

## Bhutanese to take up arms to flush out ULFA rebels

BSS, New Delhi

The people of Bhutan have said they will take up arms to flush out ULFA and Bodo militants from their country to ensure peace and security. The Asian Age reported yesterday. The Bhutanese citizens, the paper reported, expressed solidarity with the king and have said "We have always enjoyed peace and happiness under the king's wise rule but the presence of the ULFA and Bodo militants in our country threatens to deprive us of our peace and security now."

The Bhutanese citizens at a meeting with their king recently reiterated that it is the duty of every Bhutanese to provide "physical and material support" to implement decisions taken by the royal government to resolve the problem.

Bhutanese Home Minister Lyonpo Thinley Gyamatsho, who was present at the meeting said the

militants have not only refused to come forward for talks but were becoming more blatant about their presence in Bhutan, the report said.

He alleged that the militants were moving about more frequently in the border towns and villages, openly carrying arms and creating problems for the local Bhutanese.

They have mistaken Bhutan's peaceful approach of resolving the problem for weakness and were becoming more aggressive and blatant in their activities. Gyamatsho was quoted in the report as saying,

"We have already absorbed 40 per cent of the field workers, the rest will be absorbed in phases," she said while addressing a rally of Bangladesh Family Planning Field Employees Unity Council at Paltan Maidan yesterday.

Familial planning field workers, mostly women, from all over the country joined the grand rally at the historic Paltan Maidan to express their gratitude to the Prime Minister for recognition of their work at national level.

Referring to the inclusion of family planning field workers in the revenue budget, the Prime Minister said, "We have met your longstanding demand before any plea from your side."

The Prime Minister said that in order to ensure to healthcare services at the doorstep of all the present government had taken up a massive programme, including setting up of 18000 community health clinics, across the country.

She said that the government had intensified its health activities at district, upazila and community levels and introduced essential health service package for the common people.

"We are also trying to reduce dependence on foreign aid in health sector and avoid duality and wastage in the health sector to ensure better service to the people."

Hasina said people will get all necessary services the community health clinics and the government will establish a link between the clinics and specialised hospitals.

She added that health for women and children will get priority in these community clinics which will be run with direct involvement and help of local people.

About her government's success in the health sector, the prime minister noted that population growth rate had been brought down to 1.5 per cent from 2 per cent, CPR (contraceptive prevalence rate) had increased to 54 per cent from 49 and total fertility rate (TFR) had come down to 3.3 per cent.

Mother and child mortality rates

## Jobs of all FP field workers to be absorbed in rev budget: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has family planning field workers to perform their duties with utmost sincerity to ensure health for all.

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## Activists of Jubo Dal, Zia Parishad clash at Feni: 5 arrested

BSS, Feni

Five persons were arrested following a gun fight between the activists of Jubo Dal and Zia Parishad at Rampur here yesterday.

Chase and counter chase between the activists of two groups led to a gunfight and at one stage the office of Zia Parishad was set on fire, police sources said.

Police recovered lethal weapons from the scene.

The gunfight was a sequel to a clash on February 4 last between district Jubo Dal president Syed Mizanur Rahman and Zia Parishad leader Monwar Hossain Dulal over establishing supremacy in Rampur area.

## Ershad Shikdar's elder brother arrested from Barisal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ashraf Ali Shikdar alias Baro Mia 46, elder brother of condemned prisoner Ershad Shikdar, was arrested in Barisal town at noon today, police said.

He will be brought here on Wednesday in connection with several murder and drug trafficking cases.

Police still believe that Ashraf Shikdar is one of the custodians of Ershad's arms and ammunition.

In October 1999, police unearthed a big underground tunnel from his house at village Sholpur under Rupsha thana of Khulna district.

The thana was used for concealing Ershad's illegal arms, police said. But no arms was recovered there as they were shifted elsewhere soon after arrest of Ershad Shikdar.

