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 Arabia on pages 6, 7, 8,
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 Feature, Business,
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 dropped

NEWS BRIEFS

Attack on Purbokan

A group of unruly people
 Sunday night stormed the
 Dainik Purbokan office of
 Chittagong after they were
 refused entry to the office of
 the daily to see the just
 announced results of B Com
 examinations of Chittagong
 University in rush hours.
 The furious group damaged
 the window glasses, sign
 board of the daily and
 hurled stones inside the
 office. Two journalists of
 the daily were slightly
 injured by the flying
 glasses. Panchalaish
 police later came to the
 spot and brought the
 situation under control.
 reports BSS.

15 hurt at Zaker Manjil mosque

FARIDPUR, Sept 22: At
 least 15 people were
 injured when a bamboo
 ladder attached to an
 under-construction
 mosque collapsed at Biswa
 Zaker Manjil here Sunday
 evening. Nine of the
 injured were admitted to
 Faridpur Hospital with
 serious injuries and the
 rest were released after
 first aid, hospital sources
 said, reports UNB.

Aquino favours 7-year withdrawal

MANILA, Sept 22: President
 Corason Aquino, defeated
 in her battle for ratification
 of a new military bases
 pact with the United States,
 today backed a proposal for
 a seven-year withdrawal
 of American forces from
 the Philippines, reports
 Reuter.

Strip and search

NEW DELHI, Sept 22: About
 80 Indian schoolgirls were
 stripped by their teachers
 during a search for 150
 rupees (five dollars) which
 a fellow student said had
 gone missing, newspapers
 said today. They said the
 principal of the government-
 funded school in New Delhi
 and two other staff members
 were suspended after the
 incident on Friday. The
 girls were aged between
 15 and 16, the newspapers
 said, reports Reuter.

\$ 131,693 EC aid to Vietnam

BANGKOK, Sept 22: The
 European Community has
 given 131,693 dollars since
 April to Vietnam to help
 Vietnamese people returning
 from refugee camps, the
 official Vietnam news agency
 said. The grant was used
 to buy equipment for six
 job-training centres and
 vocational schools in Ho
 Chi Minh City, reports
 Reuter.

AL divided over fielding a presidential candidate

BNP to choose Biswas or B. Chowdhury

Star Report

Who will be BNP's candidate for the post of President in the October 8 election? Nobody within BNP looked quite sure till Sunday night.

Nominations for election to the post of President are to be submitted on September 25, according to the election schedule announced by the Election Commission.

There are wild speculations both inside BNP and outside about the nomination of a can-

didate by the party which is certain to get its nominee elected because of its absolute majority in the Parliament.

Under the parliamentary system now in force, the President will be elected by the 330 members of Parliament. The Election of President Law, 1991 provides for open election.

A majority of BNP leaders believe that BNP's candidate would be from amongst

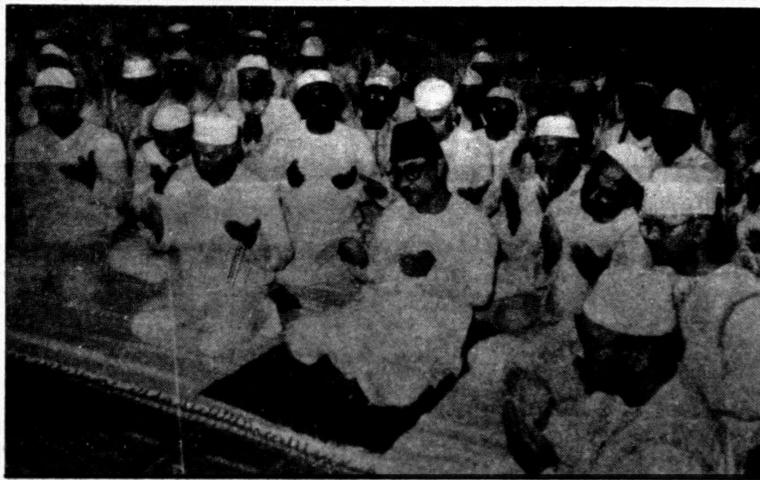
Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas, Deputy Leader of the Parliament Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury and Law Minister Mirza Golam Haif.

Some others suggest that the party may consider the nomination of a retired Supreme Court judge or a senior lawyer who are not even members of BNP.

Some other sources say the prospect of nomination of a person from outside the party

is very remote because a candidate has to enjoy the support of BNP MPs.

In the opposition Awami League, there are two lobbies. One lobby favours nomination of a strong candidate so that the election does not go unchallenged. The other lobby is in favour of taking a stand that AL should take part in an election where secrecy of the ballot would not be maintained. See Page 2 Col. 6



A milad mahfil was held at the Banghaban yesterday on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Besides Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, the milad mahfil was attended by the Speaker, ministers, MPs, high civil and military officials and members of the diplomatic missions. —PID photo

Miladunnabi observed

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, commemorating the birth and death anniversary of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), was observed Saturday night throughout the country as elsewhere in the Muslim world with due respect and religious fervour, reports BSS.

