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Talks with Bank of England fail: SB to close all UK branches by year end

LONDON, Aug 1: Efforts to keep the Sonali Bank branches in the United Kingdom operative have failed and all its six branches in England are to cease function by the end of this year, reports UNB.

Talks with the Bank of England have failed, said Sonali Bank Managing Director Mahubur Rahman Khan who was here to save the situation.

"We are to wind up by the end of this year as our license for banking in England is going to be cancelled," Mahubur Rahman added. He is likely to return to Dhaka Sunday.

He said the Bank of England has rejected the proposal to form a subsidiary with all the six branches of Sonali Bank. "Under the situation, there is no alternative to closing down the branches."

With the cancellation of license, Sonali Bank may keep a representative's office to function as a mere exchange house.

The Bank of England had lost confidence on the Sonali. See Page 12 Col 7

No Bangladeshi lives in India: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said there is no scope for India to deport any Bangladeshi national as no Bangladeshi is living in India.

She was briefing newsmen at the Ganabhaban yesterday, a day after her return from Colombo, attending the 10th SAARC summit.

Replying to a question, she said: "We do not accept that there is any Bangladeshi national living in India. So the question of deporting any Bangladeshi by Indian government does not arise."

She said that the issue cropped up when the former Prime Minister signed a joint communique in New Delhi accepting the push back of Bangladeshi nationals. "We, however, cannot accept that there are any Bangladeshi people in India. Why should our nationals live in that country?"

About implementation of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) by the year 2001, the prime minister said, the pro-



Sheikh Hasina

cess has been delayed. An expert committee has been formed to study the matter. "After consultation with the member states, the expert committee will formulate a framework of agreement to create a free trade area in the region."

Replying to another question, the Prime Minister said that the country's relations with the United States remained "excellent" despite the government's refusal to sign the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

Turning to the flood situation, the Prime Minister said, the nation has to face the problems courageously without any assistance from outside.

Asked if it was a failure of her government's foreign policy that no country was coming forward with assistance to help the flood victims, she said: "Aware of self-dignity, my government has not sought any foreign assistance to cope with the flood situation. This is our problem. We have to face it ourselves without depending on others."

Rejecting Opposition allegations of inadequate supply of relief materials, the Prime Minister claimed that the government had been distributing 'sufficient' materials among the flood affected people. "Perhaps, this is inherent in human nature that one would deny receipt

Bagha situation still tense: DC, DIG visit spot

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Aug 1: A tense situation continues to prevail in Bagha thana even 10 days after a clash between activists of Awami League and BNP that left two women assaulted allegedly by the former.

In an attempt to defuse tension, the DIG, Rajshahi Range, and the Deputy Commissioner visited the area today.

Panic was created on July 20 when a few supporters of two rival factions of the local AL clashed with each other in front of a shop owned by one Manzoor Kader, a BNP supporter.

But rumors spread that there had been a clash between the AL and BNP. It led a united attack by the two AL factions on the shop. They ransacked the shop and beat its owner. His wife Rawshanara and sister Hosneara rushed to the spot from their adjoining residence to save the victim.

The attackers then turned to the two women and allegedly pulled off their clothes and man-handled them. They also burnt three motor bikes in front of the shop. When the BNP supporters came to know this

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SI Thakur's confession Pages were removed from DB register

By Staff Correspondent

SI Hayatul Islam Thakur, one of the six DB men accused in the Rubel murder case, yesterday confessed to the CID that he had removed some pages of the DB register soon after Rubel's death, according to official sources.

The CID continued interrogation of the six, now under remand.

Rubel, a student of Independent University, died in the custody of DB in the city on July 23.

"Eagle is a call sign, not force", police headquarters yesterday described the reports, published in a section of the press recently regarding 'eagle force' of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, as 'baseless and false', reports BSS.

In a press release, the police headquarters said 'eagle' is one of the many call signs being used by police to keep in touch

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Hayat confessed to the CID investigators that he had asked Rubel whether he possessed any illegal arms. Hayat claimed that Rubel had confessed having illegal arms in his possession even without any torture, the sources said.

