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Three accords with Manila signed

Dhaka, Manila to explore areas of cooperation

MANILA, Sept 8: Bangladesh and the Philippines today signed three agreements here on the first day of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to the Philippines, reports BSS.

The agreements are: Bilateral Air services agreement, agreement on avoidance of double taxation and fiscal evasion and agreement on promotion and protection of investment.

The Philippines Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon and Bangladesh Ambassador to Manila Reazul Hossain signed the agreements on behalf of their respective sides.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Fidel V Ramos witnessed the signing of the agreements at the reception hall of the Malacanang Palace.

US Asst Secy of State due in city tomorrow

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth arrives in Dhaka tomorrow for a three-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Inderfurth, who has replaced Robin Raphael, is coming to Dhaka as part of his familiarisation tour of the South Asian countries. He will also undertake a trip to India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

During the visit, the US official is expected to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He will also call on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury.

In Dhaka, the new American Assistant Secretary of State will hold official talks with Foreign Secretary Farooq Sohan that will cover the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

"There is no specific agenda of the talks, as we have no major issue of concern with the United States," said a senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

6 JCD workers of Feni held in city

Police arrested six activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Feni unit from a recruiting agency office of a BNP parliamentarian in the city on Sunday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Detective Branch raided the 'Bay Eastern' manpower office of Mosharraf Hossain MP at Gulshan Road No 6 in the evening and picked up the JCD activists.

President assents to two bills

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to two bills passed by the Jatiya Sangsad in its 6th session, reports UNB.

The bills are the Local Government (Union Parishads) (2nd Amendment) Bill, 1997 and Local Government (Gram Parishad) Bill, 1997.

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MANILA, Sept 8: Bangladesh and the Philippines during the official talks today agreed to enhance and expand bilateral cooperations in trade, economic, technical and other forums.

The talks held at the Malacanang Palace lasted about an hour, the Press Secretary to the PM told BSS tonight.

The two countries agreed to explore the potentialities for the common benefit of their peoples. The two sides also agreed to activate the joint economic commission and called for exchange of visits by the businessmen of the two countries. "We have many fields to

cooperate," they observed.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led the Bangladesh delegation while the Philippines team was headed by President Fidel V Ramos. Both the leaders discussed the regional and international matters of mutual concern. They also expressed their desire to see more cooperation between the SAARC and the ASEAN.

Sheikh Hasina recalled the contribution of the Philippines during the War of Liberation and said that the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited Manila in 1973.

The Philippines President said the visit of the Bangladesh

business delegation would pave the way for more private sector cooperation.

The Bangladesh leader referred to the formation of an economic forum comprising India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Bangladesh and said it was further enhanced with the inclusion of Myanmar as a member on August 28 and the group has been renamed BISMEC.

Later at a press conference Sheikh Hasina said there is a great potential for further development and expansion of relations between Dhaka and Manila.

President Ramos referred to See Page 12 Col 2



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (L) and Philippine President Fidel Ramos stand at attention during a guard of honour for the Bangladesh leader on her arrival at Malacanang Palace in Manila yesterday. —AFP/UNB photo

Bangabandhu Murder Case

I was not an active participant, but feel repentant: PW-11

By Staff Correspondent

Lance Dafader Bashir Ahmed, eleventh prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu murder case said yesterday that he was not aware whether the incidents starting with the night parade of August 14, 1975 till the next evening took place under the instructions of the then Chief of Army Staff.

Lawyers of the five accused in custody completed their cross-examination of Bashir Ahmed yesterday in the court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka. The hearing resumed at around 10:45 am yesterday after a break of four days and was adjourned at about 4:10 pm.

Twelfth prosecution witness in the case, ALD Serajul Huq will make his deposition in the court today.

Bashir Ahmed also said he was in the charge of ration store at the Squadron Headquarter under First Bengal Lancer, which was located at the furthest end of the cantonment.

He said he was posted at the main gate of Bangabandhu's residence on order of a superior officer when firing was going on inside the house in the early hours of August 15, 1975.

"The artillery forces and we were brought there in the name of exercise," he said.

"I was not afraid of court martial but I got frightened at the magnitude of the incident after its occurrence," he said replying to a question from a defence lawyer.

