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Jamalpur AL issue Mosharraf meets Zillur, explains situation

By Nazmul Ashraf
State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf, facing charges of anti-party activities and misconduct with the party MPs from his home district Jamalpur, is now trying to prove his innocence to the top leadership of Awami League.
Since the Jamalpur AL suspended his membership on Saturday, bringing four specific charges against him, the state minister has been trying to take up the issue with top leaders of the party. Mosharraf is also assigned to look after party affairs in Jamalpur.
He discussed the charges against him with AL General Secretary and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday.
"I've explained my position to Zillur Bhai who advised me to meet party chief Prime Minister," he said.

Myanmar willing to sell gas to India thru' pipeline



U Win Aung

U Win Aung discloses to The Daily Star

By M Anwarul Haq
Myanmar Foreign Minister U Win Aung has said his country wants to increase trade with Bangladesh and other neighbours. It is also willing to sell gas to India through pipeline.
Aung said his country's policy of isolation has now been abandoned and it intends to bolster its economy by attracting foreign direct investment. Myanmar now has foreign investment of over seven billion US dollars, mostly in oil and gas sector involving several western multinationals.
We have an estimated gas reserve of 23 trillion cubic feet and would agree to sell gas to India through pipeline if it wants. India's energy needs increase by eight per cent a year, said U Win Aung.
A pipeline is now being set up for the sale of Myanmar gas to neighbouring Thailand.
The foreign minister was interviewed by The Daily Star yesterday on conclusion of his three-day visit to Dhaka. He gave his views on democracy in Myanmar, trade with Bangladesh and other neighbours, economic and political situation in his country and its desire to 'end isolation' without being dependent on others and remaining non-aligned.
Aung said that Bangladesh and Myanmar had century old economic and commercial relations and had regular shipping services between Chittagong and Sittwe (formerly Akyab) and Yangon.
"Despite being neighbours and having a common land boundary, unfortunately our bilateral trade is still very insignificant and we must make it significant and we must make it significant and we must make it significant," he said.

Missing ship shown still berthing!

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, July 19: Mystery still shrouds the disappearance of a cement carrying foreign vessel from the outer anchorage of Chittagong port recently, sources said.
MV Zoom Ocean, a Cambodian flag carrier, disappeared from the outer anchorage on July 13 with 15,124 tonnes of cement.
The captain fled with the ship following a dispute between its owner and the charterer. It is now in the Andaman sea, sources close to the ship's agent said.
The dispute arose due to overstay of the ship at the outer anchorage after failing to berth at the port jetty. The cement was imported from Indonesia.
The ship had arrived at the outer anchorage on June 21.
Till today, the ship was regularly shown as present in 'berthing position'.
Even the radio control system at Chittagong port, which keeps contact over VHF with all the vessels both at outer anchorage and jetties, did not report the disappearance of the vessel to port officials.
When contacted, port officials said the ship fled away without taking port clearance. The sources however said the ship may come back to Chittagong port within three days to unload the cement cargo if the dispute between the owner and the charterer is settled.
Earlier another foreign ship loaded with rice imported by the government from India disappeared from the outer anchorage.

Toll collectors block traffic on Dhaka-Aricha highway

MANIKGANJ, July 19: Several hundred vehicles stretching over 10 km on Dhaka-Aricha highway remained stranded from 3pm today due to the road barricades put up by a section of so-called transport workers.
Savar police told UNB that a group of people led by Kafiluddin put up barricades at Narayhat, Nabinghar, Mohipal, Savar and Aminbazar as they were barred from collecting illegal tolls from the passing vehicles this morning.
A labour leader preferring anonymity said traffic police used to take a share of the toll money regularly from them and as such they cannot abruptly stop collection of tolls.
The barricades mounted sufferings of the passengers of the bus, minibus stranded on the way.
The barricades were not withdrawn till filing of this report at 8 last night.

