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(From left) Sri Lankan Deputy Foreign Minister D P Wickremasinghe, Bangladeshi State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Pitak Inrawitayant and Indian Minister of State Saleem Iqbal Shervani toast after the signing of the Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIST-EC) treaty on Friday. — AFP/UNB photo

Biman's sales earning up by Tk 55cr

By Masud Arif

Biman Bangladesh Airlines earned Tk 1085.38 crore from sales during the first eleven months of the current financial year (1996-97) which is Tk 55 crore more than that of the corresponding period last year.

Biman sources said 85 per cent of the earning was from carrying passengers. The airline carried 13.20 lakh passengers during this period which was 60,000 more than that of the previous year. But it carried 300 tonnes less goods during this period compared to the previous years.

These figures were released at the 15th System Marketing conference of the Biman held in city from June 1 to 4. All country, district and station managers of about 35 offices of the Biman at home and abroad participated in the conference.

It was also announced at the conference that agreements have been signed allowing Biman flights from Dubai to Tehran, from Kuala Lumpur to Manila and for two flights a week to Rome instead of one now.

The conference discussed and analysed various ways to

increase the airline's earnings and cut expenditure to make it more profitable.

An amount of Tk 3 crore was saved during the eleven-month period through more efficient deployment of crew and better utilisation of their lay over time. An amendment to fuel purchase policy also saved another Tk 7 crore a year.

Biman officials said they hoped the airline would earn an additional Tk 15 crore by re-adjusting fares in different routes. Meanwhile, Biman has introduced 'package deals' in six of its international destinations — Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, Paris, Rome and Tokyo — to attract tourists.

Biman, established in January 1972, has now a fleet of four DC-10-30s, two Airbus A310-300s, two F-28s and two ATP aircraft. The sources said the airline needs more pilots, engineers and technical staff because of the variety of aircraft in Biman's fleet.

Biman now flies to eight destinations in the country and 26 destinations in three continents.

Historic June 7 observed

The historic June 7 was observed throughout the country yesterday commemorating the nation's glorious struggle for realisation of the six-point demand including autonomy for the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, reports BSS.

On this day in 1966, the Awami League observed an all-out hartal in support of the six-point demand. A number of activists including Manu Mia, a railway worker at Tejgaon area in the city were killed in police firing.

The six-point movement led by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman culminated in the mass uprising of 1969, which ultimately led to the liberation of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Awami League and its front organisations arranged separate programmes to mark the occasion. The programmes included the hoisting of national and party flags in the morning at Bangabandhu Bhaban, Awami League central office and all other party offices across the country, assembly and placing of wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation, holding of meetings and rallies.

At the main programme in the capital Prime Minister and party chief Sheikh Hasina along with party leaders placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at Bangabandhu Bhaban in the morning. They observed one minute's silence as a mark of respect to those including the Bangabandhu who had laid down their lives for the cause of the nation.

Later, leaders and workers of the Awami League Dhaka City Unit, central leaders of Mahila Awami League, Awami Jubo League, Jatiya Samik League, Bangladesh Chhatra League and several other organisations also placed wreaths at the portrait of the Bangabandhu.

Awami League's front organisation Jatiya Samik League arranged a workers' rally at Tejgaon industrial area. Sheikh Hasina addressed the rally as the chief guest.

Benapole

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sent to jail here recently in connection with a road accident that left a young Bangladeshi child dead.

Sources said Sharsa, a police officer arrested an Indian driver Sunil Roy and his helper Nazrul from inside Bangladesh when their truck hit and killed a child on the spot on May 27. Later, the two Indians were sent to jail by the court.

After the arrest, Indian truck drivers and workers gave a strike call on May 30 demanding unconditional release of them and vowed to continue the strike, unless they were released.

Meanwhile, customs' officials and CNF agents of both the countries in a meeting on June 2 decided to help solve the dispute.

But the agitators turned down the decision and continued their strike in an unprecedented manner. This has already caused a huge loss to Bangladesh in the last eight days. Bangladesh earns Tk 95 lakh as revenue from the port everyday, according to customs sources.

Storm

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when storm lashed eight unions in Sadar and Kamarkhand thanas of the Sirajganj district today.

Witnesses said more than 500 kutchas houses were damaged and several hundred trees uprooted by the strong wind that lasted only for 15 minutes.

