

Govt officials visit CHT to prepare for repatriation

By Special Correspondent

Senior officials visited different areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) during the past two days to set the government machinery in motion ahead of repatriation of thousands of tribal refugees from the Tripura state of India, likely in late November or December.

Highly placed official sources yesterday expressed optimism that once the peace accord is signed between the government and the Parbatty Chattogram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) to end decades of hostilities in the CHT, the refugees are likely to return home.

Some 43,000 refugees are living in camps in Tripura. They fled their homes when peace negotiations collapsed and violence resumed in April, 1986.

See Page 12 Col 7

**PM leaves for UK Oct 23 to attend CHOGM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to hold bilateral talks with more than a dozen heads of state and government during the forthcoming CHOGM in UK, reports UNB.

She will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which will begin October 24 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka on October 23 to attend the conference. She will be accompanied by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman and Director General at the Foreign Office Ziauddin.

Queen Elizabeth II, the head of the Commonwealth, will inaugurate the 4-day conference of the loose confederation of former British colonies, to be participated by heads of government of 53 member countries.

The coming CHOGM will

See Page 12 Col 1

**No power supply in Barguna town for 28 hrs**

From Our Correspondent

BARGUNA, Oct 8: Barguna town plunged into darkness again, only after a week it experienced a power blackout for five days.

For the last 28 hours there was no power supply in the town. Local PDB officials attributed faults in transmission lines for the blackout. But they could not say when they would be able to repair the lines.

Earlier, power in the town was restored on September 30 after five days.

**Chinese Vice Premier due Oct 21**

Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Bangguo is expected to pay an official visit to Bangladesh in the third week of October. Foreign Office sources said yesterday, reports UNB.

During the three-day visit beginning October 21, Bangguo will hold an official talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

**The Daily Star on the Internet**  
<http://www.dailystarnews.com>

**Inside Today**

**Article**

Currency crisis in South-east Asia

**Can it be a Blessing in Disguise for Bangladesh?**

by Munim Kumar Barai  
Page 4

**International**

Arafat, Netanyahu vow to overcome crisis  
Page 8

**Business**

Kibria links new lending to recovery of default loans

DSE index slides on lower volume  
Pages 6,7

## 15 pc increase in gas price likely

By Sharier Khan

The government is actively considering increase of gas price by over 15 per cent from next month as per recommendations of a high powered committee, energy ministry sources said.

The increase has become inevitable as the government is committed to purchase gas from private gas field developers from April next year at a rate nearly double the current price, the sources added.

The average price of gas per 1000 cubic feet which is now Tk 55 will rise to about Tk 63 if the decision is taken. The government will purchase gas from private gas field developers at a rate of about Tk 90 per 1000 cu-

feet.

If the government does not increase the price of gas now, it will have to subsidise the gas to be purchased from the British company, Cairn from April next and Occidental from sometime later.

The announcement of new pay scale is also influencing the decision to increase the gas price, the sources claimed.

As per the National Gas Pricing Policy Formulation Committee's suggestion, the government has plans to increase gas price by about 80 per cent by 2001.

According to gas expert, the agreed price of gas between the government and foreign com-

panies was not realistic in the context of the national economy. It will be difficult for the people to pay such high price, he added.

This pricing is alright if one compares it with the price of furnace oil in the international market. As per international standard, the price of gas per 1000 cubic feet (or per unit) should be equal to at least 75 per cent of the price of furnace oil, the expert said. But this is not realistic if we consider the economic situation of the country.

However, if the government does not increase the gas price immediately, it will be severely

See Page 12 Col 3

Political activities likely to be banned at IU  
From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Oct 8: Authorities of the Islamic University may impose a ban on political activities on the campus for three months from October 10, according to sources.

The IU Syndicate is likely to take a decision to this effect at its meeting tomorrow.

The Liaison Committee, in a report prepared in consultation with student leaders and submitted to Vice-Chancellor Prof Kaysuddin recently suggested the ban, the sources said.

The Liaison Committee includes Dr Abdul Khan Khan, Proctor, Selim Toha, Internal Law Adviser and Harun-Ur-Rashid Ashkar.

The Syndicate may also take decisions to reintroduce one-day weekly holiday as demanded by students and introduce five new departments, the sources said.

Parties can hold rallies at any open space, not on streets: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here yesterday that the political parties, from now on; could hold public meetings at any playground or open space other than on roads and streets, reports BSS.

She was exchanging views with the leaders of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD-Khalequzzaman) as part of her discussion session with political parties at her office in the afternoon.

During the session they exchanged views on different issues including political, social and economic affairs of the country.

The Prime Minister said that she had given a standing order to arrest anybody, whoever he might be to be found to destabilise social order or create terrorism in society.

Sheikh Hasina said that be-

fore fixing seven venues in the capital for public meetings, the Dhaka City Corporation convened all-party meetings but the BNP did not turn up.

While discussing various issues the Prime Minister said that a buffer stock of fertiliser had been built up to keep its price stable, stop smuggling and provide it to the farmers timely at fair price.

The Prime Minister further said that because of the farsightedness and timely measures of the government there was no famine in the country for the last 15 months.

The BSD leaders appreciated the government for designating seven places for holding public meetings.

Led by party convenor Khalequzzaman the BSD delegation included, among others.

See Page 12 Col 1

**8 Anti-Corruption Bureau officials suspended**

By Staff Correspondent

Eight officials of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption were suspended yesterday because of alleged irregularities in their appointments, according to official sources.

Seven of them are of the rank of Deputy Director (DD) and one is district Anti-Corruption Officer. Of the DDs, five were based in Dhaka one in Chittagong and one in Comilla the district level officer was in Moulvibazar.

