Julie Mangan, wife of Keith Mangan, visited the state and distributed appeals to villagers to help trace the Westerners who were kidnapped on July 4 last year.

There has been no direct contact with the kidnappers since last November.

Muslim militants have been fighting since 1989 for independence for Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in Hindu-dominated India.

WASAs to be restructured

From page 1

and employees and absence of performance-oriented functioning.

It is necessary to run the Dhaka WASA commercially and make the authority efficient and effective to meet the growing demand for water and ensure a sound system of sewerage in the capital, it said.

But, the bill said, the present ordinance is not suitable for making the Dhaka WASA a commercially run establishment through performance-oriented functioning.

For this the Cabinet had already approved a proposal for amending the WASA Ordinance 1963 and enacting WASA Act 1996 for the enhancement of overall efficiency of the management in order to convert Dhaka WASA to a commercially-run establishment.

Lecturer murder

From page 1

complicated one.

Nargis was found dead at her flat in the third floor of Nouratan Colony in Bailey Road Friday afternoon. Mother of two sons and wife of an engineer, Fazlur Rahman, Nargis came to Dhaka for a visit from Chicago, USA, about two months ago, police sources said adding that she had been in USA with her family for a long time.

Meanwhile, some senior police officials said last night that they were considering some issues including property related matters that could help find out the avenues to unearth the real motive behind the brutal killing. The passport of Nargis could not be recovered till last night, police said adding that they did not find anything stolen from the flat.

The case was handed over to the Detective Branch from Ramna thana yesterday. The DB investigators questioned more than 15 people including relatives in connection with the case.

Police suspected that Nargis succumbed to her injuries after being hit by heavy objects in her head and face sometime between 5pm to 7pm on Thursday.

Makbul Ahmed new PIO

Mohammad Makbul Ahmed yesterday joined the Press Information Department (PID) under the Information Ministry as Principal Information Officer (PIO). Prior to this appointment, Ahmed was the Director General of Bangladesh Film Archives under the same ministry, reports UNB.

Father hands over son to police

JHENIDAH, Aug 10: A father today handed over his 16-year-old son to the Jhenidah police along with a pipe gun, police said.

Shohrab Hussain, 26, who had been allegedly involved with an outlawed party for long, returned home at Kashimpur village under the Sadar thana yesterday with an illegal pipe gun.

His father, Mohammad Waliullah persuaded him to deposit the pipe gun yesterday but he refused. Following repeated persuasion, Shohrab became furious and allegedly attacked his father today.

Waliullah then caught Shohrab with the help of local people and handed him over to police.

Flag meet with India begins

COMILLA, Aug 10: A two-day flag meeting between Bangladesh and India began here today, reports BSS.

Both the sides discussed on repairing and re-construction of border-pillar to prevent smuggling and maintaining law and order in the border areas.

An agreement will be signed in this regard tomorrow.

Aid Club

From page 1

and textile sectors will remain unchanged. The government has already constituted a tax force to recommend privatisation.

About the energy sector, the government is expected to apprise the donors about the recent initiatives including new energy policy focusing on private investment in power and gas sectors. It would also inform the donors of the amendment to the BITB ordinance providing for separation of control and service and participation of private sector.

On privatisation, the government will detail its efforts to strengthen the privatisation board.

Bangladesh, at the Paris Club Meet on April 24-25 last year, sought disbursement of aid to the tune of 1850 million dollars for the last fiscal year.

The government, however, substantially revised the disbursement level to 1585 million dollars.

Last year's foreign aid pledge was 1.95 billion dollars.

Parliament tidbits

From page 1

pronounced the words "Two and two make four" every time he gave floor to those Opposition lawmakers who moved two proposals each on the bills passed yesterday.

As one MP is entitled to speak for two minutes on each proposal, the Chair allowed one MP, who moved two separate proposals, to speak for four minutes together.

Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury had an exchange of pinching words in light mood while the minister was placing several bills in the afternoon sitting.

"She (Matia Chowdhury) has developed expertise simultaneously in the fields of jute, livestock and fisheries", Maj (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman, the BNP said while speaking on the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (Amendment) Bill, 1996.

The Agriculture Minister also introduced two other bills, one on the Jute Research Institute and the other on the Livestock Research Institute seeking amendment to some laws.

Kidnappers free jeweller in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 10: Jeweller Milon Kanti Dhar who was abducted by masked gunmen yesterday from his village home Enayetpur under Hathazari thana was released at 1 pm today, police said.

His release was prompted by the continuous raid conducted by police at different places of Hathazari, Raozan and Fatkhari thanas.

Police said one of the alleged abductor Abul Kalam was arrested today.

Husband kills wife in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 10: A housewife was killed allegedly by her husband at the village of Napa under Moheshpur thana in the district this morning, police sources said.

The victim was identified as Ayesha Khatun, 35, wife of Alauddin.

She was cutting grass with a scythe in a nearest field when she and her husband got locked into a brawl. At one stage, her husband slaughtered her on the spot.

A case was filed with Moheshpur thana and the body was sent to Jhenidah district hospital morgue.

Meanwhile, the husband of Ayesha Khatun has gone into hiding, just after the incident, police said.

JS body

From page 1

(Amendment) Bill 1996 and the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill 1996.

The committee recommended that the Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute Bill 1996 and Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (Amendment) Bill 1996 should be passed with certain amendments.