Bashir also said that he was

not an "active participant" in the (Aug 15) incident and that he was "repentant" for it.

"The artillery guards deployed at the residence of Bangabandhu were there till about 5:00 pm, when we left the place," he said.

Asked whether he raised any question when posted at the gate, he said, "no." "Under the army rules such instructions cannot be questioned and the orders of superiors have to be carried out," he added.

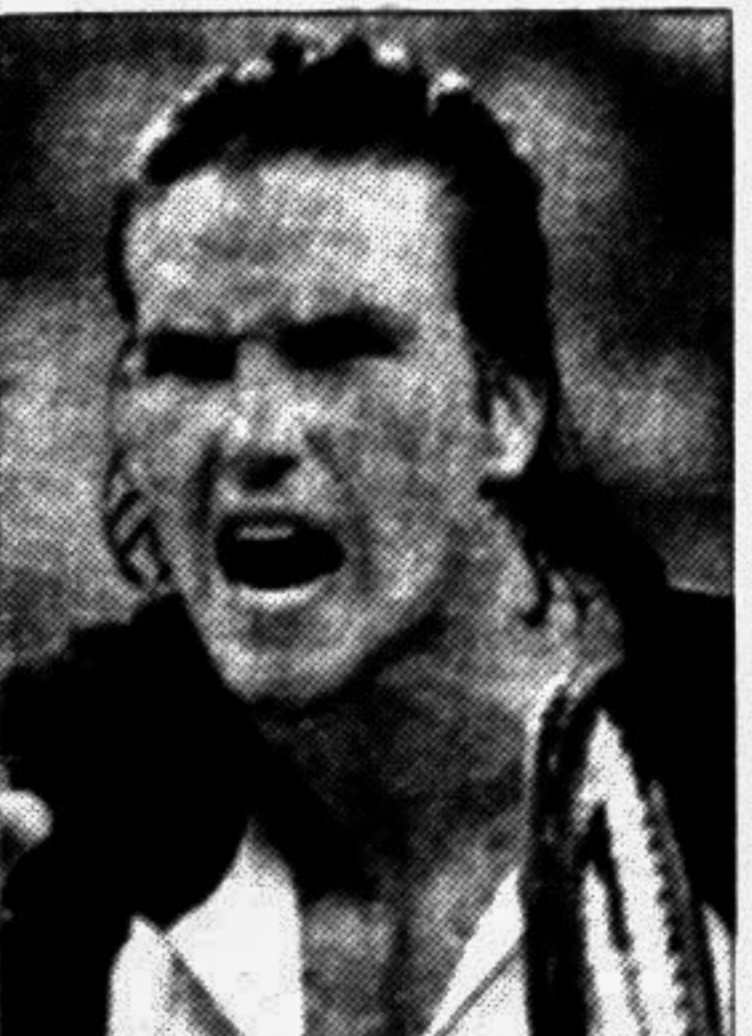
To the suggestion of a defence lawyer that none was court martialled and no court of inquiry was constituted because the incident took place under the command of the highest military authorities, the PW-11 See Page 12 Col 1

US Open tennis Hingis, Rafter lift singles crowns

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan



MARTINA HINGIS



PATRICK RAFTER

NEW YORK, Sept 8. The delightful serve and volley game, perfected so meticulously by the 24-year-old Patrick Rafter of Australia buried the bullet-serving Greg Rusedski at the men's singles final of the 1997 US Open tennis championships at the Arthur Ashe Stadium last evening.

Rafter, who earlier memorised his more illustrious op-

ponents like Andre Agassi and Michael Chang, lost a set to the Briton before finally winning the title 6-3, 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 since another Australian won it way back in 1973 — John Newcombe.

It was a wonderful experience to watch and enjoy two very talented serve and volley players, Rafter and a left-

The sisters got what they See Page 12 Col 3

Earl Spencer rejects offer to restore Diana's HRH designation

LONDON, Sept 8: Buckingham Palace said Monday it considered restoring Princess Diana's HRH designation after her funeral, but her brother said she would not have wanted to be known after death as Her Royal Highness, reports AP.

Diana received the style HRH, which is held only by the most senior royals, when she married Prince Charles in 1981, and she lost it when they were divorced a year ago.

Palace officials said the princess had "voluntarily relinquished" it.

