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PM leaves for Australia

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka last night for Australia on a four-day official visit.

Hasina is the first head of government of Bangladesh to undertake a bilateral trip to the Pacific nation at the invitation of Australian Prime Minister John Howard. Trade and investment issues are likely to dominate her official talks with the Australian prime minister.

Her 52-member entourage includes State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and a 22-member business delegation.

The Prime Minister is due to arrive in Sydney this evening where she will address an Investors Forum tomorrow.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the utilisation of Australian aid in Bangladesh would be signed during the Prime Minister's tour.

The Australian National University will confer an honorary doctorate on the Bangladesh leader when she visits the university to deliver a lecture there.

The Prime Minister is expected to return home on October 23.

Vetch import banned

By Staff Correspondent

The Daily Star yesterday. The ministry has also asked the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for a list of the importers, he said.

Samples of vetch will be sent to the Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI), Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Nutritional Science Institute of Dhaka University, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) and Bangladesh Food Research Council (BFRC) for tests, he said. The test reports will be available soon, he added.

The government has already made an inquiry with the Australian Agriculture Ministry whether vetch is a food for human consumption or a fodder and whether it contains toxic substance.

"Fax messages have also been sent to Egypt and India to know about toxicity in vetch," Kader said.

India, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and some other Middle East countries banned import of vetch in 1992, according to research work done by Doza Chowdhury, a former scientist of BARI, now working in Australia. Papers containing Chowdhury's research work on vetch in Australia were obtained by The Daily Star from

Phensidyl and other illegal drugs recovered by police at different times being bulldozed in front of the DB office in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

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Vetch: How it looks like

Star Report

Vetch is similar to Bangladeshi Masoor Dal (lentil) but the local lentil is reddish whereas vetch is much lighter in colour.

Vetch is bigger in size than Masoor Dal.

Another difference is that the edges of split Masoor Dal are very sharp unlike that of vetch.

Vetch is light pink to yellow while the local and Nepalese v-

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— Star photo

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4 guest houses in Gulshan, Banani sealed

By Staff Correspondent

Four guest houses in the city's posh residential areas have been sealed by police for alleged alcohol trading and anti-social activities in those.

Of the guest houses, two are at Gulshan and two at Banani, police sources said.

During a police raid at a guest house in Gulshan on Saturday, a top leader of Jatitya Party and a TV artiste were arrested for alleged involvement in anti-social activities.

They were produced in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday. The court granted them bail.

The JP leader, also accused of possessing alcohol illegally, was however sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

The guest houses numbering more than 50 in posh areas of the city are being raided by police as directed by a special committee formed by the home ministry to curb abuse of drug and alcohol. So far 25 guest houses have been raided.

The committee headed by Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), has recommended stern action also against owners of the residential houses rented out for such businesses, officials said.

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Prayer Timings

October 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:00
Jorh	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:10	4:25
Maghrib	5:38	5:42
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Telephonic talks with Hasina Vajpayee assures steps to ensure border peace

Bangladesh and Indian Prime Ministers have agreed to hold meetings to sort out the border problems and tensions stemming from recent clashes, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told newsmen yesterday that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vajpayee had reached the agreement during a telephonic talk.

Discussing the diplomatic initiative, the Foreign Minister said border skirmish or tension between the two neighbours is "nothing unusual."

Steps have been taken to end it, he said adding, that Vajpayee has assured of full cooperation in ensuring border peace. "Azad, however, said both the governments should take the border tensions seriously.

He parried a question whether the Indian government had regretted any of the incidents in the border, including clashes between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

While facing volleys of questions on the border troubles at the press conference on his return from the United States at the Foreign Ministry in the afternoon, he said Bangladesh would always lodge protest against any wrongdoing.

In reply to a question, he said he did not find any change in attitude of the BJP government in India towards Bangladesh.

Over the change in Pakistan government, he said the present regime is a military one and "this is purely a martial law."

The people of this region have become concerned over the change in Pakistan because "we want stability, peace and economic development," he said. "We hope constitutional system will be restored there."

When asked whether US President Clinton would postpone his proposed visit to Bangladesh following the military intervention in Pakistan, Azad expressed his optimism about Clinton's trip on scheduled October 23.

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Tangail-8 bypolls 35 submit nomination papers

By Staff Correspondent

Thirty-five candidates yesterday submitted nomination papers for by-elections in Tangail-8 constituency, scheduled for November 15.

The candidates include former Awami League leader Abdul Kader Siddiqui, Bir Uttam and Shawkat Monem Shahajan of the AL, two candidates from Jatiya Party led by H M Ershad and one from Anwar Hossain Monju led JP.

The rest are independent candidates, while none from the main opposition BNP sought nomination.

Of the 35 candidates, 17 including Kader Siddiqui submitted nomination papers to the assistant returning officer and TNO of the Shakhipur Thana, 13 to another assistant returning officer and TNO of the Basal Thana, while eight candidates submitted their papers to the Deputy Commissioner of Tangail who is the returning

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Cyclone crosses Orissa coast

A severe cyclonic storm, packing wind speeds of up to 140kph, started crossing Orissa coast near Gopalpur in India last night, reports UNB.

