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The World On Time

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PCJSS congress

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tion of Shantibahini, military wing of the PCJSS, at his headquarters in Bishnupur, Southern Tripura in 1983.

Tripura also hangs on the agreement, though efforts are being made to initiate the repatriation from the third week of this month.

All depend on the outcome of the PCJSS congress the sources said. If their reaction is positive, it will create a favourable atmosphere for the refugees, some 40,000, to return to their hearths in CHT.

Meanwhile, PCJSS leaders and supporters are campaigning for the accord to restore peace in CHT.

The Tribesmen Professional Council has convened a meeting on October 18 in Khagrachhari to mobilise opinion in favour of the accord.

Shantu Larma last month told his supporters that both PCJSS and the government side had to give concessions to each other to arrive at a draft accord.

The settlers from the plains, on the other hand, feel threatened despite assurances by the government that they would not be expelled from CHT nor the security forces would be withdrawn.

They also organised marches even in Dhaka to express their concern.



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A clash between activists of Awami League and BNP at Saidabad in the city during yesterday's barricade called by BNP.

Clashes mark barricade

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and so on. The programme was also supported by six other smaller parties — Jatiya Party (Z-M), Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote, PNP, Jagpa and Democratic League.

No inter-district transport to and from the city operated during the barricade hours although all the three terminals were under the control of ruling party activists and police.

Train services to and from Dhaka were paralysed as pro-barricade activists barricaded tracks at different points.

Following clashes between rival political groups in Kushtia, police fired at least five rounds of blank shots to disperse the mob.

In the city the areas where chase and counter-chase between the rival political activists took place included Gatabli, Mirpur, Mahakhali, Tejgaon, Jatrabari, Sadarghat and Rampura.

Sporadic clashes led to closure of many shops in the areas. Eighteen injured people, two of them bullet-hit, were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Mitford Hospital, sources in the hospitals said.

In some parts of the city, the ruling party held anti-barricade rallies. Kamal Majumder, a ruling party MP from Mirpur area, addressed such a rally at the main gate of Gatabli bus terminal at around 9:30 am.

BNP and Abdullah Al Noman, joint secretary of the party, were assaulted by anti-barricade activists in Saidabad area at around 10:00 am.

At Mahakhali, chase and counter-chase between pro and anti-barricade activists took place at around 10:45 am.

At Gatabli, clash started when pro-barricade activists approached the terminal were chased by those opposing the barricade with the support of police at about 8 am.

Police lobbed at least 20 rounds of tear gas shells and also fired four rounds of rubber bullets to disperse the clashing groups.

Our Staff Correspondent reported from Chittagong that five persons were injured, two with bullet, during clashes between the pro and anti-barricade activists.

No inter-district bus could operate during the barricade hours. Movement of vehicles inside the city was usual.

Police said the clash erupted when a Sramik League procession came near a BNP rally at Oxygen Crossing.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Khulna that at least twenty activists of BNP, JCD, Jubo Dal and Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal were injured in clashes with those of AL, BCL and Jubo League in different parts of the city and under Rupsha and Dumuria thanas of the district during the eight-hour rail-road barricade.

BNP leaders claimed that four of the injured people were admitted to KMCH in critical conditions.

Movement of train to and from Khulna railway station was normal.

UNB reports from Lalmonirhat: Fifty people, including a TNO and six policemen, were injured in a clash between BNP and Awami League activists at Mahendranagar railway station yesterday.

Police said Sadar Thana Nirbahi Officer, an ASP and the OC of local police station were among the injured. They were

admitted to Sadar hospital. Witnesses said, the clash occurred at about 9 am as several thousand BNP activists equipped with bows and arrows put up barricade at the railway station to disrupt train movement.

In Chandpur, about 36 people, including 16 cops, were injured in clashes between demonstrators and police in the town during the rail-road blockade today, witnesses and police said.

Pickets and police chased each other in the areas adjacent to Akkas Ali High School, Chandpur Railway Station and Court Station in the morning, witnesses said.

