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Notice

Our weekly feature 'Down to Earth' could not be published today due to some unavoidable factors. The inconvenience is regretted.

JS obituary references

The seventh Jatiya Sangsad yesterday at the inaugural sitting of its second session adopted Obituary References concurring the death of eight distinguished personalities of the country in the past two months, reports BSS.

They are former Awami League MP Rafiquddin Bhuiyan, former BNP MP Prof ANM Nurur Rahman and Mokhlesur Rahman, former Member of Constituent Assembly (MCA) and Awami League leaders Advocate Ahsanullah and Gopal Krishna Maharata and freedom fighters Major (ret'd) Mehdi Ali Imam and Fakhru Islam Al Maizbhandari.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury moved the Obituary References.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad conducted a munajat for the peace of the departed souls.

PM: Youths

She was inaugurating the National Youth Day at a function at the Outer Stadium organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Directorate of Youth Development.

The inaugural function was also addressed by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports M Shahjahan and Montaj Begum, a lady who had succeeded in establishing herself as a self-motivated earner after taking training from the 'Juba Unnayan Adhidaptar'.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Kader was in the chair.

The function was attended by ministers, MPs, officials of the ministry and the directorate, and representatives of friendly countries including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Singapore and Austria. Austrian representative Erfried Malle on behalf of the foreign representatives also addressed the function and appreciated the present government's initiative for youth development in the country.

The prime minister handed over the national youth awards to nine persons who proved their worth in respective fields as self-motivated and independent workers to land their lives in a decent way. The prime minister handed over to them Taka 5,000 each, a crest and a certificate.

JS winter session

From Page 1 government from embarrassment," Hafizuddin told the House. But, he added, "of the two, one hails from greater Barisal while the other from greater Mymensingh."

At this point, a visibly embarrassed state minister was seen sitting silently. Allegations of corruption made by BNP legislator Mashur Rahman prompted three cabinet members to speak in the House. While making a query as to why one of his notices was rejected by the Chair, Mashur claimed that he had enclosed with his notice specific examples of corruption in government's rice purchase and in the telecommunications sector. He also accused the Home Ministry of providing shelter to the 'armed hoodlums' who had killed a person under police custody.

Responding to the BNP lawmaker, Food Minister Matia Chowdhury said the government was ready to punish anyone involved in corruption. She asked the BNP MP to come up with specific allegation of corruption. The present government would never purchase rotten rice for the people or anybody's personal benefit, she added, without elaborating.

Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim also denied any corruption in the sector. It was the BNP government which had indulged in corruption in this sector, he said, adding that these would be unearthed through investigations.

Home Minister Major (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam claimed that the allegation of the killing of Tuhin committed suicide, "he said.

Former Speaker and BNP legislator Shaikh Razzak Ali "humbly" requested the home minister to withdraw his remark. "It is not right for a home Jayewardene

From Page 1 the maximum two terms allowed by the constitution which he adopted for the country in 1978.

He had celebrated his 90th birthday on September 17. Jayewardene is regarded as the architect of the country's free market reforms introduced in 1978. He also forged close ties with Japan which eventually became Sri Lanka's largest single donor of foreign aid.

His United National Party (UNP) ruled Sri Lanka from 1977 till it was defeated at the August 1994 parliamentary elections.

Funeral arrangements were not immediately announced. The opposition sought a state funeral and a day of national mourning.

She repeated it to the Pakistani public a million times. And yet not a cent came to Pakistan for quite some time. It is only recently that some of those companies that signed the MOU are coming and investing in Pakistan. Sheikh Hasina could very well prove to be right in her optimism. And we hope that she does. However the point we are making is that even with MOU signed in the presence of the Prime Minister foreign companies do not come to invest. With no MOU signed with us, how much chance do we have of getting actual FDI is a matter for all of us to guess. (We would be happy to be proved wrong on this count).

Here again is an example of lack of planning. An elected Prime Minister is the most powerful promoter that a country can have. But as and when we use that promoter something most collect in the kitty, otherwise it impacts adversely the image of the Prime Minister, not to mention that of the country. Here again Sheikh Hasina was badly advised.

We recall that with all the fanfare of Begum Zia's trip to Japan, with 43 businessmen in tow, brought not one cent of investment to us. The former Prime Minister also told us on return that she found great response to her call among the Japanese businessmen.

Then again why did we have a foreign company arrange for our Prime Minister's meeting with the US investors. Couldn't the BOI or our own Embassy have done that? Is that company's prestige higher than that of our country that we did not feel confident in organising these meetings ourselves?

