



Repatriation resumes Rohingyas clash with police: 13 injured

From Abdul Monem Khan
COX'S BAZAR, July 20: A total of 187 Rohingya refugees in two camps in the town were repatriated to Myanmar this morning, resuming the process after 80 days, according to official sources.

Refugees opposed to repatriation clashed with police at Nayapara camp, which left 13 people injured. The injured included Rohingyas, police and government employees of the repatriation office. Three Rohingyas were arrested from the spot.

With the repatriation of 187 Rohingyas belonging to 45 families today, the total so far stood at 2,29,252, officials said.

Immigration officials of Myanmar received the repatriated Rohingyas at Kaningchong and Tumburu reception centres in the Mongda township.

Officials at the repatriation office here told this correspon-

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Surcharge on container cargo at Ctg Port from Aug 15

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 20: The Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC) a Singapore-based organisation of ship owners, has decided to impose congestion surcharge on container cargo at Chittagong Port from August 15, port and shipping agency sources said.

They said, the congestion created at the Chittagong port due to frequent labour unrest and natural calamities has prompted the CFTC to impose the surcharge as the container vessels operating on the Chittagong-Singapore route were forced to incur huge demurrage due to delay.

As per decision of CFTC sur-

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Reconciliation between Zinat and Mosharraf

By Mizan Ali

An amicable settlement has been reached between Zinat Mosharraf, MP from Jatiya Party, and her husband Mosharraf Hossain, MP from the BNP, according to sources in the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

Zinat turned up at the office of DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif yesterday the last day of the three month time-limit for mutual reconciliation, following the issuance of a divorce notice from her husband.

The Mayor informed Zinat that her husband in a subsequent correspondence, intimated that he was willing to continue his conjugal life with her if she agreed.

The Mayor asked for her opinion about this and she agreed.

Mohammad Hanif, talking to The Daily Star last night, said he was happy over the reconciliation.

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JRC meet ends : Support for Ganges Barrage proposal

India assures full implementation of water sharing agreement

By Staff Correspondent

Indian Water Resources Minister Sis Ram Ola yesterday assured that his country would take all necessary steps to strictly implement the provisions of the Ganges water sharing accord signed in December last.

"We are committed to honour and abide by every word of the treaty and all the parts of the agreement," Ola said admitting that there has been some shortfall in the stipulated supply of water during a particular period of the dry season.

The Indian minister said the two countries have set up a scientific committee to identify the reasons for the shortfall of water and declared categorically, "There will be no problem in future."

Sis Ram Ola was addressing a joint press conference with

his Bangladesh counterpart Abdur Razzak at the Water Resources Ministry yesterday afternoon at the end of the two-day JRC meeting.

This was the first meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission in seven years and the 32nd meeting since the forum for consultation on water-related matters was set up between the two countries in 1972.

A joint communiqué issued at the end of the JRC meeting was released to newsmen prior to the press conference.

The JRC meeting, according to the communiqué, also discussed sharing of waters of the Teesta and other common rivers. It said, "The two sides discussed the issue of immediate revival of the Standing Committee and Local Level

Committees to resolve the issues of tying of embankments with priority to Teesta embankment." Respective members of the JRC of the two countries will meet "immediately at the Teesta border to discuss the tying of embankments," it said.

The joint communiqué stated: "It was agreed that the Joint Committee of Experts under the chairmanship of the secretaries, water resources ministries of the two countries, would be immediately reactivated to discuss the issues of sharing of water of Teesta river and other common rivers."

Referring to the Ganges accord, the nine-paragraph communiqué said that the JRC meeting discussed "implementation aspects and the problems encountered at Farakka." It stated, "The two sides appreci-

ated the need to remove the bottlenecks in implementation of the Ganga/Ganges Treaty with further negotiations."

The communiqué said, "It was decided to undertake joint scientific studies in accordance with the terms of reference which have been jointly finalised by the technical teams of the two countries."

It further stated, "It was agreed to maintain transparency in implementation of the Treaty both at Farakka and at Hardinge Bridge."

The Daily Star learnt that the scientific committee will comprise six members, three from each country, to be headed by a Joint Secretary and start functioning immediately so that problems encountered in the implementation of the wa-

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Restriction on movement of people

Gas leaking thru hundreds of pts at Magurchhara

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, July 20: Intensification of the fire at Magurchhara gas well and leakage of gas through "hundreds of points" around the gas well has created panic in the area.

