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Call for dawn to dusk hartal today

By Staff Correspondent
 Islami Oikkyo Jote, a grouping of some pro-Islamic organisations, has called a dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal today to protest a Zionist act of blasphemy against the Holy Quran and Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) in Israeli-occupied Palestine on June 28 last.

Jamaat-e-Islami has also called an eight-hour hartal from six in the morning today for the same reason.

The major opposition party, BNP, and the dissident group of Jatiya Party led by Shah Moazzem and Kazi Zafar Ahmad have extended their support to the hartal programme.

The hartal call was given on July 3 to protest display of a poster demeaning the Holy Quran and the Prophet in Israeli-occupied Palestine city Al-Khaili.

In the capital, IOJ, Jamaat, JP (Z-M), Jajga and Muslim League held rallies and brought See Page 12 Col 8

Hartal call protested

By Staff Correspondent
 The ruling Awami League, Jatiya Party and some socio-political organisations have protested today's hartal called by the Islami Oikkyo Jote and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman in a statement earlier had said that the hartal was called by a vested quarter to serve its political purpose and that there could not be any reason for calling a hartal after the Jatiya Sangsad adopted an unanimous resolution condemning the act of blasphemy.

Jatiya Party leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury criticised the hartal call and said there is no reason for this after adoption of the resolution by the Jatiya Sangsad.

BSS adds: Rashed Khan Menon, general secretary of Bangladesh Workers Party, said the hartal was called to serve the political interest of the right wing reactionary political parties rather than showing respect to the Prophet (SM). See Page 12 Col 4

Transport strike in Barisal div begins

From Staff Correspondent
 BARISAL, July 14: A transport strike in 35 routes of Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakati and Pirojpur under Barisal division began for an indefinite period today.

The Barisal divisional Road Transport Owners and Workers coordination council has called the strike in protest against the attacks on some See Page 12 Col 1

ALCWC meets today

By Staff Correspondent
 A meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held at 7 pm today at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

Acting president of the party Amir Hussain Amu will preside over the meeting, says a press release. Party general secretary Zillur Rahman has requested all members of the ALCWC available in Dhaka to be present on time.

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PM urges world community at Hamburg confce Free Third World from curse of illiteracy

HAMBURG, July 14: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the world community to launch a concerted drive to free the developing countries from the curse of illiteracy that created disparity in the global family, reports UNB.

"Today all of us must work to forge a structure of cooperation to usher in a global community completely free from illiteracy," she said delivering the key-note speech at the UNESCO-sponsored international conference on adult education here.

In this age of ideas and dominance of intellectual capital, she said, "we must ensure that our people have the education and skills to tap the emerging information and communications technologies."

The conference, presided over by Speaker of German Parliament Prof Rita Suessmuth, was also addressed by German President Prof Roman Herzog, UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor and first mayor of Hamburg Dr Henning Voscher.

A note-worthy speech was delivered by N Kusnatchi Methuka, and aged learner from a tiny village of South Africa.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister also urged the world community to make concerted efforts to address the following issues in order to remove the curse of illiteracy from the world as early as possible:

- Creating awareness of learning needs among target-groups through extensive social mobilisation, intensifying the struggle against illiteracy through the alliance of government and non-government agencies.
- Seeking cooperation of countries which have demonstrated remarkable achievement in the field of adult education. Linking formal and non-formal education under the perspective of life-long learning.
- Ensuring high quality of adult and continuing education programmes through mutual sharing of ideas and resources. Prioritising women's literacy and enhancing the scope for their empowerment.
- Linking functional education, skill development, income-generating activities, micro-credit approaches with continuing education programme.
- Ensuring that the highest priority is given to adult education.

See Page 12 Col 8



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with German President Roman Herzog (C) and the Speaker of the German Parliament, Rita Suessmuth (R), prior to the official opening of an UNESCO conference on Adult Education in Hamburg yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Tk 4000 cr needed to implement Pay Scale Budgetary allocation won't be exceeded, says Kibria

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria said he would not go beyond the budgetary allocation to implement the new National Pay Scale for the sake of fiscal discipline and urged the officials to reflect on the matter calmly.

