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Holiday

The offices of *The Daily Star*
 will remain closed today
 (Sunday) on the occasion of
 the Holy Ashura.
 Therefore, there will be
 no issue of the newspaper
 tomorrow (Monday).
 — Management

NEWS BRIEFS

Four Rupali Bank officials held

Four officials of Rupali Bank,
 Savar Cantonment Branch,
 have been taken into custody
 on charge of misappropriating
 Tk 10 lakh of the Savar
 Cantonment, an official hand-
 out said last night. Bureau of
 Anti-Corruption filed a case
 against branch Manager Abdus
 Selim, Accountant Mosharrif
 Hossain, Junior Officer
 Ramanath Sarker and
 Receiving Cashier Nazrul
 Islam, reports UNB.

Confce on CHT affairs July 26

A national conference on
 Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs,
 organised by Chittagong Hill
 Tracts National Coordination
 and Peace Council (CHTNCPC),
 will be held in the capital on
 July 26. About 400 representa-
 tives, both tribal and non-
 tribal, of the three hill dis-
 tricts are expected to attend
 the conference and take part
 in the discussion, a CHTNCPC
 press release said, reports
 UNB.

Noriega sentenced to 40 years in prison



Gen Noriega

MIAMI, July 11: Former
 Panamanian dictator Manuel
 Noriega was sentenced to 40
 years in jail on Friday after
 telling a court in a rambling,
 almost three-hour speech that
 he was an innocent victim of
 US political prosecution, re-
 ports Reuter.

US district judge William
 Hoeveler ruled Noriega must
 spend 40 years in jail before
 being considered for parole.
 He would be 97 years old when
 released.

Prosecutors asked Hoeveler
 to sentence Noriega to upto
 120 years in prison for allow-
 ing Panama to be used by
 Colombia's Medellin drug car-

tel for smuggling cocaine to
 the United States.

Noriega never took the
 stand in his own defence dur-
 ing his seven-month drug and
 racketeering trial, and was
 convicted on April 9. He was
 brought to the United States
 after being captured in the
 December 1989 American in-
 vasion of Panama.

He spoke for almost three
 hours during what should have
 been a routine sentencing
 hearing, saying the US admin-
 istrations of presidents Ronald
 Reagan and George Bush were
 out to get him because he re-
 fused to let Panama be used by

See Page 12 Col 7



A Tajia procession in the city yesterday in observance of
 Ashura today. —Star photo

Ashura today

Ashura, the 10th day of the
 holy month of Muharram, will
 be observed throughout the
 country today with due solemn-
 ity and religious fervour, re-
 ports UNB.

On this day in Hijri 61,
 Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), the
 grandson of Prophet Muham-
 mad (SM), embraced martyr-
 dom in the battle of Karbala,
 a fight against evil forces to
 establish truth and justice.

Crores of Muslims recall
 with heavy heart the mournful
 historic event that constantly
 inspires mankind to fight for
 justice even at the cost of life.

The day is a public holiday.
 Radio Bangladesh and
 Bangladesh Television will put
 up special programmes high-
 lighting the significance of
 the day.

Different religious and cul-
 tural organisations will orga-
 nise seminars and symposia
 highlighting the significance
 of the day.

Devout Muslims will fast
 and offer special prayers on
 the occasion.

Main attraction of the day in
 the city will be 'Tazia' to be
 brought out from Hossaini
 Dalan. Besides, a number of
 processions from different
 parts of the capital will also
 mark the day.

A week-long fair will be
 See Page 12 Col 8

Sylhet situation may worsen Flood devours 25 villages in Pabna

PABNA, July 11: Twenty five
 villages of char areas of Bera,
 Sujanagar and Sadar thanas of
 the district went under water
 as the Padma and Jamuna
 swelled further in last three
 days, reports UNB.

Water Development Board
 sources said today 13.33 cm
 rainfall was recorded in the
 district while the Jamuna reg-
 istered 7 cm rise during the
 period. However, it was still
 flowing 80 cm below the dan-
 ger mark.

Meanwhile, the unabated
 erosion by the two rivers ren-
 dered about 100 families
 homeless in eight villages of
 the three thanas in last 24
 hours.

The villages are Raghunath-
 pur, Nakalia and Varena of
 Bera thana, Nazirpur and
 Shakhganj of Sujanagar thana
 and Ashutoshpur, Kamarpur
 and Goshpur of Sadar thana.

Report from Lalmonirhat
 adds: At least 200 families have
 been rendered homeless in
 the district during the last
 three days in massive erosion
 by the Teesta.

