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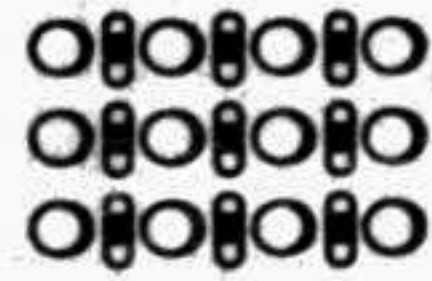
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Ansars surge to the top of the medals table on the third day of the national women's swimming championships
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NEWS BRIEFS

Probe body for Sylhet incident

SYLHET, Sept 29: The government has formed a three-member enquiry committee headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Mohammad Ismail to probe an incident in the town Saturday in which a police camp was set ablaze by angry mob, reports UNB.

Pak newspapers stage strike

ISLAMABAD, Sept 29: Pakistani newspapers and journalists staged a 24-hour strike today to protest against a series of violent attacks on reporters, reports Reuter.

Mobutu dismisses army chief

KINSHASA, Sept 29: Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko has dismissed his Army Chief of Staff and ordered a restructuring of the Armed Forces after a looting spree led by disgruntled soldiers last week, military sources said today.

Protect interests of Rajshahi

RAJSHAH, Sept 29: The committee to protect the interests of Rajshahi district (Rajshahi Shantha Sangrakshak Committee) today brought out a procession in the town

Withdrawal today: Opposition divided: Jamaat may back Biswas

Badrul firm to stay in race

Star Report

Justice Badrul Haider Choudhury told The Daily Star on Sunday that he was determined to contest the presidential election and that he would not withdraw.

The last date of withdrawal of candidature expires today at 2.30 pm.

Meanwhile, Awami League's effort to project Justice Choudhury as the consensus candidate of the opposition could not gain ground as neither the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) nor Jamaat-e-Islami lent support till late last night.

Justice Choudhury told Star correspondents at his Gulshan

residence last night that he had talks with Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, the acting chairman of the Jatiya Party, who, he claimed, assured support of his party.

A former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Badrul Haider Choudhury was seen flanked by Abdus Samad Azad, MP, Acting President of AL, Amir Hossain Amu, Acting General Secretary, Matiya Choudhury, MP, of AL, Barrister Amirul Islam (an expelled leader of AL), Hasina Banu Shirin, former whip of the Jatiya Party and Zakir Hossain of the Ganatantri Party.

Hasina Banu Shirin said the Jatiya Party would lend its support to the candidature of Justice Choudhury. A decision in this regard will be taken on October 2, she said.

Justice Choudhury said he had talks with Jamaat parliamentary group leader Maulana Matlur Rahman Nizami on Sunday morning requesting him not to take any decision by Sunday night.

Jamaat sources however indicated that they might support the candidature of Abdur Rahman Biswas nominated by the ruling party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Badrul Haider Choudhury

claimed that certain group from within the BNP had contacted him on Sunday promising to see him late Sunday night. He however requested them not to discuss anything about withdrawal of his candidature. He declined to identify the BNP men who contacted him.

Meanwhile, the central secretary of the CPB at a meeting observed that under the prevailing circumstances it had become practically impossible to put a candidate on the basis of national consensus.

Emphasising the need for a consensus not only on pre-

Khaleda visits Supreme Command hq

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited the Supreme Command Headquarters Division Sunday, reports UNB.

She was given a ceremonial guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the three services at Old Airport.

On her arrival there, she was received by chiefs of the three services, Defence Secretary and PSO to Supreme Commander.

The guard of honour over, Begum Zia went to Shikha Anirban and placed wreaths there. She also observed a solemn silence for a few moments as mark of respect to the martyrs of the War of Liberation.

The Prime Minister signed the visitors book there and wrote: "We are grateful to the heroes for ever."

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia reviewing a ceremonial guard of honour by smartly turned-out contingents of the three services at the Old Airport Sunday. — PID photo

Transport strike paralyses northern districts

By Staff Correspondent

Transport strike in 16 northern districts continued for the third consecutive day Sunday totally halting road communications.

Sufferings of the travelling public multiplied and the prices of daily essentials soared as movement of goods by trucks remained suspended.

About 1800 loaded trucks remained stranded at Aricha and Nagorbari ghats till Sunday evening.

