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VOL. 1 NO. 197 REGD. NO. DA 781

SHRABAN 25, 1398 BS,

DHAKA SATURDAY AUGUST 10, 1991

MOHARRAM 28, 1412 HIJRI

12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 3.00

Inside Today

International



British shadow Foreign Secretary Gerald Kaufman is visiting Kashmir to probe human rights violations
Page 5

Article

Maximising Growth of the Rice Economy
Column : From LDC to NIC by Shahed Latif
Page 4

Business

Former ICB Chairman Maj Gen (Rtd) Matin writes about country's capital market stressing the need for more domestic savings

AKM Sahab Alam, reviewing the Finance Act 1991, explains the changes to assess how it will affect business
Page 7

India denies BCCI's involvement in country's fraud and money laundering
Page 6

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Teaching people, especially women, to become self-reliant gives them the priceless gift of self-respect
Page 3

Parliament proceedings

Page 8

BCCI depositors to get interest-free advances

Star Economic Report

The government announced on Friday its decision to allow all categories of the BCCI depositors in Bangladesh to draw a maximum amount of Taka fifty thousand as interest-free advance against their deposits with all the four branches of the Bank.

The money will be disbursed through the branches of Agrani Bank, a nationalised commercial bank (NCB), in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. The depositors with the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) will have to apply in prescribed forms for advances against their deposits. Agrani Bank was earlier designated by Bangladesh Bank to handle matters relating to BCCI depositors. Agrani Bank will make separate announcements within a day or two detailing out arrangements for

the advances. The BCCI operations in Bangladesh were suspended from July 6 at the requests of its majority shareholders in the UAE following the closure of its activities by Bank of England and several other central banks in Europe on charge of irregularities in its transactions.

The BCCI depositors in Bangladesh launched an eight-hour hunger strike daily from August 6 in the city demanding refund or withdrawal of their deposits with the Bank.

Announcing the decision Finance and Planning Minister Salfur Rahman told the newsmen that the new arrangements were aimed at helping the BCCI depositors to tide over their financial difficulties.

The Minister said at the press briefing at his Sher-e-

Bangla Nagar office that the amount of the money to be made available as interest-free advances to the BCCI depositors would be paid in the form of account payee crossed cheques, pay orders or bank drafts. The facilities in this connection will be extended to holders of savings, current, term or fixed, and convertible foreign currency deposits with the BCCI branches in Bangladesh, he said.

The Principal Finance Secretary, the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary, the Governor and the Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank, and the Additional Secretary in charge of banking division, Ministry of Finance, were present at the press briefing.

The Finance Minister said
See Page 12 Col. 3



DEVELOPING A PASSION FOR ART: Children participating in a painting competition in the city yesterday. — Star photo

India to mass produce missiles

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: India is to mass-produce tow locally built missiles for deployment next year in what a top defence scientist called a milestone on the path to self-reliance, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, says AFP.

Abdul Kalam, who heads the integrated guided missile development programme (IGMDP), said in Madras that the surface missile Prithvi (Earth) and the surface-to-air Trishul (Trident) will be deployed in 1992, PTI said.

Kalam said 34 institutions were involved in designing and developing the missiles, whose technology was being transferred to 22 public sector units, 10 ordnance factories and nine private sector industries for production.

Kalam, who heads the Defence Research Development Laboratory, called the production and deployment of the two missiles a milestone in India's efforts to move away from foreign technology and toward building its own systems.

Prithvi, a battlefield support missile which can be fired with different warheads including chemicals, has a range of 250 kilometres (156 miles) and was first successfully launched in 1988.

Trishul is an anti-aircraft

missile with multi-role, short range applications. The two are a part of a family of world class missile systems India is trying to develop through the IGMDP set up in 1983 to slash defence imports.

Scientists have successfully tested an anti-tank missile capable of destroying all known armour, called Nag (Cobra), and an intermediate range ballistic missile with a range of 2,500 kilometres (1,562 miles), named Agni (Fire) which can be equipped with nuclear warheads or to launch satellites.

