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Govt firm on rehabilitation of Sidr-hit people

Says chief adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said his government is determined to take measures for complete rehabilitation of the Sidr-affected people.

He made the remark while receiving donations for the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund in aid of the cyclone-affected people from a number of individuals and organisations at the CA's office.

The chief adviser informed that Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme for 26 lakh families in the cyclone-hit areas began partially on Saturday.

He said the objective of the VGF programme is to ensure that the

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Mine character should decide mining method

Coal policy reviewers suggest

SHARIEF KHAN

Working against its deadline of December 5, the committee on finalising the coal policy resolved that adopting open-pit or underground mining method should be left to technicalities of a particular project and coal resources should be primarily dedicated to power generation.

The committee that has held 16 meetings till yesterday since last July, is currently trying to resolve whether the royalty over coal development should be raised from 5-6 percent to a higher number, sources said.

Even though initially the committee faced opposing views about allowing open-pit mining, which

enables huge extraction of coal compared to underground mining method. But as discussions cast light into the grim energy supply scenario of the future, the members more or less agreed to leave the matter to the technical viability of such mining.

Headed by Ex-vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Prof Abdul Matin Patwari, the committee also feels that the government, through Petrobangla and private partnership, may spearhead one such open-pit mine as a test.

The committee believes a quick action is required to tap the coal resources as the country will face huge energy crisis from 2015.

The draft policy says if Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) remains as low as 5.5 percent up to 2025, the country will need to add 19000 megawatt (MW) of additional power and if the GDP is as high as eight percent, it would require 41000MW power. However, Petrobangla said production of gas, which has been the key source for power generation, will start to decline from 2011. This is where the country's coal should play a role.

The draft coal policy said to meet its power demands in a GDP growth rate scenario of 5.5 percent, Bangladesh will need 136 million tonnes of coal up to 2025. If the GDP rate is eight percent then

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Govt asked to set up vacation courts in dists

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to constitute civil vacation court in each district for disposal of urgent cases as the civil court judges at district level enjoys a month-long annual vacation from December 1.

The HC directed the law secretary to take steps for constituting civil vacation bench with the joint district judge who would dispose of urgent civil matters during vacation.

A High Court division bench comprising Justice ABM Khairul Huq and Justice Abdul Awal delivered the judgment following a public-interest litigation writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) in 2005.

Terming the judgment a landmark in Bangladesh judiciary,

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FROM LEFT... Prof Gustav Ranis, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Prof Nurul Islam and Dr Quazi Shahabuddin at an international conference organised by BIDS at a city hotel yesterday. The conference was on "Development Prospects of Bangladesh: Emerging Challenges".

Three Ctg Wasa engineers get 15yrs for graft

Chief engineer acquitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday sentenced four people including three engineers of Chittagong Wasa to 15 years' rigorous imprisonment and fined them Tk 4.25 lakh each in a corruption case filed in 2004.

The court also ordered attachment of all their movable and immovable properties. It, however, acquitted accused Shafiqul Islam, chief engineer of Chittagong Wasa, of the charges.

Former inspector of the then Bureau of Anti-corruption Mubiniul Islam filed the case against the five with the Chittagong Police Station on May 24, 2004 in connection with misappropriating about Tk 16.9 lakh through irregularities in installing PVC pipes at Panchlaish in the port city in 2002.

Chittagong Divisional Special Judge SM Solaiman gave the verdict against Wasa Superintendent Engineer Mohammad Shafiqul, Assistant Engineer AKM Abdul Kuddus, Assistant Engineer (retd) Kazi Abu Taher and contractor AN Faruk Ahmed.

