

1.75 km-long embankment on river Teesta to be built

NILPHAMARI, Aug 11: The Indo-Bangla Joint River Commission (JRC) today decided in principle to construct a 1.75 kilometre-long embankment on the right bank of the Teesta river, reports UNB.

The proposed embankment will be 1.5 kilometres on the Indian side from Par-Mekiganj and 250 metres on Bangladesh side at the Kaliganj border near no-man's land adjoining Nilphamari district, meeting sources said.

The meeting, held at the Teesta Barrage Project rest house 'Abasar' at Doani here, decided that the JRC members

Abul Hossain says he resigned voluntarily

By Staff Correspondent

The resignation letter of State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Syed Abul Hossain was not forwarded to President Shahabuddin Ahmed till last night.

Cabinet Secretary Ataul Haq told The Daily Star last night, "The process of acceptance was still underway".

Syed Abul Hossain submitted his resignation letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday.

Hossain's resignation followed his controversial visit to Singapore on August 3 without written permission from the head of government, using an ordinary passport instead of his diplomatic passport.

Meanwhile, in a statement faxed to The Daily Star last night, Hossain said that he resigned voluntarily to keep the government and the Awami League above all controversies.

"Controversies were raised basing on many untrue and irrelevant issues, ignoring the human aspect of medical treatment but I have no grievances against anybody."

Hossain said he would still remain an ardent follower of the politics of party chief Sheikh Hasina.

2 SEC members' case

Appellate Div dismisses govt leave petitions

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has dismissed two leave petitions filed by the government against a judgement of the High Court which earlier declared that the relieving of two SEC members were illegal, reports UNB.

Alamgir Kabir and Dr A K M Shahab Alam were appointed members of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in 1993 for three years and thereafter, they were reappointed for one year.

But before the expiry of one year, the two SEC members were relieved of their posts.

This was challenged by them before the High Court Division who declared the said government orders as illegal and passed without lawful authority.

The High Court further held that they were continuing as full-time members of the SEC.

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Chakma leaders place fresh demands

By Shehab Ahmed

Tribal refugee leaders in the Indian state of Tripura have given new conditions, making the return of some 40,000 refugees to Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) uncertain, highly placed sources said yesterday.

The conditions include one year's ration for the new returnees and those who came back in February 1994, and raising cash grants for the February '94 returnees at par with those who returned in March-April this year.

Besides, they have asked for raising the age limit for government jobs for the returnees to 40 and reiterated their de-

mand for involvement of the UNHCR and ICRC in repatriation and resettlement of the returnees.

They would wait until September 30 for their demands to be met.

The fresh demands were made by Upendra Lal Chakma, Chairman of the Refugee Welfare Association (RWA), during talks with the seven-member delegation of the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) in Agartala, capital of Tripura, on August 7 and 8.

Placing of the demands, collapse of the talks with the

refugee leaders and return of the delegation without visiting the refugees in their squalid camps coincided with the formation of a rival group of PCJSS by renegade leader Prity Kumar Chakma, opposing PCJSS Chairman Shantu Lama and the peace talks he is holding with the government.

Earlier last month, the NCCHT and the PCJSS had reported progress in reaching an accord after exchanging drafts of a proposed agreement to end decades of insurgency in the CHT.

But the new developments

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TM introduces AKTEL service Monopoly in private telephone business ends, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday exchanged greetings with her Malaysian counterpart Dr Mahathir Mohamad while formally inaugurating the 'AKTEL' service, a joint venture cellular telephone company in the private sector between Bangladesh and Malaysia, report agencies.

In course of the telephonic parley, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh has many things to do in close cooperation with the friendly country like Malaysia.

"We have to develop our country and there are many fields to work together and join hands. Your experience will help us develop our nation," she told the Malaysian Prime Minister.

Hasina wished the Malaysian Premier well and also con-

veyed good wishes to his wife. She recalled her talks with Mahathir in Istanbul during the D-8 summit.

The Prime Minister extended an invitation to Dr Mahathir Mohammad to visit Bangladesh.