Kalam has said previously that India was capable of developing an intercontinental ballistic missile as well. India's billion dollar missile development programme has attracted controversy with fears expressed in the United States of missile proliferation in South Asia and a resultant arms race between India and its rival Pakistan.

Another report adds: India today condemned a resolution on Kashmir adopted at an Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting, saying it would have no effect on New Delhi's stand on the issue.

A Ministry of External Affairs spokesman said the resolution adopted at the Istanbul session of the OIC was pushed through by Pakistan,

which also claims Kashmir, the only Muslim majority state in India.

He also referred to a three-day visit here August 18 by Pakistan foreign secretary Shaharyar Mohammad Khan as a special envoy of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, expressing the hope he would have "realistic and specific suggestions for resolving critical issues affecting the Indo-Pakistan relations."

He did not elaborate on the issue. The resolution passed late Thursday called on India to allow international human rights officials to visit Kashmir.

There have been allegations of excesses committed by Indian security forces during a continuing drive against Muslim militants leading a bloody secessionist campaign there. New Delhi denies the allegations.

The resolution would encourage Pakistan to sponsor "terrorism and subversion," the spokesman said, apparently renewing New Delhi's charge that Pakistan extends military aid to the Muslim militants.

Islamabad denies the allegation, but maintains that it extends moral and diplomatic support to the right to self-determination of Kashmiris.

AL will cooperate with Govt in removing campus terrorism: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina Friday called for establishing congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions by eliminating terrorism from the campus. She stressed on passage of the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill and said the terrorists and conspirators would be encouraged if that Indemnity Bill is not passed.

See Page 12 Col. 4

OIC meet ends in disarray

ISTANBUL, Aug 9: A meeting of the organization of the Islamic conference (OIC) has ended here in disarray, with the Iraqi delegation walking out of the closing session and participants unable to agree on the text of a final declaration, reports AFP.

The 20th meeting of OIC foreign Ministers, which groups 44 Islamic countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) ended late Thursday after five days of sometimes heated debate, mostly behind closed doors.

The Turkish delegation said the "Istanbul declaration" was

See Page 12 Col. 2

Gunfight forces closure of Mymensingh Medical College

From BAU Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Aug 9: The Mymensingh Medical College was closed sine die early this morning following a brief late night gunfight between rival student groups after elections to the college students union Thursday.

The academic council of the college, after a special emergency meeting, announced the closure of the college for an indefinite period at 2 am. All students were asked to vacate their hostel rooms by 10 am.

Police remained deployed on the campus as of Friday night while students had already vacated the hostel rooms.

Witnesses said rival student groups held processions and demonstrations on the campus in the evening after elections were held peacefully from 9 am to 2 pm Thursday. A gunfight erupted between the activists of the Awami League backed BCL (Chhatra League) and BNP backed JCD at around 9 pm when the election agent of BCL disclosed the poll results violating the official procedure, they said.

At least 20 rounds of gunshot and several cracker blasts were heard during the clash which lasted about half an hour. One person was injured and at least 25 rooms of the

See Page 12 Col. 5

internees' hosted were ransacked. Mahub Rahman (22), an outsider, was seriously injured and admitted to MMCH.

The Principal of the college, Prof Mufakkarul Islam, said the election results would be announced officially within the next three days.

Unconfirmed reports said, out of the 20 posts, the BCL bagged 13 including the post of vice-president while the JCD got the remaining 7 posts including that of the general secretary.

Four panels, including the Islami Chhatra Shibir and a joint panel of the Chhatra Union and the Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, fielded 80 candidates to contest for the 20 posts. Of the 1099 eligible voters, 922 voted in the elections.

With the closure of the Mymensingh Medical College, all four medical colleges under the Dhaka University have been closed for indefinite periods.

Earlier, the Sir Salmullah Medical College, the Dhaka Medical College and the Barisal Medical College were closed sine die following clashes between rival student groups.

Meanwhile in the capital, the Dhaka University Education Action Committee (DUEAC) has decided bring out

a silent procession today (Saturday) at 10 am in the city demanding immediate reopening of the university, agency report said.