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Maj Gen (retd) Ibrahim set to float new party

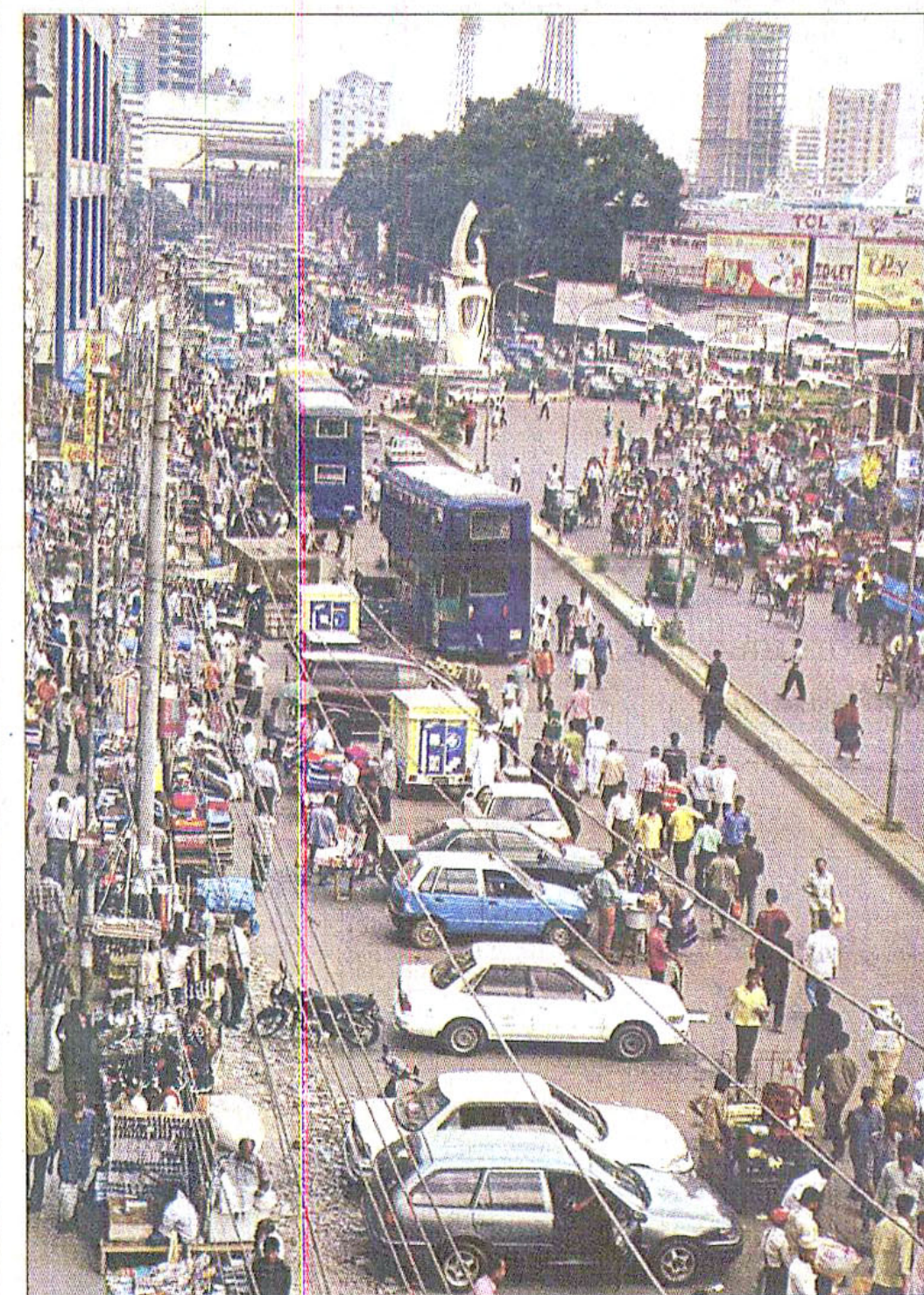
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik, a political analyst, is going to float a new political party tomorrow.

"At the fog end of my life and also at the crisis moment of the nation, I've taken a hard decision to enter into politics and float a new political party," he said in a letter wrote to journalists.

The name of his political party has not yet been finalised. But it is most likely to be Bangladesh Kalyan (welfare) Party (BWP), said Maj Gen (retd) Ibrahim.

He will arrange a press conference at a city hotel tomorrow and declare the launch of the party, he added.



Hawkers occupying the pavement and poorly parked vehicles along the road compel pedestrians to walk near the central reservation of a road close to Bangabandhu Square in Gullistan in the capital.

