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VOL 1 NO. 224 REGD. NO. DA 781 BHADRA 21, 1398 BS, DHAKA FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 6, 1991 SAFAR 25, 1412 HIJRI 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 3.00


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NEWS BRIEFS

AL public meet today

Awami League will hold a public meeting at Manik Mia Avenue today (Friday) at 3 pm. The meeting is part of a campaign AL has launched to press the government to repeal the Indemnity Ordinance. Party chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will preside over and address the meeting, reports UNB.

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Gorbachev poised to recognise independence of Baltic republics : Discussion today

Seven decades of Kremlin rule end

MOSCOW, Sept 5: Soviet lawmakers, bowing to Mikhail S. Gorbachev's will, voted Thursday to end seven decades of monolithic Kremlin rule and set up an interim government to be dominated by newly sovereign republics, report agencies.

In a sign of the republics' new standing, Gorbachev was poised to formally recognise the independence of the three Baltic states. All but five of the 15 Soviet republics have declared independence.

Gorbachev and leaders of the Soviet republics are to discuss independence for the Baltic republics Friday when the new Council of State holds its first meeting. Foreign Minister Boris Pankin said today.

He said this issue will be resolved within the next few days, but refused to specify what form recognition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by the Soviet leadership would take.

The council of State consists of Gorbachev and the Presidents of the republics. The 1,900-member Congress of People's Deputies overwhelmingly endorsed the plan to salvage some form of the huge but economically troubled country disintegrating after last month's failed hard-line coup.

The new State Council, the highest government body, still will run defense, security, law enforcement and foreign affairs during the tenure of the interim government.

Even Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state, did not escape the upheaval. Before the Congress adjourned, it was proposed that Lenin's body be removed from its stately mausoleum in Red Square and reburied in Leningrad beside his mother.

"The Congress rose to the occasion in this responsible and, without exaggeration, historic moment in the development of our state," Gorbachev said closing what was likely to be the body's last session.

The Congress effectively put itself out of business, and Lenin's fate is to be taken up by a smaller legislature set up under the restructuring plan.

The plan approved 1,682 to 43 was rammed through the Congress by a forceful and commanding Gorbachev, who squelched debate and refused to accept proposals from the chamber.

At one point, he threatened to close the session and suggested changing the Constitution to eliminate the need for two-thirds approval.

"I will not yield the microphone to anyone from the floor," Gorbachev said as some deputies tried to speak.

"Either make a decision or not. That's all!"

Many lawmakers said they believed that if they had not approved the measures, Gorbachev would simply have

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A cultural programme based on Nazrul songs was staged at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium yesterday to mark the poet's death anniversary. — Star photo

Khaleda's call to elect honest candidates in by-elections

MADARIPUR, Sept 5: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here today that the BNP government was determined to solve all problems of the farmers, workers and the toiling masses to ensure their welfare and also increase production in fields and factories, reports BSS.

Addressing three huge public meetings at Shibchar Hatir Began Math, Char Mogoria High School and Rajor High School here, Begum Zia said the elected government also attached importance to the solution of all local problems along with carrying out the overall development activities.

The local leaders had a great role to play in this regard and called for electing honest, dedicated and sincere representatives in the coming by-elections to bring about local development.

Among others, Flood Control and Irrigation Minister Majid-ul-Haq, Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf, Mrs Selima Rahman, MP, Abul Khair Chowdhury and BNP candidate Motahar Hossain Siddiqi, and Atiqur Rahman addressed the meetings.

Begum Zia referred to the misuse of the past autocratic regime and said the so-called development of that government was nothing but an eye-wash. She said "wherever I went during the past five months, I only saw problems and problems."

Begum Zia said national wealth were plundered and public-owned enterprises were handed over to private owners at nominal prices in the name of development.

Agricultural loan was not given to the farmers but a huge number of certificate cases were instituted. Development did not take place in the villages, which were the focal point of Bangladesh, she added. She said the BNP government would make all efforts to provide agricultural loans to the farmers.

The Prime Minister said her government had allocated maximum fund for the education sector. She said the government would like to restore congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions by curbing violence.

