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The Daily Star



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Inside Today

International



"My blood boils when somebody utters People's Party's name", Nawaz Sharif told a rally in Lahore
Page 5

Magazine

Sundarbans is Dying! — Shamsul Anwar writes on the world's largest mangrove forest; My World — S M Ali's weekly column; and Rising Stars — young readers' page
Pages 9-11

Article

The whole South African political situation has been transformed by a newspaper scoop and the De Klerk government has been shaken to its foundations
Page 4

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Nari Pakkha is working to establish woman's identity independent of her role as a mother, sister or wife, to make us see her as an individual, a human being
Page 3

Feature

Health

Corrigendum

We regret the UNB report on scope for cooperation with Gulf countries, which was carried in the paper on Thursday was inadvertently attributed to Finance Minister Saifur Rahman in the headline, in place of Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman, who held the press briefing.

NEWS BRIEFS

BNP rally date shifted again

The public meeting of Bangladesh Nationalist Party has again been deferred from August 18 to September 1. BNP sources said yesterday. This is the second shift in the schedule of the meeting, to be held at Manik Miah Avenue.

Brahmaputra bridge opening

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to open the second Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge on Sunday, officials said Thursday. The bridge has been constructed over the Old Brahmaputra at Shambhuganj in Mymensingh with Chinese assistance, reports UNB.

Cocaine, heroin seized

Police on Thursday recovered 300 grams of cocaine, 105 grams of heroin worth Taka 50 lakh from a house at Madartek under Shabbujbagh Thana.

Dhaka BCCI branch served as conduit for flowing out money : Fairfax

Ershad took millions of dollars as kickbacks from foreigners

NEW YORK, Aug 15 : Former Bangladesh President H M Ershad took millions of Dollars from foreigners doing business in his country, then channelled it out via the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, says a private investigator hired by the current Bangladesh government, reports Reuters.

"No work, no contract, no sale was concluded in Bangladesh unless something was paid to Ershad or his family," said Philip Stern, Managing Director of New York-based Fairfax Consultancy, an investigative firm.

Ershad seized power in a 1982 coup and resigned last December after a stormy opposition campaign.

He is now serving a 10-year jail term in Bangladesh for holding illegal weapons. He also faces trial for having about 600,000 Dollars worth of Bangladeshi currency, which the government said is far beyond his known sources of income.

The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) was shut down around the world last month by banking regulators and charged with massive fraud. It has also been linked to prominent political figures around the world, the latest being Ershad.

Stern told Reuters in a telephone interview that in Bangladesh a BCCI branch in Dhaka served as the conduit for years for the stream of money that flowed out of the country on Ershad's behalf.

He said the money was paid by well-known US and foreign companies seeking business in Bangladesh but would not name the firms.

The money travelled to accounts in London and Hong Kong, and possibly to offshore banking centres where BCCI operated, Stern said.

"Who controls the money now? We don't know. The accounts are frozen and he (Ershad) may have gotten the money out or part of it out, or it may be there," Stern said.

He said Ershad's second wife stated the President took 200 million to 300 million Dollars out of the country during his rule.

Stern's firm represented Mariam Mumtaz in a divorce action in 1989 in New York.

Fairfax, which previously investigated ties between Indian government officials and BCCI, was hired in January 1991 by the Bangladesh government to probe Ershad's affairs.

Stern said Fairfax has discussed the case with US authorities and has been asked to appear next month before one of the Congressional committees investigating BCCI.

BCCI was shut down by regulators around the world on July 5 and was charged by a New York grand jury on July 29 with orchestrating the biggest bank fraud in history.

The Luxembourg-based bank, founded by Pakistani Agha Hassan Abedi in 1972, operated in 69 countries. It has been tried to drug money-laundering, arms deals, influence-peddling and bribes.

PM asks BDR to curb smuggling

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called upon the members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) to put in their best efforts to curb smuggling along the border in the greater interest of the national economy, reports BSS.

"You carry out your duties without any fear or favour imbued with the spirit of patriotism," she told the BDR officers at a meeting held at the Conference Room of BDR Headquarters at Peelkhana, Dhaka on Thursday.

Begum Zia said the present government would extend all cooperation in discharging their duties in checking smuggling. She said the government would not interfere in their activities.

Referring to the country's economic situation, the Prime Minister said smuggling was a menace hampering the growth of our national economy. Many of our industries were closed down due to rampant smuggling across the border during the autocratic regime, she said.

Begum Zia said the previous government preferred import-oriented economy to serve the purpose of a few hand-picked people.

The meeting was also addressed by State Minister for Social Welfare and Women Affairs Tariqul Islam, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives, Kabir Hossain, Member of Parliament Lt. General (Retd) Mir Shawkat

Ali and Director General of BDR Major General Abdul Latif. Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Begum Selina Rahman, MP and Home Secretary Lutfulahil Majid were also present.

Begum Zia said her government wanted to increase production in the mills and factories for attaining self-reliance in all fields of the national life.

