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ADB President Mitsuo Sato called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. — PID photo

ADB chief calls on PM

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tant projects were underway.

"And I myself am monitoring the implementation status of some of the very important ones," she said.

The main thrust had been laid on privatisation, poverty alleviation and people's participation in the process of development, she added.

Giving an overview of development endeavours of her government, the Prime Minister said construction of deep-sea port, setting up some agro-based industries and surface water management projects were under active consideration.

The ADB president, whose first visit took place 25 years ago when Bangabandhu was in office, appreciated the strong and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in building and developing the country.

Mitsuo Sato said ADB had been supportive to Bangladesh for carrying forward the development process and it would continue to provide assistance to financially and commercially viable projects.

The ADB president appreciated Bangladesh's government recent steps for tariff adjustment in the petroleum sector.

Authorickshaws back on streets

By Staff Correspondent

The auto-rickshaws were back on the city streets yesterday after five days of strike protesting the increase in petroleum prices.

But the auto-rickshaw drivers charged their usual fares yesterday as there had been less number of passengers because of the Janmastami holiday.

BSS adds: The Chittagong Auto-rickshaw and Tempo Drivers-Owners Oikya Parishad withdrew their indefinite strike last night at the request of Chittagong city Mayor ABM Mahiuddin Chowdhury.

Police force

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comprising parts of Sutrapur and Demra thanas; Pubali thana comprising parts of Sabujbagh and Demra thanas; Kamrangir Char thana, dividing Lalbagh thana in two parts; Gajmahal thana comprising parts of Dhanmendi and Mohammadpur thanas, Baridhara thana and Kafur thana dividing Gulshan thana and Cantonment thana respectively in two parts each.

The Home Ministry's proposal envisages creation of 432 posts in the proposed thanas, 267 posts in DMP detective branch, 64 posts in DMP court wing, 795 posts in DMP traffic wing, 1086 posts in DMP riot division and 861 posts for high way police outposts, 18 posts for Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) 30 posts in CMP traffic wing, 15 posts for Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP), 25 posts in KMP traffic wing, 37 and 37 posts each for the outposts to be set up at Rajshahi University and Khulna University.

Dean elections

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Public Administration (Social Science Faculty), Prof Mahtabuddin of Physics (Science Faculty), Prof Emamul Haq of Soil Science (Biological Science Faculty) and Prof Nurul Haq of Law (Law Faculty).

White Panel are — Prof Touhidul Anwar of Mass Communication and Journalism (Arts Faculty), Prof Asaduzzaman of the Department of Public Administration (Social Science Faculty), Prof Moinuddin Khan of the Department of Accounting (Business Studies Faculty), Prof Shah Chowdhury of Physics (Science Faculty), Prof AKM Sirajul Islam of Bio-Chemistry (Biological Science Faculty) and Prof Irshadul Bari of Law (Law Faculty).

Pink Panel will contest only in three faculties. The candidates are — Prof Aminul Islam of the Department of Philosophy (Arts Faculty), Prof AKM Monwarul Hossain of Economics (Social Science Faculty) and Prof Abdul Kalam Azad of the Department of Marketing (Business Studies Faculty).

Prof AKM Hossain on the Department of International Relations, is the only independent candidate contesting for the post of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science.

Voting will be held from 9 am to 1 pm at the TSC.

Rally today

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proposal to call another hartal. One leader suggested that, it should be for 48 hours.

BNP is scheduled to hold its rally in front of its Purana Paltan office at 4 pm today, Jatiya Party (Z-M) in front of Jatiya Press Club at the same time and Jamaat at Danik Bangla crossing after Asr prayers. The other parties are also due to hold rallies to announce the programmes.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, now on a visit to Pakistan, is being kept informed of the latest developments.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Khandaker Mahbub Uddin, Asar Siddiqui, Abdullah al Noman, Ahmed Nazir, Syed Nazibul Bashar Majbhandari, Amanullah Aman and Nazimuddin Alam of BNP, Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Shamim al Mamun of JP, Oli Ahad and Saifuddin Moni of Democratic League, Rehana Prodhan and Anisur Rahman of Jappa and Sheikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu of PNP.

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ADB chief assures continued support to private sector

Asian Development Bank President Mitsuo Sato yesterday said private sector development is increasingly important for Bangladesh and assured continued support to "viable" private projects, reports UNB.

"Today, assisting private sector development has become an explicit thematic priority in the pursuit of the Bank's principal development goals," he said in a meeting with leading businessmen at a city hotel.