A district administration official said tonight gas is now coming out through "several hundred points around the gas field." Leakage of gas from more than one hundred points have been marked around the rail tracks, he added.

Meanwhile, Occidental officials were found busy shifting their equipment from the areas of the gas well. They have marked about one kilometre area as "very risky", and warned the people of "serious

consequences."

Drilling of the 'relief well', which was scheduled to begin this week to douse the fire will now be delayed further, an official of Occidental told this correspondent this afternoon on condition of anonymity. "The latest situation will again change the scheduled programme," he said. The official said that the rig which was brought from Thailand is expected to reach Magurchhara within a day or two. It is being brought to Fenchuganj through river route and from there it will be taken to the gas well area by road, he said.

But, under the present cir-

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Taka devalued by 45 paise

Star report
The taka has been devalued by 45 paise against the US dollar with effect from today, according to banking sources.

With the fresh devaluation, the first in this financial year and fourth in the calendar year, the Bangladesh Bank's buying rate for one US dollar from the banks is now Tk 44 instead of the earlier rate Tk 43.55. The selling rate is now Tk 44.20 instead of Tk 43.75 earlier.

When asked, an official of the central bank said that the dollar was going strong in the last few weeks which demanded downward adjustment of the taka. He also said exports which had been declining in re-

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Attack on farmers' procession in Meherpur: 2 killed

MEHERPUR, July 20: Two persons were killed when a procession of farmers came under attack by their rival groups in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

One of the processionists, Sharifuddin, 22, died on the spot while another, Abdul Gani, 24, succumbed to his injuries at Meherpur Sadar Hospital. Both were chopped with randao.

About 200 farmers of village Kola were marching towards the DC's office to submit a memorandum for saving their croplands from water logging caused by an embankment.

But the incident occurred when the owners of east and west beels, who erected the embankment near the croplands attacked the processionists at around 11 am, local people said.

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Gold haul at ZIA

Civil aviation securityman arrested

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) police have arrested a securityman of the Civil Aviation Authority on charge of smuggling gold worth about Tk one crore in May.

Police said, a special squad of the DB had raid Abdul Khalek Miah from the house of his relative at Mirpur in the city on Saturday night.

Khalek was absconding after a case was lodged with Cantonment thana in connection with the recovery of 118 gold bars, at Zia International Airport.

Hasina becomes grandma

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has become a grandmother, reports UNB.

Saima Wazed Putul, daughter of Sheikh Hasina and Dr Wajed Ali Mia, gave birth to her first child, a daughter, in the US city of Miami, Florida at 8.10 pm local time on Saturday (BST 5.10 am Sunday), according to the Prime Minister's office.

Both mother and child are well, the PM office sources said.

The Prime Minister went to Miami on July 15 from Germany, where she attended an international conference on adult education.

India-Pakistan rematch today

COLOMBO, July 20: The decisive Asia Cup match between India and Pakistan was abandoned due to rain on Sunday and will be replayed at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground on Monday in keeping with tournament rules, reports AP.

The match was called off shortly after 2 pm local time when bad light and subsequent rain set in for the second time with Pakistan at 30 for 5 in nine overs.

The game was earlier halted for the same reason after just five overs with Pakistan at 19 for 3.

Sri Lanka have already qualified for the final on Saturday with their last game against Bangladesh on Tuesday being only of academic interest.

The winners of the India-Pakistan match will meet Sri Lanka in the final. Should Monday's replay not produce any result due to rain, the two points will be shared but India will need to beat Bangladesh by a bigger margin on Thursday to

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Govt plans to
build housing
complex for
ministers

By Staff Correspondent

The Government plans to build in the city a permanent housing complex for ministers, Public Works Department (PWD) sources said.

The PWD is examining three possible sites for building the complex. The sites are: open space near Agriculture College, open space near the Jute Research Institute and part of the Chandrima Uddyan. All three sites are in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

According to PWD sources, they are examining the proposal following a directive from the Prime Minister's office.