"I can't give money which is just not there... as finance minister, I only can say I will be able to pay as much as I have in the budget. And I will not be able to pay more," he said in an interview with UNB on Sunday.

The minister made a strong plea for downsizing the administration and endorsed the recommendation of the Pay Commission for tailoring the present size of government.

"At least we must not permit any increase in the size of government, that is the modest goal and I think that goal should be achieved," said Kibria, also calling for austerity in the government.

The new National Pay Scale for government officials and employees, with retrospective effect from July 1, will require more than Tk 4,000 crore for its full implementation, he said.

But the budget for 1997-98 fiscal made a provision of Tk 700 crore for the implementation of the Pay Scale and the government has a plan to split the recommendation of the Pay Commission.

"The Pay Commission Recommendation is not final," Kibria said, adding that such recommendations had been made during the Ershad and BNP governments, but could not be fully implemented.

He said a committee had been formed with the cabinet secretary as its head to examine the recommendations.

"We must cut our coats according to our cloths," he said and appealed to the officials and employees to reflect on the matter calmly as any increase in salaries must be given from See Page 12 Col 7

Govt schemes to mobilise funds for industrial sector soon

The government is going to launch a number of schemes to mobilise funds for the industrial sector, facing a credit squeeze due to a liquidity crisis in the banks.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria told UNB that a new See Page 12 Col 3

Stalemate in PSC continues

By Reaz Ahmed
 A nearly three-hour meeting between members of the Public Service Commission (PSC) and representatives of agitating officers and employees to resolve the crisis in the PSC ended yesterday inconclusively.

The meeting began at 11 am at the PSC office and continued till 2 pm.

The officers and employees are demanding resignation of PSC Chairman Prof SMA Fayez and removal of three PSC officials.

The crisis ensued when a section of employees forced PSC Secretary Golam Rahman, Assistant Secretary Abu Sayeed and Deputy Secretary Ashura Begum out of their office rooms Wednesday and locked those. They were agitating against alleged corrupt practice by the Secretary.

Since then, all activities in the PSC virtually came to a halt, said sources there adding that results of the 17th BCS See Page 12 Col 6

Govt-PCJSS meet begins in city New issues raised at peace talks

By Special Correspondent
 Talks between the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) and the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS) began in the city yesterday in a fresh effort to resolve different issues standing in the way of an agreement to end the decades-old insurgency in the region.

After five hours of negotiations, the talks were adjourned at 8 pm till this morning.

Sources said both sides took up the draft on the proposed accord, tabled by the NCCHT.

The two sides had earlier reached a consensus on an agreement at their last meeting in Dhaka on May 11-15.

The present meeting was scheduled to begin late June. But it was rescheduled as there had been delays in sending details of a draft accord and difficulties faced by PCJSS leader Shantu Rama to convince all concerned including tribal elders about signing of the deal.

At the last meeting, the two sides had broadly agreed on setting up of a Regional Council enjoying wide authority for the three hill districts, comprising an area of 14,200 sq km. Consensus was reached also on land rights for the tribals.

Besides, it was then agreed that settlers from the plains would be relocated in khas lands and the lands they now occupied would be restored to the tribals. Security forces camps would be folded and Army would stay in their garrisons. Refugees would be repatriated and resettled with adequate help from the authorities and Shantibahini insurgents would be rehabilitated.

But new problems cropped See Page 12 Col 7

Shima rape case Law Ministry asks PP to prepare for appeal

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, July 14: The Law Ministry has taken up the Shima rape case and advised the Public Prosecutor to collect the copy of the judgment and all other relevant documents immediately for filing an appeal with the higher court against the verdict given here yesterday acquitting all the accused.

Talking to this correspondent today, Public Prosecutor Nurussafa Talukder said, "I had talks with the concerned official of the law ministry. He has advised me to send the copies immediately after collecting from court records on urgent basis as preparations are underway to file an appeal against the verdict on the Shima murder case."

"As per advice from the ministry, I have already applied to the court to supply me the copies of the case on an urgent basis," the PP said.

