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PCJSS congress continues to discuss draft CHT accord

By Special Correspondent

A 'special congress' convened by the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) continued to discuss the draft agreement to end the decades-old insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) yesterday.

Our Chittagong Bureau reported quoting reports available from across the border that the congress is expected to endorse the draft accord when it winds up the meeting on Tuesday, October 14. The 'special congress' began on Wednesday at a secret location in Agartala, the capital of India's Tripura state.

It has started taking up the details of the draft. The meeting is being attended by PCJSS leaders and 'commanders' of its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini.

Sources in the CHT dispelled a leading Bangla newspaper report on Friday that the congress had already approved the draft accord, which PCJSS chairman Jyotirindriyo Bod-

See Page 12 Col 5

Khaleda visits tortured Ummehany

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday visited Ummehany and her father Abdur Rashid, who were tortured by terrorists in Feni, at Motijheel AGB colony, reports UNB.

Terrorists at Feni tortured and fired shots at Ummehany and her father. Ummehany became mentally imbalanced due to ghoulish behaviour of the terrorists, said a BNP press release.

Begum Zia was told the heart-rending story of inhuman torture inflicted on Rashid and his daughter by the terrorists, and enquired about their treatment.

She demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the terrorists.

Begum Zia was accompanied by Mirza Abbas, Mosharraf Hossain MP, Joynal Abedin Faruque MP, Giasuddin Chowdhury Khokon and Hefaz Chowdhury.

Bosnian army chief in city

Chief of Army Staff of Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, General Rasim Delic arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He is accompanied by the commander of the Bosnian Air Force Brigadier Salko Bagic and four other members of the Bosnian army.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman and other senior army officers received the guests on their arrival at Zia International Airport.

In the afternoon, General Delic visited the Shikha Anirban at Dhaka Cantonment.

He placed a wreath at the memorial and paid homage to the members of the armed forces martyred during the War of Liberation in 1971.

The Bosnian Army Chief

See Page 12 Col 3

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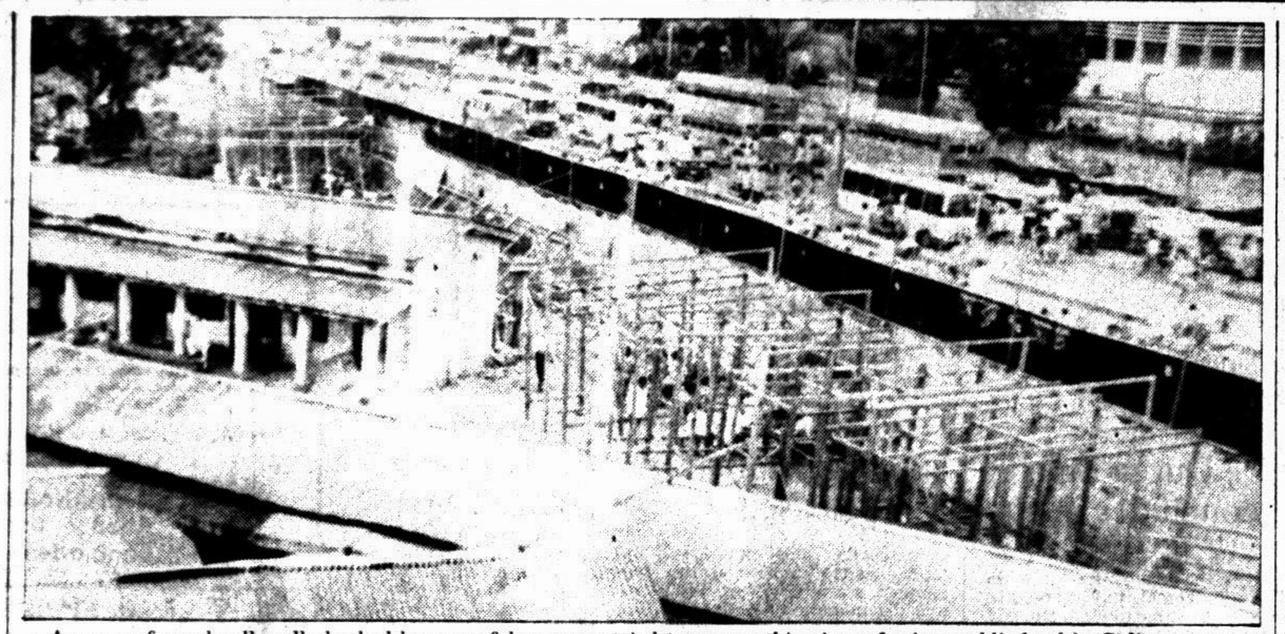
Inside Today

Article
How is Bangladesh Rated Abroad?
Column: Insight by Kabir U Ahmad
Page 4

Focus
Law and Our Rights
Judicial activism: A South Asian perspective; and HIV in prison
Page 5

