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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Water transit talks begin

Bilateral talks between Bangladesh and India on the renewal of the existing inland water transit and trade protocol began in Dhaka on Tuesday. Under the protocol, transit facilities are extended to Indian vessels for passing through Bangladesh and certain waterways of both the countries are allowed to be used by the vessels of the two countries. The present protocol, signed two years ago, expires on October 3, reports BSS.

#### Primary teachers' rally put off

The rally of the Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association (BPTA) which was scheduled to be held on August 29 has now been postponed in view of the withdrawal of programmes by the government employees, reports BSS.

#### HSC exam: Over 500 more expelled

By DU Correspondent  
Over 500 examinees were expelled on Tuesday for adopting unfair means in Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examination on the fourth day Tuesday under the boards of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Jessore. The examinations were, however, held peacefully throughout the country.

#### US to keep troops in Kuwait

WASHINGTON, Aug 27: The Bush administration will keep US troops in Kuwait longer than previously planned to provide protection for the war-ravaged nation, the Defence Department said Tuesday, reports AP.



A truck procession in the city in protest against fuel price yesterday. Story on p-12 - Star photo

## Gorbachev threatens to quit: EC to recognise 3 Baltic states

MOSCOW, Aug 27: President Mikhail S Gorbachev on Tuesday warned that "everything is collapsing" and threatened to resign if the union is not preserved, report agencies.

"I'm for a renewed union, a reformed union, I'm for maintaining it," he told the national Parliament. He said that if a new Union Treaty is not agreed upon, "I will resign. Nothing will be achieved if we cannot have a union."

Gorbachev, speaking forcefully and chopping the air with his hands, told lawmakers he would "do everything possible to prevent our country from falling apart."

"Our common point is that the USSR should be maintained as a union of sovereign states. Everyone is in favour of a unified defense, a unified armed forces..." he told the Supreme Soviet.

"I said we cannot have disunity, we have to determine what the powers are, make a major reform, decide what each republic will have so we can have a new union," he added.

Gorbachev discussed the future of the once-mighty Soviet empire with republic leaders whose power is surging with the collapse of central authority. He said republics have the right to secede but must do so "constitutionally."

Seven republics already have declared independence, the latest being Moldavia on Tuesday. Neighbouring Romania immediately recognised Moldavia.

The President said republics have the right to secede but must do so "constitutionally." The Soviet Constitution requires a lengthy waiting period before any of the 15 republics can leave the

union. Gorbachev, Soviet leader since 1985, said the Soviet people expressed their will to keep the union together as a renewed federation of sovereign republics in a referendum held last March.

The 12 nations of the European Community decided today to recognise the independence and sovereignty of the three Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens announced.

A Danish diplomat today became the first Western ambassador accredited to one of the Baltic republics since the Soviet Union annexed them in 1940.

Veteran diplomat Otto Borch, presenting his credentials in Latvia, said he hoped that governments which had not already recognised Baltic

## PDB employees threaten strike to oppose DESA from Sept 1

PDB trade unionists Tuesday asked the government to cease from launching Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA) discarding "hankering after foreign aid" and threatened strike from the day it goes into operation, reports UNB.

All the 23,000 employees and workers of Power Development Board will swing into wildcat strike from the day DESA will be launched, said Md. Zafrul Hasan, General Secretary of Jatiya Bidyut Sramik Federation, at a press conference.

Instead, the federation leaders suggested, "motivation and activities" recently evolved for efficient management of the board should be sustained.

They demanded scrapping of the DESA Ordinance and alternative measures instead to reduce systems loss and re-

move other mismanagement in the power sector.

The pro-BNP union convened the press briefing at the WAPDA building Tuesday afternoon to iterate employees and workers' "no" to DESA in the wake of its ensuing launch on September 1.

Present at the news conference were also other central leaders of the federation, which claims to represent at least 50 per cent of the PDB workers and employees, including its President Kazi Mosharruf Hossain and Senior Vice-President Kazi Habibur Rahman.

DESA will neither yield welfare to the power sector nor to the country itself, they viewed and suggested the government not to bow to the World Bank "pressure".

About systems loss, the federation leaders estimated of

the 42 per cent system loss, mechanical loss is more than 20 per cent which cannot be avoided.

They, however, admitted the rest 22 per cent theft in the power transmission is too high and should be brought down.

But they expressed skepticism about DESA's ability to slash the systems loss. Rather, they apprehended that administrative costs in the power sector would go up with launching DESA.