The Prophet of Islam was born on the 12th of the Hizri month of Rabiul Awal 1444 years ago. He died also on the same date at the age of 63.

Different religious, political, socio-cultural and juvenile organisations chalked out elaborate programmes in observance of the day which began Saturday evening. The programmes included milad mahfil, waj mahfil, discussions on the life of the Prophet (SM) and cultural function.

Government declared one day public holiday on the occasion. See Page 2 Col. 7

Diarrhoea claims 44 more in flood affected areas

By Staff Correspondent

Diarrhoea claimed at least 44 more lives during the 24 hours ending 6 am Sunday in the flood-stricken areas of the country's northern region.

With these deaths the toll has risen to 394 since September 1.

Besides, 2,148 persons were attacked by the disease during the period while the number of those attacked since September 1 is now 23,231, according to official sources.

The highest number of deaths during the last 24 hours was recorded at 17 in Nilphamari followed by Kishoreganj-5, Rajshahi, Pabna, Thakurgaon and Kurigram-3 each, Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and

Kushtia-2 each, and one each in Dinajpur, Rangpur, Joypurhat, Bogra, Natore, Sirajganj and Chandpur.

Official sources said that 1725 medical teams were working in the affected areas and that only 1074 doctors were included in the teams.

Meanwhile, water-borne diseases like dysentery and diarrhoea have broken out in most parts of the affected area and are reported to be spreading fast.

About 200 families were rendered homeless in the unabated erosion by the Jamuna in the last 24 hours while thousands of flood-hit people remained in a precarious condition in the Sirajganj district, said a UNB report.

Miseries of the affected people have multiplied for want of work, food and drinking water, although flood waters are rolling down the Jamuna and its tributaries, it added.

Our Kishoreganj Correspondent adds: Five deaths were reported from different affected areas of the district during last 24 hours.

The death toll in the district since September has risen to 60. However, the official death toll is 46.

Diarrhoea broke out as epidemic in the district's Bajitpur and Katiadi upazilas. Till Sunday 2,000 people were attacked with the disease with 108 attacked on Sunday.

Croatia, Y'slav army declare truce

ZAOREB (Yugoslavia), Sept 22: Croatia and the Yugoslav army ordered their forces to stop firing today after three days of the heaviest fighting in the country's undeclared civil war, reports Reuter.

The two sides ordered the truce to take effect at 3 pm (1300 GMT), but it was not immediately known if hostilities ended on the deadline.

An announcement by Defence Minister General Veljko Kladjevic of agreement on an 'absolute and mutual cease-fire' was followed by orders from Croatian President Franjo Tudjman for the troops of the rebel republic to stop offensive actions.

Tudjman also told Croatian

authorities to restore medical, food, water and electricity supplies immediately to army barracks besieged across Croatia. The army launched a massive offensive on Friday to relieve the bases.

The cease-fire came immediately after the army's biggest successes in its thrust against the outgunned Croatian forces.

Troops and Serbian fighters on Sunday captured the strategic town of Petrinja, near the Croatian capital Zagreb, while an armoured column in eastern Croatia fought its way into the town of Vinkovci to relieve a besieged barracks.

Air raid sirens wailed in Zagreb seven minutes before the cease-fire deadline and

people in the Croatian capital huddled in shelters for nearly an hour before the all-clear.

There was no attack, but Zagreb radio accused the army and Serbian fighters in eastern Croatia of infringing the truce.

The radio said several shells and mortar bombs hit the large town of Ostjck at 3.20 pm (1320 GMT). This could not be independently verified. Ostjck and the nearby town of Vukovar are surrounded by powerful armoured units of the federal army.

Tudjman's announcement said negotiations on separating the warring parties would begin once the cease-fire was in place.

MPs urged not to be provoked when Premadasa addresses parliament tomorrow

COLOMBO, Sept 22: Sri Lanka's ruling party has asked its legislators to maintain the dignity and decorum of parliament when President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who faces impeachment, addresses the legislature Tuesday, reports AFP.

Vincent Perera, the chief government whip, told United National Party MPs in a letter today that they should remain unprovoked in the face of any "disturbance, disruption or threat."

Opposition lawmakers have threatened to break tradition and question Premadasa at length when he makes his policy statement to the house when it resumes sitting after a 25-day suspension.

"MPs have been advised not to retaliate even if insults are hurled, at his excellency the president," Perera said in his letter.

