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SAARC summit in Colombo likely from July 28

By Staff Correspondent
SAARC countries are now actively considering participating in the next Summit in Colombo on the revised date of July 28 to July 30, according to diplomatic sources in Dhaka and Colombo.

"Bangladesh has accepted the revised date and confirmed its participation. However, we are awaiting confirmation by all other countries to make the new date effective," a senior official of the foreign ministry said last night.

Earlier, Sri Lanka worked on two sets of dates — July 9-11 and July 20-22 — for holding the 10th SAARC summit.

Five kidnapped ex-Shantibahini men released

RANGAMATI, June 14: Five former Shantibahini men, abducted on Saturday, were released today from a village in Kauhali thana of the district, reports UNB.

They were abducted from a rally at Chilachhari organised in favour of the CHT peace accord.

When contacted, PCJSS leaders said they were released this afternoon and reached here safely by a car.

The released men were identified as Satyajit Dewan, Ashapurna Chakma, Tarun Kanti Chakma, Sonarajan Chakma and Kishore Kumar Chakma.

Earlier, Dipankar Talukder MP along with DIG of police Chittagong Range, DC and SP of the district visited the spot.

10 arrested in connection with city gunfight

By Staff Correspondent
Police yesterday arrested 10 people in connection with the gunfight in city's Ibrahimpur area on Saturday.

At least five people including two women received bullet injuries during the gunfight between two rival groups.

The arrested were identified as Bahar, Hazi Ismail, Jasim, Mizan, Zahirul Islam, Shamim, Ariful Islam, Rezaur Rahman, Shawkat and Kamruzzaman, police said.

Two local groups traded several rounds of bullets during the clash over taking control of the area, police added.

Hands of schoolboy chopped off

By Staff Correspondent
A gang of armed youngsters severed both the hands of a schoolboy from the wrist at Goran in the city yesterday.

The victim Uzzal, 15, a resident of East Goran at a student of class ten in Shantipur High School was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Hospital sources said the gang called Uzzal out of their residence in the morning, took him to a nearby place and suddenly attacked him. They

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Hasina-Vajpayee talks tomorrow Delhi may propose joint stand on disarmament

From Pallab Bhattacharya
NEW DELHI, June 14: India will convey to Bangladesh the need for a harmonised stand by the two countries on a time-bound complete global nuclear disarmament during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's talks with her counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee here Tuesday.

Vajpayee is likely to explain to Hasina the imperatives of asking the five recognised nuclear power states to agree to a timeframe for dismantling nuclear arsenals across the world to help achieve global disarmament in a meaningful way, official sources here said today.

Hasina is the first head of government to visit New Delhi since the multiple nuclear tests at Pokharan last month. Delhi is expected to explain its stand that India rejected a third party mediation in its problems with Pakistan.

Vajpayee may also seek to dispel fears that tests by India and Pakistan will fuel nuclear arms race in South Asia. He may assert during the talks that nuclear threat should not be viewed as an issue confined to a particular region but in the global perspective, the sources

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Star striker Gabriel Batistuta (R) of Argentina scoring the match decider against Japan at the Municipal Stadium, Toulouse yesterday. — AFP photo

Yugoslavs win by lone goal

SAINT ETIENNE, June 14: Yugoslavia's return to the world scene after six years in the wilderness got off to a rocky start as they struggled to a 1-0 win in their World Cup opener against Iran here today, reports AFP.

The Yugoslavs had to wait until the 73rd minute to break the deadlock and it took a free kick to do it.

Sinisa Mihajlovic's 22nd goal shot curved round the wall and keeper Nima Nakisa, out of position, was helpless.

For Mihajlovic, it was the easiest of goals.

The 29-year-old is famous in Italy, where his free kicks have won a string of matches for Sampdoria.

Twelve of his 13 goals in the series have come from free-kicks, and this season alone he has scored three times, hit the post 10 times and created eight goals.

But Yugoslavia, who call themselves the 'Brazil of Europe', showed little South American skills as they came up against a determined Iran, playing in their first finals since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The Iranians, who qualified by beating Australia in a play-off, refused to be overawed by Yugoslavia and nearly took the lead after only nine minutes when a dangerous corner fired over by Javed Zarincheh was

nearly deflected in the Yugoslav goal by defender Goran Djorovic as he tried to flick it away for a corner.

Iran packed the midfield, making it difficult for the Yugoslavs to play up the middle.

Yugoslavia finally threatened the Iranian goal after Nakisa and defender Mohammad Khakpour got in a mix-up over who should collect a half-hit shot by Real Madrid striker Predrag Mijatovic that was going wide.

The two Iranians crashed into each other and the ball went over for a corner.

From the corner Goran Djorovic rose high above the Iranian defence only to see his header crash back off the cross bar. The 31-year-old midfielder Hamid Estili managed to kick the loose ball away.

