

Inside Today

Article

Stage is Set for Confrontation over NAM Reform Proposals vs Western Priorities at UN

On The Record by Shah AMS Kibria Page 4

International

UN Council votes to seize Iraqi oil assets abroad

Premadasa ready to talk with LTTE Page 5

Business

Tk 52cr WFP aid for Rohingya Page 7

Feature

Banking and Finance

Social Insurance for the Disadvantaged Old Page 8

National

Malaria claims 196 lives in three hill districts in 2 months Page 9

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



More than a Piece of Furniture Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

ROK envoy to host reception

The embassy of the Republic of Korea in Dhaka will hold a reception marking the 4325th anniversary of the republic's National Foundation Day on October 5 at 6:30-8:00 pm at Sonargaon Hotel, an embassy press release said, reports BSS.

Children's memo to Speaker

The delegation of children submitted a memorandum to the Speaker Sheikh Ruzak Ali yesterday at his Sangsad Bhavan chamber in observance of the children's rights week. The memorandum highlighted various basic problems including education and security of the children, said an official handout, reports UNB.

Workshop on acting begins Oct 8

A fortnight long workshop on 'acting' will begin on October 8 at Shilpakala Academy. Drama and Film department of the Academy has arranged the workshop which would be concluded on October 29. The participants of the workshop will be selected on Wednesday by an interview, said a press release yesterday, reports UNB.

Hartal observed in Gowainghat

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Oct 3: A complete half-day hartal was observed at the Gowainghat thana headquarters Friday in protest against the police action on the protestors and illegal disconnection of the electricity lines at the thana headquarters on the previous night. The protestors also held a meeting and demanded immediate withdrawal of the Officer-in-Charge of Gowainghat thana.

Kerry Committee Report

Ershad stole millions of dollars through BCCI



Gen. Ershad

WASHINGTON, Oct 3: BCCI 'stole millions' including disaster relief funds, from Bangladesh making huge payoffs to the erstwhile political leaders there including former President Ershad, the Kerry Sub-committee of the US senate has stated, reports FTI. BCCI was closed globally on July 5, 1991. The sub-committee report said: "According to world press accounts, supplemented by information from BCCI insiders, President Ershad worked with his brother-in-law, former Bangladeshi diplomat A G M Mohiuddin, to smuggle millions of dollars out of Bangladesh through BCCI into the United States. BCCI also hired various relatives of Ershad to work at BCCI branches in Hong Kong, Britain and Canada, and in return, former Bangladesh's govern-

ment hired one of BCCI's top officers to serve as Bangladesh's first Ambassador to Brunel. "The BCCI-Ershad connection was essential to the former Bangladesh President because, given his country's economy, he had relatively limited opportunities. By making use of BCCI he was able to move millions of dollars of funds out of Bangladesh governmental accounts. A BCCI officer Abdur Sakhsia said in response to a question about payments by BCCI to the leading political families of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the payoff came either in the form of cash, or hiring of their relatives, contribution to their favourite charities, or payment of their medical bills. "The most detailed account of Bangladesh payoffs was pro-

vided by the Los Angeles Times. Its account has been generally corroborated by testimony to the sub-committee from statements by BCCI officials, including Sakhsia. "The Times reported in Bangladesh during Ershad's rule BCCI stretched the law to its limits to avoid paying desperately-needed government taxes, to skirt national banking regulations and to remit as much profit as possible out of Bangladesh and into the bank's international web of corporations and subsidiaries. "After the Central Bank of Bangladesh forbid BCCI from exporting profits in Bangladesh abroad, the BCCI created the BCCI Foundation a charitable trust based in Bangladesh, whose official purpose was to fund scholarships, rural health care cen-

