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PHILIPS

Set up agro-based industries in northern dists: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked all concerned to give priority to setting up more agro-based industries to increase export earnings and boost the economy, reports UNB. 'More agro-based industries will benefit farmers, generate job opportunities and help increase income,' she said while presiding over a meeting of the National Export Committee at the ICC here. Hasina said northern districts would be the ideal area for setting up such industries due to its geographical location, climate and availability of land. She also emphasised that packaging, processing and other industries should be set up and new export items, like mushroom, radish, baby corn, broccoli, tomato and lettuce be chosen. The Prime Minister also stressed the need for training and developing skill in processing agro-based products as well as fish, meat and other perishable commodities. She said her government had solved the problems of GSP and frozen food export and hoped that exporters would remain alert to keep up the image of the country. The meeting also reviewed

the decisions of the previous meeting of the committee and the progress of activities. Earlier, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed informed the meeting that the export earning rose to US \$1.5 billion in 1997-98 from US \$1.2 billion in 1996-97. Tofael said export in different sectors increased substantially in last two years and the growth rate of export is 17.08 per cent. 'We have requested for 30 per cent quota for garment sector by the importing countries after the elimination of child labour,' he said. He told the meeting that a five-year export-import policy would be approved soon and an industrial policy, which has been framed, will also be approved shortly by the government. Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Faruque Chowdhury explained various activities of the ministry. The meeting was told that export diversification process is going on and efforts are also on to include more new items in the export list to increase export earnings. The new items include fresh flowers, fruits, vegetables software, ornaments, diamond cut-

tings and stuffed toys. The export earnings from vegetables and fruits reached US dollars 25 million in 1997-98 against only 1.55 million dollar in 1981-82. The meeting was informed that container yard expansion process is going on and a project has been taken up to preserve more containers by expanding the existing two container sheds in Chittagong Port. An American company, SSA (Stevedoring Services of America), has been given permission to set up two container terminals, one at Potenga in Chittagong and the other at Pangaon in Narayanganj. Leaders of the business community, present at the meeting, congratulated the prime minister for presenting an excellent budget for the current fiscal year, officials said. Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Presidents of BGMEA, finished leather and wear export, tea traders association, representatives of different chambers and concerned officials were present.



Flood-hit people are moving towards high lands for shelter as low-lying areas in Kamrangirchar, on the outskirts of the city, went under water. — Star photo

Flood situation

From Page 1 A total of 39 unions have been affected by the flood water, engulfing most of the dwelling houses in the Gaibandha pourashava. A four-year-old girl, Momena, of Kamrajani in sadar thana drowned in the flood waters. Railway sources said that movement of goods train remained suspended at Teestamukha. Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports: Thousands of people have been marooned in the district as 104 unions have been submerged in the flood waters. The flood situation deteriorated in Mirsharai, Satkania, Raozan, Chandanai, Lohagara, Anwara and Banskhali thanas of Chittagong district. Tidal water inundated the low-lying areas of Sandwip island as the protection embankment breached at three points at Harishpur union. With the release of rain water from Kaptai lake, the low-lying areas of Rangunia, Boakhal and Raozan were inundated. There was less rainfall in Chittagong yesterday. In Cox's Bazar district, the flood situation worsened at Chakaria due to more rainfall yesterday, an official said. Our Kushiya correspondent reports: The flood situation in four thanas of the district has further deteriorated with further rise in the water level of the Ganges and Gorai.

DPRK, Iran, Iraq growing fast as a ballistic threat to US

WASHINGTON, July 16: North Korea, Iran and Iraq will be able to hit the United States and its allies with missiles tipped with deadly weapons sooner than previously projected, a bipartisan panel set up by Congress said on Wednesday, reports Reuters. The blue-ribbon panel also found the United States 'might well have little or no warning' before foes deploy ballistic missiles that could change the dynamics of global power. The threat to the US 'is broader, more mature and evolving more rapidly than has been reported... by the intelligence community,' the nine-member panel concluded without dissent. In the unclassified version of its report, the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Threat to the United States did not spell out precisely how close North Korea and Iran might be to fielding missiles that could hit the United States. But it said they would be able to cause 'major destruction' in US cities 'within about five years of a decision to acquire