Iran continued to press forward and 20-year-old Mehdi Mahdavi, the youngest player in the squad, fired in a low hard shot from the edge of the area that brought the best out of Ivica Kralj.

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WORLD CUP '98

Today's matches

Group G
England vs Tunisia, 6:30 pm BST
Romania vs Colombia, 9:30 pm BST

Group F
Germany vs USA, 1:00 am BST

Proposed duty increase Reconditioned car importers go on indefinite strike

From Nurul Alam
CHITTAGONG, June 14: Importers of reconditioned vehicles started a wildcat strike today closing down their showrooms and refusing to take delivery of vehicles now lying at Chittagong port sheds protesting increase in duty in the proposed budget.

Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicle Importers and Dealers Association called the strike for an indefinite period.

Customs sources said the government is being deprived of Tk one crore revenue earning a day because of non-delivery of vehicles.

Over 1,000 imported reconditioned vehicles are now lying at port sheds and another 1100 are due to arrive at the port on June 19, customs sources said.

BARVIDA sources said, with the reduction of depreciation rate to 40 per cent from 60 per cent and increase in supplementary duties ranging from 80 per cent to 170 per cent depending on capacity of vehicles, the price of a vehicle has now increased by at least Tk 1,50,000.

Commissioner of Chittagong Customs House Abul Kasem

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Khulna BNP leader gunned down

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, June 14: A local BNP leader was gunned down by a group of unidentified assailants at Royermahal on Saturday night.

Police identified the dead as Rafiqul Islam, 42, a former chairman of Rudagara Union Parishad under Dumuria thana and a first-class contractor enlisted with the Water Development Board.

According to witnesses, a gang of four gunmen stopped his motorcycle while he was returning home from Royermahal. They fired two shots on his head and abdomen from a point-blank range.

The BNP leader succumbed to his injuries soon after being admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

His companion, Afzal Hossain, 38, who was with the deceased, escaped unhurt. But he has been absconding since the shoot-out. Police are looking for him.

Police said the deceased was the complainant of the murder case of his father-in-law Tozammuddin. Tozammuddin, also a BNP leader of Dumuria, was hacked to death in 1992 allegedly by activists of an outlawed party.

Police suspect that the alleged killers of Rafiqul Islam are among the 30 FIR-named accused in the murder of his father-in-law who were recently released on bail.

A case has been recorded with Sonadanga thana in this connection today.

Loadshedding Soccer fans in Ctg threaten hartal on June 17

CHITTAGONG, June 14: The football fans will enforce a half-day hartal on June 17 in greater Chittagong if uninterrupted power supply is not ensured by June 16, reports UNB.

This was decided at a meeting of Football Premi Parishad (Association of soccer fans) held here with its convenor Ashik Md Shakeel in the chair.

The meeting alleged that the residents of Chittagong could not watch the World Cup football matches smoothly because of planned loadshedding.

The meeting said they had submitted a memorandum to the Chittagong Electricity Supply Authority demanding uninterrupted power supply during the World Cup matches. But, the authority is yet to take any step in this regard.

The Parishad urged all political parties to support their hartal call.

Case against Golam Azam

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, June 14: A case was filed against Jamaat-e-Islami Chief Golam Azam in the court of a first class magistrate here today for his recent statement made at a public meeting in Dhaka allegedly threatening Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The case was filed by advocate Golam Masud Babul under section 120 (kha) /114 of Bangladesh Penal Code.

A press release issued by Golam Masud said, the Jamaat Chief threatened the Prime Minister by saying, "She is to bear the consequences of 15th August of 1975."

Golam Azam's statement was made at a public meeting held at the Ramna Batmul on July 9, the press release said.

The judge ordered a first class magistrate to submit a report after conducting enquiry.

'Massive response to long march' BNP plans to intensify agitation step by step

By Special Correspondent
BNP has claimed a massive response to its long march towards the CHT despite a reign of terror unleashed by the government and pledged to intensify its agitation to force scrapping of the 'black' CHT accord and to protest government's misrule.

"Despite swoop on our activists and supporters, seizure of vehicles and attack on those on the barricaded road, the march evoked response from people throughout the country, thousands joining it," party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said yesterday.

Addressing a press conference at a city hotel, he said that the spontaneous response of the

See Page 12 Col 4

BNP yet to join parliament Discussion on suppl budget begins

Parliament yesterday began discussion on the supplementary budget for the 1997-98 financial year, with the opposition BNP yet to join the session.

The original revenue budget in the 1997-1998 fiscal was Tk 14,544 crore, while the revised budget stood at Tk 14,500 crore.

Five MPs — four from the ruling Awami League and one from the Jatiya Party — took part on the first day's discussion on the supplementary budget.