She said smuggling was a big hindrance in fulfilling our hopes and aspirations. She said the goods which we procure with hard-earned foreign currency were smuggled out of the country.

Major General Abdul Latif presented a BDR crest to Begum Zia.



Sheikh Hasina along with other Awami League leaders garlanding the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at 32, Dhanmondi Thursday. — Star photo

Anniversary of Mujib's death observed

Trial of killers demanded

By Staff Correspondent

The 16th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed Thursday with due solemnity.

The day's programmes included milad mahfil, Quran khwan, rallies, mourning processions, discussion meetings and feeding of destitutes.

Fateha was offered at the mazar of the late leader at Tungipara and also at the Banani Graveyard where other victims of August 15 were buried.

Bouquets were placed at the portrait of Sheikh Mujib by different political parties and socio-cultural organisations at Bangabandhu Bhaban where the national and the Awami League flags flew at half mast.

Party flags remained at half mast along with black flags in all AL offices.

Awami League and other organisations observed August 15 as National Mourning Day.

Destitute were fed at Bangabandhu Bhaban Thursday where a milad mahfil was arranged after the Asr prayer.

Sheikh Hasina, leaders and workers of the AL and other organisations participated in

the milad mahfil.

In the city, milad mahfils and feeding of destitutes were arranged by different ward committees and other organisations.

Bangabandhu's March 7 speech and patriotic songs were played over loudspeakers in different areas of the city throughout the day.

On August 15 in 1975, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

His daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana were abroad at that time.

The family members of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, killed that day included his wife Begum Fazilatunnesa, three sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal, Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana and Rosy, brother Sheikh Naser, relatives Sheikh Fazlul Haque Mont, Abdur Rab Serniabat and others.

National Mourning Day observance committee, held a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar Thursday morning and organised a procession to observe the day.

See Page 12 Col. 5

AL activists damage vehicles

Angry activists of Awami League last night stoned and damaged vehicles on the street protesting non-broadcast by Radio-Television any special programme on life and works of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

Witnesses said at least a dozen vehicles were damaged during the unruly protest in New Market, Kalabagan, Farmgate and Tejgaon areas at around 10 pm.

Awami League sources alleged police resorted to lathicharge and teargas to disperse their supporters protesting the Radio-TV's silence on programmes on the occasion of 16 anniversary of Bangabandhu's death.

Police, however, denied the allegation but said one vehicle was damaged on Elephant Road by a group of processionists who chanted anti-government slogans.

Students strike in CU, other institutions

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 15: Strike was observed in all the educational institutions in Chittagong town and in the Chittagong University today (Thursday) at the call of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Meanwhile gunshots rocked the university campus Wednesday midnight when about 200 shots were fired, but none was injured, witnesses said.

The Shibir called the strike protesting Wednesday's armed attack on three CU halls, strongholds of the Shibir and also on the university shuttle train allegedly by pro-Awami League Chhatra League supporters.

The attack and subsequent clashes between two groups left at least 100 injured. Among them 10 were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, four in critical condition.

Shibir activist Balayet Hossain who received bullet injury in one of his eyes was not out of danger on Thursday, hospital sources said. Others were improving, the sources added.

See Page 12 Col. 5

Farooq on Indemnity Ordinance

If repealed, all political killings will be unearthed

By Staff Correspondent

Freedom Party Chairman Col. (Retd) Faruk Rahman Thursday accused BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami of collaborating with the Awami League and said this would jeopardise the country's sovereignty.

Col (Retd) Faruk was addressing a discussion meeting in observance of August 15 at the party central office here. Freedom Party observed the days as 'day of emancipation' Party's Co-Chairman Col (Retd) Rashid, Vice-Chairman Bazul Huda and Chowdhury Mohammed Faruq also addressed the meeting.

Col (Retd) Faruq said they have joined hands with the 'Fifth columnists' in the parliament which will drag the nation towards foreign subjugation.

The return to parliamentary system, will bring back 'neo-autocracy' the nation had witnessed during the regime of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he said. "Sixtyfive days' session of the Parliament ended amid cheers and rejoicing of the

MPs but resulting nothing for the peoples' emancipation", he said.

Faruk claimed to have facilitated the BNP and Jamaat win the February 27 parliamentary polls hoping that they would resist the 'fifth columnists.' "But these parties betrayed us by establishing friendship with the AL", he remarked.

Referring to the AL demand for trial of Mujib's killers by passing the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill in the JS, he said if Mujib's killers are tried, then all the killings during 1972-75 must also be tried.

The FP leader reiterated his confession of ordering the killing and said they did it to free the nation from the single-party BKSAL repression. "We killed BKSAL and its founder 16 years ago and the party buried itself by merging with AL Wednesday", he said.