## Tender: BCL activist shot at PWD office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League -- Shahin -- was shot and injured by some gangsters while he was coming out of the Public Works Department office at Shegun Bagicha in the city after dropping a tender, sources said.

He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injury in his right leg and thigh, hospital sources said.

The gangsters belonged to a BCL group led by Ripon and Zeeshan, the sources claimed.

Rivalry is going on between the Shahin group and the Ripon-Zeeshan group of BCL for the last few days over tender for PWD work, the sources said.

When contacted, Ramna police said they heard about the incident but none came to file any case in this connection.

## Hartal today

FROM PAGE 1

Dr Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain, Tariqul Islam, Shahjahan Siraj, Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Amanullah Aman MP and Abdus Salam led the procession that paraded different city roads.

Leaders and activists of JP brought out a torch procession from Muktangan.

Jamaat brought out a procession from north gate of Baitul Mukarram while IOJ from Purana Paltan area.

Hartal exemption: Hospital, ambulance, medicine shop, restaurant, electricity-water-gas and vehicles carrying journalists and law enforcing agencies' personnel.

## Jail Killing Case adjourned

FROM PAGE 1

filing a criminal revision petition pending with the High Court division of the Supreme Court.

However, Nurul Islam Monzoor, one of the accused, with permission of the court, made submissions about his confined life at the jail hayat. He (Monzoor) said, the cell in which he stays has no window and the jail authorities supply a low quality food.

He also told the court that the physician did not check him up regularly.

Eight of the 21 accused Taheruddin Thakur, Shah Moazzem Hossain, KM Obaidur Rahman, Nurul Islam Manzoor, Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farouque Rahman, Lt Col (Retd) Sultan Sharir Rashid Khan, Major (Retd) Bazlul Huda, and Major (Retd) Khairuzzaman are now detained at the Dhaka Central Jail. They were produced before the court during the hearing.

Four national leaders, Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, AHM Quamruzzaman and Captain

Mansur Ali were killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

The then DIG (Prison) Kazi Abdul Awal filed the Jail Killing Case with Lalbagh thana on November 4, 1975.

The case was transferred to CID on September 10, 1996.

The investigation officer of the case submitted a charge sheet against 23 accused including former president Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed and former Secretary Mahbubul Alam Chashi after two years of investigation.

Mushtaque and Chashi were exempted from the trial because they died earlier.

The court framed charges against 21 accused including 13 absconders on October 12 last year.

Metropolitan PP Quamrul Islam and special PP Mosarrif Hossain Kajol appeared for the state while Advocate Abdul Majid Munshi, Hazi Nazrul Islam, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and SM Rafiqul Islam for the accused.

## Nigerian HC asked to take

FROM PAGE 12

month sentence long ago. Following a suo moto rule issued by the HC Division Bench comprised of Justice Abu Sayeed and Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury on February 5, a Nigerian High Commission representative appeared before the court Sunday and assured of taking all measures to send Ochendo back home.

At the beginning of the hearing yesterday, the judges asked the high commission officials whether their car was ready to take Godday out of the court immediately. The officials in reply said that they needed more time to process necessary papers for his earliest repatriation.

The court then gave the officials five days' time to complete the procedure.

The High Commission also prayed before the Bench that Ochendo should be kept in jail for the next five days as it could not take his charge until February 17.

The Nigerian High Commission would receive Ochendo from the Dhaka Central Jail authorities on February 17 at 10.30 am and would inform the court about the steps they have taken to send him home.

The suo moto was issued taking into cognisance a report published in The Daily Star. According to the report, the 19-year-old Nigerian was arrested in connection with drug smuggling by an American teenager Eledia MacCord in 1992. He was acquitted in July 1993.

But on July 13, he was charged

with entering Bangladesh using an invalid passport and sentenced to two months in jail. He could not come out of the jail due to legal complications for the last five years.