In Comilla, pro-blockade activists attacked an Akhaur-bound train from Noakhali 'Samat Express' at Dharmapal rail crossing at about 10:30 am.

At about 12 noon, supporters of Awami League and BNP locked in a clash at Shashangacha in the town. The 30-minute chase and counter chase during a BNP procession left at least 10 people injured, witnesses said.

In Gaibandha, at least five people were injured in a clash between BNP and Awami League activists in the town during the eight-hour road-rail blockade.

Witnesses said, the clash took place at about 10 am near the No 1 traffic crossing of the town. Police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the warring groups.

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Dacoity in city house

Local mastans swooped on a house at Sheorapara in Mirpur of the city on Saturday evening and looted cash and valuables worth over Tk three lakh, reports UNB.

Police said about 25 gunmen cordoned off the house at 1,339 Sheorapara at about 6:30 pm and five of them entered the house with arms.

They exploded a series of hand bombs, fired several shots and damaged furniture of the house. None was reported injured.

The attackers looted Tk one lakh, 20 talas of gold ornaments, a mobile telephone set and a VCP.

Owner of the multi-storey house, Gul E Afroz, in a case filed with Mirpur police said the attackers was demanding Tk four lakh since she started construction of the building two years back.

None was arrested till filing the report at about 10 pm.

3 killed in road accidents

Three persons were killed in separate road accidents in Feni, Gaibandha and Khulna yesterday and the day before, report agencies.

UNB adds: A physician of Feni Medical College Hospital was killed in a road accident in front of the hospital yesterday.

Police said Dr Shuva Kantu Das, 30, was run over by a speeding bus while crossing the road. A case was filed in this connection.

In Gaibandha, a young man was killed when a truck hit him at Gabindaganj Bazar yesterday.

The victim was identified as Simul, 20, son of Abdur Rahman of Gabindaganj thana. A case was filed.

According to BSS: Assistant mechanical engineer of Mohsin Jute Mill died in a road accident on Jessore-Khulna Highway in Fulbarigate area of the city on Friday.

Eyewitnesses said the accident took place when a Fultala bound local bus knocked down the victim Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, 41. He died on the spot.

To stem growing corruption in Himachal

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: An Indian state government has offered rewards to people who will help in fighting corruption.

The summer resort state of Himachal Pradesh recently decided to offer 100,000 rupees (2,780 dollars) as reward for information on government officials possessing assets more than their legal income.

The newspaper said the reward money would be taken out of part of asset value seized from indicted officials.

If the value of the seized asset is lower than the promised reward then the government will pay the bounty from state funds, the daily said.

The scheme will cover public servants possessing disproportionate assets, property, unaccounted money, jewellery, securities and other precious items.

Himachal Pradesh has been hit by a string of allegations of corruption involving ministers and bureaucrats since 1985.

Several politicians and officials have been accused of smuggling, bribery and illegal logging.

10 hurt as police, BNP activists clash in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Oct 5: At least ten persons, including a police personnel were injured in a clash between BNP supporters and police this evening at New Market crossing, police and witnesses said.

Five of the injured were admitted to Chittagong Medical Hospital. Police arrested BNP activist Abul Kalam from the spot.

The clash erupted at 7:30 pm when a procession, brought out by BNP activists protesting the attack on its leaders in Dhaka today, came in front of New Market, witnesses said.

Police said a number of cocktails were exploded and some vehicles were damaged by the processionists.

Police resorted to lathicharge and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the agitators.

The clash lasted for about half an hour, witnesses said.

Ershad to visit Brussels, NY from Oct 10

Jatiya Party Chairman Husain Mohammad Ershad will undertake his second foreign trip from October 10 since his release on bail in January, reports UNB.

A JP source said Ershad will fly for Brussels en route to the USA next Friday. He will stay there for a couple of days before leaving for New York.

