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Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o Fils scores during the soccer final at Sydney Olympic games yesterday. Cameroon won the gold medal beating Spain 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out. — AFP photo

Intra-party feuds: Sylhet AL leaders meet PM today

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Sept 30: Prime Minister and ruling party chief Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to hold a meeting in the capital tomorrow with the leaders of Sylhet district Awami League with a view to ending the internal feuds in the party.

President and general secretaries of the AL district unit and its front organisations and leaders of the 11 upazila committees have been asked to attend the meeting. The party MPs from the district will also be present. The meeting will also discuss guidelines for next general election, sources said.

The district AL here held a meeting last night before leaving for Dhaka. The meeting decided to form the city unit and fill up 26 posts of the district committee. It also prepared a list of probable committee members to hand it

over to the party chief tomorrow for consideration. The district AL also decided to urge Sheikh Hasina to hold meetings with four party stalwarts: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta and Dewan Farid Gazi at an earliest.

The internal feuds resurfaced in the extended meeting of the district unit of Awami League on September 16. It was the first extended meeting in last six years.

Held under tight security at Saroda Hall, the leaders from the upazila units raised various allegations against some party MPs and expressed their dissatisfaction over the party feuds.

General Secretary of Kanaighat upazila AL, Lutfur Rahman, alleged MP Hafiz Ahmed Majumder extends no help and

party workers can not reach him and that's why the activists have become inactive.

President of Jaintapur upazila AL bitterly attacked Imran Ahmed MP. He said the party activists worked hard for the victory of Imran in the last election, but the MP has now forgotten them.

Convenor of Companyganj upazila unit Abdul Malik said the JS Speaker, who is the elected MP from Sylhet-Companyganj constituency, does not talk with the party members. The party workers failed to meet him when they went to Dhaka, he alleged.

The leaders and workers of Biswanath and Balaganj upazilas criticised the role of Shah Azizur Rahman MP saying, two parallel See page 11 col 4

Efforts on to get quota-free access of garments to US market

Commerce Minister tells CPD dialogue in city

Star Report

Dhaka is making efforts to get Washington to allow quota-free access of Bangladesh's garments to US market under the US Trade and Development Act, 2000 which comes into force this month.

Commerce Minister M Abdul Jalil disclosed this at a dialogue titled, Implementation of WTO Act: Current status and implication for Bangladesh, which was organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). He said that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will take up the issue with the US government during her forthcoming visit to US in the middle of the month.

"Hopefully, it is going to bring concrete results."

CPD Chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan in his opening remark said the dialogue has been organised to prepare Bangladesh to deal with complex

problems likely to evolve after the 2005 when trade restrictions will go.

Under the US TDA 2000, 72 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Caribbean Basin will get duty- and quota- free access while exporting their textile and apparel to the US market. The bill covers 33 of the 48 least developed countries (LDCs).

Garment sector currently contributes well over 70 per cent to the total export earnings of Bangladesh. "And since Bangladesh is a major player in the US market experiencing quite robust growth, it can change to its disadvantage," said a keynote paper prepared by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and Dr Mustafizur Rahman.

The economists in their studies pointed out that the quota utilisation rates for categories of importance to Bangladesh are very high for both Bangladesh as well as

most of the major competitors from the Caribbean Basin (CB).

"This would mean that under a quota-free regime for CB countries when Bangladesh will be constrained in future by quota limits, these countries will have an opportunity to expand their exports to the US market."

The paper said that Bangladesh's apparel sector stands at crossroads. With the negotiation of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) during the Uruguay Round multilateral trade negotiation and the subsequent integration of the ATC into the WTO system, both the context and the critical features of the trade in the textile and clothing are set to undergo important changes.

The early signals transmitted by the emerging global trading regime already indicate that

See page 11 col

Three notorious criminals held

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested three notorious criminals in connection with the Sutrapur double murder case and two other murder cases in the city yesterday.

Sutrapur police led by OC Md Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal yesterday raided a house in Begumganj Lane and arrested Delwar, Md Faruk and Md Nadim.

Delwar, son of late Sharif of Begumganj Lane is an FIR listed accused of the murders of teenagers Saem and Mohsin in Sutrapur on September 16. Delwar has been absconding since the murder.

Other arrested Md Faruk, son of late Anwar Hossain of Companyganj and Md Nadim, son of Md Shahabuddin of RM Das Road were FIR listed accused of the murders of Babu and Faruk.

Acid thrown on college girl in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Sept 30: A young man along with his friends threw acid on a college girl on Friday night at village Mallikpur of Aparaj upazila in Netrokona, reports UNB.

Shahanara, 20, was rushed to local hospital with severe burn injuries in her body and later shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital today.

Family sources said 7/8 youths led by Mokhes of the same village sneaked into the house of Rashiduddin at dead of night and threw acid on Shahanara when she was asleep. Shahanara had earlier refused Mokhes' proposal for marriage.

The movement leaders Ahmed Shafiul Azam, Nazrul Hossain and Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipi also spoke at the press conference.

Reading out a written statement, he said the garments industries need the quota-free access if they were to survive.

He said the small and medium-sized garments industries may well have missed the last opportunity to sustain in the competitive international market due to lack of foresightedness from governments and non-government agencies engaged to promote garments industry.

Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) Bangladesh See page 11 col 5

'Act quickly to save garments sector'

PM urged to raise quota & other issues during US visit

By Staff Correspondent

Garment manufacturers urged the prime minister yesterday to discuss the issue of quota and duty-free export of apparels to the US market with Washington during her upcoming visit.

They said the government should act quickly to save the garment sector, which is in jeopardy following the passage of Trade Development Act 2000 by the US recently.

The new bill provides for duty- and quota-free access of garments from 32 African and 40 Caribbean countries to the US market.

