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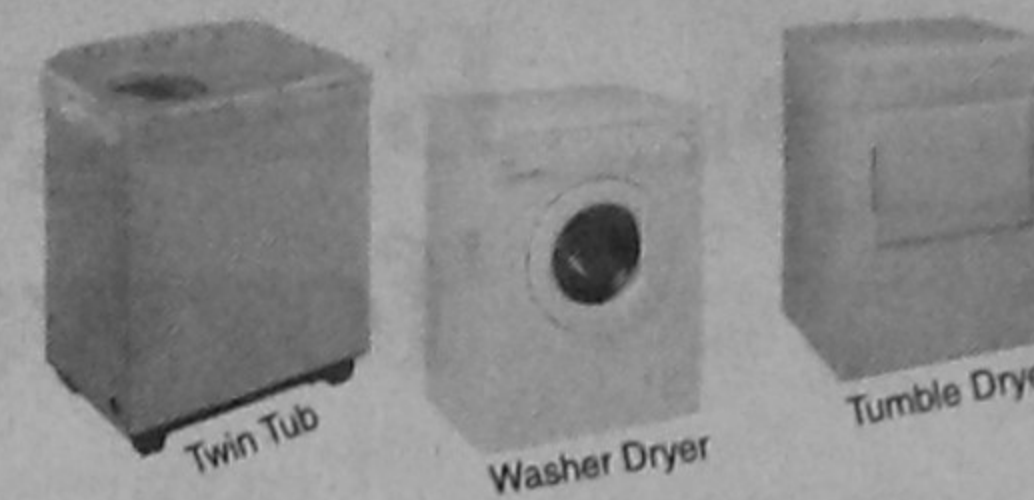
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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addressing the biennial conference of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum's Dhaka Unit at SC Bar auditorium yesterday. — Star photo

'Executive, legislative & judiciary bodies now totally ineffective'

Khaleda alleges politicisation and interference by AL govt

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said yesterday the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies of the state are not functioning independently due to interference and politicisation of the Awami League government.

She said the government made the legislative body completely ineffective and turned it into a party forum while the executive body has broken down because of politicisation and posting of "incompetent party-men" in all key posts.

Addressing the biennial conference of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum's Dhaka Unit at the Supreme Court Lawyers Association auditorium, Khaleda said the government is also politicising the judiciary and the lower court is now fully controlled by the government.

She said the innocent people and opposition leaders and activists are turning to the higher court since they are not getting justice in the lower courts.

But the government has not

spared the higher court, she said and added that the government is even corrupting it by politicisation and nepotism.

The leader of the opposition in parliament said the government has set up a new record of human rights violation.

Khaleda said the public has lost their confidence in the government. The donor countries and agencies are also hesitant to take it into confidence. The development partners have expressed their doubt whether their grant, aid, loan and other assistance are really being used for the development purpose.

The BNP chief said the AL is now desperately trying to return to power at any cost as they did in 1996.

Turning to Jatiya Sangsad, she said the opposition members attended the parliament session recently to resist the government's move to hold by-election in the vacant seats and bring about major changes in the Constitution, including re-introduction of one-party BKSAL system and repeal of the

provision for caretaker government.

Referring to appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner, she said the government appointed CEC unilaterally and later posted a most "controversial" person as EC. The government ignored the opposition's demand to recast the election commission and reform electoral rules to rig future polls.

Presided over by Fazlur Rahman Khan, it was addressed, among others, by Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khan-daker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Moudud Ahmed, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Nazmul Huda, Jamiruddin Sirar and Rafiqul Islam Miah.

A 235-member new executive committee was announced at the conference with Fazlur Rahman as President and Sanaulah Miah as general secretary for the year 2000-2001.

BCL leader shot dead in Comilla

From Our Correspondent

FENI, June 28: A BCL leader was shot dead by his party rivals at village Alkora under Chowddagram Upazila of Comilla district last night, police and witnesses said.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Alamgir, son of Maksudur Rahman.

Alamgir, general secretary of BCL Alkora Union Unit, came under attack by his rivals led by Moinuddin while he was going to Dopakhila in a rickshaw at around 8 pm.

The rivals beat up Alamgir and shot him. He was rushed to Feni Sadar Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Police said the killing was a sequel to previous enmity between Alamgir and Moinuddin over establishing supremacy in the area.

The body of Alamgir was handed over to his family after autopsy at Feni Sadar Hospital.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report at 6 pm today.

Chetia case Hearing of argument on July 10

By Court Correspondent

The Fifth Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed July 10 for hearing of argument in a case filed against ULFA leader Anup Chetia and his two associates.