Shukur, 54, an inhabitant of Kura village in Kamarkhand thana, and Amzad, 56, of Selomdaha village in Sadar, were buried alive under their houses. Four of the injured were admitted to local hospitals.

120 Shi'ite Muslims arrested in Kabul

KABUL, June 7: Taliban soldiers swept through the war-weary Afghan capital arresting at least 120 Shi'ite Muslims they suspected of plotting their overthrow, security officials said today, reports AP.

Taliban soldiers, most of whom are Sunni Muslims like most Afghans, have been wary of their Shi'ite brethren since last week's massacre in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Then at least 300 Taliban soldiers were massacred by rebelling Shi'ite Muslims, known as Hazaras — named for the region in Afghanistan they come from — as well as their former Uzbek allies.

The Taliban's defeat in Mazar-e-Sharif was their first real setback since beginning their sweep through Afghanistan three years ago.

The Taliban, made up of ethnic Pashtuns, controls roughly two-thirds of the country where it has imposed its version of strict Islamic rule.

The northern one-third of the country is ruled by an alliance that includes minority Shi'ite Muslims, ethnic Uzbeks, ousted military chief Ahmed Shah Masood, Ismaili Muslims, former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and a small royalist party.

"We believe they are launching a coup or plan to launch attacks around the city," Haji Jumaddi, security department director told The Associated Press.

Clash in Sirajganj: 25 hurt, 8 held

SIRAJGANJ, June 7: Police arrested eight people from Ullapara thana following a clash that left 25 people injured today, reports UNB.

Police said the clash occurred over the formation of a mosque committee in Khudra Gozal village.

The arrested are Tota Mia, Shamim, Shah Alam, Rafiqul Islam, Nazrul Islam, Abdus Sattar, Osman Gani and Abdul Gafur.

Four of the injured were rushed to Purnimangati hospital.

Earlier police officials said they had information that their opponents would try to smuggle weapons into the city.

On Friday dozens of check posts went up around the city where heavily armed soldiers searched vehicles.

"We have been commanded by the city council to conduct searches across the city so we can maintain security," said Police Chief Abdul Haq.

In Kabul's southern neighbourhood, where most Hazaras live, residents said they were living in fear.

"People here are very worried because they shot a man eating fruit at a roadside stall."

The raids followed demonstrations by Kabul's Shi'ite Muslims more than one week ago to protest the killing of a Shi'ite Muslim. Several demonstrators were arrested, but later released.

The Taliban administration in Kabul has appeared increasingly nervous since an explosion last Tuesday outside a military base. They still haven't said whether they believed it was sabotage or accidental.

Clash at Natore Sugar Mills leaves 10 hurt

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, June 7: The president of the Sugarcane Growers Welfare Association in the Natore Sugar Mills was seriously injured when he and the members of the Association were attacked by their rivals today.

At least 10 persons were injured during the clashes.

According to witnesses and police, the president of the association, M. Gholam Sarwar was suddenly attacked by his rival group when he was attending a meeting of the association. After this attack, a clash between the two groups started. Both groups used lethal weapons.

Two cases were lodged with Natore Sadar thana on behalf of the two groups.

India, Nepal to jointly combat terrorism

KATHMANDU, June 7: Prime Minister Inder Kumar

Gujral today clinched a firm assurance from Nepal not to allow its soil to be used for anti-Indian activities and expressed the hope that a new 'South Asian Spirit' will mark New Delhi's relations with Pakistan, reports PTI.

Both India and Nepal agreed to work jointly to combat terrorist menace as they felt that the open border between the two countries posed a serious security challenge.

"We have to put our minds together so that the security is not disturbed by terrorist activities," Gujral told a joint press conference with his Nepalese counterpart Lokendra Bahadur Chand at the end of his three-day visit to the Himalayan kingdom.

Chand said Nepal would do its best to put a stop to any anti-Indian activity provided it came to its notice.

Gujral said both the countries shared their concern over terrorism showing its ugly face in neighbouring nations.

During his stay here, Gujral signed a power trade agreement with Nepal, exchanged the instrument of ratification of the Mahakali River Water Sharing Treaty and announced that the detailed project report (DPR) of the Rs 20,000 crore Pancheshwar Hydel Project under the treaty will be completed in six months.