Finally a few words about the size of the PM's entourage. We asked several AL leaders, including a few who were a part of it, as to the rationale behind the 77-member delegation. Even if we leave out the 22-member business group who went on their own, we are still left with 55-member who were

minister to comment that Tuhin committed suicide when the court of law is yet to pass its verdict in the case," he said.

But the home minister reiterated his comment, arguing that the autopsy report said it was a case of suicide.

Meanwhile, the Speaker informed the House that he would propose a condolence motion on five late leaders including Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansoor Ali, Kamruzzaman and Abdur Rab Serriabati sometime in the current session or during the next session.

Later, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury assured the House that some important issues like law and order, transit to India and arsenic contamination of tube-well water in different areas of the country will be thoroughly discussed in the House during the current session.

"I think the issue would thoroughly be discussed during the session," Chowdhury said while separately rejecting some opposition notices seeking to adjourn the normal proceedings of the House to discuss 'deteriorating' law and order, reported government plan to give transit to India and so on. The Chair, however, readily allowed a short discussion on the issue of arsenic contamination.

The House earlier witnessed an hour-long question-answer session and the questions, all relating to the Home Ministry, were replied by the home minister.

Both Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia were present in the House, while the latter left earlier.

The session was adjourned at 8:55 pm and resumes on November 4 at 4:15 pm.

Only 3 out of 89 call attention notices accepted

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury accepted only three out of 89 call attention notices moved by MPs on the first day of the second session of new parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

The Speaker disposed off eight notices on special privilege of MPs. The Chair gave decision on 27 out of 29 notices of adjournment motions.

An one-hour discussion on arsenic will be held in parliament. The motion was moved by BNP member Harun-or Rashid Khan Monno.

Most of the opposition members who had submitted adjournment motions urged the Speaker to accept their motions on issues of transit, Asian highway, price-hike of electricity and law and order situation.

on the trip on public money. Why? For God's sake why? Can anybody please explain what national interest was served by taking all these people to the US for 8 days.

By itself there is no hard and fast rule about how big a head of government's delegation should be. But definitely there is some rationale, some cogent thinking behind constituting it. What was the rationale here? For example if the PM was taking 50 poor, unsung freedom fighters to the UN as a tribute to them, we would have a rationale.

Did the members of the delegation perform any role which made the PM's trip more successful than it would have been if her delegation was, say, of 10 to 15 members, plus the busyness delegation? On the contrary did not such a large delegation actually contribute to making her trip look less serious than it was.

If the idea was to reward people for services rendered then there are much better ways of doing it. If the idea was to expose AL leaders or supporters to the US or the UN then goodwill missions could be arranged during which the members of such delegations would have learnt much more than being a part of PM's delegation permits them to.

Didn't anybody tell the PM that she is running the risk of being welcomed in the US by one-liners in the American media like 'The PM of one of the poorest countries of the world, comes to the UN with one of the largest delegations.' Did Sheikh Hasina actually enhance her own image, or the prestige of her office by including her relatives in the trip?

We raised the above issues with the knowledge that our Prime Minister would be making many more foreign trips during her five year tenure. In fact the trip to Rome is all set. What sort of an impact is she likely to make on the Summit on Food Security if her own delegation gives the image of globalisation, and as economic diplomacy takes precedence over others, the virtues of the lean but efficient governments will have to get reflected in lean and performance oriented foreign delegations.

1,120 terrorists held, 2,097 arms seized till Oct 25

A total of 1,120 armed terrorists have been arrested and 2,097 illegal firearms recovered till October 25 since the present government assumed power, reports UNB.

This was disclosed in the Jatiya Sangsad by Home Minister Rafiqul Islam while replying to a question by Sharif Khasruzzaman (AL-Narail) yesterday.

The government had given seven days' time from August 7 to August 13 for surrender of illegal arms. A total of 715 arms of various types were surrendered during the period, the minister added.

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that 44,738 persons had been detained in the country's 62 jails and sub-jails as undertrial prisoners and convicts.

Answering a question from Shahiduzzaman (Belu) (BNP), the minister said the number of undertrial prisoners is 30,919. Out of them, 29,870 are males and 1,049 are females. He said the number of convicts is 13,819, out of whom 13,370 are males and 449 are females.

The minister said the country has 78 different categories of jails but 16 of them are non-operational.

5-member panel of chairmen

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury yesterday nominated a five-member panel of chairmen to preside over the current session of parliament in his or the Deputy Speaker's absence, reports UNB.