"Bangladesh could have availed this special access facility to protect the country's small and medium garment factories," Sarwarjan Chowdhury, a leader of Movement for Quota Free & Duty Free Export of Garments to USA told reporters at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

"We will be out of the market in 2005 and more than 2,000 garment factories may be closed down," Chowdhury said.

"On the other hand, we would

Mamata, Panja quit over oil price hike

NEW DELHI, Sept 30: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee expanded his Cabinet today to include one of India's most popular woman politicians and five others, but two other ministers resigned to protest an oil price hike, reports AP.

Mamata Banerjee, the federal minister for railways, announced her resignation in the eastern city of Calcutta along with her Trinamul Congress Party colleague Ajit Kumar Panja, the junior foreign affairs minister, United News of India reported.

Banerjee's party is a partner in

Vajpayee's ruling coalition and has eight members in the ruling coalition that has the support of 296 lawmakers in the 544-seat Parliament.

Banerjee did not withdraw support from the government, and the decision does not immediately threaten Vajpayee's administration.

Banerjee was protesting Friday's increase in the prices of subsidized diesel, gasoline, kerosene and other oil products to make up for lost revenues due to the global oil price increase.

The decision is expected to be unpopular, and Banerjee said it was taken without consultation with her party. She said she would reconsider the resignation if the price hike was withdrawn within three days.

If the two resignations are See page 11 col 6

Let nation know fate of Laxmipur BNP leader: Khaleda

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia has asked the government to let the nation know the fate of advocate Nurul Islam, district BNP leader of Laxmipur, who was abducted on September 18, reports UNB.

Accusing the ruling party terrorists of the abduction, the BNP chairperson warned of the consequences if any wrong happened to advocate Islam.

Raising question why the abductors were not rounded up Khaleda said the ringleader of the mischief and godfather of Laxmipur terrorism belonged to the ruling party who let loose a reign of terror killing scores of people in the district.

Khaleda Zia, in a statement yesterday, noted with regret that the police did not arrest anyone although they got the names of the abductors as they belonged to Awami League. The police were refrained from taking the abductors into custody even after they See page 11 col 8

Nationalisation of non-govt pry schools demanded

Bangladesh Non-government Primary School Teachers Association has announced fresh programmes to press for nationalisation of their service, reports UNB.

The primary teachers will hold rallies at district level from October 24-30 with the participation of leaders of four party alliance, other political parties and professional groups, said a press release.

Besides, the association will organise teachers' rallies at divisional headquarters by January 30.



An artist putting final touch on the idol of Durga at Sankhar Bazar in old part of the city yesterday. Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of Hindus begins on October 3. — Star photo

Terrorism didn't rise overnight: Motia

By Staff Correspondent

Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury said yesterday terrorism has a long legacy in the country; it did not surface overnight.

"This country had been used a route for arms and drugs supply from Golden Triangle during the Ershad regime. So, despite giving full efforts in curbing terrorism, it could not be rooted out as yet," she said while giving a talk on The State of Politics in Bangladesh.

Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) organised the programme as part of its Meet-the-Reporters series at the DRU office in the city in the morning. DRU President M Anwarul Haq presided over the function while its general secretary Monwarul Islam delivered the welcome address.

Motia had to answer more questions on law and order situation than on her ministry during the two-hour programme.

When some reporters asked for her comments on involvement of ruling party men in various criminal activities, the minister said the rise of terrorists did not take place overnight and they had the tendency to remain under the patronage of the party in power. Notorious criminal Ershad Sikdar of Khulna had also joined Awami League but had to leave the party and face trial after the prime minister and party president intervened.

In fact, Ershad Sikdar stepped into the crime world during Ershad's rule, rose to pinnacle during the BNP regime and had

his fall only recently.

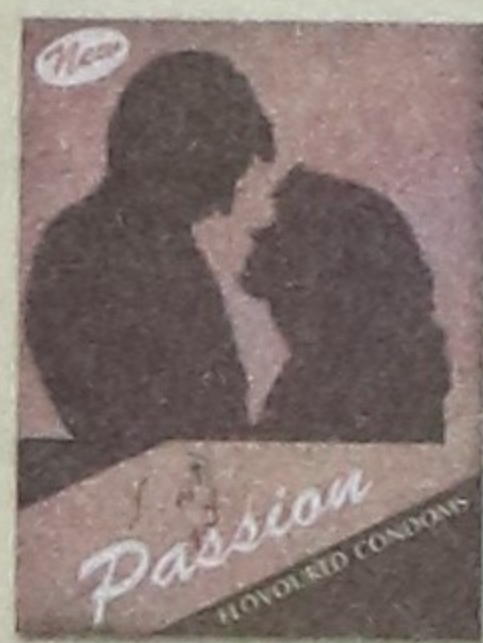
Referring to press reports that a ruling party lawmaker was aiding and abetting the kidnappers and killers of Laxmipur BNP leader Nurul Islam to get away with the act, Motia said it is condemnable if it were true and in that case police would definitely take action. Even the residence of local AL leader and municipal chairman in Laxmipur was raided, Motia reminded, assured that none would be spared.

She also refuted charges that Awami League men had a hand in the killing of an advocate in Bagerhat and a businessman in Banani in the capital.

About the political identity of slain underworld don Mungu Milon, the minister said she did not know what was his position in Jubo League, youth front of the ruling party and put down recent spate of killings on the war among underworld dons and gangsters.

She conceded that the government could not do enough in the areas of poverty reduction, literacy and unemployment, but brushed aside contention that it has been unable to deal with breakdown of law and order.

The agriculture minister dispelled all doubts over the general elections due next year and pointed to the peaceful pourashava (municipality) polls. She said the upside was that no See page 11 col 4

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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