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Head Office Tel: 9565114, Logistics Office Tel: 9884851, Fax: (880-2) 9886531, E-mail: dac@aelogis.com
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No plan to form party with vote-thieves: PM

MYMENSINGH, Oct 15: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today turned down the opposition allegation that Awami League was again out to revert to one party system, saying "we will never form any party taking the vote thieves who plundered national wealth while in power," report agencies.

Sheikh Hasina outrightly rejected the recent remarks by BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia.

She also dismissed the allegation that the present government is misusing relief goods.

Sheikh Hasina was addressing a big gathering at Mirkananda High School ground at Paranganj of sadar thana.

The Prime Minister said the BNP that fell from power for vote rigging is now making tall talks and spreading falsehood against this government.

"When they (BNP) were in power, they plundered crores of taka and misappropriated relief money and materials. Being ousted from power they are spreading lies against the ruling party," she alleged.

Hasina said she has a strong organisation and there is no need to induct the vote thieves in her party. "Awami League is the party of the people and the

people are with the party." About the distribution of relief and VGF cards among the flood affected people, she said everything is going on properly.

There is no allegation of misuse of relief materials, she said and warned that any irregularities in distribution of VGF cards and relief will be dealt with severely.

The Prime Minister said the government will not tolerate any misuse of relief goods. "If anybody tries to plunder people's food, he will not be spared," she added.

Hasina visited the flood affected areas of Madan thana in Netrakona district and of sadar thana in Mymensingh district and distributed rice, saree, lungi, baby food, seeds, seedlings and other agri-inputs among the flood affected people.

She also distributed agricultural loans among some affected farmers.

Hasina said all aiding programmes, including the VGF, will continue till next harvest.

Witnesses said more than 50 women and children fainted due to scorching heat as the meeting began at 12 noon. They were waiting for about four hours to have a glimpse of the Prime Minister.



Eucalyptus trees along the Gulshan Lake are dying as a fallout of the prolonged flood. —Star photo

Day-long hartal Sunday

From Page 1
reasons as preparations for the cricket tournament was on at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, adjacent to the Paltan Maidan.

It mentioned that the NSC also rejected a similar application by Bangladesh Chhatra League, the ruling party's student wing, for holding its central conference.

Announcing the hartal programme, Mannan Bhuiyan said that he had planned the "peaceful and innocent" programme of hunger strike against government "repression" on the opposition parties, false cases against Khaleda Zia and other top BNP leaders, arrests of the party leaders including two lawmakers and government failure in facing the devastating flood and in the post-flood management.

"But the government has denied us permission to hold the programme after four days of dilly-dally. We've called the hartal finding no other alternative," the BNP secretary general said.

Speaking on the occasion, former secretary general of the party Abdus Salam Talukdar differed on the ground the NSC showed for the denial of permission.

"The cricket tournament starts on October 24 while our programme was planned for October 18. How the hunger strike by a selected group of people could threaten security in the area?" he said.

ALCWC

From Page 1
tailed discussions about Bangabandhu Murder Case and Jail Killing Case and the possible reaction in the society at large after the verdict of the first case, expected to be pronounced on November 8.

The ALCWC meeting would take into account the main Opposition's agitation plans and might opt for party's own political programmes.

"Having completed half of our 5-year term, the party has to take some important decisions in tackling political opposition more carefully," said one ruling party lawmaker without elaborating.

The meeting is going to be held at a time when some opposition leaders were arrested in connection with Jail Killing Case and other cases and trading of political rhetoric among some key political figures belonging to various camps, noted observers.

Shell, Cairn, Unocal

From Page 1
tagon Hill Tracts and of the Bay of Bengal. Shell now has 50 per cent stake in Cairn's concerns in Bangladesh.

Unocal, on the other hand, has become a partner of Occidental in blocks 12, 13 and 14 covering the Surma basin.

The cooperation would, in future, mean that the resources in blocks 5, 7, 10, 15 and 16 could be channelled together through a pipeline for export, said a source.

Unocal has been trying to sign a contract with the government without any bid over the Shahbazpur gasfield since late 1996. Accordingly, it submitted a Western Region Integrated Project (WRIP) proposal for developing Shahbazpur gasfield, building pipelines and setting up power plants. However, because of loopholes in the proposal that goes against Bangladesh's interest, the government is yet to sign this deal.

