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 VOL. II NO. 211 REGD. NO. DA 781

# The Daily Star

BHADRA 9, 1399 BS,

DHAKA MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 1992

SAFAR 24, 1413 HIJRI

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12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### B Chowdhury off to London

The Deputy Leader of the House in parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury left Dhaka for London Sunday morning on a personal visit. He will stay there for about two weeks, reports BSS.

### City Puja body confce Aug 28

The biennial conference of Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee will be held at Dhakeshwari Mondir Melangan on August 28. Profullah Kumar Howlader will preside over the conference. Founder President of Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee Sree Kamal Bhuson Roy Chowdhury will address the conference as chief guest, reports UNB.

### JP calls strike in Jessore today

JESSORE, Aug 23: The district unit of Jatiya Party has called for a half-day strike in the town tomorrow to protest the arrest of its president Khaledur Rahman Titu. Khaledur Rahman, a former State Minister and Cultural Affairs Secretary of the central committee of the party, was arrested in Dhaka late Saturday night, reports UNB.

### City BNP extended meeting today

An extended meeting of the Dhaka city unit of BNP will be held at its office in Dhaka today with city BNP president Li Gen (Retd) Mir Shawkat Ali MP in the chair, reports BSS.

## BNP opens dialogue with AL PM-5 party meet not held

By Special Correspondent

The proposed meeting between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the leaders of the Five-Party Alliance did not take place yesterday in spite of its time being fixed.

In another development, the BNP has also opened a dialogue with the Awami League (AL) where Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House is playing the key role. Prof. Chowdhury is as-

sisted by Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Chief Whip in Parliament, according to sources.

Meanwhile authoritative sources said that the Five-Party Alliance's conditions were not acceptable to Begum Zia and that she decided to 'defer the meeting for the time being.'

Earlier, the Alliance leaders, through intermediaries, informed that they preferred a

meeting represented by a single-person and that it should not be disclosed to the media.

Sources said that the meeting was scheduled for 2.30 pm yesterday and that the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) policy planners decided against it at 1.30 pm.

Alliance sources said that a meeting, to prepare the agenda for the meeting, was held in the Secretariat cham-

ber of Abdul Mannan Bhuiya, Minister for Labour and Manpower, at 11 am. The BNP side was represented by Mannan and Afsar Siddiqui while the Alliance side was represented by Nirmal Sen and Haider Akbar Khan Rono.

Alliance sources told The Daily Star that the decision rejecting a formal dialogue with the Prime Minister was

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**LOOKING TIRED, BUT FEELING BETTER:** Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon recovering at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH). The photo was taken at 1.45 pm Sunday through the glass-door of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Hospital authorities, including Area Log Commander Brig Aiuuddin, CMH Commanding Officer Lt Col Toufique, top surgeons Maj Gens Mohaimen and Anis Waiz, had given permission to The Daily Star photographer A K M Mohsin to take snaps of the ailing leader from inside the ICU, but a number of people who claimed to be Menon's family members and their own doctor refused to let the photographer enter the ICU for security reason.

## Navy will be made stronger, says PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her government's firm determination to build a strong navy as it cannot remain indifferent to the country's defence needs, reports UNB.

"In the interest of overall development, we cannot remain indifferent to our defence needs. Because development and defence are synonymous," she said pointing out that development would not be possible if independence and sovereignty were not consolidated.

Begum Zia was inaugurating the commissioning of two missile boats named Anirban and Uital of Bangladesh Navy at the BIWTA Sadarghat terminal in the morning.

She expressed the hope that inclusion of the two new boats would help expand the fleet of the Bangladesh Navy to transform it into a modern force that is necessary to maintain military balance in the region.

She thanked the Chinese government for providing the two missile boats.

In her speech, Begum Zia said one of the major responsibilities of the navy were to protect the country's vast maritime resources, including economically prospective coastline.

"Our coastline is about 700 kilometre long, we have sea area covering about 40,000 kilometre where huge untapped resources lie," she said.

Referring to the glorious natural calamities and providing services to humanity, Begum Zia observed members of the naval forces were also making commendable contribution to the protection of fish resources, curbing piracy and anti-smuggling drive which helped in restoring security of

the coastal people. The Prime Minister also recalled contributions of the martyrs of the naval force during the Liberation War.

Begum Zia said despite resource constraint, the government was considering to set up a modern sea research institute in the country.

The Prime Minister also urged all to help the government in its efforts to charge the condition of the people which, she said, is essential for giving the fledgling democracy an institutional shape.

"The sphere of democracy is large, we have to change the condition of people for consolidating hard-earned democracy," she said. "This country belongs to all, so we must develop the country unitedly."

