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**RU Senaté elects 3-member VC panel**

From RU Correspondent RAJSHAHI, June 19: The RU Senaté today elected a three-member vice-chancellor panel. The 'Yellow Panel' backed by the ruling Awami League and left leaning parties, won the polls defeating Opposition BNP and Jamaat backed White Panel by a big margin.

Incumbent Pro-vice Chancellor Prof Sayeedur Rahman Khan got the highest 54 votes followed by Present Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Khaleque (52 votes) and Prof Wazed Ali (48 votes).

The President and Chancellor of the university will nominate one from the winning panel as vice chancellor.

UNB adds, apart from elect- See page 11 col 4



The visiting Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (second from right) with President Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban prior to a luncheon hosted by the President yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu (first from right) are also seen in the picture. — PID photo

**Red carpet reception to Vajpayee**

Red carpet was rolled out at the Zia International Airport to greet the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who arrived here yesterday on a two-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received the Indian Prime Minister at the airport.

A tiny, red carpeted a bouquet to the Indian Prime Minister just after he descended from a special aircraft of Indian Air Force at 10.45 am.

Later, the Indian head of the government was given a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent drawn from the three services as the band played national anthems of the two countries.

The India Prime Minister, accompanied by Prime Minister Hasina, took salute from the decorated dais at the airport tarmac. He later inspected the guard.

Prime Minister Hasina introduced her cabinet colleagues and high officials to the Indian Prime Minister at the airport.

Present on the occasion were Foreign Minister Abul Kalam Azad, LRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman, Education Minister ASHK Sadique, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engr Mosharrar Hossain, Dhaka City Mayor Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, chiefs of three services, and other high Civil and Military officials.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh accompanied the Indian Prime Minister. Earlier, on Friday, West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu arrived here to attend the inaugural ceremony of the Dhaka-Calcutta bus service.

**JS discussion on budget An Indian prescription: BNP Development-oriented: AL**

Opposition lawmakers told the Parliament yesterday that the government would not require to impose new taxes if cross-border smuggling and extravagant spending could be stopped, reports UNB.

They also alleged that the proposed budget for fiscal 1999-2000 was prepared on the basis of Indian prescription to protect the interest of Indian businessmen.

A BNP lawmaker, referring to the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, said he is coming here to ensure that India gets gas, corridor and transit facilities from Bangladesh.

"Each action of the present government reflects its love for India," said BNP MP Mujibur Rahman Sarwar while taking part in budget discussion.

He said the CHT peace accord was signed in the same way Berubari was handed over to India by the post-Independent Awami League government, and now the move was on to give gas, corridor and transit to India.

Former State Minister Kabir Hossain said the number of smuggling incidents has increased manifold in the last three years. If smuggling can be checked, there will be no need for expanding the VAT net, he argued. Similarly, the government can resort to austerity measures without imposing new taxes.

The common people is the target of the proposed budget, Kabir said and accused the Finance Minister of giving a misleading statement that it is a no-tax budget.

He asked how the Finance Minister would realise Tk 4,151 crore more as revenue, if there is no provision for new taxes. He also questioned the claim of realising 22.5 per cent more revenue with 8.79 per cent inflation, less export and lowest forex reserve.

Kabir criticised the government for bringing doctors and lawyers the under VAT net and said those professionals had now been identified as commodity. VAT on lawyers would ultimately hit the common people, he said.

Admitting the necessity of imposing new taxes and increase of revenue earning, he said instead of imposing tax on bid and low quality cigarette consumed by poor people, tax could be imposed on cigarette consumed by the rich.

Similarly, he added, instead of bringing the small restaurants under the VAT net, tax could be imposed on big hotels.

The former BNP state minister said the Finance Minister imposed VAT on electricity in the wake of acute power crisis to discourage poor people from taking power connection.

Although the old-age allowance, introduced by the present government, is a historic step, Kabir said, it would only benefit a handful of people.

"When hundreds of people are starving, feeding one or two is not the reflection of good governance," he said.

The treasury bench members taking part in the discussion said that for the first time, prices of essentials did not shoot up with the presentation of budget, which was a very normal feature in the past.

They said the proposed budget is aimed at industrialisation and development.

**JS tidbits**

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP lawmaker and former state minister Kabir Hossain amply entailed his party MPs in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday by his comments about some top government leaders.

Kabir's laugh some comments about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed and Finance Minister S A M S Kibria were acclaimed loudly by his party colleagues and his time to speak was almost doubled.

