

Recruitment of Bangladeshi workers to continue: Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, July 31: Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad today said his country will continue recruitment of workers from Bangladesh as and when necessary, reports BSS.

Speaking at the official dinner hosted in honour of the visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Dr Mahathir said contribution of Bangladeshi workers in the development of Malaysia's economy is appreciable.

Speaking on the bilateral relations, Dr Mahathir said the relation was "satisfactory" and added that bilateral trade has been on the rise, registering RM 263 million during the first five months of this year.

Referring to enlistment of Malaysia in the Board of Investment as the third largest foreign investor in Bangladesh

See page 11 col 7



Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (R) greets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after the guard of honour at Putrajaya, Malaysia's new administrative capital yesterday. The Bangladeshi leader is on a three-day official visit to Malaysia. — AFP photo

Malaysia may relocate its agro units in Bangladesh

KUALA LUMPUR, July 31: Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said his government would go for high-tech industries phasing out existing labour-intensive agro-based ones for relocating abroad, reports UNB.

Such labour-intensive industries could be relocated to countries like Bangladesh when Malaysia is going for high-tech ventures, he said during official talks with visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Hasina flew in here at noon on a three-day official visit for talks with her counterpart on bilateral matters as well as international issues of common concern. The meeting was held at Mahathir's office at Putrajaya.

Hasina said Bangladesh would welcome relocation of labour-intensive agro-based industries in the country, which offers cheap labour and liberal investment policy supports.

She maintained that about 1.5 lakh Bangladeshi labourers are working in Malaysia contributing to the economy and nation-building activity of a friendly country.

The Malaysian premier assured his country would buy more products from Bangladesh to strike a balance in the two-way trade.

The issue of Bangladesh labour also came up for discussion at the talks. PM's Press

Secretary Jawadul Karim quoting officials said there should not be apprehension of sending back the Bangladeshis. They will continue with their jobs in Malaysia.

Terming Malaysia a big business partner of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina said 34 investment projects had been registered with the Board of Investment by entrepreneurs from this Southeast Asian country with total private investments of 1.3 billion US dollars.

"We look forward to you as our partner in progress and we hope to learn from your experience," Hasina told her host, mentioning that Malaysia has developed information tech-

See page 11 col 8

Dengue 4 more die: 65 fresh cases in city

By Staff Correspondent

Four people including two in Khulna died of dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) across the country yesterday.

Of the victims, two were identified as Hasina Begum, 11, of Bagerhat town and Rowshan Ara, a 45-year-old housewife of Mymensingh.

Rowshan Ara died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital while Hasina at home. The other two died in Chittagong's Gurnari and Joydhan villages. Their identity is yet to be known.

About 50 dengue patients have been admitted to Dakshin health complex in Khulna in the last one week. The health complex official was quoted as saying that dengue fever in the area has assumed an "epidemic proportion."

Meanwhile, 65 more dengue cases were reported.

See page 11 col 7

Aerial spray: Agri ministry yet to give permission

By Naimul Haq

The Dhaka City Corporation yesterday got permission from the Department of Environment for aerial spraying of insecticides to contain mosquito menace in the city, Mayor Mohammed Hanif said.

But the DoE has given some conditions, he said without elaborating.

As dengue fever continued to spread in the city claiming more lives, the DCC wrote urgent letters to the ministries of agriculture and environment on Friday and Saturday respectively, seeking permission for aerial spraying to contain growth of mosquito, carrier of the dreaded disease.

Permission from the agriculture ministry is awaited, he said.

But other sources said the agriculture ministry did not hold any meeting till yesterday to decide whether to allow aerial spraying.

The Mayor said, after getting permission from agriculture ministry, DCC will hold a meeting to decide whether to go for aerial spraying.

"We may or may not go for that. Conventional ground spraying is going on and there are indications that growth of mosquito population is almost under control. If this works, we will not go for aerial spraying."

In the letters, the DCC said it was "fully prepared" for aerial spraying. DCC's Deputy Chief Health Officer Dr Shahid told this correspondent yesterday.

See page 2 col 4



Amu heading for massive victory

From Shehab Ahmed and Aroop Talukdar

JHALAKATI, July 31: Awami League candidate Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu is leading with a big margin of 65,129 votes in the parliamentary by-election in Jhalakati-2 constituency held today.

