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Inside Today

Article
 A Page from His-
 tory: The Day
 China Attacked
 India

Column: Between the
 Lines
 by Kuldip Nayar
 Page 4

International



Ghali okays accord
 with Iraq on aid
 operations
 Page 5

Business

Miyazawa warns
 NAFTA against block-
 ing free global trade
 Planning Minister calls
 for breaking 'unholy
 alliance of traders,
 bureaucrats and
 politicians'
 Pages 6, 7

Magazine



Life and Times of Wasi-
 uddin, My World by
 S M Ali, An Award too
 Late to Come, Write to
 Mita, A Gallery with a
 Promise and Book
 Review
 Pages 9, 10, 11

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Guest Control
 Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Dhaka-Yangon talks begin tomorrow
 The three-day Bangladesh-Myanmar official level talks will begin tomorrow in Chittagong, an announcement said here yesterday. The Bangladesh side in the 10th round of talks will be led by Commissioner of Chittagong Division Mohammad Omar Farooq while the Myanmar team will be headed by Director General of Department of Immigration and Manpower U Manung Aung, the announcement added, reports BSS.

BFUJ meet shifted to October 30
 A meeting of the executive committee of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), scheduled to be held today, has been shifted to October 30. The meeting will be held at the union office at the Jatiya Press Club on the day at 10.30 am, reports BSS.

Quake rocks Nepal
 KATHMANDU, Oct 22: A moderate earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale rocked parts of western Nepal Thursday, but there were no immediate reports of damage or loss of lives, reports AP.

Indian troops on maximum alert Kashmiris massing for march across border tomorrow

ISLAMABAD, Oct 22: Thousands of volunteers of a Muslim militant group were massing for Saturday's planned march across the disputed border between Pakistan and India in Kashmir, sponsors of the march said today, reports AFP.

Despite the Pakistan government's call to postpone the protest, the four-party Jammu Kashmir Democratic Alliance (JKDA) has expressed its determination to cross the border to express solidarity with the Muslim militants waging a secessionist campaign in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Indian troops and border guards in Kashmir state meanwhile were on maximum

alert to foil the march, which will coincide with United Nations' Day, to the disputed state's border, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

JKDA sources claimed tens of thousands would join an enrolment of volunteers was in full swings. More than 28,000 have already registered in five camps set up in the state capital Muzaffarabad alone, while many more have gathered in Rawlakot and Mirpur, a party source said.

Hundreds of them have already "arranged shrouds after holding farewell meeting with relatives, presuming that they would not return and meet martyrdom" at the border, a party statement said.

The alliance has finalised its strategy to cross the border from five different places keeping in view a possible government crackdown by Islamabad, which has already foiled two previous attempts with loss of life, it said.

Witnesses said rallies and public meetings were being held daily to motivate the public. Stirring war songs played on jeeps fitted with loud-speakers called for mass participation while alliance members had erected posters and banners condemning Indian "atrocities" in Kashmir.

Amanullah Khan, the leader of the pro-independence Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) who led the two

earlier abortive border crossing attempts this year, said his JKLF would fully participate in the latest march planned by the JKDA under Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim, a former president of the Pakistan-controlled Azad (free) Kashmir.

A Sreenagar report says, India vowed today not to let Kashmiris from Pakistan cross into Kashmir.

"We will proudly overcome the challenges put to us," Director General of Police Balwinder Singh Bedi said in this summer capital of Kashmir, whose ownership is disputed by arch rivals India and Pakistan.

"We are prepared to meet See Page 12 Col 6



One of the many children with kidney ailments being turned away from Children's Ward-2 of the PG Hospital for want of beds yesterday. Children are falling victims these days to a mysterious renal failure need dialysis within 24 hours of the attack for survival. — Star photo

Extortion charge Trial under anti-terrorism ordn begins

A young man was put on the dock in special tribunal yesterday marking the start of trial of violence-related cases under the stringent provisions of anti-terrorism ordinance, reports UNB.