She urged the naval officers and sailors to be careful and devote more attention for development of professional efficiency with the spirit of service, sincerity and sacrifice.

Earlier, Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam received the Prime Minister when she arrived at the venue. She was given a guard of honour.

The Prime Minister also handed over the commissioning "Farman" to the commanding officers of the vessels. The ceremony was marked by hoisting of the commissioning pennant, Bangladesh Navy and national standards atop the mast of the ships.

Ministers, Chief of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. Mohammad Nooruddin Khan, Acting Chief of the Air Force, Chinese Ambassador Chen Soung Lu, defence advisors of foreign missions, Dhaka City Mayor Mirza Abbas MP and other high civil and military officials attended the commissioning ceremony.

## Two Filipinos jailed for gold smuggling

CHITTAGONG, (Aug 23): Syed Enayet Ullah, Judge of the Anti-Smuggling Tribunal, here today sentenced two Filipino sailors to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment each on charge of smuggling gold into Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The Judge also fined the accused persons Taka 10,000 each, in default to suffer six months' RI.

The prosecution story is that Chief Officer Archesto, Fourth Engineer Aurther and Sailor Castillo descended from MV Harvest at Chittagong Port shed on March 3, 1991. The trio while proceeding toward the port shed were challenged by a customs rummage team. The Filipino tried to flee away, but the members of the rummage team caught hold of them.

The trio were searched and 1300 tolas of gold bars were recovered from the possession of the Chief Officer Archesto and Fourth Engineer Aurther. Thirteen one hundred taka Bangladesh notes were also found with Aurther.

The Judge acquitted sailor Castillo.

Passports, special landing permits and other documents

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## Int'l tenders to set up digital phone lines invited

International tenders have been invited to set up one lakh and 30 thousand new digital telephone lines under BLT/BOT system throughout the country to meet the increasing demands of the telephone subscribers, reports BSS.

This was told by the Minister for Post and Telecommunication Mohammad Keramat Ali at the sixth meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on post and telecommunication held yesterday with the minister in the chair.

## Rocket fire in Kabul stalls evacuation of diplomats

KABUL, Aug 23: Dissident Mujahideen fought fierce battles with government troops in Kabul today as heavy rocket fire damaged embassies in the city where over 1,800 people have died in two weeks of fighting, reports Reuters.

As the renewed fighting threatened to stall the evacuation of diplomats, the government warned it could not trust Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the rebel headline Hezb-i-Islami Mujahideen against whom it is battling, to observe even a temporary ceasefire.

A Hezb infantry advance from bases to the south of

Kabul met fierce opposition from troops loyal to the three-month-old Mujahideen coalition government.

"The Hezb did try to advance early this morning and we counter-attacked," said commander Hafiz at the Kabul garrison.

"They have lost three or four posts," he said.

The United Nations said 1,800 civilians, many of them women and children, had been killed in the latest bloody round of the 14-year Afghan civil war. The city has been severely damaged in blistering exchanges of rocket and ar-

tillery fire.

Thousands more have been injured, and over 120,000 residents have fled the capital, a senior UN official said.

The residence of the Pakistani Ambassador was hit during heavy rocket fire in the afternoon and two people were hurt. The Ambassador was not in the building.

At the Indian embassy several Mujahideen guards and people applying for visas were injured when a rocket slammed down outside the building. An unconfirmed report said a woman had been killed.

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## Menon takes solid food

By Staff Correspondent

The condition of Rashed Khan Menon, has improved on all accounts, the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) medical bulletin said Sunday.

Menon's family sources said that he had been given liquid food with bread. They said that he was now better than before.

The medical bulletin said that Menon had been taken out of bed. It further said that the functions of his vital organs were still under close observation.

The bulletin was issued after Menon's condition was reviewed by consultant physicians and surgeons Sunday morning.

## Attempt on Menon Ex-JP MP, brother, two others sent to jail after remand

By Staff Correspondent

Former Jatiya Party (JP) MP, his younger brother and two other Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders were again sent to the Dhaka Central Jail Sunday on completion of a two-day remand.

The former JP MP Monirul Islam Monir, his younger brother Zahirul Islam Rumi, General Secretary of the Shantinagar Club and two

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## Nirmul bodies gherao DC offices

By Staff Correspondent

Ghatak Dal Nirmul Samanaya Committee yesterday staged sit-ins outside the offices of Deputy Commissioners as part of its countrywide 'District Headquarters Gherao' programme.

Yesterday's sit-in demonstrations were to press home its four-point demand including implementation of the 'Gano Adalat' verdict on Jamaat-e-Islami chief Golam Azam.

