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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Rehan to join AL labour front

Adamjee Jute Mills CBA President Rehanuddin Rehan and his group will formally join the Awami League's labour front, Jatiya Sramik League today, reports UNB.

### Bush's appeal to Palestinians

WASHINGTON, July 25: President George Bush today urged Palestinians to "do everything possible" to make a peace conference between themselves and Israel a reality, reports Reuters.

### Colombo to hold talks with Delhi

COLOMBO, July 25: Sri Lanka plans to hold separate talks with India and the island's opposition in a fresh search for an end to eight years of ethnic fighting in which more than 30,000 have died, official sources said today, reports Reuters.

### 25 injured in Sirajganj clash

SIRAJGANJ, July 25: At least 25 were injured, four of them seriously in a clash over a disputed land at Huagachi village in Rajganj upazila in the early hours today, police said, reports UNB.

### Briefing on Ghorasal blast

Industries Minister Sham-ul-Islam Khan and the members of the Enquiry Committee constituted in connection with the explosion at Ghorasal Fertilizer Factory will meet the Press today (Friday) at 4 pm at the conference room of the Ministry of Industries (Shilpa Bhavan, Motifheel, Dhaka), reports BSS.

## Select Committee report being finalised

# Awami League to vote for passage of BNP amendment bills

By Moinuddin Naser

Awami League leader and Chief Whip of the opposition in parliament told The Daily Star on Thursday that his party and other opposition members would vote for the 11th and 12th Constitution amendment bills moved by the ruling BNP.

He indicated that the Select Committee decision on the bills was unanimous and it would submit a consensus report on the two bills.

The 11th Constitution amendment bill provides for sending back justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to the Supreme Court as Chief Justice and would ratify his appointment as Vice-President.

The 12th Constitution amendment bill seeks to revert to a parliamentary form of government.

The two bills are expected to be in the order of the day on Sunday and in all probability will be passed next week.

After the passage of the bill the President will call a referendum to ratify the basic change in the Constitution. The referendum is likely to be completed by the third week of August, according to informed sources.

The Select Committee has finalised its report proposing more power to the President regarding dissolution of parliament.

It was resolved that the President may seek the leave of parliament before dissolving it after a request by the Prime Minister. If the President finds

any party that commands the majority in parliament, other than the party in power, he may call it for the formation of the cabinet.

The Select Committee also agreed to leave the issue of the election of President to the Election Commission and drop the Fifth Schedule of the proposed bill by the Treasury Bench regarding procedure for the election of President.

The ruling party will move a separate bill in this regard.

Chief Whip of the Awami League Mohammad Nasim when contacted told The Daily Star that the Awami League would obviously vote for the bill.

He said that the stand of the Awami League to elect a President through secret ballot by the Election Commission would be left for the House to decide.

A Select Committee source said that both the Awami League and the BNP had agreed that the matter be decided by the Election Commission as per the present constitutional arrangement.

Accordingly the Treasury Bench will have to bring another bill regarding the election of the President which can be passed by a simple majority.

On this point the opposition Chief Whip told The Daily Star that it would oppose the bill but it would not create any deadlock for the BNP or to the election of the president.

The BNP bill earlier proposed that the election of the president be conducted by the Speaker of Parliament while the Awami League in the Second Schedule of its proposed bill opted for the president election by the Election Commission through secret ballot.

The Select Committee, which almost worked as a liaison committee between the Leader of the House, and the Leader of the Opposition, also agreed that the Election Commission determine the procedure of the president election under the existing constitutional arrangements.

Hence the election of the president may be held openly or by secret ballot.

It is learnt that the Awami League has also agreed to the proposal of the BNP that the ministers remain accountable to the Prime Minister and simultaneously to the House.

The issue of inclusion of the non-MPs in the cabinet has been agreed to by the two parties in principle. But the percentage of the non-MPs in the cabinet will be determined by the House.

On the plugging of floor-crossing, the two sides have already agreed on certain principles. There will not be any provision for barring any member who loses his membership because of floor-crossing to contest the next election.

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The two rival student organisations Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (above) and Bangladesh Chhatra League holding rallies on DU campus on Thursday seeking end to terrorism. But at the same time, the student activists clashed briefly at Doyel Chattar on the day. —Star photo

## Bill for independence of judiciary sent to select body

# Indemnity Ordinance repeal bill to come after scrutiny

By Staff Correspondent

A private members bill seeking repeal of Indemnity Ordinance of 1976 will be placed before the House soon after the scrutiny. This was assured by Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz Thursday in the House.

The draft of the bill was submitted by Chief Whip of opposition Md Nasim to the Parliament Secretariat early this month. The bill proposed repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance that blocked the trial of the killers of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The opposition Chief Whip appealed to the Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali to take measures for introducing the bill in the House.

The Law Minister informed the House he had received the copy of the bill Thursday morning and it would come to the House soon after the scrutiny.