Begum Zia said the people affected by the river erosion in the district would be rehabilitated. She said the government

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Farakka waters inundate vast area of Chapainawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Sept 5: With the rise of water level in four rivers of the district, overall flood situation has deteriorated in Chapainawabganj. The Mahananda crossed the danger mark and was flowing 10 cm above the danger level today.

According to informed sources, a huge quantity of water has been released through the Farakka barrage, that has swelled the Padma and inundated a vast area of Alatul, Narayanpur and Bagdanga union under the Sadar upazila and, Durlavpur and Panka under Shibganj upazila.

The Mahananda has already eroded parts of Poladanga and Alhaspur of Bholaghat upazila. Standing Aman and other crops on three thousand acres of land have been inundated by floods in the district.

Baburgaoon village and Rahampur bazar were devoured by the river Punarvaba. Two thousand people of the affected area have been rendered homeless.

UNB adds from Sylhet: Overall flood situation turned serious in the greater Sylhet district Thursday due to incessant rainfall and onrush of waters from the Indian state of Meghalaya submerging new areas in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

The river Surma at Sunamganj was flowing 20 cm above the danger mark while the water level of the Kushara at Shaola and Surma at Kanaighat was rising alarmingly, officials said.

Goaighat, Kanaighat, Companiganj and Jolyantapur of Sylhet district are the worst affected upazilas where about 20,000 acres of cropland were submerged.

In Kanaighat, about 80 per cent crops have been inundated while in Companiganj 70 per cent crops went under water. Road communications with the Companiganj upazila headquarters was disrupted.

People in several villages of Jolyantapur upazila have been marooned. Seven of eight unions of Goaighat upazila were badly affected by the flood.

Three injured in JCD-Shibir clash in Ctg
 CHITTAGONG, Sept 5: At least three students were injured in a clash between Jatyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir activists at Mohsin College here today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash ensued after an altercation between some activists of JCD and Shibir.

\$90m ADB loan for city flood protection

Star Report
 Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide 90 million US dollars soft term loan for further development of the first phase of Dhaka Flood Control Project. The loan was repayable in 40 years with 10 years' grace period.

A team of ADB experts is now in the city for appraisal of the project, the plan for which is expected to be finalised by the end of the year.

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US writes off \$292m credit

The United States may write off 292 million dollars from the credits it has provided to Bangladesh, official sources said Thursday.

They told UNB the US government was also contemplating converting another sizeable quantum of the total credits into grants. Announcement to this effect is likely during the visit of US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mrs Teresita Schaffers later this month, the officials said.

Schaffers, during her three-day tour, will discuss with Bangladesh officials "entire aspects" of bilateral relations.

Increase in US aid is likely to figure high in the discussions, they said.

The US food aid provided under PL-480 will be reviewed at her meetings with the officials here.

Govt has failed to rehabilitate cyclone victims, says Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent
 The Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Thursday alleged government's failure in rehabilitating the cyclone affected coastal people and pleaded for a massive plan for

See Page 12 Col. 7

Indemnity Repeal Bill Talks going on with BNP, says Hasina

Sheikh Hasina has said discussion between Awami League and BNP was continuing on the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill and hoped the government would help pass it to write off the "black ordinance" without further delay, reports UNB.

"I hope the BNP government will pass the bill in the shortest possible time to help establish democracy and rule of law in the country."

The Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition, during her return journey from Bholahol on Thursday was talking to a group of reporters who accompanied her to cover electioneering in the Bholahol constituency.

"Some senior ministers and the Deputy Speaker have already discussed with me the bill... and discussion continues between BNP and Awami League," she told the newsmen.

Asked why her party did not initiate any move to repeal the ordinance in 1979 and 1986 parliament, Hasina said, "The situation was not favourable as the military dictators were in power at that time."

But it's a changed perspective now," Hasina said, and pointed to the climate of understanding between the government and the opposition in parliament obtained with the unanimous passage of the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill for switchover to parliamentary democracy.

All national issues now could be resolved through discussion in parliament, a product of long years of anti-autocracy movement, she said.

