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Budget Face critics boldly in JS, Hasina tells MPs

By Nazmul Ashraf
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina instructed ruling party Members of Parliament (MPs) to make an all-out effort, while defending the proposed budget for 1999-2000 in the Jatiya Sangsad as the Opposition has launched street agitation against the new budget even before participating in a parliamentary debate on the issue.

The Leader of the House has advised Awami League lawmakers "not to spare" an aggressive Opposition on the floor of the House.

She has also asked the AL deputies to study the new budget properly and, if needed, consult the finance minister before speaking for it in parliament.

Her instructions came at a meeting of the AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) at the JS Bhaban yesterday evening, according to MPs attending the meeting.

Claiming that the proposed budget would "revamp the rural economy and the local industries," and "help massive empowerment of women", the

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Millions at risk of arsenic cancer

By Naimul Haq
Rahman's right leg had to be amputated, last year, as the poisoning had already spread to his limb and surrounding parts of his body. He is now counting his last days.

During this correspondent's recent visit to his village home of Iswardi dhana (police station) in Pabna district, Rahman, on his crutches, said, "I have been drinking water from a tubewell installed by the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) but never knew that I and my family had been drinking poison."

According to a recent nationwide survey done by Dhaka Community Hospital, the number of people exposed to arsenic cancer in the country could go into several millions. Thousands of people mostly in southern and eastern Bangladesh are suffering from cancer emanating from arsenic poisoning, experts say. What is most astonishing is that villagers who suffer from cancer are not aware of it.

I had no idea of cancer in my body until doctors from the capital (Dhaka) came to test urine and hair samples from me to confirm that the level of poisonous arsenic in my body had exceeded the danger level for long," said Abdul Rahman.

The scale of groundwater arsenic contamination in the country is not confined to shallow tubewells but also with the size of the population suffering from cancer caused by drinking contaminated tubewell water," Prof Quazi Quamrul Hossain said.

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Pak shelling during Vajpayee's trip to Kargil India, Pakistan 'ready for war'

NEW DELHI, June 13: A day after a crisis meeting in New Delhi failed to break the deadlock over Kashmir, India and Pakistan both warned they were prepared for war if the conflict in the disputed Himalayan region worsened, report agencies.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, addressing front line troops in Kargil today said India would not relent until hundreds of guerrillas occupying strategic heights inside Indian territory were beaten back into Pakistan.

"We want peace but we are also keeping ourselves ready for war," Press Trust of India quoted Vajpayee, as saying.

Artillery shells hit a village one or two km away from the helipad where Vajpayee landed today, at the start of a two-day visit to Kashmir.

Indian President KR Narayanan today described as "cowardly" Pakistani shelling during Vajpayee's visit.

"I am greatly relieved to know that you were not affected by the cowardly act and continued with your programme to boost the morale of our troops," Narayanan, the supreme commander of Indian armed forces, said in a message to Vajpayee.

At least five long-range artillery shells exploded in the mountainous battle-zone of Kargil as Vajpayee arrived to address Indian soldiers there.

In nearby mountains, Indian troops continued high altitude battles, backed by air support, to try to sweep the guerrillas from their vantage points.

Indian military briefers said the fighting was fiercest in the Batalik and Dras sectors, where United News of India news agency earlier reported Indian forces had launched an assault on a range of hills after taking and inflicting heavy casualties during the capture of a nearby height.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz had said after Saturday's frosty exchanges with Indian leaders he believed there would be no further intensification of the conflict, but back in Islamabad today he sounded a cautionary note.

"In sum, we want peace, but if war is imposed on us we have the capability to defend ourselves and our vital national interests."

Pakistan announced on Saturday an 11 per cent increase in defence spending in its budget for the coming financial year.

In another development Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif spoke to Vajpayee by phone today to urge that the two countries take steps to defuse Kashmir tensions.

He told Vajpayee that "mutually acceptable" approaches

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Opposition to observe 'protest day' June 18

The BNP-led opposition alliance will observe countrywide 'protest day' on June 18 demanding withdrawal of additional taxes in the name of VAT, reports UNB.

This was announced by BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan while addressing a post-hartal press briefing yesterday evening at 29 Minto Road.

Mannan Bhuiyan criticised the government for its denial of proposing fresh taxes in the national budget for 1999-2000.

"How the government will then generate additional revenue as projected in the budget," he posed a question.

Bhuiyan said people have rejected the anti-people budget by observing the countrywide hartal peacefully and asked the government to come up with a fresh "development-oriented" budget showing respect to the people's verdict.