Passenger coach services between the capital and the northern region also remained disrupted due to the strike.

However, some light vehicles were ferried between Aricha and Nagorbari ghats Sunday.

North Bengal Sarak Paribahan Samik Federation resorted to strike for an indefinite period to press its seven-point demand which includes wage hike, issuance of appointment letters, implementation of previously signed agreement with the authorities, removal of the Deputy Commissioner of Naogaon, release of arrested workers and withdrawal of false cases against them.

The crisis started in

Naogaon about a month and a half ago when transport workers demanded appointment letters from the owners.

Additional District Magistrate of Naogaon told The Daily Star that the crisis was resolved on August 31 by the intervention of local MPs and politicians.

"But the workers federation called an indefinite strike from September 27 in this region without any notice reviving the past issues," he said over telephone.

He said that this strike had no basis, the problem of issuance of appointment letters

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Plea not to favour particular class in Rules of Business

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Civil Service Coordinating Committee has urged the government not to give undue preference to a particular class in the administration during the framing of a new 'Rules of Business'.

The BCS Coordinating Committee comprising 24 cadre services associations at a meeting yesterday with Abu Hena in the chair, hailed the installation of Begum Khaleda Zia as head of government.

The meeting also hailed the decision on the framing of a new 'Rules of Business' and 'Allocation of Business' in line with the principles of transparency.

Rahman said: "I am convinced that we have resources and manpower for improving the lot of the people particularly in the rural areas. The

SI assaulted near Rokeya Hall

By DU Correspondent

A sub-inspector of police was assaulted Sunday evening near Rokeya Hall of the Dhaka University allegedly by Chhatra League (S-A) workers.

Witnesses said that Golam Faruk Obhi and his associates were present during the assault.

The sub-inspector came to the spot from a police van parked near the Suhrawardi Park.

He, however, returned to the van. His name could not be gathered as the policemen there refused to say anything regarding the incident.

Meanwhile, various student organisations held rallies and brought out processions on campus Sunday morning demanding a violence free campus.

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10 defence witnesses named in wealth amassing case

Ershad pleads not guilty

By Staff Correspondent

Deposed President Ershad facing corruption charges in a Special Judge Court on Sunday pleaded not guilty when Judge Mohammad Ali Khan read out the charges on amassing wealth from beyond his known sources of income.

When the Judge read out the list of charges against him, Ershad rose to his feet in the dock and said, "I'm totally innocent". He said, "These charges are fabricated and aimed at undermining me".

The government, he said wanted to serve a political purpose and arouse malice against him.

Ershad made his statement brief and pleaded to give a written statement under section 342 on the next day of hearing.

Ershad said that he would produce defence witnesses to prove that the case was false.

Meanwhile the prosecution produced 48 witnesses including the members of the Locking and Sealing Committee and the Inventory Committee.

The prosecution calculated that the total income of Ershad throughout his life from his known sources would not be more than 73 lakhs including

the earnings from his immovable property.

A cash amount of about Taka 1,90,81,565 and articles worth Taka 65 lakh were found from the Sena Bhaban and the Bangabhaban said by the prosecution to be Ershad's belongings.

Earlier the High Court had rejected Ershad's petition seeking the quashing of charges against him.

The High Court in its judgement said that the offence was a cognizable one in the eyes of law but that the Special Court would have to

See Page 12 Col. 2

Gorbachev's reaction positive: Bush

SEA ISLAND (Georgian), Sept 29: President George Bush on Saturday said he considered Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's reaction to his nuclear disarmament plan as "positive", and the White House said consultations with Moscow would continue, reports agencies.

In a televised interview in the Soviet Union earlier Saturday, Gorbachev described the plan unveiled by Bush Friday as positive but said it was too early to assess the proposals.

Nor did Gorbachev mention

any reciprocal steps, although a spokesman said earlier that most of Washington's initiatives "deserve to be reciprocated."

"The President believes that this is a positive response from President Gorbachev," said White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater from Sea Island, Georgia, where Bush is vacationing until Monday. "We will continue to consult with the Soviets."

Bush announced Friday that the United States would unilaterally abandon its land and sea-launched short-range nu-

clear weapons and proposed to Moscow the elimination of ground-based multiple-warhead ballistic missiles.

