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# The Daily Star

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Noor Uddin off to Kuwait

Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan left Dhaka yesterday for Kuwait to see Bangladesh army troops engaged in the task of reconstruction there. He is leading a military delegation. During his stay in Kuwait, General Noor Uddin will call on the Amir, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Defence Minister of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Chief of Staff, reports BSS.

### Razzaque Ali in Beijing

BEIJING, Sept 18: A seven-member Bangladesh parliamentary delegation led by Speaker Shaikh Razzaque Ali arrived here today. The Speaker and his delegation were received at the airport by Liao Hensheng, Vice-Chairman of Standing Committee of National People's Congress, Xu Gaidong, member, Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Li Zhongying, Deputy Secretary General of NPC and others, reports BSS.

### Body recovered

JESSORE, Sept 18: Police today recovered the body of a man, who was kidnapped by members of outlawed Biplabi Communist Party seven days ago. Some armed members of the outlawed party abducted Muhammad Ali from his residence at village Jotehakimpur in Sadar thana after killing his elder brother Harun-ar Rashid on September 11, reports UNB.

## Woman in the racket 18 kg gold haul at ZIA



THE GOLDEN CATCH: The detained Pakistanis and the recovered gold at ZIA yesterday.  
—Star photo by Inam Ahmed

### Two Pakistanis fail to flee Customs

By Farid Ahmed

Two young Pakistan nationals, one of them woman, were arrested with 18 kilograms of gold at Zia International Airport (ZIA) Friday evening.

Airport Customs Surveillance and Intelligence teams recovered 104 gold bars (10 tolas each) and 600 gold chains worth about Taka 93,92,500 from the bodies of Rashida, 29, and Shakir Ali Azmi, 23, at 6:45 pm yesterday.

Both the passengers arrived at the ZIA from Karachi, Pakistan, by an Emirate flight, EK-610 at 6 pm.

Azmi was carrying the 104 gold bars and 198 gold chains inside his jacket while 402 other gold chains were found in a bag tied up in the waist of Rashida, according to Customs sources.

Customs Surveillance Inspector Ashraful Haq (Bhasker Chowdhury) and Intelligence Inspector SM Shahjahan following suspicious movements challenged them and the Customs officials searched them.

Both the Pakistanis told The Daily Star that the gold was given to them by two unknown persons.

Rashida said, it was her second visit to Bangladesh, the first being on June 16 this year. But Azmi said that he was in this country for the first time.

Rashida, a divorcee, said she separated two years ago after a six-year marriage with one Abdul Hamid.

Mother of three — two sons and a daughter Rashida said her eldest son was seven years old while the youngest, the daughter, only three. They were living with her in Karachi, said Rashida.

Azmi, son of one Abu Nasar Mashkur Ali, is a student and has just completed higher secondary studies. He is from Sindh.

A senior Customs official, Shahabuddin Nagri, told The Daily Star last night that they would be handed over to the Cantonment Police.

The recovered gold would be handed over to Bangladesh Bank authorities today (Saturday), he added.

## AL council session opens today amid hopes and despair

By Farid Hossain

The Awami League goes to Engineers' Institution today (Saturday) to stage a 2-day council session, the party's largest policy-making gathering in more than five years.

About 2,400 councillors, hundreds of party workers, guests from other political parties, diplomats and intellectuals will watch Sheikh Hasina to open her 43-year-old party's third council since the country's independence in 1971.

The opening is set for 3pm. Though Sheikh Hasina has said this would be like any other council session in the past, a senior Awami League leader considered it very crucial for the future of the party.

"It holds the possibility of our meteoric rise, if we are able to take the correct decisions," he told The Daily Star adding "or else we will suffer further erosion in popularity and public confidence."

The conference is called biennial council session which means the council session in the true sense of the term and according to Awami League's constitution, should have been held in 1989 since the last session was held in 1987.

The oft-postponed council session is the culmination of a hectic organisational activity that saw holding of conferences in most of the party's organisational districts which are in line with the administrative districts.

The delegates to the council bring with them their hopes and despair, a readiness to pinpoint why the giant party failed to win the last year's parliamentary polls and even a courage to criticise the 11-

## Several foreign companies keen to search for oil

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Several major international oil companies (IOCs), willing to undertake ventures in search of oil in Bangladesh's offshore and onshore areas, have approached the Government and negotiations are under way for contracts on production sharing basis.

Authoritative sources told The Daily Star yesterday that preliminary discussions were held with at least four companies in the past few weeks and officials of two other companies are due this week.