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Indefinite bus strike in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, July 20: Bus service between Barisal and the rest of the country was snapped for an indefinite period from this morning.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of the Barisal Division Bus Owners and Workers Coordination Council, and the Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur and Jhalakathi districts bus and minibus owners associations held here today.

The bus owners of Barisal stopped plying their vehicles on inter-district routes in support of the ongoing transport strike in the division.

The district Bus Owners' Association also supported the strike.

Sources said movement of buses and minibuses on 50 routes, including Dhaka, Khulna, Pabna and Rajshahi, remained stopped due to the strike.



An Awami League unit office on the pavement of a city road at Fulbaria.

— Star photo

Cabinet body on law & order suggests Stern but cautious action against some fundamentalist groups

The cabinet committee on law and order yesterday directed the police to take more effective steps against terrorism, repression on women and acid throwing, an official press release said, reports BSS.

The committee at its 5th meeting also discussed the matter of placing a proposal in the Sangsad immediately to make more stringent law on repression of women and acid throwing.

UNB, quoting officials said, the meeting discussed 'unruly' activities by some fundamentalist groups and emphasised 'stern but cautious action' against them.

Officials said the meeting also reviewed country's law and order situation, giving a special look on the recent 'provocative' acts of some Islamic groups, including July 15 hartal.

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam presided over the meeting at the Cabinet Division in the morning.

It was attended, among others, by Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury.

The meeting also discussed the incident occurred at the Miladun Nabi function at Baitul Mukarram in presence of President Shahabuddin Ahmed, officials said.

The President had to leave the National Mosque amidst indecent acts by members of some Islamic groups.

However, the law-enforcing agency personnel arrested one Khalil from the spot and interrogated him at Motijheel thana

after bringing him on police remand.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police headquarters sources said they were considering filing a 'sedition' case against some people in this regard.

Officials also told yesterday's meeting that the chaotic situation was created in a bid to create issue against the government to mislead people.

The July 15 hartal and planned march to Shikha Anirban are also part of such bid, officials of the agencies informed the cabinet sub-committee.

Acting Cabinet Secretary Kazi Shamsul Alam, Home Secretary Shafiqur Rahman, Law Secretary M Aminullah and Inspector General of Police M Azizul Haq were present.

Fire in garments factories

Lack of training, poor safety measures blamed

By Masud Arif

Lack of interest of garment industry owners in training the workers in fire safety measures and unplanned structure of buildings cause deaths in incidents of fire in garments factories.

Senior fire service officials said, in many incidents, people working in the garments factories did not even know how to use fire extinguishing equipment.

"Most of the time, the fire-fighting equipment are like showpieces," said an official. "The factory owners only get the licences but in most cases they do not train up their staff to tackle fire incident."

The officials said they wrote several letters to the Bangladesh Garments Owners and Manufacturers Association (BGMEA) to send workers and employees of garment factories for training. Lastly, about a year ago, some factories sent a very few people, not more than 50, to the Mirpur station of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate for training, they

said.

Some eight lakh people are employed in about 2,000 garments factories in the city.

At least 54 people were killed in incidents of fire in garments factories in last five years, according to Fire Service sources.

The officials said it was sometimes difficult to conduct fire fighting operations as many garments factories did not have proper staircase and water reservoirs to extinguish fire. Besides, some of the factories are located in congested areas and the workers were not trained to vacate the building when fire broke out. As a result, in most cases, the workers were stampeded or trapped inside, they said.

The fire service officials observed that the factory owners should arrange "fire-drill and evacuation-drill" for their workers time to time.

The Fire Service is now conducting a survey on the garments factories to collect data on location, accessibility, height of the buildings housing

garments factories, arrangement for water reservoir, number of trained and untrained workers, condition of power supply lines, and number of factories having fire extinguishing equipment and automatic smoke or fire detecting devices.

It was reported in June last year that most of the garments factories in the city even lacked licence from the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD). At the time, out of about 1950 garments factories in the city and its suburb, only 936 had licence from the Fire Service.

According to the FSCD Ordinance, "no building or place shall be used as a warehouse or as a workshop unless the owner or occupier thereof shall have previously obtained under this ordinance, a licence for such use from the Director (Fire Service)."

The officials however said that the Fire Service had only four inspectors in Dhaka and two in Narayanganj to check fire safety measures in industries.

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