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Nearly 500 have died, hundreds wounded and economy wrecked in battles that followed Croatia's June 25 declaration of independence
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NEWS BRIEFS

Indo-Bangla border conference

The border co-ordination conference between Director General, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Director General, Border Security Forces (BSF) of India will be held in Dhaka at the headquarters of Bangladesh Rifles today.

Saudi food aid for USSR

MOSCOW, Sept 20: Saudi Arabia will provide food and medical assistance to the Soviet Union, a senior Saudi official said here today, a day after holding talks with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. In an interview with Cable News Network (CNN), Prince Bandar Ben Sultan also called on the West and Japan to provide aid to the Soviet Union to help stabilize the country and prevent hunger, reports AFP.

Cambodians agree on electoral system

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 20: The four Cambodian parties reached a breakthrough on Thursday in agreeing on an electoral system, the last major obstacle holding up a final peace settlement in the country's 12-year old civil war, diplomats said.

UK concerned at expulsion

BEIJING, Sept 20: Britain's ambassador to China has expressed "concerns about the harassment of foreign correspondents" to the Chinese Foreign Ministry after the expulsion of a British reporter, an embassy spokesman said Friday.

Death toll mounts to 500, about 50,000 attacked in 21 districts

Diarrhoea situation alarming

By Staff Correspondent

The devastating flood waters are receding from most of the affected areas but diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases are spreading alarmingly.

Officials confirmed 318 dead and about 20 thousand attacked till Friday, while unofficial estimates suggested more than five hundred dead and about 50,000 attacked in the 21 affected districts. According to an official estimate, at least two thousand people are being attacked everyday.

Intake of impure water and unwholesome food is spreading the diseases. 1,275 health teams, with meagre supplies of both preventive and curative medicines, were battling with the diseases, mostly concentrated in urban areas and upazila headquarters. The inaccessible far flung areas are remaining unattended due to disrupted communications.

The situation was worse in Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Jamalpur and other areas where waters have receded further.

Meanwhile, flood situation in Pabna and Natore districts deteriorated Friday while in Naogaon it remained unchanged.

In Pabna, vast areas of Chatmohar, Faridpur and Bhangura upazilas were inundated afresh. The water level of Atrai increased further and was flowing much above the danger mark.

A large area in Handial union was flooded due to breaches in the embankments. Over one hundred families of that area were given shelter at a local primary school. Thousands of affected people in the district are still living on the embankments or high places since their dwellings are under water.

A total of 476 square km area of the district has been inundated by the flood which has affected 3 lakh 65 thousand people.

All the nine upazilas of the district were now hit by the flood which damaged standing crops on 16 thousand acres.

In Natore, new areas were flooded in Gurudaspur union where about one thousand people were rendered homeless. Onrush of water from upstream raised the water level of Nandakuza river which was flowing above danger mark.

BSS adds: A huge quantity of medicines was sent Thursday to nine flood affected districts for distribution among the distressed people. The medicines amounting seven and a half tonnes were sent to Narail, Magura, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Pabna, Madaripur, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon and Bogra from the central medicine store at Dhaka on emergency basis.

The Ganges continues to fall at considerable rate

Related stories on page 9

Three-pronged Yugoslav army attack on Croatia

ZAGREB, Sept 20: Croatia said the Yugoslav army launched a three-pronged attack in the east of the republic today after a long column of tanks, soldiers and heavy artillery moved up to the border, reports agencies.

In an assault which flung reinforcements into the battle for control of eastern Croatia, Croatian television said the army attacked the villages of Tovarnik, Nijemci and Lipovac just inside the border with the republic of Serbia.

"It looks like they're going to try and circle round and bite off Osijek and Vukovar," a Croatian Information Ministry official said of the reports, which could not immediately be confirmed.

The official was referring to two Croatian-held towns which have been under almost constant fire for weeks in fighting between Croatian forces, Serbs who oppose Croatian independence moves and the Serbian-led federal army.

The Croatian official said one of the three assaults had been halted by Croatian forces at Nijemci. He gave no other details.