In its third report, the committee recommended that the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill 1996 is approved by the House as it was placed in the Parliament.

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Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (R) welcomes Palestinian President Yasser Arafat who arrived in Cairo yesterday for talks to advance the stalled peace process with Israel. — AFP/UNB photo

14 die of food poisoning in India

BOMBAY, Aug 10: At least 14 people died of food poisoning after eating in a restaurant in western India, news reports and doctors said Saturday, reports AP.

More than 100 people were hospitalized on Wednesday after eating at a restaurant in Bhivandri town, 125 kilometers (80 miles) north of Bombay, India's financial capital. The Asian Age newspaper said. Among the sick was the owner of the restaurant.

Seven deaths occurred in three Bombay hospitals on Saturday, doctors said. Seven others had died since Wednesday.

At least 19 of the sick are still in a serious condition and have been put on the respiratory support system, doctors said.

The victims were poor laborers who complained of dizziness and stomach ache after eating rice, vegetable curries and lentils, the newspaper said.

3 out of 25 call attention notices accepted

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid accepted three out of the 35 call attention notices submitted by the members in parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

The three call notices, accepted by the chair, were submitted by Shahjahan Khan of Awami League, Ziaul Haq Zia of BNP and Golam Hossain of Jatiya Party.

However, the deputy speaker sanctioned the MPs, whose call notices were not accepted, a total of half an hour or two minutes each under Article 71 of the Rules of Procedure to speak on their respective notices.

Fifteen MPs spoke on their rejected call notices in the morning sitting.

They were Prof Mohammad Ali, Kazi Sekandar Ali and Abdul Latif Mirza of Awami League; Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi, Shahidul Islam, Prof Shahidul Islam, Mojahar Hossain, Mashiur Rahman, Abul Kalam Azad, Advocate M Ruhul Quddus Talukder, Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain, Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuzullah Farid and Mohammad Nurul Amin Talukder of BNP; Dr Rustam Ali Farazi of Jatiya Party and Kazi Shamsur Rahman of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Prof Shahidul Islam (BNP-Kushtia), in his speech, drew the Foreign Minister's attention about the push back of Bangladeshi nationals, who were sent back to Pakistan on August 6, as they had no valid documents and necessary papers.

The BNP lawmaker wanted to know the condition of the Bangladeshis now staying in Pakistan.

Dr Rustam Ali Farazi (JP-Pirojpur) said thousands of Bangladeshis were facing immense sufferings in detention camps in Malaysia as they had been sent there by "fake" recruiting agencies promising jobs.

No alternative to Islamic revolution, says Nizami

Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami, the secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, yesterday said that there was no alternative to Islamic revolution to rid the society of all sorts of unrest, injustice, cruelty, terrorism and deprivation, reports BSS.

Maulana Nizami was speaking as chief guest at a Rokon (members) conference organised by City Jamaat at a community centre at Dhanmandi. City Ameer ATM Azharul Islam presided over the conference.

The Jamaat Secretary General urged all Rokons to be imbued with the teachings of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) to prepare themselves to build up an Islamic society. He also asked them to reach the correct invitation of Islam to each and every household. The workers of Jamaat, along with acquiring knowledge, should also devote themselves in building up their character, he added.

Maulana Nizami administered the oath of ATM Azharul Islam as the Ameer of Dhaka City Jamaat-e-Islami for the year 1995-96.

In his presidential address, Azharul Islam sought blessing of Allah and cooperation of all in discharging his duties.

BNP threatens

From page 1

General stated, "but in the name of arresting terrorists the government is making the list of leaders and workers of the BNP and its front organisations."

He claimed that so far 1,500 workers of his party had been harassed under the present government's repressive policies.

Presided over by district BNP president Begum Rabeya Chowdhury, the conference was also addressed by BNP leaders Mir Shawkat Ali, Haris Chowdhury, Abul Kashem, ATM Alamgir, Shamsuddin Ahmed, AKM Abu Taher and Amrur Rashid Yasin.

Time-limit

From page 1

police or DC offices across the country in 24 hours till 10pm last night, police sources said.

With this deposit, the number of total surrendered arms rose to 261 and of ammunition to 313.

Water accord

From page 1

treaty would make the provision of a tribunal comprising three members, one from Bangladesh, one from India and the third, who will be the chairperson, from outside the region and acceptable to both countries.

The tribunal will arbitrate on disputes or issues not resolved by the river commission, the paper said, adding there might be a provision for a review after 30 years to adapt various man-made changes in the ecosystem.

The paper attached importance on non-governmental negotiation and discussions organised during last several years by various research and academic organisations including BUP in Bangladesh, Centre for Policy Research (CPR) in India and Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) in Nepal.

Negotiations between the governments should be aided by technical experts, and Nepal, the co-riparian, should also be involved at this phase. If necessary, a third party might be enlisted in facilitating the talks, the paper suggested.

They proposed UNDP as a facilitator in conflict resolution, similar in nature and structure of that the UNDP had done in helping work out the Mekong River Agreement among Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Among others, Waliur Rahman, Barrister HK Morshed, Dr Anunur Nishat, Prof M Shahjahan, Touhidur Rahman, Rafiqul Islam took part in the open discussion.

The discussions emphasised political commitment towards resolving the crisis, working out mechanism for involving Nepal in the negotiation process, creating a positive climate for it and fixing a specified timeframe.