

9 HC judges call on President

UNB, Dhaka

Recently appointed nine judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court made a courtesy call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

President Shahabuddin advised them to be very hard-working for disposal of the long pending cases to maintain dignity of the court and to earn people's respect by dispensing justice without any fear or favour, said an official handout.

The judges are: Justice Mohammad Abdul Hye, Justice Faruque Ahmed, Justice Mohammad Marziul Huq, Justice Mohammad Shamsul Huda, Justice Altaf Hossain Khan, Justice Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Justice Mohammad Imran Ali and Justice Hassan Foyez Siddique.

Ctg port worker leaders invited for talks

UNB, Ctg

The government has invited the leaders of 22 workers' associations of Chittagong Port to sit for talks on Thursday to avoid possible standoff at the country's main import-export gateway.

Twenty-two workers' associations, including ruling party-backed Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA), of the port at a meeting Sunday night had threatened to launch the tough action programme from Friday if their six-point demand is not met by Thursday.

State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya urged the leaders to sit for negotiation when a delegation apprised him of their demands. Maya assured them of fulfilling the demands in phases.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Errata

In a news item headlined "3 new directors of Petrobangla", published in yesterday's Daily Star, it was inadvertently written, ".... Nuruddin M Kamal had been keeping himself busy participating in gas and energy related dialogues at the top after his removal from the PDB..." Instead of "removal", it should be "resignation".

In another news item on the same day, the headline "EC to prepare a voter list 'exclusively' for CHT" should read "EC won't prepare a voter list 'exclusively' for CHT".

The Daily Star regrets the errors.

Musharraf accepts Vajpayee's offer for peace talks

AP, Islamabad

Pakistani military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf yesterday formally accepted India's offer to hold peace talks over the disputed Kashmir region and other issues saying good bilateral relations were important for economic development.

"I accept your invitation to me and my wife to visit India with great pleasure," Musharraf said in a letter to Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"We wish to see a stable prosperous India at peace with its neighbours," the letter said.

"Pakistan has always sought to establish tension-free and cooperative relations with India, so that our two peoples may be able to devote their resources and energies to the task of economic and social development," it said.

Musharraf's letter came four days after Vajpayee broke a two-year lull in high-level talks between the two rival nuclear powers by

inviting the Pakistani leader to India.

While announcing the peace invitation, India at the same time said it was ending a six-month cease-fire in Kashmir a move that drew sharp criticism for Pakistan. The Himalayan region is claimed by both nations. Two of the three wars fought between India and Pakistan since independence in 1947 were fought over Kashmir.

See also page 9

In his letter yesterday, Musharraf said he looks "forward to sincere and candid discussions... to resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people." Jammu Kashmir is what the state is called in India, which controls two-thirds of the disputed region.

Musharraf said Pakistan is also "ready to discuss all other outstanding issues between our two countries as well."

It was not immediately clear

when the meeting between Vajpayee and Musharraf would take place. Nor was it clear if representatives of Kashmiri militant groups, which are fighting for either independence or merger with Pakistan, would attend.

Reuters adds: General Musharraf said the disputed territory of Kashmir would be central to his promised talks with India, but he remained open to discussing other issues.

Musharraf, in an interview with the BBC of which extracts were broadcast yesterday, paid tribute to what he called the vision and courage of Atal Behari Vajpayee in calling for the talks.

"I am very flexible. I have been saying that the core issue is Kashmir and let there be no doubt in that, but there are other issues also and I have no reservations at all. I have no problems in discussing other issues also," Musharraf said.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Flag meeting BSF assures BDR of dismantling groyne on Mahananda

BSS, Panchagarh

The Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday assured the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) that it would dismantle the groyne built on the river Mahananda, keep open the 'Tin Bigha Corridor' for 24 hours and ensure electricity there.

The assurance came during a flag meeting between the sector commanders of BDR and BSF at Tetulia Dukkungalow here in the morning.

The BSF also informed the BDR that it would develop tea garden outside the zero line of the border. The two sides also agreed to withdraw additional soldiers from their respective border areas and maintain friendly atmosphere.

BDR Rangpur sector commander Colonel Ferdous Ahmed led the Bangladesh side while BSF was represented by DIG of Shiliguri sector Ajit Singh and DIG of Kuchbihar sector M I Khan.

