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## Working Group meet begins in city D-8 countries urged to fight poverty unitedly

A two-day meeting of the D-8 Working Group on Rural Development and Micro Credit began in the city yesterday to work out a common formula for poverty alleviation in the member countries of the new economic bloc, reports UNB.

Inaugurating the meeting at a hotel in the morning, LORD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman emphasised the extensive rural development and proper implementation of micro-credit programmes for total poverty alleviation.

He identified some sectors where substantial progress are essential to bring about total emancipation of the rural people.

The sectors include access of people to jobs and physical infrastructures like roads, electricity, irrigation and drainage, access to production assets such as land, credit, shelter, safe drinking water, basic education and health services.

"It's the function of the rural development and micro-credit sectors to address all these components of rural development," Zillur Rahman said.

Bangladesh, as the coordinator of the working group of D-8, is hosting the meeting which is being attended by representatives and officials of all member countries.

D-8 or Development-8 was launched at a summit in Istanbul in July this year. It groups Bangladesh, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt and Nigeria.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury was the special guest at the inaugural function. Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman was present.

Rural Development Secretary Syed Marghub Moshed read out the key-note paper at the session.

Zillur Rahman, in his speech, called upon the D-8 member countries to work together to fight poverty and bring about a development which will benefit millions of their people.

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The Dhaka City Corporation has found a convenient dumping ground for garbage beside the Demra Road near Jatrabari crossing, polluting the area with stinking smell. — Star photo

## PSC to be modified

From Page 1

buyer for Bangladesh's pipeline gas is India, which holds promise to narrow a yawning trade gap between Bangladesh and the large neighbour.

Meanwhile, the debates were alive over "one block one company" formula among the bidders as well as the Petrobangla officials.

The government said the formula was intended to "maximise participation" of companies.

Critics of the plan point out that the plan contradicts the competitive bidding rules.

Proponents of the formula argue that it would put a brake on big companies trying to get as many blocks as possible, which would put them in a position to dictate terms.

For instance, as they point out, one company vying for several blocks would end up with at least six to seven, giving it the chance to "play with the country's hydrocarbon reserves".

An official said that the Energy Ministry plan was to keep oil and gas exploration in Bangladesh above the international oil politics.

"Some of the companies participating in the bidding have had enough strategic strength in the global market to retard Bangladeshi potentials if they want," one source explained.

The Ministry believes that a maximum participation of foreign companies would kill chances of one single company calling the shots.

Official sources said that there were several companies in the race whose financial strength or technical capability did not match their work programmes, which had been given the highest weightage in the evaluation.

"In some cases, they submitted unrealistic plans for which they may be, will come up with the required bank guarantee," one source said.

The "one company one block formula" is one that leaves room for awarding contracts to companies which are not capable.

There are other loopholes in the whole process that give companies scope to manipulate and run away with quick profits without investing any resources.

Once the PSCs are signed, the companies can partially sell out their stakes to others — with a consent from the government. Cairn and Occidental have brought in Halliburton, Brown and Root and Unocal in this manner.

So, if the government had really intended to stop one company from getting hold of several blocks employing this formula, any company interested to get several blocks would buy over shares from companies, smaller or not capable of doing the job.

"In fact, the US company UMIC which had signed PSC for a block in the Bay of Bengal nearly a year ago is now negotiating with Shell for a partnership deal," one source said. "Now what will happen to these companies?"

Some insiders said the "one company one block" theory was devised to dole out favours to political and other heavyweights who are acting as local agents of these foreign companies. "It is just that everybody will have a piece of the big cake."

But whether it will serve the national interests in the long run is the big question being asked now.

## Sylhet Pourashava to be turned into city corpn: PM

SYLHET, Oct 20: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called upon all to join the government's development work to accelerate the war of economic emancipation and rid the country of poverty, hunger and exploitation, reports UNB.

"The main target of the government is rapid economic growth to change the lot of commonman," she told a huge rally at the local Madrasah ground in the morning.

The Prime Minister, who was on a two-day visit to greater Sylhet, earlier laid the foundation stone of the Sylhet Divisional headquarters.

Addressing the public meeting, she announced massive development programmes for the Pourashava will be turned into a city corporation in due course.