Replying to a question, she said BNP's non-cooperation in abrogation of "the black ordinance" will only convince the people that President Ziaur Rahman had hands in the killing of Bangabandhu."

She ruled out the idea that the repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance might create constitutional vacuum.

Referring to the September 15 referendum, she said Awami League leaders and workers had been instructed to make it a success. But the ruling party should take effective measures for a record

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Invitation of applications for enlistment of private importers of fertilizers under ADB credit fund

Applications are invited from bonafide fertilizer distributors/importers for enlistment and selection as importers under ADB assistance who can fulfil the following criterion for enlistment as private importer of fertilizers under \$35.00 million ADB credit fund. The applications should reach the following address on or before September 11, 1991 within Govt. office hours (Office closes at 2-30 P.M.).

- Criterion**
1. Documentary evidence showing presence in the domestic market as a fertilizer distributor indicating quantities lifted from different local factories/ports during the last two years.
 2. Provide evidence of available logistic facilities in the form of storage capacity (tonnage), transport capacity (number and tonnage), and marketing network (number of dealers).
 3. Certificate of credit worthiness from a schedule commercial bank specifying positive and unconditional commitment to finance of fertilizer import. Maximum of financial commitment should be certified by the bank.
 4. A list of the prospective importers will be prepared based on the above criteria.
 5. Selected importers would be required to follow ICB procedures for obtaining bids.

Chief of Party IFDC
 JBC Tower Building (18th floor)
 10, Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000
 Phones : 281508, 864518, 864519, 259642

Coins to oust one-taka notes soon

By Reazuddin Ahmed
 One-taka paper notes are likely to be replaced soon by metal coins as it costs one taka 11 paisa to keep a one-taka note in circulation for a year.

The one-taka metal coin minted of stainless steel may cost 75 paisa to keep it in circulation for about 14 years.

The cost of the paper and printing of a one-taka note in the Security Printing Press in Gazipur is 37 paisa and three notes are needed annually to keep a one-taka note in circulation, said a source in the Security Printing Press.

One note survives for only about four months due to frequent use, as other notes of smaller denominations.

When contacted a source in the Bangladesh Bank told the Daily Star that the metal coins are expected to be introduced in early 1992. It will take 3 years to withdraw the notes in circulation.

The source said that the bank had already placed order for minting metal coins of the one-taka denomination.

Canada got the order competing in an international tender.

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Steps taken to make referendum a success

The Election Commission has taken all necessary preparations to make the referendum on the form of government on September 15 a success, reports BSS.

According to Election Commission sources, the commission Thursday started distribution of referendum materials including ballot papers, necessary forms and packets, seal-stamp pads and indelible ink to different polling centres.

Distribution of such materials will continue till September 7, the source said.

Meanwhile, arrangements have been made to open 24,319 referendum centres with 1,12,645 polling booths throughout the country so that 6,21,94,392 voters could exercise their franchise.

Of the total eligible voters, 3,30,48,672 are men and 2,91,46,260 are female voters.

The Election Commission has already appointed Assistant Returning Officers at the district level and Assistant Officers at the thana and upazila levels for conducting the referendum smoothly.

The referendum will take place on September 15 from 8 am to 5 pm without any break.

Soviet crisis pushing them on single platform

By Moinuddin Naser
 All left political parties in the country are likely to float a new front on the basis of 'maximum understanding and minimum programme' on national issues.

The former pro-Soviet left political parties including the CPB, NAP and Ganotantri Party, facing internal conflicts in the party cadres following the termination of socialism in the Soviet Union have proposed to the Five-Party left alliance the formation of a joint front on the basis of minimum programme.

All the left parties in Bangladesh believe that socialism was earlier a necessity in meeting the demands of the poor classes, but in future socialism will be a cultural and mental need of mankind, not only in the developing countries but also in the developed world.

They further believe that the crisis in the socialist world was created by the 'capitalist' forces just to divert world attention from their own problems.

However, the leaderships of all these parties are sharply divided on these issues.

However, to keep the party workers engaged in political activities the left parties decided to open a platform in the way of pursuing some programmes.

According to a CPB source the new front has been necessitated as the Eight-Party alliance centering the Awami League does not exist anymore

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