The judge M Humayun Kabir adjourned the proceedings of the case as the Special Public Prosecutor was not present in the court during yesterday's hearing.

Anup Chetia and two associates — Babul Sharma and Laxmi Prasad Goswami — were arrested from a residence at Adabar under Mohammadpur thana on December 21, 1997, on charge of illegally possessing currency of 16 countries.

Police also recovered a satellite telephone set from them.

All the accused were produced in the court during proceedings of the case.

PM: World Cup

From page 1

Thousands of people, carrying the national flag and colourful banners and waving cups, crests, bats etc. came to the venue with thunderous slogans hailing the event. Some of them posed as cricketers while others danced their way into the huge space covered with a canopy erected on the occasion.

Beats of drum and blasts of crackers amid deafening cheers for Bangladesh, Bangladesh gave gathering an air of festivity.

Cricket heroes including the former ones walked to the dais amid thunderous applause.

Star cricketer Akram Khan, country's first captain Shamim Kabir, State Minister for Sports Obaidul Quader, BCB President Sabir Hossain Chowdhury and Secretary Syed Ashraf Haq were among those who spoke on the occasion.

The Paltan Maidan gathering appeared to be an Awami League programme with mostly the ruling party people attending it.

At the outset, Nader Choudhury, captain of under-13 cricket team presented the prime minister a bouquet on her arrival. The PM reciprocated by honouring the tiny captain with the national flag.

Addressing the cheerful gathering, Sheikh Hasina said none can undermine Bangladesh any more now that it has carved a niche among the world's Test cricket-playing nations.

Describing various steps her government has so far taken to advance the national cricket, Hasina noted, "Nowhere can sports flourish without state patronisation."

The prime minister disclosed that her government has made a special allocation of Tk 2 crore for development of cricket after the country's Test status was confirmed.

Mentioning increased budgetary allocation for cricket and other steps taken in this regard, Hasina said the country will have two new cricket stadiums very soon.

She thanked all concerned for the nation's latest achievement in cricket and recalled contributions of former West Indian coach Gordon Greenidge as well as South African coach Eddie Barlow.

Obaidul Quader, however, preferred to use the occasion to blame the opposition for acting against the nation's development in cricket.

Saber Chowdhury spoke about his plan to go for a talent hunt in grassroots level.

Speeches over, the huge crowd enjoyed songs presented by popular singers like Shir Nandi, Bipul Bhattacharya, Moloy Kumar Ganguly, Baby Naznin, Shuvra Dev, S D Rubel, Dolly Shayontoni and Robi Choudhury.

Govt has fulfilled most of the election pledges: Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday claimed her government as "people-friendly," and said she has fulfilled most of her election pledges to improve the economic status of the people, reports UNB.

Hasina, who seeks reelection for the second term, said her government had fulfilled most of her 21-point election manifesto announced before the 1996 voting.

She assured the House during her budget speech that the state-owned Radio and Television would be given autonomy before the next election while practical steps would be taken to separate the Judiciary from the Executive.

"I don't like to see any distance between the government and the people. As I do politics for the people, I will go to them to tell frankly what I could do, what I could not," she said.

Referring to her four-year rule, Hasina said the main mission of her government is to alleviate poverty, eradicate illiteracy and attain a self-reliant economy.

Describing the new national budget as a unique financial document, she said all the four budgets presented by the Awami League government since 1996 were designed to achieve economic freedom of the people.

The present budget, the Prime Minister hoped, would cast a positive impact on all fundamental sectors, including agriculture, industry, education and overall socio-economic sectors.

She proposed extension of tax holiday for five years, duty exemption on CI sheet and raw materials of plastic products and retaining previous interest rates on saving instruments.

She requested the Finance Minister to accept her proposals considering the interest of low-income group of people and for ensuring industrial growth.

She observed reduction of interest rates on saving instruments, including family saving certificate, would hit hard the small low-income savers and advised the Finance Minister for withdrawing the budgetary proposal for interest cuts.

About the criticism of bank borrowing suggested in the new budget, Hasina said the government would take necessary steps.

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Pvt terminal 22 trade unions threaten to halt port activities

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 28: The 8-day programme of the alliance of 22 trade unions of Chittagong port, as part of the movement against installation of the proposed container terminal at Patenga by American company SSA, ended today.

The alliance held a rally on the concluding day today near the port office premises to protest move to install private container terminal.

The alliance leaders at the rally threatened to halt all port activities if any agreement is signed between the government and SSA in this regard.

