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Foreign Secy leaves for Delhi today

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami is due to leave for Delhi today on a special mission which includes urgent consultations and discussions with senior Indian officials on matters of mutual concern and recent border clashes, sources said.

Sami is likely to carry a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Reached by The Daily Star on Friday, the Foreign Secretary said his visit was not consultative in nature but for discussing bilateral matters with Indian officials. He declined to elaborate.

The Foreign Secretary is expected to discuss among other subjects bilateral issues with Indian officials, particularly his counterpart.

One source said the trip is "very important" and the Foreign Secretary will discuss many other subjects of bilateral

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Floods wreak havoc in Assam, Bihar

59 killed, 2.5 million left homeless

GUWAHATI, India, Aug 5: Floods have killed at least 59 people and left about 2.5 million homeless in the Indian states of Assam and Bihar, isolating the country's sprawling northeast, officials said today, report agencies.

Assam state government spokesman Manoj Deb said the swollen Brahmaputra river and its tributaries had severed road and rail links between seven northeastern states and the rest of the country.

"So far 35 people are reported to have died in different parts of the state," Deb said, referring to Assam, the most important of the seven north-eastern states.

"Floods have submerged the national highway and railway tracks at various points in the western districts of Kokrajhar and Nalbari snipping surface communication between the

northeast and the rest of India," Deb added.

The seven northeastern states are linked to the rest of India through Assam.

"With both rail and road communication systems thrown out of gear in Assam, the whole region is completely cut off," said Deb. "At various places railway bridges have been damaged and tracks washed away."

In the eastern state of Bihar, two more flood-related deaths were reported Saturday, taking the toll to 24, a government spokesman said.

Nearly one million people, spread over hundreds of villages in Bihar's 16 districts, were affected by the floods, which have damaged crops and public property worth several million rupees, he said.

The air force and army were

carrying out rescue operations in the state with helicopters and motor boats, he added.

An Indian Railways spokesman in Assam, meanwhile, said repair work had started to resume train links.

"But it will take time for trains to start plying as there has been extensive damage to railway tracks," he said.

According to the Assam flood control department, at least 16 districts were submerged after flood waters burst the banks of the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries at several places.

Over 3,500 villages have been inundated by the overflowing Brahmaputra river which rose after heavy rains lashed the state for 48 hours.

"Thousands have set up temporary homes along the high-

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People move their belongings to safer places from the flood-affected Bihapara village in Assam yesterday. Monsoon downpours have caused flash floods in the north-eastern Indian state killing at least 35 people and leaving over one million people homeless.

—AFP photo

Flood situation deteriorates in 3 dists: 4 drown

KURIGRAM, Aug 5: Four people died in Kurigram as floods turned serious in three northern districts leaving over a lakh people marooned by the overflowing Brahmaputra, Jamuna, Dharala and Teesta rivers, reports UNB.

Four people reportedly drowned in Kurigram district in last 24 hours. They are Mohiuddin, 70, of Kashirchar, Julekha, 7, and Hasina, 5, of Bhogdhangra and Mominul, 4, of Nawabas village.

According to reports, 55,000 people in Kurigram and another 50,000 in neighbouring Gaibandha and Lalmonirhat districts have been marooned as flood situation further deteriorated today.

More than 400 villages in the frontier district Kurigram went under water with some 870 families rendered homeless in river-erosion. The homeless took shelter on embankments and other safe places.

Part of an embankment of Water Development Board was washed away by the turbulent Teesta at Bazra while construction work of Dharala bridge and ferry service at Dharala ferryghat was suspended.

600 garment factories on NBR list of tax evaders

By Rafiq Hasan

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has prepared a list of 600 garment factories involved in tax evasion, forgery and corruption.

According to NBR sources, these factories evaded around Tk 500 crore in taxes. Owners of these factories imported fabrics under bonded warehouse facilities without paying duties and taxes and sold those in the local market.

