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## NEWS BRIEFS

### SAARC Secy-Gen meets Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed the optimism that SAARC would play an effective role in promoting the socio-economic condition of more than one billion people of the region. Her optimism came when the visiting Secretary General of SAARC, Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, called on the Prime Minister at her office yesterday in the afternoon. During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to the 7th SAARC Summit to be held in Bangladesh in Dhaka next December, reports UNB.

### AL constitution body meets Aug 30

A meeting of the sub-committee on constitution and manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League formed in connection with the biennial conference of the party will be held on August 30 at 11 am at House No 29, Minto Road, a press release said. Deputy Leader of Opposition in the parliament and convener of the sub-committee Abdus Samad Azad has requested the sub-committee members to attend the meeting, reports BSS.

### Hartal observed in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Aug 26: Half-day hartal was observed in the town today to protest government failure to check terrorism and collection of illegal tolls by musclemen. Shop-owners and traders association which called the hartal, at a rally in the afternoon, expressed concern over the rising trend of terrorism, loot and extortion, reports UNB.

## Joint body on water likely



Indian Irrigation Minister appears all ears to a teammate during yesterday's formal talks at the Bangladesh Irrigation Ministry. —Star photo

## India admits withdrawal of water puts undue pressure on Bangladesh

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

In a bid to strike an accord on water sharing before the next lean season, Bangladesh and India are likely to announce the formation of a high-level joint committee of experts today after the second round of formal talks.

The second round was scheduled for yesterday afternoon, but deferred to this morning at 9.30.

Official sources said that the two sides were examining the various proposals tabled by the respective sides at the first round of talks that began yesterday at 11.30 in the morning, and would make their positions known at today's meeting.

Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Majid-ul-Huq and visiting Indian Irrigation Minister Vidya Charan Shukla led their respective countries' delegations at the meeting held at the Irrigation Ministry conference room.

Responding to insistence by the home side, the sources said, India for the first time admitted that the unilateral

withdrawals of waters by it during the past years had caused "undue hardship" on Bangladesh.

They said that the two sides sounded identical on the need to find out a water sharing formula before the next dry season but continued to differ on ways for augmentation.

Indian side kept insisting the "link canal concept" while the hosts spoke of "looking into all possibilities including bringing in Nepal."

On the composition of the joint committee, the visitors suggested that it be made up of high ranking technical persons while the Bangladesh delegates preferred a body chaired by Irrigation Secretaries for "better manoeuvrability."

Earlier, briefing newsmen after the first round talks, Irrigation Minister Majid-ul-Huq, waiting to attend the scheduled second round, hinted progress by saying: "If it's not progressing, then why would I be sitting here?"

He spoke of "new approach" from both sides to-

wards resolving the issue that he described as "a very big problem".

Emphasising on the political overtones of the vexed issue that vitiate the bilateral atmosphere, the minister referred to the Prime Minister's India visit and said: "The talks are taking place in light of the talks between the two PMs."

"You can say the bench mark is May", said Majid-ul-Huq pointing to the May meeting of the prime ministers.

"Whatever we do, we've to solve it politically," Huq quoted himself as telling his Indian counterpart during an exclusive 40-minute informal chat that preceded the delegation level talks.

"We have no reservations, we're working with an open mind."

Majid-ul-Huq led an eight-member team that included Irrigation Secretary Asafuddin, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Farooq Sobhan, Additional Foreign Secretary A H Mahmood Ali, Additional Irrigation Secretary

Syed Rezaul Hayat, Chairman of Water Development Board M Abdur Razzaque, Flood Plan Coordination Organisation Chief Engineer M H Siddiqi and Joint Commissioner of JRC Tauhidul Anwar Khan.

Shukla's 9-member team comprised Chairman of Central Water Commission C D Thatte, High Commissioner in Dhaka R K Raghunath, Member of CWC M S Reddy, Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka Amitava Tripathi, Commissioner of Eastern Rivers and Member of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission Ramesh Chandra, Minister in Dhaka mission S Tripathi, Chief Engineer of West Bengal's Teesta Project B N Dey, and Indian minister's private secretary Gopal Dixit.

Although second formal session was not held as scheduled at 3 pm, the ministers and the delegates sat informally in the evening while experts of the two sides dealt separately with the technical aspects in preparation of today's meeting.

## Menon likely to be flown to London Saturday

By Staff Correspondent

Rashed Khan Menon, MP, and General Secretary of the Workers Party of Bangladesh, is expected to be flown to London Saturday night for better treatment especially of his liver.