Hasina said Tk 1000 crore has been allocated for the development of Sylhet division, including its communication infrastructure.

The local Osmani airport, she said, will be upgraded as an international one and steps has been taken so that Airbus can land in the airport by next June.

Ridiculing a reported remark of opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia that "the tear gas seems to be harmful and should be tested", she said these tear gas shells were imported during the rule of BNP.

From Sylhet, the Prime Minister flew to Sunamganj and addressed a public meeting at the local Government Jubilee High School in the afternoon.

## 3 held for looting JMB construction equipment

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 20: Three people were arrested from Bhuapur thana of Tangail district today in connection with the looting of equipment from the barge of a Korean company, reports UNB.

Police said Shamsul Alam 30, Hazrat Ali 28, and Mohammad Hamud Ali 30, were arrested from their respective villages.

Construction equipment, including mixture-machine, monitor and wireless were looted from the barge engaged in the construction of Jamuna Bridge Saturday.

## Share trader shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was shot allegedly by his business partner at Goran in the city yesterday noon.

Habibur Rahman, 32, a resident of Khilgaon's Tilipara, sustained bullet injuries on his back when an armed man opened fire on him at Goran Bazar, police said.

Habibur, a share trader, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Quoting the FIR, Shabujbagh police said Darpan, a business partner of Habibur, shot him over a business related feud.

Habibur's wife Afroza Akhter lodged a case with Shabujbagh thana.

## Classes at CU resume

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 20: Classes at Chittagong University resumed today as student unrest eased, campus sources said.

The All Party Students Unity (APSU) which laid a siege at the university's Road No 1 from October 16 for three days, postponed its next programmes.

However, classes were not held for the last two consecutive days after CU was reopened on October 18 following a closure for over one and a half days.

## 170 immigrants escape from Malaysian detention camp

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 20: At least 170 illegal immigrants escaped from a detention camp by climbing over a fence, police said today, reports AP.

Seventeen were captured since they escape late Sunday night and the search is on for the others, police official Rahim Jaiin told the national news agency Bernama.

A few hundred illegal immigrants are being detained in the camp surrounded by a high wire fence — one of about a dozen such camps in Malaysia.

Those who escaped the camp in Semenyih, 40 kilometres (24 miles) south of Kuala Lumpur, included 118 Burmese, 21 Bangladeshis, 11 Indonesians, 10 Indians and 10 Pakistanis, Bernama said.

Police have set up road blocks, sent in more men and deployed tracker dogs.

Two years ago, 12 illegal immigrants from Ghana escaped from the camp after overpowering several guards. They were all recaptured.

## House tutor gets life term for raping girl

CHITTAGONG, Oct 20: A special tribunal on Repression on Women and Children today convicted one person and sentenced him to life in prison for raping his teenage girl student, reports BSS.

The case in brief is that Amin Hossain, house tutor of the victim Parveen Akhter, 12, kidnapped her from Nasirabad Primary School where she studies in class four, promising to marry her on May 5 last year.

The house tutor made Parveen captive for four days and allegedly raped her, according to a press release.

The other accused was acquitted of the charge as he was not found guilty by the court.

SPP Mohammad Ilias Mia appeared on behalf of the state while Advocate Ehsanul Haq Hena and Advocate Pradip Kumar Bhattacharya pleaded for the accused.

## EBL's case

From Page 1

leged communication between the banks as authorised under Section 119 of the Bank Companies Act, and hence no prosecution could lie against them for writing the said letter and no offence of defamation under Section 500 was committed by writing the letter.

It was submitted that the case filed by Beximco Limited was an abuse of the process of court to harass the Chairman and Directors of EBL and as such the same should be quashed.

In course of the hearing it was pointed out that Beximco Limited had made a statement in the petition of complaint which was false as it contradicted Annexure-A to the complaint.

## Alleged terrorist Kartik held from DU campus

By DU Correspondent

Police arrested Kartik, an alleged terrorist, from the Dhaka University campus early yesterday morning, police said.

Kartik, an outsider on the DU campus, was association with a student organisation at DU and introduce himself as a student of the university, police added.

## Children in jails

From Page 1

police or jail to look after the children nor the policemen showed interest in informing them after holding a child.

Meanwhile, a senior jail official said they tried to arrange accommodation for the children in jails as per the existing laws. "But we can hardly go by the laws because the facilities are virtually non-existent," he added.