"Support of private sector development in our member countries has become one of our main tasks," the visiting ADB chief told the meeting, arranged by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

He mentioned that the Bank, which began direct private sector financing in 1983, had so far approved four private sector projects in Bangladesh and three new projects are now in the process.

The projects are Lafarge Islam Cement, Meghnaghat Power Plant and Gramteen Telephone projects, Sato said. "The Bank would like to support more viable private sector projects," he added.

The ADB chief mentioned the Capital Market Development Project which "could be very critical to broaden the scope for resource mobilisation by private sector and augment the limited resources currently provided through the banking system."

Sato pointed out the Bank is assisting regional and sub-re-

gional cooperation among the South Asian countries and lauded the signing of treaties by regional chambers for expansion of trade and investment.

Sato said the FBCCI can play a crucial role in bringing together the private sector and government as well as international development partners like the ADB.

FBCCI President Yussuf Abdullah Harun said Bangladesh has been making vigorous efforts to accelerate growth for alleviating poverty and pursuing a strategy of private sector-led growth in a liberalised market economy.

He mentioned that despite progress in many areas of the economy, the growth rate in the industrial sector has remained sluggish.

Harun hoped that ADB would play a significant role in removing the bottlenecks to stimulate private sector investment and identified four areas where the donor agency could extend cooperation and support.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Water Resources Minister Noor Uddin Khan, Dhaka City mayor Mohammad Hanif, Privatisation Board Chairman Kazi Zafarullah, leaders of different chambers, entrepreneurs and senior government officials were present in the meeting.

Attack on Nari Samaj rally condemned

By Staff Correspondent

A number of socio-political organisations in separate statements yesterday condemned the "attack by BNP workers" on the rally of Sammilito Nari Samaj organised to observe the death of Yasmin on Sunday last.

Nari Samaj, a women's rights organisation, called the rally on Sunday in front of the Jatiya Press Club to mark the day as 'Women's Oppression Resistance Day'.

Sufia Kamal, chairperson of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, condemned the incident and said the "attack on the Nari Samaj rally by the BNP workers is a reflection of their unruly attitude and terrorist activities."

Rashed Khan Menon, the secretary general of Workers Party said, "the attitude of not allowing others to hold rally at the same place and at the same time is undemocratic."

Roushan Ara Rusko of Samajtantrik Mohila Forum also criticised the BNP attack on the rally.

Rocket launcher: Kaiyum placed under 3-day remand

Kaiyum, the key person responsible for bringing in the rocket launcher recovered about two months back, was placed under Detective Branch custody on a three-day remand yesterday, reports UNB.

The DB sought permission to take him on remand for 10 days after he was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday evening. The court allowed a three-day remand, officials said.

Motijheel police also sought a separate remand order for Kaiyum. They were granted one day to interrogate him on remand under the thana custody.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Motijheel thana arrested him from in front of Notre Dame College in the city at about 9 pm on Sunday.

DUCSU demands release of BNP leaders, workers

DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP and GS Khairul Kabir Khokon have demanded immediate release of all the arrested leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, they said people will wage a greater movement to oust the government if they were not released soon.

Meanwhile, JCD brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus, protesting the police action on their processions during Sunday's hartal.

After parading the main thoroughfares of the campus, the JCD supporters held a rally at Shahbagh, where its leaders condemned the police action on the workers of BNP and its front organisations.

Fire in mosquito coil factory

A fire broke out in a mosquito coil factory at Matuail in Demra thana in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Firebrigade and police sources said an electrical short-circuit sparked off the fire at the Power Coil Factory. Machinery and a large number of mosquito coils were gutted in the fire.

The factory was also partially damaged. Firefighters brought the blaze under control after half an hour of struggle.

No casualty was reported. Extent of damage could not be ascertained immediately. Firebrigade headquarters said.

Attack on Nari Samaj rally unwanted: BNP

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has said the attack on the procession of Sammilito Nari Samaj in front of the Jatiya Press Club during Sunday's hartal was "painful and unwanted," reports UNB.

"This was not the act of political workers. BNP does not approve such kind of behaviour. It has full support and sympathy for the ongoing movement of the country's women community," he said in a statement yesterday.

The BNP leader said when Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal was organising a united movement to establish women rights and against women repression, such type of incidents would create an unfavourable atmosphere.

He called upon all to remain alert against such activities.

Task Force on tribal refugees meets today

KHAGROCHHARI, Aug 25: A meeting of the task force on tribal refugees will meet at the local Circuit House tomorrow to discuss the progress of repatriation and rehabilitation of Chakma refugees from the Indian state of Tripura, reports UNB.

The meeting, to be chaired by task force chief Kalpa Ranjan Chakma MP, will also review the latest situation of the process of repatriation and other issues concerned.

