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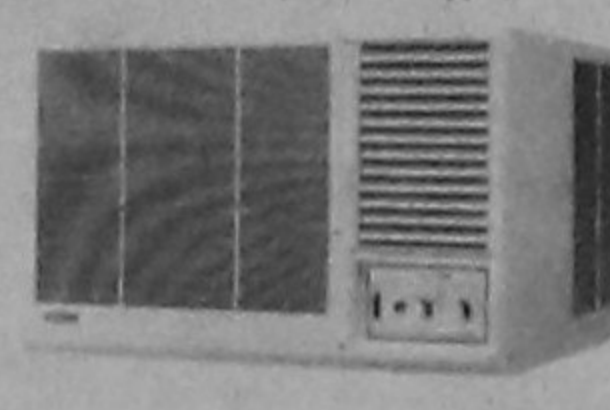
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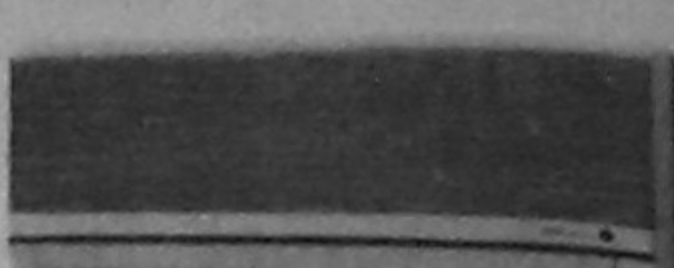
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Frozen food units affected by EU ban, flood

80 pc interest on 1997-'98 bank loans waived

The government has decided to waive 80 per cent interest on bank loans of the frozen food factories affected by the 1997 EU ban and 1998 devastating floods to emerge this potential export sector, reports UNB.

As per the decision, the owners of the factories that were affected by the adversities during the two years and remained operated will pay 20 per cent of the interest for those two years while the government and the banks concerned the rest in equal share.

The decision was taken at a high level meeting presided over by Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, on resolving the problems facing the frozen food export sector in the conference room of the Finance Ministry yesterday.

Among others, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Mohammad Farashuddin, managing directors of state-owned commercial banks and representatives of Frozen Food Exporters Association attended the meeting.

Association President Kazi Shahidul Karim, General Secretary M Aminul Hossain and former president M Golam Mustafa and Syed Mahmudul Haq were among the representatives.

A meeting source said the association sought total waiver of interest accumulated since 1991 to 1999 which amounted to around Tk 250 crore.

He said with the partial exemption the owners are expected to get relief from liabilities worth nearly Tk 90 crore. However, the total amount of cumulative interest was yet to be assessed as that will be done by the banks concerned.

Nearly 55 frozen food factories were affected by the import ban slapped by the European Union in 1997 and devastating floods in 1998. Most of them were also overburdened by damage done in the 1991 cyclone.

During the meeting, the representatives also sought government cooperation in realising insurance money due from different private insurance

companies.

These firms will get about Tk 25 crore from the insurance companies following massive loss in the 1991 cyclone, the source said.

The meeting advised the frozen food factories to contact people concerned in the Commerce Ministry for realising the overdue insurance money.

It also decided to ask the Commerce Ministry to take "legal actions against the private insurance companies for their lapses in payment of dues of the frozen food industries."

The finance minister said: "The frozen food export sector is making important contribution to the country's economy."

Emphasising boosting export of frozen foods, Kibria assured all possible assistance for the fore-earning sector, which fetches over Tk 1,000 crore annually in export earnings.

The minister also advised the people concerned to keep an eye on environment during shrimp culture.

Tribals kill 27 Bengali settlers in Tripura

GAUHATI, May 21: Rival ethnic groups clashed in India's mountainous northeast, claiming 32 lives from both sides in village massacres and a bombing, police said today, reports AP.

At least 27 Bengali settlers were killed overnight in four attacks by armed tribal guerrillas on remote villages in Tripura state, K T D Singh, the state's police chief, said in a telephone interview. Fifteen people were wounded.

The attack seemed to have been carried out in retaliation against the bombing of a jeep by Bengali guerrillas late Saturday in which five tribespeople were killed, Singh said.

The situation is very tense. There could be further escalation of riots," Singh told The Associated Press. "We do not have enough forces."

Singh said the attackers in the village belonged to the National Liberation Front of Tripura, which is fighting Indian forces to carve out a separate homeland.

At least 15 Bengali village people, most of whom reportedly crossed the border from neighbouring Bangladesh and

settled in Tripura state, were killed in a single attack in the Bagher village close to midnight.

Armed with AK47 automatic rifles, the guerrillas surrounded the village and burnt down some houses. As terrified village people rushed out, they fired indiscriminately, Singh said. Seven bodies were found in the night and eight more in the morning, he said.

"We are expecting more bodies," he added. Twelve more people were killed in three other attacks.

Festering tensions between the local tribespeople and the Bengalis have flared in recent weeks.

The tribespeople, who formed more than 70 per cent of the area's population until the 1960s, say they have been reduced in their own land to less than 30 per cent following huge illegal migration from Bangladesh through the porous hilly border.

