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PM for peaceful solution to all problems facing Muslim world

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday suggested peaceful solution to all problems facing the Muslim world, reports UNB.

She also called for settling the problem of Western Sahara within the purview of UN Security Council Resolution.

The prime minister made the remarks when a special envoy of Morocco's King Mohammed the Sixth met her at Gano Bhaban and apprised her of problems related to Western Sahara as well as the Muslim world.

Envoy Ismail Alaoui delivered a special message of the King to the PM. He praised the proactive role of the prime minister in upholding the cause of the Muslim Ummah.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh is always committed to peace and felt the necessity of negotiated solution of problems facing the Muslim countries.

"Bangladesh and Morocco enjoy excellent relations," said Hasina and hoped it would further strengthen in future.

Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami and PM's Press Secretary Jawadul Karim were present.

Indo-Bangla border confce begins in Ctg today

A three-day high-level border conference between Bangladesh Rifles and Indian Border Security Force will begin today at the Chittagong sector of BDR to discuss a wide array of contentious issues, reports UNB.

"Recent frontier rights between the two border security forces and intrusion by Indians into Bangladesh territories are among the issues to be discussed at the talks," an official source said.

The long-drawn agenda for the border coordination conference also include matters relating to flag meeting, Navagram and Muhurir Char issues, and firing and casualties in border areas besides intrusion by BSF, Indian nationals and law-enforcers.

Besides, repair and maintenance of border pillars, demarcation of disputed lands, construction of Karimganj Jetty, construction of a church in Mymensingh border, woman and child trafficking, and smuggling will also come up for discussion, a BDR press release said.

Deputy Director General of BDR Brigadier Shah M Mohiuddin will lead a nine-member Bangladesh team at the conference.

Inside Today

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Controlling the damage in Kashmir

Why not discuss autonomy earnestly?

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July	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 17		6.48 pm
July 18	5.22 am	

Prayer Timings

July 17

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:15	4:45
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:55	6:58
Esha	8:15	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Hanging of 12 for killing President Zia

JS body to review documents of military tribunal

Star Report

For the first time in the country's history, documents and proceedings of the military tribunal that hanged 12 army officers for their alleged involvement in the killing of President Ziaur Rahman in a coup in 1981 will be scrutinised by a parliamentary sub-committee.

The major decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of the Sub-Committee of Parliamentary Standing on Ministry of Defence.

The sub-committee had been persuading the government for the last four years to make available the documents of the trial. The government had so far refused to give the documents.

Finally, the Defence Ministry yesterday agreed to provide the sub-committee with documents on trial of four army officers at its next meeting scheduled for July 27. Two of the officers were hanged and the rest were jailed.

The sub-committee will review the documents and ascertain whether the trials were fair and justice was dispensed. It will also summon the armed forces officials who had defended the four officers in the tribunal to find out whether they were under pressure from higher authorities during the trial.

"This is a major achievement in the history of parliamentary democracy as we have been able to establish that all

activities of the armed forces are controlled by the constitution and the parliament," said Maj (Rtd) Akhtaruzzaman, a member of the sub-committee. "We received applications from relatives of the four army officers who were condemned by the military tribunal," he told The Daily Star after the meeting.

In their applications, widows of Col Rashid and Col Delwar claimed that their husbands were under pressure from higher authorities during the trial.

See page 11 col 7

Opposition to hold July 25 processions separately

The four-party opposition alliance yesterday reaffirmed its resolve to continue its out-governance movement, reports UNB.

Secretaries general of the four parties and members of the Central Liaison Committee held a meeting at 29 Minto Road for about two hours in the evening to iron out some differences came out with a cohesive note.

They discussed latest political developments, ways of intensifying the current movement and modality of the next general election.

The meeting was presided over by BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

After the meeting, Bhuiyan

and three other secretaries general — Nazim Rahman Manjur of JP, Moulana Mottur Rahman Nizami of Jamaat and Fazlul Huq Amine of IOJ — and other members of the Liaison Committee met the Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia.

Later briefing newsmen, Mannan Bhuiyan on behalf of the alliance said their unity remained intact and it would be strengthened.

"The alliance would continue the out-governance movement, contest election and form government unitedly. Our movement will continue until fall of the government," he said.

Replying to a question, Bhuiyan said the July 25 mass procession would be brought out separately from different venues by the allied parties.

The BNP secretary general

said the Liaison Committee would meet soon with H M Ershad, Prof Golam Azam and Azizul Huq to discuss the next course of movement.

He said the planned joint public meetings of chiefs of the four parties in divisional headquarters were deferred in view of the inclement weather. The rallies will be held after the rainy season.

About the Zilla Parishad Act, Bhuiyan said the government is hatching conspiracy to appoint administrator to use them in influencing the next general elections.

He hoped that President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed would not give assent to the Zilla Parishad Bill as it contradicts his judgement on local government given while he was the Chief Justice.



Secretaries General of component parties of the four-party opposition alliance met Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia at her official residence yesterday. — Star photo

Gunmen open fire on BCL procession in Ctg: 10 injured

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 16: At least ten people were shot when unidentified gunmen fired on a stick procession of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Chawkbazar in the port city today.