Amu bagged 86,428 votes against 21,299 polled by his nearest rival Elen Bhutto, an independent candidate, according to the Election Commission sources at 12.20 night.

The polls described by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed as free and fair, however, was not without trouble.

Voting was postponed at one polling centre at Subidpur school in Nalchhiti following violence between supporters of

See page 12 col 1

Elen rejects poll results

By Staff Correspondent

JHALAKATI, July 31: Elen Bhutto has rejected the poll results, saying the election was farcical.

During a press conference at the Barisal Press Club this evening, she accused the CEC of being partisan and demanded his resignation. She also demanded cancellation of the election and re-polling in Jhalakati-2 constituency, claiming wide spread irregularities.

The independent candidate alleged that her polling agents were not allowed to do their job at different polling centres. She urged the opposition not to participate in any election under the incumbent CEC.

She was accompanied by her brother Anis Chowdhury.

Assam militants blow up train: 12 killed

GUWAHATI, India, July 31: Suspected separatist militants in India's northeastern state of Assam blew up a passenger train today killing 12 people, an Indian Railways official told AFP.

The official said militants staged a powerful landmine blast on a railway track close to Rangia station, 60 kilometers west of Assam's capital Guwahati, killing 12 people and injuring several others.

The Samastipur G.L. Express travelling from Bihar to Assam on the metre gauge was blown up, said the official, who did not want to be named.

"According to the information we have right now 12 passengers have died while an unspecified number are injured."

The official said at least two coaches of the train were ripped apart in the explosion.



A mission in a mess: Armed with hand-spray machines, City Corporation employees (left) get down to their job yesterday. Residents in many city areas allege that the drive has not been successful in achieving the target, and DCC employees demonstrate at Nagar Bhaban after activists of the ruling party's student wing yesterday allegedly beat up some of their colleagues, who went to Mirpur to conduct an anti-mosquito drive, on the ground their spraying did not work. — Star photo

Journalist murder Jahangir heard gunshots, saw Selim, Shukkur running away

By Staff Correspondent

Jahangir Hossain, arrested in connection with the killing of journalist Shamsur Rahman, yesterday gave a judicial statement as an eyewitness of the killing before the CMM's Court, Dhaka.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had prayed before the court for recording his statement as an eyewitness.

See page 11 col 3

Special customs squad may be dissolved

By Rafiq Hasan

The special customs squad of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) which detected a number of tax evasion cases involving crores of taka is likely to be dissolved, sources concerned said.

With the retirement of NBR Chairman Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury today and transfer of its First Secretary Jahan Ara Siddiqui who headed the squad, its fate has become uncertain.

In the absence of these two key persons in the NBR, there is little possibility of continuing the activities of the squad, the sources added.

The squad would be dissolved and its members are likely to be absorbed in the NBR intelligence department, one source said.

When contacted, NBR member (customs) Abul Quasem said as he was not involved in the activities of the squad, he does not know anything about its future.

"The chairman (now retired) directly supervised the activities of the squad and it would depend on the new chairman whether it would survive or not," he said.

See page 11 col 5

Protest rally at BARC

Tax official barred from taking charge

By Reaz Ahmad

Several hundred agriculture scientists and officials from across the country yesterday held a protest rally on the premises of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) in the city and barred a taxation official from taking charge of its Finance and Administration Wing.

Normal activities at the BARC is virtually stopped for three weeks now following posting of Ashim Kumar Roy, a Tax Commissioner, as Member Director (Finance and Administration) of BARC, a post traditionally held by persons from

the agriculture cadre. Roy was posted there on July 7 on deputation, sources there said.

Since the "controversial" appointment, scientists and officials of BARC staged sit-in from 9 am to 5 pm everyday and later gave the government a July 31 deadline for its withdrawal.

Scientists from various research institutions including Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) and Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) joined the protest rally as the deadline expired yesterday.

A showcause notice on the BARC Executive Chairman by the Agriculture Ministry on Sunday seeking explanation for recent developments there added fuel to the agitation.

BARC is the apex body of all institutions under the national agricultural research system (NARS) in the country.

When asked for comments, BARC Executive Chairman Dr Z Karim said he would not talk to the press at the moment.

But the ministry is "adamant" as regards posting of

See page 11 col 7

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