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The Daily Star

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Holiday Notice

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed on Thursday, 10 September, 1992, on account of holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper on Friday, 11 September, 1992.

Supplement

Today's issue contains one-page Supplement on holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi on Page 8.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina returns today

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina will return home today (Thursday). Hasina, who left here for Karachi on Monday, attended a one-day seminar on the Role of Opposition in Asian Society, reports UNB.

CEC to visit Rajbari Sept 12

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rauf will visit Rajbari on September 12 in connection with the by-election in Rajbari-1 constituency to be held on October 12, an Election Commission press release said in Dhaka yesterday. During his visit, the Chief Election Commissioner will hold a discussion with the officials, representatives of the law enforcing agencies, local leaders and cross section of people, reports BSS.

Shahabuddin buried

FENI, Sept 9: District BNP A K M Shahabuddin Ahmed, who died of cancer in Dhaka on Tuesday, was buried at his Rampur family graveyard today (Wednesday), reports UNB.

SAARC opposition leaders suggest State should fund all major parties

Opposition leaders of SAARC countries Wednesday called for political solution of the outstanding issues between the countries in the South Asian region to boost the spirit of cooperation, reports UNB.

The call was made in a joint declaration issued after a one-day conference of leaders of the opposition in SAARC countries held at Ramada Renaissance Hotel in Karachi on Tuesday.

The declaration was signed by Bangladesh Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Pakistan Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto, former Indian Prime Minister and Convenor of National Front VP Singh, Sri Lankan opposition Freedom Party leader Anura Bandaranaike and Nepalese Opposition Leader Manmohan Adhikary.

They called for maintaining impartiality of the head of state, which is an 'essential element in parliamentary democracy'.

It was agreed in the opposition summit that effective guarantees not to manipulate elections should be advisable and that elections be conducted by an independent commission of each country free from administrative interference.

The message from the opposition summit also suggested that it should be the responsibility of the state to provide financial resources to all major political parties — whether in the government or in the opposition — 'on the basis of population of vote cast for each party in order to fund policy planning, research and training of political workers'.

The declaration said there was a consensus that there should be regional review of the electoral arrangements to ensure that elections in the SAARC countries are free and fair.

Since both the government and the opposition represent the people, there is need for tolerance and mutual respect, 'the opposition should have free access to information on important issues', it said.

The declaration said the seminar of the opposition leaders provided an invaluable opportunity for exchange of views on various issues concerning the member-countries

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Hasina, Benazir discuss plans

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina had an exclusive meeting with her Pakistan counterpart Benazir Bhutto at Billawalah Bhaban in Karachi yesterday, reports UNB.

The two opposition leaders exchanged views on future plan of action of the opposition in SAARC countries to strengthen democratic process for improving lot of the deprived people in South Asia, according to a message received in Dhaka.

During the hour-long parity, they also discussed bilateral matters as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

Hasina Wednesday hoped that opposition in the SAARC countries would play a constructive role in developing human resources to remove poverty in the region. She was speaking at a reception hosted by Karachi North Rotary Club at Hotel Pearl Continental this evening.

Former Indian Prime Minister and Convenor of National Front VP Singh, Sri

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Plan to pump over Tk 4 crore coins into money market

The government is planning to pump Taka 4.3 crore in coins into money market.

Finance Ministry sources told The Daily Star Wednesday that the coins of taka-one denomination would be released in addition to about Taka five crore mint money already in circulation.

They said that the new coins had already been shipped from a manufacturing company in Canada and would be released late this month or in the next month.

Bangladesh Bank sources said that the one taka bank note had lost its importance to individuals because of devaluation of the currency over the past few years and people prefer big notes to the small ones.

In most cases, people carry a few one-taka bank notes, they said adding that the people would also carry coins of limited numbers. As an argument for releasing more coins, the Bangladesh Bank officials say a paper-note lasts only six months. A coin could be used over a longer period of time and its cost of production would also be much lower, they added.

Money changers at the Gulistan area in the capital also say that some buyers prefer coins to its softer paper brothers.

The changers said that a small number of one-Taka coins were sold, mainly, to the collectors.

Nation observes Miladunnabi today

By Staff Correspondent

Nation today (Thursday) observes the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi marking the birth and death anniversaries of the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM).

In observance of the day throughout the country, various religious, social and cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes including Quran Khwani, Milad Mahfil, discussion meeting, seminar and symposium.

The National Flag will fly atop government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings. Main thoroughfares and road islands in the capital city will be decorated with colourful fastoons inscribed with 'Kalama Taiyeba and Eid-e-Miladunnabi'.