Nurses go on indefinite strike

By Staff Correspondent

Nurses began an indefinite strike at the government hospitals and clinics across the country from 8 am yesterday (Saturday) to press home their 14-point charter of demands. Some 15,000 nurses in 38 medicare centres, hospitals and nursing centres joined the strike. Patients reportedly began leaving the hospitals voluntarily since yesterday and many of the beds in the city hospitals were found empty. Meanwhile, the government will sit with the leaders of the Bangladesh Diploma Nurses Association again today, either at 11 am or 3 pm, according to a Health Ministry official. He said that the government would probably make an official announcement on the outcome of the talks today. Meanwhile, the Joint Secretary of BDNA Faisal

Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the government had not informed the BDNA of today's meeting until 9.30 pm yesterday. He said, "The government had not been much sincere about the three rounds of talks held since September 22, and by not informing us about this meeting it has once again revealed its insincerity." "We are ready to cooperate with the government...", Faisal said, "But it is useless as the government had been rigid in the past rounds of talks." Out of the 14-point charter of demands, the government had already accepted the first: regularisation of 750 nurses appointed on an ad-hoc basis, and issued an order. But the BDNA leaders insisted on other points such as increase in allowances of the



Premadasa arrives today

A rousing welcome awaits President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka arriving in Dhaka today on a three-day visit to Bangladesh in the second phase of his trip to South Asian capitals, reports UNB. He will be accompanied by Madame Hema Premadasa. Premadasa, current Chairman of SAARC, will fly in Dhaka by a special flight of Air Lanka, from Hashimara Airport. See Page 12 Col 4

Commentary

Delhi should call off "Operation Push Back" for its own sake

By S.M. Ali

Four attempts to push in 64 more From Our Correspondent JESSORE, Oct 3: Bangladesh Rifles today foiled four attempts by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to push 64 people into Bangladesh through different borders, according to BDR sources. The sources said that the BSF attempted to push in 19 persons through Panchpiritala under Chowgacha Thana at 5 am, 34 persons through Kanaidanga under Moheshpur Thana at 6 am, three persons at 6:30 am and the rest eight persons at 3:30 pm through the border village Sadipur under Sharsha Thana of the district. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) promptly thwarted the attempts. All of them were Bangla-speaking Indian nationals. According to an unconfirmed source, a batch of 20

The reported division among Indian politicians over New Delhi's drive against the so-called Bangladeshi illegal immigrants may result in the "Operation Push Back" being stalled. But such a development, otherwise welcome to this country, will not necessarily lead to an abandonment of the drive that has severely damaged the bilateral relations between Dhaka and New Delhi. What makes the situation so bleak is, the Indian Home Minister SB Chavan has also disclosed progressing a carefully planned scheme of fencing 896 kilometres of border and constructing 2,784 km of roads along the frontier, at an astronomical cost of Rs 831 crore. This is happening at a time when countries in other regions — for that matter, even the South Asia — talk of open borders, freer trade and closer communication on people-to-people basis. The damage to Indo-Bangladesh ties by these moves from New Delhi could not have come at a worse moment, casting a shadow over the Summit of the South Asian Association

for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) which Dhaka hosts in just two months time. On the face of it, it would have been reasonable for New Delhi to wait until the Summit was over and then to set the stage for detailed talks on this complex issue, first among the officials and then perhaps at the ministerial level. If all went well, even a meeting between the two prime ministers, Narasimha Rao and Khaleda Zia, could take place. This is the internationally recognised way of dealing with a bilateral issue. For reasons best known to the Indian authorities, this approach was rejected by New Delhi, even without alerting Dhaka. Instead, it launched a unilateral action in the form of "Operation Push Back" that has split the Congress Party, dismayed a section of the Indian press by its increasingly pronounced communal undertone and provided the region with one more example of what critics describe as New Delhi's hegemonism. The gain for the Rao Gov-