When asked, he said, "I moved the case and tried to See Page 12 Col 8

Acquittal of 4 policemen protested

By Staff Correspondent
 Different women's organisations, human rights bodies and NGOs have protested the acquittal of all four policemen accused in Shima rape and murder case.

The Sammillita Nari Samaj — a platform of different women organisations has demanded re-examination of the Shima Chowdhury rape case accusing the government of not providing necessary evidence and documents during the trial.

Addressing a press conference in the city yesterday, the leaders of the organisation expressed concern over the acquittal of the accused from the case and demanded an explanation from the government in this respect.

They said that as the case was filed, investigated and conducted by the police, there was hardly any chance of getting justice.

Nari Samaj leaders Farida Akhtar, Dr Najia Khan, Shirat Akhtar, Rokeya Kabir, Shaheen Anam, Helena Rahman, Shima See Page 12 Col 6

Killing of 5 muggers: 2 held in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent
 NARAYANGANJ, July 14: Fatullah thana police today arrested two persons in connection with Saturday's killings of five muggers at Bhuiagarh on the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road.

The arrested are: Sultan Ahmed, 42, and Abdul Aziz, 25. The arrests were made during a raid at Raghunath village in Bhuiagarh, the spot of the five killings, following a case filed by police with Fatullah thana Saturday night. Both Sultan and Aziz were produced before the District Judge's Court.

Nuruddin Ahmed, a machine operator of The Daily Ittefaq, today filed a case with Sd. Dirganj thana alleging that he was mugged by those five at Jalkuri under Siddirganj thana just before they were chased from Jalkuri to Bhuiagarh where a mob beat them to death on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the General Hospital authorities here handed over the bodies of three of the five killed muggers to their families after autopsy. The three bodies taken from the hospital were of Jahangir Alam, aged 30, son of Md Sultan Bepari, of 285/2, South Jatrabari, Babu, aged 25, son of Fazlur Rahman of East Dolairpar See Page 12 Col 3



A flood-affected family in Narayankandi village under Harirampur thana in Manikganj shifting to a safer place. — Star photo

Road links with Sylhet remain snapped Flood situation in five dists worsens

The flood situation deteriorated in five districts while it remained unchanged in the northern districts and improved in the southeastern region, reports UNB.

According to reports from flood-affected areas, the situation has improved in the worst-hit Bandarban, Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Sylhet, Habiganj and Moulvibazar districts.

But it remained unchanged in Pabna, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Kushtia and Kishoreganj.

The flood situation, however, has deteriorated in Comilla, Feni, Nilphamari, Sherpur and Sirajganj districts with flood water inundating fresh areas.

The flash flood was caused by monsoon downpour and onrush of hilly water. Now the water started receding from most of the affected areas.

Meanwhile, ferry service in Aricha-Notakhola route which was restored on Sunday night, was again suspended yesterday morning and Dhaka-Sylhet road link remains snapped due to collapse of a bridge over the river Khowai at Shayestaganj. According to a press release See Page 12 Col 7

Bright prospects for attracting Japanese investment

By M Anwarul Haq, back from Tokyo
 The recent visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Japan has set in motion distinct possibilities for attracting Japanese businessmen to invest here, according to entrepreneurs of the two countries.

Several Japanese investors and the 55-member business team that accompanied the Prime Minister expressed their optimism to The Daily Star and at different forums in Tokyo and Kyoto about future investment prospects.

Why does Bangladesh hold such potential for attracting Japanese investment?

The question was answered in very clear terms by Michio Mizoguchi, Special Adviser to the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said in Tokyo "Bangladesh is one of the many Asian countries that continue to record conspicuously high growth rates. Japan and Bangladesh must cooperate further to achieve mutual economic growth. We must support one another by using our unique strength by combining Bangladesh's abundant labour force with Japan's technology and financing."

He, however, said, "Unfortunately, in Japan, the present level of interest in Bangladesh is still insignificant, especially considering the potential strength of that country."

The same view was expressed by Ms Meiko Nishimizu, Vice President of the World Bank, while addressing an investment seminar in Tokyo.

