

CHOGM begins in Edinburgh today

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) begins today in Edinburgh in Scotland in the United Kingdom, reports UNB.

Queen Elizabeth, as the head of the Commonwealth, will inaugurate the meeting of the Commonwealth leaders, the first in the UK in 20 years.

Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair and head of governments of 53 other Commonwealth member countries, including Bangladesh, will join the three-day meeting.

This year, for the first time, the meeting will have a specific theme — Trade, Investment and Development: The Road to Commonwealth Prosperity.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is attending the conference of the loose confederation of former British colonies for the first time. She will meet the

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PM arrives in Edinburgh

EDINBURGH, Oct 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived here today to attend the four-day Commonwealth heads of government meeting beginning tomorrow, reports BSS.

Ambassador Ian McLumey, representative of the secretary of state for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of British government received the Prime Minister at Edinburgh airport.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to the United Kingdom A H Mahmood Ali and other senior officials of the mission were also present at the airport to receive the Prime Minister.

From the airport the Prime Minister drove in ceremonial motorcade to the George International Hotel where she will be staying.

A few hours after her arrival, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had an audience with Queen Elizabeth II at the Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh.

SSC exams '98 from April 16

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations, 1998 under five education boards of the country will begin on April 16, reports UNB.

The examination schedule will be announced later on, said an official handout yesterday.



The arched roof of Kamalapur Railway Station tells of the architectural genius behind its structure that makes it one of Dhaka's prominent landmarks. Read this week's cover story on pride of the city Kamalapur Railway Station.

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Police keep a watch as government employees hold a rally inside the Secretariat yesterday demanding revision of the new pay scale. — Star photo

Demand for pay scale revision, change in office timing

Govt employees defy ban, hold rally inside Sectt

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of government employees, defying a ban, yesterday staged a demonstration at the Secretariat premises, demanding revision of the new pay scale and change in office timing.

Police stopped the demonstrators near the Finance Ministry and pushed them back to the 20-story building, averting a clash by allowing them to stage a rally.

Nearly two-hour demonstration began from the 20th floor where the employees gathered as part of their mass contact programme to protest the new pay scale and office hours.

Their number swelled as the marchers paraded each floor. A revised SRO issued yesterday, 22-pages of it containing the new pay scale and allowances, had incensed the employees.

They were also agitated due to alleged failure of the authorities to prepare the October salary bill as per the new scale despite earlier announcement to this effect.

The bill is normally prepared by the 20th each month. But the SRO for the new scale was issued on Wednesday and was replaced by a revised one yesterday. But it failed to soothe the employees.

Addressing the employees, their leaders urged the government to review the pay scale and other benefits and revert back to the old office timing. Otherwise, they would unilaterally announce change in office hours as they did during General HM Ershad's rule, they warned.

The leaders also urged the government not to go give indulgence to whom they termed its favourites in a rival organisation of employees, led by Syed Momtazuddin.

They urged the authorities to withdraw the new SRO and re-see Page 12 Col 6



An illegal structure housing a local BNP office near Bangshal crossing was demolished by the DCC yesterday. — Star photo

Demolition of BNP office protested: 30 vehicles damaged

By Staff Correspondent

At least 30 vehicles were damaged when a group of people went on the rampage at Bangshal crossing in the city to protest the demolition of a makeshift BNP local office by the authorities yesterday afternoon.

Police arrested eight persons during the violence that continued intermittently for about three hours from around 2:30 pm.

Several persons suffered minor injuries in the incident, witnesses said.

Local people and police said violence broke out after a DCC demolition team, as part a current drive, dismantled an 'illegally set up' BNP office at North-South Road near Bangshal crossing.

The protesters, said to be a section of local BNP activists, threw bricksbats at police and clashed with them. Chase and counter chase between the BNP men and police created panic in the area.

Besides, they barricaded the busy North-South Road, halting traffic movement for about half an hour. They set fire to tires and rubbish on the road.

The protesters first tried to resist the DCC team's operation but failed as a large number of police personnel were deployed. Later, police were reinforced and brought the situation under control at about 5:30 pm.

DCC demolition drive 70 illegal structures dismantled so far

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka City Corporation's demolition drive of illegal structures belonging to different political parties enters its twenty day today with more than 70 such structures dismantled in the city, official sources said.

They said, in addition to dismantling illegally constructed party offices, they also brought down illegal shops and businesses along the Rokeya

Sharoni and Dholpar area near Sayedabad.

An official of the DCC's Estate Department said there were an estimated 300 such party offices in the city. When asked whether they could bring down all of them within the scheduled October 27 deadline, the official replied that by that time they would only complete the first phase of the operation.

"We will start the second phase of the operation by the first week of November," he said.

Another DCC source said that there was a serious lack of coordination between the police and the DCC. In Demra, the DCC demolition team had to turn back because the local police station could not provide support.

"Only two policemen and an officer were assigned to accompany us to demolish structures situated at notorious places at Demra," said the source, adding that the team turned back postponing its action. The same situation arose in Sutrapur and Tejgaon previously.