International
US, 4 other states approve UN peacekeeping force for Congo
Page 8

Business
Paper industry struggles to survive
Indian minister calls for phasing out oil subsidies
Pages 6, 7



A group of people allegedly backed by powerful quarters tried to occupy this piece of prime public land in Gulistan area of the city defying a court order. But their efforts were foiled by hawkers. The area was designated for rehabilitation of the hawkers of Gulistan Puran Bazar. But trouble arose when the group tried to raise structures for a tin-shed market. The Land Ministry handed over this land to the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka for giving it to the City Corporation. The latter was to set up a market for hawkers, giving priority to genuine hawkers of the Puran Bazar. The City Corporation and the hawkers are now locked in a court case, on the list of genuine hawkers. Another case is pending before the Supreme Court between the hawkers and the Muktijoddha Samabaya Samity, who claims the land. The hearing will take place on October 21. — Star photo

TUs issuing fake number plates

2.5 lakh rickshaws plying on city roads illegally

By Morshed Ali Khan

More than 2.5 lakh rickshaws are illegally plying on the city roads which can cope with only about 80,000 such manually driven three-wheelers carrying valid licence plates, according to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) officials.

The officials said they were unable to control the number of rickshaws in the city as no high-level decision was taken to solve the problem. For a clampdown on this massive irregularity, they needed to come down on the streets and confiscate the illegal rickshaws. This could not be done until the higher echelon of the DCC took a policy decision, they said.

"There is a total reluctance on the part of the decision makers to clampdown on illegal rickshaws," said a DCC official seeking anonymity. Several recommendations from the relevant DCC department to tackle the problem have been lying unattended for several months.

One of the main reasons behind DCC's reluctance to solve the problem was that thousands of rickshawpullers in the city were registered voters and none wanted to upset them fearing loss of votes, officials said.

Taking advantage of the situation, some trade unions are making enormous somes of money by issuing fake number plates to rickshaws under their banners.

The Rickshaw Sramik League (RSL), a front organisation of Sramik League backed by the ruling Awami League, has issued over 40,000 such number plates charging up to Tk 300 for each over the last two years. Some rickshawpullers with these number

See Page 12 Col 4

Bodies of 8 train accident victims handed over to families

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Oct 11: The bodies of eight people out of 10, killed in the train accident at Singia station in the district yesterday were returned to their families after autopsy at the General Hospital here today.

The eight were identified as Billal Hossain, Jahanara Begum, Hosen Ali, Bulu, Putul Rani, Milon, Mairam and Amena. Bodies of the rest two, yet to be identified, were lying in the morgue till the filling this report.

Hospital sources said that two of the 18 persons injured in the train accident and admitted to this hospital — Taleb and Shahajahan — were released today. Others are improving.

All expenses for treatment of the injured will be borne by the Railway, as directed by Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Monju during his visit to the spot of accident yesterday.

According to Railway source, train communication between Jessore and Khulna, suspended

See Page 12 Col 2

European leaders okay ban on human cloning

HR court to be set up

STRASBOURG, France, OCT 11: Presidents and prime ministers from 40 European countries, faced with some of the most difficult moral challenges of the age, agreed today to create a new court of human rights, ban the cloning of human beings and call for the universal abolition of the death penalty, reports AP.

The 40-nation Council of Europe ended a two-day summit in this Alsacian capital with a final declaration filled with good intentions toward the continent's downtrodden and ill-treated and a new plan of action.

"It's been a step in the right direction, whether it be on human rights, social progress or peace," French President Jacques Chirac said at the close of the summit. Premier Lionel Jospin said the Council had 'intensified its efforts to move toward a Europe that is more democratic, more just and constantly concerned with human dignity."

In their final document, members of the Council, founded in 1949, reaffirmed the organisation's principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law and its role in setting the standards in these areas for all of Europe.

Most importantly, Jospin said "we have placed the protection of the individual at the heart of our work in adopting our plan of action."

The action plan calls for the establishment of the new Court of Human Rights by November 1, 1998. The leaders also endorsed plans to create an office of Commissioner for Human Rights.

The clause on cloning said the leaders "undertake to prohibit all use of cloning techniques aimed at creating genetically human beings."

They pledged to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance and to take practical initiatives for the protection of national minorities.

See Page 12 Col 8

Sramik League asked not to resume barricade on Dhaka-N'ganj Rd

Star Report

The government and the ruling Awami League's labour front have started taking actions against those responsible for ransacking the Prime Textile Mills in Narayanganj on October 2.

The central leadership of Sramik League has asked its local unit not to resume its planned road barricade today while the government has asked the local administration to maintain law and order in Narayanganj industrial belt where the barricade is planned for.