Police said BCL brought out the procession from Anderkilla protesting killing of eight people, including six BCL activists allegedly by Shibir activists at Bahadderhat in the city on Wednesday.

Police and witnesses said the gunmen fired on the procession from rooftop of a school when it was passing the road in front of Gulzar Cinema Hall at Chawkbazar at 6 pm.

BCL and Shibir activists traded fire, chased each other in Chandanpura and Chawkbazar areas.

Later, police intervened and dispersed the clashing groups firing tear gas shells. Angry BCL activists damaged about 40 vehicles at Anderkilla, Chawkbazar and Rahmatganj. Movement of traffic in the these areas was disrupted for an hour.

In another incident of violence at Patiya at 1-30 pm today, a petrol pump owned by a Jamaat supporter was ransacked while a procession was brought out by BCL supporters to protest the incident of killing, police said.

Meanwhile, police during raids both in the city and its adjoining areas arrested 11 people including five Shibir activists and seized some microbuses today.

The Shibir activists were arrested. See page 11 col 7

Strengthen unity, Khaleda's call to Opposition leaders

Opposition Leader Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called for further consolidating the unity of the opposition alliance by removing all misunderstandings, reports BSS.

Begum Zia made the call when secretaries general of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Qiyas Jote and members of the Liaison Committee met her at her Minto Road official residence.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan noted with concern that a section of the Press had been publishing "imaginary reports" about disunity in the four-party alliance.

He asserted that the unity of the opposition alliance is consolidated and it would continue to strengthen further.

Stating that the movement would be intensified, he said the government would be forced to

See page 11 col 5

BNP MP Sarwar gets ad-interim bail in case under PSA

The High Court yesterday granted one-month ad-interim bail to Majbar Rahman Sarwar MP from Barisal in a case under the Public Safety Act, reports UNB.

Court officials said the granting of ad-interim bail to an accused in a case under the PSA was first.

The bench comprising Justice Hasan Amin and Justice A F M Mesbahuddin, however, asked the lawmaker to appear before the trial court.

Police on July 7 charged Sarwar with 12 others in case filed with Barisal Sadar Thana in connection with cutting tendons of Mashur Rahman Milton, a local of BNP student front, Chhatra Dal.

Milton's wife filed the case against the BNP leader and others under Section 4, 9 and 10 of the PSA on June 6.

Sarwar was also granted three-month ad-interim bail by the same bench of the HC in a murder case filed about 10 years ago.

Jubo League leader shot dead in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, July 16: A Jubo League leader was shot dead by some unidentified assailants at village Naymatpur under Sadar upazila of the district last night, police said.

The victim was identified as Joyanal Abedin Humayun, 27, son of Nurul Islam of the same village.

Joyanal, also president of the Bangabandhu Parishad Dalia unit, was shot at 11 pm in front of his house. He was returning home from Mamtanjir Hat.

Police recovered the body this morning and sent it to Feni Sadar hospital for autopsy.

District Jubo League blamed Jubo Dal activists for the killing. Jubo Dal denied the charge.

Save the Buriganga

The river bed is covered with 10-ft sludge

By Morshed Ali Khan



Toxic waste flowing into Buriganga river from Hazaribagh area. — Star file photo

Motor vessels can no longer anchor in the Buriganga between Kamrangirchar and China Motri Bridge as the river bed is covered with up to ten feet sludge accumulated over the years, BIWTA sources said.

Tests show the river bed is covered with thousands of tonnes of rubbish-turned-sludge where an anchor can not have any grip, they said.

In addition to dumping of an estimated 10,000 cubic metres of liquid industrial waste daily, the river takes in an unspecified quantity of solid waste from kitchen markets, residents and industries along its banks. About 70 per cent of the sewage generated in the city of about nine million people flows untreated into the river.

"We have to collect river bed samples regularly but we can not find any clay, sand or soil to do the tests. What we get is only sludge or waste like discarded coconut shells, polythene bags, garment waste and so on," said an expert at the BIWTA.

As a result, BIWTA has to install expensive mooring buoys at the narrow passage near the Sadarghat launch terminal. But there are only seven mooring buoys where a total of 28 vessels can rest before berthing at the launch terminal. About 200 passenger motor vessels use the terminal daily.

Officials said this is a unique situation, which can only be overcome by dredging the stretch of the river and controlling pollution. Inadequate mooring facilities in the river is contributing to haphazard anchoring of hundreds of vessels. See page 11 col 7

Journalist shot dead in office at Jessore

JESSORE, July 16: Shamsur Rahman, special correspondent of daily Janakantha based in Jessore was killed by unidentified gunmen at his Jail Road office at about 8:30 tonight, reports UNB.

Neighbours and police said two gunmen entered his office and shot on the head from a close range, killing the 43-year old journalist on the spot.

The assailants fled the scene safely leaving Rahman in a pool of blood.

The body was sent to Jessore Sadar Hospital.

Shamsur Rahman who joined Janakantha in January 1997 has covered activities of underground parties in southwestern region.

