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VOL. IX NO. 159 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

ASHAR 21, 1406 BS

DHAKA MONDAY JULY 5, 1999

RABIUL AWAL 20, 1420 HIJRI

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Report on bill Walkout for not allowing debate

By Staff Correspondent
The Opposition staged a brief walkout from the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday protesting the Speaker's ruling not allowing any debate on presentation of the JS Standing Committee report on the Remuneration and Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1999.

Chairman of the JS Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Suranjit Sengupta placed the Bill.

The Opposition claimed that the 'note of dissent' on the Bill, given by opposition members of the committee during its meetings earlier, were not read out when it was placed. They insisted that the members concerned be allowed to speak to record their 'note of dissent'.

Four opposition members of the committee -- Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Barrister Aminul Haq and M Khalequzaman of BNP, and Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan of JP -- had given their 'note of dissent' on Clause 3 of the Bill.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury gave the floor to Opposition Chief Whip Khanadaker Delwar Hossain to speak. Delwar requested the Speaker to allow Khalequzaman of BNP to speak.

The Speaker then gave the floor to BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury. The BNP lawmaker claimed that the Chairman of the committee did not read the 'note of dissent' on the Bill and as such he presented an 'incomplete' report of the committee.

Quoting from Rule 211 of the Rules of Procedure, he said that either the committee Chairman should be allowed to read out

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India's space programme Military and Strategic Implications

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Liberation and Beyond

by JN Dixit
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Prayer Timings

July 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-15
Johr	12-50	1-25
Asr	4-55	5-05
Maghrib	7-00	7-05
Esha	7-55	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Judge finds 'flaws' in charge sheet Reinvestigation into Jail Killing Case ordered

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court yesterday ordered reinvestigation into the Jail Killing Case, saying there were 'some flaws' in the charge sheet, reports BSS.

"I cannot indict the accused in the case today because of some flaws in the charge sheet," Judge Sheikh Rezwana Ali told the court.

He ordered investigation officer Abdul Kahar Akand to submit an additional charge sheet after the reinvestigation, by August 5.

The order came after the prosecution and the defence appeared in the court, which was due to pronounce its verdict yesterday on the indictment of the 21 accused, disposing of defence

prayers for their exoneration.

The judge said the charge sheet did not specify the role of the executors of the four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tazuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and AHM Quamruzzaman. Therefore, further investigation was needed to make the case more transparent, he contended.

He said according to the charge sheet, it appeared that the November 3, 1975 pre-dawn murders in Dhaka Central Jail was committed in two phases. One group led by Risaladar Moslemuddin first shot the detained leaders while another group under one Ali later entered the jail and confirmed the deaths with bayonet.

But, the judge said, the investigation also did not unveil the current whereabouts of Moslemuddin, and Ali, a naik of the East Bengal Regiment in the massacre.

The court referred to an earlier defence claim about the reported death of Moslemuddin quoting a book, titled, 'Bangabandhu Murder: Facts and Documents,' by Prof Abu Sayeed, currently the State Minister for Information, and ordered further police enquiry into the matter.

Under the Bangladesh Penal Code, a dead man cannot be prosecuted.

The prosecution earlier said Moslemuddin, one of the prin-

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Concrete slabs are being placed on the slope of Dhaka Flood Protection Embankment in the city's Kamrangirchar area yesterday as heavy downpour has raised fears of flood.

—Star photo by Amran Hossain

PM leaves for London tonight

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka for London tonight on a four-day official visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, reports BSS.

The two prime ministers will hold talks on July 7 at 10 Downing Street covering the entire gamut of relations between the two Commonwealth countries.

Sheikh Hasina and Tony Blair will jointly inaugurate the 19-day long Bangladesh Festival, organised by Arts Worldwide in London, on July 7.

Although her four-day official visit to UK will conclude on July 9, the Prime Minister will stay back for some days to attend several functions including some to be arranged by expatriate Bangladesh nationals living in different parts of England.

Sharif leaves for US, Vajpayee declines talks with Clinton

DRAS, July 4: With the national flag flying from a recaptured, strategic Himalayan peak on Sunday, India reached a turning point in its battle to push Pakistan-based fighters off the heights of Kashmir and stuck to its policy of no talks until the Islamic intruders are gone, reports AP.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif headed to Washington, but India's leader declined an invitation from President Clinton.

"We will win this war," Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee told a party worker gathering, using that term for the first time to describe what the military calls a "localized conflict."

During a 10-minute Saturday night phone conversation, Clinton told Vajpayee that Sharif was coming for a Sunday meeting, and invited Vajpayee to visit the United States. Foreign Ministry spokesman Kaminder Singh Jassal told reporters in New Delhi.

"Vajpayee declined. It is not convenient at this stage, Jassal said.