Unocal is insisting that the WRIP deal would be a 99-year one. While its pipeline contract seeks one dollar royalty per unit of gas used by any party, it also wants gas supply to WRIP power plants at the government subsidised rate (presently around 1.1 dollars a unit) while it wants to sell Shahbazpur gas at international rate (presently around 1.8 dollars a unit).

2 new halls to be constructed at DU

Two new residential halls at Dhaka University will be constructed soon at a cost of Tk 22 crore. Education Minister A S H K Sadique said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Sadique was addressing as the chief guest a memorial meeting in the TSC auditorium in observance of the Jagannath Hall tragedy of Dhaka University in which 39 students died when the roof of the hall's auditorium collapsed in 1985.

The eight-member team led by Foreign Secretary K Raghunath, India's highest-ranking foreign ministry official, will open talks tomorrow with his Pakistani counterpart Shamshad Ahmad and other senior officials.

Asked about the scheduled arrival of two of the cricket teams in Dhaka on the day of hartal, Mannan Bhuiyan replied: It is the government's concern.

On Sunday, the cricket team of Zimbabwe is due to arrive at Zia International Airport at 4.30 am while that of England at 3.15 pm.

Anwar Zahid also spoke on the occasion while some other BNP leaders were present. But no leader of other components of seven-party alliance was present at the press briefing.

Meanwhile the city BNP at a meeting last night decided to bring out processions in all the 90 DCC Wards today and torch processions from five places in the city the day after to drum up support for Sunday's hartal.

Two Nigerians held at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent
Two Nigerian citizens were arrested from Zia International Airport (ZIA) last night, according to police.

The identities of the arrested foreigners could not be known immediately. When contacted last night, Cantonment police said that the officer concerned did not return from the spot.

Police could only say that they were arrested when they were trying to leave ZIA using forged tickets.

9 killed

From Page 1
was killed and 13 others injured while a Ramganj-bound passenger bus skidded off the road near Bagur bus stand in Chandina thana.

The injured were admitted to various clinics and hospitals.

Another accident was occurred at Khataerpool area in the same thana leaving an unidentified woman killed.

A minor girl Afroz Begum, 8, of Bhatar Char village was killed when a speeding bus hit her at Ladua in Laksham thana in the noon.

In Chittagong, a young man was killed and two others injured when their speeding car overturned near Agrabad Barik Building in the early hours of yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shamsu while the injured as Kabir and Alam.

Witnesses said the car met with the accident when it was running in high speed to cross the area before 6 am to avoid hartal.

Indo-Pak talks today

ISLAMABAD, Oct 15: An Indian delegation flew into Islamabad late today for talks with Pakistan on peace and security following the rival nations' nuclear tests this year, reports AFP.

The eight-member team led by Foreign Secretary K Raghunath, India's highest-ranking foreign ministry official, will open talks tomorrow with his Pakistani counterpart Shamshad Ahmad and other senior officials.

Hartal observed at Naogaon

NAOGAON, Oct 15: A half-day hartal called by BNP was observed here today without any major incident, reports UNB.

The hartal was enforced to protest the arrest of Alamgir Kabir MP and demand his immediate release.

Police arrested Kabir from his Naogaon residence on Tuesday in connection with three criminal cases.

BATEXPO

From Page 1
BGMEA president Mostofa Golam Quddus, at a press conference yesterday, urged the foreign investors to set up composite textile mills and other backward linkage industries in Bangladesh taking advantage of various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives provided by the government.

He said the recent nuclear explosion in India and Pakistan, current economic debacle in some South East Asian countries and Bangladesh's investment-friendly environment have created ample opportunities for the foreign investors to come and invest here.

He told a questioner that BGMEA would hold talks with commerce and foreign ministries on October 20 to work out an action plan to persuade the US government to raise Bangladesh's garment quota by 30 per cent.

Ctg hartal

From Page 1
against its leaders and activists, including four MPs.

Paramilitary BDR and additional police force were deployed at important places of the city to foil any attempt of violence during hartal hours.

Rallies and processions organised by BNP supporters at various places of the city marked today's hartal.