They announced fresh programmes including demonstration daily till July 11. Next course of action will be announced at a rally of dock workers on July 12 on port premises, they said.

Presided by alliance leader Abdus Sattar the rally was addressed by Mahfuzur Rahman Khan, Nurullah Bahar, Shamsul Huq Shafi, Abu Jafor Azad and Shariat Ullah.

Khulna

Looted rice found in WDB, BADC godowns: 3 held

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 28: Police today recovered 507 bags of rice looted Monday night from a mechanised trawler at Skid Ghat.

The bags were recovered from the godowns of Water Development Board and BADC at Roosevelt Jetty.

Seven bags of lentil, 16 packets containing tube lights, eleven cartons of electric bulbs, five cartons of battery plates and a big carton containing homeo medicines were also seized from the two godowns.

Police arrested three people on charge of keeping the stolen and looted goods in the godowns.

The arrested persons have been identified as Hasan Ali, caretaker of the WDB's godown, night guard of Roosevelt Jetty Korban Ali and Moslem Uddin, supervisor of the BADC godown. Police also sealed the two godowns.

Indian chocolate bombs seized at Magura

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, June 28: Police seized 1944 pieces of Indian chocolate bomb from Choulia bus stand in Magura town at around 2-45 pm today.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team raided the spot and recovered the bombs.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report at 6 pm today.

Communists

From page 1

clear majority in the 141-member Calcutta Municipal Corporation following Sunday's balloting.

The Trinamul Congress, led by a rabble rouser politician, won 56 seats and together with four seats of an ally could try to form the board that runs the local body.

It was the biggest setback to the communists in the state of West Bengal, of which Calcutta is the capital.

"We will constitute the board and our aim will be to provide proper civic amenities to the people," Manata Banerjee, leader of the Trinamul Congress said. The communists did not react to the verdict.

The other seats were won by the Congress party and independents. The Trinamul Congress is likely to win over the support of some of the Congress councilors.

The municipal elections are being viewed as a dress rehearsal for next year's state legislative elections. But the communist coalition is facing a challenge in finding a replacement for Jyoti Basu, the state chief minister, who has said he will retire from politics due to ill health.

4 DU students

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committee of the university yesterday. The committee was earlier formed with DU Pro-VC Prof Md Shadat Ali as convener to probe the June 26 incident.

The committee ascertained involvement of the four students. It considered newspaper reports and information from other sources including law-enforcing agencies.

The committee recommends temporary expulsion of the four students as the law enforcing agencies are investigating the incident.

The committee also said their involvement in the untoward incident has tarnished the image of the university.

Committee member and pro-vice-chancellor Prof Md Khairul Hossain and proctor Prof A K M Nur-un-Nabi attended the meeting.

2 tribesmen shot in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, June 28: Two tribesmen suffered bullet wounds as gunmen fired on them at North Hatimara village in Nantiachar upazila this morning, reports UNB.

Parbatyia Chhattag Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) blamed a gang of anti-peace activists led by Abhilash and Anil Kanti Chakma for shooting the activists who support the CHT peace pact.

The injured were identified as Bipul Chakma and Bijoy Singh Chakma. Bijoy was rushed to Rangamati General Hospital.

Later the assailants abducted Uitam Moni Chakma and bullet-hit Bipul Chakma at gunpoint.

PCJSS condemned the attack and demanded arrest of those involved.

When contacted, police, however, said they had no knowledge of the incident.

3 get RI in case under PSA in Ctg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 28: Three people were awarded three years rigorous imprisonment and penalty of Tk five thousand each in default to suffer another three months RI in jail here today in connection with a criminal case filed under Public Safety (Special provision) Act.

District and Session judge A N M Bashir Ullah awarded this punishment to them for obstructing road expansion work at BRTC Bus Station adjoining area in the city on March 3 this year.

The convicts are: Ali Iddris, Md Zahed and Muntasir Mamun Rupa.

New Mooring terminal Installation work to begin soon

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, June 28: France-based consultancy firm BCEOM is likely to begin work for installation of New Mooring container terminal at Chittagong Port soon, sources said.

The firm assigned by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) will also supervise the installation work of the Tk 800 crore project, the sources said.

The CPA signed an agreement with this consulting firm recently.

The firm will get Tk 14 crore for the job, which is scheduled to be completed in 10 months. It will help prepare papers for floating tender inviting bids for construction of the terminal to be built with the CPA's own funds, the sources said.

The country's prime port will be able to handle an additional three lakh containers a year with the installation of the container terminal, port sources informed.

The container terminal project at New Mooring point of

Chittagong port was taken up in 1996 against the backdrop of growing pressure of container cargo at Chittagong port.

