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Breakthrough in CHT peace talks likely

Special Correspondent

Negotiators from the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) are expecting a breakthrough in their talks with the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS).

Highly placed sources said after three hours of talks with PCJSS leaders yesterday that NCCHT negotiators were hopeful of signing an agreed minutes to end the insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The talks, seventh in the current series, began at the state guest house Padma at 3-30 pm. The NCCHT delegation was led by Chief Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasnat Abdullah while the PCJSS team was headed by Jyotirindriyo Bodhipriyo Larma alias Shantu Larma.

The talks were adjourned at 6:30 pm till 10:30 am today after one and a half-hours of exclusive meeting between Abdullah and Shantu Larma.

Sources said the two sides picked up the unresolved issues dogging an agreement, following pressure by the PCJSS for some amendments to the draft agreed upon earlier by Shantu Larma.

Abdullah slipped out of the state guest house without meeting the waiting newsmen outside. No one from the NCCHT was on hand to brief the newsmen although indications were given earlier from the guest house that there would be a briefing at 7 pm.

Meeting sources said that Abdullah tried to persuade the PCJSS leaders to stick to what was agreed earlier at the last meeting.

He also reportedly explained the government's inability to concede further.

Hardliners in the PCJSS are now demanding a series of concessions including more authority for a proposed Regional Council to administer police and manage the lands in the three hills districts comprising CHT.

These run contrary to a brief press statement by Shantu Larma at the end of the last round of talks on September 19. He had said that they agreed on a draft accord which would be signed at the next meeting

See Page 12 Col 8

NCCHT convener and Chief Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasnat Abdullah and PCJSS chief Joytirindriyo Bodhipriyo Larma led their respective sides at the talks on CHT that resumed in the city yesterday. — PID photo

Ten more HC judges likely to be appointed

By Mizan Ali

Ten more judges are likely to be appointed soon in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, according to highly placed officials sources.

There are 35 judges, 11 Division Benches and 12 Single Benches in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court now.

The Supreme Court Bar Association recently requested the President for appointment of more judges. They also met the Law Minister. The sources said that there has been a backlog of cases in the High Court.

Court rooms are being readied for the judges to be appointed. The Judicial Administration Training Institute and the Law Commission, both house in the old High Court building now, have been asked to vacate it for this purpose, the sources said.

Hajj expenses for each pilgrim fixed at Tk 79,409

The expenses for a pilgrim to perform the holy Hajj under government management in 1998 have been fixed at Tk 79,409, reports UNB.

Those who had deposited Tk 16,000 as advance house rent should deposit Tk 63,409 more in their respective banks by December 10 to meet the air fare and miscellaneous expenditure, an official handout said in the city yesterday.

Those who did not deposit Tk 16,000 by October 30, could now submit the 'Hajj form' to the DC's office after depositing Tk 79,409 in government selected banks by December 10, it said.

See Page 12 Col 8

Body of Sadia exhumed for autopsy

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26: The body of 5-year-old Sadia was exhumed today by police in presence of a magistrate and taken for autopsy.

The body was later buried at Hamzarbagh after autopsy, police said.

Sadia was rescued from the

See Page 12 Col 7

TOMORROW

Established in 1964, the Dhaka Zoo has in recent times been in the news due to a number of untoward incidents which have occurred in quick succession. The recent one is the death of Zakir at the tiger's paw. Read this week's cover story of SWM on the inherent problems of the Zoo and the Zakir tragedy.

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

Inside Today

Article

Negotiations on Chittagong Hill Tracts: Confusion Galore

Column: Currents and Crosscurrents by M M Rezaul Karim Page 4

Business

Lifting of EU fish ban will be delayed

DSE index experiences 10-point fall Pages 6,7

Supplements

Today's 16-page issue of The Daily Star contains two supplements—one on BUET Convocation '97 on Pages 8&9 and the other on 'Real Estate' on Pages 13, 14 & 15

BNP, other parties to resist CHT accord against 'nat'l integrity'

By Staff Correspondent

BNP and six other political parties at a joint meeting yesterday warned that vigorous agitation programmes including hartal would be announced to resist any accord on the CHT "surrendering national integrity and interests and violating the Constitution".

