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PM calls on President

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and discussed with him matters of public interest, reports UNB.

After nearly hour-long talks, a brief communique from Bangabhaban said the Prime Minister stayed with the President for some time discussing "different matters of public interest".

The Prime Minister also apprised the President of the outcome of her recent visit to Malaysia.

The communique did not spell out which matters of public interest the Prime Minister discussed with the President.

"It was virtually a one-to-one meeting," an aide of the Prime Minister told UNB.

"What I perceive is that the discussions were good and useful," he said.

The Prime Minister went to Bangabhaban around 5 pm and stayed there nearly an hour.

The meeting between Head of the State and the Head of Government took place at a time when the country is passing through a crucial time.

Observers said matters relating to the judiciary and law and order might have come up during the consultation.

Hasina's letter to be delivered to Gen Musharraf today

ISLAMABAD, Aug 23: A special envoy of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar and senior officials here today, diplomatic sources said, reports AFP.

Foreign Secretary C M Shafi Sami called on Sattar after meeting his Pakistani counterpart Inamul Haq, they said.

The details of the meetings were not immediately known.

Sami, who arrived here Tuesday on a four-day visit, is due to call on military ruler General Pervez Musharraf on Thursday to deliver a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Nothing has been officially said about his visit, but it follows a recent statement by Sheikh Hasina that Bangladesh would try to reconvene a postponed summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).



BDR personnel guarding Dhaka District Judge's Court building during hartal hours yesterday. The court was ransacked during a demonstration by the lawyers on Sunday protesting the killing of Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal.

— Star photo

Second petition for quashing contempt cases filed

'All three cases are aimed at realising political agenda'

By Staff Correspondent

Five hundred sixty-eight pro-government lawyers yesterday filed a petition with the High Court seeking rejection of the three contempt petitions filed against the Prime Minister.

Barrister Amirul Islam filed the petition with the court that is hearing admissibility of the three contempt petitions.

The three contempt petitions were filed separately by Supreme Court Bar Association President (SCBA) President Barrister Mainul Hossain, 339 pro-opposition lawyers and the Opposition MPs.

Yesterday's petition for rejection of the contempt petitions was the second one. A former president of SCBA, Barrister Shaikat Ali Khan, filed the first petition on Monday.

Those who filed the petition yesterday include Vice-president of SCBA Faruque Ahmed, former president of SCBA Serajul Haque, Gazul Haque, Shudhanshu Shekhar Halder, Yusuf Hussain, Humayun, Awami League Law Secretary Sahara Khatun and Office Secretary Abdul Mannan Khan.

Former SCBA President Barrister Shafique Ahmed is also among the 568 lawyers.

Ahmed was one of the signatories to the August 3 statement by 11 senior lawyers in which they said the Prime Minister's recent remarks on the judiciary were tantamount to contempt of court.

Praying for rejection of three contempt petitions, Barrister Amirul Islam said, "These petitions are nothing but abuse of the process of the court to realise a political agenda."

Filing of multiple contempt petitions proves that "vengeance, malicious intentions and ulterior motives" are

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Dhaka to host World Press Council confce

Bangladesh will host the biennial conference of World Association of Press Council (WAPC) in January next year, reports BSS.

The conference is expected to be inaugurated by the prime minister.

This was communicated to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina when a delegation of Bangladesh Press Council called on her at Ganobhaban yesterday evening.

The delegation was led by acting chairman of the Press Council and Editor of the Daily Sangbad Bazlur Rahman.

Other members of the delegation were Prof. Mubammad Ali Tassil, Mr. Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Ozaer Faruq, Mahbul Alam, Santosh Gupta, Shafiqur Rahman, Mahfuz Anam, Kazi Shahed Ahmed, Information Secretary Akmal Hossain and Press Council Secretary M A Bashir Khan.

The delegation told the Prime Minister that the conference was scheduled to be held in November 2001, but Bangladesh will favour holding the conference in January.

The decision would be taken at a WAPC regional meeting in Cyprus. A six-member delegation headed by Bazlur Rahman will attend the regional conference to be held September 7 and 9 this year.

The Prime Minister assured the delegation of all possible logistic supports from the government for holding the WAPC conference in Bangladesh.

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Court told as hearing resumes Contempt case filed to defend constitutional position of judiciary

By Special Correspondent

Arguments for and against admissibility of two contempt petitions against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her remarks on the Judiciary resumed in the High Court yesterday.

The hearing was adjourned at 4:55 pm and it resumes at 10 this morning.

A Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Mohammad Mozammel Haq and Justice Mohammad Abdur Rashid began the hearing on Tuesday.

The contempt petitions were filed by Barrister Mainul Hossain, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), and Barrister Rafiqul Haq on

behalf of 339 pro-opposition lawyers.

Another contempt petition against the PM filed by Barrister Moudud Ahmed on behalf of 110 opposition lawmakers is pending with the HC for hearing on its admissibility.

Besides, 568 pro-government lawyers filed a petition with the Court yesterday seeking rejection of all the three contempt petitions. Admissibility of the petition submitted by Barrister Amirul Islam was partly heard.

As the HC Bench resumed the hearing yesterday afternoon, Barrister Mainul Hossain started his arguments, picking up the points raised by Attorney General (AG) Mahmudur Rah-

man and Barrister Amirul Islam. He said, "We are not even against the scandalising language she (PM) had used in the interview (with BBC) while criticising the judges and the lawyers. Our fear and anxiety here in this court and outside are not merely to defend the dignity of the judges but more importantly to defend the constitutional position of the judiciary as the protector of people's fundamental rights."

Mainul Hossain said he did not differ on the submission of the AG that the "language of criticism of the judges, even when they are harsh and stinking, may not constitute contempt of court." But he pointed

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Proposed Rupsha Bridge 38 cos likely to submit pre-qualification applications today

Star Report

Thirty-eight companies are likely to submit today pre-qualification applications for construction of the proposed Rupsha bridge near Khulna to connect Mongla Port by road.

Sources concerned said 38 companies have purchased tender documents from the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) for the Tk 650 crore project to be financed mainly by Japan Bank of Industrial Cooperation (JBIC). The bridge would be 1360 metres in length and 16 metres in width.

As per the present schedule, JBIC and RHD would pre-select

bidders from among the applicants. Selected bidders would have to submit their proposals by the end of next month and the authorities would select the best bidder within 45 days.

The best bidder will have to complete the project within 40 months of the signing of final agreement.

However, due to certain pre-qualification criterion imposed by JBIC, the RHD feels that some experienced contractors might not be able to participate in the bid although they have purchased bid documents.

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Hartal passes off peacefully

By Staff Correspondent

The half-day countrywide hartal called by the four-party opposition alliance yesterday to protest killing of city BNP leader passed off peacefully, disrupting normal life, traffic and economic activities for seven hours.

The BNP and its allies — Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote called the strike from 6 am to protest Sunday's killing of city BNP Joint Secretary Habibur Rahman Mondal.

The alliance also called a dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal on Wednesday next to protest government's enhancement of prices of gas and petroleum products.

In the city, one person was injured at Shantinagar as the fell from an auto-rickshaw when pickets chased it. Pickets also damaged two auto-rickshaws at Malibagh crossing and an auto-rickshaw at Jatrabari.

Some BNP activists while parading streets overturned some rickshaws on Bijoynagar Road and some motorbikes on Nayapalton Road.

Some cocktails were exploded at Tipu Sultan Road in Old Dhaka and at Tejgaon.

The hartal kept shops and business houses in the city closed, but the countryside remained untroubled. Attendance in offices was thin. Banks operated behind closed collapsible gates. All educational institutions in the country reminded closed.

Armed police and riot police were deployed in strategic points and at important government establishments in the city. Police put up barbed wire barricades on different roads to obstruct pro-hartal processions, but no clash was reported.

Yesterday's hartal in the city

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Shahid's name was dropped from Sumon murder case

By Staff Correspondent

DCC Ward Commissioner Saidur Rahman Shahid, who joined ruling Awami League recently, was an FIR-listed accused in Sentu murder case.

But his name was dropped from the chargesheet submitted recently, sources at Sutrapur thana said.

Although Shahid is involved in many criminal activities in the area he manages to escape charges, they claimed. Shahid is Commissioner of Ward No. 83.

Some residents of Faridabad area under Ward No 83 talking to this correspondent said Shahid had always been protected by a section of police officials and some people in the administration.

He maintains a paid group of people for extortion, land grabbing and such other activities, they claimed. He was involved in the murder of Sumon, Michael and Habibur Rahman Mondal, they alleged.

Sutrapur thana however said that in none of these cases he was an FIR-listed accused.

Some local people who knows Shahid from his childhood said he had joined the then EPR (East Pakistan Rifles)

but fled away with a rifle. He then got involved in theft, bank dacoity, launch dacoity and such other crimes.

He was also an accomplice of Gal Kata Kamal and was arrested along with him in late seventies. He was later involved in selling drugs in slums at Khilgaon, they claimed.