The companies which have already talked to Bangladesh authorities are the Occidental Petroleum of US, TEXACO=UNOCAL of the US, Holand Sea Search of the Netherlands, the United Meridian International Company of the US companies which are due this week are the AMOCO and the BHP-Utah.

They are expected to come up with proposals soon in writing.

Energy sector donors want Bangladesh to invite international private capital for

petroleum exploration, and of late this view is also gaining ground among the country's energy sector policy planners.

"Exploration, which is inherently risky, should not be financed from borrowings or scarce ADP annual development programme funds but from funds set aside from sector revenue, or from foreign risk capital, particularly from private international oil companies under appropriate arrangements," said a recent World Bank report.

According to the sources, the Government would be "pragmatic" in its response to the IOCs' interests. "We will have to be and we will be pragmatic in the discussions", said a highly-placed source in the Energy Ministry.

"There has to be mutuality in the contract terms... otherwise why would they (IOCs) come and invest?", said the source requesting customary anonymity.

The sources said that the officials at the Energy Ministry

## Tk 107 crore Green Belt programme

Bangladesh has chalked out a massive Green Belt Programme in the southern coastal areas in a bid to construct an environmental safety net against cyclones and tidal bores, create job opportunities and alleviate poverty.

In an exclusive interview with BSS yesterday Environment and Forest Minister Abdullah AL Noman said all the preparatory works were completed to start the implementation of the Taka 107 crore Green Belt Programme from the current fiscal year for planting fruit bearing trees like coconut, date-palm and palmyra in the south coast of the country.

The Minister said the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was now formulating more than Taka 1000 crore programmes for national tree plantation, conservation of bio-diversity, nature conservation, coastal afforestation.

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## Shantibahini frees 43 for Tk 13 lakh, demands Tk 12 lakh for rest 7

CHITTAGONG, Sept 18: Armed miscreants who claimed themselves to be members of the outlawed Shantibahini released 43 persons yesterday out of a total of 50 they kidnapped on Wednesday last from Khiram bazar of Fatikchhari thana, 30 miles off here, reports BSS.

According to local people, the 43 persons mostly shopkeepers and businessmen were released by the miscreants after realisation of Taka 13 lakh.

The miscreants, it is further said have demanded a ransom of Taka 12 lakh for releasing the remaining seven persons, they are still holding up.

Chittagong district police when contacted admitted that there was an incident of kidnapping at Fatikchhari on Wednesday last but could not give further details.

## Khaleda urged to help hold SAARC labour ministers' meet

A 20-member delegation of South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) led by its President S Thondaman called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Sugandha office in Dhaka yesterday evening, reports BSS.

The members of the delegation are now in the city for attending the fifth executive board meeting of the SARTUC and a seminar.

Thondaman who is also Minister for Rural Industrialisation and Tourism of Sri Lanka and other delegation members, during the meeting with Prime Minister Begum Zia apprised her the progress of activities of the SARTUC.

They urged the Prime Minister to take initiatives for holding a meeting of SAARC Labour Ministers to help generate employment opportunities in member countries.

They also pleaded for increased exchange of views among trade union bodies of SAARC members to create favourable atmosphere for industrial peace.

Prime Minister Begum Zia suggested the 'submission of

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## Confrontation should be in JS, press & courts: Milam 'Democracy is a difficult practice'

Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury has called upon all irrespective of political affiliations to help the government to flourish democracy in the country by practising tolerance and respecting rule of law, reports UNB.

"Democracy is a very difficult practice... Every one has to contribute to nourish the hard-earned, newly achieved democracy and make it a success", the Deputy Leader of the House in Parliament said yesterday.

He was addressing a discussion meeting on 'The Wave of Democracy' held at the Academy for Planning and Development at Nilkhet in city Friday morning.

US Ambassador in Dhaka William B. Milam presented the key note speech at the function also addressed by Dr

Kamal Hossain, Justice Maksumul Hakin, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, MP, Barrister Amirul Islam and British High Commissioner in Dhaka Sir Colin H. Imray.

The discussion, organised by International Relations Alumni Association of the Dhaka University, was chaired by Association President ATM Shamsul Haque.

Prof B Chowdhury also urged the opposition to play its due role in flourishing democracy in the country.

Emphasising on a strong opposition for sound democracy, he, however, said the opposition should not compete only for power but must prepare itself as an alternative government. "Unfortunately, the sense is still lacking in our country."

On the law and order situa-

tion, Deputy Leader of the House said the government is taking measures to root out terrorism and corruption from society.

Corruption has taken on almost an institutional shape threatening social peace, he said reiterating government's determination to wipe it out once for all.