The meeting, held at the Minto Road official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad, accused the government of 'concealing the anti-national provisions in the so-called peace accord' by adopting 'evil tactics'. It also expressed deep concern at the government's 'secret talks' with Shantibahini and urged the people to remain alert against the 'secret treaty' being drafted in the name of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and

See Page 12 Col 6

$ 2.9b capital inadequacy of banks

WB for 'relentless' drive against top 20 loan defaulters

Star Report

The World Bank has suggested that a 'relentless' drive from the highest level of the government should be made against the top 20 defaulters of all banks for recovery of loans.

It has also suggested a firm deadline — December 15 — to regularise the defaulting loans through 'significant' downpayment.

The suggestions came in the World Bank's aid memoir on the Commercial Banks Restructuring Programme. A high-powered team recently reviewed the country's banking sector and prepared the report.

The WB has also suggested bringing pressure on the loan defaulters, legal actions and out of court settlements to recover the bad loans.

About 30 per cent of the total portfolio of commercial banks are bad debts.

The Bank has also suggested that in two to three years, the state-owned banks, after having reformed, should be privatised 'one at a time.'

Dwelling on the 'problem banks,' the report said the current capital inadequacy of the banks at 2.9 billion US dollars

See Page 12 Col 3

Jubo Dal worker in Jessore shot dead

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Nov 26: A Jubo Dal activist was shot dead by a group of miscreants at the truck terminal in the town last night.

According to police, Alim, 30, was called out of his house and brought to the truck terminal by an unidentified person. The miscreants then fired several shots, killing him on the spot.

The killers then stabbed him several times to be sure he was dead.

Previous enmity was the reason for the killing, police said. Alim was wanted by police in a number of cases.

A case has been recorded with Kotwali police in the connection.

None was arrested till filing of this report.

Haripur power plant

Cabinet body may review project today

Star Report

The purchase committee of the cabinet may review today the Haripur 360 MW Power Project in the private sector, official sources said.

The Power Cell of the Energy Ministry had finalised evaluation of the bids for this project nearly three months ago and sent its recommendations to the ministry to finalise the bidding procedure. But the project was not forwarded to the purchase committee earlier for final clearance.

A leading American power company — AES — was found the lowest bidder out of four. It offered a 20-year levelised power tariff of 2.73 US cents per kilowatt hour, a rate less than half the power tariff of the Power Development Board (PDB).

If the purchase committee now clears the project, the Energy Ministry will formally announce the name of the lowest bidder and proceed for final agreement with it.

Meanwhile, the future of the Meghnaghat 450 MW Power Project remains uncertain as

See Page 12 Col 7

Police raid 3 RU halls: 17 Shibir activists arrested

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Nov 26: Seventeen Shibir activists were arrested during a pre-dawn police raid at three residential halls of Rajshahi University today.

The raid was made following Monday's clash between Shibir and BCL activists which left 35 people injured including 10 policemen.

The halls which were raided are Molihar, Sher-e-Bangla and Suhrawardy halls.

Police also filed three separate cases with Motiher Thana against 43 Shibir leaders and activists, including university unit president Abdul Jabbar and Secretary Moinul Hossain

See Page 12 Col 3

Bankers express concern

Al-Baraka Bank unable to file case against big defaulter

By Inam Ahmed

Bankers yesterday expressed their surprise and concern over the development in the Al-Baraka Bank regarding filing of a criminal case against a big loan defaulter.

Al-Baraka Bank had proceeded to file a criminal case against Abul Khair Litu of Bengal Group for issuing cheques which subsequently bounced to adjust over Tk 200 crore of defaulting loans.

