

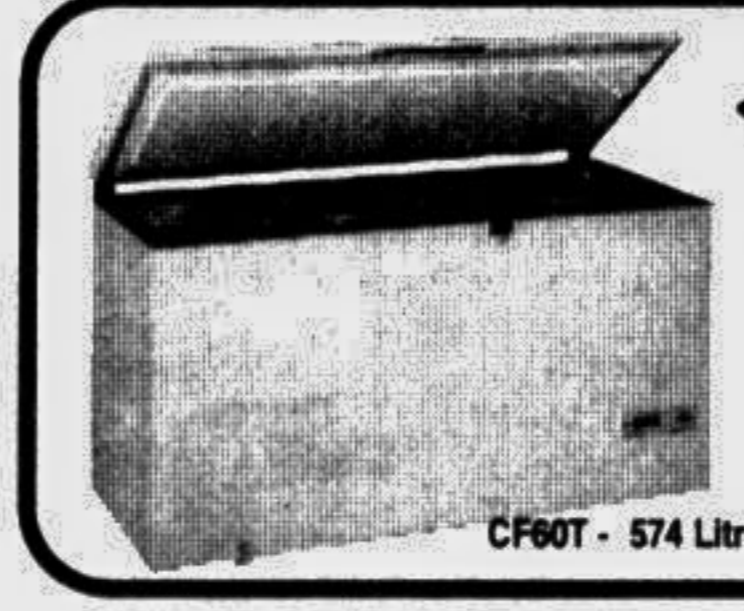
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Kashmiri militants gun down 37 labourers

JAMMU, India, Aug 3: Militants massacred 37 labourers today in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, police and witnesses said, reports AFP. A police spokesman said two gangs of militants, fighting against Indian rule in the neighbouring province of Kashmir, carried out two attacks within hours of each other. Twenty-six men died after separatist fighters entered the remote hill town of Chamba in the early hours of the morning, tied up their victims with rope, and opened fire with automatic weapons. Police said three labourers had survived the attack with wounds but had to walk around 20 kilometres (12 miles) for treatment. Another witness said: 'The men rounded up 29 men who were working on a road near Chamba. They were sleeping outdoors when they were woken up, tied and shot.' Chamba, near the Himalayas, borders Kashmir. Kashmiri militants have carried out a series of massacres in recent months as part of a campaign against Indian sovereignty. Police said another group of militants shot dead 11 other road workers in the adjoining village of Satrundi. Three others were wounded.

Girl kidnapped allegedly by her father's friends

By Staff Correspondent A school girl was abducted allegedly by her father's friend from the city's Modhubazar area Sunday afternoon. Police said the teenage girl, daughter of one Mujibar Rahman, was abducted by her father's friend Monir and one Jewel when she was playing in front of her residence. Monir and Jewel stopped their microbus in front of the house, dragged her into the vehicle and drove off. A few days ago, Monir had threatened Mujibar that he would kidnap his daughter, police said quoting the FIR filed with Dhanmondi thana by the victim's mother, accusing Monir and Jewel. Police failed to rescue the girl and also could not arrest the accused till the filing of this report last night.

10 injured in Magura clash

MAGURA, Aug 3: At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the employees of Magura Pourashava and local shopkeepers at Viana Square today, reports UNB. Traffic on Dhaka-Khulna highway was disrupted for about an hour as the angry shopkeepers put up barricade on the road. Witnesses said the clash took place when employees of the Pourashava tried to demolish some roadside shops in the area without any prior notice. According to Pourashava employees, three of their colleagues - Shahjahan, Sukkur and Kalu - were injured in the clash.

SOFA

From Page 1 Inderfurth agreed with Ambassador Shehabuddin that there is almost no other important economic issue or matter pending with Bangladesh government and decisions on the remaining gas blocks will follow in due course keeping in view the national interest of the country. As regards the Bangladesh government's decision not to sign SOFA which was designed to bring urgent relief to Bangladesh during natural disasters, Inderfurth showed profound understanding. He said that the agreement was worked out through bilateral discussions and understanding to help Bangladesh in emergencies. Such agreement exists with many other countries, Inderfurth said adding that the US government, however, understands the reasons for Bangladesh not signing it.

Pabna-2

From Page 1 will conduct the byelections are now engaged in relief operations. Under these circumstances, the situation is not congenial for holding the elections, the press release explained. The Pabna-2 constituency fell vacant on June 28 following the death of a ruling party MP, Tafazzul Master.