Some armed activists of Fatullah thana Sramik League allegedly led by its president Kowsar Ahmed Polash had ran-

See Page 12 Col 4

Spl JS group to help fight AIDS suggested

Some MPs and social activists yesterday suggested formation of a special interest group in parliament on the issues of AIDS prevention, reports UNB.

The suggestion came from the concluding session of a workshop where 25 MPs from ruling Awami League, opposition BNP and Jatiya Party signed a declaration of social commitment for prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Among the lawmakers are M K Anwar, Rowshan Ershad, Zinat Hossain, Panna Kaiser, Zannatul Ferdous, Akhteruzzaman, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Abul Kalam Azad and Mohammad Salahuddin.

The MPs and some experts in four groups drew some recommendations in the closing session of the workshop on "Developing Social Commitment with the Lawmakers for Prevention and Management of AIDS" at Hotel Sonargaon.

Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf attended the session as chief guest. Bangladesh AIDS Prevention and Control Programme, GOB, ACTIONAID Bangladesh and Centre for Advocacy and Social Mobilisation jointly organised the workshop.

The speakers also called for creating mass awareness at grassroots level about the deadly disease, which has taken six lives so far in the country in official count.

They underlined the need for a review and reform of existing

See Page 12 Col 7

BNP's call to make demonstration programmes a success

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has urged partymen and people to make a success the party's meetings, processions and mass contact programmes from village to city levels, reports UNB.

BNP has announced a 17-day countrywide demonstration programme demanding fixation of jute price at Tk 500 per maund, fair price of agri-products, reduction of fuel-fertiliser prices, cancellation of Gram Parishad Bill, an end to women repression, extortion, attacks on political opponents, withdrawal of false cases and release of arrested leaders and activists.

As part of the programme, BNP will hold rallies, processions and mass contacts at village market, yard, thana

See Page 12 Col 7

Truckers blocked Dhaka-N'ganj road for 4 hours yesterday protesting attack on vehicles by supporters of Shafiqur Rahman, who was shot dead at Malibagh in the city earlier in the day. —Star photo

Sramik League worker shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

An activist of Sramik League, labour front of the ruling Awami League was gunned down by a gang of unidentified assailants at Malibagh under Sabujbagh thana in the city yesterday morning.

Police said a gang of about 15 unidentified armed men shot Shafiqur Rahman alias Meser, 27, from behind while he was returning home from Malibagh *bazar* at about 9 am. Two bullets hit him on the back.

He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where on-duty doctors declared him dead. The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy. Shafiqur Rahman was a resident of Malibagh Chowdhurypara. He was an activist of Sramik League, police said.

None was arrested till last night in this connection.

Police suspected that he was killed following previous en-

See Page 12 Col 6

BHRC survey: 85pc maids in city houses tortured

By Staff Correspondent

At least 85 per cent of the female household helps in the city are tortured regularly by their employers, according to a survey by Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) recently.

The BHRC suggested necessary amendment to the existing laws or enactment of new ones for prevention of such oppression and formulation of a separate wage policy for the maids.

Statements of 123 female household helps aged between four and 30 were recorded by the BHRC from Jatrabari, Gopibagh, Narinda, Dhanmondi and Mohammadpur areas in the city. "At least 105 of them complained of frequent torture by their employers," the survey report said.

"Among those tortured, 80 per cent suffer it at the hands of their mistresses, 10 per cent are tortured by their masters and the rest by relations of their employers."

"The female household helps employed by high officials of the administration are tortured more as complaints cannot be lodged against them," the report revealed. Maids also alleged beatings by champions of women's rights, it pointed out.

Of the those surveyed, about 60 per cent said that they were 'locked in the house from outside' when the mistress left for work or some other job', the report said. "It is a unique case where woman is being oppressed by woman."

Regarding education of the maids, BHRC said "Only two out of the 123 had passed the SSC examinations, eight had studied upto class VIII, 31 upto class VII and 42 had attended primary school. The rest 40 could not even enter the primary schools."

About 60 per cent of the maids suffer from malnutrition.

Shopkeeper shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A shopkeeper was shot dead allegedly by some local youths at Moddya Badda under Gulshan thana in the city early yesterday.

Musa Mia, 30, a shopkeeper, was shot by a gang of about eight local youths as he refused to sell cigarettes on credit at about 1 am, police said.

He sustained bullet injuries in his chest. In a fatally injured condition he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Police arrested one person in connection with the incident. The body of Musa Mia was handed over to his family members after autopsy in DMCH morgue.

A murder case was filed with Gulshan thana in this regard.

Anti-graft constitution takes effect in Thailand

BANGKOK, Oct 11: A new era of democracy dawned on Thailand today as the country's 16th constitution, aimed at cleansing a corrupt political system, was promulgated, reports Reuter.