But the bank could not file the case as a sub-judge court in Dhaka had earlier issued an injunction, barring filing of any criminal case against the business magnet. This fact was revealed at a bankers' meeting with the Governor of the Bangladesh Bank Lutfar Rahman Sarkar yesterday.

The bankers viewed that this is a unique case in the sub-continent where a bank could not go to court to seek redress of a criminal action of a client, according to sources present in the meeting.

They felt that such a blanket coverage against any court action was most unusual and constituted a violation of the fundamental right of every citizen to file criminal case against anybody.

They said if such injunctions and stay orders continue, it would be extremely difficult for the banks to run the banking business.

The bankers then requested the Governor to raise the issue with the proper authorities so that amendments are brought to limit the timeframe of injunction to a maximum 30 days.

The bankers also pointed out that regularising the big defaulting loans is impossible to achieve if such legal problems persist.

They also mentioned the mounting political pressure on bankers whenever they go for realising loans from defaulters, especially the big ones.

But the Governor assured them of the government's good intention of fighting the defaulters and said political interferences would not take place in this regard.

The bankers also expressed their dissatisfaction over the increase in bank rate saying this would affect their lending programme.

But the central bank officials said there is no relation of bank rate to lending rate. Commercial banks hardly use

See Page 12 Col 3

Freak clouds warm up weather

By Shehab Ahmed

A 'freak' cloud from north-eastern India's Meghalaya state warmed the weather a bit yesterday, at a time when air normally starts getting cool, preceding the winter, meteorologists said.

"It is unusual but not abnormal," Sajedur Rahman, Director of the Met office told The Daily Star, commenting on the sudden rise in temperature yesterday.

Thin cloud covered the sky almost all over the country making the weather a bit warm.

The clouds will disappear in a day or two, paving the advent of the winter, he said.

However, the winter is likely to be normal this year despite some "abnormalities" featured by a bone-dry October and almost rainless November that sent hordes of insects invading homes and crop fields.

The air starts getting cool from mid-November and by this time.

Food import from SAARC states

Govt plans to withdraw radiation tests

By Morshed Ali Khan

The government is planning to withdraw the last remaining barrier — radiation tests —to import of food items from SAARC countries.

As a result, huge quantities of rice, wheat, corn, fruits and vegetables will pour into the country unchecked.

According to sources in the commerce ministry, the proposed Import Policy for 1997-2000 has prescribed a total withdrawal of radiation tests on food items imported from India, Pakistan, the Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

In the current Import Policy, effective since 24 April 1996, exporters are required to declare the origin of the item at any point of entry.

The declaration would ensure that the items were produced in countries exempted from the radiation test.

Businessmen and commerce ministry officials feared that the loophole could attract unscrupulous traders to send radiated food items into the country.

Cheap and easily available radiated food items are reportedly on sale in some East European countries.

"Bangladesh has been a dumping ground for many substandard consumer items," said a commerce ministry official. "It is most likely that these traders would take all the advantage. All they need to do is to make a simple declaration."

Most of the food items are currently imported from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Other SAARC countries export little or no food to Bangladesh.

The government's 1996 decision to withdraw the mandatory radiation tests on imported food items from SAARC

See Page 12 Col 8

Nirmal Sen hospitalised, medical board formed

By Staff Correspondent

Nirmal Sen, a veteran journalist, was admitted to the intensive care unit of the PG Hospital in the early hours of yesterday when his condition deteriorated after sixty-one hours of his 'fast unto death' at the Jatiya Press Club.

He went on fasting to press full payment of dues and benefits to the journalists and employees of the Dainik Bangla, Bichitra, Anonda Bichitra and of the Bangladesh Times as per law. The publications were owned by a state-run trust.

The publications were closed by the government on October 31 and all journalists and employees were asked to resign a day earlier. Some of them had taken retirement. But most of them declined, demanding full termination benefits.

