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Clash with police Sabur, his 7 accomplices arrested

DB police in a pre-dawn swoop at Momenbagh in Demra thana yesterday arrested one Sabur and his seven accomplices, and recovered some arms and ammunition, reports UNB.

During the operation, five policemen were also injured when other accomplices of Sabur opened fire and hurled bombs in a bid to snatch the arrested people, leading to a gunfight.

The recovered arms and ammunition included three foreign sawed-off rifles, one foreign-made revolver, 11 cartridges of rifle, seven revolver bullets and six bombs.

Sabur, wanted in 15 cases, is the leader of a notorious group and was involved in terrorist activities.

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4 hurt as police, snatchers clash in city

Four people, including two cops, were injured in a clash between snatchers and police near Baitul Mokarram Mosque here yesterday, reports UNB.

The injured were identified as CID sub-inspector Manju and constable Mizan, and passers-by Jasim and Hanif.

Police said the clash began when a CID team, led by inspector A K M Rafiqul Haq, challenged a group of youths near the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque at about 9 pm.

The youths responded by exploding bombs indiscriminately, creating panic. People ran helter and skelter for safety and shops were shuttered.

The CID personnel, who had gone to the spot acting on a tip-off, however arrested two of the snatchers.

2 minor girls raped in city

Two minor girls were violated in the city's Sabujbagh and Lalbagh thanas on Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police said four youths — Halim, Nazrul, Nazir and Farul — took a 12-year-old girl from her residence to Kamrangir Char at about 11 pm and raped her overnight at a newly-built building.

A case was filed with Lalbagh thana in this connection and police arrested one of the accused, Halim.

In Sabujbagh, an eight-year-old girl was violated in Manda area by a local mastan, Hasan, at about 8 pm on Saturday. A case was registered with Sabujbagh thana.

Manikganj bypolls Ban on carrying arms from June 28 to July 2

The government has imposed a ban on carrying authorised fire arms in Manikganj district from June 28 to July 2 to maintain order during the Manikganj-3 byelection on June 30, reports UNB.

Legal action will be taken against those who will violate the ban, said an official hand-out last night.

Special Coverage

The Daily Star announces with pleasure that this paper's Special Correspondent will cover the Wimbledon Championships, the queen of Grand Slam Tennis, from the court-side from 23 June '97.

So, don't miss the very best on Wimbledon reporting. Make sure you get your copy everyday to read these fascinating reports.

— Editor

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Dousing of gasfield fire may be delayed Flame comes down to below 50 ft

By Staff Correspondent

The height of the Magurchhara gasfield flame has reduced further and come down to below 50 feet, Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan told The Daily Star last night.

"It has definitely fallen below 50 feet," he said.

Earlier in the day, the chairman of Petrobangla informed the minister at a meeting in the ministry that the height of the flame was between 50 and 60 feet.

Our Staff Correspondent reported from Sylhet: The height of the flame of Magurchhara gasfield fire has reduced further yesterday as the pressure of gas decreased, said an official.

Sands and small pieces of stones are still coming out along with the fire.

Meanwhile, an official of Occidental said that they will not be able to start dousing the fire until the temperature of the flame comes down. It is not possible to say right now when the fire would be brought under control, he said adding, dousing of the fire will be delayed more. He could not say when the dousing operation will begin.

He said report of the experts will be available shortly and work on plugging the (leakage) of gas, deviation drilling and development of lands will be started on the basis of their report.

Construction of the by-pass gas line is in progress, the manager of Fulbari Tea Estate said this afternoon.

If everything goes well, the by-pass line to resume gas supply to the 12 tea gardens in the surrounding areas, will be put into operation by Friday, he said. Petrobangla officials also said that work was going well to resume gas supply at an early date.

Meanwhile, a committee set up by the government has started work to assess the loss caused to the tea gardens, forestry, railway and the rural electrification network in the area, said an official.

BSS adds: All out measures have been taken to extinguish the gas fire in the number one well at Moulvibazar within the shortest possible time, officials of Occidental and fire fighting experts said yesterday at a meeting with Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister M Nooruddin Khan at the conference room of the ministry.

According to an official announcement, Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, chairman of Petrobangla, said that work was going well to resume gas supply at an early date.

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2 burnt alive, 400 shanties gutted at Maghbazar

By Staff Correspondent

Two children were burnt alive and some 300 people rendered homeless in a fire that also gutted at least 400 shanties at a slum in Maghbazar area of the city Saturday night.