The new AKTEL service was introduced by Telekom Malaysia (TM) International (Bangladesh) Limited (TMIB), a joint venture company formed between Telekom Malaysia Berhad holding 60 per cent of the equity capital and 40 per cent local shareholding by M/s AK Khan Group.

Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim, chairman of AK Khan Group AM Zahiruddin Khan, vice-president of Telekom Malaysia Noor Joydul Abedur Rahman and

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Resist any act against iman, akida : Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon all nationalist forces, Islamic parties and religious-minded people to rally round her party, reports UNB.

"All Islamic thinkers, ulema, peers and mashayekhs should be united under the banner of BNP which is the centre of nationalism," she told the leaders of Jatiyatabadi Ulema Dal who paid a courtesy call on her at 29 Minto road yesterday evening.

Begum Zia urged all to prepare themselves to resist any attempt by any quarters against the people's iman, akida and religious values and sentiments.

She said those who came to power misleading the people by using their religious sentiments now emerged as an anti-religion force. "Now people have realised who is the protector of their religious values and who is not."

The Leader of the Opposition said some people in the past had

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Programmes to observe Nat'l Mourning Day

National Mourning Day will be observed at state level on August 15 commemorating the death of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with elaborate programmes, reports UNB.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the portrait of the slain leader at the Bangabandhu memorial museum and the armed forces will present a guard of honour at 5:30 am.

A *milad mahfil* will also be held there on the occasion of 22nd anniversary of death of Bangabandhu Mujib, killed in a military putsch on August 15, 1975.

The day is a public holiday. National flag will fly half-mast at all educational institutions, government, non-government and autonomous bod-

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Deposition of PW-6 'Huda took control of house after the killing'

By Staff Correspondent

The sixth prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case in his deposition before the Court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka yesterday said that he saw captain Bazul Huda taking over control of Bangabandhu's residence after the killings.

Sohrab Ali, 47, now a retired Army Havildar, said that he was on duty as a guard at the residence of the then President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman when the killings took place on August 15, 1975.

On completion of his hour-long deposition, Sohrab Ali was cross-examined by one of the 14

lawyers of the state defence before the proceedings were adjourned at about 4:45 pm.

Chief Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Serajul Huq and SPP Ramzan Ali Khan took down Sohrab's deposition in the court. Sohrab also identified Wahab Joarder, one of the five accused in custody in the dock.

During hearing of the case yesterday which began at around 10:55am, the court also completed cross-examination of PW-5, Abdul Gani, who was Guard Commander at Bangabandhu's residence on the day

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Gram Parishad to look after dev projects, prepare reports

By Nurul Kabir

The Local Government Commission (LGC) has proposed that the first tier of the local government should be at the village level and that this grassroots level body be called Gram Parishad (village council).

Gram Parishad will be a 13-member body headed by a chairman and will look after the development projects in the area concerned. It will prepare reports on the field-level performances of the government and semi-government employees and forward the reports to the Union Parishad — the next tier of the local government.

Chairman of a Gram Parishad will, however, be elected by the people of a Ward — a Ward in some cases might consist of more than one villages — on the basis of adult franchise. Twelve general members, three of them women,

will be 'elected or selected' at a 'meeting' attended by the 'adult persons' of the Ward concerned. Chairman of a Gram Parishad will represent, by virtue of the post, his constituency in the Union Parishad and will be called a 'Ward Member'.

Besides, one representative each from agriculture-service workers, health workers, cooperative workers and freedom fighters, one each from government, semi-government and autonomous bodies operating in the ward concerned, and one from the Ansars and Village Defence party will be there in the Gram Parishad. Entitled to take part in various discussions, these representatives will not, however, enjoy voting right in the decision-making process. The non-voting members will be 'selected' on the basis of consensus among the villagers.

One representative each from the 'backward or ignored classes and professions such as fishermen, weavers, landless peasants and distressed men and women' will also be there in the Parishad. They will also have no voting rights. The Commission did not clearly say as to how this category of members will be picked up.