Besides, battalion commanders of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur districts Lt. Col. Abdul Kadir, Lt. Col. Salek, Lt. Col. Hassan, Major Zahid (acting) were present in the meeting.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Gano Forum brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting attacks on journalists at different places of the country.

15 UNFPA staff fall sick after taking fast food

BSS, Dhaka

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) office in Dhaka yesterday took a deserted look as most staff fell sick a day after they ate together some snacks supplied by a fast food shop.

Fifteen out of 20 UNFPA staff and a number of government officials and employees of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) are suffering from stomach cramps and fever after they ate the food supplied by a fast food shop at Kalabagan at an agreement signing ceremony at the ERD office here on Monday.

A UNFPA official said initially he was not sure what caused the problem until he called his office to report sickness when he was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 30		6.41 pm
May 31	5-11 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-20	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Biman's fresh drive to draw partners

SHEHAB AHMED

Bangladesh Biman has taken a fresh drive to draw strategic partners (SPs) including foreign financial institutions under a World Bank aided restructuring and commercialisation programme of the airline.

Earlier, it invited bids only from foreign airlines to be its strategic partner, which evoked a poor response.

The decision to invite bids from financial institutions was taken at a meeting of officials of World Bank, Biman and its consultant, the Citibank Group, in New York last week, according to sources in the airline here yesterday.

The Citibank will send a report on its fresh drive by July 1.

If there is no satisfactory progress by July 15, Biman itself will launch a drive for strategic partners, terminating its contract with the Citibank, the sources said.

Biman is trying to procure strategic partners, offering them 40 per cent of its shares.

The New York meeting also decided to invite non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) to invest in Biman.

The NRBs will be offered equity shares but screened carefully to avoid loan defaulters, the sources said.

Biman has also decided to seek management partners or hire executives from foreign airlines to bolster

its management.

The Citibank has been given an 'executive summary' containing the new proposals, which will be sent to major airlines and financial institutions.

The Citibank was appointed consultant under a 10-month contract in February last year.

It came under criticism by Biman and the World Bank for lack of aggressive persuasion for procuring SPs for Biman.

Failing to procure SPs, the Citibank has now agreed to make a renewed effort without charging any money from Biman, the sources said.

Since launching of the restructuring drive in February last year, response was available from two airlines -- Qatar Airways and Gulf Air. Qatar Airways is still in the race after withdrawal of Gulf Air.

Businessman shot, robbed of money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Muggers shot and wounded a businessman before snatching Tk 40,000 from him at Kalarpool area near Battali yesterday morning.

Police said Mohammad Amran reached Kalarpool from Chandgao by an auto-rickshaw at 10:30am yesterday to make advance payments for purchasing some land in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Nuruzzaman tells court Khaled Mosharraf was not involved in jail killing incident

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Cross-examination of ATM Nuruzzaman, third prosecution witness in the Jail Killing Case, by defence lawyers, was completed yesterday in the Special Court adjacent to Dhaka Central Jail.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the hearing till June 4.

Four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Captain Mansur Ali and AHM Quamruzzaman were murdered in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

During the four-hour cross-examination, Nuruzzaman told the court that jail killing was not done under the leadership of Brig Khaled Mosharraf.

He further said the names of 'meal culprits' involved in the jail killing were mentioned in the FIR of the case. He said he gave a judicial statement as a witness before a magistrate on October 20, 1996.

Nuruzzaman said Brig Khaled Mosharraf advised him (the witness) to file on FIR on the incident on November 4, 1975.

The witness said that the upsurge under the leadership of Brig Khaled Mosharraf and Shafayet Jamil was not aimed at capturing power and the four national leaders were not killed with the help of the then jail authorities.

Nuruzzaman said he was promoted to the post of Inspector General (IG) in 1973 during the rule of the Awami League Government.

He further said that he neither committed any offence under the Penal Code nor assisted the five killers in murdering the four leaders inside the jail.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



The Daily Star - প্রথম আলো

Tipu Treatment Fund

Donate generously to this Fund
Save Tipu from Disability

Send donations to: Savings Account No. 25002111
Dhaka Bank Ltd, Karwan Bazar Branch, Dhaka