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# The Daily Star

Happy 40th  
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 flowing!  
 -- Love Colleen

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The Philippines is the 'hottest' among the world's 15 rainforest 'hot-spots.' Its exceptional levels of biological diversity are being threatened  
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## NEWS BRIEFS

### RU Masters exams begin Nov 25

From Our Correspondent  
**RAJSHAHI, Oct 22:** Masters examinations of 1998 of Rajshahi University will now commence from November 25. It was announced by the University authority today. Examination schedule would be announced later, the announcement said.

### Hasina may visit Canada

By Staff Correspondent  
 Awami League's branch in Canada invited the party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina to have a visit there. A party press release Tuesday said, the decision to invite Hasina was taken at the October 20 meeting of the AL unit.

### Kazi Zafar back to prison cell

Kazi Zafar Ahmed MP, who was set free on parole, was taken back to the prison cell of PC Hospital last night, his family sources said. Zafar was released on a week's parole on October 7, later extended up to October 24, on advice of a medical board for treatment in family atmosphere, reports UNB.

## Khaleda Zia visits affected northern districts

# Relief operations till next harvest

RANGPUR, Oct 22: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said relief operations, including test relief under food-for-work programme (FWD) would continue till the next harvesting season in the flood affected areas of northern district, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister was addressing spontaneous gatherings at Jikarbari Ghat and Purbapayerpur Government High School in Kurigram and Gaibandha of Rangpur district today. She flew into the northern district of Rangpur to see the relief and medicare work being carried out in the

flood-affected areas of the district.

Begum Zia said the government would take up permanent measures to save the people in this calamity-prone country.

She called upon all, irrespective of political opinion, to help the government realise its plans to set up permanent measures against the calamities.

The Prime Minister said, "we want to become a self-reliant nation through implementing our various development programmes. We do not want the nation to remain de-

pendent on relief."

Begum Zia said with satisfaction that no report of corruption regarding relief operations was received because of the sincere services rendered by the ministers, members of Parliament, Armed Forces personnel, government officials, local people's representatives and the general people.

Earlier, on her arrival at the Rangpur, the Prime Minister was briefed at the Relief Coordination and Control Room in Rangpur cantonment on the overall relief and medicare operations being carried out in the post-flood areas of

the Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Panchagarh, Dhanajpur and Thakurgaon.

Relief, Coordinator of greater Rangpur district Wing Commander (Retd) Hamdullah Khan MP, and Area Commander Major General Asma Amin conducted the briefing.

The Prime Minister was informed that in the month of Ashwin and Kartik the economic hardship of people living in some areas of the northern districts was not an unusual phenomenon. Moreover because of hailstorm and

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia during her tour of the four northern districts to see for herself the post-flood situation. Tuesday visited Rajar Hat of Jaldhaka upazila where food-for-work programme is being run. —PID photo

## Long-term EEC help for alleviation of poverty assured

The European Economic Community (EEC) assistance to Bangladesh will give more emphasis on long term plans for rural development and poverty alleviation, reports UNB.

Poverty alleviation will get top priority in its future aid programme in least developed countries like Bangladesh, JP Pronk, leader of the high-power EEC delegation told newsmen at the end of its four-day visit here.

"As for Bangladesh, we would prefer to assist the government in diminishing poverty as a large segment of the population here still live below poverty line," said Pronk.

Bangladesh's long term development needs for flood control and disaster management would receive due importance alongside its assistance to education and health sectors, he said.

During the visit, the delegation appraised coordination of the Community's assistance here and discussed future strategy of EEC-Bangladesh cooperation with the new government.

Juan Prat, Director General of North-South Relations of EEC, also responded to queries from newsmen. Other members of the 12-member delegation were present.

UNB adds: JP Pronk, who is also Minister for Development Cooperation the Netherlands however, stressed that Bangladesh ought to make sincere efforts to lessen its reliance on foreign aid and depend more on its own resources. "Longer term assistance can be expected from outside but it can never be a substitute for domestic effort", he said.