Official sources said a number of joint meetings involving the ministries of Social Welfare, Home Affairs and Law and Parliamentary Affairs had recently discussed different issues relating to juvenile delinquency.

Following the meetings, one of which was held last week, the police and social welfare directorates directed their field level staff to strictly abide by the codes prescribed for handling cases concerning juveniles.

Section 49(2) of the Children Act, 1974, says, "A court, on remanding for trial a child who is not released on bail, shall order him to be detained in a remand home or a place of safety." It termed a remand home an "observation centre".

"The juvenile offender is kept in this remand home for the interim period between the taking up of the case for hearing and the disposal of the case... During the stay in remand home the child can enjoy the privileges of participating in different games and sports and can continue his studies but vocational training cannot be given during the short period," the act says.

## Admn asked to be neutral

From Page 1

assistance from the administration, neither for helping her party nor for manipulating anything in her favour.

"Speaking on law and order situation, she said, a tough law is imperative as many a time terrorists escape through the loopholes of laws."

The Prime Minister called upon the opposition to return to parliament and help enact a stringent law to combat terrorism and women repression.

Hasina hoped that the opposition would go back to parliament to help introduce such laws which can effectively curb the menacing social ills.

"None should patronise terrorism; the government and the opposition should reach an understanding for enforcing laws against it," she said.

The Prime Minister, however, observed that terrorism cannot be stamped by merely introducing law and giving punishment to the culprits. "Moral values will have to be developed."

The Awami League chief put much of the blame for the social and moral rot on the BNP politics of "anarchy". BNP in the past had patronised anti-social elements to aggrandize its political interest, to hang onto power, and they are also doing so now."

Terrorists, she said, do not belong to any party. "Whoever the terrorist is, the law will take its own course," she added.

Sheikh Hasina said the main target of her government is to ensure peace and security for the people, so it wants to strengthen the local government.

The Prime Minister instructed the authorities to ensure quick disposal of cases. "As people's faith has been restored,

## Road accident

From Page 1

the wheels of a bus while she was crossing road in the morning.

In another accident, Abu Bakar Siddique, son of Haji Majan of village Dupchachia under Sadar thana was killed when his motor cycle collided with a bus at Dupchachia at noon.

Both the bodies were sent to hospital for autopsy.

## C'wealth confce PM leaves for Edinburgh tomorrow

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka tomorrow night for Edinburgh to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), reports UNB.

The four-day conference of the heads of 54 Commonwealth countries begins Friday in Edinburgh to focus on winds of democracy sweeping across the world.

Queen Elizabeth, as the head of the Commonwealth, will inaugurate the conference of the loose confederation of the former British colonies.

The main themes of CHOGM are good governance and human rights as well as development of trade and investment.

Hasina will be accompanied by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman and Director General (IO) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Ziauddin.

In Edinburgh, the Prime Minister is expected to hold bilateral talks with heads of government of friendly countries.

## 60 BNP MPs demand judicial probe into 'attempt on Khaleda's life'

Sixty BNP lawmakers yesterday called for judicial enquiry into the attempt on the life of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Begum Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

In a statement, they condemned the government for what they said making the enquiry a farce and alleged that the attempt of killing the Opposition Leader is a part of conspiracy of the government to stop the BNP's activities.

The signatories to the statement included Prof AKM Badruzzaman Chowdhury, M Saifur Rahman, Oli Ahmed, Khondaker Delwar Hossain, Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, K M Obaidur Rahman, Sheikh Razzak Ali, Barrister Nazmul Huda, M K Anwar and Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar.

## 'Govt handout against Sayeed Iskander untrue'

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has strongly protested the "false campaign" against Sayeed Iskander, younger brother of Begum Khaleda Zia, through official handout, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, he said the official handout published in newspapers against Sayeed Iskander is completely baseless, false and untrue.

Demanding withdrawal of the comments of the handout, Bhuiyan said Sayeed Iskander was a freedom fighter, an ex-army officer and a leading businessman. "He has no connection with politics."

But he (Iskander) fell victim to conspiracy, harassment, false cases and propaganda of this vindictive government because he is the brother of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, Bhuiyan observed.