She said, "Bangladesh has beaten all doomsday prediction. It is true that Bangladesh once suffered from famine and remains vulnerable to natural disasters. However, there is a deep chasm between his perception and the reality on the ground today in Bangladesh."

She further said the International Finance Corporation and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) — are geared strategically to help Bangladesh in its development process.

The WB Vice President made a clarion call to private companies in Japan to invest in Bangladesh which she said, would be one of the foremost countries in South Asia in the years ahead to attract foreign investment.

From the side of Japanese private entrepreneurs the interest to invest in Bangladesh was expressed in no uncertain terms at the Keidanren meeting with the Bangladesh leaders and businessmen. Headed by Chairman of the Toyota Motor Corporation Shoichiro Toyoda, Keidanren is the most influential Japanese business body comprising representatives of leading Japanese business conglomerates.

The assurance from Keidanren to send a team shortly to look into future business prospects was plainly indicative of the fact that they considered the investment situation in Bangladesh to be positive.

Japanese businessmen were also doubly reassured about the protection of their investments when, during the Prime Minister See Page 12 Col 4

Officials asked to ensure proper distribution of relief

COX'S BAZAR, July 14: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has directed the local administration to immediately do whatever is necessary to recover the loss caused by the flash flood, reports UNB.

He also directed the officials to ensure proper distribution of relief materials among the flood victims.

Azad, given the responsibility of looking after the routine work of the Prime Minister in her absence, was addressing a meeting at the local circuit house today to review the district's flood situation.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now on a visit to Germany, was keeping regular contact with the country to know the flood situation.

The foreign minister said the water from such flash flood normally recedes quickly and does not cause any major damage. But this year the damage is higher as silt in huge quantity came with the water.

Such heavily silt-mixed flood water caused severe damage to seed beds in the affected areas. See Page 12 Col 2

Second witness tells court Armymen dragged Bangabandhu towards stairs and shot him

The second witness in the Bangabandhu murder case yesterday made his deposition in the court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, reports UNB.

Abdur Rahman alias Rama, a servant in Bangabandhu's house, said he witnessed the killing of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

Making his deposition before Judge Kazi Golam Rasul, the second witness, Rama, who was 14/15 years old at that time, told the court that he witnessed the killing of Bangabandhu.

He said before killing Bangabandhu, a group of armymen first surrounded him in front of his bedroom when the President asked the army personnel, "What do you want? Where do you want to take me?"

He (Mujib) was then dragged towards the stairs when another group of soldiers from the lower end of the staircase shot at him, said a weeping Rama, who also hails from Tungpara.

Narrating the story of the fateful night of August 15, the witness said he and another servant, Selim, used to sleep on the corridor in front of Bangabandhu's bedroom and both were sleeping there that night.

He went on saying, "Suddenly early in the morning, at about 4:30 am, Begum Mujib came out of her room and awoke and informed me about the attack on Serniabat's house."

Rama said then he went down and walked up to the lakeside outside the house when he saw a group of armymen advancing towards the house opening fire.

"As I came inside the house, I found Bangabandhu talking over phone from the reception," he said, adding "I went upstairs through the backside staircase and found Begum Mujib moving anxiously on the corridor."

See Page 12 Col 1

Bidding deadline for exploration in 15 blocks expires today

By Staff Correspondent
 The deadline for submission of proposals by interested oil and gas companies to participate in bidding for hydrocarbon exploration in 15 blocks of the country expires today.

Sources said that it was not yet clear how many companies would participate in the bidding. But a few big companies like Exxon which had earlier shown interest to participate, would not take part.

They further said it was apparent that blocks 9, 10 and 11 covering Shahbazpur, Comilla and Noakhali were the most sought blocks to the participating companies.

Companies which are already working in Bangladesh are participating in the bidding. They include Unocal, Cairn, Occidental, Rexwood Oakland and UMC. Besides leading companies like Shell Oil is also participating in the bidding.

The government announced the bidding schedule on March 15 allowing the oil companies to submit their bids within the next 120 days.

The Cabinet earlier approved See Page 12 Col 5