He welcomed the advent of democracy in Bangladesh and indicated that the change

along with better human rights conditions less arms expenditure would help the country qualify better for having additional external support.

On growing concern of the developing economies about a possible diversion of western funds to Eastern Europe, Pronk said the EEC members have repeatedly confirmed that aid to the region would in no way be detrimental to the interest of the poorer countries. "Europe will continue to assist you as it has been doing so long."

In reply to a question, EC Executive Juan Prat said that Bangladesh and other LDCs will continue to enjoy the GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) facility in EEC countries. The Community has no plan to impose quota restrictions on Bangladesh garments, he added.

About 80 per cent of the total exports of Bangladesh to EEC countries enjoy GSP facility.

When his attention was drawn to existing conditions tagged with the purchase of Commodities with EEC assistance, JP Pronk said EEC policy makers are discussing the issue and we hope we will be able to be more flexible in the near future. "It's not a guarantee, it's a political commitment of most of the EEC members."

About conditions laid down by multilateral funding agencies including World Bank and IMF, Pronk observed that most of these are developmental in nature and "do not create major problems for Bangladesh."

Talking about his meeting with the Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina, Pronk said EEC would, henceforth, maintain contact with the opposition in Bangladesh.

## JS session resumes today

By Staff Correspondent  
 The session of the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) resumes at 4:30 pm today (Wednesday) after a week-long recess.

Four new bills including one on Union Parishad are expected to be introduced in the Parliament today. A call attention on water-logging in some upazilas of Khulna region is likely to be moved. As usual, there will be the question hour.

The remaining days of the current session in likely to be stormy. Heated debates are expected not only on the situation in the northern part of the country, but also on some questions of privilege which were referred to the Committee on Privileges before the House was adjourned on October 15 last.

Besides, Awami League members will again try to raise

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## Help keep environment pollution free, urges Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Tuesday called for effective participation of all concerned to keep the environment free from pollution, reports BSS.

Addressing a seminar on 'Protection of the atmosphere' organised by the Bangladesh Junior Chamber in observance of the Jaycees Week here, the president stressed the need for ensuring environmental balance which he said had become the crying need of the hour.

President Biswas observed that the human interference in nature had been causing the environmental degradation and

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## Consensus on outlines for Radio, TV autonomy stressed

The need for a national consensus to determine outlines for autonomy to Radio and Television on the basis of the Joint Declaration of the three alliances was stressed at a discussion meeting yesterday.

The two-day discussion titled 'democratisation and autonomy to Radio and Television,' was organised by the Sammilita Sangkritik Jote at the auditorium of the National Press Club with its President Fayez Ahmed in the chair.

By Staff Correspondent  
 The speakers were Deputy Leader of the House Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Five-Party leader Rashed Khan Menon MP, Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed, educationist Dr. Khan Sarwar Morshed, Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Dr. Anisuzzaman, President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist (BFUJ) Reazuddin Ahmed, poet Shamsur Rahman, Communist Party President Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Five-Party convenor Bimal Biswas, Journalist

Ata'ul Samad and BSP President Matnul Hossain.

The meeting observed that autonomy could help prevent the use of the national media as an instrument for party propaganda.

Badruddoza Chowdhury said that "the experience of autonomy in our country was not a happy one. We can never boast of any of our autonomous institutions, so it will not be wise to do anything hastily."

In an oblique reference to the Chittagong University, he

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## Amnesty to CHT insurgents comes into effect

CHITTAGONG, Oct 22: The government has declared general amnesty for armed insurgents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to enable them to return to normal life, reports BSS.

According to a government announcement here, the amnesty effective from today (October 22) till further declaration, has been declared with the prime objective of restoring a congenial atmosphere in the Hill Tracts for carrying on massive development activities in the area.

The announcement pointed

See Page 12 Col. 3

## BNP patronising terrorism: Hasina

NARAIL, Oct 22: Awami League President and Sheikh Hasina today accused the ruling party of patronising armed terrorism against its political opponents across the country to consolidate power, reports UNB.