Inspector Aminul Islam, who is on a four-day CID remand, told the investigators that he did not know anything about Rubel's killing, the sources said.

ASI Karim, havildar Nuruz-zaman and constables Parvez and Faruk told the investigators that after picking up Rubel from Siddheswari area, they had left him at the disposal of Hayat at the DB office.

However, all the six DB men were still denying that they were involved in torturing Rubel, the sources said.

Meanwhile, the judicial commission probing the Rubel murder case yesterday visited the Detective Branch office and

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JCD factions clash at DU: 2 arrested

By DU Correspondent

Activists of the two rival factions of BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) traded gunshots and chased each other on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

None was injured during the half-an-hour clash. Police arrested two of the activists.

Witnesses said, the clash broke out when activists backed by JCD president Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anshel blasted a cocktail at the Modhu's Canteen protesting "provocative" statements made by their rivals, backed by Nasiruddin Pintu, acting president of the organization. Anshel is now in jail.

The Anshel group activists then chased their rivals. Several gunshots were traded during the chase and counter-

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'Reports should not provoke criminals'

By Staff Reporter
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has observed that press reports on unusual types of offences against women and children could contribute to worsening of the situation.

Sheikh Hasina made the observation at a press conference yesterday at the Ganabhaban when her attention was drawn to a news item saying that two women were stripped by some hoodlums in Bagha thana under Rajshahi district.

She asked newsmen not to report such incidents "in a way that could rather provoke criminals to adopt such methods of assaulting women and girl children."

Some newsmen, however, asserted that it was their professional responsibility to project the evils in the society. They also pointed out that such

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Rubel murder case Spl tribunal violative of Constitution, says law ministry

By Mizan Ali

The law ministry has expressed the view that setting up of a special tribunal for trial of the Rubel murder case would be violative of certain provisions of the Constitution, ministry sources said.

The home ministry had earlier sought the opinion of the law ministry as to whether there is scope for setting up of the special tribunal for trial of the special tribunal for trial of the law ministry. Opinion of the home ministry on Thursday.

The law ministry, however, noted that under Article 110 of the Constitution and Section 526 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the High Court Division of the Supreme Court is vested with the power to withdraw a pending case

from a subordinate court on a point of general public importance and dispose of the case itself, the sources said.

"The High Court either on suo moto or on the basis of a request by the government can withdraw a case from a subordinate court and then get trial of the case conducted by a Judge in the High Court Division," said one source.

"If the government wants to get trial of the Rubel murder case conducted by a special tribunal then that would necessitate enactment of an act or promulgation of an ordinance for setting up of the tribunal."

The home ministry had earlier sought the opinion of the law ministry as to whether

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Arms looted from factory store in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 1: Six rifles, two double barrel (DB) and two single barrel guns and 450 bullets were looted from the store of Shironomi Cable Shilpa Ltd under Khanjahan Ali thana in the early hours of today.

According to police, a group of 15 young men stormed into the main building of the factory at about 4:30 and tied up six security guards at gun point before breaking open the door of the store room.

The security guards were sleeping when the armed miscreants stormed into the factory.

They left the factory with

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Sale of mortgaged factory by BSRS BAC probing 'irregularities'

By Rafiq Hasan

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) has started investigation into alleged irregularities by a section of officials of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) in selling the mortgaged land and factory of Jadz Distilleries to a private company about four years back.

The 13.48-acre mortgaged land including the factory in Panchagarh was sold for Tk 5.01 crore to Marshal Services Ltd, Dhaka, in 1994, sources said.

AKM Abdul Halim, Managing Director of Jadz Distillery in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister recently complained that two top officials of the BSRS in collaboration with an influential political circle sold out his company despite a court stay order.

Talking to The Daily Star he

started commercial production in 1982.

Halim claimed that he had offered to pay Tk 5.10 crore against the sale price of Tk 5.01 crore. He sought an interest waiver of Tk 8.50 crore for repayment of all loans or rescheduling of loan without any waiver as per the government order of January 28, 1992.