Special Tribunal Judge Nasruddin Ahmad framed extortion charge against Ramzan Ali in a case filed with Lalbag police by Mazbor Rahman.

The complainant alleged that Ramzan Ali of West Islambag in the city came to a plastic factory at 97/12 South Islambag on September 24 and unleashed violence by exploding cocktails demanding Tk 500 from him as toll.

He allegedly threatened the complainant with dire consequences if the money was not paid.

After enquiry, police charged the accused.

PP Abdur Razzaque Khan conducted the hearing of the charge on behalf of the state and the accused was defended by M Masud Ahmed Talukder as no lawyer was engaged on his behalf.

AL protest week begins Oct 28

Awami League will observe protest week beginning October 28 by staging public rallies and demonstrations all over the country to press its demands, reports UNB.

The week-long action is to press for annulling the indemnity Ordinance to make way for trial of the killing of Bangabandhu, trial of Golam Azam in a special tribunal, protest against push back by India and deleting Clause 11 of the Rao-Begum Zia joint communique.

AL, the main opposition in parliament, will also mobilise public opinion against the anti-terrorism bill, lawlessness, price-hike, politicisation of administration, corruption and nepotism.

Central leaders of the party will attend the protest week programme till Nov 2.

General Secretary Zillur Rahman has instructed all district units of Awami League to draw up their programmes of the protest week.

WB-prescribed reforms may backfire, experts fear

An extraordinary professional seminar yesterday cautioned that the World Bank prescribed structural reforms, if implemented merely on ideological consideration instead of a well-calibrated economic grounds, might backfire and further worsen the limping economy, reports UNB.

Economic experts at the World Bank-sponsored seminar found many a World Bank inferences on problems of Bangladesh economy as "hypotheses" based simply on statistical estimates without any rigorous framework and in-depth review.

"World Bank has so far

talked much about inefficiencies in the public sector but failed to carry out a detailed review of the prospects of public sector," said Prof Rehman Sobhan.

The experts voiced strong reservation about whether policy prescription, particularly regarding indiscriminate import liberalisation and all-out privatisation, would at all prove effective for Bangladesh economy.

The seminar in the NEC auditorium was coordinated by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and participated by dozens of leading economists,

bankers senior bureaucrats, researchers and donors' representatives.

Titled "External Competitiveness and Economic Efficiency of Bangladesh," the seminar had deliberations on crucial economic issues ranging wide from exchange rate fluctuations, public enterprises reforms and trade liberalisation to deregulation of industry.

Private sector, the core of the highly orchestrated free economy, came under sporadic attacks for failing to prove efficient and honest. Entrepreneurs and experts, even those See Page 12 Col 3

Tangail college poll row spreads to Parliament

By Staff Correspondent

In an otherwise dull session, the Jatiya Sangsad last night witnessed a somewhat tense situation when Abul Hasan Chowdhury of the Awami League accused the Minister of State for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan of misusing power and publicly abusing his father and forefather in their home district Tangail.

The young AL MP, raising on a point of order after presiding Deputy Speaker gave a ruling rejecting an adjournment motion moved by him, made the charges which the young minister, a fellow Tangailite, denied terming See Page 12 Col 1



Biman security staff checking people at the entrance of the Motijheel office of the Bangladesh Biman yesterday following an untoward incident Wednesday involving a travel agent and a Biman passenger. — Star photo

Travel Agents' strike passes fourth day

By Staff Correspondent

The indefinite strike of the travel agents entered its fourth day Thursday causing immense sufferings to the travellers.

Following the reported untoward incident in the Biman Office over the booking of tickets by one agent Wednesday, the authorities beefed up security in the counter so that the passengers are not harassed by the outsiders. Police were also posted at the entrance of Biman Office.

Airlines sources said that their passengers bookings have fallen alarmingly which may affect flight operations.

A section of travel agents Wednesday reconfirmed their clients previous booked tickets, but the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) sources said that had been stopped totally.

Meanwhile, the ATAB leaders at a press conference Thursday evening at Hotel Sonargaon reiterated their vow to continue the strike until an acceptable solution was found.

