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Energy Ministry asked to resume gas supply to Ctg Urea Factory

The Advisory Committee on Fertiliser has asked the energy ministry to resume gas supply to the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Factory for its resumption of production, reports UNB.

The Committee, at a meeting in Dhaka yesterday with its Chairman and former advisor to the caretaker Government M Anisuzzaman in the chair agreed on resumption of production in the factory.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Suranjit Sengupta MP, Industry Secretary M Akhtar Ali, Agriculture Secretary Dr AMM Shawkat Ali, Energy Secretary Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Commerce Secretary Sayed Alamgir Far-

rouk Chowdhury, Bangladesh Fertiliser Association Chairman A Samad, Chairman of BCIC and BADC, Agriculture Extension Department DG and other members of the committee were present.

Production at the factory was suspended since December 10 last due to cessation of gas supply from Bakhrabad gas system, said a PID handout.

The meeting has decided not to provide any subsidy on import of Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser.

It also took decision to appoint maximum 10 dealers in each thana and the authorities concerned to rehabilitate the excess dealers to neighbouring thanas of the same district if they have sufficient establishments there.

Appointment and relocation of the dealers would be accomplished through lottery, the committee decided.

Besides, the meeting asked the BCIC to give allotment of TSP and SSP as per schedule prepared jointly by agriculture and industry ministry, and to look stock of production, supply and price condition of urea throughout the country.

Transport strike in Lalmonirhat

LALMONIRHAT, July 2: An indefinite transport strike began here today snapping the road communication of the district from other parts of the country, reports UNB.

District Motor Sramik Union enforced the strike protesting assault of some transport workers by a union parishad chairman at Chakherhat on Lalmonirhat-Chaerhat road on Saturday.

Sramik union secretary Azhar Ali at a news conference here today alleged that the UP chairman beat the transport workers when they refused to pay toll while they went there to salvage a bus that met an accident.

10 hurt as villagers clash with snatchers in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, July 2: Ten people were injured in a clash between villagers and a group of snatchers in Belkuchi thana today, reports UNB.

Waleed Begum, a staff of Grameen Bank at Daulatpur union, was attacked by the snatchers at Gagrakhali village when she was going to her office at 10:30 am.

Eye-witnesses said the snatchers halted Waleeda on her way to office and started beating, and took away Tk 10 thousand from her.

Later, some locals being informed of the incident, rushed to the spot, gheraoed the snatchers at a jute field and locked in a clash that left 10 people wounded. Gang leader Anul Haq was severely beaten up but others escaped.

Anul was sent to jail hajjat while Waleeda was admitted to local health complex. Other injured were given first aid.

Protest against govt decision to sell out jute purchase centre

JAMALPUR, July 2: Thousands of jute workers demonstrated at Sarishabari thana headquarters today protesting the government's decision to sell out all jute purchase centres under Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC) reports UNB.

Witnesses said several thousand jute workers from across the district thronged at the jute purchasing centre at Sarishabari responding to the call of BJC Sramik Andolan Committee.

The demonstrators later held a meeting at Aramnagar Bazar after parading through the main thoroughfare.

The protest meeting was addressed by workers' leaders Abdul Jalil, Abdul Malek, Anjad Hossain, Mahabubur Rahman and Agor Ali.

They alleged that the government is handing over BJC's property worth crores of taka to some persons in the name of auction.

The speakers said about eight thousand workers would be jobless if the BJC's jute purchase centres and jute press houses are sold out.

The jute workers threatened to enforce a road-rail blockade if the government did not change its decision. Later, they submitted a memorandum to TNO Sontosh Ranjan Talukder in support of their demand.

Taiwan National Assembly deputies punch, kick each other

TAIPEI, July 2: Taiwan's constitutional reform process degenerated into chaos today as National Assembly deputies punched, kicked and gouged each other to the point where blood flowed. Two deputies were hospitalised, reports Reuters.

In scenes that looked more like Saturday's Tyson-Holyfield heavyweight boxing melee than a political forum, state television showed deputies from rival parties engaged in furious battle around the speaker's dais.

Some deputies jumped on to the speaker's table, while others attacked colleagues with flying kicks, bare fists and choke holds.

One deputy from the fledgling New Party was beaten seriously during the minutes-long chags, with blood streaming from the back of his head. Another New Party deputy was taken unconscious to hospital.

Both were in stable condition. The National Assembly, an increasingly marginalised elective body whose sole function is to revise the constitution, has been reviewing a package of amendments proposed by the ruling Nationalist Party, which dominates its membership.

Security men asked to show highest patience

More than 5,000 personnel of law enforcing agencies will be deployed in the capital city during the hartal hours today, reports UNB.

Security men have been asked to show the highest patience in discharging their duties during the eight-hour hartal called by BNP for the second time since Awami League assumed power.