RMG quota increase

From Page 1 prevents Bangladeshi manufacturers from fully taking advantage of these commercial opportunities," the letter said. Third, Bangladesh requests this increase as a means of demonstrating to other nations that the US welcomes efforts to eliminate child labour and is prepared to respond positively when adequate steps are taken. "We believe we are a model on child labour for other nations to emulate, and the US response to Bangladesh should make them more willing to address their own problems," the letter noted. Finally, Bangladesh requests this increase as a sign that the US is fully supportive of Bangladesh's democratic development. The increase would constitute less than one per cent of the total US garment imports but help the US government increase the amount of revenue by 350 million dollars a year.

S Q Chy sued on charge of blasphemy

MYMENSINGH, Aug 3: A lawyer today filed a case against BNP central leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury MP on charge of blasphemy, reports UNB. Advocate Nazrul Islam Chinnu filed the case with a magistrate's court against the BNP leader for 'offensive comment against Islam and hurting the religious sentiment of the Muslims.' The plaintiff in his complaint said that Salauddin Quader Chowdhury reportedly stated that the 'sixth farz' of the Muslims is to oust the Awami League government. The plaintiff in his complaints said the report published in the daily Sangbad on July 30 was 'direct insult to Islam and the news has directly affected my religious sentiment.' Advocate Chinnu in his complaint further said there are five 'farz' in Islam and there was no existence of a 'sixth farz' in Islam. The advocate said Chowdhury through his statement intentionally had hurt the 'religious sentiment of myself, my witnesses and all Muslims of the country.' Ten people have been made witnesses in the case and the magistrate fixed August 5 for the hearing of the case.

Work stoppage demanding setting up of an EPZ in Tangail

TANGAIL, Aug 3: People spilled out on to streets from their respective workplaces here for an hour today demanding setting up of an EPZ and a tourism centre on the eastern side of Bangabandhu Bridge, reports UNB. Sirens sounded from different mosques of the district town and the dwellers started playing flutes together at 12:05 pm calling the people to come out of their respective workplaces in support of the demands. As the siren sounded, all modes of transport stopped wherever they were and shops were closed. Teachers and students came out of their institutions in a unique gesture to press their demands. Officials, employees and workers of different government and non-government organisations also responded to the call. People and vehicles stayed on the road, and shops and institutions remained closed until the siren and the flutes sounded again at 1:01 pm. Later, they resumed their works.

Firearms looted in Khulna yet to be recovered

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Aug 3: The firearms and ammunition looted from the store of state-owned Bangladesh Cable Shipra Ltd at Shiromoni on Friday could not be recovered till today. Six rifles, two double-barrel and two single-barrel guns and 450 bullets were looted by a gang of 15 men in the early hours of Friday. A high official of the KMP said, police is interrogating the nine persons arrested in connection with the incident. The arrested persons include two activists of the outlawed Purba Bangla Communist Party.

Flood situation

From Page 1 103.2 mm at Panchpukuria, 85 mm at Sunamganj, 57 mm at Kaunia, 53.2 mm at Rangamati, 52 mm each at Bhaibar and Kurigram and 51.5 mm at Bandarban during the last 24 hours till 9 am yesterday. Meanwhile, Relief Ministry control room said there was no report of flood related death yesterday keeping the death toll unchanged at 256. The control room at Health Directorate said diarrhoea claimed three more lives in the last 24 hours and affected another 1,466 people in 37 flood-hit districts. The flood situation is improving very slowly in Dhaka, Narayaniganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Mymensingh, Madaripur, Rajbari and Pabna districts, said the Relief Ministry officials. The situation is improving also in Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Netrokona, Faridpur, Sherpur, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, Bogra, Gaibandha, Kushtia, Comilla, Sunamganj and Habiganj districts. Districts where the situation has already become normal are Tangail, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Chittagong, Rangamati, Chandpur, Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Feni, Magura and Moulvibazar. Relief Ministry officials said some 1.74 crore people have been affected by the ongoing flooding. Of them, only 1.25 lakh took shelter in 429 centres.