A well-known journalist, Shamsur Rahman worked in Dainik Bangla, Dainik Thikana and weekly Bichitra. He was once involved in left politics and his recent reports



Shamsur Rahman

on Sarbahara infested southwestern districts were appreciated by all quarters.

He is also author of a novel 'Dusar Simanta' and political biography 'Rajinir Jyoti Basu'. Rahman hails from village. See page 11 col 7

HC judgement on DU Senate polls stayed

A judge of the appellate division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed for four weeks the High Court order that set aside the Dhaka University Senate election held in June last year, reports UNB.

Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury issued the order from his chamber upon a provisional stay petition moved by Barrister Shafique Ahmed, the counsel for the university.

Barrister Mainul Hossain, Prof Mahbubullah, Gias Kamal Chowdhury and some others filed a writ petition challenging the election of Senate members all of whom belonged to the pro-government panel.

On July 12, a Division Bench comprising Justice K M Hasan and Justice Abdul Kuddus, upon hearing the writ petition, declared the election illegal.

Bail prayer of 38 Shibir activists rejected

RAJSHAHI, July 16: Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court here today rejected a bail prayer of 38 Islami Chhatra Shibir activists who were arrested from the halls of Rajshahi University on Friday midnight, reports UNB.

Police prayed for remand of six of the arrested, saying they were wanted in many cases but the court sent all of them to jail. Meanwhile, central leaders of Shibir who came from Dhaka reportedly held a secret meeting with local police officials.

JP rejoinder & our reply

Jatiya Party has contradicted a Daily Star report headlined "Discord over contesting polls ahead: Top JP leaders threaten to desert Ershad", which was published on July 15.

In a rejoinder, Faquir Ashraf, Press Advisor to the Jatiya Party Chairman, said Jatiya Party remains consolidated under the leadership of Ershad. There is no internal conflict or feud in the party. Jatiya Party has not broken away from the four-party opposition alliance. Since the four-party alliance is yet to finalise the election strategy, Jatiya Party has simply asked the local leaders to prepare for the election.

Presidium members, parliament members and top leaders of the party have not threatened the party Chairman on this score. No leaders of the party met Ershad on Tuesday night, the rejoinder said.

The reporter's reply: Our report was based on specific information gathered from senior leaders of Jatiya Party and, therefore, we stand by the report.

Biman TUs won't join privatisation talks

By Special Correspondent

All the six trade unions and associations representing officials and employees of Bangladesh Biman at a joint meeting yesterday decided not to attend a meeting today, called by the management to brief them on its plan to privatise the airline.

Under the plan, prepared by consultants from Citibank, New York, 40 per cent share of the state owned airline would be offered to a 'strategic partner' and nine per cent to Biman employees. The airline is being privatised under a World Bank financed project.

The trade unions decided not to attend today's meeting to hear the consultants as the Biman management did not pay attention to earlier calls for a briefing on the situation, their leaders said.

Meanwhile, the consultants yesterday briefed State Minis-

ter for Planning Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir on their report that includes a situation analysis, business plan, bidding process and the airline's prospects after privatisation.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Mohammad Moinin, Biman's Managing Director Air Commodore Rafiqul Islam and its General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Anwar Hossain Khan were also present at the briefing.

Uli Baur, team leader of the Citibank group along with Stephen Farlong, Citibank Vice-president and legal expert Andrew Matthews briefed the state minister and the officials. Other members of the team were also present, said a press release.

The KNM with a daily production capacity of 120 tonnes has also been struggling for long due to poor maintenance and absence of overhauling of age-old machines. Production came to a stop on July 1 after 30 tonnes of pulp brought from Sylhet could not be used because of poor quality, sources alleged.

Newsprint prices continued to soar over the past few months, making it difficult for

newspapers and publishing houses to cope with the situation.

Hoarders are selling KNM newsprint at around Tk 40000 per tonne. It was around Tk 30000 a few weeks ago. The price of imported newsprints also soared to around Tk 51000 per tonne from Tk 34000 depending on quality, market sources said.

Top officials desert KNM for fat salaries at put mill

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, July 16: A good number of top officials of Khulna Newsprint Mill recently joined Bashundhara Paper Mill, creating a crisis of skilled manpower in the KNM, sources said.

The officials, five engineers and two technicians, are getting fat salaries and other financial benefits at least four times more than what they used to get at KNM, they said.

Apart from severe financial crisis, the KNM has been suffering from skilled manpower crisis for three years.

The sources said the desertion is a part of a well-knit conspiracy to ruin the KNM.

Latiful Hasan who once served as chief engineer of KNM is now serving as executive director of Bashundhara, one source said. Two former chief engineers Mozammel Huq and

Ata Saeed have recently been appointed directors of Bashundhara Paper Mill, a private enterprise which has created an impression in the market with its quality production.

The incumbent chief engineer of Bashundhara Paper Mill Yasin Ali had also served as additional chief engineer at KNM.

According to a highly placed source, more experienced officials

are going to follow suit. These officials allegedly created a deadlock in production and administrative matters of KNM and instigated the employees of the mill to agitate against the government.

Production in KNM remained suspended since July 1 for lack of pulp and funds. Supply of newsprint also stopped as the stock exhausted, sources said.