BKSL leader Abdur Razzak MP also spoke in favour of the bill saying that it should be unanimously adopted by the House to stop politics of coup

and killings, and restore rule of law in the country.

### Judiciary bill

A Constitution amendment bill aimed at ensuring independence of judiciary was unanimously referred to a Select Committee of Jatiya Sangsad for scrutiny Thursday.

The private members bill, titled 'Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1991' was moved by Awami League's Salauddin Yusuf. The bill proposed amendment to Articles 95, 98, 109, 115, and 116 of the Constitution.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz and Deputy Leader of the opposition Abdus Samad Azad welcomed the bill and thanked Salauddin Yusuf for introducing it before the House.

Moving the bill, Salauddin Yusuf said that independence of the judiciary and its separation from the executive were indispensable for ensuring democracy in the country. He mentioned that the three political alliances were committed to ensure the rule of law.

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## Treasury Bench in a minority

By Staff Correspondent

The government on Thursday had to defer the consideration by parliament of a resolution moved by an opposition member, as the Treasury Bench appeared to be in a minority.

The resolution that called for granting of 50 per cent subsidy to fertilizers and pesticides was moved by independent MP Nurul Islam Moni, and supported by all opposition parties and groups in the House.

Winding up the discussion on the resolution Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister had requested the mover of the resolution to withdraw it since the government had not decided to withdraw subsidy from sale of these agricultural inputs.

As Nurul Islam Moni declined to withdraw his resolution Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas promptly put the matter to a voice vote. As the Speaker made routine utterances proclaiming the Treasury Bench as the winner, a number of opposition MPs stood up demanding a division in the plea that the opposition was in a majority among the

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## 22 injured in renewed Rajshahi clashes

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 25: At least 22 persons were injured in clashes between the activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Chhatra Oikya Parishad in different educational institutions and city pockets on Thursday and late night Wednesday.

Biton, a JCD activist got bullet injuries in three hour gunfight between JCD and Chhatra Oikya Parishad activists at Madarbox and Suhrawardy Hall on the Rajshahi University campus late night Wednesday. He was treated in a local clinic.

This sparked clashes between them at the Rajshahi Government College and the New Degree Government College Thursday leaving twenty injured including JCD activists Zillur Rahman, Azizul Hoq and Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal Activist Mohsin.

Kishore Kumar (30), owner of a night coach was stabbed near the new degree government college Thursday noon. He was rushed to Rajshahi medical college hospital when his condition was stated to be serious.

Most of the students of res-

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## Police raid halls

# DU tense: 2 JCD activists assaulted

By DU Correspondent

A group of miscreants assaulted on Thursday two activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and released them at the Dowel Square of Dhaka University after detaining them briefly.

The JCD blamed the members of Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-A) for the incident. The incident caused tension among the activists of JCD.

Meanwhile, members of the Special Branch of Police raided some of the rooms of two halls of Dhaka University in the small hours of Thursday.

Acting on a secret message police conducted the raid in Zahur Huq Hall and Surja Sen Hall of the university.

No incident of arrest or recovering arms was reported so far.

Meanwhile, tension flared up on the Dhaka University campus following slogans and counter-slogans chanted by various student organisations accusing each other of resort-

ing to terrorism on the campus.

Different student organisations on Thursday held demonstrations on the campus protesting terrorism. They demanded immediate arrest of armed hoodlums.

JCD rally held in front of the DUCSU building was addressed by Habibunnabi Sohel, President of its Dhaka University unit.

The rally blamed members of BCL (S-A) for recent deterioration of the campus situation and said the JCD itself is powerful enough to resist them.

It also demanded immediate announcement of the date of DUCSU election.

BCL (S-A) rally held at the foot of Aparajay Bangla was addressed by Golam Mostafa Suzan and Quamruzzaman Ansari, President and General Secretary respectively of its Dhaka University unit.

The speakers accused the expelled students, sheltered by JCD, of aggravating the

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## Programme for post-flood rehabilitation ordered

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia Thursday gave directives to concerned ministries to draw up post-flood rehabilitation programmes, reports UNB.

The directives came when she was presiding over a high-level meeting of the concerned ministers and secretaries at her Suganda office last night.

Begum Zia also directed all concerned agencies to be prepared for facing any flash flood. The meeting reviewed the overall flood situation in the country.

The meeting was informed that the Relief Ministry had distributed money and relief goods including saris, lungis.

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## Hasina, NDI team talk repeal of Indemnity Ordinance

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting delegation of the New York-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) of international affairs led by Eric Bjornhild Thursday met Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) Sheikh Hasina at the JS Bhavan.

Deputy leader of the opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, M A Jalil MP, Begum Matia Chowdhury MP, Sudhansu Sekhar Haldar MP and Abul Hossain Chowdhury MP were present on the occasion.

Sheikh Hasina informed the delegation the socio-political and economic condition in Bangladesh and discussed efforts towards consolidating

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## Indian devaluation to encourage smuggling

By Moazzem Hossain

Export competitiveness of many Bangladeshi items will be lost in the international markets because of a major devaluation of the Indian currency.