The relief goods which were supposed to be distributed yesterday remained stacked outside the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament. - Star photo

Malaysian shipping line to launch service to Ctg this week

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3: Malaysia International Shipping Corp. Berhad said today it will launch service to Chittagong this week, reports AP. MISC, Malaysia's leading international shipping line will send its first freighter, the Bunga Mas Enam, from Port Klang on Saturday. The ship is due in Chittagong August 13 and back in Port Klang August 24, the company said in a statement. The service is jointly operated with Xpress Feeders Group Ltd., with both providing one compatible geared vessel each.

Container seized at Ctg port: 2 arrested

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Aug 3: Port personnel last night seized a loaded container of imported goods while it was being taken out illegally through the MPB gate without completing the formalities. Though import documents said the container was carrying computer spares, it was suspected that it contained contraband items, port official said. Two persons involved in this incident were handed over to port police. Port authorities formed a committee today to probe the matter. A senior port official said the container was kept in safe custody inside the port terminal. It will be opened later in presence of the importer.

Garment factory employee gangraped in city

By Staff Correspondent A teenage garment factory employee was gangraped allegedly by a gang of eight men at Kalachandpur under Gulshan thana in the city in the early hours yesterday. The 16-year-old victim, a resident of the area, was under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, police said. Four persons have so far been arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident. They were identified as Masud, Polash, Gomez and Provas, according to police. A gang of about eight young men entered the victim's hut at about 1 am and raped her alternately throughout the night, police said. The victim filed a case yesterday with Gulshan thana accusing eight persons including the arrested four under Women and Children Repression Act, 1995.

2400 city phone lines out of order

The Telegraph and Telephone (T&T) Board is working to restore the 2400 telephone lines in the city, disrupted due to intrusion of flood waters in the cables, reports BSS. A press release of the board yesterday said, despite a restriction on digging roads during the rainy season, the board is trying to keep the phones working in different areas under its Dhaka South telecommunication zone, the press release said.

JCD-BCL clash in Sirajganj: 10 hurt

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 3: At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the activists of JCD and BCL here today, reports UNB. The clash erupted at Station Road in the evening. Milan and Rajan, two JCD activists, were admitted to Sadar Hospital in critical condition. The clash began when the BCL activists reportedly attacked some JCD leaders and activists. Two homemade bombs were exploded and four shops damaged during the clash. Later, police brought the situation under control and recovered two unused bombs from the spot.

Akash missile

From Page 1 'ishul' missile which could be used as a surface-to-air missile against aircraft and as a counter to sea-skimming missiles. Trishul (Trident), which uses solid fuel, has a range of up to 5.5 miles and can carry a warhead of 15 kilograms.

Rice for relief

From Page 1 The probe body also held 10 staff members of the Narayaniganj Pourashava responsible for the misappropriation. These 10 employees under the guidance of the Pourashava's executive engineer, Hasibul Islam, were responsible for receiving and distributing 16 metric tons of rice sanctioned by the government for the town's 1.60 lakh flood victims. Of the sanctioned rice, nearly 11 mt have already been distributed. The accused Pourashava employees are: Sharifuddin, Zakir Hossain, Mujibur Rahman, Shaful Islam, Mofijul Islam, Sajat Hossain, Nasrudin, Moniruzzaman and Kazi Nazrul Islam. DC Abdur Rahman formed the inquiry committee on August 1 following a news report on the irregularities appeared in a local daily. When contacted, the DC confirmed receiving the probe report and said stern action would be taken against all those responsible for the misappropriation of the relief item for the flood victims.

Mued Chy

From Page 1 The Special Affairs Division, Kazi Golam Rahman, has been transferred to the Ministry of Hill Tract Affairs as its Secretary in-charge. The following additional secretaries currently posted as Officers on Special Duty (OSD) at the Establishment Ministry have been transferred to different posts: Abdul Malek as Member of the Land Reforms Board, Abdur Rouf as Land Appeal Board, Md Khorshed Ansar Khan as Managing Director of Jiban Bima Corporation, Anwarul Haq Chowdhury as Vice-Chairman of Export Promotion Bureau, Azizur Rahman as the Secretary-General of Bangladesh Rural Development Board, Md Shafiquddin as Director General of Land Record and Survey Directorate, Sultan Mahmud Chowdhury as Chairman of WASA, Chittagong, Syed Abdur Rab as Member Land Appeal Board, Fazlul Haq as Director General of Youth Development Directorate and Abu Taleb as Director General of BSTI.