'I only damaged a headlight'

By Staff Correspondent
Dr M A Wazed Mia, former chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) and husband of the prime minister, yesterday said he did not cause any serious damage to the car used by assistant private secretary (APS) to the prime minister.
"Being enraged after hearing that there was no car at Ganobhavan for me, I only damaged a headlight on Sunday," said Dr Wazed Mia who went on retirement as the BAEC chief on February 15 this year.
Talking to The Daily Star, the scientist said he would return the key of the office room he used as BAEC chairman and the bluebook of a BAEC car he took away on Sunday by today.
Regarding the bluebook, he took away on Sunday, the former BAEC chairman said, "I took the blue book when the commission officials refused to give me an attested photocopy of it." "I felt that I should have a copy of the blue book of the car which was bought for the Ruppur Atomic Project, because the car is being misused by the minister for science and technology Nooruddin Ahmed," the premier's spouse explained.
"I bought the car for the use of Ruppur Atomic Project and it is now being misused by the minister. That is why, I felt that I should have a copy of the blue book because I might be a victim of conspiracy if I do not have it."

Intra-party conflict Khaleda warns of action against some top leaders

By Rezaul Karim
BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has warned of "punitive measures" against some top party leaders from Comilla for their alleged instigation to "intra-party conflict" for their petty personal interest, party sources said.
The leaders include a Vice-president and a Standing Committee member of the party, who are allegedly indulging in "local politics" instead of contributing to decision making.
Sources said the recent conflict in formation of Comilla Sadar (north) district unit of BNP and resignation of Manirul Ahsan Munshi MP was caused due to interference by a Standing Committee member and some other central leaders of the party.
A close aide of Begum Zia told The Daily Star yesterday that she was "very annoyed" with the leaders and warned them to refrain from such "unholy politics".
Munshi, who was elected from Comilla-4 (Devichwan) constituency in the last general election for the third consecutive term, had resigned from the party twice within the last two months, protesting "naked interference" by the central leaders.
Munshi however withdrew his resignation both the times at the request of Begum Zia and party Secretary General Abdul

Beheaded body found, one beaten to death in city

By Staff Correspondent
Beheaded body of a young businessman was found in a jute sack in the city's Rayerbazar area yesterday.
In another incident, a rickshawvan puller, who was critically injured when he was beaten up by a mob at Nilkhet on Friday, died at Pangu (orthopaedic) Hospital Sunday afternoon.
The hospital officials identified the beheaded body as Babul Ahmed, 35, son of Motaleb, a resident of Tongi. Quoting family members, hospital sources said that a few days ago extortionists demanded tolls from Babul who owned a travel agency at Moghbazar.
When he refused to entertain their demand, the extortionists kidnapped Babul from his office.



Jalal's child covers his face in shock seeing his father's corpse at Paribagh slum in the city. The rickshawvan puller died yesterday after being severely beaten up at Nilkhet on Friday. — Star photo by Amran Hossain

Outlaws clash at Khulna sub-jail: 9 injured

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, July 19: At least seven outlaws and two terrorists were injured, two of them severely, in a clash between Shaiken group and Haider group at about 8.30 am inside the Nooraganj sub-jail.
The severely injured, identified as Debu, 30, and Abul Hossain, were admitted to Khulna District Jail Hospital. Their condition is critical, said a source at the sub-jail.
According to the Deputy Jailor, the clash which continued for about 20 minutes, took place over distribution of food and failure of the local administration to get them released on bail as per commitment.
Shaiken group alleged that Haider group managed to get bail and other facilities, including food and accommodation in the sub-jail as police are backing them.
But police, jail authorities and Haider group denied the allegations. Sources said both the groups used utensils, spoons and logs during the clash. At one stage, they were locked in brawl and wrestling. Riot police intervened and brought the situation under control.

Showcuse on Occidental, UNOCAL and Petrobangla

A district court here yesterday asked two foreign gas exploration companies Occidental and UNOCAL — and Petrobangla to show cause within seven days why Occidental should not be refrained from transferring its plants and assets in Bangladesh to UNOCAL, reports UNB.
The court also asked Petrobangla to show cause why it shall not refrain from giving approval to the transfer of plants and making payment of outstanding bill of gas to Occidental or UNOCAL till conclusion of the arbitration proceeding.
The first court of subordinate judge issued the notice upon a petition by Maxwell, a local engineering company that worked as sub-contractor of Occidental and claimed US \$ 96.34,855 as its dues to Occidental.