As Ochendo was produced before the HC bench Sunday, the Attorney General Mahmudul Islam argued that the court had no authority to issue a suo moto rule in this case under Clause 102 of the Constitution.

At that stage, Advocate Nizamul Haq Nasim of the Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK) was asked by the court to file a writ petition.

## Youngman held with gun from central jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was arrested with a pistol from the visitors' room of the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Waskurni Palash, son of Hafiz Uddin, came to meet a prisoner at the jail, sources said.

Prior to his entry, Chief Jail Guard Abul Kalam Azad ran a check on him with the metal detector. When detector gave positive indication, Palash got scared and tried to run away, sources added.

However, security personnel at the jail chased and caught him. He was later handed over to the Lalbagh police station. A case was filed in this regard.

## Form vigilance bodies

FROM PAGE 12

They called upon conscious section of the society, religious people, police, members of mosque and madrasah committees and madrasah teachers to be on constant vigil so that there could be no terrorist training in any madrasah in future.

Condemning the recent destructive activities in Branhanbaria, Chittagong and elsewhere in the country, they said that bigoted religious leaders and activists were using mosque and madrasahs to meet political ends.

They also castigated these people for provoking people and declaring intellectuals and prominent personalities murtad. Their main objective is to destroy democracy and stall initiative to establish rule of law, they said.

Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) Chairperson Khushi Kabir, Prof. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury of Nirmul Committee, Ajay Roy of Sammitilo Samajic Andolan, Nurul Islam of Trade Union Centre, Sheikh Shahidullah of Teachers Association and Shamsul Huda addressed the press conference at the Jatya Press Club auditorium.

Khushi Kabir criticised the government for taking mild actions against the fanatics. The government must take stern legal action against them otherwise the civil society would face problem in the future, she warned.

Referring to threat by religious zealots of bringing about a Taleban-style style Ajoy Roy said it amounted to violation of the constitution.

## 2 teenage boys hurt in bomb blasts in Ctg

UNB, Ctg

Two teenage boys were injured in explosions of bombs left in a sweetmeat box behind the Hamzarbag Gausia Mosque in Panchnalish thana yesterday evening.

The bombs exploded when Ismail Hossain, 12, and Abdur Rahim, 13, picked up the box, witnesses and police said.

They were admitted to hospital. Police took note of the incident but could not ascertain who left the sweetmeat box containing the bombs behind the mosque.

## IOJ leaders

FROM PAGE 12

Azizul Huq was arrested on February 5 in connection with the murder of a policeman at a mosque at Mohammadpur in the city.

Amini was arrested on February 4 on charge of giving provocative statements at a rally at Paltan Maidan in the city on February 3.

Both were given one month's detention under the Special Powers Act.

## Tk 15 cr IT project

FROM PAGE 12

Ministry of Education last year, it is yet to get approval from the ministry that would make sure that there is no setback facing the programme.

When contacted, a high official of the ministry said the file is under process and will be sent back soon after necessary appraisal.

## Hearing on split verdict begins

FROM PAGE 12

charge but was acquitted under Section 120-B on the charge of conspiracy to murder.

The five others acquitted are Lt. Col. (rt) Mohiuddin, Maj. (rt) Ahmed Sharful Hossain, Captain (rt) Kishmet Hashem, Captain (rt) Najmul Ahsan and Lance Dafadar (rt) Moslehuddin.

Yesterday's hearing begun as Justice Fazlul Karim invited Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Serajul Huq to make deposition after defence counsel Khan Saifur Rahman declined to take up the case for his client Lt. Col (rt) Mohiuddin for lack of time, which he said was not enough to prepare the case.

Before that, Attorney General Mahmudul Islam pointed out that as per High Court rule, the defence attorney should initiate the hearing, going through the paper book of the case.

However, Serajul Huq rose to make submission after Khan Saifur

declined. The SPP begun with the First Information Report (FIR) and the background of the case. He also mentioned that charges were framed against the accused under Section 120-B.