"The handout is the part of that revengeful politics and conspiracy," he added.

The BNP secretary general said the fact is that Sayeed Iskander on Sunday was going to London for treatment which he described at a press conference.

Bhuiyan said he (Iskander) has no intention or necessity to meet with any so-called killers in London as mentioned in the handout.

## Proceedings of case against ex-minister Zahidul Haq stayed

A High Court division bench yesterday issued rule upon the government to show cause as to why former deputy minister ABM Zahidul Haq should not be dropped from a special tribunal case, reports UNB.

The rule was made returnable within 6 weeks.

## Khandker Mosharraf MP granted anticipatory bail

A High Court Division bench yesterday granted anticipatory bail to Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, MP, of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, in a criminal case known as 'Sipem Case', reports BSS.

The bench comprised Justice Mohammad Mozammel Huj and Justice Mohammad Awlad Ali.

The same bench granted anticipatory bail to BNP leaders Mirza Abbas, Gaeshwar Roy, Nazrul Islam Khan and Kazi Abu Basheer and JCD chief Shahiduddin Any in two criminal cases.

## 'These tear gas shells bought in '94-95 fiscal'

The Police Headquarters yesterday made it clear that the tear gas shells currently used in Bangladesh are also used internationally to disperse unruly mobs and illegal gatherings whenever necessary, reports BSS.

A press release issued by the Police Headquarters said that its attention was drawn to a report published in yesterday's newspapers in which the tear gas shells were termed as "dangerous."

"Each tear gas shell contains 25 grams of CS contents, which produces temporary irritant gas," it said.

The press release further said these tear gas shells were bought in the fiscal 1994-95 and were received by a committee on November 9, 1995. Moreover, these shells have been used for quite a long time.

## Chinese Vice PM

From Page 1

member delegation, including businessmen.

The front-ranking Chinese leader is coming here on the first leg of his trip to several South Asian countries. It will also take him to five other Asian countries, including Vietnam.

His entourage will include three cabinet ministers, five state and vice ministers and some senior officials.

Soon after arrival, the Chinese leader will hold formal talks with the Bangladesh Foreign Minister which will cover the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

Bangguo, one of the Chinese Vice-Premiers in charge of economic and development affairs, will predominantly exchange views with Azad on expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The visit is likely to be featured by signing a soft loan agreement for 2,000 Yuan (Chinese currency) with Bangladesh.

Beijing has so far given about 700 million US dollars in terms of grants, loans and credits.

The Chinese Vice Premier is expected to call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

## Quota restrictions

From Page 1

export market for Bangladesh garments, which fetched a total of 3.1 billion US dollars in export income in 1996-97 fiscal. Bangladesh ranks the fifth largest apparel suppliers to the US market.

"We have the potential to export more in the US market," he said and disclosed that the government wants to raise the export income to 10 billion US dollars by the year 2000.

Referring to the recent achievement regarding GSP from the European Commission with relaxed conditions, he said it was an excellent work done upholding the interest of the country and the exporters, maintaining close ties with the European Union.

He informed that a request would be made to the Commission to allow Bangladesh to use the quotas in the next year, which the country could not be able to avail due to lapse of time this year.

He also informed that he would lead a Bangladesh delegation to the World Trade Organisation meeting in Geneva on October 27 and 28 and would try to obtain duty free entry for goods from poor countries to the developed nations.

## BNP demonstration

From Page 1

headquarters on the day.

BNP's demands include an end to conspiracy against Chittagong Hill Tracts not giving corridor to India in the name of transit, making the parliament effective, immediate implementation of the pay-commission and solution to the persisting water-gas-power crisis, introduction of voter identity card and reorganisation of the Election Commission.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan and city Convener Sadek Hossain Khoka urged all, including the BNP's thana, ward and unit level committees to make the programme a success to strengthen the ongoing movement.

Meanwhile, an emergency joint meeting of the leaders of Dhaka city BNP and the party's front organisation will be held at a central office at 11 am tomorrow.

Presidents, general secretaries/conveners of central committees of BNP's front organisations and city BNP convener and joint conveners will attend the meeting.

Joint secretary generals of the party executive committee have also been requested to attend the meeting to be presided over by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, said a party press release yesterday.