But the project remained shelved for a long time due to bureaucratic tangles although the port had to cope with an increasing number of container cargo that grew by 25 per cent a year, sources said.

Frequent agitation by workers and employees of Chittagong port demanding the installation of New Mooring container terminal prompted the government to get it approved by the CCNEC.

Earlier, two container terminals known as Multipurpose Berths (MPB) were set up at Chittagong port at a cost of Tk 400 crores in 1993. The terminals combined have a capacity to handle 1,90,000 containers annually.

However, Chittagong port handled over four lakh containers last year, the sources said.

Dhaka-Agartala trial bus service after jt survey

NEW DELHI, June 28: Bangladesh and India today agreed to go for trial run of buses between Dhaka and Agartala to be conducted by Bangladesh Road Transport Association and Tripura State Transport Corporation, reports BSS.

It was decided at the two-day official level talks between the two countries today on the modalities to initiate passenger bus services between Dhaka and Agartala, an official source said.

The six-member Bangladesh delegation was led by Asaduzzaman Bhuiyan, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Communications while the Indian team was headed by Alok Rawat, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Surface Transport.

The two sides would conduct a joint survey before the trial bus run to see the physical condition of the roads, facilities at customs check point and the bus depot at Dhaka and Agartala.

The team comprising officials of both the countries will carry out the survey on July 17 and 18 and make recommendations to their respective governments.

The next official level meeting will be held in Dhaka to finalise the draft agreement.



Barrister Tania Ameer presenting a draft bill seeking increase of reserved seats for women in parliament to 150 at a workshop organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Arsenic mitigation activities bypassing national body

Allegations against some ministers, donor agencies

By Naimul Haq

The National Steering Committee on Arsenic has raised serious concern over arsenic mitigation activities of some ministries and donor agencies.

Without naming the ministries it pointed out in a working paper report prepared on June 1 that certain ministries are carrying out certain activities by bypassing the steering committee.

The committee also noted that a number of donor agencies have financed projects, which are implemented by non-government organisations, without discussing those with the government.

As a result, on many occasions review of the proposed activities is not taking place, leading to uncoordinated efforts in arsenic mitigation programmes, the committee report said.

Although the donor agencies

are discouraging implementation of projects by sidestepping the committee, some of them do not comply with the rules, it noted.

However, it regretted that some donor agency-funded arsenic mitigation projects have been implemented without prior approval of the committee. It also said the projects are duplications of a number of existing projects, which are already in the implementation stage. Such projects are the result of whimsical decisions.

Citing an example, an anonymous source said a project to assess the success of community based arsenic mitigation models has been proposed by British donor agency DFID.

The two million pound sterling project also aims to improve the health condition of the affected people through affordable, sustainable and integrated community based programme of arsenic mitigation.

Dhaka Community Hospital would act as DFID's partner to implement the three-year project.

The source said the project has not been placed in the technical committee constituted by the national steering committee for review. The project, which is yet to be implemented, seeks to be in operation without the committee's approval.

Some other mitigation projects, which are almost identical to the DFID project, are in their implementation stage funded by the World Bank and Unicef. The projects are Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Projects and Action Research Water Supply Project. Both the projects involve community-based affordable and sustainable water supply mitigation projects.



A family that encroached on public land along the Gulshan lake put their belongings on a boat prior to clearing out yesterday. — Star photo

NGO official, trader robbed of Tk 5 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

Armed gangs took away Tk 5 lakh from an NGO official and a businessman in two separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Miscreants stabbed and snatched away Tk 2.67 lakh from the NGO official at Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur area yesterday afternoon.

The victim was identified as Rezaul Islam, Accountant of Nijera Shikhi.

The incident occurred at about 1:45 pm when Rezaul was returning to his office after drawing the money from two banks.

A gang of four muggers intercepted Rezaul when he arrived near Minar mosque and asked him to hand over the money.

The gang stabbed him when he refused to oblige and took away the money. They left the scene in two motor-bikes, the victim said in the FIR lodged with the Mohammadpur thana.

Mohammadpur police said they could not arrest anyone in this regard although the FIR mentioned the number plate of one of the bikes used during the

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RMC female students on strike

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, June 28: Female students of 40th batch of Rajshahi Medical College put their classrooms under lock and key today.

The female students are abstaining from their classes for the last few days demanding seats in the women's hostel.

Sixty-five female students of the 40th batch have been living in the common room for last one and a half years in a miserable condition.

They also staged sit-in in front of the office of principal from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm today to press home their demand.

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