DUEAC, a non-political body of the general students, was formed on August 6 to press home their demands. It announced a 10-day action programme which will begin tomorrow (Saturday).

The programme was earlier scheduled for August 8. Meanwhile, student members of the committee failed to talk with the student leaders on Friday as they (leaders) were not available on the campus.

The DUEAC decided to hold a meeting with the student leaders about reopening of the campus. Sources said that the student leaders have shown high degree of reluctance about reopening the university.

The Secretary General of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Abdus Salam Talukdar, Friday condemned and protested the attack on a victory procession of BNP, Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal on August 7 at Iswardi with bombs and other weapons by a group of armed miscreants in the name of Awami League.

In a statement, Talukdar

See Page 12 Col. 5



Freed British hostage John McCarthy (R) pauses during his press conference at the Syrian foreign minister's office. McCarthy arrived at Royal Air Force base at Lyneham, southern England on Thursday. — AFP photo

Reformer elected Vietnam PM

BANGKOK, Aug 9: A leading advocate of capitalist-style reform was elected Prime Minister of Vietnam on Friday, reports AP.

Vo Van Kiet, 69, who fought the French and Americans as a communist guerilla, succeeds the more conservative Du Moi in the key government position.

The official Voice of Vietnam radio, monitored in Bangkok, said Kiet was elected by the National Assembly in Hanoi. Du Moi had submitted his resignation earlier in the day.

The only other known candidate for prime minister — State Planning Commission Chairman Phan Van Khai — withdrew after being nominated.

The National Assembly has been meeting for the past two weeks. It is scheduled to elect members of the new Cabinet at its closing session on Saturday.

Kiet is regarded as one of the most liberal figures in Vietnam's senior hierarchy and has pushed for reforming the

country's centrally planned, state-run economy.

The Communist Party, which maintains a monopoly on power, has allowed several capitalist-style changes in the economy in recent years.

With an estimated annual per capita income of 200 dollars Vietnam ranks as one of the world's poorest nations. It is burdened by a burgeoning population, natural disasters that destroy vital food crops, an antiquated infrastructure and a US trade embargo.

Kiet is the country's third-most powerful figure based on his ranking in the Communist Party's Politburo.

Du Moi leads the Politburo and was named to head the Communist Party during a congress last June. Traditionally, the party leadership and prime minister's portfolio do not go to the same person.

Defense Minister Le Duc Anh is ranked No 2 in the Politburo.

Kiet was among the reform-

See Page 12 Col. 7

Colombo offers autonomy to Tamils

COLOMBO, Aug 9: Parliament unanimously approved a resolution Friday sponsored by a hard-line opposition party creating a new committee to recommend a settlement with Tamil rebels based on autonomy.

The resolution, adopted by a voice vote in the 225-member house, said a Select Committee should "arrive at a political solution to the national question involving the devolution of power to the northern and eastern provinces."

Tamils, led by the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, have been fighting since 1983 for independence in the north and east, where the Tamil population is concentrated.

Sri Lanka offered autonomy to the Tamils in the north and east in an Indian-brokered peace agreement in 1987, but the Tamil Tigers backed out of the plan.

The resolution was proposed as a private motion by a member of the opposition Freedom Party which until now has led the criticism of the government's handling of the Tamil war, usually urging tougher military action against the rebels.

The committee, whose 12 members will be appointed later, should discuss ways to prevent the disintegration of the nation, the resolution said. It also should seek ways to stop the killing of innocent civilians, members of the armed forces and youths fighting for a cause, it said.

