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Inside Today Article

**Bush and Clinton
 Share Same US
 View of the World**
 Kevin J Kelley writes
 from Washington
 Page 4

International



**Clinton ahead in three
 more states**
**UN relief convoys fail to
 reach Sarajevo**
 Page 5

Business



**Britain expected to lower
 interest rates**
**Funds of Dhaka and
 Chittagong branches of
 BCCI forfeited**
 Pages 6, 7

Feature

Health

**Breastfeeding prevents
 diarrhoea**
 Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



**A Performance to
 Remember**
 Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Cabinet meet held

The regular weekly meeting of the cabinet was held at Bangabhaban yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair. Ministers, State Ministers-in-charge of different Ministries and divisions attended the meeting. Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Secretaries of the concerned Ministries and divisions were present, reports BSS.

Proper plan to uphold parliamentary system vital : Hasina

Star Report

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has suggested a proper planning for the continuity of parliamentary democracy in the country.

Talking to The Daily Star at her Minto Road official residence Monday evening, Hasina said "Power will come and go but there should be a system in which the guiding principles of the country will never change."

She said that her party would strive for an ensured political continuity for the greater benefit of the land and its people.

"We really want a healthy politics in the country... but there are some who get us far later than the time we show our goodwill," she observed.

The Awami League chief did not elaborate on her statement.

When asked to comment on the general outcome of the AL national conference which took place after nearly six years, Hasina said that her party's power of adaptation, its new economic policy, a smooth change in the party leadership and increased organisational strength were the fruits of the two-day session, that ended in the early hours of Monday.

"This conference has proved that the Awami League is the political organisation truly capable of leading the nation," she said.

"Ziaur Rahman had once said that he would make politics difficult, but we have proved that leadership that emerged from the grassroots level could only ensure democratic transition," the Awami League President, also the

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, added.

Earlier, speaking to the Awami League leaders and workers who called on her at her residence, Hasina emphasised broadening the foundation of the party.

"No matter whether we are in power or not — our goal is to restore people's rights," she said.

BSS adds : Sheikh Hasina yesterday congratulated leaders and workers in all tiers of Awami League for making the council concluded session of the party an all-out success.

Hasina, elected unopposed party President for a third consecutive term, hoped that the new leadership elected by the council would advance the party's movement for realising the just demands of the com-

See Page 12 Col 7

We'll be able to fulfil hopes of party rank and file : Zillur

Star Report

Zillur Rahman, the newly-elected General Secretary of the Awami League, has expressed firm confidence that with the efforts and cooperation of the party rank and file, the AL would become stronger and more organised.

"We will be able to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people and the party workers," said the 63-year-old veteran Awami League, elected to the post Monday morning.

This was for the third time in 20 years that Zillur had been chosen for this important position of the party's Central Working Committee. Previously, he was elected General Secretary in 1972 and 1974 consecutively.

Giving his reaction Monday evening on his being elected, Zillur told The Daily Star "I am happy and proud to assume the post again after 17 years."

He said that he was very much aware about the responsibility vested in him considering the present political situation of the country.

See Page 12 Col 6



The newly elected office bearers of Awami League Executive Committee garlanding the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban, Dhankandi, yesterday.

Khaleda to meet Pope Oct 17

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will visit Vatican City on October 17 to meet the chief of world Catholic community, Pope John Paul II, reports UNB.

Official sources yesterday described as important Begum Zia's planned trip to the Holy See where she will discuss with the Christian high priest global peace and bilateral relations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs attaches importance to the visit in view of an excellent relationship between the two states.

The Prime Minister will proceed to the Vatican after delivering the key-note address on "Food and Nutrition: A Basic Right" at the FAO headquarters in Rome on October 16, the World Food Day.

She is scheduled to leave Dhaka on October 14 for Rome on a four-day visit to Italy in connection with celebration of the Food Day.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Agriculture Minister M Mazid-ul Haq will accompany her in the tour.

BSF tries to push 36 more thru' Sadipur border

JESSORE, Sept 21: BDR personnel today (Monday) foiled another attempt of the Indian BSF to push back some 36 people, who they claimed were Bangladeshi nationals, at the Sadipur border of the district, reports UNB.