A delegation of the task force, headed by Kalpa Ranjan Chakma MP, visited Agartala in the first week of this month. But the delegation returned home without any positive talks with the Chakma leaders as well as the authorities in Tripura.

Bazar looted in Ctg: 20 injured

CHITTAGONG, Aug 25: At least 20 people were injured, four seriously, when armed dacoits attacked Hazrat Bazar in Anwara thana yesterday, reports UNB.

Police said 10-12 gunmen swooped on several grocery shops at 11 pm and looted cash and goods worth Tk 2 lakh.

While making off with the booty in a microbus, the dacoits fired shots indiscriminately, leaving 20 people injured.

Of the injured, Dilder Hossain, Sohrab Ali, Kafiluddin and Mohammad Sayeed were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. A case was filed.

Transport strike on Dhaka-Sylhet highway ends

HABIGANJ, Aug 25: The transport workers and owners today withdrew their indefinite strike on Dhaka-Sylhet highway after six days, reports UNB.

The strike was withdrawn after a trilateral meeting of transport workers, owners and local leaders held at Habiganj Circuit House this afternoon. Ruling party MP Dewan Farid Gazi was in the chair.

Rly HQs

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among others, by the city Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu, Syed Ekramur Rasal, General Secretary of Rajshahi Bar Association Mohammad Ali Sarkar, President of Rajshahi of Commerce and Industries Abdul Mannan and President of Nature Chamber of Commerce and Industries Jahangir Alam.

The speakers urged the government to postpone the decision to withdraw the Railway Head office from Rajshahi. Otherwise, they threatened to organise a greater movement.

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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia, now on a visit to Pakistan, with Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub prior to an informal talks in Islamabad yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Khaleda

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tary affairs and shared experiences.

She also discussed bilateral, regional and international issues with Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub in the evening.

The members of Begum Zia's entourage — Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan MP, Salahuddin Ahmed MP, Giasuddin Quader Chowdhury MP and Selima Rahman — were present during the meetings.

The BNP Chairperson is expected to leave Islamabad for New York this morning.

Ctg Port dock workers clash

CHITTAGONG, Aug 25: Traffic on the airport road of the port city was halted for about one-and-half hours as rival groups of Dock Workers' Union clashed this evening, reports UNB.

Police said the rival workers chased each other on the road, disrupting traffic movement since 6 pm.

The clash took place following a dispute over the election of the union.

The angry workers ransacked the booking office of the Dock Workers' Management Board and confined its officials till 8 pm. The labour gang booking was also closed during the trouble.

None was reported injured in the clash.

DU tense

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Meanwhile, Shamim handed over the car and the cellular phone which he used earlier, to the new leaders yesterday morning. The car and phone belong to the group.

When contacted over phone at his residence, Shamim told this correspondent that he would abide by the decision taken by "high command" of the BCL.

The new leaders, when contacted, said that Shamim Ahmed had retired from cadre politics willingly.

Cases filed

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Ramna police have so far arrested 13 people in connection with the four cases and sent them to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday, official sources said.

They are advocate Habibur Rahman Mondol, Bimol Chandra, Abul Hossain, Yasin, Panna, Sharif, Manan, Helal Sarkar, Akter, Majibur Rahman, Omar Faruk, Abdullah Al Mamun and Chowdhury Alam.

CFTC may review

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viser Dr S A Malek, was attended by Deputy Minister for Shipping Dharendra Debnath Shambhu, Shipping Secretary Mofazzal Karim, Chittagong Port Authority Chairman and concerned officials.

It had decided to send Saber Chowdhury to Singapore for negotiation with the CFTC. "Accordingly, he negotiated the issue successfully," said the handout.

Pointing out various aspects of the positive impact of the steps undertaken in the port, Saber had requested the CFTC to review the decision imposing the punitive congestion surcharge.

The imposition of congestion surcharge yielded a negative impact on the country's export and import business. Specially, it hit the garments industry hard.

The exporters and importers have to pay additional 150 dollars for a 20-foot container and additional 300 dollars for a 40-foot container as congestion surcharge, in addition to the MLO (main line operator) surcharge of 50 dollar for a 20-foot container and 100 dollar for a 40-foot one.

Earlier, the freight for a 20-foot container was 300 US dollars and for a 40-foot container 580 dollars.

Chandrika announces referendum on constitutional reform

COLOMBO, Aug 25: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga today announced a referendum on proposed constitutional reforms aimed at ending the country's Tamil separatist war which has claimed more than 50,000 lives, reports AFP.