In Dhaka, hundreds of workers of the committee yesterday staged a sit-in outside the office of the Deputy

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Jahanara Imam addressing a rally outside DC's office in Dhaka yesterday.—Star photo

## Police stop OP-1 winners' march on US embassy

By Staff Correspondent

Police stopped some 200 demonstrators, who had won the US OP-1 Immigration Lottery but were not issued visas, from marching Monday towards the US Embassy at Baridhara.

The demonstrators were stopped near the Rampura Bridge by riot police and only three representatives of the OP-1 Immigration Lottery Winners Association were allowed to submit a memorandum demanding visas to the Embassy officials.

Arman Hossain, convenor of the association handed over the memorandum to the Chief Security Officer outside the Embassy building after he along with two others were taken there aboard a police vehicle.

In the memo addressed to the Ambassador, the winners said that although some 730 of them had not been issued visas, the Embassy in Dhaka declared the programme closed in August last year.

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## FBCCI calls for consensus to improve law, order situation

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday urged the government and the political parties to reach a consensus for improving law and order situation in the country through taking credible, objective and firm measures, reports BSS.

In a press release issued in Dhaka last night on conclusion of its two-day meeting at the Federation Bhaban, the FBCCI said the strong 'unreserved backing of the major political parties, which carry the will of the people among them, is sufficient for a durable law avoiding environment in the country.

The meeting held with the FBCCI President Mahbubur Rahman in the chair, was attended by 30 presidents of constituent Chambers of Commerce and Industry and 45 chairman and presidents of member associations.

The FBCCI appreciated the government's step to contain the spate of crime by apprehending large number of known offenders throughout the country.

## Severe Hurricane heads for Florida coast

MIAMI, Aug 23: About a million coastal Florida residents were told to flee inland Sunday as strengthening Hurricane Andrew surged westward out of the Atlantic, reports AP.

Gov. Lawton Chiles declared a state of emergency late this morning that allows the mandatory evacuation orders and activates National Guard on a ready status.

The storm's winds grew to 135 mph (217 kmph), a Category 4 storm, by 11 am (1500 GMT) as it approached the Bahamas and Southeast Florida.

"We've not seen anything like this in the past few decades," said Bob Sheets, director of the National Hurricane Center. "We have to go back to the 1947 Hurricane to find anything comparable, and this is worse than 1947.

## Tuberculosis claims 80,000 lives a year in Bangladesh

By Masud Hasan Khan

More than 80,000 people of the country die of Tuberculosis every year while another 1.5 lakh healthy people fall prey to the disease, Health Ministry officials said.

They said that immediate long-term steps were needed to combat the silent killer in both urban and rural areas of the country.

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Hossain while replying to questions during the budget session in parliament admitted the rise of TB, a wasting disease affecting various parts of the body tissue,

particularly the lungs. According to the National Tuberculosis Control Project in Dhaka, an estimated 45 lakh 68 thousand people have been suffering from the disease.

Out of the total, 57 thousand people suffering from the disease have the potential to infect others, doctors at the Project say.

But researchers and physicians fear that the annual death toll and the number of patients would be much higher.

Because many patients die undiagnosed while others con-

ceal the disease fearing social segregation.

Tuberculosis is a communicable disease and is spread from a patient through spittle, coughs and sneezes to a healthy body. Lungs, gland, bone, intestine and even eyes of a healthy body are the general targets of the TB germ.

A survey by the National TB Control Centre said that 56,052 people were diagnosed carrying TB out of a total 1.29 lakh who reported to the doctors with lungs trouble. The survey was conducted

last year at the 44 TB Clinics, Thana Health Complexes, TB Hospitals and on the reports of NGOs.

People from 16 to 50 years of age were most vulnerable to tuberculosis while people above 50 were less exposed targets of TB.

Another study on the 44 TB Clinics in 1990 showed that 73.38 per cent of the total 36,715 patients were between 16 and 50 years of age while 20.96 per cent were above 50.

The disease among infants below five years of age was well controlled (0.94 per cent) be-

cause of the government's Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) which covers TB among six killer diseases.

There is no way to prevent tuberculosis from entering healthy human body because the germ is borne and spread by air, doctors say.

However, they suggest that the best way to prevent the disease is to detect and cure the patients with potential to infect others.

One doctor recommended using handkerchief for maintaining personal hygiene and

to keep away while others sneezes. He also advised not to spit at public places.

Yet TB can be cured if detected at an early stage, doctors say.

It takes six to at least 12 months to cure a full blown TB case, said Dr A K Md. Ahsan Ali, Director of the National Tuberculosis Control Project.

Prices of drugs to cure tuberculosis vary from 500 paisa to Taka 10. One piece of Diateben tablet costs 50 paisa while Rifampicine tablet is Taka 10 a piece.