Doctors had put him on intravenous saline dip at 3 pm on Tuesday. When his condition

See Page 12 Col 4

Export of raw jute nearly doubles

By Rafiq Hasan

The export of raw jute significantly increased this year following 'government's initiatives and lobbying' in international markets, exporters said.

According to figures available from Bangladesh Jute Association (BJA), an organisation of raw jute exporters and shippers, 8.94 lakh bales of jute were exported till the end of October this year, almost double that during the corresponding period last year. The export figure for the period last year was 4.54 lakh bales.

Export earning from jute upto October this year increased by Tk 38.49 crore over that last year. Tk 168.24 crore in foreign currency was earned this year as against Tk 129.75 crore last year.

China became the biggest buyer of jute from Bangladesh with 3.90 lakh bales upto October. It purchased 1.08 lakh bales during the period last year.

BJA leaders said that the volume of export might go up to 10 lakh bales by the year end.

Jute traders and sources in jute industry said the government's 'prompt decisions and

See Page 12 Col 1

Farooq Sobhan new BOI Executive Chairman

Former Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, who is now on LPR, has been appointed Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment (BOI) for one year on contract basis, cancelling his LPR, reports UNB.

Besides, an official handout yesterday said, some more changes have also been made in the administration.

Textile Secretary K M Izazul Haq has been transferred to the Industries Ministry and BOI Executive Chairman Anisul Haq Chowdhury made a member of the Planning Commission.

Retired judge Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman

See Page 12 Col 2

Cong backtracks over its threat to topple UF govt

NEW DELHI, Nov 26: India's Congress (I) Party here today backtracked over its threat to topple the ruling minority coalition, saying it was willing to compromise following a seven-day political crisis, reports AFP.

The Congress, which last week threatened to withdraw support after a coalition party was implicated in the 1991 assassination of former Congress premier Rajiv Gandhi, announced it wanted to reopen peace talks with the government following a two-hour leadership meeting.

Senior Congress leader Priyaranjan Das Munshi, a former federal minister, said: "We have sent a letter saying that we are willing to talk with them about the situation."

Until the face-saving announcement, due to be discussed by the multi-party ruling coalition later today, India looked set to face national polls for the second time within 18 months.

The congress last week said it would withdraw its backing if Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's coalition failed to act immediately on its ultimatum that the DMK Party be ousted from the alliance.

The coalition, however, a loose alliance of more than a dozen parties kept in power by the Congress for the past seven

See Page 12 Col 1

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড
ঢাকা

বিষয় ঃ যোগানদারের ক্ষেত্রে উৎসে মূল্য সংযোজন কর কর্তন প্রসঙ্গে

আপনি নিশ্চয়ই অবগত আছেন যে, অর্থ আইন ১৯৯৭-এর মাধ্যমে "যোগানদার" [সেবার কোড S০৩৭.০০] কে মূল্য সংযোজন করের আওতায় আনা হয়েছে। কোটেশন বা দরপত্রের বিপরীতে বিভিন্ন সরকারী, আধা-সরকারী, স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠান, বেসরকারী সংস্থা (এনজিও), ব্যাংক, বীমা বা লিমিটেড কোম্পানীর নিকট মূসক আরোপযোগ্য পণ্য সরবরাহ করেন, এমন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান "যোগানদার" হিসাবে গণ্য হবেন। উক্ত সেবা গ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে সেবা গ্রহণকারী কর্তৃক উৎসে মূল্য সংযোজন কর আদায়, কর্তন ও জমা প্রদানের বিধান করা হয়েছে। উৎসে কর্তনকারী বা আদায়কারী আদায়কৃত মূসক ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে "১৪-মূল্য সংযোজন কর" খাতে সরকারী ট্রেজারীতে জমা প্রদান করবেন। তবে ক্ষেত্রবিশেষে তা বুক ট্রান্সফারের মাধ্যমেও জমা প্রদান করা যাবে। যোগানদারের ক্ষেত্রে মূসক ধার্যের জন্য সংকুচিত ভিত্তি মূল্য নির্ধারণ করায় নীট মূসকের হার হলো ৩% (তিন শতাংশ)। উৎসে আদায়কারী কর্তৃপক্ষ সেবার বিপরীতে প্রদত্ত টেন্ডার মূল্য বা বিল থেকে নির্ধারিত হারে তা আদায় করে সরকারী ট্রেজারীতে জমা প্রদান করবেন।