such a capability,' and 10 years in the case of Iraq. Arguing that Washington may be in the dark about covert missile programmes, the panel left open the question of how far along North Korea and Iran might be now. Chaired by former defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Commission spent six months studying the threat based on what Rumsfeld called 'unprecedented access to the most sensitive and highly classified' US intelligence data. 'As surprising as it may seem, because of compartmentation in the intelligence world, we had access to information... that most of our briefers have not,' he told a news conference. The Commission said China and Russia each posed a threat to US national security as big exporters of ballistic missile technologies, including to US antagonists such as Iran. The panel's timelines for an intercontinental ballistic threat from a country other than Russia, China and North Korea were shorter than those

reported to Congress in March by the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA Director George Tenet said in a letter to key lawmakers on Wednesday. But Tenet embraced the panel's findings, saying they would inspire 'healthy debate' sharpen thinking about the missile speedups that would come from foreign technology transfer. 'Foreign assistance is not a wild card,' Rumsfeld said. 'It is a fact of our relaxed post cold-cold war world' of liberalised export controls and increased educational and scientific swaps among other things. The commission found that North Korea had deployed its No Dong medium-range ballistic missile, capable of flying 800 miles (1,300 kms) and threatening Japan and South Korea. The panel said North Korea's current effort to develop a longer-range missile called the Taepo Dong 2 could put at risk western US soil in an arc extending north-east from Phoenix, Arizona to Madison, Wisconsin.

Top BNP leaders

portedly an initiator of collecting resignation letters of party MPs, admitted to the BBC last night that they had deposited the letters on their own. 'There was no party decision about resignation. Since the government is not allowing us to play the role of an effective opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad, we have thought it appropriate to deposit our letters of resignation from parliament to our party chief.' Ziaur Rahman, another member of the national executive committee who has not deposited any resignation letter, found Khan's explanation 'inadequate'. 'Had there been a call for an alternative government against the government and a party decision to quit parliament, all of us would have signed the resignation letters.'

Meanwhile, the Standing Committee reiterated its demand for immediate resignation of the government, paving the way for holding mid-term polls. This was the only way to 'free people from the yoke of misrule' of the government, said a press release last night. 'The government which could not check the price hike, provide security of life and property, and ensure adequate supply of power, gas and water... has no right to stay in power', a resolution adopted at the meeting said. The committee, the highest policymaking body of BNP, went into an emergency session at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia with herself in chair. The meeting reviewed the overall situation including the political situation in the country, the course of party's agitation and the forthcoming parliamentary election in Barisal. It expressed its anger at 'machinations' by the Election Commission and the ruling party to 'tailor' the results of the by-polls. It posted a notice upon the Election Commission, the Chief Election Commissioner and the government, reminding them of the consequences of snatching the results of the election on July 20. The committee pointed out 'violation' of the electoral code of conduct by persons holding the rank and status of ministers, state ministers and chief whip, 'trying to influence the administration to manipulate the outcome of the polls'. Bringing charges against government functionaries it

Algerian rebels cut throats of 13 villagers

ALGIERS, July 16: Muslim rebels cut the throats of 13 people and wounded two others overnight at a village in the province of Tiaret, 220 km southwest of Algiers, government security forces said today, reports Reuters. The carnage seems to follow a new pattern in Algeria's six-year-old conflict with attacks carried out mostly on Wednesday nights or Thursdays, the first day of the Muslim weekend.

Popular singer Lounes Matoub was gunned down on Thursday June 25, just after 17 villagers had their throats cut the night before. A bomb ripped through a crowded market in Algiers on Thursday last week killing at least 10 people and wounding 21.

Maoists kill 7 in Andhra

NEW DELHI, July 16: Seven people, including a village chief, were hacked to death by Maoist guerrillas in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh today, AFP quoting the United News of India (UNI) said. Police said the guerrillas, belonging to the outlawed Peoples War group, attacked the villagers following a land dispute.