Blind demand rights

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of blind persons, mostly students took to the streets of the capital yesterday demanding that their demands be fulfilled. While marching through the main thoroughfares, they voiced demands like 'We want education, we want jobs'. Placards carried by the marchers read 'Fullfill the 16-point charter of demands of the blind', 'Give us our rights as citizens of the country'. Setting off from the street adjacent to the Jatiya Press Club, the processionists marched to the Social Welfare Directorate at Bijoynagar to submit a memorandum containing the demands to the Director General of the office. They then moved to the Secretariat to hand over a copy of the memo to the Minister for Social Welfare. Bangladesh Dristhiheen Adhikar Adaya Parishad (the council for realising the rights of the blind) organised the march preceded by a big rally in front of the Press Club. Addressing the rally, President of the Parishad Abdul Latif alias Badal set an October 25 deadline for the authorities to accept its demands. Latif said the blind in the country were leading inhuman lives because of inadequate ar-



Members of the Bangladesh Council for Realising the Rights of the Blind brought out a procession in city yesterday demanding implementation of their 16-point demand. — Star photo

Cyclones may hit coast this month

By Staff Correspondent

Cyclones may hit the coastal areas of the country this month but there is no chance of flooding, Met. office said Saturday. Weather experts analysing the available data said that one or two depression may form on the northern Bay which may turn into cyclonic storms and pass over the coastal Bangladesh. The Met office did not mention the date or time of forming of the depression. They said that the monsoon may withdraw by 10th of this month but there is no threat of flood. The country may experience the normally expected rainfall this month. The Met office expects 150-200mm of rain in Dhaka and Khulna divisions, 200-250mm in Chittagong division, 90-140mm in Rajshahi division. In the month of September 229mm of rain was recorded in Dhaka division, 300 mm in Chittagong, 367mm in Rajshahi and 246mm in Khulna division.

Iran ready to defend Qatar

Quit border post, Doha orders Saudi troops orders Saudi troops

DOHA, Oct 3: Qatar today ordered Saudi troops to withdraw from a southern border post, allegedly seized by Saudi Arabia two days earlier, the Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported, reports AFP. "Saudi troops must withdraw from the Qatari border post of Al-Khaffus... and restore the situation of before the recent regrettable events for direct bilateral contacts to succeed," a government spokesman said, quoted by QNA. Qatar earlier protested to Saudi Arabia after summoning

its ambassador, Abdel Rahman Al-Shubaili, over the "unjustified aggression," on the post some 120 kms (75 miles) south of the capital. Foreign Minister Hamad Ibn Jasssem al-Thani also met the Ambassadors in Doha of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to inform them of the situation. Doha has accused Saudi forces of seizing Al-Khaffus on Thursday, a day after a deadly clash at Al-Khaffus in a disputed zone. Riyadh has denied the charges, saying Bedouin

nomads were responsible for the clash. Calling for negotiations to demarcate the frontier between the two countries, Qatar said it was scrapping a 1965 border accord. But Riyadh reacted by insisting the accord was a binding. Meanwhile, Iran is ready to defend Qatar against Saudi 'aggression' and condemned Riyadh's alleged use of force against its small neighbour, a leading Iranian newspaper said today. The Tehran Times was re-

Shah Moazzem likely to lose JP secy post

Star Report

Shah Moazzem Hossain, the longest serving Secretary General of the Jatiya Party (JP) leaves the country this week for treatment abroad and will not get back his present responsibility when he returns, reliable party sources said Saturday. "He will leave for the United States via London by next Tuesday handing over charge to senior Joint Secretary General A B M Shahjahan," the source requesting anonymity said. General full-fledge Secretary Abdul Latif was Khaledur Rahman Tito, the first choice of jailed Party Chairman H M Ershad. Tito is also now in jail. The source said that the JP