In early eighties, he became police informer.

He was selected as ward commissioner during Ershad's rule and soon became a powerful local leader of Jatiya Party.

He was elected ward commissioner in the last Dhaka City Corporation election.

Dengue: 62 more hospitalised

By staff correspondent. Sixty-two more people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals and private clinics in the city yesterday.

Sources said Dhaka Medical College Hospital admitted 24 people with the fever while Mitford Hospital admitted four.

Dhaka Shishu Hospital reported

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132 HSC examinees PM asks Edn Ministry not to seek stay of HC verdict

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night asked the Education Ministry not to move the Supreme Court seeking stay of the High Court verdict that declared valid the registration of 132 HSC examinees of Mottijheel Model School and College, reports UNB.

An earlier report said a provisional leave petition was filed in the Supreme Court yesterday by advocate on record Shamsul Haq Siddiqi seeking stay of operation of the High Court verdict in the case following instructions through the solicitors' office.

The High Court on August 21 in its judgement upon a writ petition by aggrieved students declared valid the registration of 132 girl students, who were allowed to sit for the examination held in April this year under a provisional order of the Court.

The Court also cleared the way for publication of their results.

The students were debarred from sitting in the examination on grounds of defective registration.

Talks between minister, teachers adjourned till 11 am today

A meeting between the Education Minister and the representatives of different non-government teachers associations was adjourned till 11 am today, reports BSS.

The meeting, held in the conference room of the Primary and Mass Education Division of the Education Ministry, decided to sit again today as both sides agreed to continue the dialogue.

Meanwhile the teachers will continue their action programme announced earlier.

Earlier, Education Minister A S H K Sadique said that the government was ready to pay 100 per cent salaries to the teachers of non-government institutions provided they deposit all earnings of the institutions to the government treasury.

The government is always ready to solve their problems through dialogue if they call off their on-going strike," he said, while addressing a meeting of the representatives of different teachers organisations.

The education minister said that government would make the teachers recruitment policy and person having third class in academic background would not be allowed in teaching profession.

He also laid emphasis on raising the percentage of pass in the examinations. The salaries of the teachers would

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SKOP calls hartal in Ctg today

From Our Correspondent. CHITTAGONG, Aug 23: Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) has called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the greater Chittagong tomorrow to realise its 9-point demand.

The demands include reopening of 11 towel factories at CEPZ, withdrawal of termination letters of 15 workers, withdrawal of detention orders of some 30 workers of those factories and salaries as per BEPZA circular of 1993.

SKOP held a rally on the central Shaheed Minar premises in the city this afternoon in support of tomorrow's hartal.



As many as 568 lawyers filed a petition with the High Court yesterday seeking rejection of all the three contempt petitions against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent remarks on the judiciary. Photo shows the lawyers led by Barrister Amirul Islam coming out of the court.

— Star photo

Ties acquire new dimension: Vajpayee We are now global partners: Mori India, Japan to work out details of new security dialogue



Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (L) welcomes Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori (R) at the Presidential Palace in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: India and Japan will start working out the details of a new security dialogue today during Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's meetings with Indian leaders, despite their differences over nuclear nonproliferation and economic sanctions, reports AP.

Terrorism, nuclear disarmament and defense cooperation between the Indian and Japanese navies in tackling piracy will be part of the dialogue, foreign ministry spokesman Raminder Singh Jassal said.

Details of a 45-minute meeting between Mori and his Indian counterpart late today were not immediately available but Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said, "Bilateral relations have acquired a new dimension and a new depth," after the discussions.

"Japan and India have become global partners today," Mori told reporters as he emerged from the meeting.

Mori began his visit Monday in Bangalore, India's informa-

tion technology center.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Cabinet gave Mori a ceremonial welcome today at the presidential palace.

Mori walked along a red carpet, wearing a military guard of honor. The president's guards, wearing turbans and mounted on horseback, held flags.

The Japanese leader visited the Mohandas K Gandhi memorial, where he laid flower petals on the granite slab and bowed in silence for a few moments, before beginning a day of formal meetings.

The security dialogue was agreed upon in November when External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh marked an easing of relations between the two countries by making the first top-level visit to Tokyo since 1998. Japan had halted all development loans to India after May 1998 nuclear test by India and Pakistan.

During Mori's visit, no change was expected in the two countries' positions on nuclear nonproliferation and sanctions. Japan, which was India's

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Star Magazine



THE INSIDE SCOOP

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By Shaheen Anam

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Prayer Timings

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Source: Islamic Foundation