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The visiting president of International Inner Wheel, Beth McNeill, called on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday. —PID photo

Dhaka iterates solidarity with Palestinians

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reiterated Bangladesh's total solidarity with the Palestinian people and its unstinted support for the realisation of their goals and aspirations, reports BSS.

The government and the people of Bangladesh join me in reiterating total solidarity with the Palestinian people and commitment to support all efforts for the realisation of their unalienable rights," she said in a message on the occasion of the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people yesterday.

Welcoming the peace process initiated with the Madrid conference in 1991 and the autonomy accord in 1994 the prime minister expressed satisfaction at the implementation of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

She said Bangladesh expressed grave concern and outrage at the recent violence and killings in the West Bank and Gaza.

Diarrhoea claims

6 in Jhalakathi

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 28: Diarrhoea claimed six lives in Rajapur and Nalchity thana of Jhalakathi district during the last two weeks, according to official sources.

According to unofficial sources, eighteen people have died of diarrhoea with more than five hundred people suffering from the disease in Badalkathi, Indrapasha, Naikathi, Sapuria, Baria and Kairakathi villages.

The officials identified the deceased as Siddique Hossein, 24, Imran, 12, Rahela Begum, 32, Baby, 3, of Rajapur Thana while Al Amin, 5, and Liza, 4, of Nalchity Thana.

Mother Teresa improving

CALCUTTA, Nov 28: Doctors treating Mother Teresa were encouraged today that she slept well overnight, but had not yet decided when she would be strong enough to undergo a test that involves puncturing an artery, reports AP.

"She's in the process of stabilising," said Sudipta Chakrabarti, a spokesman for Calcutta's BM Birla Heart Research Centre.

Doctors had said the 86-year-old charity leader must be in stable condition for at least 48 hours before they feel it will be safe to perform an angiogram.

Tributes to 129 FFs martyred in N'ganj today

From Ehsanul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 28: The supreme sacrifice of 129 valiant freedom fighters here during the War of Liberation will be recalled and rich tributes will be paid to their memory tomorrow.

On November 29, 1971, Pakistani occupation forces raided 14 villages under Bakhtabali union in Patuila thana here and brutally killed 129 freedom fighters.

The occupation forces, on information from their local collaborators, attacked Bakhtabali regional training centre of the Mukti Bahini and set fire to houses in the area.

The day was not observed in a befitting manner in the past, local people regretted. They demanded that the massacre in Bakhtabali should be properly recorded in the history of the Liberation War and a memorial should be erected for the 129 martyrs.

In observance of the day the local Silver Jubilee Celebration Committee for Victory Day will organise a memorial meeting at Kanainagar Sobhania High School ground in Bakhtabali.

Awami League General Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman is scheduled to address the meeting as chief guest. Local MP A K M Shamin Osman and others will take part in the discussion to be chaired by Bakhtabali Union AL chief Md Ibrahim Pradhan.

Preparations for participation in micro-credit summit discussed

An inter-ministerial meeting yesterday discussed necessary preparations and strategies to make Bangladesh's participation in the micro-credit summit meaningful, reports BSS.

The three-day summit, scheduled to begin on February 2 in Washington is aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through providing small credit among the ten crore poorest families of the world by the year 2005.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria presided over the meeting attended by Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Banking Division Secretary, Finance Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Secretary of Youth and Sports, LGRD and Cooperatives Secretary and Secretary of Women and Children Affairs were also present.

Power plant

From Page 1

order to avoid any confusion between the Power Development Board and the RPC over purchase of power, an agreement between the two organisations should be signed and a power rate should be fixed.

It also suggested revision of the project implementation cost in the light of fluctuation of exchange rates and finalisation of agreement between the government and the ADB.

Instead of complying with the decision of the DPEC meeting, the sources said, an expert in the Energy Ministry in October last year suggested the RPC authorities go ahead with "two 30 MW power unit criterion for floating the tender."

The RPC is the first project of the government which would operate under a private management system on pilot basis. The Power Plant also has room for expansion up to 180 MW from 60 MW.

ECNEC okays 14 projects involving Tk 2587.43 cr

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved 14 development projects involving Tk 2587 crore 43 lakh including Tk 1226 crore 35 lakh in project aid, reports BSS.

The approval was given at a meeting held yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair in the cabinet conference room at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

The approved projects included development of primary education in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna (including Barisal) divisions at a cost of Tk 1078 crore 70 lakh including Tk 844 crore 11 lakh in project aid, development of primary education in Chittagong division at a cost of Tk 252 crore 25 lakh including Tk 218 crore 49 lakh in project aid, food for education programme at a cost of Tk 449 crore 97 lakh, agro-based industries and technology development project at a cost of Tk 168 crore 32 lakh including Tk 42

Sit-in in front of Kailashtila Gas Field ends

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 28: The 3-day dawn to dusk sit-in programme in front of the Kailashtila Gas Fields ended today. The All party Action Committee enforced the programme to press its 6-point demand.

Work in all 4 wells remained suspended during the programme.

