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VOL. 1 NO. 229 REGD. NO. DA 781

BHADRA 26, 1398 BS, DHAKA WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 1991 SAFAR 30, 1412 HIJRI

12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 3.00

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NEWS BRIEFS

PM may address nation tomorrow

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to address the nation over radio and television on September 12 in connection with referendum on the form of government, reports UNB.

Editor of 'Shakti' freed on bail

Editor of the Daily Shakti and Secretary General of Bangladesh Editors Council A G M Jainul Abedin was released on bail from the Dhaka Central Jail Tuesday, according to a press release issued by the newspaper, reports BSS.

Bank holiday

All the scheduled banks in the capital and in those areas, where by-elections will be held will remain closed today a press release of the Bangladesh Bank said Tuesday night, reports BSS.

Perez de Cuellar in Tehran

TEHRAN, Sept 10: UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar arrived here late today for a three day visit.

Officials asked to take precautions : Alarming rise in water level at Farakka Barrage

Ganges basin flood may turn severe

By Staff Correspondent



Slum dwellers of Sheikher Hat at Mohammadpur on the outskirts of the city, who have taken shelter on the embankment, are looking at their houses submerged by rain and flood waters. — Star photo

The flood in the Ganges basin covering the greater districts of Rajshahi, Kushtia, Faridpur and Pabna is likely to turn severe. The districts of Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Tangail, Manikganj and Dhaka may also experience flooding above the normal level.

The late monsoon floods have so far affected 22 districts. These are — Rangpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Pabna, Sirajganj, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Kushtia, Netrokona, Brahmanbaria, Sylhet, Manikganj, Bogra, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Naryanganj, Dhaka, Faridpur and Tangail.

A special bulletin issued by the Flood Information Centre of the Water Development Board last night said that the information received from neighboring India suggested that the water level of the Ganges at Farakka was rising and was about to approach the record level.

The bulletin further said that the country's overall flood situation was likely to aggravate.

The authorities have requested all officials concerned to remain alert and take adequate precautions for the safety of life and property in the face of a deteriorating flood situation.

Meanwhile, with the rise of

water level in the Brahmaputra and the Ganges basins, flood situation in the northern districts further deteriorated Tuesday with more areas going under water.

The Ganges was flowing above the danger level at all points Tuesday, while the Testa, the Karatoa, the Punarbhaha, the Mahananda, the Goral, and the Surma have already crossed the red mark. Brahmaputra is also rising at all points and crossed danger mark at Aricha.

Reports from the flood affected areas said that thousands of people were marooned while standing crops on vast areas reeled under water that also snapped Railway and road communication at places.

Our Rangpur Correspondent adds: Twenty upazilas out of thirty five in greater Rangpur district have been hit by the flood waters that marooned thousands of people, displaced as many and snapped rail link with Lalmonirhat and Kurigram.

Dinajpur Ekota Express from Dhaka was derailed Monday midnight near Bamondanga railway station due to inundation of the track and kept rail link between Gaibandha and Kaunia paralysed for about eight hours. Road communication in some parts of the district was also

See Page 12 Col. 5

Referendum's success will bolster image : Shahabuddin

NETRAKONA, Sept 10: Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said here yesterday that the success of the referendum would keep up our image as a democratic nation, reports BSS.

Addressing the public representatives and officials of the district at the local Circuit House he said the continuity of the democratic process would be also ensured by the democratic exercise of the referendum to settle the issue of the form of government.

The Acting President said democrats of all shades of opinion should intensify their campaign to make the voters understand better the implications of 'yes' or 'no' to be indicated by them on ballot papers.

He said voters should also be informed as to how to cast votes. This, he said, was needed because there was no contestant in the referendum to explain these aspects.

Justice Shahabuddin reminded the public representatives of their duty to mobilise voters since the referendum was being held on an issue of vital importance to the nation.

Hasina calls for communal harmony

From Our Correspondent
 GOPALGANJ, Sept 10: Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina Tuesday called for complete communal harmony to ensure peace and development under a democratic Sept up and to reap the fruits of independence.

She was addressing a public meeting at 'Gabol Sarak' at Kotallipara upazila under Gopalganj district. She said Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians fought together for independence in 1971 but certain vested quarters were now active to divide them.

"The independence of the country will be at stake if communal amity is not maintained," she said adding that "AL will resist any such attempt of division."

Citing the example of August 23 incident in which neighbouring villagers plundered the Pirbari and Masuria
 See Page 12 Col. 8

\$40m ADB loan for rehabilitation projects

MANILA, Sept 10: Bangladesh will have access to 40 million dollars in savings from Asian Development Bank (ADB) loans for cyclone rehabilitation projects, an ADB statement released here today said, reports AFP.

These savings will come from four ADB loan projects to Bangladesh approved between 1980 and 1988, the Manila-based bank said.