The day is a public holiday.

On this occasion, President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and leaders of different political parties have

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Govt may set up a new mechanism for sick industries

The government is considering the setting up of an Equity Participation Fund (EPF), primarily made up of banks and financial institutions, to provide credit and management knowhow to non-performing industrial units on case-by-case basis, according to well-placed sources here.

The proposal is still at a tentative stage. However, observers here say, it was probably very much in the mind of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman when he addressed the senior-most bankers and officials last Sunday. Since the authorities are also said to be looking at other options, Rahman did not spell out any proposal in details, beyond calling for a new bank-client relationship replacing the existing collateral-based lending procedure.

Reacting to the commentary on the Finance Minister's call published in The Daily Star on Tuesday, sources suggest that the proposal for the EPF has merits which are being carefully studied by experts.

The idea, in its present form, is to set up the fund with an initial start-up capital of anything between Taka 100 crore to 200 crore, contributed by a consortium of banks, financial institutions, public sector agencies and even the Bangladesh Bank. Depending on the initial success of the exercise, the EPF could eventually tap additional funds in hard currency from outside.

The EPF would identify potentially successful but currently non-performing industrial units which, in the past, have failed to meet their obligations to banks. According to sources, under the plan, the Fund would offer them additional but limited, assistance in the form of equity participation and provide them with back-up support in management knowhow.

For this purpose, banks involved in the plan could hire consultants from multilateral agencies, such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

For the banks participating in the project, the main interest lies in recovering their dues, some virtually written off as bad debts, in the form of dividends when (and if) the industries concerned become profitable.

However, as sources say, the key to the success of the operation lies in distinguishing between non-performing but potentially successful concerns and the hopeless cases which cannot be saved. It is in the identification of these concerns that the proposed consortium would need management experts, instead of relying on its manpower.

'Herein lies the most important sensitive part of the exercise,' says a critic of the plan. 'If the consortium does not follow the rules of the game with scrupulous care, we can be in a very big mess.'

Another prerequisite for

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Delhi wants time Dhaka ready to bring back kidnapped kids

By Sharier Khan

With Bangladesh ready to send officials to bring back 25 children stranded in Bombay, India has sought time to determine the nationality of these children before repatriation.

The children, all under the age of five, were rescued by Bombay police March 26 as they were reportedly being 'smuggled' to some Middle Eastern countries. These children, earlier reports said, are from Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh government, meanwhile, has decided to award the custody of these children to an American non-government organisation (NGO) running an orphanage in Khuina.

Sources said that Indian authorities have informed Bangladesh not to take steps to repatriate these children before India completes some formalities regarding their identities.

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DOWN WITH TERRORISM: Mothers along with their children parading Dhaka streets carrying placards for peace and security yesterday. Engineers' Institution organised the procession. — Star photo

Pro-Syrian Parliament likely to jeopardise Lebanese peace

BEIRUT, Sept 8: Lebanese voters have elected a pro-Syrian Parliament that is expected to sharpen the Christian-Muslim differences that left parts of this nation in ruin, reports AP.

For Lebanon, a nation torn apart by Christian and Muslim armies, the election results could jeopardise the fragile 2-year-old peace and even affect the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Final results, released Tuesday showed three-fourths of the newly elected 128 lawmakers are politicians who have close ties to Syria or who have supported the presence of Syrian troops. That includes some Christians, who half the seats under an agreement that ended the 15-year civil war.

The last round of the three-stage election was held Sunday in turbulent southern Lebanon. The election was boycotted by conservative Maronite Christians, who dominated Lebanon's government before the civil war started in 1975. They argued that the presence of 40,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon would intimidate voters and produce a parliament dominated by Syria.

Maronite leaders vowed to oppose the new parliament, which one called a 'new chapter of the civil war.'

Five seats in the Kesrouan province allocated to the Christians remain vacant because of the boycott. Special elections will be held to fill those seats before the previous parliament adjourns on Oct 15.

The Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement, participating in elections for the first time, won 16 seats.

That was unlikely to give the fundamentalist Shi'ite Muslim group great clout in parliament since two-thirds of the half-Christian, half-Muslim House are needed to approve laws.

But it gives them a parliamentary foothold for the first time and will alienate Christians who fear Hezbollah's gains give momentum to its aim of establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon.

The election brought allegations of fraud and provoked a political crisis for President Elias Hrawi's Syrian-backed government, which was appointed to oversee an Arab League-brokered peace treaty that stopped the civil war in 1990.