40 Taliban killed in Afghan clashes

AP, AFP, Kandahar

Afghan and Nato-led troops battled with Taliban militants and called in airstrikes in a series of clashes in the country's south that left 40 insurgents dead, an official said yesterday.

The joint force clashed with militants in the mountainous Shah Wali Kot district in Kandahar province during a three-day operation that ended Saturday and left 35 insurgents dead, said provincial police chief Sayed Agha Saqib.

Ten other insurgents were detained near the militants' hideouts, which they used to launch attacks against Afghan and foreign troops in the area, Saqib said. Authorities recovered the militants' bodies along with their automatic weapons and ammunition, he said.

In Kandahar's Zhari district, Afghan and foreign troops clashed with another group of militants hiding in a compound Saturday night, killing five militants and detaining four others, Saqib said.

Among those killed was a regional militant commander, Mullah Faizullah, he said.

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

USS Tarawa to take over from Kearsarge

US contributes \$5 mil to WFP fund

STAR REPORT

A second US amphibious naval ship 'Tarawa' will join the current cyclone relief operation soon, as American Marine Commander Brig Gen Ronald Bailey said usually it takes two weeks to meet the emergency relief needs, reported UNB.

A French company, TOTAL, through its subsidiaries TOTAL E&P Bangladesh and TOTALGAS Bangladesh, yesterday announced a relief donation of US\$100,000 to be distributed by Friendship, an NGO.

Bangladesh Medical Association of North America, an organisation of expatriate Bangladeshi physicians in the USA, donated \$10,000 to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund, reported UNB.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a US contribution of \$5 million for an

emergency operation designed to support 2.2 million people in nine districts whose lives and livelihoods had been devastated by cyclone Sidr.

At a press briefing in the American Club in the capital Brig Gen Ronald Bailey said they have yet to finalise the date for completing the emergency relief operation in the cyclone-battered coastal areas.

The US ship Kearsarge entered Bangladesh territorial waters on November 22 and had started full-scale 'Operation Sea Angel-11' a week before catering to the immediate need of pure water for the victims.

Since November 29, the Kearsarge delivered over 12,000 gallons of water by helicopters to different hard-to-reach localities along the coast.

In reply to a question, Brig Gen Bailey, Commander of the 3rd US

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ESSENTIALS' PRICES

Matin accuses businesses of playing tricks

UNB, Barisal

Communications Adviser MA Matin yesterday expressed dissatisfaction at the role of businessmen and NGOs in the cyclone-affected areas.

"Businessmen have played many tricks with prices of essentials. They must not do it anymore. Everybody is answerable and accountable to the people and nobody would be allowed to play with the fate of distressed people,"

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Muggers shoot dead two in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ngarj

A gang of muggers shot two people dead as they were being chased by a mob following a robbery attempt last evening at Arahajar upazila in Narayanganj.

Locals captured two of the muggers and gave them a mass beating.

The deceased were identified as Abdul Matin, a labourer, and Arman, a garment factory employee, while the captured muggers were identified as Hanif Sheikh and Mafiz.

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Ctg mayor, wife sued for ill-gotten wealth

UNB, Ctg

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against detained Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and his wife Hasina Mohiuddin in connection with illegally amassing property worth Tk 1.46 crore and concealing information about their wealth worth Tk 2.37 crore.

Abu Mohammad Arif Siddique, deputy director of the ACC, filed the case with Doublemooring

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SIDR-AFFECTED AREAS

Classes start in schools, colleges from Dec 15

UNB, Dhaka

The government has taken initiatives to get academic activities up and running in the Sidr-affected areas by December 15 after reconstructing and repairing the educational institutions.

In this regard, the education ministry allocated Tk 27.82 crore for buying furniture, books and reconstructing 554 destroyed and repairing 2,050 damaged educational institutions in 72 upazilas of 11 districts, said a handbook.

The ministry also sent related allocation letters along with expenditure guidelines to district and upazila offices.

At least 83 officials and teachers have been temporarily involved to complete the tasks properly and transparently by December 15, as per the government guidelines.

CHT peace accord can be reviewed: Mainul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday said the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord can be reviewed.

"No agreements are perfect without several reviews. Time has come to review the CHT Peace Accord considering prevailing conflicts between the Bangladeshis and the hill people," he said.