## Khaleda

From Page 1

their foreign masters", remarked the BNP chief who called the mosquitoes in CHT "expansionists."

Protesting the proposed treaty to resolve decades-old crisis in the CHT, Begum Zia emphatically said, "No uneven treaty beyond the Constitution would be accepted." "We're determined to protect every inch of land of the country. Any accord must guarantee equal rights for all living in the areas."

Speaking further on the ongoing negotiation with the PCJSS, the former prime minister wondered how the government was holding talks with "those who killed thousands of people taking arms and training from across the border."

Begum Zia accused the AL government of hatching "cold-blooded conspiracies" against the state one after another, ruling the country in an autocratic manner, jeopardising the national independence and sovereignty, speaking lies, repressing the people, ruining the economy by destroying the local industries and violating the Constitution.

"They must step down immediately admitting their failure."

The Opposition leader once again alleged that the ruling party turned the parliament ineffective by obstructing the Opposition from speaking on the floor of the House and criticised the Treasury Bench for "failing" to form the JS committees in the last 16 months. "They're unwilling to let the parliament function."

Earlier, former UPP leader Ashraf Hossain Borda of Rangpur along with some of his party members joined the BNP at a simple ceremony.

BNP leaders Fazur Rahman Patil, MP, Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Shamsuzzaman Dudu, MP, Motiur Rahman and JCD general secretary Habibur Naji Sobel also spoke on the occasion.

Rangpur district convener of BNP Rahimuddin Bharasha presided over the function.

## Showcouse on govt

From Page 1

caretaker government," even there was no room for the President to hold any ministry", he said.

"The President usurped the power of the Parliament by levelling allegation of insubordination and mutiny against the petitioner arbitrarily and unilaterally and bypassing the procedures laid down by law and by terminating his service without giving him right to defend his character and military honour," he submitted.

Yusuf further submitted, "The President bypassing the orders to put the petitioner in Military Custody and to release him without putting him on trial by Court-Martial, subverted the ends of law and justice and caused irreparable loss to the petitioner."

"The series of notification substituting and cancelling one by another are all informal, irregular and vitiated by mala-fide and irregularities," he said.

Discarding the argument of Barrister AR Yusuf, Attorney General KS Nabi submitted that any activities of the President cannot be challenged before any Court inasmuch as the President is immune.

Referring to the decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court made in Rear Admiral MA Mostafa, former Chief of Naval Staff, he submitted that no court should interfere with any matter of the Armed Forces.

He further submitted that the court should consider the consequence of the writ petition.

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

From Page 1

early on August 15.

Earlier, CO of 2nd Field Artillery Major Khandakar Abdur Rashid, CO of 1st Bengal Lancer Syed Farooqur Rahman and Major Dalim, before handing out the ammunition to the soldiers, addressed the joint troops calling for ousting the government, he said.

Regarding murder of Abdur Rab Serniabat and his family members, Yasin said, "I witnessed the killings standing on the verandah facing the door of a room of his house where the massacre took place."

"Soldiers numbering 80 to 90, at the order of officers, entered the house of Serniabat with a formation that means closing," he said, adding army personnel were also posted outside the house during the operation.

He informed that there was no challenge when the military personnel entered the house. However, he saw some police personnel while coming out.

"I didn't tell the IOs that we entered the house of Serniabat firing, I told him Major Rashid Chowdhury and other officers entered the house firing," he said responding to a suggestion.

He said: "I came to get wit-

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

ness on the incidents that took place from 4 am on August 15. I didn't see what happened at Bangabandhu's house, but I witnessed the killings that took place at Serniabat's official residence."

When asked about the November 1975 incidents in Bangladesh Army, in a sequel to the August 15 military putsch that massacred President Sheikh Mujib and his family, the witness said he heard later that sepoys killed officers in other units at the cantonment.

"But no such incident took place in my unit. Major Muhiuddin sir is here (in the dock). He can also say this," said Yasin who was in the 2nd Field Artillery from January 10, 1974 to December in 1975.

In this regard, the witness said discipline was maintained both by officers and sepoys at that time. Officers made directives and all the sepoys carried out those.

"The high standard of discipline was also maintained in 2nd Field Artillery from August 14 evening to August 15 morning when we went to the Radio Station," he said replying to another suggestion.

Asked whether they had their own security or not while

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