The union leaders vehemently opposed the general conviction that PDB men are solely involved in the power runoff.

"It's a shared theft, people in remote villages are also involved in this activity... even the rich section of citizenry steals power taking the advantage," he said.

See Page 12 Col. 7

## Minimum export price for jute goes

Export Price Check (EPC) that fixed the minimum price for jute has been withdrawn to freely compete in the world market.

A notification issued by the government Tuesday said the measure, enforced immediately, would bring dynamism and discipline in export and create a healthy and realistic competition, reports UNB.

The existing system of jute export registration with Bangladesh Bank will, however, continue.

EPC on jute goods was withdrawn on August 7 with the same objective.

Bangladesh produces about 50 lakh bales of jute and the fibre and its products fetched the exchequer more than 50 per cent of the 1700 million US dollars total export earning last year.

While withdrawing the price restrictions, the government cautioned that it may be reimposed if the exporters are found misusing the facility. See Page 12 Col. 7

## 7,000 Ctg Port workers strike work from today

From Our Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, August 27: About 7,000 Chittagong Port employees begin a continuous work abstention tomorrow (Wednesday) to press home their 35-point charter of demands.

Their demands include: removal of time-scale discrepancies, salary discriminations and granting of other al-

See Page 12 Col. 3

## Pay hikes to have adverse impact on wages policies, says DCCI

Star Economic Report  
Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) on Tuesday feared that the recently announced pay increases for government employees would have an adverse impact on wages policies in the private sector.

In a statement to the press, DCCI President Mahbubur Rahman said that the private sector would support all efforts to raise productivity, not merely nominal increases in wages. See Page 12 Col. 6

## Water transport owners want to operate without loss

By Staff Correspondent  
The strike in country's water transport sector continued for the fifth consecutive day Tuesday paralysing the movement of riverine traffic on the country's 5000-mile-long inland waterways. Owners of river transporters have resorted to strike protesting the price hike of fuel.

Government in a Press Note issued on the day warned the owners to immediately resume plying of vessels in view of the

## Gunmen kill officer probing Zardari case

KARACHI, Aug 27: Gunmen on Tuesday killed the investigating officer in a kidnapping-for-ransom case against the husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, authorities said, reports AP.

Inspector Malik Ehasan, was ambushed as he left a police headquarters in central Karachi to take his son to school, authorities said. He died instantly, they said.

Non one claimed responsibility for the shooting, and police declined to speculate. Ms. Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has been jailed

## Jamiruddin resigns: New example set, says Talukder

# BNP bars Ministers from campaigning in bye-polls

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for Land Zamiruddin Sircar a nominee of the ruling BNP in the September 11 by-election, resigned Tuesday.

His resignation follows a party decision that its nominees for the by-election holding ministerial posts would resign and that no Minister or State Minister would campaign for candidates in their constituencies after September 7 to ensure a free and fair polls.

Barrister Sircar will contest the by-election in Dhanmohammadpur (Dhaka-9) constituency, the seat vacated by his party Chief and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The BNP Secretary General Barrister Salam Talukdar at a hurriedly-called press conference at the National Press Club Tuesday announced the decision and turned them as "historic" because none like those were taken before.

The BNP has set a "new example" he said and called upon all opposition political parties to show gestures so that the fledgling democracy could be firmly rooted. Never before, a Minister resigned to contest an election and a ruling party decided to stop campaign by ministers for candidates, he noted.

The party has taken the decision in the greater interest of holding the by-elections in a free and fair atmosphere, was that of February 27 parliamentary polls, he said.

BSS adds: Explaining, Talukder, who is also the LGD Minister, said the decisions had been taken also in

view of the fact that the government was still led by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, even though the 12th Amendment Bill had been passed by Parliament unanimously. In this context, he said, until the holding of the referendum on September 15, the government was officially under the command of the Acting President, who was a neutral person.

Replying to questions, Salam Talukder hoped that his party candidates would secure all the eleven seats in the by-elections as they did well in February 27 polls.

He answered that his party had no discussions with other political parties as yet on maintaining congenial atmosphere in the polls, but the Acting President had already taken some actions in this regard.

Addressing the press conference, Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar said the decision for resignation from the office of the State Minister for Land was taken by him and his party to honour democratic values.

Sircar hoped that the decision would help maintain a congenial atmosphere during the polls and the by-elections would be held as peacefully

and fairly as the February 27 elections.