Senior police officials at a briefing at Rajarbagh yesterday afternoon, however, were asked not to allow any untoward incident or terrorist act.

Official sources said 5,213 security personnel included para-military BDR 561 (17 platoons), police 4,122, armed police 330 (10 platoons) and Ansars 200.

Ten deputy commissioners of Dhaka Metropolitan Police will lead the police forces. They will be assisted by six assistant DCs and 30 assistant commissioners.

21 killed as truck rams bus in India

HYDERABAD, July 2: A speeding truck collided with a parked bus packed with wedding revellers on a highway in southern India, killing 21 people, police said today, reports AP.

The accident occurred when the truck driver lost control and rammed into the bus Tuesday evening near Durapally village, 240 kilometers south of Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh state.

8-hr hartal today

BNP, Its city unit and front organisations organised a series of programmes over the last three days to drum up support in favour of today's hartal.

The programmes included bringing out processions and torch processions and holding of rallies and demonstrations. A party press release said, 58 street-rallies were held and a torch procession was brought out in the city yesterday.

BNP, the largest ever opposition in parliament, termed the budget an anti-development and anti-investment one and protested additional taxes including the 2.5 per cent infrastructure development surcharge in the new budget.

Leader of the Opposition in the House and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has urged people to observe the hartal, in a statement earlier the BNP chief said that her party called the hartal to protest the budget because it was impossible to protect the interest of the people in parliament. The ruling party by force of majority ignored the proposals placed by the Opposition for making the 'anti-people' budget a balanced one, she noted.

Mosharraf Hossain's retirement declared illegal

The High Court yesterday declared the forced retirement of former Industries Secretary A K M Mosharraf Hossain from his service illegal, reports UNB.

A division bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Haq and Justice A K Badrul Haq gave the verdict after final hearing.

Mosharraf Hossain, now BNP MP, filed a writ petition on March 30, 1992 as he was first made OSD and later given forced retirement on November 23, 1991.

The former bureaucrat challenged his retirement saying the order goes against the Public Servant Retirement Act 1974 as he was not 57 years old or completed 25 years of his job during the retirement order.

Talking to UNB, Mosharraf Hossain said his legislators will not be affected following the order as according to the court order his retirement will be implemented from January 9, 1996 and he was elected MP later.

Sylhet-bound train will ply up to Srimangal

CHITTAGONG, July 2: The Railway authorities suspended direct train service between Sylhet-Dhaka and Sylhet-Chittagong sections temporarily on the advice of experts of the Occidental, a press release of Bangladesh Railway, Chittagong, said tonight, reports BSS.

However, from now on all Sylhet-bound trains will ply up to Srimangal, the press release added.

Rocket launcher case Four accused remanded again

Four accused in the rocket launcher case were brought again on police remand for two days yesterday, officials said, reports UNB.

Detective branch of police after producing them before the CMM's court sought remand for five days for further interrogation. The court, however, granted two days.

Accused Laju, Sultan, Russel and Khabiruddin were kept under DB custody, officials said, adding Defence Forces Intelligence might take them again for interrogation.

Detective branch arrested them on Friday and recovered a high-powered rocket launcher following their statement. Later, they were brought on remand for four days.

3 trawlers sink in Bay: Five fishermen missing

COX'S BAZAR, July 2: At least 5 fishermen are feared drowned when three fishing trawlers sank in the Bay of Bengal today, police and fishermen said.

A large number of trawlers were forced to go to safe areas in the sea when the Bay's weather got rough at 2 pm today.

Some 28 fishermen returned to the shore.

Magistrate killed in road accident

MANIKGANJ, July 2: Kamrunnahr Begum, 25, a magistrate at Manikganj Collectorate succumbed to her injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) this morning, reports BSS.

Hospital and family sources said she was seriously injured in a road accident at Baltha on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday noon.

Kamrunnahr on board a truck was returning Dhaka from her working place to bring her household furniture. While the accident took place she was first taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital and later shifted to DMCH.

She was severely injured when the truck hit a road side tree.

Saudi meat to reach July 5

CHITTAGONG, July 2: Some 54,000 pieces of sacrificial meat from Saudi Arab will reach the port on July 5, official sources said today, reports UNB.

M Shakawat Hossain, Divisional Commissioner, will receive the meat from representatives of Islamic Development Bank at the port.

PCP activists

From page 1

tion while 1795 others surrendered without arms.

Even during the ceasefire period beginning from August 10, 1992, 50 Shantibahinim surrendered with arms and ammunition while 69 others without arms, the source added.

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7pc growth rate likely

From page 1

Reviewing the economic performance of the country in the 1995-96 fiscal the ADB said, the GDP growth rate increased slightly to 4.7 per cent from 4.4 per cent in the 1994-95 fiscal.