The demands include setting up fractionation, LPG and Gas Turbine Power Plants, increasing gas supply in Golapganj thana, creating job opportunities for the local people in the Gas Fields and stopping acquisition of private lands in the name of Jalalabad Gas.

At the end of the sit-in programme today, a big rally was held at the Bus Terminal at Golapganj with the president of the thana unit of Jatiya Party Osman Harun Chowdhury in the chair. It was also addressed by Thana BNP Secretary Mohiuddin Chowdhury Narjis, JP leader, Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Thana Jamaat Ameer Syed Nasir Uddin and secretary Hafiz Najmul Islam, Khelafat Majlis Vice-President Hafiz Moulana Ohid Ahmed and secretary Moulana Iqbal Hossain, Thana Mukti-joddha Sangsad Commander Tuta Miah, and leaders of student organisations, labour organisations and social welfare organisations. They said, they were united to realise the legitimate demands.

Police arrested two youths red-handed while they were mugging a rickshaw-passenger at Rajbari in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Patrol police of Motijheel Thana found that Kamal and Raju were attempting to snatch the passenger near north gate of the Rajbari police line at about 4:30 pm.

They chased the two youths and caught them. A case was filed with Motijheel police in this connection.

Police said Kamal is a resident of Shantibagh while Raju of Talaitola area. The latter is also an accused of a snatching case filed with Dhanmondi Thana.

Two snatchers held in city

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 28: A young man was found dead at a hotel room here this afternoon. Kotwali police identified the man as Tipu, 30, who came from Bhola yesterday and took the room in the hotel. The body was sent to hospital for autopsy. The cause of the death was not known.

CBA polls held in Jamuna Fertiliser Factory

JAMALPUR, Nov 28: The CBA election at the country's largest fertiliser factory, Jamuna Fertiliser Company Limited, was held today amidst tension, chase and counter-chase between rival groups, reports UNB.

Activists of two factions of ruling party's labour front, Sramik League, chased each other in the factory area creating panic among the general workers, most of whom refrained from voting in fear.

The election was held today allegedly defying a court order against holding election today on a petition filed by Hafizur Rahman Khasru on behalf of a group of workers.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin (C) on his arrival at the presidential palace at New Delhi yesterday being flanked by Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma (L) and Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda. Jiang is the first Chinese President to visit India

—AFP/UNB photo

UK, UAE sign defence cooperation pact

ABU DHABI, Nov 28: Britain and the United Arab Emirates today signed a defence cooperation pact pledging British help if the Gulf state is threatened, officials said, reports Reuters.

The agreement was signed by visiting British Defence Secretary Michael Portillo and Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zaid al-Nahayan, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

The defence accord provides for strengthening military cooperation between Britain and the UAE in such fields as training, combined exercises, provision of modern defence equipment and related services to the UAE armed forces, the development of joint military plans and deployment strategies for the defence of the UAE.

Portillo told the news agency in an interview: "What the agreement commits us now is working out joint plans and we would like to get on with that."

The UAE, sparsely populated but enriched with huge oil wealth, is nervous about an arms buildup by non Arab Iran, the largest power in the volatile Gulf region.

The defence accord had been delayed by disagreement over whose laws would apply to British troops operating in UAE territory.

Britain said armed forces traditionally were responsible to their own government, even when operating in another country.

The UAE insisted any British troops deployed in its territory must be liable to its jurisdiction.

The UAE, which celebrates its silver jubilee on Monday, was formed in 1971 when Britain unilaterally withdrew its protection from the Gulf's crucial states, which it had defended and ruled for 150 years.

The country is now one of the world's richest thanks to abundant supplies of oil and sufficient reserves to last a century.

Following the end of remand she also made confessional statement under Section 164 in the CMM's Court. She was later sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

crore in project aid, rural sanitation project at a cost of Tk 145 crore 92 lakh, introduction of SSC vocational course in selected private high schools in each thana of the country at a cost of Tk 119 crore 79 lakh, establishment of 13 vocational training institutes to introduce SSC and HSC vocational course and repair and development of existing VTIs at a cost of Tk 69 crore 71 lakh, Pabna Sugar Mills at a cost of Tk 83 crore 81 lakh including Tk 50 crore 81 lakh in project aid, greater Titas franchise area gas distribution project (phase-3) at a cost of Tk 60 crore 6 lakh, rural development project-5 production-oriented employment project, 5 districts of greater Faridpur (phase-3) at a cost of Tk 38 crore 71 lakh with project aid, rural development project-14 infrastructure, Tangail district (2nd revise) at a cost of Tk 40 crore 33 lakh including Tk 32 crore 23 lakh project aid, Saldanadi oil and gas exploration and appraisal well drilling project at a cost of Tk 27 crore 93 lakh, construction of STAL Biman Bandar at different areas of the country (Khan Jahan Ali Biman Bandar, Bagerhat and Bogra STAL ports) at a cost of Tk 44 crore 29 lakh, and Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC), Khulna at a cost of Tk seven crore 64 lakh.