Sources with the BDR said the BSF tried to deport those people early Monday, but the efforts were resisted.

Meanwhile, BDR today sent three Indian nationals back to Indian territory who had been pushed into Bangladesh through Benapole border earlier on Sunday.

In a separate development BDR at Sadipur frontier detained a woman with a Indian revolver with her possession. Police also arrested an Indian national from Barabazar, 15 km off here.

Saju (22), who entered Bangladesh illegally through Chowgacha border post, hailed from the Indian state of Assam. Kalganj police arrested him this morning after observing his suspicious movement. He was sent to Jhentsidaj jail.

Meanwhile, a Lalmonirhat report says, tension in the bordering area of Thenghara

of the district, triggered last week by an assault by Indian BSF on a Bangladeshi fisherman, was defused today (Monday) after a flag meeting between the border security forces of the two countries.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area following the assault of the Bangladeshi fisherman by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

At the flag meeting, the Bangladesh side was led by BDR Battalion Commander Lt Col Manzoor Ahmed while the Indian side was led by Brig SF Kutub of BSF.

Striking Polytech teachers seek PM's intervention

By Staff Correspondent

The teachers of country's 20 Polytechnic Institutes have started an indefinite abstention from work from Sunday.

They started the strike to press home their 10-points demand. The demands include promotions under the BSC technical cadre, waiving of senior scale examination for those who have completed their five years of job and regularisation of ad-hoc teachers.

Meanwhile, the striking teachers Sunday held a rally at Dhaka Polytechnic Institute and sought the Prime Minister's intervention in resolving the issue.

Special tribunal on arms case One gets life term, 3 to suffer 17-yr RI

A young man was Monday sentenced to life-term in jail and three others were awarded 17 years rigorous imprisonment each by a special tribunal in an arms case, reports UNB.

Special Tribunal Judge Abdul Gafur handed down the judgement, convicting the four who fought police with bombs before arrest at Tejgaon in the city on October 29 in 1990, according to the prosecution.

Munir Hossain, son of Abdul Mannan, a resident of the Central Printing Press Staff Quar-

ters at Tejgaon, was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment in absentia as he absconded after he had been enlarged on bail.

Rathan Hossain alias Ramjan of Shantibagh in the city, Mahmudullah of Daudkandi in Comilla district and Moniruzaman of village Sohampur in Belkuchi thana of Sirajganj were sent to the Central Jail to serve their 17-year prison term.

According to the prosecution, police went to the Tej-

See Page 12 Col 7

ML wants its Shahbagh building back

By Staff Correspondent

One faction of Bangladesh Muslim League wants back its office premises which is now a part of the PG hospital at Shahbagh.

Muslim League president Kazi Kader, secretary general M A Matin and the Standing Committee secretary Mohammad Jamir Ali in a joint statement wanted the "Muslim League Bhaban" back except for the part being used by the hospital.

They also demanded that the government should let Muslim League use the Allah-walsh Building in Motijheel in the capital until return of their property.

The statement said that the Mujib government acquired

See Page 12 Col 2

Fahd orders quick implementation of reforms

DUBAI, Sept 21: King Fahd has ordered quick implementation of reforms that would give Saudis constitutional guarantees and their first say in running the country that celebrates its 60th anniversary on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The official Saudi press agency SPA said the monarch on Sunday met senior princes and members of the committee that drafted the 'basic law,' a kind of constitution that will govern the Kingdom alongside the Islamic Sharia code.

He ordered the committee

See Page 12 Col 1



Art is a means of struggle : Shabana Azmi

By Staff Correspondent

Celebrated Indian artiste Shabana Azmi believes that changing people through art is a long struggle and art cannot bring an instant change in the social life.

"It is a long process to create a sense of awareness and change the sensibilities," says Azmi, who is now in the city to take part in the play 'Tumhari Amrita' along with Farooque Shaikh, another artiste from India.

Azmi, Farooque and Feroze Khan, the director of the play, was addressing a press conference at Sheraton hotel yesterday. Theatre School has organised four performances of the play written by Javed Siddiqui.