The funds will be used to rehabilitate areas damaged by the cyclone which hit the coastal areas of Bangladesh in April, killing some 139,000 people and destroying or damaging about 1.7 million homes.

Soviet Culture Minister opposes removal of Lenin's body

MOSCOW, Sept 10: The Soviet minister of culture on Tuesday declared his opposition to removing the body of Vladimir Lenin from his Red Square mausoleum highlighting a growing national debate on the subject, reports AP.

He also expressed reservations about the toppling of monuments to revolutionary leaders such as occurred after the Aug. 18-21 failed coup.

"The Lenin mausoleum protection of the historical
 See Page 12 Col. 4

BNP, Awami League locked in straight fight

By-elections today

Star Report

Nearly 24 lakh voters are expected to exercise their franchise today (Wednesday) in the by-elections in eleven constituencies. The constituencies are two in Dhaka city, one in Chittagong, four in Rangpur, one in Bhola, two in Madaripur and one in Bogra where a total of 49 candidates are contesting.

The ruling BNP and opposition Awami League have fielded candidates in all the eleven seats in a crucial test of popularity.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is fighting this election to get an endorsement of the policies of her five and a half months old government.

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina will try to regain the lost ground through the by-elections.

Jatiya Party is fighting a battle for survival. In four Rangpur seats, vacated by deposed President HM Ershad, Jatiya Party is pinning its hope of political survival. Former Prime Minister Mizanur Rahman Choudhury and former Deputy Prime Minister Shah Moazzem Hussain, Acting President and Secretary General respectively of Jatiya Party, are contesting from two Rangpur constituencies. Both of them are outsiders. The local candidates belonging to BNP and Awami League are vocal against both the JP leaders.

The anti-Mizan lobby in Jatiya Party is learnt to have been working against them.

Awami League is hopeful of winning at least two seats in Rangpur.

BNP Chief Khaleda Zia vacated four seats and the party hopes to win in all the four constituencies — two in Dhaka city, one in Chittagong and one in Bogra.

Awami League leaders vacated two seats one in Bhola and one in Madaripur. One seat was vacated following the death of an Awami League MP from Madaripur.

Awami League has concentrated all its might to retain the three seats and to increase
 See Page 12 Col. 1

Tripura CM for quick return of Chakma refugees

By Staff Correspondent

The government of the Indian state of Tripura has started a process of dialogue with the central government in Delhi to ensure quick return of tribal refugees of Bangladesh from the state.

A report published in the September 9 issue of an Indian newspaper says the Chief Minister of Tripura Sudhir Ranjan Majumdar discussed the issue with Indian Prime Minister PV Narashimha Rao last week. He may take up the same issue with him again this week.

The Chief Minister of Tripura said the five year stay of Chakma refugees from Bangladesh in his state had created an adverse reaction among his own people. The state administration is also
 See Page 12 Col. 8

PM stresses improving civic amenities

Directive to build 5 more roads in city

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday directed the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK) to construct three more link roads and two cross-roads in Dhaka to remove the problem of traffic jam and facilitate the movement of city people, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister gave the directives at a meeting held to discuss the civic amenities and condition of educational institutions at her Secretariat office.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, Dhaka City Mayor Mirza Abbas, MP, Education Secretary ANM Yusuf, Rajuk Chairman Anwarul Alam and WASA Chairman Nurul Islam
 See Page 12 Col. 5

attended the meeting.

The proposed link roads would be constructed from Green Road to Mirpur Road, Shantinagar to Khilgaon linking Outer Circular Road with Syedabad and Bjoy Swarni to Tejgaon Industrial Area.

The two cross-roads would be constructed in Senpara Parabata areas of the city.

The Prime Minister said Shantinagar to Khilgaon Road linking Outer Circular Road with Syedabad was the original proposal of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

The Prime Minister gave directives to start the development activities in Badda and Khilkhet to provide electricity
 See Page 12 Col. 5

Ershad, five others in dock for gold smuggling

By Staff Correspondent

Tk 1.28 cr gold seized: Pak national held

Customs surveillance team at Zia International Airport last night seized 1600 tolas of gold worth Taka 1.28 crore from a Pakistani passenger coming from Singapore by Bangladesh Ilman flight, reports BSS.

The team took the Pakistani passenger Sajid Hossain into custody and handed him over to the Cantonment thana and a case had been filed with the thana.

According to Customs sources at the Zia International Airport, the Pakistani passenger Sajid Hossain coming from
 See Page 12 Col. 8

Deposed President Ershad, accused in the sensational gold smuggling case of 1990, was produced before the Special Tribunal No 16 yesterday.

Ershad was implicated in this case as the seventh accused in a supplementary chargesheet submitted on August 31, 1991 after 13 months of the original chargesheet submitted on August 30, 1990, when he was in power.