"Increased tax on electricity is to discourage people from asking for power which the Hasina government has failed to supply. It's a good strategy, undoubtedly. Similarly, fresh tax on medical treatment aims at leaving the poor to die untreated, resulting in a smaller size of population to agitate. A tactic indeed!"

Kabir then came up with a unique suggestion for the government to increase revenue by austerity. "The foreign minister could avoid an extravagant show in his second marriage and his expensive honeymoon in Germany. Instead, he could have gone to Sundarbans, to make the animals there joyful."

About the government claim that the proposed budget had no new tax, the BNP MP jokingly said: "I think, their claim has already found its place in the Guinness Book of World Records."

Defending elderly Azad's ceremonial wedding, A S M Firoz of the Treasury Bench said, "Whatever the foreign minister has done, he has done it publicly. But secret stories are there about many of you (in BNP)."

**President**

From Page 1

Shahabuddin also hosted a lunch for the visiting Indian Prime Minister at the Bangabhaban.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal, Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh Abul Kalam Azad and India Jaswant Singh, Chief Minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu, ministers, judges of the Supreme Court and diplomats attended the lunch.

Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force, members of the parliament, secretaries, educationists, senior lawyers, editors and members of the Indian delegation also attended it, said a Bangabhaban press release.

**It's a joyride**

From Page 1

gers set out at 4.30 am from Calcutta and arrived at Dhaka at 4.30 pm.

The buses, bedecked with flowers and garlands, were nicknamed "Souhardo" (cordial).

In the caravan were celebrities like famous vocalist Bhuben Hazarika, BJP MP Tapan Sikhdar, footballer Chuni Goswami and singer Malabika Das.

Malabika Das was overjoyed: "I can't express it in my words, it's a great feeling, just like a feeling of enjoying sunset from a mountain with so many colours..."

Hailing from Manikganj, she left for Calcutta at the age of nine. She came to Dhaka in 1997 to receive the Sher-e-Bangla Shishu Kishore gold medal.

Narrating the warm reception they got from people along the bus route, Malabika said: "I won't find such hospitality anywhere in the world... I wish this bridge of friendship does never get broken."

Popular singer Bhuben Hazarika said: "We the two people live in the same air beneath the same sky... It's just the beginning and our relation would deepen."

**PM: Reduce trade gap**

From Page 1

the benefit equally. We have to be mutually careful in achieving success in any field relating to bilateral cooperation.

Describing the Dhaka-Calcutta bus service as a positive step, the Prime Minister said: "I am confident that together we shall continue to traverse newer heights in our bilateral relations in the days to come."

She called for opening new possible arena in the bilateral relations between the two neighbours and said the remaining issues could be solved in the same spirit the two countries displayed at the time of signing the historic treaty on sharing of waters of the Ganges.

Hasina urged her Indian counterpart to take specific measures for reducing the trade imbalance between Dhaka and New Delhi.

"We have already requested for free access of a number of items of export from Bangladesh to India, to which we hope to receive a positive response."

Pointing to the challenges of the new millennium, she said political leaders of the South Asian countries have to realize themselves what contributions they will make for next generation.

Referring to Indo-Bangladesh relation, she said the relations with a country that rendered positive support to Bangladesh's liberation war bear a very special significance.

Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had established the base of friendly bilateral relation with India immediately after the independence.

"Our bilateral relation with India, as our closest neighbour, had taken up a major part in our foreign policy since then. We, therefore, attach utmost significance to our relations with India."

**Natural friends**

From Page 1

The Indian leader said the Ganges water sharing treaty and the CHT accord are clear proof that "given the will on both sides, we can work out mutually advantageous solutions through dialogue for even a complex issue."

Referring to Bangladesh's initiative to float SAARC, he appreciated Dhaka's positive outlook to this forum.

Vajpayee also mentioned the formation of BIMSTEC where Bangladesh and India are members.

"We see a bright future for regional cooperative arrangements and India will make its full contribution to the success of these arrangements," he said.

**2 terrorists**

From Page 1

tion would be launched soon to arrest other top terrorists of the city.

Meanwhile, OCs of the city's five thanas were transferred against the backdrop of deterioration of law and order in the city, police sources said.



The latest royal bride Sophie Rhys-Jones (L) waves to the crowd along with her husband Prince Edward as they leave St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle yesterday after their wedding. (Story on page 9). —AFP photo

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A way of life

**A view from the Gully**

From Page 1

to win a place in the semifinals. Both these giants started from a scratch in the Super Six having failed to bring with them any points from the preliminaries. Both had to win all three matches at this stage of the competition which was absolutely unlikely. Australia did. It was truly frustrating for a team which had prepared themselves for the big occasion mentally and physically. Only thing missing was a strong determination to win.