But his proposals were turned down on the plea that such waiver would encourage default culture.

He further alleged that the then managing director and the general manager of BSRS had "managed" to pass a resolution in a Board of Directors meeting within one day's notice to sell the land and factory. They also used a news of theft incident at the closed factory to accelerate

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Woman murdered in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Aug 1: One woman was murdered allegedly by a relative at village Mohadevpur in Sitakunda thana of the district today, reports BSS.

According to police sources, one Arun Chandra Malakar, dragged Maju Malakar out of the house and started to hit her with deadly weapons.

The victim Maju Malakar, 50, succumbed to her injuries on way to hospital, the sources said.

A case was filed with the police in this connection, but no arrest was reported so far.



A crack in the DND embankment in the city's Demra area being repaired yesterday. — Star photo

Bid to repair damaged culvert in DND dam Gushing flood water washes away earth several times

By Staff Correspondent

Groups of workers from the Roads and Highways Department were trying yesterday to repair and protect parts of the DND embankment which developed cracks on Thursday.

An earth-filled culvert in the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment at Sarulia is now posing a great threat to the areas on the other side of the dam. The earth has been washed away by the gushing flood waters putting the city at risk.

However, water levels in all rivers in the country started receding yesterday, officials at the Flood Control Room said.

Till late yesterday evening, the RHD and WDB people were piling and earth-filling the damaged culvert entrance. But the pressure of water was so great that it was difficult to retain the earth and pilings in place.

The earth and pilings have

been washed away 10 times since last night, said a WDB official on the spot. "We are trying our best. But it is very difficult to ward off the water pressure."

The difference between water levels on the outer and inner side of the embankment is about seven to 10 feet. As a result, the flood water is putting massive pressure on the embankment.

"The RHD has also built a ring fence along the embankment as water was seeping in and washing away the earth, putting the Dhaka-Demra road at risk."

"We have already built ring fences at seven or eight places," said an official. Tomorrow, we will build three more."

As repair of the damaged culvert was going on, people from both sides of the embankment were watching anxiously.

"Till now we are dry. But we will no longer remain so if the embankment gives in," said Abdul Alim, an onlooker. "We were comfortable that the flood will not touch us. But now we are worried," he went on.

"We are already wet all through," said Alif Mondal, whose house outside the embankment is partially submerged by flood water. "But if the culvert gives in, our house

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People's fate won't change under misrule of this govt: Khaleda

COMILLA, Aug 1: Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia has called upon the people to be united to save the nation from the clutches of the 'oppressive' government, reports UNB.

"People's fate will not be changed under the misrule of this government. The ruling party is known to the people for grabbing relief goods including blankets received as doles from foreign countries for the poor," said Begum Zia today.

She was addressing a public meeting at Muradnagar thana council premises in the afternoon during her visit to flood affected areas in the district.

Begum Zia said when most part of the country is reeling

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Flood situation grim in five districts including Dhaka

Flood situation worsened further in five districts, including Dhaka and its adjoining areas, with 11 more deaths reported yesterday, report agencies.

The death toll rose to 253 as the flood claimed six more lives in Sirajganj, four in Brahmanbaria and one in Madaripur in 24 hours till 5 pm Saturday, according to the flood control room at the Relief Ministry.

The deaths were caused by drowning, boat capsizing, snakebite or diarrhoea.

Most of the low-lying areas in the capital have been submerged by flood waters and boats are now being used to ferry the people.

In several areas including Rampura people are using makeshift wooden planks to walk to the main road from their houses. At least 28,000 people have moved to 50 flood shelters.

Apart from Dhaka, the flood situation deteriorated further

in Madaripur, Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Chandpur. The flood situation improved in other parts of the country.

The situation in the central part of the country is likely to improve and around Dhaka city it may improve slightly, said a FWC spokesman.

It said flood situation in the Brahmaputra basin as a whole and in the upper part of the Ganges basin are likely to improve further. The situation in greater Rajshahi district along the Padma river may remain unchanged while downstream from the Harding Bridge is likely to improve.