The agriculture sector grew by 1.9 per cent, while the industry sector grew at the lower rate of 5.7 per cent in the fiscal, the report added.

The present government is planning to pursue appropriate monetary management, the report said, to keep inflation in check.

The inflation rate of the country was contained at 4 per cent in the 1995-96 fiscal following a good harvest, the report added. "In recent years, the monetary policy has been generally expansionary with a sharp increase in credit to the private sector," it said.

Regarding the external sec-

tor the report said, the country's external trade began to recover after the general elections in 1996.

In the 1995-96 fiscal export growth declared to around 11.8 per cent, while imports grew by 17.9 per cent. Slow export growth and the stagnant inflow of workers' remittances raised the current account deficit to 3 per cent of GDP. Foreign exchange reserves fell to about 2 billion US dollars in June 1996, the report added.

On the domestic policies of the country the report said, "Compared with the achievements of Bangladesh's economic reforms in recent years, its progress in 1996 (1995-96 fiscal) was limited."

301 protest Jamaat comment on President's message

A total of 301 intellectuals, writers, professional and journalists yesterday protested the "insolent" remarks of the leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and their supporters regarding the President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed's message expressing homage to 'Shaheed Janani' Jahanaara Imam on the occasion of her death anniversary, reports BSS.

The Jamaat leaders have proved again that their fascist and communal attitude remained unchanged regarding Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty by their indecent comments about Shaheed Janani Jahanaara Imam and ridiculing the President's tributes to the Shaheed mother," they said in a joint statement.

Prominent among the signatories are: Begum Sofia Kamal, Shawkot Osman, Justice Devesh Chandra Bhattacharya, Professor Khan Sarwar Mursheed, Justice KM Sobhan, Engineer Mazarul Islam, Dr Nilima Ibrahim, Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Poet Shamsur Rahman, journalists KG Mostafa, MR Akhter Mukul, Kamal Lohani, Santosh Gupta, Habibur Rahman Milon and Abed Khan, Barrister Amirul Islam, Syed Hasan Imam, Major General (Retd) CR Dutta, Barrister Shafique Ahmed, Professor Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir and poet Foyez Ahmed.

US children better educated, but more likely to take drugs

WASHINGTON, July 2: More American children are starting their education earlier and completing it with college, but many of them are likely to smoke or use drugs, according to a government report released Wednesday, reports AP.

The report, which compiles previously released statistics about children, says more kids are attending early education programmes and graduating from college. They also are getting immunized against childhood diseases and less likely to die during infancy and childhood.

The report also found, however, that adolescents smoked and take drugs than in the past. Other discouraging trends: Young black males in the 1980s, and children from families with annual incomes of less than \$15,000 are 22 times more likely to be abused and neglected than kids from families that make twice that amount or more.

The report, intended to provide a snapshot of the state of America's children, also suggests the United States find more accurate ways to measure the number of homeless and poor children.

The report was ordered by President Bill Clinton and was compiled from data contributed by federal agencies, including the departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice and Labour.

ROHINGYA

From page 1

Naikhangchhari thana of Bandarban district.

More than 1,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees were pushed back to Myanmar by BDR men in last five days, but most of them entered the Bangladesh territory again, local people said.

The influx of Rohingyas is increasing alarmingly although additional BDR forces have been deployed along the bordering inlets of Teknaf, Ukhiya and Nai-khangchhari thanas.

Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Mohammad Sakhawati Hossain and Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar Alim Hossain visited the frontier thanas and the refugee camps today.

2 murdered

From page 1

the killing could not be known immediately.

In another incident, Cantonment police recovered the body of a man, aged about 30, from a bush in Kawla area in the morning. Police said that several marks of injuries caused by sharp weapons were found over the body. It was sent to the DMCH for autopsy.

Besides, one person identified as Noor Hossain, 25, who was injured in a bomb explosion in Kumartilla Tuesday night died at the DMCH at about 4 am yesterday. The explosion occurred allegedly when Noor and some of his accomplices were carrying home-made bombs.

It was also alleged that Noor and his associates were preparing to commit a snatching near Star Cinema Hall under Kotwali thana area at about 11:30 pm Tuesday.

Three others were also injured in the explosion. They were under treatment at the DMCH. However, police said they did not have any information in this regard till last night.

AL questions

From page 1

protest against the budget, the LGRD Minister said it has become a tradition that the opposition would criticise even if the government produced a good budget.

"We have tried to present a balanced budget," Zillur said, adding that the opposition's many demands regarding the taxes were met. "I could not understand why BNP has called for this hartal," Zillur said.

In a pointed reference to the Manikganj by-election, he said BNP's conspiracy was foiled after free and fair voting in Manikganj.