Citing prosecution witnesses, he argued that accused Risaldar (rt) Moslehuddin had been sighted at three places with the other accused on the night of August 14 at the residence of Bangabandhu. Lt. Col (rt) Aziz Pasha (absconding and sentenced to death in the case) took a gun from Moslehuddin's hand and sprayed bullets on Begum Mujib and others at Bangabandhu's house. Moslehuddin was also seen when he organised the staff at the residence under a mango tree at the entrance of the house.

The day's hearing ended after his submission and presentation of accounts of a number of prosecution witnesses (PW) by Ansul Huq, another prosecution lawyer.

During Huq's presentation,

Justice Fazlul Kaim made a number of queries on accounts of PWs and made some observations.

On PW Major (rt) Shahadat Hossain Khan's account that he was sent to Bangabandhu's residence by the then Chief of Army Staff to make an inspection and report to him (Chief of Staff), the judge asked whether that report was submitted. The prosecution said there was no order to submit a report in this regard. The court wanted to know who was the army chief at that time.

To this, Ansul Huq said Major General Shafiqullah was the then Chief of Staff, who was the 45th PW in the case. Shafiqullah had explained how his command was violated at gunpoint.

On the accounts of PW 4 and PW 5 that they were trying to save their lives and weapons, the court observed that they should have been put on court martial for failing to protect the President.

The hearing will continue.

## Major buyers packing up

FROM PAGE 1

Republic 6.1 per cent, Hong Kong 6 per cent and Bangladesh 5.5 per cent.

Only five countries of the North American and Caribbean basin are now exporting 42.5 per cent to the US market in terms of volume. But even more worrisome development is that Mexico and Honduras two emerging giants registered growths of 16.2 per cent and 18 per cent respectively in 1999 while Bangladesh could make only a 4.2 per cent growth.

On top of these duty-free access threats, new challenges emerged as the European Union recently waived quota on certain categories from China and Sri Lanka. Jacket, so far a hot item for Bangladesh, has become quota-free in China. At the same time, five items like trousers and shirts have been kept out of quota for Sri Lanka under a textile agreement.

When Bangladesh is exporting the same items under quota, the quota-free status of these two countries would make it suffer, BGMEA Vice-president Anisul Huq feels.

Meanwhile, the emerging competitors have embarked on internal restructuring to become major apparel exporters. For example,

Nigeria, Kenya and Mexico are implementing reconstruction programmes for the RMG sector and are attracting foreign investment in fabrics production.

"Bangladesh also needs similar actions now," said Anisul Huq. "We need to relocate our RMG units and upgrade the technology. The government should set up factories which would comply with labour and environment standards."

By doing so, Bangladesh can still retain its customers who would still prefer to stay in a familiar and "tested sourcing ground" than moving to "untested countries".

"We now have to seriously pursue advancing the quota phase-out for Bangladesh," says Anisul Huq. "If we can get unlimited duty-free access now, orders will again start pouring into Bangladesh."

But that will critically depend on two things BGMEA leadership and the Commerce Ministry's negotiation capability on the world body.

"In the run up to the phase-out of MFA, every country is positioning themselves through having free trade agreements and free trade parity so that once the multi-fibre agreement (MFA) is phased out by 2005, they enter the new phase with the best of strength".

The free trade agreements are

giving added momentum to countries because despite GATT and Uruguay Round, tariff on textile products is the highest at around 20 per cent while on other commodity, it has come down to around four per cent.

"So, once a country gets duty-free access, it gets on to a much advantageous position and duty-tagged countries can in no way compete with it," explains Dr Mustafizur Rahman, Research Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). With the duty-free access, another global phenomenon that is taking place is the huge migration of investment.

"The global textile trade is worth 350 billion US dollars and to meet the post-MFA challenges, huge investments in textile sector are taking place all over," said Dr Rahman".

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# Check inflow of small arms