See Page 12 Col 8

'Teresa should be buried in public place'

CALCUTTA, Sept 8: Mother Teresa's final resting place will be in the charity headquarters on the edge of the slum where she lived and toiled, but not everybody in Calcutta is happy about it, reports AP.

From the moment Mother Teresa died of a heart attack Friday, the sisters at her Missionaries of Charity requested that she be buried close at hand on the grounds of their building.

The sisters got what they See Page 12 Col 6

Withheld results Team leaves for Rajshahi for investigation

A two-member enquiry committee has been formed to investigate the matters relating to the withheld results of some HSC candidates under Rajshahi Board, reports UNB.

The committee members have left Dhaka for Rajshahi to conduct a spot investigation and action will be taken against the persons responsible on the basis of its report.

According to an official handout, the attention of the Education Ministry has been drawn to the press reports on the withheld results of some HSC examinees under the board.

It said holding of examinations, announcement of results and other related works are being conducted by the country's five secondary and higher secondary education boards and the Education Ministry has no scope to intervene in these matters.

"At present the boards are taking decisions as per rules See Page 12 Col 7

Committee meets today to decide fate of 6686 RB examinees

From MA Ali

NATORE, Sept 8: The Rajshahi Education Board Committee may take a decision against cancellation of examinations of 6686 HSC examinees of the Board, a member of the Committee indicated today.

The Committee meets tomorrow to review an earlier decision of the Board to cancel examinations of 1997 for alleged irregularities. The Board's decision was also approved by the Education Ministry earlier.

The committee member claimed that the Board had no right to cancel the examinations because it allowed the candidates concerned to appear at the examinations.

In this regard, he recalled that the Board authorities had, at one stage, thought of withholding the admit cards of those candidates because of "irregularities in their applications and registration cards."

But eventually, this was not done, he said.

A highly placed source in the Board also said that the decision of the committee is binding on the Board.

The committee comprises principals of major government colleges and high officials of the Education Ministry and the Board.

Some officials of the Board are also active to influence its decision, the source said.

Meanwhile, the Board will submit tomorrow a "written objection" before the Assistant Judge's Court against an injunction restraining it from publishing the results of HSC examinations before withdrawing the decision about cancellation of examinations of 6686 examinees.

The legal adviser of the Board will appear before the court with the "written objection" See Page 12 Col 6



Mobutu dies in exile

RABAT, Sept 8: Mobutu Sese Seko, the Zairean leader toppled in May after 32 years of despotism that left his country in shambles, died after a long battle with prostate cancer. He was 66, reports AP.

Mobutu died Sunday night at the Mohamed V military hospital in Rabat, where he has been since June 30, said two hospital workers who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Maghreb Arab Press agency, Morocco's official news agency, said only that Mobutu had died at 9:30 pm (21:30 GMT) "after a long illness."

See Page 12 Col 3

Improved road link, motor vehicle accord needed Transportation of cargo thru' transit route yet to begin

By M Anwarul Haq

Improvement of infrastructure in the country and the signing of a motor vehicle agreement are required immediately to facilitate regular movement of Nepalese commodities using the newly opened transit route, according to official sources.

The transit route is not only for export of Nepalese cargo to third countries using the Mongla Port but also for bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Nepal, the sources said.

Although the transit route was formally opened September 1, the passage of commodities between Nepal and Bangladesh or of Nepalese cargo through Mongla Port is yet to start.

Officials in the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Communications say that transportation of commodities would take some time as Nepalese importers and exporters would have to wait till the expiry of

the contracts they have already made for use of Calcutta Port.

They, however, pointed out that work is in progress for removing some procedural bottlenecks like signing of a motor vehicle agreement. Bangladesh government hopes to conclude the accord with Nepal shortly.

Stiff Indian conditions

By Staff Correspondent

India has imposed some stringent conditions while agreeing to give Nepal permission for land transit to Bangladesh, it is learnt from authoritative sources.

According to the terms of transit, Nepal can use the Fulbari-Banglabandh route only on two days in a week. All See Page 12 Col 1

The government has plans on the anvil to improve the existing road communication in the country to facilitate use of the new transit route.

India recently granted permission to Nepal for using the Fulbari-Banglabandh point for movement of its goods to and through Bangladesh.

Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Lok Bahadur Shrestha, talking to The Daily Star, said businessmen of his country are examining the options of what route to use from Banglabandh point to Mongla.

He said India has allowed the use of trucks having Nepalese registration to pass through the 'Indian land transit corridor through Fulbari point.'

When asked if Nepalese goods would be transported by road up to Mongla or be brought to Baghabari and transhipped See Page 12 Col 4

BNP supporters receive Khaleda at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia was warmly received by party-men yesterday at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on her return home after a 15-day tour to Pakistan and the USA.

Thousands of her party workers and supporters assembled at the airport to welcome back the BNP chairperson.

The supporters, many of them carrying bouquets, started chanting slogans hailing the BNP chief as the Biman aircraft she flew in landed at ZIA at around 5:30 in the morning.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, flanked by other top leaders of the party, greeted Begum Zia with a bouquet as she disembarked from the Biman aircraft that flew from the John F Kennedy airport in New York.

To receive their leader, the BNP supporters travelling in See Page 12 Col 7



BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia was received by party leaders at Zia International Airport on her return from the US yesterday. —Star photo

Police action at BMU: 4 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

Two nurses and two ayas of the Bangladesh Medical University (BMU) were injured yesterday in police action on agitating nurses who were protesting the government decision to turn it into an autonomous institution.

The injured are Shamsun Nahar and Shamsunnahar, both staff nurses, and ayas Mahinur and Marjina Akhtar. The two nurses were admitted to the hospital while the ayas were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and were released later.

According to hospital sources, the incident occurred when nurses surrounded the office of Director of the Hospital Dr Md Tahir. The director assured the agitating nurses that he would meet leaders of the See Page 12 Col 6

Rival groups of employees clash in Sectt

By Staff Correspondent

Police dispersed two rival groups of government employees who were involved in a clash inside the Secretariat yesterday.

Trouble began when leaders of the two groups of Class Three and Four employees exchanged blows after a heated argument over the formation of a rival committee, sources in the Secretariat said.

As news of the clash spread, supporters of Mizanur Rahman of the Establishment Division and Abdul Quddus of the Finance Ministry rushed in aid of them.

However, police stationed inside the Secretariat dispersed the clashing employees before it turned serious.

No arrest was made, police said.

Vehicles with more than 5 tons load banned in 3 district roads

The authorities concerned have banned the movement of vehicles with more than 5 tons load on the roads in Habiganj, Nawabganj and Sherpur, report agencies.

Bridges and culverts on the roads have become risky, said a PID handout, adding that these bridges and culverts may collapse with the movement of heavy vehicles.

So, the restriction has been imposed on movement of the vehicles carrying goods weighing more than five tons on the roads in the region.

Meanwhile, the government has directed the Roads and Highways Department to construct the Saistaganj bailey bridge by first week of next month.

It also instructed the railway authorities to ensure that every See Page 12 Col 7