The charred remains of the children were found when the local people and the homeless slum dwellers were removing the debris yesterday morning. Police took the bodies of the children, aged between five and eight, to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), according to Ramna police.

According to hospital sources, one of the two was identified as Jyotsna. Police said none came to claim the bodies or file any complaint about any missing person.

Fire brigade sources said, about 30 small shops were also gutted in the fire which broke out at about 8 pm and fast engulfed the slum near the Maghbazar kutchha bazaar.

However, the cause of the fire could not be known till last night.

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AL govt steps into second year Hasina vows to strengthen base of democracy

By Staff Correspondent

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina steps into its second year today.

This day a year ago, Awami League president Sheikh Hasina took oath as the 10th Prime Minister of Bangladesh after her party emerged the largest in the seventh Jatiya Sangsad through June 12 parliamentary elections.

Eldest daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina led the AL to power again after 21 years. The then president Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed in a bloody military putsch in 1975.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages yesterday marking the completion of one year of the AL government.

In his message, President Shahabuddin emphasised on tolerance and understanding among all political parties and between the Treasury and the Opposition benches in the parliament to uphold democratic values and norms.

Wishing another success of the government and also extending greetings to the countryside, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said that the government's steps in the last one year for ensuring socio-economic development and a democratic social system were praiseworthy.

In her message, the Prime Minister vowed to further strengthen the base of democracy in the country which was established through a protracted movement. "Insha Allah, we shall build Sonar Bangla as dreamt by Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman together with the people of the country," she said.

Paying rich tributes to Bangabandhu, other national leaders and martyrs of the anti-

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Sheikh Hasina



Truckloads of banana coming to the city markets as there has been a bumper production. — Star photo

Jatiya Sangsad passes supplementary budget

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Appropriation (amendment) Bill, 1997, seeking a total of Tk 2,250 crore, 68 lakh and 29 thousand to meet the additional expenditure in fiscal 1996-97 that ends on the 30th of this month.

The size of the original budget for 1996-97 — passed on September 1 last year — was Tk 25,306 crore, 14 lakh and 55 thousand.

In the supplementary budget, the sector-wise allocation is: Tk 10,64,80,000 for government organs, Tk 61,48,60,000 for education, Tk 43,58,10,000 for retirement allowance and other benefits, Tk 18,30,57,000 for agriculture, Tk 1,61,00,00,000 for subsidy, Tk 210,81,25,000 for food for work programme and Tk 196,62,20,000 capital investment for rural development projects.

Before the passage of the supplementary budget, the House witnessed last week a two-day debate on it. The opposition members then strongly criticised the government for the additional expenditure.

Besides, the opposition lawmakers yesterday moved a total of 940 cut motions against 130 demands for grants, involving the additional expenditures. The cut motions were rejected through voice vote.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury allowed discussions

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BNP threatens tough agitation next week

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday vowed to launch a tough anti-government movement next week if the government does not reduce the price of fertiliser and withdraw new taxes and surcharge by June 26, reports UNB.

"There will be no alternative to launching a tough street agitation if the government fails to realise the people's demands," said BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan who also announced a nationwide demonstration on June 26.

He was addressing a rally in front of Badda Hossain Market, organised as part of the party's demonstration at all thana headquarters and wards in Dhaka city demanding reduction of enhanced fertiliser price

See Page 12 Col 6

JCD calls strike in educational instts today

By DU Correspondent

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) has called a day-long strike in all educational institutions across the country today protesting alleged repression on the leaders and activists of JCD and BNP and the price hike of books and writing materials.

The strike call came from a meeting of the JCD held at the Aparajee Bangla of Dhaka University yesterday.

The meeting was addressed by Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anney, Monwar Hossain Rana, Mossarrat Hossain, Abdul Khaleq and Monir Hossain.

They demanded immediate release of the four JCD leaders arrested a few days back in connection with a murder on the Dhaka University campus.

Criticising the budget, they said the price hike of books and writing materials would hamper education in the country.

The JCD leaders threatened that they would launch a tougher movement if the demands were not met immediately.

Death of Shima Jail officials, police & doctors testify before JS probe body

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 22: The members of the parliamentary committee formed to probe the death of garments worker Shima Chowdhury, left the port city for Dhaka this afternoon, official sources said.

The committee members, led by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, stayed at the Chittagong Circuit House during the visit here. They took testimony of the jail officials, police and doctors in connection with the death.

The parliamentary committee was formed on February 18 to probe the death of Shima while in 'safe custody' in Chittagong jail on February 7.