Menon is now recovering at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) from the deadly injuries he suffered from assailants' bullets August 17.

His family sources said that preparations for the journey would be completed today and if his physical condition remained stable there would be no change in the flight plan.

Sources in the Prime Minister's Secretariat said that instructions had been given to Biman Bangladesh to make special arrangements to fly Menon to London.

A request has also been made to the British High Commission in Dhaka so that entry formalities are expedited, sources added.

Menon's family sources further said that Dr Naila Khan, his sister-in-law and a doctor from the CMH were expected to accompany him.

A government functionary, involved in the process, preferring anonymity, said that

though Menon's family had taken the initiative to take him out of the country there would be all possible assistance to facilitate his journey and treatment abroad.

Menon's physical condition, according to family sources, improved further yesterday as the bilirubin count (indicator of jaundice) came down to 12 from 17.

Meanwhile, the CMH said that the condition of the

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Menon at CMH

## Malaysian FM meets PM

## Support to ensure Rohingyas' return

Malaysia has assured all-out support to Bangladesh in ensuring safe and voluntary repatriation of thousands of Muslim Rohingyas refugees, reports UNB.

The visiting Malaysian Foreign Minister, Datuk Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi, called on Prime Minister Begum Zia at her office Wednesday afternoon and conveyed his government's prime concern over the plight of the Rohingyas refugees camped in Bangladesh.

The Malaysian government will continue to provide all-out support to Bangladesh in its efforts to ensure repatriation of the refugees, he said.

Begum Zia thanked the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad for the support to Bangladesh in resolving the Rohingyas refugee problem.

The Malaysian Foreign Minister praised the efforts of the democratic government of Bangladesh for its programmes and policies for economic development. He particularly mentioned about the Export Processing Zone in Chittagong.

Referring to the setting up joint commission at the for-

ign ministers level to expand areas of bilateral cooperation, Begum Zia hoped that economic relations between two fraternal countries would strengthen further in the days ahead.

She said skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers were interested in serving in different industrial and commercial units in Malaysia.

Commenting on the skills of Bangladeshi workers, the Malaysian Foreign Minister told Begum Zia that they were

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## Agreed minutes with Malaysia signed

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi signed agreed minutes in Dhaka yesterday at the conclusion of the first meeting of Bangladesh-Malaysia Joint Commission, reports BSS.

Earlier the JC was set up under economic and technical

See Page 12 Col 3



## Anniversary of Nazrul's death today

By Staff Correspondent

The 16th death anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam will be observed today (Thursday) throughout the country with due homage.

Various socio-cultural and juvenile organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to pay tribute to the poet who is also prominently known as 'The Rebel Poet'.

The programmes include laying wreaths at the mazar of the poet, miled mahfil, Quran-khwani, discussion on the life and works of the poet, recitation of his poems, Nazrul Sangeet session and staging of drama written by the poet.

Nazrul Institute will place wreaths at the mazar of the poet in the morning, hold a discussion meeting, stage a

See Page 12 Col 7

## Tariff value of 30 importables reduced

The government has revised downward the tariff value of 30 importables conceding to demands from the business community.

Official sources quoting a Finance Ministry circular issued on August 23 told UNB that the items getting relief were industrial raw materials.

The revision was made as per recommendation by a committee, set up in the wake of post-budget protests from the trade bodies alleging that tariff values on many of items were extremely inconsistent with real international price.

Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed headed the review committee which

See Page 12 Col 3

## Dhaka, Yangon talk border security

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 26: The Sector Commander level flag meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar was held today at Teknaf border town.

Officials here said the meeting started at 11 am and lasted for three and a half hours at the Rest House of Roads and Highways at Teknaf.

See Page 12 Col 6

## Subsidy on export credit interest goes

By Inam Ahmed

Exporters of the country face another hurdle as the government has decided to withdraw the subsidy on the interest on export credit.

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) in a circular Wednesday informed the scheduled banks that the subsidy would be withdrawn from August 31.

The exporters used to get a 0.75 per cent subsidy from the BB through their respective scheduled banks.

According to the previous rule the exporters had to procure a certificate from their scheduled banks against their

See Page 12 Col 7

## RMCH docs threaten to resign en masse

RAJSHAHI, Aug 26: The striking doctors, nurses and all other staff of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital threatened today that they would resign en masse if their demands were not met by 1 pm tomorrow.

The local unit of Bangladesh Medical Association issued the warning at a press conference held this evening to register protest against the attack on Prof Habibur Rahman, an RMC associate professor.