Protesting attack on peaceful pickets and arrest during

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50 hurt in clashes in city Hartal passes off peacefully

By Staff Correspondent
A dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal called by the BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday was observed by and large peacefully except some sporadic incidents of clash in the city that left around 50 people including four policemen injured.

The opposition alliance called the hartal to protest the "anti-people" national budget for fiscal 1999-2000, placed in the Jatiya Sangsad on Thursday.

Twenty-one pro-hartal activists were detained for picketing, blasting bombs, pelting stones at police and damaging of rickshaws and other vehicles in the city, police said.

Witnesses said there were clashes involving police, pickets and anti-hartal activists in different areas of the city including Jatrabari, Nayapaltan, Bijoynagar and Purana Paltan.

At least 15 people were injured in clashes at Shaheed Farook Road at Jatrabari. Trouble began there early in the day and continued intermittently throughout the day.

Witnesses said police charged batons and fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets to disperse a pro-hartal procession there. Pickets also chased police with brick bats and hand bombs.

Pickets in a procession torched four autorickshaws, damaged four buses and several rickshaws at Shaheed Farook Road after they allegedly came under attack from police and anti-hartal activists in

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Picketers assaulting a rickshawpuller in front of the BNP central office at Paltan yesterday. —Star photo

ANNOUNCEMENT

LIBERATION AND BEYOND

INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

J. N. DIXIT

Starting from Wednesday, 16 June (previously scheduled to start on the 14th), The Daily Star will serialise some relevant extracts from the just released book by JN Dixit, "Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relations". Dixit opened the Indian Diplomatic Mission in Dhaka on 17th January 1972 and served as the Deputy Chief of Mission until the middle of 1975.

JN Dixit gives the readers an eye-witness account of the post-liberation warm relations between Bangladesh and India and how it soured within the first few years. As a thoughtful and analytical commentator JN Dixit's book forms an essential reading for all scholars and students of Bangladesh-India relations.

The Bangladesh edition of the book will be published by the University Press Ltd from whom The Daily Star has got the exclusive rights to serialise the extracts. The book will be launched this week.

Waugh steers Aussies to semis

HEADINGLEY, England, June 13: Steve Waugh cracked a century here today as Australia won a drama-packed match with South Africa with just two balls to spare to grab the last World Cup semi-final slot, reports AFP.

The Australian captain, dropped off a sitter halfway through his innings, snatched a five-wicket victory from the tournament favourites with a sparkling 120 not out off 110 balls.

He put on 126 with Ricky Ponting (69) and 73 with Michael Bevan (27) as his team overhauled a seemingly impenetrable 271 for seven in the final over.

Australia joined South Africa, Pakistan and New Zealand in the last four, with Zimbabwe just missing out.

Ironically, Australia and South Africa will meet again at Edgbaston on June 17 in the semi-finals, with Pakistan taking on New Zealand 24 hours earlier at Old Trafford.

The normally undemon-

strative Waugh punched the air in delight, jumping up and down after scrambling the winning single as jubilant Australian fans stormed the pitch.

The game swung on one astonishing incident.

Waugh, on 56 and with Australia fighting for their lives on 152 for three, chipped a com-

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WITH LONG LASTING MOUTHWASH & FLUORIDE

CLOSE UP

SHINY WHITE TEETH - FRESHER BREATH

For Long Lasting Fresh Breath and Sparkling White Teeth



South Africa's Jonty Rhodes smashes through the wicket with an attempted run out by Australia's Damien Fleming during their Super Six match at Headingley yesterday. — AFP photo

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STEVE WAUGH
(Australia)
Man of the Match
Australia vs South Africa

Rallies, processions banned on CU campus till June 30

CHITTAGONG, June 13: Chittagong University authorities have again banned rallies and processions on the campus till June 30 to avoid confrontation between rival student groups, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of CU Deans, Provosts, Registrar, acting Proctor and Assistant Proctors with Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Abu Yusuf Alam in the chair, campus sources said.

On May 31, authorities withdrew the restriction on rallies and processions on the

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'Disqualified four' to monitor PSC at last

By Sharier Khan
PSC monitoring which is virtually non-existent now.

But as per the evaluation criteria set by Petrobangla, not a single bidder scored the "pass mark" of 80 out of 100 to be considered "pre-qualified" in the tender. In December, the bid evaluators set a new criteria under which bidders receiving over 50 points, instead of 80, were considered "qualified".

Seven companies were qualified under that criteria.