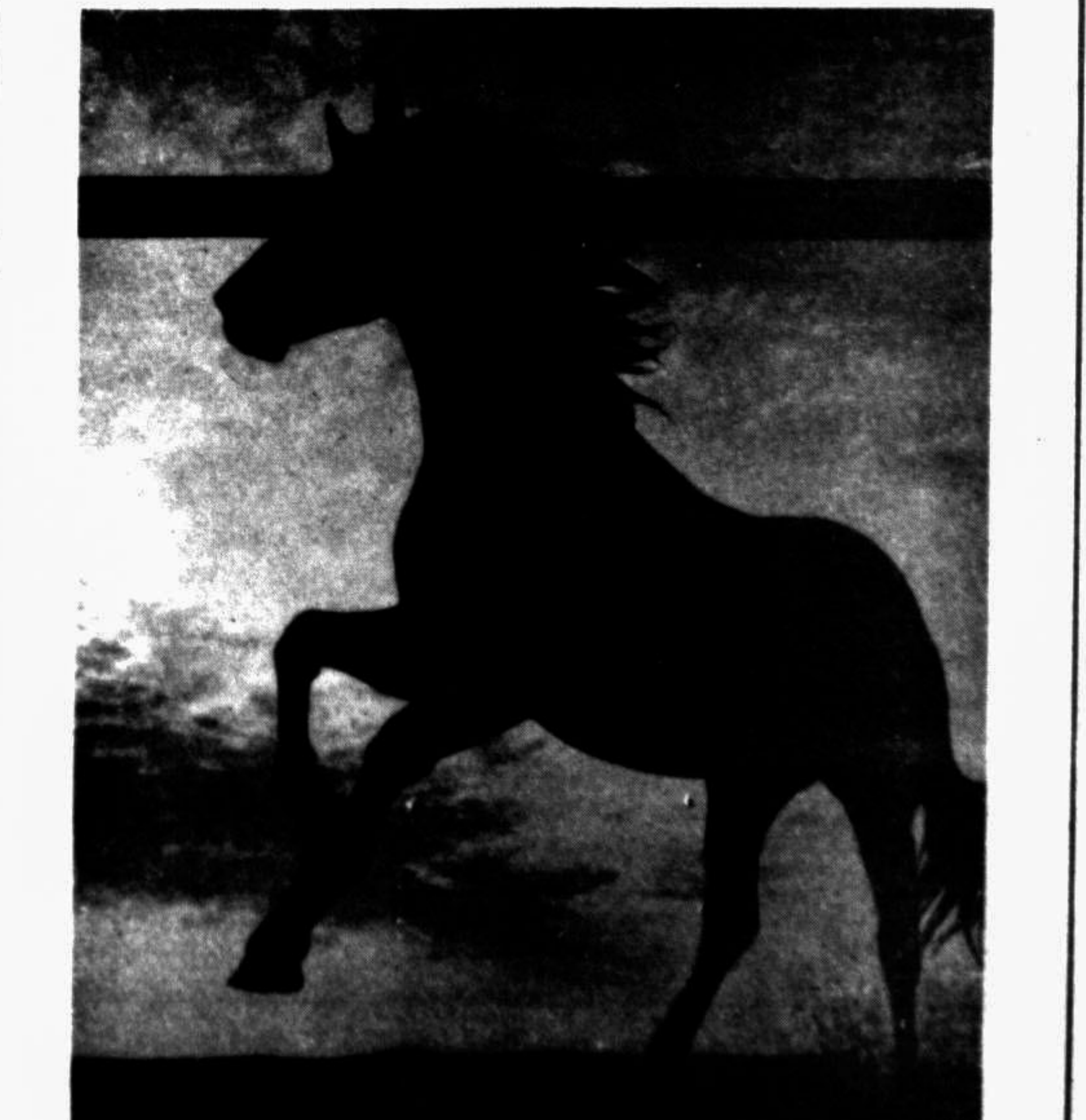
Meanwhile, guerillas hacked to death seven Muslim farmers with knives and axes and burned their corpses in a haystack in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials said. They said the attack was in retaliation for the rebel defeat in the battle for Elephant Pass.

The villagers were killed Thursday at Sammantural, 218 kilometres (136 miles) east of Colombo, said the officials. It was the first multiple slaying of civilians reported in several weeks.

Officials of the Joint Operations Command said the army had been expecting a civilian massacre in response to the rebel's failure to overrun the strategically located army camp at Elephant Pass, 295 kilometres (183 miles) north of the capital.

Last Saturday, relief troops broke a 25-day rebel siege of

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