The army sent more than 700 vehicles thundering out of Belgrade along the main Yugoslav motorway towards Croatia on Thursday afternoon. The column had stopped at Sid, close to the three villages but on the Serbian side of the border.

Croatian radio also reported heavy fighting in the towns of Vukovar and Osijek in north-eastern Croatia and mortar fire near Gospic in the south, one day after European Community (EC) efforts to end almost three months of fighting broke down.

Amid growing international concern about the fighting, which has killed about 500 people since June, Canada called for an urgent session of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the situation. France and Germany supported the call.

"France wants the Security Council to consider certain rather delicate legal problems that could arise," French President Francois Mitterrand said at the end of a three-day visit to Germany.

"The UN can and should in-

See Page 12 Col. 7

Islamic Constitution Movement held a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque after the Juma'a prayer yesterday. — Star photo

Switchover to parliamentary system hailed

Different socio-political and cultural organizations have hailed Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for her success in the switchover to parliamentary form of government and giving democracy an institutional shape, reports BSS.

The leaders of the organizations congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia for becoming the chief executive of the republic and wished all success to the parliamentary form of government, press release said.

Lt. Gen (Retd) Mir Shawkat Ali, president, city BNP, in his statement pointed out that Begum Zia through her nine years of movement had presented the nation parliamentary democracy by ousting the autocratic regime.

Bangladesh Muslim League leader Muhammad Ayenuddin

See Page 12 Col. 4

JP observes "Ershad release day" Oct 10

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party will observe "Ershad release day" on October 10 across the country through holding rallies and processions at district and upazila levels demanding release of the party leader.

It will also hold a rally at Baitul Mukarram square on the day.

A resolution adopted at an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of the party yesterday said the referendum did not reflect people's opinion. Vote cast was shown at only 35 per cent and that also included "widespread false voting", it said.

People "rejected" the referendum and the real turnout was not over five per cent, it claimed.

On stage at the National Press Club are two dancers of the Mohila Forum at a function organized to celebrate the organization founding day Friday. — Star photo

Declare flood-hit dists distressed area : Hasina

DINAJPUR, Sept 20 : Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina today asked the government to immediately declare the flood-hit northern districts, including Dinajpur, as "distressed area", reports UNB.

She also called for opening destitute centres and supplying essentials, including food, medicine, clothes and house building materials, on emergency basis to "save thousands of starving men, women and children" in the area.

Hasina, now on a tour of the northern districts, was addressing rallies at Kashba, Mohammadpur, Ulipur, Utrail, Rajbari, Kumarpara, Bhabaipur and Mohanpur in Chirir Bandar, Beerganj, Kaharol and Sadar upazilas of Dinajpur district.

Awami League leaders Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Abdur Rahim MP, Satish Chandra Roy MP, Mizanur Rahman Manu MP, Advocate Mustifizur Rahman MP and Dinajpur District Awami League President Abdur Rouf and General Secretary Azizul Islam also addressed the rallies.

Addressing a rally at Chirir Bandar, Hasina said that failure of the ruling party because of ignorance, inefficiency and ineptitude is again pushing the nation towards the "darkness of despair".

She alleged that relief goods received by the government from foreign agencies

See Page 12 Col. 5

Miladunnabi tonight

By Staff Correspondent

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, the birth and death anniversary of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) will be observed in Bangladesh, as elsewhere in the globe, from tonight (Saturday).

The Prophet of Islam was born in the 12th of the Hijri month of Rabiul Awal. He died also on the same date at the age of 63.

Different religious and socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

Bangladesh Islamic Foundation has arranged a fortnight-long programme to mark the occasion with due respect and religious fervour.

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the Islamic Foundation's programmes at 7 pm, today (Saturday). The programmes include Waj (discussion on religious matters), kerat competition (recitation from the Holy Quran), seminar, book exhibition and cultural competition.

Islamic foundation has also arranged a competition exclusively for the girl students of

See Page 12 Col. 1

Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (September 21) on account of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. There will, therefore, be no issue of the paper tomorrow (September 22).