After much delay due to lack of emphasis by the government in monitoring PSC activities, Petrobangla opened the financial offers of the participants a couple of weeks ago. The offers of these four companies were found "lowest". The bid is now

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Second round Block Bidding resumes

By Staff Correspondent
Petrobangla resumed the Second Round Block Bidding for oil and gas exploration by beginning negotiations with oil giant Shell Co. yesterday.

Sources said, negotiations with Shell over blocks 5 and 10 would continue for about a week. From June 20, Petrobangla will begin talks with Maersk over blocks 19 and 20. No other oil company will negotiate with Petrobangla for the blocks.

During the talks, among other things Petrobangla will try to persuade the oil companies to give a 10 per cent carry over interest to BAPEX from their respective blocks.

At the same time, the oil companies would seek government confirmation of gas sales.

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Sporadic bomb blasts, 50 rickshaws damaged in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, June 13: Hartal passed off peacefully in the port city today barring some stray incidents of violence, police and witnesses said.

Over 50 rickshaws were damaged by the pickets in different parts of the city during hartal hours, witnesses said.

Chase and counter chase between hartal supporters and police took place near BNP office at Nasim Bhaban in the morning. The trouble erupted after a picket was beaten up by police.

Sporadic blasts of cocktail at Kadamtoli, Bahaddarhat, Agrabad, Muradpur and Chawkbazar created a panicky situation in the morning.

Three pickets were arrested during the hartal called by BNP-led opposition alliance protesting new fiscal measures in the budget for 1999-2000.

Besides, rallies and processions at New Market crossing, Zilla Parishad market premises and other city areas marked the hartal.

All kinds of vehicles except few rickshaws were off the roads while shops and markets remained closed.

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Prayer Timings

June 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:20	4:25
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:50	5:00
Maghrib	7:00	7:05
Esha	7:55	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Foreign earnings of non-resident Bangladeshis not taxable

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) said yesterday that foreign earnings of the Bangladeshi non-residents were in no way taxable in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

In a statement, the NBR said under the provisions of the Income Tax Ordinance, only the income of a non-resident Bangladeshi accruing in Bangladesh is taxable in Bangladesh.

The NBR further said if they (Non-resident Bangladeshis) do not have any income in Bangladesh, they even need not submit income tax return in Bangladesh.

The NBR was giving a clarification about some confusion that has arisen in some quarters about the budget proposal

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Beyond the boundary

Australia By A Nose

Shakil Kasem
The last match of the Super Six, inexplicably enough, still had plenty of interest left in it. Australia needed two points to get to the semi-finals. Why this team, which had been the bookmakers' favourite all throughout the tournament, had to sing for its supper, boggled the mind. But, that was how it turned out to be. The aristocrats of cricket had to

fight the plebes of the game to establish their credentials in the highest echelons of the game. Australia or Zimbabwe, that was the question.

South Africa in spite of their defeat against Zimbabwe, a result which had turned the cricket world inside out, had already booked a place in the semi-finals. What remained to

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we score... while others watch

Standard Chartered

Dhanmondi playground once again being used for money making

By Morshed Ali Khan
The Dhanmondi playground at Road 8 is once again being used for commercial purpose.

More than half the field is now being dug by the Forest Department to build 70 temporary stalls for a two-week tree fair beginning tomorrow. However, it is yet to get permission from the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Forest officials said they have applied for permission.

The move to use the field for such a purpose has once again angered the residents and hundreds of sports enthusiasts of the area. "This is a mindless thing they are doing on this field to make money whereas our children have nowhere to go to play," said a retired naval officer, a long time resident of the

area.

Dhanmondi playground belongs to the Public Works Department (PWD) but the DCC is in charge for its maintenance now.

The Dhanmondi Club that has built some structures there has been using the field for quite some time. The playground is a favourite venue for holding meena bazaars, cattle markets, circus and fairs to generate huge sums without the 'knowledge' of the DCC.

A forest official, involved in organising the fair, said they are planning to charge between Tk 2,500 and 6,000 for each stall.

"We have been holding it every year," the forest official

said. When asked who gave them permission for the fair and how much it would cost them, he said the Dhanmondi Club has given them permission.

He, however, said they have applied to the DCC for permission but are yet to get it. "I can not say how much we had to pay to the club," he replied.

Dhanmondi Club officials however denied that they had anything to do with the tree fair. "We do not know anything about it," said a club official.

When asked why they chose a playground while other places such as the Parade Square were available, the official replied, "This is a prime location where

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20 We give you MORE

First Semifinal (Jun 16)
Pakistan vs New Zealand
Venue: Old Trafford

Second Semifinal (Jun 17)
Australia vs South Africa
Venue: Edgbaston