The river, which went into
 spate with huge water from
 the upper-catchment and

incessant rain, devoured some
 400 acres of land in four af-
 fected thanas, according to a
 primary estimate.

The affected thanas are
 Aditmari, Kaliganj, Hatibandha
 and the Sadar.

Balapara and Chandimari in
 Mohikhocha union of Aditmari
 are the worst hit villages.

The homeless villagers have
 taken shelter on nearby flood
 control embankments.

Meanwhile, the embank-
 ment on the river in Aditmari
 thana is threatened by the ero-
 sion.

Meanwhile, the Brahmapu-
 tra and the Ganges basins may
 experience mild floods to-
 wards this month end while
 the situation in Sylhet aggra-
 vate, officials said Saturday.

According to the Flood
 Forecasting Centre prediction,
 the flood situation in greater
 Sylhet may deteriorate as the
 two rivers in the Meghna
 basin, already in spate, con-
 tinued swelling in the last 24
 hours.

It said the Surma and the
 Monu in the region were flow-
 ing above danger level.

War continues despite West's move to deter Serb fighters

SARAJEVO, July 11: Mortar
 rounds landed near the U.N.
 headquarters and the peace-
 keepers barracks early
 Saturday, and Bosnian leaders
 complain the West's latest
 moves to end the 4 1/2-
 month-old civil war are too
 weak to deter Serb fighters,
 reports AP.

In Belgrade, capital of the
 Serbian-dominated remnants
 of Yugoslavia, Premier-design-
 ate Milan Panic pledged again
 Saturday to get the U.N. sanc-
 tions against his country lifted
 and said he was satisfied by

meetings with Western offi-
 cials in Helsinki, Finland.

The leaders of newly inde-
 pendent Bosnia were less so.
 An Adriatic flotilla promised by
 NATO and the Western Euro-
 pean Union to monitor the
 economic embargo against
 Yugoslavia fell well short of
 their demands for military in-
 tervention in the three-month
 siege.

"The Serbs are making
 fools of the Americans," said
 Stjepan Kljucic, a member of
 the Bosnian presidency. "If
 America is not going to react,

then there will be no indepen-
 dent Bosnia-Herzegovina."

U.N. commanders in Sara-
 jevo said their installations are
 falling victim to "incidental"
 shelling from fierce fighting
 between the Muslim-led Bosnian
 defenders and Serb irregu-
 lars, who oppose Bosnia's
 secession from Yugoslavia.

Four mortar rounds landed
 100 meters (yards) south of
 the U.N. command post over-
 night, spraying it with debris,
 and stray 50 mm bullet went
 through a window, U.N.
 spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

Three more rounds landed in
 the Canadian peacekeepers'
 camp, one on the quartersmas-
 ter's store.

There were no injuries, and
 Eckhard said it was not
 known who fired. Canadian
 commander Col. Michel Jones
 was to meet with both sides
 Saturday.

Warfare in contested zones
 outside of Sarajevo also im-
 peded the U.N. effort. A convoy
 of 32 empty supply trucks and
 73 lightly armed soldiers has
 been stranded for four days in
 the hills en route from the

capital to Zagreb, in neigh-
 bouring Croatia.

About 50 kilometers (30
 miles) from Sarajevo, the con-
 voy found the road ahead
 mined. When they tried to re-
 turn, the road had been mined
 behind them.

"They went to the right and
 there were mines," said
 Eckhard. "They went to the
 left, and there were mines.
 They are having a rough time."

The convoy - now low on
 fuel - was trying to return to
 Sarajevo on a main road
 Saturday, the U.N. said.

Overnight fighting was
 relatively light in the capital.
 There was shelling in the sub-
 urbs, the Old Town and near
 the Bosnian presidency build-
 ing, the U.N. said. Both sides
 appeared to be firing.

On Friday, Serb forces
 launched two infantry raids for
 control of the strategic Zlatise
 hill, towering over the heart of
 the Old Town. By capturing
 the hill, they could virtually cut
 Sarajevo, in two.

The Bosnian news agency
 BH Press said nine people were
 killed and 32 injured Friday.

HBFC to resume lending operations this month

By S Y Bakht

The House Building Finance
 Corporation (HBFC) will re-
 sume lending operations this
 month after a lapse of over
 three years.

"We are hoping to start pro-
 viding new loans by the 15th
 of this month," said a source of
 the HBFC, the lone housing
 sector lending agency in the
 country.