—Managing Editor

Shahabuddin, Khaleda, Hasina seek divine blessings

The Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, has called upon the Muslims to derive inspiration from the Eid-e-Miladunnabi to follow the path of truth and justice keeping in mind the message of peace and brotherhood as enshrined in Islam, reports BSS.

In a message on the occasion of holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi he said the day is of great significance to each Muslim as it contains the holy memory of the birth and death of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) whom Allah had sent with the messages of peace, brotherhood, and welfare.

On this auspicious day, the

See Page 12 Col. 2

Deputies reject Silayev's food programme

MOSCOW, Sept 20: Russian Prime Minister Ivan Silayev, newly chosen to run the Soviet economy, suffered a slap Friday in his own parliament when lawmakers voted no confidence in his programme to supply food and deal with the economic crisis, reports AP.

Deputies voted 134 to 19 with five abstentions to adopt a resolution which declared "unsatisfactory" Silayev's government's actions to revive agriculture and master the economic crisis.

The resolution also urged Russian Federation President Boris N Yeltsin to review the makeup of his government and dismiss officials who had performed poorly.

Russian deputies rejected wording that would have made the resolution a no-confidence vote on the government's performance as a whole. The resolution they did pass has no practical effect, but was a political setback as Silayev prepares to take on a national economic post.

Russia has led the way in the Soviet Union in privatisation and has repeatedly offered incentives to farmers to get them to sell more goods to the state. But lawmakers complain officials are not doing enough, and point to the fact that about 25 per cent of the republic's harvest routinely rots in the field and that farmers don't want to sell their produce to state.

Silayev and other republican politicians have blamed the central government and the old inefficient command economy for the slow pace of change. Friday's censure followed a pessimistic speech Thursday by Russian Deputy

See Page 12 Col. 2

Bomb blast at AL district confce: One injured

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Sept 20: Abdul Malek, a district Awami League leader, was injured when a bomb exploded during clashes between two groups of AL workers at its biennial conference today.

AL Presidium member and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Abdus Samad Azad, central leader Amir Hossain Amu, and Rashed Mosharraf MP, Abul Kalam Azad MP, Golam Azam MP, Mohammad Nazim MP, were present at the conference held at the local public hall.

See Page 12 Col. 1

Baker reports progress in convening Middle East peace conference

AMMAN, Sept 20: US Secretary of State James Baker met unexpectedly here today with a Palestinian representative, saying progress had been made toward convening a Middle East peace conference and then left for Syria, reports AFP.

He later arrived in Damascus on the last leg of a regional tour to receive President Hafez Al-Assad's response to a letter of assurances on the nature of the conference he presented to the Syrian leader Wednesday.

Hanan Ashrawi, a leader of the Palestinian community in the Israeli-occupied territories, said she met Baker on orders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to clarify a series of demands blocking Palestinian attendance to a peace conference.

She said the decision by the PLO leadership was communicated to her overnight and Baker was only informed of the offer of a meeting at 3 am, his spokeswoman said.

On Thursday the Palestinians had refused to meet in Jordan with Baker, with Palestinian sources saying assurances given them earlier this week by the US official concerning the peace conference had been insufficient.

"We have held a meeting and progress has been made", Baker said at the end of more than one hour of talks held at the Mariott Hotel in Amman.

In reply of a reporter's question Baker also said he was optimistic about the prospects for a Middle East peace conference which he has been striving to organise for the past half year.

Ashrawi confirmed Baker's statement and said that some of the issues she discussed with him on behalf of the PLO had been clarified.

"Some points which needed to be clarified have been clarified," Ashrawi told reporters.

Earlier she had said she would discuss with Baker issues relevant to the Palestinians, request for self-determination, the status of Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem as well as Israel's settlement

See Page 12 Col. 3

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Green Delta started its business in 1985 as a private sector insurance company, with a pledge to serve the national economy providing personalised service to suit individual need. There on Green Delta never looked back. Through relentless efforts and uncompromising strive for perfections it has become the model insurance house with in a short span of time.

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