When asked whether they communicated with the PWD, Railway, Housing and Roads and Highways departments to see Page 12 Col 3

It's a terrorist govt: Khaleda

KALIHATI (Tangail), Oct 23: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Begum Khaleda Zia said the government has no sympathy for the people as it was not elected by the people, reports UNB.

"It came to power through conspiracy.... it has no responsibility towards the people," she said while addressing a public meeting organised by local BNP at Kalihati College ground this afternoon.

The meeting was organised to mourn the deaths of 60 people in the worst ever road accident in the country that occurred on the Tangail-Mymensingh highway on October 14.

Begum Zia held the government responsible for the tragic accident and demanded due compensation for the victims. See Page 12 Col 7

Press report on pay scale false: Finance Ministry

The Ministry of Finance has requested all not to create confusion among the public by giving fictitious and wrong information involving the expenditure due to the enhancement of salary and allowances in the new pay scale, reports BSS.

An official press release issued in the city yesterday said that attention of the Finance Ministry has been drawn to the news item under the headline "the government officials and employees are not getting salary in November as per the new pay scale" published in a Bengali daily.

The press release described as "faultry and baseless" the estimate of the government's additional expenditure in the financial year 1997-98 for the implementation of the new pay scale as mentioned in the news item.

It termed as imaginary and fictitious the contention of the report which showed Tk 533.46 crore as additional expenditure for pay increase in the year 1997-98.

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Narsingdi Jubo League leader killed

NARSINGDI, Oct 23: A leader of the Awami Jubo League was killed by his opponents at Satipara in the town this morning, reports UNB.

Family sources said Sanjib Kumar Saha, 28, was attacked and stabbed by two men near Surovi cinema hall at 5:15 am when he went out for morning walk.

The sources said, a rickshawpuller found Sanjib lying on the ground and brought him home.

Sanjib, son of late Haripada Saha of Kawripara of the town, was joint secretary of the See Page 12 Col 2

DU students damage vehicles

By DU Correspondent

Students of the departments of Chemistry, Bio-chemistry, Micro-Biology and Applied Chemistry of Dhaka University went on the rampage and damaged at least ten vehicles on the street in front of Curzon hall yesterday.

The student damaged vehicles after police barred them from forming a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club and drove them away firing tear gas shells and charging batons.

They tried to form a human chain demanding amendment to Section 13 (1) of the Drug See Page 12 Col 2

HC rejects writ against promotions to post of army chief

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday summarily rejected a writ petition filed by Major General Moinul Hossain challenging the government notifications giving Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim and Mahabubur Rahman promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General and appointment to the post of Chief of Army Staff successfully.

Moinul Hossain, now posted as Bangladesh High Commissioner to Australia and New Zealand, stated in his petition that he being the senior most army personnel was superseded twice, first on August 27, 1994 and later on June 6, 1996.

The division bench of the High Court comprising Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman and Justice Abu Sayeed Ahmed heard the petition yesterday and the day before and passed the order rejecting the writ petition.

By two notification dated August 27, 1994, Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and appointed to the post of Chief of Army Staff.

Subsequently, by two other notifications dated June 30, 1996, Mahabubur Rahman was promoted and appointed to the same rank and post respectively.

In his writ petition the petitioner prayed for a rule nisi calling upon the respondents to show cause as to why the notifications dated August 27, 1994 and June 30, 1996 should not be declared to have been issued without any lawful authority and as such void and having no legal effect.

He further prayed for an order calling upon the government to show cause as to why a directive should not be issued for considering his promotion as per Rules prescribed under the Bangladesh Army Regulations and Rule.

He also prayed for staying further promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General till disposal of the rule.

The secretaries of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lt General (rtd) Nasim and Lt General See Page 12 Col 3

5 rover scouts killed in road accident

By DMC Correspondent

At least five students were killed and another 34 were injured when a Sylhet-bound minibus plunged into a roadside ditch at Jaipur, Dhamrai early hours yesterday.

The victims identified as Mohammad Aminul Islam, 20, Mahfuzur Rahman, 19, Javed, 18, Moniruzzaman, 17, and Masum, 16, died on the spot. The injured were admitted to the nearby hospitals and clinics.

Relatives at the hospital said that 39 students of different colleges and madrassahs were going to Lakkatura, Sylhet from Meherpur to attend the 9th Asia Pacific Rover Meet.

All the bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

BSS adds: Bangladesh Scouts sources said that the

driver of the 36-seater bus with 37 scouts and four officials lost control when he was trying to give side to a truck coming from the opposite direction.

As a result, the bus skidded off the road, and fell into the ditch killing five scouts on the spot and injuring the others.

One of the injured with severe wounds in his head was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Others were given first aid at Dhamrai Thana Health Complex and later at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The drivers of both the ill-fated bus and the truck escaped after the accident which took place at around 5:10 am. A case was filed with Dhamrai Thana in this connection.

President Shahabuddin See Page 12 Col 3

PW-28 tells court

People were barred from attending Mujib's janaza

"Thousands of people" were barred by army men from attending the janaza of President Sheikh Mujib at his ancestral village Tungipara before he was buried beside graves of his parents, reports UNB.