At a meeting with district Administration officials today, the transport owners agreed to call off the strike but later they withdrew their decision.

Meanwhile, local leaders of Uttar Paschim sadar area submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner and the superintendent of police demanding immediate action against the persons responsible for the road accident.

BSS adds: Bus service in the Sylhet Sunamganj route will resume tomorrow after five days of transport strike.

The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet told the news agency that a meeting was held in the conference room of the DC with representatives of transport owners and employees to resolve the problem.

It was decided at the meeting to resume transport service on the Sylhet Sunamganj road from tomorrow.

At a meeting yesterday, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has demanded immediate release of all the arrested JCD leaders, including its senior vice-president Nasir Uddin Pintu, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday Bhuiyan also called for withdrawal of all 'false' cases filed against Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal leaders across the country.

He said Pintu was charged with a conspiratorial case and being tortured in police remand after he was given detention. Police is forcing Pintu to make 'false' confessional statement as directed by the ruling Awami League, he alleged.

The BNP Secretary General demanded release of JCD leaders Aslam Ali and Touhidul Islam of Agriculture University, Jubo Dal leaders of Pabna Kamrul Ahsan Mintu and Nur Ahmed Masud, JCD leaders Swapan, Karmi and Tuhin, JCD leaders of Ishwardi Zakaria Poltu and Jubo Dal leader Abdul Khaleque.

KLM to withdraw

From Page 1

As a result, the Bangladesh government authorisation to KLM for its operation in Bangladesh has not been renewed. Its latest authorisation expires on December 1, says a KLM press release issued yesterday.

KLM deeply regrets having to take this unavoidable step, as it is extremely damaging to the airline's service to the traveling public," the release said.

Passengers of the previously scheduled KLM flights are being transferred to other international airlines, it added.

The Royal Dutch Airline started its twice weekly flights from October 31, 1994 on the Amsterdam-Dubai-Dhaka-Dubai-Amsterdam route under an agreement between the two civil aviation authorities of Bangladesh and Holland.

At that time, Biman had two weekly flights in the Dhaka-Amsterdam-New York-Amsterdam-Dhaka route.

On March 1995, KLM applied to Bangladesh for approval of a third weekly flight.

At that time, Biman felt that KLM's approved route via Dubai was more financially profitable than Biman's route via Amsterdam. Therefore it asked KLM not to operate in the Dubai stopover to make a level playing field for both the national flag carriers, Biman sources said.

While the processionists chanting anti-government slogans were passing by an Awami League rally at Rasul's Crossing, they came under attack by the ruling party supporters that left 15 injured.

Ruling party supporters suspected that the villagers were provoked by the opposition BNP men some of whom joined the protest meeting.

Later, local MP Advocate Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, Natore Chamber of Commerce and Industry chairman Abdul Mannaf and Nazrul Islam addressed a gathering of the villagers.

They demanded of the government to take punitive action against those responsible for what they said, killing of Jainul, failing which they threatened a week-long hartal in the district from Saturday.

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Bus strike in Sylhet continues

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 28: Bus service in some routes of Sylhet remained suspended for the fourth day today. Transport owners began the strike on the Sylhet-Sunamganj, Sylhet-Darail and Sylhet-Chhatrak roads protesting the damage to some vehicles by villagers following the death of two persons in a road accident.

At a meeting with district Administration officials today, the transport owners agreed to call off the strike but later they withdrew their decision.

Meanwhile, local leaders of Uttar Paschim sadar area submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner and the superintendent of police demanding immediate action against the persons responsible for the road accident.

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Taliban preparing for new offensive

KALAKAN, Afghanistan, Nov 28: In preparation for a fresh offensive, Taliban soldiers on Thursday moved their heavy weapons and tanks to the newly-captured village of Kalakan, north of the beleaguered Afghan capital, reports AP.

"We are ready for more fighting," said Mullah Niaz Mohammad Akhund, a Taliban officer, gesturing toward soldiers who were cleaning their weapons. "We may launch a new offensive any time."

The occasional artillery round shattered the silence of the sunny winter day, as Taliban soldiers set up multiple rocket launchers, tanks and combat vehicles just a few hundred metres away from their enemies.

The Taliban vowed to continue its march north toward Bagram military base, controlled by anti-Taliban soldiers, led by Dostum and ousted military chief Ahmed Shah Masood.

The fundamentalist Taliban has been locked in a fierce battle with the north-party alliance since taking Kabul, the Afghan capital, on Sept. 27.

A band of former religious students and clerics, the Taliban has imposed a strict version of Islamic law that forbids women from working and forces men to pray five times a day.

Taliban retook Kalakan from enemy troops, who had captured the front-line village more than one week ago. Kalakan is about 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Kabul.

Earlier Thursday jets belonging to northern warlord Rashid Dostum bombed the new Taliban positions, but there were no known casualties, Akhund said.

The Taliban vowed to continue its march north toward Bagram military base, controlled by anti-Taliban soldiers, led by Dostum and ousted military chief Ahmed Shah Masood.

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