Khaleda

From Page 1 planned seven days back and arrangements were made to distribute relief goods to more than 2,000 flood victims. They were informed at 2:30 pm that the party chief would not be able to come due to her illness, he said. Nabillah alleged that Salahuddin had created panic in some areas and informed Begum Zia that the situation was not favourable for her to attend the relief distribution programme. Our staff correspondent adds: Begum Zia and the party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan later held a meeting with Nabillah Nabi to discuss the situation that arose out of cancellation of her Demra trip. In the meeting, sources said, Khaleda Zia agreed to visit the flood-hit areas in Demra thana soon to distribute relief materials there. Meanwhile, a BNP press release last night claimed that Nabillah Nabi and other party leaders from Demra met Khaleda Zia and deposited sarees, lungis, chira, rice, breads, biscuits, saline and medicine to the party's relief fund. Begum Zia will visit the flood-affected areas of the city's Ramna and Tejgaon thanas at 4 pm today.

Satkhira clash

From Page 1 where their leaders announced a half-day hartal in Satkhira town tomorrow and declared the DC, SP, and ADC (Rev) 'unwanted' in the district. The sit-in programme was announced earlier to protest killing of three persons in police firing during clashes over possession of a khas jalmahal at Baburabad in Kaliganj on July 23 and to press an eight-point demand of the Bhumihin Uchhed Protirodh Sangram Samonnoya Committee. The demands include removal of the DC and SP of Satkhira. Witnesses said that thousands of people had gathered near the venue at about 11 am to participate in the planned sit-in. Police had cordoned off the Collectorate Building area. When the demonstrators tried to move in, police resisted, caught Lutfullah and beat him. The angry demonstrators then attacked the court building. Police then resorted to baton charge and fired shots, rubber bullets and tear gas shells to disperse the mob. Police also entered into the nearby residential area and the premises of the Palashpole School, chasing the demonstrators. The clashes continued till about 4 pm, witnesses said.

DB men on remand

From Page 1 on which the CID was focusing its investigation. The arrest of Havilder Qudus may provide clues in unveiling the facts behind the arrest and brutal murder of Rubel, CID sources said. The investigators were scanning the background of the remanded plainclothesman. "Nothing to speak very high," said an official when asked about the records of the arrested policeman. CID produced the five DB

53pc pass SSC exams under BOU

Results of the first batch of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations under Bangladesh Open University was announced in the city yesterday, reports UNB. The pass percentage is 52.92. A total of 12,494 students appeared in the examinations, of which 6,612 came out successful. Among the successful candidates 2,890 secured first division, 3,691 second division and only 31 third division. Md Nurul Islam of Muradnagar DR Govt High School Tutorial Centre in Comilla topped the merit list followed by Jesmin Akhtar Khanam of Kendua Joyhari Govt High School Tutorial Centre in Netrokona. Muzahidul Haq of Akhaura Bangladesh Railway Govt High School Tutorial Centre stood third. The BOU authorities advised the examinees to contact their respective examination centres or regional resource centres to collect their results. No result will be available at Gazipur campus of the university, newspaper offices, Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television or the Education Ministry, said a BOU press release.

Doctors

From Page 1 Dr Hayat Mahmud Ruseel, General Secretary of DMCH unit of the Association said that the problem regarding intern doctors' pay arose following announcement of the new pay scale by the government. The Pay Commission did not consider the fate of the trainee doctors who actually run the government hospitals. In the previous pay scale announced in 1992, the pay for the intern was raised to Tk 4000 from Tk 2,500," he added. The Association will hold a press conference today at the Jatiya Press Club to announce an action programme.

Petrobangla

From Page 1 from negotiations in the Second Round Block Bidding and its experienced officials have lost their interest in such affairs," said a source. Meanwhile, the energy ministry is toying with the idea of setting up a Hydro-Carbon Unit in the ministry to gradually shift PCDC's task of supervising activities of foreign companies on it. The proposed Hydro-Carbon Unit may also act as a 'gas regulatory authority' while the re-structured PCDC would act as a 'technical authority'. It is often said that the Magurchhara blowout incident during Occidental's exploration could be averted if Petrobangla could enforce proper monitoring. Currently, due to lack of manpower or planning, Petrobangla can not even assign a single official on permanent basis to the Saungu gas field, developed by Cairn. The present monitoring system is being undertaken on a makeshift basis.

Advertisement for 'অগ্রণী ব্যাংক' (Agrani Bank) featuring a cartoon illustration of a boy and a girl, and text in Bengali describing bank services and interest rates.