Barrister Mainul was addressing as the chief guest a discussion organised by Parbatya Chattagram Samu Odhikar Andolon, a platform of the anti-peace accord Bangalee settlers.

Activists of pro-peace accord at another meeting questioned neutrality of the caretaker government (CG), saying how an adviser attended the "discussion on anti-peace agreement" as the chief

guest. They demanded that the chief adviser "dismiss" Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain from the advisory council for "damaging" the neutrality of the present caretaker government.

Two separate meetings were held at the Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the CHT Peace Accord.

Parbatya Chattagram Samu Odhikar Andolon was founded by Wadud Bhuiyan, who is now behind bars on charge of corruption.

The platform's activists organised the discussion styled "A Decade of CHT Accord: Expectation and Achievement" at the conference room of the press club.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Adibashi Odhikar Andolon, a

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Pakistan polls boycott would help Musharraf

Says Benazir

AFP, Peshawar

Former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto said Sunday an opposition boycott of upcoming polls would only help President Pervez Musharraf legitimise his imposition of emergency rule.

Benazir said she would meet early next week with former rival Nawaz Sharif, who has called for a boycott of the January 8 election, to discuss the issue.

"If we all boycott elections, then it will give Musharraf a two-thirds majority in the parliament to validate his provisional constitutional order," she told a press conference in northwestern city of Peshawar, an Islamic political stronghold.

"That is why we are saying that we will take part in elections under

protest, but we will also leave the door open (to talks on a boycott)."

"I am getting conflicting signals from Nawaz Sharif and Qazi Hussain Ahmad about (an) election boycott as they have filed nomination papers and if someone does that it means he is taking part in election," Benazir told reporters.

Ahmad is the chief of Islamist alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, which is also divided over boycott issue.

Benazir made the comments after launching the election campaign of her Pakistan Peoples Party here on Saturday.

She said she had decided to take part in elections despite fears they would be rigged by the government.

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SC overrules HC judgment on hartal activities

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday overruled a High Court judgment and set aside its order that violence and coercion for or against hartal constitute criminal activities.

A seven-member full court of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin, passed the order following an appeal filed by Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan while he was secretary general of BNP.

A High Court division bench, in a suo moto rule on May 13 in 1999, affirmed that violence and coercion for or against hartal constitute criminal activities and directed police and court to take appropriate action in this regard.

In Bangladesh, hartal is recognised as a political weapon for articulating political demand. During the Awami League rule,

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India to hand over two criminals today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) will hand over two suspected criminals to Bangladesh authorities today.

In a letter to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Bangladesh, Indian authorities said two Bangladeshi nationals -- Jewel and Rafiq -- would be handed over to them.

India decided to deport them as their jail sentence for staying illegally in India ended recently.

"They are not top criminals. But we have information that they are accomplices of high-profile criminal Khandaker Tanveerul Islam Joy," a top CID official told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said CID will interrogate the two to get important information

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Prayer Timing		
December 3		
Fajr	Azhan	Jamaat
5:15	5:15	5:50
12:45	12:45	1:15
3:45	3:45	4:00
5:19	5:19	5:22
7:00	7:00	7:30

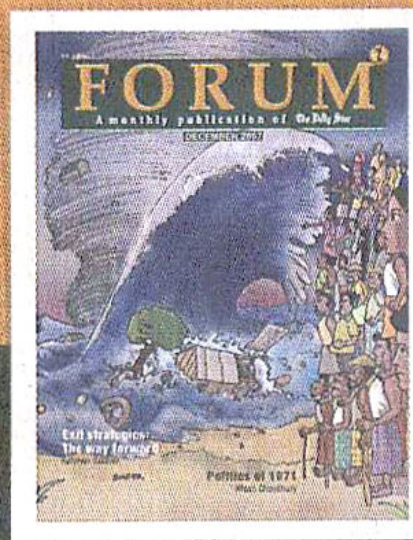
Source: Islamic Foundation



LATE YASMIN RAHMAN WIFE OF MD. FAIZUR RAHMAN

We request all relatives and friends to pray for Mrs. Yasmin Rahman, the dearest member of our family who passed on to eternity eight years ago.

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