The AL legislators thanked the Finance Minister for the supplementary budget that did not ask for any fresh allocations. But the JP lawmaker questioned the transparency of the present budgetary process.

"This is for the first time in the history of Bangladesh that the Finance Minister has sought no additional amount of money to supplement the originally calculated budget a year ago," said ruling party MP Akhtaruzzaman.

Echoing Akhtaruzzaman, a ruling party whip Mizanur Rahman Manu said: "The credit for a saving of Tk 44 crore from the originally estimated budget goes to the Finance Minister."

He also said that the "close supervision and prudent management in the public expenditure by the government of Sheikh Hasina has made the impossible possible."

None of the ruling party MPs, however, mentioned the Tk 600 crore cut in the originally announced Annual Development Programme for the 1997-98 fiscal year.

Jatiya Party lawmaker Golam Mohammad Kader, found the present budgetary process to be "absolutely funny."

The party in power starts

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Budget to boost industry, export, says FBCCI

By Staff Correspondent
The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) yesterday hailed the proposed budget for 1998-99 and said if it is properly implemented the country's industry and export would get a boost.

"The budget would boost industrial production, expand our export base, revitalise the capital market and result in increased investment and facilitate poverty alleviation", the FBCCI said.

However, it pointed out a number of steps which it felt would have adverse effect.

"Extension of VAT on CI sheet and MS rod and cement at retail level will hit the common man," the FBCCI said in its reaction. "The supplementary duty imposed on motor car, jeep, station wagon and reduction of depreciation from re-conditioned vehicles need to be rationalised."

FBCCI said introduction of VAT at retail level in certain sectors must be implemented after due consultation with the business community, represented by FBCCI.

It also questioned the *modus operandi* suggested for solving

problems in sick industries. "This would not be effective", it said.

FBCCI further said the limit of taxable income should be raised from Tk 60,000. The increase in tax at source for transfer of immovable property from six per cent to nine per cent is too drastic, it said.

FBCCI said reduction of duty on built up trucks and buses to 15 per cent from 22.5 per cent will "effectively destroy" the domestic assembling industries.

"Different treatment of import-See Page 12 Col 6

Govt, BNP may hold fresh dialogue

By Nazmul Ashraf
A fresh round of dialogue is likely to be held between the government and the main opposition BNP.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury plans to mediate the proposed dialogue between representatives of the Treasury and the Opposition benches in the Jatiya Sangsad to help iron out various contentious issues between the two sides.

The Speaker revealed his plan when a four-member BNP delegation led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury met him at his chamber yesterday afternoon.

Chief Whip of the Opposition Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, and MK Anwar, MP, were the three other members of the team.

Meanwhile, the BNP Parliamentary Party meeting was again adjourned yesterday without any decision on the date of their joining the on-going budget session of the Sangsad yesterday. BNPP will now meet again at 3 pm today.

After the 65-minute meeting, both the Speaker and the BNP leaders informed a group of newsmen about the planned dialogue.

The date for the dialogue will be fixed after consultation with the government side, the Speaker said.

"I'm planning to convene a meeting of the 11 wise men, offer them lunch and repair their mood", a smiling Speaker said indicating a fresh dialogue similar to that of February 27-March 2. The ruling Awami League and the BNP had reached an agreement on March 2.

"The planned meeting may discuss the rate of progress and the difficulties in the implementation of the March 2 accord", the Speaker said.

On resolving the dispute over implementation of the accord, the Speaker said, "I don't have any power to execute the agreement). Maybe, I've some influence which I intend to utilise."

The BNP leaders said they had elaborated discussion with the Speaker in a cordial atmosphere.

The talks covered the March 2 agreement that incorporated

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Depression over Bay

A well-marked low over north-west Bay and adjoining west central Bay and neighbouring Andhra-Orissa coast concentrated into a monsoon depression yesterday, reports UNB.

It centered about 700 km south-west of Khulna city and 820 km southwest of Chittagong port at noon.

According to a special bulletin of Storm Warning Centre issued at 2 pm, the depression is likely to intensify further and move in a northwesterly direction.

Maximum sustained wind within 44 km of the depression centre is about 40 kph rising upto 50 kph. The Sea will remain rough.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to noist local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the north Bay have been advised to come close to the coast and proceed with caution.

BUET students for suspension of classes during WC

Hundreds of World Cup soccer fans at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology yesterday defied a call of the authorities to join the classes. BUET sources said, reports BSS.

All academic activities were suspended and classes could not be held due to protests from the students, they added.

The classes were scheduled to resume yesterday after month-long stalemate on the campus.

On Saturday night, a big procession paraded the campus demanding suspension of classes during the World Cup.

"It is not at all possible to appear in the class tests or to do other academic activities after having a late night for World

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