A major achievement for land-locked Nepal was the fulfilment of a long-pending request for a 61-km long trade transit route through Indian territory which will give it better access to the Bangladesh

port of Chittagong. A memorandum of understanding on civil aviation was also signed paving the way for participation of private sector airlines on the Indo-Nepal sector.

Responding to a question about India's stance on the movement for restoration of democracy in Bhutan, Gujral said, "India does not believe in import and export of ideologies as it does more harm than good and it is up to the people there to decide what system they want."

On the recent arrest of a Bhutanese democratic leader in New Delhi, the Prime Minister said India and Bhutan had an extradition treaty with each other and added that the issue of the leader's extradition was before the court on the request of Bhutanese government.

On the Bhutanese refugee issue, the Prime Minister said since Nepal and Bhutan were sovereign nations, they should sort out the problem bilaterally as third party intervention in any other's affairs is dangerous.

Mango output

From Page 1

Mohirul Islam, owner of a mango orchard at Shibganj, said that he never saw 'such a crop damage' in last 12 years. Haripada Maitra, owner of another orchard, said he will be able to just avert loss if there is no more storm.

Quality mangoes like Gopalbhog and Himsagar are being sold between Taka 600 and Tk 1100 per maund while Guli mango is available at Tk 250 to Tk 450 per maund, local traders said.

Nat'l pay scale

From Page 1

timetable would help coordinate with other offices, particularly with the offices outside the capital.

A complete rest for two days will infuse a fresh zeal in the employees to work more and help raise their efficiency, she said, adding the Secretariat workers will work with freshness after two-day weekend.

The new timing expanded holidays as well as working hours, said the Prime Minister, adding that the government wants to utilise every moment for the development of the nation.

"We have some commitments to the people, we want to fulfil those during our tenure. If you do not work hard, it will not be possible for us to complete our task for the advancement of the nation."

Spelling out solution of different problems arising out of the new timing Hasina said the government would incorporate a special allocation for the tiffin of the employees in the new Pay Commission report.

About transport problem, she said the government had already arranged ten double-deckers and would give more vehicles for the transportation of the Secretariat officers and employees.

She said the cooperative shop in the Secretariat would be improved further and day-care centre be set up inside for the convenience of working mothers to keep their babies

there during the working hours. Referring to housing problem of the employees, Hasina said the government has a plan for building apartments at low cost to allocate among the low-income groups.

Employees and people of other professions will own those houses and pay the price from their monthly salaries, she told the gathering, adding this programme is to help solve the housing problem.

Hasina said her government is the government of the people and there is no need for demanding anything from it as the government takes steps according to people's need.

"My door is always open for you. You can come to me during your needs without any hesitation," Hasina told the leaders and workers of various associations of the Secretariat who attended the meeting. More than a thousand of them were there.

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and government employees Sanghati Parishad leaders also addressed the meeting.

Among the speakers were Sanghati Parishad president Syed Mohiuddin, Sangjukta Parishad president Habibur Rahman, Sanghati Parishad executive president Shaikh Saidur Rahman and secretary general Mohammad Shah Alam, and different association leaders Shah Mohammad Mohsin, Motahar Hossain, Waheduzzaman and Mizanur Rahman.

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Agitation in Bandarban withdrawn

BANDARBAN, June 7: The ongoing agitation programme of the Sarbadaliya Sangram Parishad was called off following a discussion between the Parishad leaders and Chittagong City Mayor Alhaj ABM Mahiuddin Chowdhury here today, reports BSS.

Held at the local circuit house, the meeting was attended by chairman of the local government council Maung Kya Ching Bir Bahadur MP, Awami League leader Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, deputy commissioner and leaders of different political parties.

Parishad leaders have withdrawn their agitation programme on the basis of the seven-point agreement reached at the meeting.

The agreement includes withdrawal of cases filed in connection with untoward incidents those happened on May 30 and 31 at Bandarban and arrangement of proper treatment to the injured persons in the incidents.

DU teacher made honorary WASA chairman

By Staff Correspondent

Dr A K M Zahurul Huq, Chairman, Department of Economics of the Dhaka University, has been appointed honorary chairman of WASA, according to official sources.

Dr Huq, talking to The Daily Star, said yesterday that he would also continue as the Chairman of the economics department.

Prof Dr A K Azad Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, when contacted for comment, said there is no bar for university teachers to hold the post of WASA chairman if it is a part time job like that of the chairman of a bank.