Feroze Khan, the director of the play, speaking on the occasion, explained how the play had been based on an American play, which brought in a bohemian woman and a straight-jacket individual and how through their letters the socio-political life of the country and the concerned individuals unfolded through 35 years. "It was a totally Indian

See Page 12 Col 3

MIXING FEMINISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS : Shabana Azmi, professing the headwords as her credo, giving autographs to fans after a press conference at Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

— Star photo

Govt plan to crack down on fake manpower agents

By Sharier Khan

The government has launched a move to stop unscrupulous manpower agents sending Bangladeshi workers in thousands to Southeast Asian countries allegedly on fake papers, according to well-placed sources.

Labour and Manpower Ministry sources said that the government was keen to identify the manpower agents involved in human trafficking.

The sources said that the government would soon take specific measures against such manpower agents but that they had not yet been formulated.

The government would also vigorously implement the existing laws against such agents, the sources added, for which primary inquiry on activities of the manpower agencies had already begun.

Malaysia is at present reportedly a favourite destination for these "illegal" Bangladeshi workers resulting in their languishing in sub-human living conditions in rubber plantations and construction industries.

A Malaysia returnee, Ashraffuddin, 30, a victim of such a manpower agent, said that these Bangladeshi, in constant fear of being detained or deported, were staying there against their will.

Malaysia is presently taking in a large number of Bangladeshi workers legally. The legal workers are paid well.

A few dishonest men in Bangladesh, with their networks extending up to Malaysia and Singapore, are exploiting this situation and sending workers despite not having any manpower export licence.

"I was convinced by a manpower agent that he had a legal contract with a Malaysian company wanting workers," Ashraffuddin said.

The dishonest manpower agents reportedly charge workers 70,000 taka each while authorised agents in Dhaka charge 50,000 taka per person for a two-year contract.

According to authorised manpower agents, the Malaysian jobs are at rubber and palm plantations, construction

sites, factories and in other similar fields.

The job offers a worker from Tk 4,000 per month to Tk 10,000. A labourer can save at least half his income per month if his employment is legal, the agents informed.

But working in Malaysia illegally not only earns constant mental stress but also yields nothing, the agents said.

Ashraffuddin and some other Bangladeshi workers entered Johor Bahru, a Malaysian city, via Singapore in early July.

See Page 12 Col 8

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Divorced dame does it!

By DMCH Correspondent

Md Abdul Motaleb, 35, a businessman, got his penis cut off by his divorced wife Sunday night.

Sharmin, 26, reportedly wooed her former husband into coming to see their two-year-old son at her 643/A Moghbazar Bank Colony residence to execute her design, Motaleb's family sources said.

The young lady ended up in police custody.

Sharmin reportedly phoned Motaleb that night to invite him to her house, and Motaleb responded to his former belo-ved's call.

Sharmin and Nasrin, two sisters of Sharmin, brought the son before Motaleb but took away the kid after a while switching off the lights.

Sharmin then promptly

See Page 12 Col 2

Pound plunge buoys dollar up

By Inam Ahmed

The turmoil in the European Community money market has caused the pound sterling in the country to slide a long way down giving the US dollar a strong footing.

The exchange rate of the pound sterling in relation to the US dollar has come down to 1.7 dollar per pound sterling, banking sources said.

It was earlier exchanged at a much higher rate, they said. On September 2, the rate was two dollars per pound sterling.

The phenomenon occurred as the British currency value plummeted and the pound was suspended from the EC exchange rate mechanism.

In taka value, the pound has fallen from a rate of taka 77 per pound to taka 67 recently.

Meanwhile, official sources said the devaluation of the pound may not have any specific adverse effect on Bangladesh as the country's majority volume of trade, about 80 per cent, is carried out in dollars.

However, exporters to the British market may suffer due to the weakness of the pound, they said.

As Bangladesh has a very limited export market, exporters to United Kingdom (UK) would be left with no other option but to export their commodities to the British market. Naturally, their export proceeds in pounds would carry less value when used for import in US dollars.

See Page 12 Col 7

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star will publish a 16-page Special Supplement on the "National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" on Wednesday, 23rd September, 1992.

This 16-page Special Supplement will be a rare document on the Kingdom, containing articles, write-ups and photographs of the transition of this Desert Kingdom into a modern day booming state.

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