Gram Parishad will meet at least once in three months to review its quarterly activities and it will organise a 'general meeting' of all the voters of the Ward concerned at least once a year. The Parishad has to submit report at the general meeting on its activities during the previous year and listen to the people about the development projects and programmes and so on for the next year. On the basis of the proposals or opinions of the villagers, it will

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'Banks must be equipped with modern technologies'

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday said the current banking reform is aimed at equipping the banks with new technologies to face tough challenges of 21st century, reports UNB.

The ongoing reforms are not routine ones, we're trying to make the banks ready for a modern, vibrant economy," he said inaugurating a day-long seminar at a city hotel.

The Bangladesh chapter of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC,B) organised the seminar titled 'Uniform Bus-

ness and Practices (UCP) in Banking, including Electronic Commerce'.

UCP is a commercial transaction guideline developed by the Paris-based ICC for international trade and followed by banks in more than 140 countries, including Bangladesh.

The finance minister said society itself was going through a change in line with the changes in the international arena and trying to adopt the technologies now available. But he regretted that the use

of modern technologies was often resisted. "The more backward the society, the more resistance," he said.

Bangladesh Bank governor Lutfur Rahman Sarkar, speaking as a special guest, said the banks should use modern technologies as they would have to face competition from giant banks in the next century in an open environment.

The governor also told the function that the central bank had received some complaints from the banks abroad regard-

Opinion poll Both AL, BNP place party interest above nation's

By Staff Correspondent

A countrywide opinion poll shows 47 per cent of the people think that both the ruling AL and the opposition BNP are not giving priority to national interest over their party interests.

The poll, conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), also reveals 53 per cent people are of the view that both the parties lack sincerity about resolving the conflicts between them.

The main objective of the survey was to 'monitor the dynamics of public opinion' concerning developments in the economy and the society over the last year, it said.

Disclosing the findings of

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UP elections now in December

By Staff Correspondent

Elections to the Union Parishad (UP) will be held in December instead of September as scheduled earlier.

In a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday the Cabinet approved an Election Commission proposal to hold the UP elections in December.

According to Cabinet sources, the Election Commission earlier observed that it would be difficult to hold the UP elections in September. The EC argued that the voters as well as officials and others related to holding the elections would find it difficult to discharge their respective responsibilities due to inclement weather in September. The EC proposed that the polls should take place between December 1 and 31.

The Cabinet thoroughly reviewed the EC observation and approved its proposal to shift the polls to December, a government handout said last night.

The Chief Election Commissioner was not immediately available for comment.

In another development, the cabinet has approved a proposal for setting up of Sericulture Foundation in the private sector. The World Bank (WB) will provide financial assistance to set up the foundation.

Ministers, state minister in charge of different ministries, Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and secretaries concerned attended the meeting held at the Prime Minister's office.

Death in custody: 5 policemen sent to jail in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 11: Five police men including two Sub Inspectors were arrested and sent to jail today in connection with the death of one Nurul Absar, a suspect in a dacoity case, while in Fatikchhari thana custody.

The arrested included Sub Inspector Mollammad Nazmuz-zaman, Sub Inspector Mir Mohammad Ali Siraj, constables Moslem Uddin, Jinal Abedin and M Saifur respectively.

Earlier, they were suspended on charge of torturing accused Nurul Absar to death during remand at Fatikchhari thana, official sources said.

A regular case was started with Fatikchhari thana against the five police personnel.

The accused Nurul Absar, was a night guard in Fatikchhari thana health complex. He was arrested by Fatikchhari

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Salman's death DB plans to file defamation suit against some people

Film star Salman Shah's controversial death case takes a dramatic turn as the Detective Branch of police is planning to sue some people including police officials for tarnishing its image, reports UNB.

"Obviously, I will sue those who played this nasty game to defame the image of DB by capitalising on the death of the popular film star," said DB Deputy Commissioner Syed Bazul Karim.

He will file the case against those who tried to destroy DB's image by planning to move to turn the death of Salman into a murder case, Karim told the agency last night.