In his first trip, the former president went to Saudi Arabia for treatment in August last. On his way back to Dhaka, he made a stopover in London.

Ershad's visit to Brussels and New York has been described by Jatiya Party as organisational.

Tk 200cr fund

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country. He also thanked the foreign banks for their positive attitude for extending long-term industrial loans in the country.

Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Banking Secretary Syed Amir-ul-Mulk, Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfar Rahman Sarkar, Country Director of the World Bank Pierre Landell-Mills and ADB Mission Chief Bhanuphol Horayangura were present in the meeting.



Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria speaking at a meeting with chief executives of foreign banks operating in the country yesterday.

Politicisation of TUs blamed

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union workers.

The CBA general secretary told The Daily Star that neither the CBA nor the unions were responsible in any way for the losses incurred by the PDB.

The management sought union's help properly, bill collection could be enhanced easily to minimise losses, he said.

The CBA leaders also alleged that their supporters were victims of unfair treatment in postings and transfers. They however told this correspondent that while BNP was in power, certain supporters of this CBA had definitely taken advantage from the management.

The four main trade union bodies of PDB are directly backed by leading political parties of the country. PDB employees and officials feel that politicisation of the unions was the main reason behind all the problems in the loss-making organisation.

Trade union leaders say that political affiliations were determined not by politicians but by the employees themselves.

Presently, the Central Bargaining Agent (CBA) of PDB is dominated by the BNP backed Bangladesh Jatiya Biddut Sramik Karmachari Union which was elected twice; in 1992 and in 1994. But due to conflicts among the four unions, the election which was due in May '96 has not yet been held.

backed by the Communist Party) and Jatiya Biddut Sramik League. There is another union — Biddut Unnayan Board Sramik Karmachari Union — which is supported by the Jatiya Party.

The conflicts intensified when the Labour Directorate filed a case against CBA general secretary Zairul Hasan on August 15 last saying that he was disqualified to be an union activist. However, the court verdict on August 17 last went in favour of Hasan who had faced similar charges in 1981, '84 and '92.

I have been repeatedly confronted by my opponents as a result of power play inside the PDB, Hasan said.

Till 1989 there was virtually no centrally controlled CBA in PDB but there were as many as 64 registered unions at different district level offices and power plants.

An amendment to the Industrial Relations Ordinance in 1989 allowed existence of a CBA in PDB.

While the unions had always been unofficially criticised for backing dishonest employees, the management was able to get CBA's cooperation since 1992 by involving it in some official activities.

It is alleged that the unscrupulous employees had always been protected by unions and the unions were being protected by political parties. Therefore the management was never able to punish or suspend the guilty persons. This was how the PDB management had gradually become ineffective till DESA was born in 1991. Even after 1991, the manage-

ment could not be fully effective since the politically backed unions remained powerful as before.

The unions are also allegedly standing in the way of implementing decisions, posting and transfer of employees or even recruitment of new employees.

Considering these factors, the government has now given emphasis on privatising the vital components of PDB so that private management can efficiently supervise power distribution and bill collection.

New power plants will now be built mostly with private investment while the PDB will only look after the old power plants which generate about 2100 MW power now.

Donors' pressure had led the government to create the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) in late 1991 by separating a component of the PDB. Now, to the discomfort of the unions, the government has created the Power Transmission Limited Company (PTLC) to look after the power distribution network. In both the cases, losses, specially the system loss, were the main reasons why the authorities restructured the PDB.

However, the main reason behind PDB's net annual loss is not the system loss or any activity of the unions. PDB's net loss in fiscal '95-96 was about Tk 250 crore which was Tk 280 crore in fiscal '94-95. These losses are mostly attributed to a huge amount of interest on loans and exchange rate fluctuations.

One killed, claims Mannan

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the activists of Awami League with the help of police launched armed attacks in many places. He cited capital Dhaka, Chittagong, Kushtia and Narayanganj in particular.