The government will hold the vote so that the new constitution, which seeks to grant greater autonomy to minority Tamils, will be in place early next year, the President said over state radio.

"We will have a referendum on the draft constitution so that we will be able to end the war, re-unite the country and restore peace," Kumaratunga said during a ceremony to drum up support for the reforms.

The President did not specify when the referendum will be held but implied it could be by the end of this year or early next year for the new constitution to be implemented in the first half of 1998.

Political sources have been speculating on the possibility of a referendum on the reforms which seek to turn the country into a federal state in all but name.

However, the referendum will not be legally binding as the constitution requires a two thirds majority in parliament to re-write the present constitution.

Kumaratunga's People's Alliance has just a one-seat majority in the 225-member National Assembly and must win the support of the main opposition United National Party (UNP) to push through the reforms.

The government has been toying with the idea of a referendum to show that popular

Janmastomi

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community at Bangabhaban on the occasion.

Advisor to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Suranjit Sengupta, Justice Bimalendu Roy Chowdhury, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Satish Chandra Roy, State Minister for Religious Affairs, Moulana Muhammad Nurul Islam, MPs and Religious Affairs Secretary AB M Abdus Shakur, Deputy Attorney General Nikhilesh Dutt and PSC member Arun Kanti Adhikari were present.

The day was a public holiday.

A Geeta recitation and painting competition for children was arranged in the city.

Sree Sree Geeta Sangha arranged Mangalcharan, puja, recitation from Geeta and Bhagavat, Sree Krishna Bhog, and Aroti.

AL platform

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in one form or the other".

In reply to a question, Zillur Rahman admitted that 'full committees' could not be formed in some units of the party even more than three months after the party's triennial national council held in May last.

Mentionably, except the president and the general secretary, no other office bearers of Dhaka city unit has been elected as yet though its council was held in April last.

Zillur Rahman visited the party's Dhanmendi office yesterday, after one month, to gear up organisational activities.

He told this correspondent that full committees of the organisational units would be formed without further delay.

Meanwhile, after an informal meeting of some AL leaders and leaders of Left Democratic Front (LDF), last week, AL now plans to increase frequency of such exchange of views.

public sentiment favours power sharing in a bid to end the Tamil separatist war which has killed over 50,000 people since 1972.

Justice Minister GL Peiris has said the government hoped to have the new package of proposals presented in parliament before the annual budget is presented on November 6.

Under the draft constitution, the country would be turned into a federal state with an unspecified number of regional councils enjoying sweeping powers over land, law and order, foreign aid and taxes.

The controversial plan was first unveiled by Kumaratunga in August 1995 in a bid to appease demands by Tamils to have a greater say in the administration of their own affairs.

Train dacoity

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area and launched a combing operation to recover the firearms and ammunition and track down the dacoits.

None was arrested till the filing of this report.

The Simanta Express runs between Sayedpur in the north and Khulna in the south.

The DIG of GRP, Osman Ali Khan and other officials visited the spot today.

Meanwhile, high railway officials, including the GM of Western Zone, held a meeting at Jessore Railway Station to take stock of the situation.

BSC vessels

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A private shipping company of Bangladesh also has two feeder container vessels operating in this route and it has also hired two others for the same purpose, the sources said.

Of the more than 20 feeder vessels operating in Chittagong-Singapore route most are owned by members of the Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee.

CFTC imposed congestion surcharge on container cargo at Chittagong Port from August 16 for one month period but national flag carrier BSC is not taking any surcharge.

JRC meet

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The Teesta within 60-kilometre area of the two co-riparian countries — one in Gajaldoba of Shailguri district and the other in Doani of Lalmonirhat.

The river, which originates in Sikkim, carries water to a vast tract of land inside Bangladesh territory, including the greater districts of Bogra, Dinajpur and Rangpur.

But India has long been unilaterally withdrawing the waters of the river at Gajaldoba Barrage point in absence of any water sharing agreement. JRC Director Touhidul Anwar Khan told UNB.

The issue of Teesta water sharing had come up for discussion in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th meetings of JRC, virtually without any positive outcome.

Bangladesh needs at least 10,000 cusecs of Teesta waters during the lean period, but the country actually received a meagre 2,700 cusecs on average.

As a result, the Tk 1,000 crore Teesta Barrage Project faces acute shortage of water in its main, secondary and tertiary canals.

Besides, another 2,000 cusecs of water is needed for maintaining navigability of the river.

Local sources said the talks created enthusiasm in the northern districts, where people, specially the farmers of 34 Banas, were affected and at least 20,000 fishermen and boatmen became jobless due to the drying up of the Teesta.