A special customs squad prepared the list after one and a half years' preliminary investigation and submitted it to the NBR Chairman on Sunday last.

The NBR Chairman sent the list to the Member (Customs) and asked him to complete the investigation and take proper action.

Most of the factories were located in Dhaka City Corporation area and some are in Chittagong.

The preliminary investiga-

tion revealed that the factories were closed down after importing fabrics in the name of producing apparels for export in the country. The NBR filed criminal cases to stop production of apparels because there were documents on import of fabrics and garments accessories against those, but no export documents.

Some of the factories have no export activities since 1990. But their owners are showing those as 'running factories' and getting benefits from the government, the sources said.

Earlier, the special squad had detected Tk 50 crore tax evasion by another 15 garment factories. The NBR filed criminal cases to realise the money.

After completing investigation against the newly listed 600 factories, action will be taken against those found guilty, said a high official of NBR.

But it will take time to complete the investigation. All relevant documents will have to be collected from banks, customs department and ports for scrutiny and their bonded warehouses will be checked thoroughly, he said.

When contacted, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Anisur Rahman Sinha said that he was not aware of any such list.

Some garment factories are involved in forgery and corruption but their number is unlikely to be so high, he said.

"I have no idea about any such list. BGMEA will not support any wrong-doing. Only a few factories are involved in such wrong practices," Sinha said.

BGMEA will not support those found guilty. Rather, it will help the government identify

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Simple solution to deadly problem

By Staff Correspondent

A simple and easy method to remove arsenic and other toxic chemicals from groundwater has been developed.

Three 18-litre pitchers made of unglazed clay (*Kalshi*) are used in the method. The first pitcher will contain iron chips and coarse sand and the second will contain wood charcoal and fine sand. Water poured into the first pitcher will get filtered while passing through the two pitchers. The filtered water will be collected in the third pitcher.

Scientists of Bangladesh Chemical and Biological Society of North America (BCBSNA) developed the method.

Toxic substance up to 800 parts per billion (ppb) in water can be removed through this method, Prof A H Khan, Head of Dhaka University's Chemistry Department and a member of BCBSNA told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

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Trade, investment to top Hasina-Mori talks

By M Anwarul Haq

Increase of trade and investment, relocation of sunset industries and greater participation in infrastructure development are expected to dominate the official talks between visiting Japanese Prime Minister Yohiro Mori and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Japanese premier arrives in Dhaka on August 19 on a two-day official visit. He is expected to head a large delegation of around 75 members including a big contingent from the media.

Yohiro Mori, who succeeded Keizo Obuchi, will be the second Japanese Prime Minister to visit Bangladesh after Toshiki Kaifu, who was here in May 1990.

Dhaka would be the first stop on the Japanese prime minister's three-nation whirlwind tour of South Asia. From

Dhaka, he would proceed to Islamabad and then to New Delhi.

Mori's tour of South Asia is designed to seek support for expansion of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with Japan inducted as a permanent member, both as an economic superpower and the representative of Asia.

Bangladesh is currently a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Both Japan and Bangladesh have a long history of working hand in hand at the UN.

Mori's planned trip to Bangladesh is considered significant, as Japan is not only the largest bilateral donor but also a major partner in economic development.

Mori is coming at the invitation of Sheikh Hasina, who went to Japan in July 1997 within a year of becoming the Prime Minister. The trip would

be a follow-up of Hasina's visit to Tokyo.

Dhaka-Tokyo relations have been very cordial with several high-level visits taking place from both sides. All Bangladesh heads of government have taken the opportunity to visit Japan. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman being the first.

Japan has contributed heavily to Bangladesh's infrastructure development and its grants and loans had helped build such mega-projects as the Bangabandhu bridge, the Meghna bridge and several other bridges. Although details of the Japanese prime minister's trip is yet to be confirmed, a visit to the Bangabandhu bridge is likely to be included in the itinerary.