BOU cameraman mugged in city

By Staff Correspondent

A video cameraman of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) was beaten up and robbed of Tk 2900 by a group of armed youths in the city yesterday.

Solhel Ahmed, also a guest videographer of the BTV, was mugged at Malibagh Choudhuria while he was returning home from the BTV station at Rampura at about 12.30 pm. An FIR was recorded with Sabujbagh thana.

Two arrested with stolen goods

Police yesterday arrested two persons from Pagla area under Narayanangj district and recovered stolen goods including gold ornaments from their possession, reports BSS.

A team of Mohammadpur police arrested Zakir and Titu alias Kamruzzaman from Pagla area and recovered valuables and gold ornaments. Police said the arrested were house servants of former deputy secretary Abdul Halim, a resident of Baitul Amman Housing Society, Mohammadpur. They stole valuables and gold ornaments making the inmates of the house unconscious by feeding poison along with food.

Vitamin-A Week begins

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A countrywide nutrition campaign for children began yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina feeding five babies with Vitamin A at a function at Ganobhaban in the morning, reports UNB.

A total of 22 million children of 1 to 6 years of age will be given vitamin A during the Vitamin A Week June 7-15 under the auspices of the Institute of Public Health Nutrition (IPHN).

Thirty thousand under-6 children are getting blind each year owing to vitamin A deficiency and malnutrition and 100 facing blindness everyday owing to vitamin A deficiency. That means four children are losing sight hourly.

Ctg port

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programme was called off," he added.

"Since then, we wrote to the concerned quarters to implement the decision of the Prime Minister, but nothing tangible was done till June 5," he said. "As a result, finding no alternative we have decided to go for an action programme."

Cell to monitor

From Page 1

media, they added.

July last year, the Home Ministry set up a cell following a workshop on law and order. The cell, headed by an additional secretary of the ministry was established to receive comments and recommendations of the people for improving the law and order across the country. The findings and activities of the cell still remain unknown to the public.

Pak envoy to India tells press Deployment of Prithvi to trigger arms race

NEW DELHI, June 7: A Pakistani diplomat today said New Delhi's reported missile deployment near its border would have a destabilising effect and trigger an arms race between the two South Asian rivals, reports AFP.

Ashraf Jahangir Gazi, Pakistani High Commissioner (ambassador) to New Delhi, said India was making 'steady' and 'progressive moves' to position 'Pakistan-specific ballistic missiles'.

Gazi told a conference here that a report by the Washington Post on Tuesday which said India had deployed medium-range Prithvi ballistic missiles at a prospective launch site near Pakistan's borders had 'lent credence to our anxieties'.

India denied the report on the deployment of India's 'Prithvi' (earth) surface-to-surface missiles on Pakistan's borders and said the report was aimed at fuelling animosity between the arch Asian rivals.

A defence ministry spokesman said: "We have no knowledge of the deployment of Prithvi on India-Pakistan border."

Senior government officials said the report was aimed at jeopardising upcoming talks between India and Pakistan later this month. The officials also described the comments in the US newspaper as "a motivated report."

Quazi said: "I welcome the Indian government's denial. But we have to make our own assessment. I don't think that the Prithvi missiles will be kept down India's south."

Gohar Ayub Khan, Pakistani Foreign Minister, in a letter to the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has warned that the reported deployment had created a 'dangerous security environment'.

"The Indian action bears the potential of unleashing a ballistic missile race in south

Asia," Khan told Albright.

"The threat posed by this escalatory action would leave us no choice but to take appropriate counter measures."

Quazi said Khan's response was "measured and balanced."

The reported deployment of missiles comes ahead of a second round of talks between the Indian and Pakistani foreign secretaries planned for June 19-22 to continue a normalisation dialogue initiated in March.

"Islamabad is looking forward to the next round of foreign secretary talks. Pakistan is realistic, cautious and at the same time optimistic," Quazi said.

"We have leadership in place in both countries. We do have a real opportunity to improve bilateral ties," Quazi said.

However, Quazi added: "We can't put fundamental issues aside. Differences on these issues cannot be put aside or resolved in one sitting."

PTI adds: Gohar Ayub Khan, has warned India that any intruding Indian aircraft into the Pakistani territory would be shot down as "Pakistan has the capability to do so."