Police raid 5 DU halls, detain 5

By DU Correspondent

Police raided five residential halls of the Dhaka University in the early hours Wednesday.

In the three-hour raid police could not recover any arms or ammunition.

Police entered the Mohsin, Suryasen, Ziaur Rahman, Sheikh Muzibur Rahman and Jasimuddin halls at about 4 am yesterday, hall residents said.

Police picked up five persons during the raids for interrogation.

Meanwhile, hall sources said that several students not attached to the raided halls were picked up by police during the raids. They were freed later.

Police searched Jasimuddin Hall twice Monday but they did

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Hindu leaders demand separate electorate

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Hindu Sangram Committee, a conglomerate of 15 organisations, Wednesday had separate meetings with Information Minister Nazmul Huda and acting Jamaat chief Abbas Ali Khan.

The committee submitted a memorandum to the Information Minister and exchanged views with Jamaat chief on the political situation, according to two press releases.

A Jamaat press release said that Khan assured committee secretary Samarendra Nath Gossami of Jamaat support to the legitimate demands of the Hindu community.

In a written statement, Gossami criticised the Enemy Property Law and demanded separate elections for the Hindu and Muslim communities the press release said adding that Khan urged the Hindu leaders to invigorate movement to realise their demands.

The Acting Jamaat chief also said that if Bangladesh became an Islamic country, the rights of all communities and sects would be ensured.

'A true religious man can never become communal,' Khan was quoted as telling the Hindu leaders.

The Jatiya Hindu Sangram Committee later at noon called on the Information Minister Nazmul Huda at his office and submitted a memorandum demanding a ban on the film 'Radha Krishna.'

BDR-BSF flag meeting fails

LALMONIRHAT, Sept 9: A flag meeting between Indian Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles at the Kuchlibari border in Hatibandha thana flopped today as BSF denied involvement in two incidents, reports UNB.

The meeting was sought by the Bangladesh side to defuse tension prevailing in the Lalmonirhat-Coochbehar border area since Sunday, official sources said.

Two BSF men on Sunday intruded about 400 feet into Bangladesh and shot and injured Rahmatullah, a fisherman of frontier village Thengchhara.

Later on Tuesday, a BDR messenger was sent to Dhapa BSF camp across the border suggesting a flag meeting on Sunday's incident. But on return, Fazal Ali narrated a har-

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Waliur Rahman, Mohiuddin Ahmed to be new Addl Foreign Secys

Star Report

Ambassador Wajidur Rahman and Ambassador Mohiuddin Ahmed will be new Additional Foreign Secretaries, official sources said yesterday.

The two top posts in the Foreign Office fell vacant after Additional Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan was sent to India as High Commissioner and Additional Foreign Secretary A H Mahmood Ali was appointed Ambassador to Germany.

Rahman has been in Rome as Ambassador since September 1986, with additional duties as Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), World Food

Biman unions override transfer orders

By Asiuzzaman

One of Biman's trade unions this week exercised its 'power' in stalling the transfer of 33 employees, reliable Bangladesh Biman sources said Wednesday.

'All transfers from different stations to Dhaka and vice-versa have been kept in abeyance till Dec '92, regards, Solaiman,' a telex message sent to the outstations Sunday by one union read.

A few hours later, a similar order from the Biman management carried the same message, the source said, adding that it was not clear how a union stayed the order of the management.

The leaders of the concerned union were not available for comment.

The source said that the authorities issued an order transferring 33 employees and officials of customer services September 2 and asked station heads to execute the order.

But the employees union sent the 'stay order' at around 12:30 pm and the authorities sent the similar order at around 5:45 pm the same day.

The authorities' stay order said that as the employees would face trouble in admitting their children into schools if they were transferred in the middle of the year, the management had decided to stay the order until December 15.

All such postings would be implemented in the period December 16 to January 7, the management order added.

The sources added that the Chittagong unit of the Union

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Govt urged to foot Menon's hospital bill

By Staff Correspondent

The leaders of Five-party Alliance and Left Democratic United Front, United Kingdom Branch, said that the total expenditure of Rashed Khan Menon's treatment would exceed 2000 pound sterling and demanded that the government bear the expenses as per the commitment of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

A delayed message from London yesterday said that the leaders expressed the view at a press conference on September 8 at the conference room of the Job Club at Hanbury Street, London.

The press conference was addressed, among others, by Ayub Karam Ali, Abdul Baset, M A Mukhtar, Masud Rana and Shariful Hasan.

Meanwhile, the condition of

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