Economy set on right track, says Saifur

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said yesterday national economy was set on right track and poised to take off, reports BSS. All indicators are favourable for investment and the imperative needs of the hour are the initiative and aggressive drive of the entrepreneurs, he said. The Finance Minister was presiding over a review meeting of the progress of the overall financial sector particularly industrial financing with the heads of Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) and Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) at the conference room of the finance division in the Secretariat here. State Minister for Finance M Mujibur Rahman, Governor

of Bangladesh Bank, Secretary, Internal Resources Division (IRD) and Chairman of the National Revenue Board (NBR), Chairman and Managing Directors on NCBs and DFIs were present. The meeting took stock of the overall performance and economic trend of the country particularly industrial investments. It was revealed that utilisation of fund for revitalising industrial sector, during the last couple of months have doubled compared to the position in the earlier month. Out of Taka 100 crore earmarked for revitalising industrial sector and Taka 25 crore given to Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB), a total of Taka 55 crores have been provided to

ADB suggests privatisation of energy, telecom sectors

By Staff Correspondent

A top Asian Development Bank official Saturday suggested opening up the energy and telecommunication sectors to private capital investment. In the spirit of liberalization and to ensure timely implementation of good quality projects, I suggest that these (energy and telecommunication) sectors be opened up for private sector investment," said A Cushman May, Director of the Private Sector Department of the Manila-based ADB. Speaking as the guest

speaker at a seminar on 'Promotion of private sector for national development,' he also suggested establishment of a long-term lending mechanism and a scheme to cover foreign exchange risk on the foreign borrowings of private entrepreneurs. Cushman May also announced that the Bank was 'actively' considering providing Bangladesh with a capital market development programme loan of about 40 million US dollars in support of a wide range of policy reforms to be undertaken by the government

to develop the capital market as an alternative source on investment capital for the private entrepreneur. Organised by the ADB and held at Hotel Sonargaon, the seminar was chaired by Afzalur Rahman, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, while the ADB resident representative G H P B van der Linden also made introductory remarks. Rahman pointed out that the liberal fiscal measures taken by the government and the industrial policy of 1991 with a "stronger open door

policy" had created a favourable climate for foreign direct investment in the country. He said that the government was actively considering taking up an export promotion scheme as part of an eight-year export development programme. An export promotion fund might also be created under the scheme, he added. The Additional Secretary also noted that the government was even considering a recommendation by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and

Industry to hand over the quota allocation and certain licensing authorities to different business bodies. Outlining ADB's initiatives in promoting private sector development in Bangladesh, Cushman May said that the Bank had provided equity and loan assistance to three private sector companies. Of them Padma Textile and United Leasing Company had already started commercial operations and were performing 'satisfactorily,' he added. In addition, the Bank had also given a 30-million US dol-

lar line of credit to four private commercial banks to finance small and cottage industries in the country. He, however, added "This credit line became effective in November, 1991 but its utilization is quite slow." He suggested initiating greater marketing and promotional efforts by the banks to speed up utilization of the credit line. Referring to the recent government steps to liberalise the economy, including privatising public sector enterprises and allowing foreign in-

Transport Workers Federation formally splits

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation formally split Saturday with formation of new committee with Manjurul Ansh Khan as President and Bhushan Ghosh as General Secretary. Khan was the Executive President of the former committee while Ghosh was the General Secretary of the southern region of the federation. A 30-member executive committee and 101 councilors were elected by some 400 delegates from across the country at a special conference at the Institution of Engineers. The other workers' leaders holding vital executive posts in the new committee included Shah Alam — Executive President, Abdur Rouf, Nurul Islam and Liakat Hossain — Vice-Presidents and Abdur Wadud Nayan and Yakub Ali — Joint-

Kohl physically assaulted

By Staff Correspondent

SCHWERIN (Germany), Oct 3: Chancellor Helmut Kohl was physically assaulted by a man in a crowd following him on a walkabout after German Unity Day ceremonies today, reports Reuter. Witnesses in the East German city of Schwerin saw a man in dark clothing barge his way through Kohl's bodyguards and strike the Chancellor in the stomach. The blow knocked the burly Kohl off balance and the assailant immediately fled.