In an apparent reference to the alleged violation by an IAF aircraft of the Pakistan airspace on May 27, Khan said "It was a demonstration of tremendous political courage and maturity on the part of Pakistani leadership not to have retaliated in the face of extreme provocation by intruding Indian aircraft."

"Pakistan's F-16 fitted with air-to-air missiles could destroy the enemy aircraft from a range of 35 to 40 miles of firing position," Khan said in an exclusive interview to English daily 'Pakistan Observer'.

"Pakistan not only has the American missiles, but also Italian and French missiles to meet with any situation," he said.

Congress presidentship

Pawar, Pilot urged to quit race in favour of Kesri

BANGALORE, June 7: AICC

member and senior Karnataka Congress leader, T N Narasimha Murthy, today appealed to Sharad Pawar and Rajesh Pilot to pull out of the race for the AICC presidentship and make way for the unanimous election of Sitaram Kesri, reports PTI.

Murthy told reporters here that in his 112 years of history, the Congress had seen elections for the post only twice, in 1938 and in 1950, and on all other occasions the AICC president had been elected unanimously. This convention should be followed now also, he added.

He said though Pawar and Pilot were leaders in their own right, Kesri was a seasoned leader who had taken the 'bold step' of withdrawing support to the United Front government led by H D Deve Gowda and had been making continuous efforts to rejuvenate the party.

Also, since Kesri was already holding the AICC presidentship and contesting, he should be elected unanimously, Murthy said, adding that this would

Khaleda

From Page 1

our industries and allow India to capture the domestic market completely.

Turning to economic scenario, Begum Zia said the overall economy of the country has fallen into a deep crisis due to government's wrong policies and development works have come to a standstill.

She claimed that her BNP government had achieved economic progress and improved the lot of commonman without imposing tax burden on the people during its five-year rule.

The opposition leader alleged that the programmes initiated by the BNP government for economic uplift, poverty alleviation and development of sectors, like poultry and dairy farming, pisciculture and small and cottage industries, are now on the verge of destruction.

As a result, poverty and unemployment are increasing day by day, she added.

The BNP Chairperson accused the ruling party of obstructing democratic process. Terrorism, repression, killing, rape and acid throwing have become a regular phenomena across the country, she said.

Begum Zia said the patriotic people and political workers are rallying round BNP to protect national independence and sovereignty. She called for consolidating the unity of nationalist and patriotic forces.

In Dhaka, Moulvibazar district BNP convenor Ebadur Rahman, the meeting was addressed by M Saifur Rahman MP, Haris Chowdhury, Barkatullah Bulu MP, Begum Khaleda Rabbani, and newcomers Nabab Ali Abbas Khan and Abdul Ahad Miah.

send the right signal to the people that the Congress was united.

He said if election became inevitable, Kesri would win hands down with more than two-thirds support. The Karnataka unit of Congress was solidly behind Kesri.

On the KPCCI presidentship also, Murthy said it was desirable to avoid elections and elect the PCC chief unanimously. Meanwhile, Rajesh Pilot today said Sonia Gandhi was "maintaining a neutral stand" on the party's organisational polls.

"She is not participating in active politics," Pilot told a press conference in Patna.

He was replying to a query as to whom Sonia would support for the party's top post.

Another top leader from Hyderabad added: Sharad Pawar also said Sonia was not "taking sides" in the race for AICC chief post but she was concerned about the party's future.

Nasim advised complete rest

The doctors have advised Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim to take complete rest, official sources told BSS last night.

The minister, therefore, has cancelled all his programmes on June 8 due to pain in his neck, the sources added.

Clash at CU

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cocktails.

According to police, today's clash was a sequel to Thursday's incident in which three students were injured following infighting in the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

Bypolls

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some independent candidates also.

The nomination papers will be scrutinised tomorrow. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is June 14.

A former mayor of Dhaka city, Col (Retd) Malek joined the Awami League leaving Jatiya Party last month. Abdul Wahab is the vice-president. Manikganj unit of BNP while Ramzan Ali is the chairman of the Manikganj municipality.

Syringe

From Page 1

bought by this correspondent from a pharmacy near Mitford Hospital contained some fluid. When questioned on its quality, the shopkeeper replied, "Don't worry, that is just the lubricant you will find in every new syringe." He said recycled syringes had no lubrication but sometimes sweated in the packets. BCDA officials also expressed similar views.

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