Members of the panel are: Dewan Farid Gazi (Habiganj), Abdul Momen (Netrokona), Syed Kamal Bakht Saki (Satkhira), Barrister Rabeya Bhiyan (women seat-19) and Prof Mohammad Abdullah (Chandpur).

The nomination of the panel was the first business taken up in the second session of the 7th Parliament which began its sitting in the after a two-month recess.

Uneasy calm

From Page 1 garding logging in the area. The woodcutters were then tied and blind-folded and led away in groups of five. When others asked why they were being tied and blind-folded, the cadres replied that the new 'Boro babu' (name attributed to the chief toll collector) wanted to see them, an official said.

quoting other woodcutters in the area and an eyewitness who managed to escape from the scene.

The bodies of the 28 woodcutters bore extensive marks of torture, said another official source adding that the two missing woodcutters were yet to be traced. Most of the victims were settlers from Mymensingh and Bhola districts.

Meanwhile, the families of the victims were yet to receive the Tk 50,000 offered to them by the government. The DC of Rangamati said that they did not yet receive the Accountant General's authority in this regard.

Several committees were formed to probe into the killings. A five-member committee formed on September 28 submitted their report to the Home Ministry on October 10.

CHT situation

From Page 1 feasibility of setting up of some new police stations, investigation centres and more fire stations in the country, he added.

Pressed repeatedly by ruling party deputy Shamsul Haq the Home Minister assured him that a new police station would be set up in Taraganj in Mymensingh.

Replying to BNP lawmaker Jafrul Islam Chowdhury from Chittagong, the Home Minister said that experts from BUET, Shipping Ministry and Navy have already prepared a technical specification for floating an international tender to procure six vessels for the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard would be developed as an independent force to check piracy in coastal areas, he said.

He regretted that though a tender was floated in this regard a year ago it was cancelled later for "reasons beyond my knowledge."

Replying to another question the minister said that conditions in prisons and the quality of food served there were not up to the mark. He assured the House that efforts would be made to change the conditions.

The Home Minister told the House that Tuhin, who's death in police custody in the city recently sparked controversy, had committed suicide as per the post mortem report. Former Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali now a BNP deputy, reacted sharply to the Home Minister's statement and urged him to refrain from making such statements because the case was under trial.

Rao

From Page 1 into a courtroom for the first time to seek an extension of bail in a case of conspiring to forge documents to defame a rival politician. The court is to give its ruling next week on the bail petition.

The third case involves allegations by a London-based businessman that Rao helped cheat him of 100,000 dollar which he had paid against promises of government contracts. That case resumes next Wednesday.

Residential plots

From Page 1 Uttara residential area were repeatedly served with notices by the authorities concerned in 1991 for shifting those from the area but those continue to operate there till now while several others have come into operation, sources noted.

Electronic Toaster Philips Transcom Electronics Limited Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets Dhaka: 815306-9, 819625-9, 889993 Ctg: 501082, 503578, Khulna: 20304, Bogra: 6215

AL programmes to observe Jail Killing Day

The Awami League has taken up an elaborate programme to observe the Jail Killing Day tomorrow, reports UNB.

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend a discussion meeting as chief guest at Engineers' Institute at 3 pm on the day.

The programme also includes hoisting of black flag, national and party flags at half mast at Bangabhaban, Awami League central office and other offices across the country and wearing of black badges at 6 am, placing of wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at 8 am, placing of wreaths, offering of fatiha and milad mahfil at the mazars of martyrs of the 15th August at Banani.

Nat'l Cooperatives Day today

The 25th National Cooperatives Day will be observed throughout the country today, reports UNB.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages yesterday wished success of the day.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed called upon all to under take and implement new projects to create employment opportunities for the jobless and make them self-reliant.

In a separate message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for concerted efforts to make the cooperative institutions self-reliant to free the people from the curse of poverty.

5 arrested

From Page 1 from father of our Shahidul Islam alias Biplob, 24, after he was taken hostage instead of sending him to Japan.

According to police sources, the gang telephoned Biplob's father Azizul Huq Sikder of Das Mansion in Santahar under Adam Dighi thana of Bogra and demanded the ransom amount.

The arrested were identified as Moazzem Hosain, 45, and his accomplices M Saifuddin, 45, Mosharraf Hosain, 42, Md Selim, 45, and Md Faruq, 35, police sources added.

Sangsad tidbits

From Page 1 of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

While asking a supplementary on his question if the government had any plan to set up a new thana at Tarakanda in Mymensingh, Shamsul Haq, in his usual high tone, reminded the minister that Sheikh Hasina, while she was the Leader of the Opposition had assured him that Tarakanda would be turned into a new thana. "But you are telling that the government has no such plan... Please, don't tarnish the image of the Prime Minister by making such a statement", Haq told the House amid thumping and laughter in both the benches.