Flood situation in the south-eastern hill basin and upper part of the Meghna basin will continue to improve, but from Bhabrabazar to downstream it may remain unchanged.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna registered further fall at all points yesterday. The Jamuna was flowing above danger level at Bahadurabad and Aricha.

In this basin, the old Brahmaputra at Mymensingh, the Buriganga at Dhaka, the Lakshya at Narayanganj, the Turag both at Mirpur and Tongi and the Kalliganga at Taraghat were continuing to flow above their danger levels.

The Padma recorded fall at all points except Rajshahi and was flowing above the danger levels at Pankha, Goalanda and Bhagyakul. The Mohananda was also flowing above danger level at Chapainawabganj.

Most of the rivers in Meghna basin also recorded further fall and was flowing above their respective danger levels. The rivers in the south-eastern hill basin also registered further fall and were flowing well below their respective danger levels.

An official handout said here some 1.74 crore people of 37 districts have so far been affected by the current monsoon flood.

Standing crops on 2.85 lakh

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26 WASA pumps threatened by flood water

By Staff Correspondent
A number of water pumps of Dhaka WASA are being threatened by the rising flood waters.

"Of the 235 water pumps in the city areas 26 are being threatened," Dr Azharul Huq, Managing Director of Dhaka WASA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Emergency measures have been taken to keep these water pumps operative, he said, adding that flood water has also entered the compound of these 26 pump stations. The flood water level increased by at least six centimeters yesterday, he added.

If these 26 pumps become inoperative it would affect an estimated 14 lakh people, he said.

These pumps supply water in Manda, Bashabo, Mughdipara, Kalia, Rajarbagh Kali Mandir, Mitford, Gulshan, Nurur Chala, Bashundhara, Ashkona, Khilkhet, Moghbazar, Khillgaon, Goran and Nandipara.

IU student drowns in Bay

COX'S BAZAR, Aug 1: Yasin Mueyed Mahfiz, 22, a BBA student of the Independent University drowned in the Bay this morning, police said, reports BSS.

The body was recovered by his friends along with divers and local people after a half-an-hour search in the Bay, they said.

Yasin came to the beach with friends from the capital. His family resides at Bara Maghbazar in Dhaka, the friends said.

Meanwhile, the people in Cox's Bazar town today deeply mourned the death which is second in a row following death of Mohammad Noor, a Dhaka College student, on July 25 last month.

Woman murdered in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Aug 1: One woman was murdered allegedly by a relative at village Mohadevpur in Sitakunda thana of the district today, reports BSS.

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The victim Maju Malakar, 50, succumbed to her injuries on way to hospital, the sources said.

A case was filed with the police in this connection, but no arrest was reported so far.

Fighting along Kashmir border Pakistan summons Indian envoy to lodge protest

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1: Pakistan's foreign ministry summoned the Indian envoy today to protest an unleashing of mortars and artillery by Indian troops in the disputed territory of Kashmir that killed a reported 80 Pakistanis, reports AP.

Indian Acting High Commissioner Sharaf Sabharwal rejected the protest, an official at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad said on condition of anonymity. The official said that while he had no confirmation of Indian troops had fired at all in recent days, such firing in the past has been provoked by Pakistani firing.

In a press statement, the Pakistani foreign ministry accused India of "unprovoked and indiscriminate firing" along their disputed border known as the line of control that undermined "the prospects for a resumption of meaningful talks between Pakistan and India."

"The government of India must desist from further violations of the line of control and escalation of the existing tensions in the region," the Pakistani statement said.

Increasingly bitter rhetoric has accompanied unrest along the border. Friday, as peace talks between India and Pakistani leaders on the Indian Ocean island of Sri Lanka reached a deadlock, an Indian spokesman accused Pakistan of being 'obsessive' and 'neurotic' about Kashmir, and Pakistan charging that India was 'rigid and inflexible.'

Exchanges of mortar and gun fire is almost a daily occurrence, but casualties of the magnitude of the past week are rare. Last September, at least 39 people died in a similar outbreak of border tension.

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