The Bureau which is under the Prime Minister's office initiated the action following an enquiry into the alleged irregularities.

**Pay Commission award breach of AL's election pledge: BNP**

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has termed the new Pay Commission award for public servants "another document of breach of election pledge" by the Awami League government.

With the implementation of the Pay Commission award, majority of the government employees, belonging to class-III and class-IV in particular, will have little rise in their salaries. The pay rise is not at all consistent with the inflation claims. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP said in a press statement yesterday.

Mannan Bhuiyan asserted that the rise in salaries won't cope with the essential com-

See Page 12 Col 7

**Clash at Mongla Port leaves 25 injured**

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 8: The situation at Mongla Port deteriorated today after clashes left at least 25 dock workers and two security guards injured in the last 48 hours.

Loading and unloading of ships remained suspended as the dock workers continued their strike demanding booking for casual workers. The strike will continue, said a leader of Dock Workers-Management Board.

At least 13 foreign ships are awaiting unloading, sources said.

The first clash took place on Tuesday noon when the Traffic Division of the Port Authority made an attempt to send a container to Khulna despite strong resistance by the striking dock workers.

See Page 12 Col 2

**Biman flights in Dhaka-Ctg route inadequate**

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 8: Biman's flights between Chittagong and Dhaka have decreased over the past few months although the number of passengers increased during the period.

Biman officials here said that shortage of aircraft forced reduction of flights in the route.

Now, only three flights a day are scheduled from the port city against a demand for more than four flights, officials said.

Two F-28 and one ATP aircraft are in operation in the route. If any of the three aircraft is grounded for any reason, the number of flights reduced further, they added.

Business people particularly foreign buyers and investors of Chittagong Export Processing Zone are worst affected.

Flights before 8 am and in the evening period are very convenient for business people who shuttle between Chittagong and Dhaka on business purpose. But there has been no such flight in the past few months.

Very often, many passengers

See Page 12 Col 6

**Bodies of eight missing fishermen recovered**

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 8: Eight decomposed bodies of missing fishermen were recovered by the owner of the missing fishing boat from the sea beach and Dhalchar of Bhola district during the last three days.

Of them, three bodies were recovered and identified by their relatives as Abdul Haq, 24, Mahafuz, 23 and Abdur Rahim, 31. They hailed from Teknaf under Bhandaria thana of Pirojpur district.

According to Parerhat Fisherman Co-operative Association, 38 fishermen were missing with three fishing trawlers and are feared dead.

Five bodies were recovered from Dhalchar were identified by the owner of the fishing trawler, Alam Mirdha, as Yusuf, 30, Forkhan, 32, Ahmad Gharani, 35, Arshed Ali, 50, and Shah Alam of Bakulbaria village under Galachipa thana of Patuakhali.



Despite repeated notices by the Dhaka City Corporation, various political parties have not yet dismantled their offices on pavements of different city roads. Two such structures — one of the ruling party at Phulbari (Right) and the other of Opposition BNP's youth front at Kaptan Bazar Market Complex — are seen in the pictures.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

**PW-21 at Bangabandhu murder trial**

## Maj Rashid ordered troops to get ready for emergency duty

Major Khandker Abdur Rashid, a few hours before the August 15, 1971, killing, ordered his troops to get ready with arms and ammunition for "special emergency duty."

Rashid, who was then the Commanding Officer of Two Field Artillery Regiment, also ordered them to take necessary ammunition, said Lance Naik (retd) Abdul Khaleque, the 21st prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, reported UNB.

Making his deposition before the court yesterday, Khaleque, 44, said CO Major Rashid along with Major Muhiuddin, Capt Bazlul Huda and

some other "unknown" army officers came to them at about 2 am and passed the order.

He said the troops took ammunition from a truck when the Battery Havildar Major, probably named Kalam, divided them into a few sections and ordered each section to get into trucks which brought them to Road-32 at Dhamondi at about 4 to 4.30 am.

The witness, who was a soldier of Papa Battery of 2-Field Artillery Regiment, said that on August 14, 1975 they had a programme of night training and the troops after having their dinner fell in at MT Garage.

By the order of the Battery Havildar Major, he said, they

See Page 12 Col 4

**India, Pakistan expel each other's visa officer**

NEW DELHI, Oct 8: India and Pakistan have expelled each other's visa officers accusing them of spying, an official said today.

Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman Raghav Bal Madhukar said Pakistan's diplomat in New Delhi, Murad Baluch, was ordered on Monday to leave, hours after Islamabad

expelled an Indian visa officer.

Madhukar described as a "total fabrication" Pakistan's charge that Indian officer Surjit Singh Chaudhury had indulged in "activity incompatible with diplomatic status." Islamabad did not officially react to the Indian visa officer.

As we were dozing on the runway Major Rashid, Major Muhiuddin, Capt Bazlul Huda and some other unknown army officers came there when the CO informed them of the special emergency duty and passed the order.

Both the witness and the CO informed them of the special emergency duty and passed the order.

See Page 12 Col 8

## Pak cricketers make history

RAWALPINDI, Oct 8: Pakistan's lower order, led by century-making debutant Azhar Mahmood, were in record breaking form as the home side scored 456 in their first innings on the third day of the first Test against South Africa today, reports Reuter.

Pakistan had been 231 for eight but numbers 8, 10 and 11 scored 128, 45 and 59 respectively.

Mahmood, resuming on 72, hit 128 not out to join fellow debutant Ali Naqvi (11) in the record books. It was first time in the 121-year-old history of Test cricket that two debutants have scored centuries for the same team in an innings.

Mahm