"It is likely to move further northwards and may take four to five hours to cross the coast," said a special bulletin of the Storm Warning Centre at 9 pm.

Maximum sustained wind within 74km of the storm centre is about 120kph rising up to 140kph in gusts or squalls. "Sea will remain very rough," it said.

Mongla Port and its surrounding areas may experience peripheral squally wind at the time of crossing the coast, the weather office cautioned.

Maritime port Mongla has been advised to keep hoisted warning signal number four.

Maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number 3 rpt three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the North Bay and deep sea have been advised to take shelter immediately.

AP adds: Thousands of people from low-lying areas in the coastal districts of Orissa, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh

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Dighinala clash 3 killed, condition of 15 critical

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 17: A tense situation is prevailing at Babuchhara Bazar in Dighinala Thana of Khagrachhari district following yesterday's clash involving tribal people, Bangalee settlers and army personnel leaving three people killed and over 50 others injured.

Police said one Dipen Joti Chakma died on the spot yesterday while two others — Sukonol Chakma and Tinamoni Chakma — succumbed to injuries at Khagrachhari health complex and Chittagong Medical College hospital today.

Of the injured, the condition of 15 were said to be critical. Security has been tightened at Dighinala and Khagrachhari to avert further clash.

Besides, security personnel have been put on alert in two other CHT districts — Rangamati and Bandarban.

Police sources said, the clash broke out at around 2 pm yesterday at Babuchhara Bazar

centring alleged teasing a tribal girl by an armyman.

At one stage, a tribal youth allegedly hit the army man with a lethal weapon. On hearing this, troops stationed nearby rushed to the spot. But they were also attacked by the tribals. Local Bangalees then came forward and a clash broke out, lasting about two hours, sources said. Police later brought the situation under control, sources added.

Meanwhile, supporters of Pahari Chharta Parishad today staged a demonstration at Khagrachhari district headquarters and submitted a memorandum to the local administration protesting yesterday's incident.

Most of the shops were closed and traffic movement came to a halt in Khagrachhari district today.

UNB adds: The district administration has formed a three-member committee

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3 members of Markajul Islam remanded again

By Court Correspondent

Three members of Al-Markajul-Islam, who were arrested in connection with the bomb blast in a mosque in Khulna and planting of grenades and anti-tank mine in two mosques and a newspaper office in the city, were placed on a fresh remand yesterday.

The three — identified as Shahidul Islam, Ruhul Amin and Sayed Af Mesbah — were arrested by the Detective Branch (DB) of police on Tuesday last.

They were produced before the CMM's Court the same day and the court placed them on a five-day remand for interrogation.

But police produced the three before the CMM's Court yesterday, one day before completion of the five-day remand and prayed for another seven days' remand for interrogation by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC).

Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Taleb granted two-day remand for the three. Bail petitions, moved on behalf of the arrested, were rejected by the court.

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Killing at Udichi function Stop conspiracy, find out real culprits: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has reiterated its demand for judicial inquiry into the Udichi killing incident to find out the 'real culprits' and strongly protested the government's conspiracy to implicate the party's senior leader Tariqul Islam in the case.

In the name of trial, the government is trying to protect those directly involved in the incident and those behind the scene and a judicial probe is needed to trace them, BNP leaders said at a public meeting at Paltan Maidan yesterday. City unit of the party organised the meeting to protest the 'conspiracy'.

They alleged that the government was forcing the arrested persons to give confessional statements against Tariqul Islam to tarnish the image of BNP and the leader. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury said the government has hatched a deep-rooted conspiracy against

4 burnt alive in Sitakunda ship breaking yard

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Oct 17: At least four labourers were burnt alive in two separate incidents of fire at Sitakunda ship breaking yard within a span of 16 hours, police said.

Of them, Guda Meah, 50, was killed in the first incident that took place at Kabir ship breaking yard at 7:30 pm last night while three others, identified as Mujib, 30, Kamal, 32, and Didar, 35, were roasted alive in the second incident of fire that took place at Nasim ship breaking yard at 11 am today, police said.

Besides, three other labourers suffered burn injuries.

Unilateral troops reduction along border Pak coup leader pledges return to democracy

By Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: Pakistan's new army ruler pledged today to return the country to democracy even as he announced joint military-civilian rule, but made no mention of the timeframe that Western powers had pressed for, reports Reuters.

"The armed forces have no intention to stay any longer in charge than is absolutely necessary," General Pervez Musharraf said in his second

broadcast since taking power five days ago.

Musharraf, "chief executive" since Tuesday's bloodless coup, said he wanted to steer Pakistan out of a "dark age" after what he called the despotic rule of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

"Quite clearly what Pakistan experienced in the recent years has been merely a label of democracy, not the essence of it.

Our people were never emancipated from the yoke of despotism."

"I shall not allow the people to be taken back to the era of sham democracy but to a true one and I promise you I will, Insha-Allah (God willing)," he said.

The 56-year-old career soldier said a 6-member National Security Council would oversee the running of the country

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