The copy of the letter of resignation of the State Minister addressed to the Acting President was circulated among the reporters.

Meanwhile, Zamiruddin Sircar, State Minister for Land, voluntarily submitted his resignation to the Acting President, Mr Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at the latter's official residence here Tuesday evening.

In his letter of resignation Mr Sircar stated that he is resigning from his office as a State Minister in order to

See Page 12 Col. 4

## BNP fails to rule country: Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina Tuesday accused the BNP government of failure to rule the country and throwing the people into despair, reports UNB.

Addressing a group of workers and employees of Dhaka WASA, Sramik-Karmachari Union at Bangabandhu Bhaban, she said "the whole nation has been plunged into darkness of despair for failure of BNP in governing the country."

The BNP had once ruled the country from 1975 to 81 "by curfew and through repressive measures", Hasina said and warned that the

present BNP government would not be spared by the people, if democracy fails due to its wrong policy.

The Awami League President said her party had extended all its cooperation for ensuring democracy, rule of law and economic emancipation of the people.

Without elaborating, Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, alleged that the present government had virtually sold out the country's sovereignty to foreign interests.

If (the government) has no right to play drakes and ducks

See Page 12 Col. 4



## Nazrul's death anniversary today

By Staff Correspondent

The fifteenth death anniversary of national poet Kazi Nazrul-islam will be observed today (Wednesday) throughout the country.

Various socio-cultural and youth organisations have drawn-up elaborate programmes to mark the day in a befitting manner.

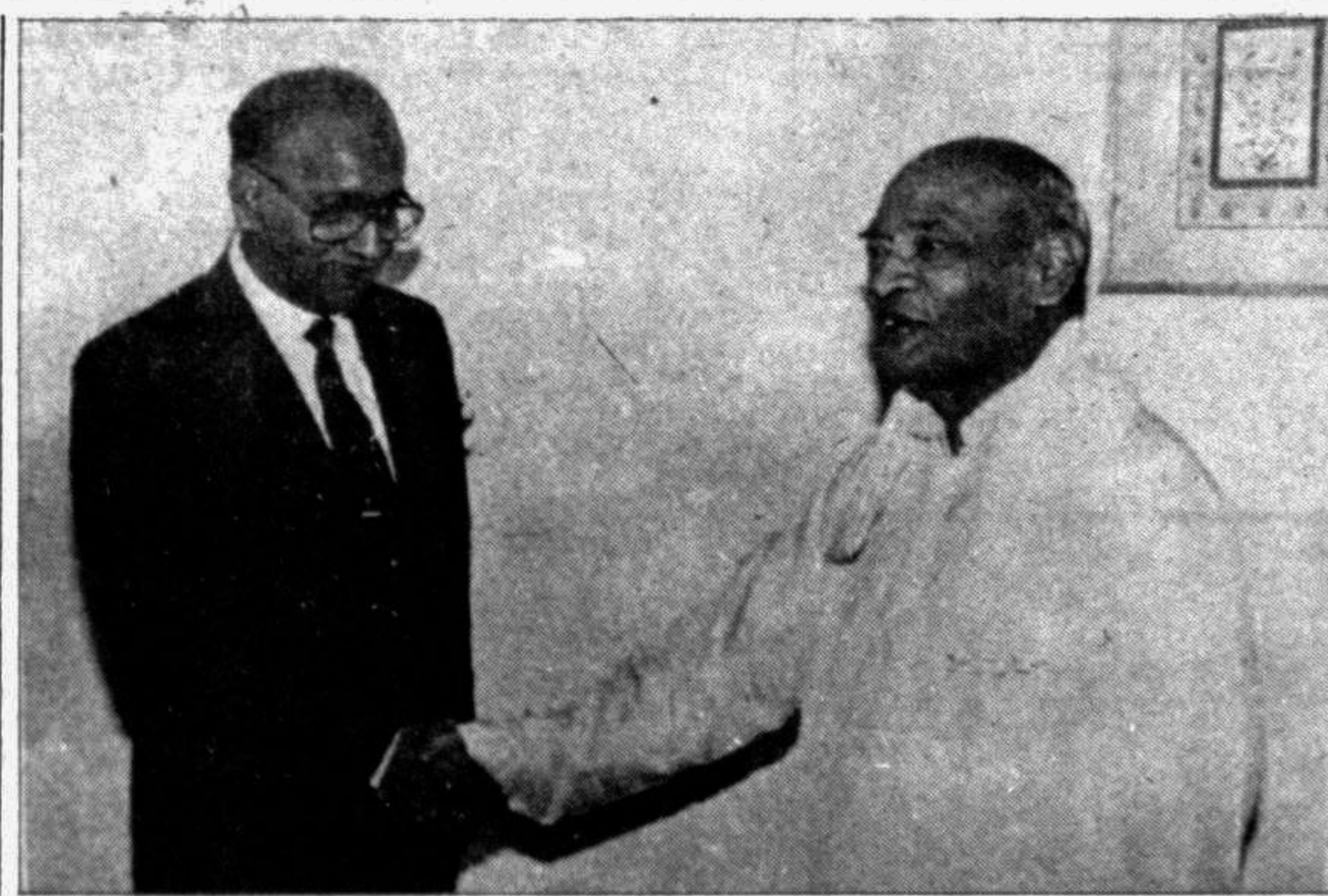
Bangladesh Radio and Television will put up special programmes in observance of the death anniversary.