The other members of the committee are: Col (ret'd) Showkat Ali, Mosharraf Hossain, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Akhtaruzzaman and Khalede Khanam.

The committee is expected to submit its report soon.

Death of Biman crew DMP sends separate report to ministry

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) continued its investigation into the death of Nuruzzaman Sharif, a crew of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, for the second day yesterday, reports UNB.

Sharif was allegedly tortured to death after he was arrested for trespassing on the Prime Minister's Secretariat on June 13.

A CID team visited the Tejgaon thana and the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court and talked to police officials there. The investigators also examined the registrar book at the CMM's Court.

At the initial stage, the investigators will record statements of all people concerned and examine and cross check those, said additional SP Subodh Chandra Chanda who supervises the CID teams.

After visiting related places and interrogating all officials and people concerned, the CID team will try to identify the persons responsible for the death, he said. The team is led by ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman.

A senior police official said a postmortem of the body of Sharif might be carried out for the second time as the first autopsy report contradicted surathal and preliminary reports.

He indicated that police will apply to the authorities concerned for a second autopsy.

Official sources said Dhaka Metropolitan Police has sent a separate report to the Home Ministry explaining various reports and statements on the death.

The report said Sharif had fist fighting with some other detainees at the court hajat at a time. But there were more than 300 prisoners on the day.

The fight as well as suffocation in the congested hajat might be a reason for the death, it said referring to the statement of Sharif's co-accused, Mourir.

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JS snippets

By Nazmul Ashraf

Parliamentary Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister, Suranjit Sengupta, was found sitting in the chair of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition just before yesterday's sitting of the Jatiya Sangsad began at 3 in the afternoon.

Until then, the Opposition seats were vacant.

Pointing her finger at Suranjit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told her colleagues around, "He is there as he is not getting press coverage now-a-days." A smiling Hasina then looked at the press gallery and said, "He wants to draw attention of the journalists."

Responding to this, Suranjit said, "The Opposition Bench lacks members. That's why I've lent myself to it."

While narrating his 'bitter' experience with the office of the prime minister, Shamsul Alam Pramanik of BNP told the House he once wanted blankets from the PM's office for the distressed people of his area. "After taking a lot of pains, I was assured by officials of getting allotment of some blankets following the PM's order," he said.

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3324 held under SPA in 10 months, JS told

By Staff Correspondent

The number of people detained under the Special Powers Act (SPA) between July last and April this year was 3,324 while 2,130 of them were released from confinement, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

The minister claimed that no one was detained on political grounds under the SPA during the period. He added that no one was imprisoned in the country without a trial.

The minister was replying to a number of questions raised by both Treasury and Opposition bench members.

Rafiqul Islam said that there were 2,847 posts in the police force now lying vacant, which would be filled up soon. He said that the number of policemen was not adequate and recently 5,000 new posts were created. More policemen would be recruited in phases subject to availability of funds, he added.

The total number of policemen was 93,067 in the country including 4,961 in Range Reserve Police and another 7,055 in Armed Police Battalion, he said, adding that the number of Ansars was 2,08,115.

There were vehicles for police in 210 out of 530 police stations now while, 125 pick-up vans were procured recently to supply on a priority basis to various police stations during the 1997-98 fiscal.

Rafiqul Islam said that during the period between September '96 and May '97, the number of dacoity, mugging, burglary and rapes were recorded at 722, 1288, 8132 and 576 respectively.

A total number of 2,293 murders were committed in the country during the period between June 24 of last year and April 30 this year, he said.

The minister said during the months of April and May this year, a total of 288 terrorists were arrested in Dhaka metropolitan area and 103 arms of various types and other ammunition were recovered from their possession.

He also informed the House that a 'Dog Squad' will be set up at a cost of Tk 1.8 crore under the police force.

Armed Forces Pay Committee report submitted

The Armed Forces Pay Committee yesterday submitted its report to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, an ISPR press release said.

Chairman of the Committee and Quarter Master General of the Bangladesh Army Major General Jalaluddin Ahmad handed over the report to the Prime Minister at a simple ceremony at the Prime Minister's Office, Armed Forces Division at the Dhaka Cantonment.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam, Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Acting PSO of the Armed Forces Division and members of the Committee were present on the occasion.

Ershad's passport returned

By Staff Correspondent

The authorities have returned the passport of former president and Jatiya Party Chief HM Ershad, which was seized after he was ousted in a mass upsurge on December 6, 1990.

The secretary general of the party and Minister for Railway and Communications Anwar Hossain Manu, talking to The Daily Star last night, confirmed it.