To counter attacks by the tribal separatists, the Bengali settlers have this year formed their own armed outfit, the little-known United Bengali Liberation Front of Tripura.

TU leaders of jute, textile mills postpone planned hunger strike

Trade Union leaders of private jute, yarn and textile mills have postponed their fast-into-death programme till June 27, reports UNB.

The programme was postponed following a meeting between Labour Minister M A Mannan and trade union leaders.

The meeting was held at the conference room of the Ministry of Labour and Employment yesterday with the Minister M A Mannan in the chair.

The fast-into-death programme was scheduled to begin today in front of the Jatiya

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Queen of romance fiction Barbara Cartland dead

LONDON, May 21: Known more for her prodigious output than her talent, Dame Barbara Cartland, who died Sunday aged 98, was nevertheless the undisputed queen of fictional romance for millions of readers around the world, reports AFP.

Born into an aristocratic English family on July 9, 1901 as Mary Barbara Hamilton Cartland, her public profile was further enhanced later in life when she became step-mother to the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

After starting out contributing social gossip pieces to the Daily Express newspaper, where she picked up tips on writing, Cartland published at age 23 her first novel, "Jigsaw".

Building on the popular success of that book, she returned again and again to what proved a lucrative -- and predictable -- story development: beautiful, virginal and proud young lady meets handsome, rakish and

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'Soli' Godrej dead

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: Sohrab Pirojshah Godrej, the grand old man of Indian industry, died in a London hospital, a spokesman from his Godrej business group reported on Sunday. He was 87, reports AFP.

Godrej, who was popularly known as "Soli" across India's corporate world, was hospitalised May 17 while flying from Delhi to Paris en route to London, and died late Saturday in the British capital, spokesman K. R. Krishna-swamy said from Bombay.

Indian President K. R. Narayanan Sunday said he was shocked by the death of Godrej, chairman of the 8,000-employee group, who was also a fund-raiser and backer of the World Wide Fund for Nature in India.

"A leading industrialist with a social commitment, Godrej was well known as philanthropist. He devoted himself to efforts to address the problems of population explosion," he said.



Bangladesh Satellite Cable Network Owners' Association brought out a procession in the city yesterday in support of their 15-point demand. It threatened to go on a fast-until-death if the demands were not met immediately. Earlier, the association leaders held a meeting at Muktangan. The demands include withdrawal of additional charges introduced recently, permission of inspection by officials of BTV and the government, ensuring supply and replacement of decoder boxes and digital receivers free of cost.

—Star photo

PM tells SC Bar leaders Frustrate undemocratic gesture of a quarter

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for continuing democratic and constitutional process in the country frustrating undemocratic gestures of certain quarters, reports UNB.

"We want rule of law and justice and continuity of constitutional process," she said while talking to a 14-member delegation of the Supreme Court Bar Association at her office yesterday afternoon.

President of the Association, Barrister Mainul Hossain and General Secretary Shahidul Karim Siddiqui led the delegation.

Criticising "double standard" of certain political parties the Prime Minister said talking of democracy and patronising undemocratic elements cannot go hand in hand.

"Democratic process can't take roots if anti-people elements are patronised," she said in veiled criticism of her political opponents.

"I believe in democracy,"

fought for it and established it in the country and am trying to hard so democratic process continues," Hasina told the leaders of Supreme Court lawyers.

Without democracy socioeconomic development is not possible.

The bar leaders thanked the Prime Minister for taking steps for development of the bar associations across the country and sought government help in constructing the association's own building to house its over 2200 members.

The Prime Minister said her government is pledged-bound to put the country under the rule of law and said several steps had already been taken for development of the judiciary as well for the welfare of the lawyers.

Hasina mentioned the setting up of judicial training institute, a drafting unit of the Law Ministry and the Law Reforms Commission.

The Prime Minister said an efficient and time-befitting justice system is the goal.

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The city streets were flooded with rainwater yesterday after Saturday night's downpour. Photo shows a portion of Nazimuddin Road in old city.

BSF-BDR flag meet likely today

Mashaldanga people still besieged by Indians, face food crisis

KURIGRAM, May 21: Some 15,000 Bangladeshis at the Mashaldanga enclave are now facing food shortage as they passed the third day of siege by Indians backed by Border Security Force (BSF), report agencies.

According to some people who came to the mainland fleeing from the enclave, Indian special police force kept Section 144 enforced in the enclave, prohibiting local people from coming out of their houses.

The inhabitants of the enclave are not even allowed to go to shops to buy foodstuffs, they said.

Meanwhile, the UNO of Bhurungamari thana has allocated one metric ton of foodgrains for the enclave dwellers.

Government officials in the mainland are still in the dark about what really is happening in the enclave at the northern part of Kurigram.

Backed by BSF and border police, some 2,000 Indian na-

tionalists intruded into the Bangladesh enclave in Bhurungamari upazila on Thursday morning and since then they have remained besieged.

As the enclave is separated from Bangladesh mainland by a 125 feet wide patch of Indian land, BDR can't take any effective step due to limitations under the International Border Law.