Police said no untoward incidents were reported from anywhere in the city.

D-8 summit in Dhaka next year

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said D-8 summit would be held in Dhaka sometime next year, reports UNB.

Bangladesh earlier postponed the summit scheduled in November this year because of the flood.

"We have already completed all necessary preparations to hold the summit," Azad said, adding that the specific date would be fixed in consultation with seven other member states.

"Everybody coming here to vote is a responsible person. We don't expect any untoward incident," he said.

Outgoing FBCCI chief Harun said he was happy to see the huge turnout.

"Everybody is happy. The big turnout shows that everyone has faith in the FBCCI," Harun said.

Meanwhile, in a back-stage move on Wednesday, a group of very influential business leaders tried to convince different association leaders to secure votes for a certain person.

The behind-the-scenes manoeuvring was in violation of election rules that prohibited election campaign 24-hour before the election.

The 15 unofficially declared EC-members are: Rajab Sharif (175), Mumtazuddin (173), democratic panel, ATM Wazirullah (171), Abul Kashem Ahmed (157), Bijoy Kumer Kezraai (155), Alhaj Afzal Hussain (148, DP), Alhaj S K Nurul Alam (145), Dewan Sultan Ahmed (144, DP), Md Abdus Shahid (142), A K M Shamsuddin (137), DP Md Abdul Wahid (136), Golam Mustafa (135), DP Afzal Khan (134), Shamsul Alam (132), Mohammad Ali Sarker (131, DP).



Supporters of FBCCI candidates crowd the Motijheel street yesterday as polling began inside the Federation Bhaban to elect a new committee for the 1998-2000 term. —Star photo

ADB aid

From Page 1
Addressing a press conference, the ADB Vice President expressed his deepest sympathy with all those who have suffered in the unprecedented flood of 1998 and said the Bank has responded quickly and fielded the largest ever mission to Bangladesh for very quick assessment of damage of infrastructure.

Shin announced that out of the 130 million, 100 million will be fresh loans and the balance 30 million will be utilised from loan funds that would otherwise have been cancelled.

The ADB official said the Bank assistance will cover the rehabilitation of the most seriously affected infrastructure sectors, including \$41 million for major roads, 22 million for rural roads, 18 million for water management structure (embankments), 15 million for railways and rail tracks, 24 million for urban infrastructure and seven million dollars for educational institutions.

Since this is an emergency assistance, he said, the Bank is expected to approve the loan within two months.

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FBCCI election

From Page 1
from the association group.

As many as 954 votes were cast out of a possible 1011 as the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) went into biennial elections to choose its new leaders.

Polling began at 9:30 am and continued till 5:00 pm with a one-hour lunch break.

The peaceful election witnessed 269 votes cast out of 281 from the Chamber Group while 685 votes were cast against a total number of 730 from the Association Group, election officials said.

The huge turnout of voters from the chamber group was surprising because of the fact that top chamber leaders had announced a consensus candidate for vice president and a panel of 15 EC members.

At a meeting on September 29 chaired by President of the FBCCI and ex-officio head of Council of Chambers Yussuf Abdullah Harun announced the names of the 15 Executive Committee members and a vice president, prompting protest from those whose names were not included.

The "consensus" was reached after the last date of withdrawal of nominations, which meant names of all the candidates appeared on the ballot papers. The chances of breaching the consensus therefore remained.

"A vested group was spreading rumours, was what a press statement said the following day signed by those who were left out. They later formed a separate "democratic panel" saying they were still in the race.

Most of the chamber leaders are based outside Dhaka and came from every corner of the country to vote.

"If there was a consensus panel why would they bother to even vote," a chamber leader from the anti-consensus panel said.

Both the presidential candidates, one standing on the ground floor and the other on the eighth floor of FBCCI, said the election was running peacefully.

23 chargesheeted

From Page 1
dropped from the charge sheet as they are already dead.

Abdul Kahar Akand, the investigating officer (IO) of the case, invoked Sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 448 (house trespass), 449 (house trespass in order to commit offence punishable with death), 302 (involvement in the killing), 109 (abatement) and 34 (Act in furtherance of common intention) of the Penal Code, while bringing charges against the accused.