"All agreed the situation is

dangerous and could escalate if not resolved quickly," the White House press office said in a statement. But Clinton will not attempt to mediate. "We believe this has to be resolved through bilateral dialogue," the White House said.

AFP adds: Sharif flew to Washington today for surprise talks with Clinton, raising speculation that new moves to solve the Indo-Pakistani crisis on Kashmir were imminent.

"Prime Minister Sharif's spur-of-the-moment dash to Washington is likely to be a turning point in the ongoing crisis, though it is not necessarily going to help it," the Nation newspaper said in Islamabad a front page commentary.

The Pakistani leader's trip was not announced in advance and hours before he left by a commercial flight a foreign office spokesman said no date had been set for the encounter. A brief foreign ministry statement on Sunday said the meeting would take stock of the deteriorating situation and the need for a settlement of the Kashmir dispute, which holds

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Jesmin to be buried but as 'unclaimed body'

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, July 4: Although her identity as a sex worker is widely known now, Jesmin, will be buried as an unidentified person.

After a four-day uncertainty over her burial Jesmin, 22, who was killed in the early hours Thursday, will be buried with another unclaimed body at Masdar graveyard tomorrow.

Jesmin, a sex worker of Tanbaraz brothel, was killed by unidentified assailants and her body lay at the Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for days as authorities of all the graveyards here refused to allow her burial in their graveyards because she was a sex worker.

At last, Tanzim Association, a private organisation dedicated to burial of unclaimed bodies in Narayanganj, agreed to accommodate her after a fresh request from hospital authorities today. Amir Hossain, in-charge of the Tanzim Association's burial operation said they agreed to bury the body after it was forwarded to them from the hospital as an 'unclaimed one'.

Hospital authorities admit-

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2 stabbed to death in Narayanganj

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, July 4: Two persons were stabbed to death by some unidentified assailants at Nishchintapur under Fatullah thana last night.

The victims were identified as Noor Hossain Titu, 25, General Secretary of Jubo League, DCC Ward No 35 and his friend Monirul Islam alias Chhati Babul, 25, a cement trader of Nishchintapur.

Police and witnesses said, the assailants called the two out of Monirul's house at Nishchintapur at around 10 pm and brought them to a place near a road.

They stabbed them indiscriminately, leaving Noor Hossain dead on the spot. Monirul was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctors declared him dead.

The motive behind the killing could not be known. Kallur Rahman, father of Monirul Islam filed a murder case with Fatullah thana.

None was arrested.

Monirul was wanted in six criminal cases, filed with Fatullah thana, police said.

The bodies were sent to Narayanganj Hospital for autopsy.

Floods in northern & central regions likely this month

By Special Correspondent

After a brief pause yesterday, another spell of rains later in the week is likely to trigger off floods in the Brahmaputra basin this month, a senior meteorologist said.

The areas vulnerable to the spate of Brahmaputra are the regions of greater Rangpur, Mymensingh, Dhaka and Faridpur.

"But floods this monsoon is not going to be as severe as the last floods," Ershad Hossain, director of Meteorology Department, told The Daily Star yesterday after a meeting of experts who prepared the weather forecast for this month.

The forecast for this month said there is a possibility of one or two seasonal lows that might cause more-than-average showers and eventually floods in the north and central regions.

He said that last month it rained two per cent less than the forecast. Breaks and huge clouds that veered off the country caused the less precipitation. But the rainy days were more than normal as monsoon winds were active in early June

and western pressure later in the month.

Last monsoon, the country was washed by century's worst flooding that wrecked homes and crops and slowed down economic activity for three months from July, according to UNB.

The flood this month would occur under the influence of significant rainfall in Dinajpur and Rajshahi to the north and Dhaka, Faridpur and Comilla in the central region.

Meanwhile, active monsoon over the country made almost all the rivers in four basins swell in the last 24 hours till 9 am yesterday. Two rivers were flowing above their respective danger levels, said the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre of Water Development Board.

The centre, in its regular report, said the Brahmaputra, Jamuna and Ganges recorded further rise at all points and the rivers in the Meghna basin recorded rise and fall during the period. The rivers in the South

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Dhaka-Calcutta bus service from today

Commercial bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta will begin today, official sources said last night, reports BSS.

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain will inaugurate the commercial operation at the BRTC bus depot in Kamapur at 6:30 am this morning.

Bangladesh and India signed an agreement on June 17 to introduce direct bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta. Initially two buses from Dhaka and two from Calcutta will operate in Dhaka-Bangalore-Calcutta route everyday except Sundays. The state-owned BRTC and Indian surface transport buses will operate in the beginning.

This arrangement will continue for three months and later it will be reviewed, Communications Ministry sources said.

The number of buses will be increased in this route with the increase of the number of passengers and the private sector buses will get opportunity to ply.

Police hunt for Ershad Shikder continues, wife arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 4: Police and BDR jointly raided the "hide-outs", business firms and residence of Ward Commissioner Ershad Ali Shikder today, but failed to arrest him.