The ATAB leaders said that their 550 members are united in their demand for withdrawal. See Page 12 Col 7

4 more resolutions introduced, one rejected, one withdrawn

By Staff Correspondent

The House yesterday rejected a resolution introduced by an Opposition member to nationalise a high school and college located in Kalkini thana under Madaripur district.

Another resolution introduced by a Treasury bench member to build a mosque near the mazaar of late President Ziaur Rahman was withdrawn.

Chaired by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni another four resolutions were introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad on private members day.

Moving the resolution, Alhaj Syed Abul Hossain of Madaripur called for nationalising the Kalkini Pilot High School and the Kalkini Syed Abul Hossain College, both located at Kalkini thana.

Pointing out that the Kalkini Pilot High School was set up way back in 1946, AL member said that it had gained a credible reputation over the years and students from the school had performed well in Secondary School Examinations.

He said that the college, the only one in the thana also had See Page 12 Col 4

AL, BNP readying for Bhola-4 by-election

Star Report

Boosted by victories in by-elections to two Jatiya Sangsad seats earlier this month, the mainstream opposition party Awami League is preparing to fight hard to retain Bhola-4 seat.

The ruling BNP will also strive to win the seat for which by-election will be held on December 2. The seat fell vacant due to death of Awami League MP Principal Nazrul Islam.

By-elections in two constituencies, Rajbari-1 and Mymensingh-3, were held on October 12 and 15. The by-elections to these seats were necessitated due to death of two AL MPs, Abdul Wazed Chowdhury and Nazrul Islam. AL could retain both the seats beating BNP candidates.

The AL leadership termed their victory in the recent by-elections as the reflection of people's no-confidence in BNP government. The ruling party, however, ignored AL's contention saying that results showed people's increased confidence in BNP since it could secure more votes than before in both the by-elections.

In the Rajbari-1, AL's Kazi Keramat Ali got 41,962 votes, defeating his nearest rival M A Khaleque of BNP who secured 36,096. Among other two candidates, Nurul Islam (Jamaat) polled 10,353 and Munshi Abdul Latif (Jatiya Party) bagged 9968. The total votes polled in this by-election were 98,379.

The number of votes cast in this constituency in February 27 general election last year was 1,16,030, much higher than this time. In the general election, AL's Abdul Wazed Chowdhury was elected with 33,187 defeating BNP's M A Khaleque who got 30,489.

An analysis on Rajbari-1 by-election showed that both AL and BNP could increase their number of votes compared with 1991 general election. However, AL's position is a bit better if percentage of votes secured by the parties is considered. AL bagged 28.60 per cent of total votes in last year's election while the percentage rose to 42.65 in this year's by-election. BNP also increased its percentage to 36.69 this time, as against 26.27 last year. In the by-election, only four candidates contested, while there were 11 candidates in 1991 election.

The scenario in the See Page 12 Col 1

JCD, BCL clash in Khulna, seven knifed

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 22: At least seven students were injured following a clash between the activists of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at the Sundarban College here today.

Witnesses said that both the groups organised rallies on the college campus on the occasion of the freshers' reception today.

The clash ensued when the two groups exchanged hot words as they passed each other in procession at about 12 pm at the college ground.

Four BCL and three JCD workers were admitted to the Khulna Sadar Hospital with knife injuries.

Both the groups filed cases with Kotwali police accusing each other.

Later in the evening, BCL brought out a procession in the town protesting the incident.

Weak economy hurting re-election chances, admits Bush

WASHINGTON, Oct 22: President Bush on Thursday acknowledged that the weak economy is hurting his re-election chances but predicted that he would charge from behind to beat Bill Clinton. Clinton said he will "work like crazy" to stay ahead, reports AP.

Independent Ross Perot's new ad blitz coincides with a post-debate surge in polls that show him still in third place but gathering enough steam to worry Clinton.