Manju, however, told this correspondent, "the chairman

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Earth Summit +5 opens today Leaders to review progress of '92 Rio documents

UNITED NATIONS, June 22: Leaders and envoys from 173 countries converge on New York tomorrow to debate vanishing forests, dying species and declining fish stocks. But the "greenest" topic of all at the UN Earth Summit will be the disappearing dollar, reports AP.

Progress on finance is essential to making progress on all other issues, said a top UN development official, Joke Waller-Hunter.

US President Bill Clinton will join 60 other heads of state and government in the five-day relay of five-minute summit speeches.

Fresh from their Denver summit with Clinton, the leaders of Japan, Britain, Germany and France headline the first day's lineup, which leads off with a welcome from US Vice President Al Gore. Clinton speaks on Thursday.

"Earth Summit Plus 5" is to review progress made since the historic Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, when governments endorsed the goal of "sustainable development" — global economic growth linked to environmental protection.

The Rio summit took steps toward countering global warming, protecting endangered species and saving tropical forests. But some of its biggest battles were over financing.

Poorer nations wanted firm money commitments from the industrial North to help develop their economies with "environment-friendly" technologies. What they got instead was a promise from most — the United States opted out — to work toward increasing aid to 0.7 per cent of the North's gross national product.

But that figure has declined, not risen — from 0.35 per cent in 1992 to 0.27 per cent in 1995.

The 59 billion dollar in total aid in 1995 was not even half the Rio target of 125 billion dollar. The United States led the way, slashing its aid contribution to 7.4 billion dollar in 1995 from 9.9 billion dollars a year earlier.

Now, in closed-door negotiations over the final declaration Friday for this summit, Third World representatives are again trying to pin the North down, proposing a deadline of 2002 for industrial nations to meet the 0.7 per cent level.

There are enough resources in the world to help, said the chairman of the UN Third World bloc, Tanzanian Ambassador Daudi N. Mwakawago. "What is lacking is the political will."

Speaking privately, US officials make clear such deadlines are unlikely to survive in the final documents, which must be

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Rumour on Pol Pot's death

PHNOM PENH, June 22: 'Khmer Rouge guerrilla strongman' Pol Pot is still alive and will be handed over to the Cambodian government very soon, a government general said today, report agencies.

"Pol Pot is still alive. I met him this morning," General Nhiek Bunchhay told reporters.

Earlier today, Cambodia's second Prime Minister Hun Sen said he had received an unconfirmed report that the ageing Pol Pot was dead.

Nhiek Bunchhay, who has spearheaded talks with Khmer Rouge renegades who broke with Pol Pot earlier this month, said the guerrilla leader was being detained at the Anlong Veng jungle headquarters of the breakaway faction which captured him last week.

The general said Pol Pot was very sick and would be handed over to the government soon.

"They will give Pol Pot to the government very soon," he said upon his return from Anlong Veng.

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Production of lubricant in pvt sector allowed

By Sharier Khan

The government has allowed for the first time, a joint venture private company to import 'base oil' for production of lubricating oil in the country, official sources said.

So far, 'base oil' was not in the imports list of the private sector. This oil is the raw material for production of lubricating oil, grease etc. The annual demand for lubricating oil is 50,000 tonnes and most of the quantity is imported.

Fuchs Lubricant Bangladesh Ltd., a joint venture between Balmor Loh Fuchs of Germany and Grease House Ltd, will start marketing a wide-range of lubricating oils for motorised vehicles and machinery from August next, officials sources said.

"This means we will be able to sell quality lubricant oil at a much cheaper rate," Mohammad Yusuf of Grease House Ltd said. "We will be able to use brand names and add value to the production of the brand-name by over 30 per cent."

The Fuchs Lubricant Bangla-

desh will invest Tk 4 crore to set up a plant in Chittagong. Presently it has started trial production by using the available technical facilities of Grease House Ltd, Yusuf added.

The Grease House, set up in 1975, is equipped to produce grease and lubricants. It has been producing grease from recycled oil since 1983.

The complete plant of Fuchs Lubricant Ltd will be ready within a year.

The joint venture company signed a four-year agreement with Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation in April last. Under this agreement, Fuchs Ltd will pay one per cent of the ex-factory price per litre of lubricant. The rate of royalty will be reviewed every two years.

"Our plant will be capable of producing 10,000 MT of lubricants which is one fifth of the country's demand," Yusuf noted. "Besides this oil has tremendous export potentials."

Official sources meanwhile

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