উৎসে কর্তনের বা আদায়ের বাধ্যবাধকতা সত্ত্বেও কোন প্রতিষ্ঠান বা ব্যক্তি তা করতে ব্যর্থ হলে যিনি সেবা মূল্য বা কমিশন পরিশোধ করেছেন সেই ব্যক্তির নিকট থেকে ২ শতাংশ অতিরিক্ত করসহ উক্ত কর এমনভাবে আদায় করা হবে যেন তিনি মূসক আইনের অধীন একজন সেবা প্রদানকারী।

এ বিষয়ে আরও বিস্তারিত জানার জন্য আপনার নিকটস্থ যে কোন মূল্য সংযোজন কর কার্যালয়ে বা নীচের ঠিকানায়/টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন।

ক) প্রথম সচিব
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খ) দ্বিতীয় সচিব
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ডিএফপি-২৬৭০০-২৫/১১ জি-২৯০১

'Ensure meaningful privatisation'

Economists and experts at a discussion in the city yesterday appeared unanimous that the privatisation should be continued, but its process and quality should remain in the right direction, reports UNB.

At the same time, they said, an investigation should be carried out into the post-privatisation situation of the disinvested units to ensure sustained and meaningful privatisation.

"If the diseases remain common, privatisation of new units would not work," said noted economist Prof Rehman Sobhan, while pointing out that half of the units privatised earlier were either closed down or became sick.

"The units to be privatised in future would face the same fate, if the problems are not addressed," he told the discussion titled "Nationalisation Revisited: Privatisation Rejoined" at the CIRDAP auditorium.

American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham), Rotary Club of Dhaka Buriganga and Rotary Club of Dhaka New City jointly organised the discussion.

Pierre Landell-Mills, the World Bank Country Director, saw the matter from a completely different angle. He said he found no wrong with the closure of such units as the assets are transferred to other areas.

Landell-Mills also contradicted the claims that all the denationalised state-owned enterprises (SOEs) did not perform well or their performances marked decline compared to their pre-privatisation period.

"The performance of the privatised enterprises significantly increased," the World Bank official said, adding that the average capacity utilisation of the units increased with infusing new investments.

He said some 635 million US dollars have been spent for the renovation and expansion of the disinvested units. The employment declined by 18 per cent, which showed that they were over-staffed, he added.

"But if the current expansion plans are implemented, the actual employment would rise

See Page 12 Col 4

Ruling unlawful: Sajjad Ali Shah

SC Quetta Bench suspends Pak CJ

QUETTA, Nov 26: Two Pakistan Supreme Court judges today ordered the suspension of Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, who is at the centre of a constitutional battle with the government, report agencies.

The president's 1994 appointment of Shah to the top judicial post "is held in abeyance," a two-judge Quetta Bench of the Supreme Court ruled.

Shah "shall cease to perform judicial and administrative functions and powers of the Chief Justice of Pakistan until further order," Irashd Hasan Khan and Khalilur Rehman declared.

The interim decision was given on a petition challenging Shah's appointment on the grounds that he was not the most senior judge when promoted during the government of former premier Benazir Bhutto. The petition was filed by Assad Ali, a businessmen in the Baluchistan capital of Quetta last month.

According to Pakistani law the chief justice must be the senior most judge, which Shah was not when he was appointed to head the Supreme Court, said constitutional lawyer Aslam Chishti.

It was not clear whether the law required him to step down.

Some constitutional lawyers said yes, while others said no.

But if he is suspended it

See Page 12 Col 7