Australia had two tough matches against South Africa which they won after lot of sweat and struggle to be in the final. But Pakistan had two easier opponents to beat to reach the end of the road. So, the two giants of modern cricket will be locking horns at the mecca of cricket before a soldout house.

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1787 and its early history relates directly to the development of Lord's cricket ground itself, says Wisden. Thomas Lord, a Yorkshireman born in Thirsk in 1775 had by 1780 found his way to London when he took employment at the recreation ground at White Conduit Fields, Islington. Here he met members of the White Conduit Cricket Club (founded in 1782) who were not satisfied with the cricket ground at Islington and suggested to Lord that he should find a more exclusive ground for their use. This he found at Dorset Fields. In 1787 the first match was played on this ground between Middlesex and Essex and the MCC was founded by Thomas Lord's patrons from the White Conduit Club headed by Lord Windchelsea.

Australia enter the final with six successive victories after two losses in the first round and Pakistan have two back to back wins after their consecutive losses to Bangladesh, South Africa and India. While the Aussies had two tormenting experience against the Proteas, their opponents had comfortable fixtures against Zimbabwe and New Zealand. So physically the Pakistanis should feel better than their opponents. Australia must make a sound start against Shoaib and Akram and have to be careful against Saqlain if he bowls well. They have a longer tail than Pakistan, so the top and middle order must cope with the potent Pakistani attack.

The Pakistanis on the other hand must bowl with discipline and Wasim Akram should lead the way. Generous dose of no-

**Multi-modal**

From Page 1

Abul Hasan Chowdhury.

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Brajesh Mishra and High Commissioner in Dhaka Dev Mukerjee were on the other side.

To the Indian proposal for multi-modal communication links, Bangladesh said it will study the proposal but pointed out that the existing road and rail infrastructures in the country did not have the capacity to take additional load and that detailed studies were needed before opening any new cross-border route.

Plans are there to restore train communication between Benapole on Bangladesh side and Petrapole in India, they told the Indian side.

Besides, a special train operates every year on the occasion of 'Urs' carrying devotees from Rajbari in Bangladesh and Midnapore in India.

Studies may be undertaken in future regarding restoration of train communication in Darsana-Gede, Rohonpur-Singhabad, Birol-Radhikapur and Shabazzpur-Mahishashan routes that existed before 1965, the Bangladesh side is learnt to have said.

The India side said that Bangladesh could also consider opening of bus service between Dhaka and Agartala and between Dhaka and Siliguri.

To this, the Bangladesh side said it will wait to see the outcome of the Dhaka-Calcutta route before making any immediate move.

The two prime ministers also discussed geo-political matters and other matters of regional and international issues of common concern. The Indian Prime Minister is learnt to have briefed her Bangladesh counterpart on the situation in Kargil and India's position regarding Kashmir, and sought Bangladesh's understanding.

Bangladesh also suggested setting up of joint venture industries in Bangladesh with 'buy-back arrangements'.

The two sides also discussed the problems of cross-border crime, insurgency, smuggling of narcotics, law and order and suggested that meetings be held on these issues at appropriate levels including the Joint Working Group (JWG).

**Protest against Vajpayee's visit**

Pro-Islami parties and BNP-backed student front JCD, demonstrated in the city yesterday with black flag protesting the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, reports UNB.

They blamed him for demolition of Babri Masjid and killing Muslims in Kashmir.

The police intercepted the demonstrators at different places and picked up at least 25 activists.

A procession of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis was intercepted by police at Bijoynagar when they tried to proceed towards Paltan crossing yesterday afternoon.

Police lobbed several teargas shells and charged baton as processions pelted stones at the police at about 6.30 pm. Prior to the procession they held a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mokarram mosque.

The Islami parties earlier declared that they would protest Vajpayee's visit holding him responsible for demolition of centuries-old Babri Masjid in India and killing Muslims in Kashmir who are fighting for independence from India.

Thousands of Shiv Sena, affiliated to Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), demolished the Babri Mosque in 1990.

Leaders of Islami parties in separate rallies described Prime Minister Vajpayee as anti-Muslim and anti-Bangladesh. They said that he and his government have taken a course to jeopardise the sovereignty of Bangladesh.

They were also critical of the Awami League government for collaborating with Vajpayee to implement the Indian plan in See page 11 col 8

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The Branch has been shifted today on the 20th June, '99

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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