Abdul Hye, who dressed the country's founding president in 'kafan' with sarves from the local Red Cross Hospital on August 16, 1975, said this in his deposition to the court as the 28th prosecution witness in Bangabandhu Murder Case.

He said army personnel had asked for burying the blood stained body of Bangabandhu "as it is", but later allowed them to perform funeral rites, like ablution and janaza, for a Muslim.

Hye made his emotional deposition to the special ghat of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court at Nazimuddin Road yesterday. He was followed by PW-29 Naik (rtd) Shehabuddin.

Replying to a defence lawyer,

Hye said there were thousands of people outside the compound of Bangabandhu's home. "But they were not allowed by the army personnel to attend the janaza. A few people who were on the home compound attended it."

"The compound of Bangabandhu's village home is not so small. Perhaps all the people who had rushed could not be accommodated for the janaza. But 2,000 to 2,500 people would have taken part in it had they been allowed," he said.

All the defence lawyers, except Khan Saifur Rahman for Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman, declined to examine PW-28 Abdul Hye after he described the tragic funeral of Sheikh Mujib.

Hye, 44, now engaged in agriculture, told the court that he was then a ward boy of Sheikh Sahera Khatun Red Cross Hospital in Tungipara of Gopalganj district.

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Taka devalued again

By Staff Correspondent

Taka has been devalued once again by upto 50 paisa against the US dollar with effect from Sunday next, Bangladesh Bank announced yesterday.

This time the devaluation will have different effects on buyers and sellers of dollar as the spread between the BB's buying and selling rates has been widened from Tk 0.20 to Tk 0.30 per dollar.

As a result, buyers will have to pay 50 paisa more and sellers will get 40 paisa more from Sunday.

The BB's buying and selling rates of dollar from and to authorised dealer banks will be Tk 44.85 and Tk 45.15 respectively.

The resultant change in the middle rate will be from Tk 44.55 to Tk 45 for a dollar.

According to the BB, the devaluation has been made to maintain the incentive for remittances from Bangladeshi nationals working abroad and also competitiveness of exports from Bangladesh, keeping in view the recent trends in exchange rates of currencies of major trade partners and competitors.

The market had been expecting a major devaluation of taka for some time ever since Pak-

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2,500 Bangladeshis return from Saudi Arabia

A total of 2,500 Bangladeshis returned from Saudi Arabia by Biman and Saudia till yesterday morning and another batch of 3,500 was awaiting deportation, reports UNB.

This was stated at an inter-ministerial meeting here, chaired by State Minister for Labour and Manpower, which reviewed the return of 'illegal' Bangladeshi workers from the Kingdom.

The meeting was told that besides regular Biman flights from Jeddah, the New York-Dhaka flight was changed into New York-Jeddah-Dhaka to facilitate return of Bangladeshi workers.

Introducing a special flight in the route is under process, said a representative from Biman in the meeting.

The meeting was informed that the Foreign Ministry has See Page 12 Col 3

2 muggers held, Tk 6 lakh recovered

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested two alleged muggers and recovered Tk six lakh in cash from them on the Airport Road at Khilkhet under Cantonment thana in the city yesterday afternoon.

The arrested persons, identified as Yusuf, 18, and Suruj, 22, were caught by police when they were escaping with the money after stabbing an unidentified man near the crossing at the Zia International Airport (ZIA).

The two, reportedly members of a gang of four, were heading towards the city in an auto-rickshaw after snatching the money.

Police quoted local people as saying that three of the gang members attacked the man as soon as he got down from an air-conditioned premier bus at the ZIA crossing at about 3 pm. The muggers had followed the man after he withdrew the cash from a bank in the city's Gulistan area.

The muggers used a razor to stab the man in the shoulder and fled the scene in an auto-rickshaw which was parked near the crossing.

Police Sub-Inspector (SI) Hasimuddin, riding his motorcycle, started chasing the auto-rickshaw after a some local See Page 12 Col 6

Youngmen block Dhaka-Aricha Rd to protest students' death in accident

By Staff Correspondent

A group of young men blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway for about an hour after a teenage student was killed in a road accident on the highway at Aminbazar, a city suburb, yesterday morning.

The angry youths, mostly students, pelted bricksbats damaging a number of vehicles near the Gabtoli bus terminal.

Police said the agitated students from a technical training institute at Mirpur put up the barricade to protest the death of Zakir Hossain, 18, at about 10:30 am.

Savar police said Zakir died when he was going to the institute in a bicycle. A Savar-bound speeding bus from Dhaka ran over Zakir killing him on the spot.

Mirpur police said a number of youths hearing the news rushed to the spot in a truck and staged a demonstration there.

Later, after the intervention of the institute officials and police eased the situation.

A case was lodged in connection with the road accident with Savar thana. However, police could not arrest the driver or seize the bus till last night.



Chamak, a cultural organisation, held a dance programme at the Engineers' Institution in the city yesterday to mark its second founding anniversary. — Star photo