Addressing a cross-section of people at Narail District Board Dakbungalow premises, she said people were now in doubt about BNP's intentions and whether the party wanted a democratic process at all.

"BNP exposes itself as neo-autocrat through its undemocratic and terrorist activities,"

Hasina told the unscheduled gathering this afternoon.

She mentioned the brutal killings of Chhatra League leaders Parag in Pabna and Shaheen in Munshiganj allegedly by the ruling party workers.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, regretted that the party which once wage anti-autocracy movement with other opposition parties was now following anti-democratic policy.

The Awami League chief came here to express her

See Page 12 Col. 6

## CCC faces funds crisis as Tk 50cr taxes remain unrealised

CHITTAGONG, Oct 22: Taxes amounting to about Taka 50 crores of Chittagong Municipal Corporation remained unrealised due to weak collection drive.

This has plagued the Corporation with serious fund crisis and is compelling it to divert development fund to meet current expenditures.

Corporation sources said about Taka 20 crores tax money was lying with public sector organisations while the rest amount with the private sector. Some of the taxes remained unrealised for more than five years, the source said.

The Corporation launched a tax reassessment drive in

From Staff Correspondent  
 1990 which drew about 38000 appeals filed by the defaulters seeking further reduction or exemption of the taxes. Of those appeal cases 2000 were disposed of after proper hearing by the four committees constituted by the corporation while the rest 36000 are lying pending. The committees will resume hearing of those pending cases from Saturday next, a corporation official confirmed.

The committees had started functioning from June '90 but after sometime had to stop due to political unrest. Apart from tax collection drive, some 1200 attachment orders against the defaulters remained unexecuted for a long

time.

In the last fiscal year, only Taka ten crores were realised as taxes. The current year target is Taka 32 crores while only Taka four crores were collected during the first quarter, from July to September.

A corporation source who declined to be named said the revenue section of the corporation did not function properly in the past time and even had never fixed any target of tax collection that resulted in such a bulk outstanding. The officials and employees worked as per their sweet will and often remain busy for personal gains, the source alleged.

## Ctg development committee threatens strike if demands are not met

By Staff Correspondent  
 The greater Chittagong Unnayan Ganasangram Committee on Tuesday urged the government to take effective measures to fulfil its 15-point demands by November 30. Otherwise it would observe a day-long hartal on December 12 in Chittagong.

In a press conference at the National Press Club leaders of the committee said that the present BNP government when in the opposition supported the demands which include declaration of Chittagong as the commercial capital, separate education board for the region, upgradation of the

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## Entire Rangpur in grip of famine: Nasim

RANGPUR, Oct 22: Opposition Chief Whip in Parliament Md. Nasim today said that the entire Rangpur region was in the grip of a famine.

Nasim now on a tour of Rangpur as the head of a two-member Awami League parliamentary group refuted the government claim that there was no famine in Rangpur saying that hundreds of people were helplessly dying of starvation and from epidemics.

Talking to The Daily Star Md. Nasim accompanied by former Awami League Whip Abdur Rouf said that the situation could have been averted had the government begun test

relief operations even a month ago.

Describing the miseries being faced by thousands of hungry people in Rangpur, Nasim said that it was astonishing how a democratically elected government could launch an all-out effort to conceal facts and reject press reports on the situation in the northern districts with a view to shirking its responsibility.

Nasim toured the worst affected areas in Nilphamari, Rangpur and Kurigram districts and alleged that relief was inadequate and yet to reach the badly-hit regions.

He demanded of the gov-

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## BUET employee abducted, seriously beaten

By BUET Correspondent  
 Armed youths abducted an employee of the BUET at gun-point Tuesday and later released after seriously beating him up.

Mohsin, an assistant foreman at the automobile workshop of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, was abducted from a confectionery adjacent to the university, beaten up and left at the university gate in the afternoon.

The armed youths also threatened the security officer of the university.

The incident was suspected to be related to Saturday's terrorist activities on the university campus when a group of Dhaka University students allegedly belonging to the Chhatra League (S-A) burnt vehicles, fired shots, blasted bombs and assaulted some teachers protesting arrest of their fellow worker Golam Rabbani Boby.