The Detective Branch had investigated the reported suicidal death of Salman Shah and submitted its final report that it was not a homicidal case.

But a fresh investigation started when one Rezvi who

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3 arrested while collecting toll from factory

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested an alleged criminal, Rajiv, and his two accomplices with a revolver from a garments factory at Tejgaon in the city Monday night.

Acting on a tip-off, a DB team raided Sidni Garments at about 8:30 pm and arrested Rajiv along with Babul Talukdar alias Zahir Iqbal and Abdul Quddus.

Police cordoned off the garments factory as Rajiv allegedly went there to collect extortion money of Tk two lakh. The DB seized the revolver loaded with three bullets while searching Rajiv's body.

Rajiv, the alleged leader of an organised gang of criminals, created panic and disturbed the business houses in Tejgaon industrial area as he often used to brandish firearms and collect tolls.

Police sources said he was also involved in various other criminal activities. The DB team was interrogating the arrested persons and filed an arms case with Tejgaon thana against them.

Three drown as boat capsizes in Meghna

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 11: A young woman and her two sons drowned when a boat capsized in the river Meghna today, reports UNB.

Survivors said the 28-year-old woman, who could not be named, and her sons Nayan and Sujon, drowned when the engine boat sank in between Rajapur and Kochua.

The mishap occurred as the boat with 10-12 passengers was caught by a strong wind at about 5:30 pm. It was heading towards Bhairab Bazar from Ajmiriganj Bazar of Habiganj district.

Rest of the passengers, including the boatman, swam ashore.

The bodies were sent to their village home in 'Ajmiriganj' thana.

Mugda killing: 4 arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police were yet to find out the real motive behind the alleged killing of two persons in a house at Mugda under Shabujbhab thana in the city Saturday.

However, a senior police official said he suspected that the two, identified as Abul Kalam and Mukta Begum, both aged between 25 and 30, were killed following a conflict in an organised gang involved in sex trade.

Police till yesterday picked up four persons including a

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Indian kathak legend Birju Maharaj (inset) and his troupe performing at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city last night. —Star photo

Ctg Port team leaves for S'pore today for talks with CFTC

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 11: A delegation of the Chittagong Port Authority leaves for Singapore tomorrow to negotiate with the Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC) for withdrawal of its decision to impose a congestion surcharge on vessels operating at the port.

An association of feeder vessel operators, has decided to impose congestion surcharge on containers at Chittagong Port from August 15. The rates are 150 US dollar for 20 feet-long containers and 300 dollars for a 40 feet-long container, port sources said.

The delegation members include Sanwar Hossain, Acting Director (Traffic) of Chittagong Port, MR Ali, chairman of the Shippers Council, Md. Wahidullah, president of Bangladesh Steamer Agents Association, Mahbub Ali, vice President of

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JCD won't join today's DU hall evacuation

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University (DU) authorities will evacuate most of the residential halls of the university today to rehabilitate the displaced students in their respective dormitories.

The decision was taken at a Paribesh Parishad meeting on Saturday. Classes at the university will not be held today but the officers will remain open, says a DU press release.

Meanwhile, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal has decided not to participate in the evacuation process, alleging that the university authorities have violated the decision.

Nasiruddin Asim, JCD DU unit convener told The Daily Star that it was decided at the meeting that the evacuation process would be started with halls dominated by BCL.

But the authorities without consultation with the JCD have decided to start the process in the dormitories dominated by the JCD, Asim alleged.

Still there are terrorists in the campus and they should be arrested before starting the evacuation and rehabilitation process, he said.

He also alleged that the BCL brought out a procession in Surya Sen Hall of the university Sunday night, in which, outsiders also participated violating the decision of the Paribesh Parishad meeting. Sources in the hall confirmed the BCL procession inside the hall.

Vice Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury could not be contacted till 10 pm last night as he was in a scheduled meeting of the DU Syndicate.

According to the decision of the Paribesh Parishad meeting, all the male dormitories excepting Surya Sen and Jagannath Halls will be evacuated today by turn and the bona fide residents would be allowed to enter only after checking their residence.

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