BDR 24 Rifle Battalion sources said tonight that BSF agreed to hold a company-level flag meeting on the matter.

The flag meeting between BDR and BSF likely to take place tomorrow.

"We have not yet received any official response from BSF. But BSF today verbally responded and sent a messenger to BDR hinting that they would sit tomorrow," BDR Rangpur Sector Commander Colonel Shakil Ahmed said this afternoon.

Some villagers of six villages of the enclave who man-

aged to come into the main land said the Indians first attacked the enclave on May 11 after an Indian Muslim youth eloped with a Hindu girl from an Indian village and they thought the couple took shelter in Mashaldanga.

Two people were kidnapped on the day. However, they were later released on payment of Tk 20,000 as ransom.

The second attack was made on May 18 (Thursday) while the intruders set fire to almost all the houses in the enclave, looted valuables as well as over a hundred cows and 47 goats.

They also abducted four people whose fate remains to be known.

Deputy Commissioner A F M Solaiman Chowdhury said some relief goods had been sent to the enclave.

Meantime, Nekbar Ali, one of those who had fled the enclave, filed a case against seven Indian nationals.

HC rule on govt over appointment of CCCI administrator

A division bench of the High Court yesterday issued rule upon the government asking to show cause why its order taking over the management and appointing an administrator for CCCI should not be declared illegal and without lawful authority, reports UNB.

The rule came upon a writ petition filed by Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed who had taken over as president of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) weeks ago overthrowing elected president Kamal Uddin in a vote of no-confidence at a meet-

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Students block traffic on road in front of NU

GAZIPUR, May 21: Traffic movement on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway came to a halt for half an hour today as students of eight colleges put up barricade on the road in front of National University demanding shifting of honours 3rd part examination, reports UNB.

Sources said about 300 students of Dhaka, Eden, Jagannath, Ananda Mohan and Karatia Sadat University and other colleges who came here by buses brought out a protest procession and held a rally on NU campus in support of their demand.

The agitating students barricaded the highway as a meeting with the NU authorities failed to resolve the issue.

A huge number of vehicles were stranded on the highway but no untoward incident was reported.

Larma urges PM

From page 1

He, however, called for quick implementation of the basic terms of the agreement and suggested coordinated efforts of the CHT Ministry, Regional Council and hill district councils for successful implementation of the accord.

The CHTRC Chairman was critical of some non-governmental organisations engaged in development activity in the hill tracts.

Naming two leading NGOs, he said rate of interest of loan they disbursed is so high that the debtors could not bear it.

Bringing major allegations against some other NGOs, Shantu Larma said those are involved in converting hill people to other religions under the cover of development works. The tribal people are mostly Buddhists.

He suggested that the NGOs working in the CHT should be guided by set principles. He also sought enhancement of quota for hill students.

The regional council chairman also suggested holding of such review meeting on the CHT more frequently.

The prime minister assured that she would look into it.

Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah informed the meeting that most parts of the accord had been implemented, refugees rehabilitated and development projects were being implemented.

CHT Affairs Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, Chairman of CHT Development Projects Implementation Committee and Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma, Task Force members Bir Bahadur MP and Dipankar Kalukdar MP, Chairman of Khagrachhari Hill District Council Jyotindra Prasad Tripura, Chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council Thoaing Cha Pru Master and member of Rangamati Hill District Council Sushanta Chakma were present in the meeting.

The meeting was apprised of ADP allocation in last three years for development of the three hill districts. It shows

that the allocation has sharply increased from Tk 61.85 crore in 1997-98 to Tk 115.68 crore in 1999-2000.

About the possible foreign investment in CHT, the meeting was told that the need-assessment mission sponsored by UNDP proposed some 48 projects, involving Tk 2105.75 crore, of short and medium terms.

Besides, ADB, DANIDA and other organisations expressed willingness to join development drive in the CHT. Already, 80 million US dollar worth of projects have been recommended for development of rural infrastructure and micro-credit programme.

The meeting was informed that a project was undertaken for Tk 6.43 crore to prepare a Master Plan for the CHT.

After the peace accord, the steps so far taken included selection of site for Science and Technology University in Rangamati, setting up an Employment Bank, construction of a TV broadcasting centre in Rangamati, construction of hotels in Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts for development of tourism and supply of electricity through solar energy in remote areas of Rangamati.

Besides, projects were taken for construction of 400-km road, 38 educational institutions and 18 multipurpose reservoirs by the CHT Development Board.

LGED has taken a project costing Tk 522.18 crore for infrastructure development in the CHT. Moreover, Public Health and Engineering Dept has installed 470 ring-wells, 451 Tara-pumps, 100 shallow tube-wells, 44 infiltration galleries and 3411 sanitary latrines.

Pakistan 274/3
Sports Reporter

Pakistan were 274 for three — a lead of 129 — 45 minutes after lunch in their second innings on the fourth day of the second Test against the West Indies at Kensington Oval yesterday.

Inzamamul Haq and Yousuf Youhana were at the crease with 17 and 11 runs respectively.

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