Meghnaghat Power Plant Signing of accord with AES delayed again

By Sharier Khan
The signing of the final agreement for the 450 MW Meghnaghat Power Plant project between US company AES and the Power Development Board (PDB), is once again being delayed by a couple of months, sources said.
PDB is doing so in order to facilitate the project's land site developer — CWHEC — to meet its repeatedly rescheduled deadline to finish work.
The Chinese company CWHEC was originally scheduled to complete development of 100 hectares of land with a budget of Tk 143 crore by July 22.
Earlier this month when the developer's progress at the site started showing indications of not being able to meet the deadline, PDB last month, allowed the company to complete the task by September without penalty.
As a result, the power project agreement — that was originally scheduled to be signed one and a half year ago — has become uncertain.
On March 16, PDB initialled the agreement of the power project with AES. At that time PDB said that various components of the agreement were yet to be finalised and the final agreement will be signed in a few weeks.

Mugging: Angry traders lay siege to police outpost in city

By Staff Correspondent
A group of watch traders of Patuatuli sieged the Babubazar police outpost and hurled bricks when muggers snatched Tk 1.6 lakh from a trader in front of the watch market in the afternoon, yesterday, police said.
Meanwhile, one havildar and eight constables of the outpost were suspended yesterday on charge of negligence of duty.
According to Kotwali police, the gang of about four snatchers brandishing arms, asked Swapan Sarkar, the trader, to hand

NU allowing colleges to open courses 'violating rules'

By Gobinda Bar
The National University has been allegedly permitting colleges to open honours and masters courses without meeting the minimum requirements and often in violation of rules.
This is being done also ignoring recent suggestions by the University Grants Commission that no more colleges should be permitted to open masters courses, UGC sources said.
Some NU sources, however, said the university is often compelled to permit opening of honours courses because of political pressure. "In such cases, we have to permit colleges by setting preconditions that they would have to fulfill the requirements within a certain period," one source said.
A senior NU official denied the allegations that colleges are allowed to open the courses in violation of rules but admitted that many colleges cannot fulfill the requirements within the stipulated period.
Asked whether affiliation of any college was cancelled for failure to meet the requirements within stipulated time, the official requesting anonymity replied in the negative. "It is almost impossible to cancel affiliation of any college because of various reasons", he said.
A top NU official said "Colleges are often given permission for opening honours and masters courses by relaxing the rules". The NU authorities often have to do so in the face of pressure from different quarters.
"Our team inspecting any applicant college to check whether it fulfills the requirements often has to make liberal reports because of pressure from influential people including and ministers and political leaders," he said on condition of anonymity. "Politicians do this because of their commitments to voters for opening honours or masters courses in colleges."
Government colleges offering honours courses hardly have the required seven teachers for every subject, he noted.
"Government degree colleges are generally permitted to open

Cabinet okays proposal to set up Disabled Dev Foundation

The Cabinet has approved a proposal for establishing National Disabled Development Foundation for improving lifestyle and protecting rights of the disabled, reports UNB.
A meeting of the Cabinet held yesterday at the PM's Office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair gave the approval.
The foundation will play a vital role in coordinating, policymaking and its implementation for ensuring equal status, rights, complete participation and facilities for the disabled, said an official announcement.
The Cabinet also endorsed on principle the draft Admiralty Court Act 1999 and amendment to the Public Demand Recovery Act 1913.

Inside Today Article

The charade over Kargil

No "Secret Deal", Mr Vajpayee?

Praful Bidwai writes from New Delhi Page 4

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Liberation and Beyond by J N Dixit Page 5

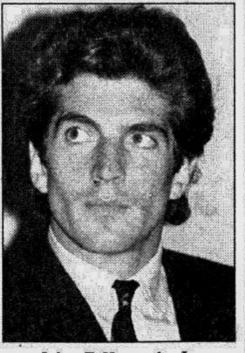
Prayer Timings

July 20		
	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.