The new charter — the first people's constitution — took effect as Thailand's revered monarch King Bhumibhol Adulaydej formally gave his assent to it.

"His majesty the king said this constitution is possible because of everyone in the country, may the Thai people unite and abide by the new constitution to uphold the democratic system," parliament speaker Wan Muhammad Noor Matha told a press conference after it was approved.

The constitution is aimed at ridding the political system of rampant vote-buying and decades -old patronage system to make politics cleaner and more transparent.

It was passed overwhelmingly by parliament on September 27 with the support of many old-guard politicians who had initially opposed it but buckled under heavy pressure from the public and pro-democracy groups.

Thailand has seen 17 military coups since it switched from absolute monarchy to a parliamentary system in 1932, and the political system has been weakened by a series of shaky and short-lived governments.

Under the new charter the prime minister, members of the cabinet and parliament, senators, political appointees and local administrators must constantly declare their assets and liabilities.

The first disclosure must be made when they take office, the second 30 days after they leave office and the third one year later.

The new charter also curbs the powerful military's role in politics, revamps the electoral system and lays down tougher educational requirements for

See Page 12 Col 2

Durga Puja ends

The five-day "Durga Puja," the greatest religious festival of the Hindu community, ended yesterday with ceremonial immersion of the idols of goddess Durga, the last ritual of the festival, across the country in the evening, reports BSS.

The devotees brought out colourful processions as the idols were carried to nearby rivers and water bodies for immersion after performance of the "*bijoya dashami*".

In Dhaka, the main venues of the festival were the Dhakeswari temple and Ramkrishna Mission where thousands of devotees of all ages thronged to see the last journey of idols of Devi Durga and take part in rituals before the idols were immersed in the river Buriganga in the evening.

President Shahabuddin

See Page 12 Col 5

Immersion of the image of Goddess Durga in the river Buriganga yesterday. —Star photo

5 N'ganj yarn traders robbed of Tk 7 lakh

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 11: Armed dacoits looted over Tk seven lakhs from some yarn traders travelling on a microbus on the Dhaka-Narayanganj road today.

Police said, the dacoits riding a microbus and two motorcycles waylaid the microbus near LGED Building at Chandmari under Fatulla thana at around 3 pm. They beat up its driver and forced out the five yarn traders on board. They took away the money from the traders and decamped with the traders' vehicle leaving them on the street.

The traders were coming from Shahjadpur, Pabna, to buy yarn from Narayanganj. The severely beaten microbus driver was admitted to a local clinic.

A case was lodged with Fatulla thana but none was arrested in this connection till late last night.

Che's remains in Cuba

HAVANA, Oct 11: A small casket containing the remains of Ernesto "Che" Guevara went on public display in Havana today, giving Cubans a chance to say farewell to the legendary guerrilla who was killed 30 years ago, reports Reuter.

From 8 am, the public filed past the casket at the Jose Marti Memorial in Revolution Square.

It marks the start of a six-day mourning period in Cuba that culminates in a funeral ceremony in the Central city of Santa Clara on October 17, when Guevara will be laid to rest at a specially built mausoleum.

Guevara's family and his admirers in Cuba were never able to mourn beside the finality of a coffin until now.

The Argentine-born physician, president Fidel Castro's right-hand man in the rebel struggle that led to Cuba's 1959 revolution, was captured by Bolivian troops on October 8, 1967, while leading an abortive guerilla uprising there.

He was executed the following day near the town of La Higuera. His corpse was taken to nearby Vallegrande and buried in a secret mass grave.

See Page 12 Col 1

Abdullah Sheikh shot dead

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 11: A regional leader of Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's party was shot dead along with two security guards in the troubled Indian state of Kashmir, police said here today, reports AFP.

Abdullah Sheikh, 42, was gunned down today by suspected Muslim militants in the town of Akingam 60 kilometres (37 miles) south of Srinagar, they said.

The six masked gunmen fled with the security guards weapons. There were no claims of responsibility.

Zimbabwe beat Bangladesh

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh posted the highest-ever total runs against any Test playing country but could not avoid a 48-run defeat to Zimbabwe in the tri-nation President's Cup at the Nairobi Gymkhana Club yesterday.

Chasing a huge Zimbabwean total of 305 for four Bangladesh were all out for 257 in 47.1 overs.

The total bettered the 210 made against Pakistan during the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka last July.

See Page 12 Col 3

US envoy, WB mission chief call on PM

The US Ambassador to Bangladesh John C Holzman called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Ganabhaban residence yesterday evening, reports BSS.

The World Bank Resident Representative in Bangladesh Pierre Landell mills also called on Prime Minister at her official residence in the evening.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr S A Samad, Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman and Secretary of Economic Relations Division Dr Moshiur Rahman were present during the meetings.