The corporation will start
 providing new loans 'immedi-
 ately' in the metropolitan
 areas of Dhaka, Chittagong,
 Khulna and Rajshahi. However,
 no decision has yet been taken
 to resume loan operations for
 other areas around the coun-
 try, he noted.

The corporation source
 added that the new loans
 would be provided under a re-
 vised guideline.

A Finance Ministry source
 said that steps had already
 been taken to increase the
 paid-up capital of the HBFC. An
 amount of Taka 25 crore has
 been given to the Corporation
 in June last while another
 Taka 25 crore has been ear-
 marked in the 1992-93 bud-
 get.

Set up in 1952, the
 Corporation's initial paid-up

capital of Taka 10 crore was
 later increased by another
 Taka 50 crore. Thus, by the
 end of the ongoing fiscal year
 the total paid-up capital of the
 HBFC will stand at Taka 110
 crore, added the Ministry
 source.

Meanwhile, the deadline for
 the special opportunity offered
 by the Corporation to repay
 outstanding loans expired on
 June 30.

The offer gave defaulters an
 opportunity to repay their out-
 standing dues in equal instal-
 ments spread over a period of
 two years after making a down-
 payment of at least 10 per cent
 of the outstanding amount.

The HBFC source said that
 about 30 to 35 per cent of the
 defaulters responded to the of-
 fer. The final figures of the re-
 covered amount of overdue
 loans for 1991-92 was in the
 process of being tabulated.

However, he added that the
 recovery rate up to June 30
 this year was likely to top Taka
 100 crore compared to Taka
 85 crore overdue loans recov-
 ered during the previous fiscal
 year.

Initially, all new loans, the

HBFC source noted, would be
 provided under a similar cate-
 gory. To ensure repayment of
 the loans, HBFC will encourage
 borrowers to build a two-unit
 house of about 3,000 sq ft, so
 that one floor can be rented to
 help repay the loans.

The Finance Ministry
 source said that the new bor-
 rowers will be charged a 'flat
 rate' of interest instead of the
 simple term rate of interest
 charged earlier.

Lending operations of the
 HBFC, funded by selling debent-
 ures to commercial banks and
 to the Bangladesh Bank, was
 suspended in May 1989.

At the time, about 48,000
 borrowers around the country
 owed the Corporation more
 than Taka 1200 crore and its
 total financial loss stood at
 around Taka 350 crore.

According to Finance Min-
 istry figures, the total out-
 standing amount owed by the
 HBFC stood at Taka 1503.98
 crore as of December 1991.
 The total amount of principal
 and debenture loan interest
 payment of the HBFC is pre-
 sently about Taka 108 crore
 per year.

WB keen to update private sector jute mills

By Inam Ahmed

The World Bank (WB) has
 showed its interest in balanc-
 ing and modernisation of the
 private sector jute mills in the
 country.

The WB has already asked
 for a list of machinery required
 for the modernisation scheme
 from all jute mills. The bank
 will sum up the lists and then
 scrutinize the financial outlay
 required for the scheme, ac-
 cording to concerned sources.

Meanwhile, the WB in its
 meeting with the representa-
 tives of Bangladesh private and
 public sector jute mills in
 Washington recently, has again

See Page 12 Col 5



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a meeting at Osmani Memorial Auditorium
 yesterday in observance of 'World Population Day'. —PID photo

Population Day observed

World Population Day was
 observed Saturday throughout
 the country as elsewhere in
 the globe with a commitment
 to establish 'A world in bal-
 ance', reports BSS.

The day was observed to
 highlight adverse effect of
 population growth and in-
 crease awareness among the
 people to accept small family
 norms.

The theme of this year's
 population day was 'A world in
 balance' and special thrust was
 given on environmental pro-
 tection and making a balance
 between natural resources and
 population.

In the morning a colourful
 procession was brought out
 from Shishu Park with ban-
 ners, festoons and placards
 depicting various family plan-
 ning messages.

Led by Health and Family
 Welfare Minister Chowdhury
 Kamal Ibne Yusuf, the proces-
 sion started at the National
 Press Club.

In observance of the World
 Population Day 'Bangladesh
 2000' Saturday decided to
 provide employment and train-
 ing opportunities to the edu-
 cated unemployed youths in
 the age group of 15-33 in its
 project area at Shibbalaya under
 Manikganj district.

Bangladesh Family Planning
 See Page 12 Col 8

Population is the root of our poverty : PM

Prime Minister Begum
 Khaleda Zia said here yester-
 day that the population policy
 of the government aimed at
 integrating family planning
 with the overall nation building
 activities, ensuring healthcare
 facilities for mother and child
 and to set two-child family as a
 model for all, reports BSS.