Besides matters of bilateral and economic co-operation, the

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Under-trial prisoner dies at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

An under-trial prisoner died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

Babul, 25, son of Sonu Mian of Sahapur under Kasba thana in Brahmanbaria was sent to the DMCH from the Dhaka Central Jail after he complained illness.

The attending doctor declared him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

JP leader shot in Ctg, hartal tomorrow

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 5: The All-Party Action Committee, Chittagong unit, called an eight-hour hartal till 2 pm in greater Chittagong on Monday to protest the attack on the Jatiya Party city unit president Jahangir Alam.

Jahangir was shot by some terrorists near his residence at Bakalia last night, police and party sources said.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police and party sources said the terrorists opened fire on him while he was going to attend a function at Bakalia at 9 pm.

The attackers fled the scene when people from surrounding areas rushed to the spot, police said.

2 electrocuted in city

By Staff Correspondent

Two people were electrocuted in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

The victims were identified as Sohel Rana, 20, son of Abdul Halim of Kafrul area and Abdul Malek, 20, son of Sahed Ali of Pallabi.

Sohel came in touch with a live electric wire near his house in the early hours of yesterday.

He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Malek was electrocuted at a factory in the city's Benarashi Palli at Mirpur at about 6-30 am yesterday.

The bodies of the victims were sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Renewed resolve to protect the river

By Staff Correspondent

About 500 representatives from 65 organisations and institutions yesterday brought out a colourful boat procession on the Buriganga carrying banners and shouting slogans for saving the river from pollution and encroachments.

The procession was organised by the Save Buriganga Movement, launched recently following reports of indiscriminate encroachments and pollution of the river. POROSH, an organisation working for protection of the environment, is leading the Movement.

Activists of the Movement—male and female—gathered on the eastern side of Bangladesh-China Moitri Bridge with colourful banners and placards at around 2 pm. As they proceeded in two rows towards Shashan Ghat at Postagola, hundreds of onlookers clapped to cheer them.

At about 3-30 pm, the ac-

tivists boarded about 35 mechanised boats and set out for the Sena Kalyan Sangstha's installation nearby. The Sangstha's installation is one of the most serious encroachments on the Buriganga.

The boats stopped at the installation where about 100 labourers engaged by the Sangstha were working. The processionists chanted slogans and demanded immediate removal of the massive encroachment. They also demanded removal of the other encroachments nearby.

The processionists then moved towards Kamrangirchar in the upstream. Employees and workers from launches and other vessels raised hands and clapped to express solidarity with the processionists.

As the procession, watched by policemen in a boat and a speed boat of the Fire Brigade,

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Save the Buriganga: A boat procession was organised yesterday by the Save Buriganga Movement, launched recently to protect the lifeline of the city from pollution and encroachment. Nearly 500 representatives from 65 organisations joined the procession. —Star photo

Furore at FBCCI

Former business chief hosts AL meeting at the federation building

By M Shamsur Rahman

Much to the surprise of the business community, former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Yusuf Abdullah Harun yesterday held a meeting in the conference room of the federation to settle an internal dispute of Murad Nagar Thana Awami League.

Sources concerned said Harun held the meeting after winning the ruling party's blessings to contest for the top post of FBCCI in the election due on October 12.

The meeting constituted a 51-member committee of Murad Nagar Thana Awami League.

Business leaders said holding of such political meeting in the FBCCI office is prohibited by its constitution. "It is a serious offence," said one leader.

When contacted, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo said any one could rent the conference room by paying Tk 7,000 per day.

Asked if opposition parties want to hold meetings there by paying the required amount, Mintoo said high level meet-

ings may not be allowed.

A former FBCCI president, seeking anonymity, said yesterday's meeting was "unfortunate and unprecedented and it tarnished the image of FBCCI. The FBCCI leadership should not have allowed it," he said.

Leaders of some trade associations said that in the past, their requests to allow them to hold meetings on trade related matters at that venue were turned down.