In an ABC poll released Thursday, Perot's support had risen to 19 per cent of voters surveyed. Clinton was ahead at 48 per cent and Bush at 29 per cent. An earlier ABC News poll taken showed Clinton with 52 per cent, compared with 29 per cent for Bush and 11 per cent for independent Ross Perot. The trend indicated Perot was taking support from

Clinton and from undecided voters.

"It's a problem," said Clinton communications director George Stephanopoulos. "Obviously, the higher he goes, the more he takes from us."

Clinton, campaigning Thursday from Seattle to southern California's Orange County, re-arranged his schedule to squeeze in competitive Missouri on Friday.

"I'm just going to keep working like crazy... I haven't won this election yet by a long shot," Clinton said Wednesday, as he hunted votes in Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, a region that's voted Republican in every presidential election since 1964.

Perot's post-debate climb has little effect on Bush, who is mired at near 30 per cent in most polls, a disappointing performance for an incumbent president whose party's base is

about 10 points higher.

"In spite of the economic concerns that we all feel, I'm convinced I'm going to win," Bush said on a CBS-TV morning show.

"One reason I'm going to win is that people are starting to realize that, yes, we are in tough economic times, but this is global," he said.

Of independent presidential candidate Perot, Bush said: "He's got some good ideas, he's got some nutty ideas."

Bush was to campaign Thursday in New Jersey for his second stop in that state in less than a week.

Bush on Wednesday wound up a 436-mile whistlestop tour aboard the "Spirit of America" that took him to three traditionally Republican southern states where his advisers had hoped he wouldn't need to campaign this close to Election Day.

Bush hammered relentlessly at Clinton, bashing his economic ideas, belittling his record as Arkansas governor and questioning his trustworthiness.

"He says he's going to... sock it to the rich. Watch out, middle America," Bush shouted. "He's going to stick it right in your wallet — and you don't need that anymore."

Bush aides have acknowledged that many voters unhappy with Bush believe he doesn't deeply care about the problems of average people and doesn't fully understand the pain some people feel from the hard economic times.

"When people are hurting in this country you feel it," he told several thousand supporters at a spirited rally in Thomasville, NC, on Wednesday. "You feel it right in your heart."

Quinine still effective in Bangladesh

By Sharier Khan

Anti-malarial drug quinine is losing its potentials in some parts of the world as malarial parasites have been developing resistance against it.

However, the parasite had so far not developed resistance to quinine in Bangladesh.

According to studies conducted by the Faculty of Tropical Medicine at Mahidol University in Thailand, a steady loss of drug effectiveness in Malaria patients was revealed.

The study published in The Times recently says that the high risk areas for malaria are many developing countries including Thailand and Kenya.

Apart from quinine, the recently introduced drugs such as Mefloquine, are also losing effectiveness, the study revealed.

Already malaria is causing between one to two million deaths a year, almost entirely in developing countries.

World Health Organisation representative in Bangladesh Dr ANS Abeysondere talking to The Daily Star said that quinine was losing its effectiveness in certain countries due to its random use.

Explaining how malaria infects the human body, he said, "human malaria is transmitted by four protozoan (single cell germs) species which have two life cycles. One cycle in man (asexual) and another in the mosquito (sexual cycle). It is this cycle in man that causes the disease malaria."

For malaria control, he said, "the parasite can be attacked by drugs and the species of mosquito (anopheles) which transmits the parasite."

Abeysondere said, "In Bangladesh, two species of human Malaria is prevalent. They are the benign type and See Page 12 Col 6

Depression weakens

By Staff Correspondent

The deep depression over the northeast Bay of Bengal which intensified into a storm, crossed the Teknaf and Ukia coast of Cox's Bazar district early Thursday. Meteorological office said.

The storm hit with a speed of 50 kilometre per hour but caused no major damage in the region, the Met official at Cox's Bazar said adding that the high wind and heavy rain only flattened the standing Aman crops in the coastal belt.

It is likely to move to east-northeasterly direction inland and gradually weaken.

The district administration officials said that those who were taken from the high risk zone of islands and char areas returned home Thursday morning.