Dr Rahman, stabbed in the chest and hand by unknown assailants Tuesday night in the RMCH compound while on way

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## BNP amassing illegal wealth, says Hasina

GOPALPUR (Gopalganj), Aug 26: Sheikh Hasina today said lawlessness across the country has been seriously hampering development and threatening the democracy earned through a long drawn struggle against

autocracy, reports UNB.

Addressing a big rally this afternoon, the Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament blamed the government for failing to take "effective non-partisan" measures to curb terrorism and provide security to the people.

They have failed to tackle

See Page 12 Col 1

## Princess Anne cancels visit to Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

Princess Anne of Britain has cancelled her visit to Bangladesh planned for next month, a British High Commission source said Wednesday.

The Princess' visit, her second to Bangladesh, was planned for late September as president of Save the Children's Fund. However, she will go ahead with her tour of India, from where she was

See Page 12 Col 8

## US, allies give 24-hr deadline to Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 26: The US and three other government warned Iraq on Wednesday that it was violating a UN Security Council resolution demanding an end to attacks on Shiite Muslims, and gave Baghdad 24 hours to stop, reports AP.

US Ambassador Alexander Watson, the deputy US delegate to the United Nations, was joined by the envoys of Russia, France and Britain in delivering the warning to Abdul al-Amir al-Anbari of Iraq.

"We've made a communication to the Iraqi ambassador here about a 'no-fly zone' in the south of Iraq," Sir David Hunnay, Britain's envoy, told reporters outside the French UN mission, where the meeting was held.

The warning was another element in the multi-faceted showdown between the United Nations and its members states and Iraq that began with Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Other points of conflict

have been Iraqi resistance to the scrapping of its mass destruction weapons, refusal to recognize UN-suggested boundaries with Kuwait and refusal to sell oil and use the proceeds to compensate Gulf War victims.

Meanwhile Deputy spokesman Bob Hall said Tuesday all Iraqi military fixed-wing aircraft and some helicopters have been withdrawn from the southern portion of the country in recent days, reports AP.

The spokesman said about 30 Iraqi aircraft "appear to have" flown north of the 32nd parallel and that "a number" of the 40 helicopters have flown north as well; some Iraqi helicopter missions, he said, continue to support ground operations in the south.

Asked if the remaining Iraqi helicopters might be shot down if they attack the Shia population in the coalition partners' planned "no-fly" security zone.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
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ইদানিং লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে বিদেশী সাহায্যে পরিচালিত বিভিন্ন প্রকল্পে ব্যবহারের জন্য সাময়িক/পুনঃপ্রতিরূপিত বিভিন্ন আমদানিকৃত গাড়ী/জীপ/মাইক্রোবাসের অপব্যবহার হচ্ছে। কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে দেখা গেছে যে প্রচলিত নিয়ম তৎপর করে পুনঃপ্রতিরূপিত বিভিন্ন আমদানিকৃত কিছু গাড়ী/জীপ/মাইক্রোবাসে এই ধরনের প্রকল্পের জন্য সুনির্দিষ্ট হলদু রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বরের পরিবর্তে স্ক/কর পরিশোধিত গাড়ীর জন্য ব্যবহার্য কালো নম্বর প্রেট ব্যবহার করা হচ্ছে। এমতাবস্থায় এখন থেকে বিদেশী সাহায্যপূর্ণ প্রকল্পের জন্য প্রকল্প পরিচালক কর্তৃক সরাসরি বা তদুদ্দেশ্যে নিয়োজিত ঠিকাদার কর্তৃক আমদানিকৃত গাড়ী/জীপ/মাইক্রোবাস পুনঃপ্রতিরূপিত শর্তে স্ক/কর মুক্তভাবে সাময়িক আমদানির সুবিধা দেয়া হবে না। এই ধরনের সকল গাড়ী আমদানি পর্যায়ে প্রদেয় সকল স্ক/কর পরিশোধ করে খালাস করতে হবে এবং পরবর্তীকালে পুনঃপ্রতিরূপিত সময় ড-ব্যাক-রুলের আওতায় প্রদত্ত স্ক/কর ফেরত দেয়া হবে। প্রকল্পের কাজে ব্যবহৃত বিশেষ ধরনের গাড়ী যথা-ট্রাক, ডাম্প-ট্রাক, ক্রেন সংযুক্ত ট্রাক ইত্যাদি এই আদেশের আওতায় আসবে না।

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