As the first phase of the plan, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Saturday he had signed the order taking the US strategic bomber force off alert. Some 40 bombers would be handed over to maintenance crews and would have their missiles deactivated and stored, and the bombers could be returned to alert state in 24 hours if needed, Cheney said.

A senior US official, however, said the United States

could reverse its unilateral nuclear reform if the Soviet Union did not follow the US lead on abandoning short-range nuclear missiles.

Bush called on the Moscow to reciprocate Washington's "bold" moves. Senator John Warner, a Virginia Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Friday he had reason to believe Moscow would make some announcement in the next two or three days.

Editorial on page 4

IMF meets today to consider funding

Economic reforms programme okayed

By Moazzem Hossain

The IMF directors will consider at a meeting in Washington today (Monday) the funding support for Bangladesh under the on-going economic reforms.

The Committee of the Whole, representing the policy makers of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved last Friday at its meeting, also in Washington, the programme for economic reforms in 1991-92 under the three-year term Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF).

The ESAF was approved in early fiscal 1990-91 for Bangladesh. This will be the

second year of ESAF operation in 1991-92.

Earlier, the Committee of the Whole postponed its consideration of the reforms programme under ESAF for Bangladesh for 1991-92 following the announcement of the new national pay scales for the public employees by the government. The approval of the programme for annual instalment fund release for the current fiscal year by IMF was due last month.

But, both the WB and the IMF expressed fears that the implementation of the announced pay scales would have

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Govt may lay off 11 textile mills

off 11 textile mills

Government will declare lay off in 11 textile mills early next month if they fail to make up financial loss within the current month, official sources said, reports UNB.

Management of the mills have been warned by the government that they would face lay off from October 1, failing to make their units profitable by September 30.

The warning came after a meeting of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation chaired by the State Minister for Textile on August 7.

The meeting decided that the textile mills which would not reduce losses by 50 per cent within August 31 and the

See Page 12 Col. 1

Public sector can do no good: Saifur

Massive disinvestment from next month

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said here Friday that the government would undertake massive development programmes from the next month to reactivate the national economy, reports BSS.

Speaking at a briefing session on the state of national economy sponsored by Overseas Correspondent Association of Bangladesh (OCAAB), the Finance Minister said that there was no dearth of resources for funding the development programmes. The size of the Annual Development Programmes would remain intact this year, he hoped.

The Finance Minister said the procedure of the liberalised import policy would be further simplified and relaxed and the margin of letter of credit for the purpose of import would be reduced further.

Dwelling at length on the different aspects of the national economy the Finance Minister reiterated the commitment of the BNP government under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to ensure the welfare of the people through better management of the financial matters with accountability and transparency.

Rahman said: "I am convinced that we have resources and manpower for improving the lot of the people particularly in the rural areas. The

only thing we need management of the economic and financial matters appropriately with honesty and accountability," he said.

Earlier, the president of OCAAB, Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, welcomed the Finance Minister while the General Secretary Shehabuddin Ahmed Nafa presented the vote of thanks.

The Finance Minister laid out enhancing the mobilisation of internal resources for funding the development programmes in the back-drop of aid fatigue by the donor countries and agencies.

He said the government had decided to expand the credit facilities particularly in the rural development sector. "We should double the investment in the agriculture sector, which is the most suitable area for creating job opportunities for the unemployed."

Regarding the proposed disinvestment programme scheduled to begin soon, the Finance Minister said public sector enterprises and industrial units would be disinvested in a massive way for injecting dynamism in the economy.

He said under the disinvestment programme, the government would also release the shares of the multinational companies.

He said half of the shares of

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AL concern at plot

'Scotland Yard provides security to Sheikh Hasina'

The Scotland Yard is providing security to opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina who is now on a visit to the United Kingdom, a senior Awami League leader said here Sunday, reports UNB.

He said the special security for Hasina was arranged soon after press reports here that she was on the hit list of an international terrorist organisation.

AL Acting General Secretary Amir Hossain Amu telephoned the agency to say they received a message from London that necessary action had been taken by the Scotland Yard detective branch.

The Scotland Yard has deployed security personnel around the place where Hasina is staying in London and is also

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SKOP ultimatum to meet demands by October 21

Stramk Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) leaders on Sunday asked the government to meet their five-point demand before October 21 or face a movement, reports UNB.

SKOP, a broad-based alliance of workers and employees, has earlier announced a 24-hour countrywide strike on

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