Meanwhile, Harun has won support of the ruling party to contest the FBCCI election by-passing two others — Salman F Rahman and ruling party MP Ali Ashraf who was an aspirant from the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Business sources said Salman Rahman will also contest the election although he did not get the ruling party's blessings.

The other candidates for the post of FBCCI president are Mir Nasir of Faridpur Chamber, MA Rouf Chowdhury of Gazipur Chamber and incumbent vice president of FBCCI MA Mumin.

Inside Today Article

How is India as a Neighbour? By Mahfuz Anam Page 4

Business

Export gains from processed leather up 16 pc last fiscal

DSE, CSE price quotations Pages 6 & 7

August	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 6		6:38 pm
Aug 7	5:31 am	

Prayer Timings

August 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:25	4:55
Zohr	1:00	1:30
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:55	6:58
Esha	8:15	8:40

Source: Islamic Foundation

Firecracker blast kills 21 in China

BEIJING, Aug 5: Explosives intended for making fireworks detonated in an apartment building, killing 21 people and injuring more than two dozen others, says AP.

The explosion Friday in central Jiangxi province completely levelled the five story structure and shattered windows in buildings as far as 200 meters away, the government's Xinhua News Agency reported.

The blast occurred as independent fireworks maker Huang Yuexiang was transferring 2 tons of explosives purchased illegally in northern China from his truck to a storage space in the apartment building. The report did not say what sparked the explosion or whether Huang was among the dead.

Another 26 people were injured in the blast, two of them seriously, Xinhua said.

An investigation into the cause has been launched under orders from Jiangxi's governor and Communist Party leadership, the report said.

Widespread disregard for industrial safety and lax enforcement lead to frequent deadly accidents in China. Poor controls over dynamite and other explosives make them widely available.

Cold war on, work off

Rivalry among ministers, state ministers, secretaries puts ministries to a standstill

By Special Correspondent

Differences among ministers, state ministers and bureaucrats on running the affairs of the ministries are hampering activities of the administration, sources concerned said.

They cited a 'cold war' between ministers and their deputies in the ministries of communication, fisheries and livestock and foreign affairs and change of two Secretaries in one month over differences on policy and administrative matters.

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju, Fisheries and Livestock Minister ASM Abdur Rob and Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad are having 'trouble' with their deputies.

There are dissatisfaction in the ministries of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Posts, Telegraph and Government of Consensus.

Last year, Anisul Haq Chowdhury, a senior AL leader from Rangpur, was appointed State Minister for Communications.

Relations between Manju and Anisul Haq are said to be

far from cosy.

Sources close to the State Minister said that at the time of his appointment he was asked by the Prime Minister to look after the Railway Division of the ministry.

But he has hardly anything to do. Because of the differences between the two on the issue of responsibilities, a recent agreement between India and Bangladesh on railway was almost torpedoed.

When the file in this regard was sent to the State Minister after the Minister's approval, he was annoyed and put a note that the Minister had nothing to do in this regard.

The matter was later settled at the initiative of the PM. But Manju told the Prothom Alo newspaper in this regard that he had no problem with the State Minister.

The agreement was signed by the Directors General of the railway ministries of the two countries, he said. Anisul Haq did not make any comment in

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ডেঙ্গুজ্বরের চিকিৎসা ও প্রতিরোধের জন্য যা করণীয়

ডেঙ্গুজ্বরে আক্রান্ত হলে আমাদের প্রধান করণীয় হচ্ছে হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসকের সাহায্য নেয়া এবং প্রতিরোধের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা।

লক্ষণসমূহঃ

- * জ্বর (শরীরের তাপমাত্রা হঠাৎ বৃদ্ধি পায়);
- * মাথা ব্যথা, পেটে ব্যথা, মাংসপেশী ও হাড়ে ব্যথা (বিশেষতঃ মেরুদণ্ডে ব্যথা);
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