Police arrested his second wife, Shanjida Nahar Shova, 25.

Shikder and Shanjida are accused in the case in connection with the murder of Jubo League leader Khali.

Police said Ershad Shikder recently married Shanjida after kidnapping her from the residence of a city Awami League leader.

All property of Shikder's house have been attached following a court order, police said.

Shikder is also accused in six murder cases and 19 other cases filed with different police stations.

'No dependence on India for spares' Migs necessary for defence: Air Chief

By M Anwarul Haq

The purchase of eight MIG-29s from Russia is merely an attempt to replenish Bangladesh Air Force's fleet capacity, Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed has said.

"It is a long pending requirement of BAF to augment its depleting number of aircraft. The BAF had as early as in 1994 pointed out that it was 'deficient' by two squadrons from its earlier strength of five fighter squadrons."

Talking to The Daily Star on Thursday, the BAF chief replied to a number of questions relating to the purchase of MIG-29s which had drawn public

scrutiny. The Air Chief took three hours to explain the reasons for purchase of Russian fighters, the modality of procurement, backdrop of the deal and efficacy of the MIG-29s. He also spoke on the needs and standard of the BAF.

The 124-million US dollar deal is inclusive of training, transportation and technical services. Payment for the purchase of eight MIG-29s fighter planes will be made in cash over a nine-year period. Ten per cent advance payment was already made on June 30 while

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Air Vice Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed

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Don't Miss It!

Boro tops crop output chart

By Reaz Ahmed

Boro emerged as number one crop of the country, accounting for 50.2 per cent of total crop production in the 1998-99 fiscal year, reports BSS.

Comparing to 43.5 per cent in 1997-98 fiscal, according to sources in the food ministry.

Before that, aman used to be major crop of all seasons, the sources added.

Such phenomenal growth was also noticed after the devastating flood in 1988. Boro contribution to total foodgrain rose from 30.7 per cent to 37.5 per cent within a year after the flood.

Some food policy experts, talking to The Daily Star, attributed such development to resilience of the farmers in recouping crop damage incurred by flood, rise in acreage, rich

deposit of post-flood soil nutrient residue and government policy support.

Available data show the 1974 flood resulted in crop loss, and production was around 11.2 million MT (Metric tons) in 1974-75 fiscal. However, recovery came quickly as crop production surged by 14 per cent growth to 12.7 million MT in the succeeding fiscal.

Country's crop production was reduced to only 16.5 million MT in 1988-89 fiscal because of devastating flood in 1988. But, production shot up to 18.7 million MT the following fiscal, marking a 13 per cent rise.

The prospects of crop production after the century's worst floods in 1998 can be bet-

ter analysed against the growth performance in recent years, said Quazi Shahabuddin, Research Director of BIDS, recently.

He noted that after a prolonged stagnation in rice production during the years 1993 to '96, there was a significant increase in production in fiscal 1996-97, which was sustained despite a production shortfall of aman the following year due to a bumper boro and wheat harvest in 1998.

Official sources, however, said that post-flood growth in boro production cost the environment dearly, putting strain on rapidly depleting ground water table.

They also stressed on better food security strategy as it has

been noted over the years that during natural calamities of big magnitudes, the country had to depend largely on food import which puts pressure on the foreign exchange reserves.

"Whatever recovery comes in the form of boro is too late to cope with the immediate crisis. During floods, if the aman is lost substantially, we are left with no option but to import food on cash payment," remarked one source.

After last year's crop loss due to flood, over three million foodgrain had to be imported through both public and private channels to avert looming food shortage. The government's food stock has again swelled to an all-time high thanks to the boro bounty.

Dhanmondi Lake project comes to a halt

By Morshed Ali Khan

Work on the Dhanmondi lake development project has come to a halt due to various reasons including lengthy procedures in releasing funds and encroachment by some residents of the area, Dhaka City Corporation sources said.

All along the project area, half finished structures are now standing amid speculations that the project might never be completed.

Sources in different organisations involved in implemen-

tation of the project alleged slackness among DCC officials concerned for the last four months.

The Assistant Engineer of DCC who was involved in the project from the very beginning and was monitoring the progress, has been transferred to Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) as Executive Engineer. The incumbent engineer has "little experience or knowledge" about the project, the sources alleged.

But DCC sources said the contractor has "almost stopped" work on the project for last one and a half months as huge bills are pending. The revised project proposal of Tk 14.82 crore is now lying with the Planning Ministry for approval, they said.

DCC officials blamed the Planning Ministry for its "lengthy procedure" in releasing funds and said the contractor has stopped work on the pretext of fund shortage and en-

croachment. They also alleged that the contractor did not employ the required manpower earlier.

The contractor however denied the allegations saying that there was scarcity of laborers in the city during harvest time in rural areas.

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— Study in the —

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