Latest Hollywood movies may be released in local cinemas

By Sharier Khan

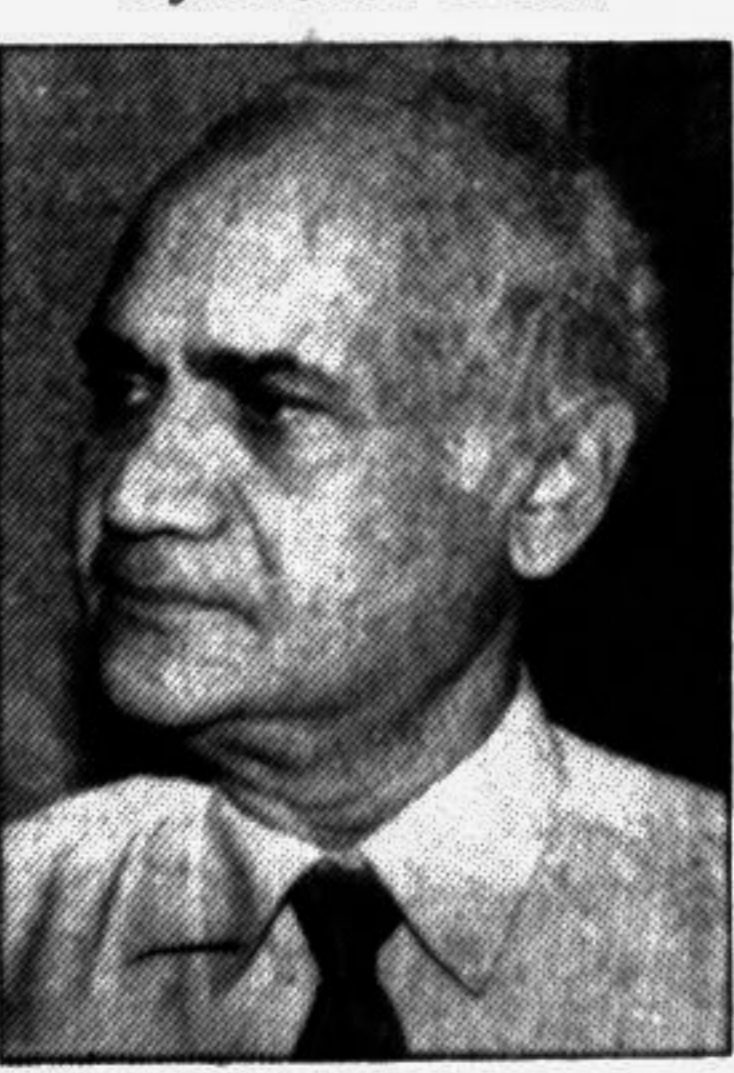
Can you imagine enjoying the latest Hollywood blockbuster movies in Bangladeshi cinema halls equipped with Dolby stereo sound and modern lighting systems?

When your answer is definitely a "no", Mike Macclesfield — representing three giant Hollywood movie producers — sees a ray of hope of introducing the latest blockbusters from Hollywood in Bangladesh.

Mike, Vice President, International Sales and Development, United International Pictures (UIP) — a company jointly owned by Paramount, Metro Goldwyn Mayer and Universal pictures — is now on a brief visit to Bangladesh to assess the condition of the movie theatres, tariff structure of ticket and how movies are advertised.

"We are going to decide soon whether we shall be able to release latest films in Bangladesh since it all depends on the condition of local cinema halls and the profitability of their owners," Mike Macclesfield told The Daily Star in an interview yesterday.

"If a number of problems of the hall owners and distributors in Bangladesh are solved immediately, I am sure most latest Hollywood movies will be



Mike Macclesfield

released in local theatres in about a year," Mike said.

For a starter, UIP is releasing all-time hit movies like Raiders of the Lost Ark, Congo, Waterworld, Time Cop and Friday Death beginning from Sudan next. Channel Cinema Ltd of Madhumita Group of Dhaka is the local distributor which will exhibit the films in a refurbished and fully digitised Madhumita theatre in Motijheel.

If these releases hit the box

office, UIP will release Jurassic Park and Golden Eye as well.

Since the independence of the country, the condition of movie theatres started deteriorating while almost no new Hollywood movie had been released locally.

"I understand that out of a Tk 28 entrance ticket, the cinema hall owners, distributors and producers get Tk 12 and the rest (about 60 per cent) is taken by the government as entertainment tax, municipal tax and VAT," Mike said.

"Such tariff structure is unheard of in the western countries and it is much less in developing countries. This should be rationalised in Bangladesh. Otherwise, movie theatre owners will never have any money left to refurbish their theatres and exhibit good movies. And in the end, there will not be enough audience to support the cost of releasing a good movie here," he pointed out.

"The condition of the movie theatres in Dhaka is so pitiable that I can't imagine anyone watching a movie even if he is given a free ticket," Mike said, jokingly adding, "You need a search light to see what is happening on the screens."

He said that while improve- See Page 12 Col 8

BNP-called hartal observed in 3 N-districts

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 8: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in Rajshahi, Naogaon and Bogra today at the call of district BNP units.

The hartal was called to protest filing of 'false cases' against 16 BNP leaders including two MPs in Naogaon, killing of JCD leader Masum in Bogra and withdrawal of development allocations for Rajshahi.

Shops, business establishments, banks, educational institutions and private offices remained closed during the hartal period. All kinds of vehicles were off the roads.

No untoward incident was reported.

Local BNP units brought out processions and held rallies in the city.