Begum Zia said "we have
 taken up family planning not
 in isolation but as a well-coordi-
 nated national programme. As
 parts of the programme, we
 have initiated a number of ma-
 jor steps like poverty allevia-
 tion, achieving national au-
 tarky, expansion of education
 especially women's education
 and ensuring healthcare of
 mother and child."

The Prime Minister was
 addressing a discussion orga-
 nised to mark the World
 Population Day 1992 at the
 Osmani Memorial Hall. Health
 Minister Chowdhury Kamal
 Ibne Yusuf, Deputy Minister for
 Health and Family Welfare Md.
 Sirajul-Huq, Health Secretary
 Syed Ahmed and UNFPA and
 UNDP representative in the
 country Charles Larcomont also
 spoke.

Jointly organised by the
 Health and Family Welfare
 Ministry, Family Planning
 Directorate and UNFPA, the
 function was attended by min-
 isters, members of parliament,
 diplomats, members of differ-
 ent foreign missions and high
 officials.

Highlighting the serious-
 ness of the population explo-
 sion in the country, the Prime
 Minister said the country's
 population was increasing at a
 rate of 2.10 per cent which
 was alarming compared to
 even the neighbouring coun-
 tries. If this rate is not prop-
 erly checked, the country's
 population might well exceed
 150 million by the year 2010,
 she added.

Begum Zia said the huge
 population is a stumbling block
 in the nation's way of socio-
 economic uplift. "Our plight
 can be well foreseen when 40
 to 50 million new faces will be
 added after 18/20 years.

She said, an additional
 quantum of 10 million tons of
 foodgrains would then be re-
 quired to feed these new
 mouths. About 20 million new
 jobs would have to be created
 alongwith the setting up of
 more educational institutions,
 hospitals, transports, houses
 and other amenities. It would
 indeed be a Herculean task to
 meet the increased demands
 with the limited resources the
 See Page 12 Col 6

Thursday's incident 5 Titas Gas employees held so far

By Staff Correspondent

Police have so far arrested
 five employees of the Titas Gas
 Transmission and Distribution
 Company Limited in connection
 with Thursday's incident in
 its head office in Dhaka that
 left one killed.

Tejgaon police said that
 they arrested Saturday Moham-
 mads Shahjahan and Asad Ali
 Khandaker, two employees of
 the Company, for their alleged
 involvement in the incident.
 See Page 12 Col 7

France to help people affected by refugee settlement

By Staff Correspondent

France will extend assis-
 tance to the 'non-Rohingya
 population' in Bangladesh's
 southern districts that is suf-
 fering from the refugee set-
 tlements in the area.

Ambassador Serge Degallatx
 in Dhaka will fly to Cox's Bazar
 next week to visit the places
 and is scheduled to initial
 agreements with two local
 See Page 12 Col 7

Memo to PM Jamaat demands trial of 'people's court' sponsors

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami leaders yester-
 day handed over a memo-
 randum to Prime Minister
 Begum Khaleda Zia demanding
 immediate release of their
 leader Golam Azam.

The memorandum also de-
 manded trial of the 'people's
 court' sponsors on charges of
 sedition.

The memorandum was
 handed over by a team headed
 by Jamaat Assistant General
 Secretary Professor M Yusuf
 Ali, Press Secretary Abdul
 Kader Mollah, Sheikh Ansar
 Ali, MP, Moulana Shakhawat
 Hossain, MP, city Amir A T M
 Azharul Islam and Secretary
 Jasim Uddin Sarkar.

Prior to the team's visit to
 the prime Minister's Secre-
 tariat in the morning, the
 leaders addressing a rally at
 Moghbazar crossing said that
 the agreement signed in parli-
 ament building between the
 BNP and the Awami League
 (AL)-led Opposition was illegal
 See Page 12 Col 3

Govt patronising terrorism: CPB

By Staff Correspondent

The General Secretary of
 the Communist Party of
 Bangladesh (CPB) has called
 upon all the patriotic forces of
 the country to take united
 steps to solve the national po-
 litical and socio-economic
 problems.

Nurul Islam Nahid, the
 General Secretary of the CPB,
 was addressing the party's
 two-day central committee
 meeting which began yester-
 day with the party President
 Saifuddin Ahmed Manik in the
 chair.

Placing his political and or-
 ganisational report in the
 meeting, the CPB General Sec-
 retary, observed that the anti-
 liberation and fascist forces
 were pushing the country into
 See Page 12 Col 1