"Awami League, he said, has gladly accepted the election results."

Japanese aid likely

From page 1

han, ERD Secretary Mashur Rahman and Bangladesh Ambassador to Japan S M Rashed Ahmed.

Sheikh Hasina apprised the Japanese side of the need for construction of a rail-cum-road bridge over the river Rupsha and development of Mongla Port. She pointed out that these would facilitate improved handling of increasing traffic and goods. Expansion of Mongla Port would generate increased employment opportunities and provide support to the Export Processing Zone. She also noted that the Rupsha Bridge and Mongla Port would allow Nepal access to the port. India has recently provided landlocked Nepal with transit facilities.

The Japanese Prime Minister fully appreciated his Bangladesh counterpart's views. He also supported the idea of having a good road link between Nepal and Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh side stressed the need for construction of the Ganges Barrage following the long term water agreement with India. It also apprised the Japanese side that the barrage would be a multi purpose project which would facilitate proper utilisation of water resources and help control of salinity and conservation of environment, particularly in the north-eastern region of Bangladesh.

Regarding the barrage, the Japanese side said that it was willing to provide technical support. Since the project involved large scale financial support from other donors, it might require detailed studies and a regional consensus. It, however, assured of support for carrying out detailed technical studies of the proposed barrage.

Business guide in Japanese

From Staff Correspondent

TOKYO, July 2: Business guide for helping Japanese entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh was published today.

Written in Japanese by Katsumi Hara, the book titled 'Economic Revolution and the Business Activities in Bangladesh', was distributed to investors at the 'Bangladesh investment conference' held here today.

The 502-page book is the first extensive business guide on Bangladesh and carries details of investment opportunities in different sectors. Fifty leading business and industrial houses have been listed in the book.

The author is presently director of Jetro in Yokohama and worked in Bangladesh earlier for three years.

Road barricade

From page 1

But the factories remained closed, the management said. The situation became normal following the intervention of the Gazipur district administration officials and the local MP who assured the agitating people that their problem of waterlogging would be solved soon.

Meanwhile, in a complaint filed with the Joydebpur thana, the management said that on Tuesday evening some local people, led by one Shahidullah had staged a demonstration in front of the factory and threatened to attack it the next day.

According to the complaint, some people scaled the walls and snatched away tools and equipment from the workers who were working in the fisheries project.

Investors

From page 1

The potential foreign investors are eagerly looking at Bangladesh as much for the very abundant and cheap labour, as for its advantageous geopolitical potentials, situated as it is in the gateway to the most populous area of the world, she said.

Hasina said as a matter of fact Bangladesh itself is a market of 120 million people. Besides, she said it could also be the door to the market in South Asia where the concept of free trade is taking firm roots as the region moves forward in regional cooperation.

She said the countries of South Asia have decided that by the year 2001, they will implement South Asia Free Trade Arrangement (SAFTA) which will make this region a fabulously big and rich market.

"We are aware that the investors are not easily led by word promises. They need hard evidence on ground to be convinced," she said listing the steps of the government undertaken in last one year for attracting investments.

She said a law has been enacted for setting up a Private Export Processing Zone with very attractive facilities, a permanent Law Commission has been set up for modernising investment and trade related laws.

"We have opened almost all sectors of the economy of foreign investment. These include oil and gas extraction, electricity generation and other manufacturing sectors," she said.

The prime minister said macro-economic management of the country has been internationally recognised as prudent. "We have limited inflation and geared ourselves to avoid excessive deficit spending."

Couple commits suicide due to poverty

GAZIPUR, July 2: A young couple allegedly committed suicide due to poverty a village in Sreepur thana on Tuesday midnight, police sources said, reports UNB.

Motaleb, 22, son of late Jamir Ali of Kashijali village, married his co-villager Taslima, 15, four months ago following a love affair. They moved to his uncle's house as his elder brother did not accept their marriage.

Motaleb's neighbours said he was frustrated being unable to bear the family expenses and committed suicide by taking poison.

His grief-stricken wife Taslima also took poison when her husband was being rushed to Sadar hospital. Motaleb died on way to hospital and Taslima at home. A UD case was filed with local police.

Missile test

From page 1

200 kms but the newly developed Hataf-3 can hit targets upto 800 kms, the paper said.

It said the successful test firing of Hataf-3 missiles is the result of Pakistan's programme to indigenously develop missiles.

The Pakistani experts after the success of the Hataf-1 and Hataf-2 series of missiles were working on substantially increasing the range of this missile and they finally succeeded in it, Nawa-e-Waqt said.

Incidentally, the report on the Hataf series of missile has come in the wake of alleged development by India of its own indigenously developed Prithvi missiles near the Pakistani border.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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