Fears loom large in some exporter circles that trade through informal channels, or smuggling across the border, will be encouraged because of a 20 per cent devaluation of Indian rupee recently in two quick successive doses.

The Bangladesh taka has meanwhile depreciated in value in US dollar terms by 1.95 per cent.

Exporter circles in Dhaka said the Bangladeshi export items which are competing with India in the international

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## Shafi Sami made envoy to China

The Government has decided to appoint Mr C M Shafi Sami, at present High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as Ambassador of Bangladesh to the People's Republic of China, an official handout said in Dhaka on Thursday, reports BSS.

Mr Shafi Sami was a Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1972-1975 and held diplomatic assignments in Paris and Cairo. He was Director-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from December 1982 to January 1987 before the current assignment as the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan since February 1987.

## 'BSP has no right to talk about Wage Board award'

Leaders of three federations of newspapers and news agencies and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) on Thursday said, Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP), an organisation of a few owners of newspapers has no lawful right to talk about the Wage Board awards, reports BSS.

In a joint statement Thursday, they said the Supreme Court and the High Court in their verdict had clearly stated that the BSP had no locus standi to talk about the newspaper employees Wage Board awards. But by

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## DCCI retorts charges of fraud, cheating

# Maligning of business community unbecoming

Star Economic Report

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the country's largest trade promotion body in the private sector, has sharply retorted the Finance Minister for 'maligning the business community as a whole for so-called 'delinquent culture'.

In a statement issued to the press Thursday, President of DCCI Mahbubur Rahman termed the recent announcements of some government functionaries about overdue bank credits, the loan liabilities of some directors of private sector banks in the name of their business firms or concerns, and 'free-wheeling' charges of fraud and cheating as the 'most unbecoming'.

The private sector has 'borne the major burnt' of faulty economic management by the successive governments and other 'regulatory, arbitrary and distortionary policies',

leading to a 'sickening state of the situation in overall trade and industry', he said. The recent steps and announcements of the government, he observed, are creating more problems, instead of solving the existing ones.

In a pointed reference to the replies of the Finance Minister to a question in the Jatiya Sangsad on July 22 on the so-called 'loan liabilities' of some directors of private sector banks, the DCCI President contested the premises on which the directors of such banks have been sought to be discredited.

'Bank loans were sanctioned not to any individuals as such, but to units, companies or enterprises which are separate legal entities with a number of other owners or shareholders,' he said.

He stated, 'There is nothing unlawful about borrowings

by the concerned units.' 'The extent of borrowings or credit sanctions depends on respective assets of the borrowing units', he said while noting that the credit facilities to any director of a private sector bank must not exceed some specified limits which were set by Bangladesh Bank for the concerned banks. 'If the borrowing needs are higher than limits, any recourse to borrowings from private banks will be violation of law itself', he added.

Mahbubur Rahman regretted that the Finance Minister's statement about 'mushroom' growth of the banks in the country, 'Facts speak otherwise. All the private banks came up in the early eighties following the decision of the government of late President Ziaur Rahman to allow banks in the private sector. The gov-

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## Grounds for detention weak, says Moudud

# Ershad had extra-marital ties with 18 women: AG

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Barrister Moudud Ahmed said on Thursday that deposed President Ershad had many other options to stay on in power.

Ershad, Moudud said, had instead handed over power through constitutional means. Moudud, defending Ershad, who has challenged the grounds of his detention in the High Court, pleaded for Ershad saying that the grounds of his detention, served on December 12, 1990, were very weak.

Earlier the Attorney General Aminul Haque in his affidavit before the Court as part of evidence of corruption by Ershad gave a long history of Ershad, the ways he used to usurp power and the lies he told about his personal and public life.

The Attorney General in his affidavit also named 18 women

with whom Ershad maintained extra-marital relationships or had kept as his concubines.

The Attorney General in his affidavit however said that the grounds of arrest were quite relevant and that the detention was very necessary to establish the rule of law.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed in his argument challenging the grounds of arrest said that Ershad had considered the declaration of the three alliances.

Though he had many other options to continue in power he showed respect to constitutional rule and handed over power to a neutral person, chosen by the three major alliances.

Barrister Moudud said that there was no constitutional basis to installing the Chief Justice of a country as Vice-President. But it was done through an extra-constitutional

means. He said that the appointment of Justice Shahabuddin as Vice-President and his activities would have to be ratified by Parliament for which a bill had already been introduced.

At this stage Justice Anwarul Haque Chowdhury presiding over the Court said that the ratification would be an act of indemnity. Moudud Ahmed replied in the affirmative.

Pleading for Ershad, Moudud Ahmed further said that there was no countrywide movement against Ershad and that only the people of urban areas had agitated against his government. But as Ershad wanted a peaceful solution to the crisis he decided to step down and contest the election in a free and fair atmosphere.

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