## BCL (S-A) leader arrested

By DU Correspondent  
 A Chhatra League (S-A) leader, Najibullah Hero was arrested Monday night from his residence at Rajar Dewart of old Dhaka on charge of involvement in a murder at Jagannath University College.

He is the treasurer of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League (BCL) central committee and also a student of Jagannath College.

BCL (S-A) held a rally in front of the National Press Club on Tuesday morning protesting the arrest. The rally, addressed by BCL president Shaha Alam, and its leaders Golam Mostafa Sujon and Quamrussaman Anwar, alleged that the BNP government was harassing the innocent workers of the organisation by indiscriminate arrests, but it did not take any action against the armed hoodlums of its own student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The speakers termed the BNP government as "autocratic" and alleged that the arrests were aimed to foil the ongoing student movement for realising the 10 point-demand of the student community.

The BCL (S-A) also decided to submit a memorandum to the Home Ministry on October 24.

# Uproar over Tehri dam as UP quake death toll rises

NEW DELHI, Oct 22: A devastating earthquake which killed about 800 people on the Himalayan foothills has again focussed attention on a Soviet-aided mega-dam being built there over the objections of seismic experts, reports BSS.

Newspapers today joined environmentalists to demand that the Government take a second look at, or even scrap, the proposed three-billion-dollar Tehri dam, which specialists say could destroy whole towns downstream if it bursts.

The renewed controversy on the project followed Sunday's pre-dawn tremor measuring 6.1 on the open-ended Richter Scale which

had its epicenter very near the dam site at Tehri, a quake-prone hilly area in Uttar Pradesh state.

"The earthquake has also caused a few cracks in the assumed safety of the Tehri dam across the river Bhagirathi," said The Tribune in an editorial titled "Scrap Tehri dam."

The daily said until Sunday grim warnings from seismologists about the impact of a quake on the dam "sounded like so many synthetic walls from a set of Cassandra. Not any more."

Other newspapers echoed the sentiments, with even the pro-government National Herald newspaper urging au-

thorities to reexamine the warnings about the dam voiced by Indian US and Soviet experts.

But the government appeared unmoved.

"There is no evidence whatsoever to think that we need to change our opinion on Tehri dam," Deputy Commerce Minister Salman Khurshid said here Tuesday after a tour of quake-hit areas.

He said those involved in the project knew that the area was quake-prone and "adequate safeguards had been taken in the design of the project."

But unnamed officials were quoted as saying Monday that

the government was ready to incorporate "any new changes" in the 1,100-meter (3,600-foot) wide, 260.5-meter (850-foot) high rock and earthfill dam, which has seen opponents undertake numerous protest fasts and marches to stop it from being built.

The multi-purpose dam was first proposed in 1972 when environmental awareness in India was virtually non-existent. But in the past decade or so it has been at the centre of a raging debate.

Some 800 people are known to have died in an earthquake which rocked the Himalayan foothills in northern India, and the toll is set to

cross the 1,000-mark, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said today.

PTI, quoting officials, listed 784 deaths in three affected districts of Uttar Pradesh state. A total of 609 have died in Uttar Kashi, 125 in Tehri and 50 in Chameli.

Thousands of people were injured in the quake, some 1,000 in Uttar Kashi alone. Many of the injured were reported in serious condition.

"It may take us another week to go through all the villages and find all the bodies," local official Chandra Singh Panty told Reuters in Uttar Kashi, district centre for some 400 villages scattered across

the hills.

Reporters who reached villages to the north of the town of 50,000 people said soldiers were pulling scores of bodies from the rubble of wrecked houses.

"The soldiers are pulling out bodies from the ruins and piling them up in fields," said Subash Gupta, a reporter for the Hindi-language newspaper Amar Ujala.

The hills between Uttar Kashi, some 300 km (190 miles) northeast of Delhi, and the Tibetan border were still largely inaccessible with roads and bridges wrecked by the earthquake, rescue officials said. (Related story on page 8)