Premadasa suspended parliament on August 30 until September 24 to give himself time to win over dissidents who sided with the opposition in submitting a resolution to

impeach him on a wide range of charges.

Dissidents argue that Premadasa has no moral right to address parliament while facing unprecedented impeachment proceedings.

Sri Lanka's 225-member legislative assembly has seen MPs punching each other in recent times when opposition members staged unorthodox protests such as sitting in the Speaker's chair.

Security has been tightened for the ceremonial opening of parliament Tuesday, officials

7 hurt as JU students, transport workers clash

By JU Correspondent

Transportation on the Dhaka-Aricha highway was suspended for 24 hours following clashes between the students of Jahangirnagar University and the transport workers Saturday.

However, traffic on the highway resumed Sunday morning after a settlement between the JU Central Students Union (JUCSU) leaders, JU teachers and the leaders of the transport workers of Gabtoli bus terminal Saturday evening.

Angry students damaged at least 15 buses and trucks, kept some vehicles under siege in the campus Saturday night and put up a barricade on the highway.

See Page 2 Col. 4

Armed intruder in SN hall?

A female armed outsider intruded into Dhaka University's Shamsunahar Hall and allegedly stayed at a room of the hall Saturday night, the hall residents said, reports UNB.

A group of students of the hall Sunday evening came to the office of the Dhaka University Journalists Association (DUJA) and alleged that the armed outsider after entering the hall had threatened the general students.

They said that the intruder Jesmine Kohinur, a former student of Eden Girls' College, stayed overnight at room number 333 which belongs to Chhatra League (A-A) leader and VP of the hall.

US writes off \$ 292m debt of Bangladesh

Star Economic Report

The 292-million-dollar debt relief, under a bilateral agreement signed in Dhaka on Saturday, will exempt Bangladesh from its repayment obligations to the US for its entire amount of outstanding official development aid in the form of project loans.

The agreement formalised the announcement by the US government in February of its intention to take relief action favouring Bangladesh.

The decision was communicated on March 4 by the US Ambassador in Dhaka William B Milam to the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed during a courtesy call-on meeting.

Under Saturday's agreement, Bangladesh is the first country in Asia to receive debt relief for development assistance loans from the US government.

All outstanding principal on US official development aid to Bangladesh stands cancelled under it. The amount, equivalent to Taka 1050 crore, also involves some project loans, dating back to the mid-1960s.

The agreement was signed by the US Ambassador Milam and Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance Enam Ahmed Chowdhury on behalf of their respective governments.

Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman was present at the signing ceremony at the National Economic Council (NEC) bloc at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Secretariat and put his "courtesy signature" on the agreement in view of the

"significance of the occasion".

The ERD said that the "written-off" amount of the debt under the agreement included all unpaid principal and interest accrued on it upto July 1991.

The cancellation of "such a big amount of outstanding loan immediately following the installation of the democratic government in power under parliamentary system in the country is a clear manifestation of the US government's firm support to the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia", the ERD stated.

Commenting on the debt cancellation, the US Ambassador stated that the signing of the debt relief agreement was "further support for the Bangladesh government's efforts to sustain the pace of economic reform".

The Finance Minister reiterated on the occasion the government's commitments to "democratic pluralism, human rights, rule of law, and accountability and transparency in the conduct of its business".

The external support in the form of debt relief will facilitate the government to achieve its stated goals and objectives, he added.

The US government decision under a provision of law allows "debt forgiveness" for least developed countries pursuing "economic structural reforms", supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, ERD Secretary See Page 2 Col. 3

DESA launching delayed: Talks with union leaders today

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) could not be launched on September 21 due to resistance by the employees unions of the Power Development Board (PDB).

This was for the third time the launching DESA was deferred. The government is however negotiating with the union leaders a settlement on the issue.

Energy Minister Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain held discussions with the union leaders on Wednesday and tried to persuade them to accept the newly-formed DESA. The minister also explained to them the government's position and the World Bank's conditions for the energy sector. The minister is See Page 2 Col. 2

USAID advises import of urea, officials say 'no'

By Chapal Bashar

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has advised Bangladesh to import one lakh tons of urea during fiscal 91-92, apprehending a shortfall of the item in the country.

Government officials however dispelled the apprehension and opposed the idea of importing urea, since, they maintained, its availability from local production would be more than the requirement. Moreover, import would affect the market of locally produced urea, they said.

At a recent meeting, the USAID representatives told the officials that there might be See Page 2 Col. 8

JP demands repolling to Parliament

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party on Sunday demanded fresh elections to Parliament in light of the recent switchover to a parliamentary form of government in the country.

Acting Chairman of the Party, Mizanur Rahman Choudhury, MP, said a news conference in his Gulshan residence this afternoon, that after the introduction of the See Page 2 Col. 7

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