In response, a smiling Home Minister drew the attention of the Chair to say, "You've seen that I myself also thumped the table along with other members."

Had the honorable member told me of the Prime Minister's earlier commitment, I won't have made such a statement. Anyway, I now assure the member that Tarakanda would be turned into a thana", the minister concluded.

Following Shamsul Haq, several other MPs stood up to raise similar demands. At this stage, the Home Minister commented, "I think the Finance Minister is getting worried since money is involved for meeting such demands."

Jahurul Islam of the BNP created laughter in the House by introducing himself saying, "I'm the honorable member of parliament from Shingaj area of Bogra district."

While disposing of a notice by Jamaat-e-Islami MP Delwar Hossain Saidee on phenylidol addition by a section of the youths, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury advised the noted Maolana, "You can guide them through your sermons."

Front bencher in the Opposition, KM Obaidur Rahman narrowly escaped a fall from his revolving chair when he was sitting with Salauddin Kader Chowdhury in a jovial mood. Chowdhury dashed Obaid's chair with hands and saved him.

Ruling party member Sharif Khasruzzaman charged the Speaker for being "biased" towards the Opposition lawmakers by allowing them to make

'intruse statements' in violation of the Rules of Procedure. "A smiling Speaker replied, "one thing has been established now that my neutrality is questioned by both the sides. It's a good symptom."

As the House was locked in a debate over BNP lawmaker Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed's comment during an obituary reference that two member of the council of ministers of Sheikh Hasina had opposed the liberation war, the Speaker sought help from the Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia.

"Honorable Leader of the Opposition, I beg your help to maintain a solemn atmosphere for the obituary reference", the Speaker humbly uttered several times.

However, Begum Zia only stared at the Speaker and smiled.

AL legislator AKM Jahangir Hossain, while making a supplementary on his question about the Coast Guard, hoped the members of the newly-formed Coast Guard would not act like the BDR personnel in a lighter vein. Jahangir said, "Edhar Ka Mall Odhar, Er Naam BDR."

Revolver

From Page 1 and police.

Zakir a government official of the rank of senior assistant secretary, was carrying the weapon in his handbag. He told an SI of Special Branch that there was a licensed revolver in his bag, according to police sources.

Refusing to hand over the revolver there, the PS went to his second floor office at the Sangsad Bhavan and sent it to SB control room through his office assistant. He later produced his licence to SB officials.

Talking to newsmen at his office, Zakir said, "I carry weapon with me... as a first class magistrate I am entitled to that."

He declined to make any comment when asked about the incident.

A general diary in this connection was registered by Police at the Sangsad Bhavan and a report was sent to the Secretary of the Parliament secretariat, according to police.

WELCOME MR. DANNY PASSI AND bydesign EXPORT PROMOTERS. WE ARE JOINING HAND TOGETHER IN THE EVENT OF EXPORT PROMOTION CEREMONY IN BANGLADESH hongsong (B.D.) CORPORATION CITY GROUP OF INDUSTRIES PEOPLES WHO CARE BUSINESS

How not to make a trip

From Page 1 planned, whose most dramatic example was the faux pas with her General Assembly speech.

We fully endorse her position of not having raised the water issue at the UN this time. It would have been foolish, and counter to all diplomatic commonsense, to raise it at the international level when bilateral negotiations were not only going on, but were at a very critical stage. We commend her for forcefully countering her critics by taking a strong public position on this matter. But that should not distract us from the fact that a most embarrassing situation was created with the text of the PM's speech, signifying the bad planning that we are talking about.

The speech that ultimately Sheikh Hasina gave to the world body could have been far better drafted. Granted that most leaders speak at the UN with the domestic audience in mind. What was been forgotten in this case is that the same domestic audience does not want a repeat of the same things that they are hearing at home all the time. In fact, at the world body, the home viewers and listeners want to see their leader as a world leader, talking about global issues and speaking out for what is good for humanity and the future of the world. For the few minutes that their Presidents or Prime Ministers are on the world stage, they want to see them as world leaders. Where was the world, the humanity, the future in Sheikh Hasina's speech? Where was her vision, for the citizens of the world to hear and judge her by? Just as she fights BNP in Bangladesh, she fought it on the floors of the UN.

In her press conference on return, Sheikh Hasina claimed that she had received tremendous response from the US investors. Well, let us recall Benazir Bhutto's trip to the US a year or two back. During that trip she was able to sign MOUs worth nearly 3 billion US dol-

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