Faruk called upon the BNP and other nationalist forces not to pass the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill and

See Page 12 Col. 3

TV programme

Shahabuddin denies press reports

The President's Secretariat has described as 'false and motivated' a news item published in a section of the press that Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, had taken personal interest in a television programme on the country's first President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

An official press release issued on Thursday said, attention of the President's Secretariat has been drawn to a news item published in a section of the press today alleging that the Acting President had taken personal interest for making a TV programme on the 16th death anniversary of the first President of the country, late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

This allegation is totally false and motivated.

Facts are that, about a fortnight ago General Secretary of the Awami League had written to the minister in-charge of Information requesting for a TV programme on the said

See Page 12 Col. 7

CEC asks officials to conduct referendum honestly

The Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, yesterday called upon the officials engaged in conducting the coming referendum to discharge their duties with utmost honesty, sincerity, and efficiency, reports BSS.

He was addressing a conference of all the deputy commissioners of the country, who are also the assistant returning officers, at the Election Commission Secretariat here.

The Election Commissioner, Justice Syed Misbah Uddin Hossain, Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat and returning officer for the coming referendum Mohammad Ayubur Rahman and other senior officials of the Election Commission Secretariat were also present at the conference.

Describing the constitu-

See Page 12 Col. 6

More cooperation between South, Southeast Asian nations stressed

By Staff Correspondent

The need for some mechanism to share experiences between the countries of South and Southeast Asia in the field of development was emphasised at a seminar in Dhaka on Thursday.

The seminar on 'The role of Indonesia in South-South Cooperation: Rural development in Indonesia' was organised to mark the 46th anniversary of Indonesian independence.

Speakers at the function took particular note of the successful community-based development model of Indonesia and observed that development programmes in Bangladesh could benefit from exchange of information in different fields.

See Page 12 Col. 4

Gen Beg retires

ISLAMABAD, Aug 15: Pakistan's powerful military commander retired Thursday, squelching rumours of an imminent military takeover, reports AP.

Meanwhile, the choice of Gen Mirza Aslam Beg's successor was seen as a move to smooth Pakistan's troubled relations with the United States.

Beg, 59, stepped down in a small, private ceremony after 41 years of military service. Such a resignation has occurred only once before in the country's turbulent history.

Beg's successor, Gen Asif Nawaz Janjua, a 54-year-old, tough-talking soldier, will assume his duties on Friday.

In appointing Janjua, the President bypassed Lt Gen Shamim Alam Khan, who was first in line for the post and who is a close associate of Beg, who has made anti-US statements. Shamim, instead, was appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a ceremonial post.

Locally dominant powers threaten peace : Bush

WASHINGTON, Aug 15 : US President George Bush has said "we will continue to encourage Indo-Pakistani rapprochement and the adoption of confidence-building measures and other concrete steps to moderate their military competition," reports PTI.

In this year's national security strategy message to the Congress President Bush said in South Asia as elsewhere "we strongly believe that security is best served by resolving disputes through negotiations rather than military pressure."

Bush said as the effects of the Cold War receded, regional disputes were less likely auto-

matically to be perceived as part of a permanent — frequently dangerous, sometimes violent — competition thus allowing broader international cooperation in their resolution.

"Less happily," said Bush, "in some regions, this overall positive trend could unleash local, destructive forces that were formerly kept in check."

As we saw in the Gulf, there is the danger of locally dominant powers, armed with modern weaponry and ancient ambitions threatening the world's hope for a new era of cooperation.

"We see regimes that have made themselves champions of

regional radicalism, states that are all too vulnerable to such pressures, governments that refuse to recognise one another and countries that have claims on one another's territory — some with significant military capabilities and a history of recurring war."

"A key task for the future will be maintaining regional balances and resolving such disputes before they erupt in military conflict."

Bush stressed that export controls must be strengthened to prevent nuclear, chemical and biological weapon proliferation. However, "a successful non-proliferation strategy must

address the underlying security concerns that drive the quest to obtain advanced weapons and must encompass contingency planning to deal with these weapons should prevention fail."

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty "remains essential to global stability, although intransigence by a few delegations blocked unanimous agreement to a final conference declaration," he said adding that the agreement by India and Pakistan to ban attacks on each other's nuclear facilities also helped ease the nuclear rivalry in that part of the world.

"The proliferation of advanced weapons poses and ominous challenge to global peace and stability to meet it, we will work with our allies and address the causes of strife while curbing exports to builders of weapons of mass destruction."

"The dangers of intermediate range missile deployments and nuclear proliferation in the subcontinent persist, however, and this year we were unable to certify Pakistan's nuclear programme under the Pressler Amendment."

Bush also said that the US remained committed to

achieving a comprehensive settlement in Afghanistan.

On US intelligence programmes Bush said that the global reach of American intelligence capabilities "is a unique national asset crucial not only to our own security but also to our leadership role in responding to international challenges."

"Sweeping political and economic changes also make for a more challenging counter intelligence environment. Warner relations between the United States and former adversaries will open new opportunities for the intelligence services of those countries.