Rescuers give up hope of finding JFK Jr alive

HYANNISPORT, Mass, July 19: Ships and divers prepared to resume an intensive search at first light today for the wreckage of the plane in which John F Kennedy Jr is presumed to have perished with his wife and her sister, reports Reuters.
Authorities finally gave up hope on Sunday of finding the 38-year-old son of assassinated President John F Kennedy alive after almost 48 hours combing the Atlantic Ocean for his small plane which vanished on a flight from New Jersey to the Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard on Friday night.
Coast Guard Rear Admiral Richard Larabee announced on Sunday that efforts to find Kennedy, his wife Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, 33, and her sister Lauren Bessette, 35, were shifting from a "search and rescue" operation to an attempt to recover wreckage of the plane.
He added that no person could survive in the waters around the Vineyard for longer than 18 hours without a life raft or a life jacket — neither of which the three people had.
The single-engine Piper Saratoga plane piloted by Kennedy is believed to have plunged into the sea about 9.40 on Friday night, a day before Kennedy's cousin Rory was to have married in a glamorous wedding on nearby Cape Cod.
Pieces of plane debris have been plucked from the sea and small items like luggage, handbags and prescription bottles have washed up on Vineyard.



John F Kennedy Jr

Shrimp trader shot, robbed of Tk 10 lakh in Khulna

KHULNA, July 19: A shrimp trader was seriously injured and robbed of Tk 10 lakh near Gallamari bridge on the outskirts of the city when some miscreants shot at him this afternoon, police said, reports BSS.
Injured Mahtab Sheikh, 30, was rushed to the Hospital here and operated upon.
Botiaghata police said the incident occurred when Mahtab, along with his associates, was going to Dumuria in a pick-up van after drawing the money from the local branch of Prime Bank.
The miscreants numbering about eight halted the van at gunpoint near Botiaghata (Thana and shot Mahtab in the knee and snatched the bag containing Tk 10 lakh.

6-pt accord with SKOP, strike called off

Striking a deal with the government yesterday for pay-hike, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad called off its 24-hour strike scheduled for today across the country.
The decision to withdraw the strike came after a fruitful negotiation leading to an agreement with the authorities yesterday at the Manpower Employment and Training Bureau, meeting sources told UNB.
Labour and Employment Minister MA Mannan and other high officials of his ministry held a meeting with leaders of the broad-based trade union alliance, which also groups the ruling party's labour wing.
SKOP leaders Abdus Salam Khan, Ahsanullah MP, Abul Bashir, Nazrul Islam Khan, Nurul Islam, Dr Wazedul Islam Khan, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Shaifur Rahman Majumder, Shahidullah Chowdhury and others were present at the meeting.
In the six-point agreement, the government agreed to announce minimum national wages for the workers and employees of private and public sectors by October 31 by making a proper law.
Other agreed points include giving advance of Tk 300 to permanent workers and employees and Tk 150 to temporary ones of the nationalised industries with effect from July on condition of implementation of the Wages and Productivity Commission award. Besides, the regular workers will get Tk 1000 and the master-roll ones Tk 500 as lump sum.
The meeting also agreed that the Labour Law Reform Committee would submit labour code, with necessary amendments, to the government for making it into a law by December.
"Steps will be taken to re-

Workers call strike at Ctg Port today

From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, July 19: Activities at the Chittagong Port remained suspended for about three hours from 8 am today as port workers staged a demonstration in support of their tomorrow's strike.
Twenty-two trade unions of Chittagong Port have called for a strike at the port tomorrow to press home their demands, including 80% incentive for SS-category workers.
During demonstration, the workers chanted slogans in support of their demands.

Newton placed under detention

Saidur Rahman Newton, joint secretary of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of the main opposition BNP, was placed under 30 days' detention in jail yesterday, reports UNB.
Newton was arrested from Dhaka Central Jail gate immediately after his release on bail on Sunday.
Police have taken the JCD leader on remand five times for 33 days and detained him thrice.
Newton was arrested five times from the jail gate the same way, police and family sources said.
This was the sixth time he was enlarged on bail, but again arrested from the prison gate.
He was first arrested on January 6 from Mirpur-2 area.
Sources said 21 cases were filed against Newton and he got bail in all the cases.