The CID cited 76 witnesses, including the informant, in the charge sheet of the case. Besides, around 155 people were interrogated during the investigation.

CID collected 53 alams, including bullets, files and papers from Prison Department, documents from Army Headquarters and the DC's office. Blood stained clothes of the four leaders were also recovered.

"Greed for political power led the accused to kill the four national leaders" — the investigating officials said.

CID, however, did not single out the principal accused. "The court will decide," said one official.

CID did not mention which specific charges were brought against whom.

The IO, in the charge sheet, recommended relieving Nuruzaman from the case as there were not sufficient witnesses and evidences against him, according to the investigators.

According to the charge sheet the then president, Khan-dakar Mushtaque Ahmed along with his civil and military accomplices conspired to eliminate four influential leaders of the Awami League, who they feared, would challenge their position.

Mushtaque and his accomplices first requested the four leaders to join the cabinet. Then the killers allured the four national leaders and at last the accused persons threatened the four leaders. The four leaders were arrested and taken to the jail on August 23, 1975, when the killers failed to make them agree to their proposals, investigators said.

Mushtaque and his accomplices started considering the four leaders as possible threat to their survival when a meeting attended by Awami League MPs in the Bangabhaban on October 16, 1975, ended in a pandemonium, without arriving at any decision.

About 150 to 200 Awami League MPs were present at the meeting that was actually arranged to give Mushtaque more political authority, according to the investigators.

Besides, army officials, who at that time were in the Bangabhaban and now facing trial for the killing of Banga-

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Besides, army officials, who at that time were in the Bangabhaban and now facing trial for the killing of Banga-

bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members were afraid that their rival group in the Cantonment might dislodge Mushtaque from power, sending them all behind bars on charges of killing of Bangabandhu.

The killers of 15th August became afraid due to the activities of the rival group in the Cantonment led by the then Brig Khaled Mosharraf, Chief of General Staff, and the then Lt Col Shafayet Jamil, Station Commander, Dhaka of Bangladesh Army in the last week of October, 1975, the charge sheet said.

Then the killers had a meeting at the Bangabhaban on November 2 night. The blue print for the killing of the four leaders was chalked out in that meeting following which a group of five was sent under Risaldar Moslemuddin to carry out the operation at around 4 am on November 3, 1975.

Other members of the group included Dafadar Marafat Ali, LD Abul Hashem Mridha and two other unidentified soldiers.

The jail authorities refused to let the group get inside the jail, initially.

An order over telephone from the Bangabhaban facilitated their entry into the jail at around 4 am, according to the CID findings.

At gunpoint, the group forced the jail warden to open the cell of the new jail building where the four leaders were confined in separate rooms and brought Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansur Ali and A H M Kamruzzaman inside Room No: One where Syed Nazrul Islam was already confined.

They were shot inside the prison cell of the jail. Another group of four later came and charged the leaders with bayonets soon after the first group left the jail. The second group which charged the four leaders with bayonets, however, remained unidentified, the investigators said.

During the investigation, the CID recorded the judicial statements of three persons, one accused and two witnesses, under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Of the accused, CID recorded the judicial statement of Taheruddin Thakur. Besides, two witnesses — Informant Abdul Awal, the then DIG (Prison), and the then IG (Prison) Nuruzaman — gave judicial statements.

The CID investigators, however, were not able to recover the FIR that was filed with Lalbagh thana by the then DIG (Prison).

During the investigation, the CID could not find the autopsy report on bodies of the four national leaders, the investigators said, adding the witnesses include the doctors who conducted the autopsy of the bodies.

Taka devalued again

From Page 1
government went for the devaluation. There had been no compelling grounds or reasons for such massive adjustment," Rahman said.

"There is no straight forward logic behind it. There is no reason that it should inject fresh dynamism in the economy," he added.

But business leader Yussuf Abdullah Harun, the outgoing president of Bangladesh Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), defended the move.

"The flexible exchange rate policy of continuing adjustments in response to unfolding developments affecting the external sector has enabled Bangladesh to maintain reasonable growth and stability in the neighbouring region. The Bangladesh Taka continues to remain one of the most stable currencies in the region," the bank said.

On the occasion of the Wills International Cup cricket being held at Dhaka from Oct 24-Nov1, 1998

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See Star Sport Now!

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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