Five of the other accused were also produced before the court along with Ershad. They are former airport manager Ashrafuddin Ahmed Sikander, P A to the Chairman Civil Aviation Authority Magasudur Rahman, Airport security guard Abu Taher, Adger Rudgard, a German national
 See Page 12 Col. 7

and Anthony Chalkar, a British national, also having citizenship of Australia. The other accused, former Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority Commodore (Retd) Moinal Islam is absconding. He fled the country just after submission of the original chargesheet in 1990.

The case began at the Special Tribunal No 16 chaired by Judge ATM Fazle Kabir. The tribunal which was first housed in the district court has now been transferred to the old jail warden's barrack near the Dhaka Central Jail.

The court resumed at 11.30 am. When Ershad was entering the court along with the other accused, he whispered to the Attorney General Aminul
 See Page 12 Col. 7

3-member body to finalise draft of left front

The Five-Party Alliance, United Communist League and Otkya Prokryta formed a three-member committee to finalise the draft document of a new political front they are floating with other left-wing parties, reports UNB.

The committee, constituted at a meeting Monday evening, consists of Bimal Biswas, Hasanul Haq Inu and Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan, sources said. The committee will sit today.

Leaders of these seven parties met at the Five-Party Alliance office Monday evening with UCL leader Bimal Biswas in the chair and also discussed modalities of forging a broad based unity of left democratic forces and individuals.

Rashed Khan Menon, MP, of Workers Party, Tipu Biswas and Nazrul Islam of UCL,
 See Page 12 Col. 2

US to help combat drug menace

From Rahman Jahangir

WASHINGTON, Sept 10: The US government has called upon countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan to step up motivational campaign to curb the menace of drug abuse.

While opening a workshop on drug abuse here on Monday Dr Charles Schuster, Director of powerful National Institution on Drug Abuse (NIDA) said while strengthening prevention and treatment mechanisms, the countries afflicted should focus on factors leading to the spread of the menace.

Dr Schuster said the drug problem is increasingly worrying all countries of the globe including the United States. If not checked right now, millions of promising youths in the 25-35 age group will fall
 See Page 12 Col. 2

victim to drug addiction. Sapping the vitality of those nations and those of Latin America.

The NIDA chief said the US government is ready to extend all possible assistance to countries falling victim to drug menace.

Bangladesh was an unfortunate victim to the drug menace although the country was not producing any hard drugs. The US government is keen to help the country menace by providing hi-tech facilities detecting of drug trafficking.

US officials told The Daily Star. They appreciated the intensive country wide campaign against drug abuse and lauded recent steps taken by the Bangladesh government to
 See Page 12 Col. 2

Gorbachev asks West for more assistance

MOSCOW, Sept 10: President Mikhail Gorbachev, avowing that his country had reformed itself, asked the West today for more aid as nationalist tensions swirled around the Soviet Union's southern rim, reports Reuter.

He was speaking to an international conference which had just admitted three former Soviet republics—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—as members.

He said the failure of last month's coup attempt had been an explosive liberation of
 See Page 12 Col. 2

reform and the time was now ripe for the west to increase its aid efforts.

"We need assistance, cooperation, solidarity, the Soviet President told member countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. "We are counting on it."

Unrest, unleashed by the weakening of Soviet power continued to swell in the southern republics of Georgia and Moldova and along the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia. One Azeri and two Armenians were reported
 See Page 12 Col. 2

killed in ethnic clashes.

About 1,000 opponents of Georgian nationalist leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia built barricades in Front of the Parliament building in the republic's capital, Tbilisi.

The demonstrators, on their ninth day of protests demanding Gamsakhurdia's resignation, acted after rumours in the city that Gamsakhurdia planned to order an attack on them.

If we do not erect these barricades, people will not realise we have a dictator in power, opposition leader
 See Page 12 Col. 2

Irakly Tseretely told the crowd, according to local journalists.

Gamsakhurdia, a former dissident, was elected President in a landslide victory last May and has sworn to turn Georgia's independence declaration of April 9 into reality.

Critics accuse him of authoritarian tendencies, saying he has suppressed opposition and ethnic minorities.

In Romanian-speaking Moldova, which declared independence from Moscow last month, the ethnic Russian mil-
 See Page 12 Col. 2

lity were forming militia units to protect themselves, including a hard-core Dnestr Battalion, the independent Russian information Agency reported.

The republic's President Mircea Snegur told Parliament Moldova was willing to join an economic association with Moscow but would not join any political structures such as the voluntary union of sovereign states Gorbachev has proposed.

On the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, one
 See Page 12 Col. 2

Azeri was killed and seven were wounded early today when Armenian fighters attacked the town of Khadzahly, the independent Azeri news agency Asa-Irada said.

It said two Armenians were killed by unidentified persons in a village in Nagorno-Karabakh, administered by Azerbaijan but populated largely by Ethnic Armenians.

More than 800 people have been killed in clashes over the region since early 1988, according to official Soviet estimates.
 See Page 12 Col. 2