New JU VC

From Page 1 The appointment letter yesterday. Born at Burudia village in Pakundia thana of Kishoreganj district, Prof Alauddin obtained M Sc degree from Dhaka University in 1971 and MS degree from Kanajawa University in 1972 and DSc from Tohoku University in Japan in 1985. He also worked as a visiting professor at Kanajawa university in 1994. Dr Alauddin was also a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector from 1973 to 1997. He actively took part in the war of Liberation in 1971 and played an important role as a naval commander. Some 30 research papers of Dr Alauddin have been published in different national and international journals.

Magurchhara

From Page 1 Plants, trees and bamboos worth about Tk 8 crore were destroyed, the report said. Environmental losses due to the blowout have been broadly outlined as 'damage to the natural absorption of carbon dioxide, natural process of oxygen generation, flora and fauna and the flow of surface water through natural creeks'. The report mentioned that under ground water table around the area has sunk and the micro-nutrients of the soil has also been damaged. Most of the environmental damages caused by the blowout will have a long term effect in the area, it noted. 'Database required for an exact assessment of the total environmental losses due to the blowout is not available at the moment. Collection of data in this regard is not only time consuming but also expensive, the committee added. Through discussion and analysis members of the expert committee determined that cumulative losses due to the blowout for a period of next 50 years stand at Tk 600 crore,' the report said. It added that losses mentioned under various heads have been counted as an overall damage to the eco-system and the environment. 'Long term and short term scientific investigation will be needed to remedy the environmental damages to the area,' the report stressed.

Arrest warrant against Benazir

LAHORE, July 16: An accountability court here today issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, court officials said, reports agencies. The warrant was issued by a two-judge accountability bench of the Lahore High Court as Benazir, accused in a corruption case filed by the government, failed to comply with summons to appear before the court, they said. Benazir, who is in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been ordered to appear in court on July 27. She is accused of failing to declare some of her assets when she filed her election papers prior to the February 1997 elections. Although Benazir could be arrested when she returns to Pakistan, it seems unlikely given that she has not been arrested on previous warrants.

Flood situation in Tripura worsens

AGARTALA, July 16: The flood situation in different parts of Tripura deteriorated further following incessant rains, reports PTI. Incessant rains for the last five days inundated many low-lying areas and all the major rivers — Deo, Juri and Manu in north, Howrah in West and Gumi, Muhuri in South — were still flowing above the danger marks, officials said. Thousands of people still remained marooned in Udaipur and Belonia districts. The sharp divergence of views on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment was evident in New Delhi as well. Experts laid before the participants the legal options before governments — including complete state discretion on letting in foreign business, or unrestricted entry to companies in all segments apart from certain specified areas, the statement said. The views expressed ranged from the opinion that there was no need for an international investment regime that was legally binding, to the view that bilateral investment promotion agreements were sufficient to enhance FDI flows,' the statement said. The participating countries were Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, North Korea, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, organisers said.

16 Asian states

From Page 1 world's richest nations shelved for six months negotiations on regulating the multibillion-dollar flows of foreign direct investment at a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, mainly over sharp differences between the United States and France. The sharp divergence of views on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment was evident in New Delhi as well. Experts laid before the participants the legal options before governments — including complete state discretion on letting in foreign business, or unrestricted entry to companies in all segments apart from certain specified areas, the statement said. The views expressed ranged from the opinion that there was no need for an international investment regime that was legally binding, to the view that bilateral investment promotion agreements were sufficient to enhance FDI flows,' the statement said. The participating countries were Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, North Korea, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, organisers said.

BNP condemns police attack on pro-hartal activists

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday congratulated the city dwellers for making the half-day hartal an all-out success, reports UNB. 'The people by spontaneously observing the hartal have expressed their no confidence in this government for its failure and anti-people activities,' he said. The BNP leader said the demand of the people for adequate supply of water, power and gas and improvement of law and order situation has also been manifested in the hartal. He said the government should pave the way of holding a midterm election by stepping down, if it has minimum respect to people's verdict. The BNP secretary general condemned police attack on pro-hartal activists at Mouchak, Mirpur, Pallabi, Postogola and other parts of the city during the hartal hours and demanded immediate release of the party activists.