The day's programmes will begin with the placing of wreaths and offering of fatcha at the mazar of the rebel poet on the Dhaka University campus.

Bangla Academy will hold a discussion on the occasion at 5pm today Wednesday in the Academy premises.

Dr. Korunamoy Goshwami will present a paper entitled "Nazrul Sanget: the reasons of its popularity." The programme will be presided by Prof. Muhammad Muniruzzaman and will be participated by Muhammad Jahangir and Muhammad Nurul Huda. The programme will be rounded off with a musical session.

See Page 12 Col. 4



NEW DELHI: Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman is being greeted by Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao (R) on Tuesday in the Indian capital. This is the first high-level contact between the two countries. — AFP photo

## Shahabuddin tells BCL Shibir action in CU as bad as assault on Nizami at DU

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has said the action of the Islami Chhaira Shibir in the Chittagong University is as condemnable as the assault on the Jamaat leader Moulana Matur Rahman Nizami MP in the office of the Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor, reports BSS.

See Page 12 Col. 5

## Dhaka, Delhi sign two accords

# Tin Bigha handover top priority: Solanki

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Indian External Affairs Minister Madhavsinh Solanki has said the necessary action is being taken to handover the Tin Bigha corridor to Bangladesh, reports BSS and AFP.

Solanki's comment came at the talks with visiting Bangladesh counterpart Mostafizur Rahman here today. Tin Bigha, Solanki said, is most immediate issue. Our

commitment is sincere and determined and it will be given top priority.

Referring to "Tin Bigha" Bangladesh Foreign Minister said an excellent situation was prevailing for its transfer and that "this should be handed over to us and we should move forward to mutually beneficial areas of cooperations on tribal refugees in India," he said.

See Page 12 Col. 2

## Party activities of Soviet mission in Dhaka banned

By Moinuddin Naser

Officials of Soviet missions in different countries of the world who moved in favour of the leaders of last week's abortive coup in Moscow may be in trouble, according to diplomatic sources.

Meanwhile, heads of Soviet diplomatic missions in Bangladesh and abroad have been asked to ban party activities.

Earlier Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh who replaced Sheverdnadze after

See Page 12 Col. 6

## Educate people about referendum, CEC tells newspapers

By Staff Correspondent  
Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf on Tuesday sought the cooperation of national newspapers in educating as well as awakening the consciousness of the people about the upcoming referendum on the form of government in the country.

Speaking in a meeting with the Editors of Daily newspapers and the chiefs of news agencies at the Election Commission Secretariat, See Page 12 Col. 3

## AL demonstrates over TV role

By Staff Correspondent  
Dhaka city Awami League held a demonstration near the Rampura television station Tuesday evening to protest the non-telesharing of programmes on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15. The demonstration was organised as part of the AL's TV gherao programme announced earlier.

After holding a mass rally at the Malibagh rail-crossing, several thousand AL workers and supporters marched towards the TV station in a big procession chanting slogans against what it called the par-

See Page 12 Col. 8

## Khaleda leaves for Bhola today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka for Bhola to begin a three-day campaign for her party's candidates in the September 11 by-elections, reports UNB.

The ruling BNP has nominated Musarrat Hossain Shahjahan to contest the by-election in Bhola-2 constituency, which was vacated by Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed.

Begum Zia will also address a series of election rallies at Rangpur and Bogra on August 29 and 30.