Prof Chowdhury said the people now enjoy freedom of speech and choice. There is also full freedom of press in the country, he said adding that none could cite any violation of press freedom under the present government.

Ambassador Milam in his keynote speech dwelt on various aspects of democracy, including 'do's and don'ts' and the requirements without which democracy is unlikely to

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## Indian sarees, cloths worth Tk 50 lakh seized

CHITTAGONG, Sept 18: A special team of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) today recovered contraband Indian sarees and cloths worth about Taka fifty lakh from a truck at Enayet bazar here, a CMP press release said, reports BSS.

Acting on a secret information, Pahartali and Kotwali police ordered a loaded Chittagong bound truck to halt while it reached at Glaxo Factory at Pahartali. Defying the police order it ran away quickly and entered into the Enayet bazar area.

But at one stage, tearing the police appearance, who were chasing it, the driver fled away leaving the truck.

Police made a vigorous search and found 5,220 pieces of different qualities of sarees.

## Stock turnover up by Tk 16 crore

By S Y Bakht

The volume of turnover at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) during the first eight months of this year outstripped the total turnover of 1991 by over Taka 16 crore.

The revival of the stock market along with a significant surge in the demand for shares came in the backdrop of the 'bold' liberalisation steps along with the fiscal measures taken by the government in line with transforming into the market economy, said Aminul Islam Khan, chairman of DSE.

According to the latest available DSE figures, the total turnover for this year upto August stood at about Taka 28 crore with the trading of 37,99,022 shares.

On the other hand, a total of 18,70,512 shares were traded

during the January to December period of 1991 with a total turnover of about Taka 11.6 crore.

The record single day turnover of Taka 1.37 crore was set at DSE on June 13 last.

In an interview to The Daily Star, the DSE chairman pointed out that the share market was boosted after the government allowed non-residents to operate in the secondary market and also to invest on primary issues with the provision to take back the imported capital along with the capital gains and dividends.

Local interest in the share market was revived when the capital gains tax was abolished and the six per cent development surcharge and the four

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## Clinton proposes Grameen Bank's Yunus for Nobel Prize

By S M ALI

The Democratic nominee for US presidential election, Bill Clinton has suggested that Prof Muhammad Yunus be awarded a Nobel Prize for his work in the Grameen Bank.

Governor Clinton made this proposal during a wide-ranging exclusive interview to a team of writers of popular US magazine, the Rolling Stone, published in the journal's issue of Thursday, Sept 17.

A faxed copy of the 10-page long interview has just been made available to The Daily Star.

The reference to Muham-

mad Yunus, the founder and the Chief Executive of the Grameen Bank, came up when the Governor started talking about the need for a radical approach to the banking system in his own state, Arkansas.

As Clinton put it, "I think, every major urban area and every poor rural area ought to have access to a bank that ought to make loans to those who deposit in the bank." He probably suggested that such loans to the rural poor should not be tied to collateral or securities.

Then, he went on to explain

that Good Faith Fund of the South Shore Bank in his state offered loans to low-income people, mostly for self-employment ventures.

Bangladesh, even though it was making loans almost exclusively to poor people."

Slightly taken aback by Clinton's detailed knowledge of a

Muhammad Yunus should be given a Nobel Prize."

Then, the Governor went into some details as to how he came to know about the Grameen Bank, through the roommate of his wife in college. Some time later, he had a long 90-minute meeting with Yunus in Washington.

The Democratic presidential nominee said, "I spent an hour and a half with Yunus. I was just blown away. He made his enterprise work. He promoted independence, not dependence. The idea struck me that whenever the power of

the government can be used to create market forces that work, it is so much better than creating a bureaucracy to hire a bunch of full time people to give some body a check."

The proposal from Bill Clinton to give a Nobel Prize to Yunus in recognition of his work in the Grameen Bank is expected to find wide support in different parts of the developing world, where the Bangladesh institution is regarded as a model.

For details of the Clinton interview, see Page 4.

## Star Special

Clinton said, "This is based on the work of Muhammad Yunus at the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which until the recent national disasters, had ninety-seven per cent loan repayment rate, better than the commercial banks in

bank in Bangladesh, one interviewer then asked, "I am intrigued because, with a few eccentric exceptions, I think you are the only politician I have encountered who has heard of the Grameen Bank."

Clinton replied, "I think

## SAARC ministers agree to spend more money on women, children

COLOMBO, Sept 18: South Asian ministers today informally agreed to spend more money on women and children and cut expenditures on weapons, saying they were looking for foreign help to implement social welfare projects, reports AFP.

Ministers of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) ended their three-day meeting here with a resolution to improve conditions for some 430 million children in

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