15000 rtd Gurkha soldiers stage protest against British govt

KATHMANDU, July 16: Over 15,000 retired Gurkha soldiers and their families demonstrated today over the treatment by their former employer the British government, reports AFP. Led by 79-year-old Victoria Cross (VC) winner Tul Bahadur Pun Magar, the protesters chanted slogans against the British government and listed demands they claim as their entitlement for serving the British crown. 'We, the British Gurkhas gave blood and sweat to the British empire but in return we got only misery and pain,' the angry ex-soldiers shouted. 'We will continue our struggle until our demands are met,' chanted the protesters who at one point, formed a human chain. The demonstration was organised by the Gurkha ex-servicemen's organisation. The demonstrators headed for the British embassy where six delegates handed over an ultimatum letter to British ambassador L B Smith. 'We have given a letter to the British ambassador to remind the British and the Nepalese governments to sit down for a dialogue to solve our problems,' Yam Bahadur Gurung, general secretary of the organisation told AFP. 'The British government must face reality and fulfil our demands,' Gurung added. 'If our demands are not met by August or September, we will surround the British embassy,' he said.

Pakistan calls for emergency session of OIC FMs on N-sanctions

ISLAMABAD, July 16: Pakistan has called on the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to convene an emergency session of foreign ministers over the nuclear sanctions against Islamabad, a minister said today, reports AFP. Raja Zafarul Haq, Minister for Religious Affairs, said on return from visits to Iran and Saudi Arabia that the secretary of the 55-nation OIC would consult member states on the proposal, the state-run television reported. He said Pakistan has called for the session to muster Islamic support to counter the impact of the sanctions imposed after its nuclear tests in May in retaliation to the Indian nuclear detonations. Iran, the current OIC chairman, and Saudi Arabia, where the organisation is based, have supported the Pakistani proposal, the minister said.

ROK investment

From Page 1 epitomised in the construction of Bangabandhu bridge over the river Jamuna in which Korea also played a part. Hundal, a Korean construction company, was the main contractor of the bridge. During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interests which lasted for nearly half an hour. Later, Shin held a meeting with the acting foreign secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed at his chamber in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ahmed briefed Shin on the achievement of the present government in the past two years. He also spoke about the tension generated in the sub-continent due to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan and the efforts made by Bangladesh to ease it. Korea assured that it would consider Bangladesh's candidature for non-permanent seat of UN Security Council for the year 2000. The election will be held next year, Ahmed told newsmen. Shin arrived here last night on a three-day visit. Korean ambassador in Bangladesh Han Tae-Kyu and ATM Nazrul Islam, DG (Far East) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present.

Audit objections of Industries Ministry discussed

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts was held at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with committee president S M Akram in the chair, reports UNB. It discussed audit objections of various departments of Industries Ministry for 1994-95 fiscal raised by Auditor and Comptroller General. It was informed in the meeting that there were 39 audit objections involving Tk 128.92 crore for the period. Of which Tk 47 crore 94 lakh and 43 thousand has already been adjusted.

Faruk murder

From Page 1 Keraniganj thana following a court order yesterday. However, police were yet to arrest any one of the six accused in the killing. Earlier, Nasrin Akhter Flora was arrested for her alleged involvement in the killing. A murder case was lodged with Keraniganj thana after police recovered Faruk's body from the luggage compartment of a car which was found abandoned on Dhaka-Mawa highway at Bhawar Bhatti in Keraniganj.

Haripur

From Page 1 permanent workers sparked dissatisfaction among the workers and they put the offices of Haripur and Kailashita gasfields under lock and key Tuesday afternoon. Some agitated employees also manhandled Abdur Rashid, Senior Administrative Officer, on the same day. On getting information, the Additional SP of Sylhet visited the Haripur gasfield yesterday. The General Manager (Administration) of SGFL said that they could not file any case due to the absence of the Managing Director, who was in Dhaka. A police contingent had been deployed today to avert any untoward incident in the office of the gasfield.

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