Dhaka city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka also spoke on the occasion. Leaders and MPs including Khandaker Delwar Hossain, M K Anwar, Haris Chowdhury, Selima Rahman, Nazrul Islam, Mirza Abbas, Amanullah Aman, Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Nazimuddin Alam, Joyanal Abedin Faruque, Lutfar Rahman Khan Azad, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Rezvi Ahmed, Fazlul Haq Milon and Abul Khair Bhuiyan were present.

Bhuiyan said a large number of BNP leaders and workers took part in the 8-hour barricade programmes at five points — Rampura, Mohakhali, Gatabli, Jatrabari and Sadarghat — in the capital city.

Identified notorious terrorists under the banner of Awami League with firearms, sticks, iron-rods and bombs launched attacks at all points but Rampura, he said.

More than 200 BNP leaders and workers, including former home minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Fisheries and Livestock minister Abdullah Al Noman, received serious injuries in the attacks. Some 100 of them were admitted to city clinics and government hospitals.

The statement said that Togo's admission at a meeting in New York on October 2, followed a request from the government for membership. Togo previously enjoyed observer status at the Jeddah-based organisation.

PM: Confusion

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The Prime Minister said the government took over power in an adverse situation, when there was an economic recession. It took over with a burden of food deficit to the tune of 45 lakh tons, she told the teachers.

Reiterating government's commitment for removing illiteracy from the country within next ten years, the Prime Minister said the government attached special importance to female education as women constitute half the country's population.

Teachers Association president Principal Qamruzzaman mentioned different problems of the teachers and demanded raising government allocation for non-government teachers to 100 per cent and placing them in the national pay scale.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, Deputy Minister for Mass and Primary Education Division Jinatunnesa Talukder, Open University Vice-Chancellor Prof M Aminul Islam, National University VC Prof Aminul Islam, Association general secretary Chowdhury Khurshid Alam and senior vice-president Hena Das also spoke.

Oldest T-Rex fossil sold for \$8.3m

NEW YORK, Oct 5: A Tyrannosaurus Rex fossil "Sue" was auctioned off here for more than eight million US dollars Saturday to Chicago's Field Museum, quashing the hopes of South Dakotans who hoped to bring the bones home, reports AFP.

The 65-million-year-old fossil, considered to be the most complete of a dinosaur ever discovered, had been expected to fetch one million dollars at Sotheby's Auction House, but soared past that price in a matter of seconds.

Less than eight minutes later, the gavel came down at \$8,362,500 dollars.

Nine bidders, including the Natural History Museum of Dallas and the Natural Science Museum of North Carolina, desperately sought "Sue" named after archeologist Sue Hendrickson.

Hendrickson was working for the Black Hills Institute of Geological Research when she found the fossil, believed to be from a female T-Rex, the largest land predator known to have existed, in South Dakota in 1990.

Among the bidders was a disappointed contingent of South Dakotans who had wanted to bring "Sue" home but were unable to keep up with the institutional bidders.

Fire at textile unit in CEPZ

CHITTAGONG, Oct 5: A fire broke out at a multinational textile industry in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone today, causing damage to its materials and machinery, reports UNB.

EPZ sources said the one-and-a-half-hour blaze, originating from an electric short circuit at about 8 am, gutted stockpiled fabrics, yarn, machinery and building structure of Greyseb Bangladesh Ltd.

Firefighters, aided by the workers, put out the flame at 10:30 am.

The intending cab operators see good business ahead as there has been a growing awareness among the city's public, fed up with the polluting auto-rickshaws and chaotic traffic congestion.

The three-wheeler has a national population of 80,000, almost half of which operate in Dhaka. Replacing these non-environment-friendly vehicles, some of which are even banned in their countries of origin, is a task these prospective operators believe can be accomplished.

BNP programme

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naming the Zia International Airport, release of Opposition leaders and workers and withdrawal of cases against them.

BNP will also undertake mass contact programmes across the country from October 17 to 21 and hold street rallies and processions in cities and at the district towns on October 22.