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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina visits late Altaf's residence

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina Sunday went to the Gopibagh residence of late Syed Altaf Hossain, the Ganatantri Party leader. She consoled the members of the bereaved family, reports UNB.

JS body on Home affairs meets

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Home Affairs has formed a three-member sub-committee for overall development of the traffic system throughout the country including Dhaka city, according to a Jatiya Sangsad press release yesterday. Wing Commander (Retd) M Hamidullah MP has been made its convener. The other members of the sub-committee are Abdur Rauf Chowdhury MP and Mostafa Rashidi MP, reports BSS.

137 held under anti-terrorism law

Ninety cases have been filed and some 137 people arrested in the city till Saturday (November 14) under the newly enacted anti-terrorism law, a police press release Sunday said. Of the cases, charge-sheets were submitted in 27 cases and final report placed against five other cases after completion of investigation. The remaining 58 cases were under investigation, reports UNB.

Protest against mastans in Pabna

PABNA, Nov 15: A traders' rally here today demanded of the government to deal with iron hand the armed mastans and illegal toll collectors. The rally at the town hall was organised by local Traders Unity Council to register protest against mastans and toll collectors, reports UNB.

Saifur urges Preston during talks

Withdraw WB suspension on energy sector credit



Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman received the World Bank President Lewis T Preston at the Zia International Airport yesterday. —Star photo

The Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday called upon the World Bank chief Lewis T Preston to withdraw the suspension of the 300 million dollar energy sector credit, reports BSS.

The reform programmes undertaken by the present government would be disrupted if the energy sector credit disbursement did not begin on time, he said adding that the energy sector is very vital for the development of the country.

Saifur Rahman made the call when the visiting World Bank chief met him at his office.

The World Bank president lauded the very efficient macro-economic management of the present democratically elected government.

The World Bank chief also praised the efforts of the government in mobilising successfully higher domestic resources and tightening the belt.

Earlier, welcoming Preston, Saifur Rahman gave a detailed account of the policies and reforms undertaken by the government and said: "We have

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Vested quarters out to destroy democracy: PM

KOTIADI (Kishoreganj), Nov 15: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today lashed at the opposition threat for movement, saying vested quarters are creating unnecessary issues holding the people hostage, reports UNB.

Vested quarters who want to destroy the country are involved in calling hartals, bringing out processions, destroying public property on the streets and creating indiscipline in national life, she said addressing a huge public meeting at the Kotiadi Pilot School ground this afternoon.

"Those who talk about parliament are now trying to paralyse parliament with an ulterior motive to destroy the hard-earned democracy," the Prime Minister pointed out, in an oblique reference to the main parliamentary opposition.

They also talk about democracy and the spirit of Liberation War, but they had curbed people's rights during their rule, she said. "They introduced one-party rule, curbed freedom of the press, made black laws while people died of hunger during their rule."

They strangled the hopes and aspirations with

which the commonman had fought the War of Independence, Begum Zia told the rally.

"Today's democracy is an outcome of nine years of struggle against autocracy, for which people from all walks of life had laid down their lives," she said.

She also reminded that it was the same quarter which joined hands with the autocratic regime and went to election in 1986 when the people were on movement to remove the autocracy.

The vested quarter once again has joined hands with the autocratic forces to foil the development programmes of the people's government, the Prime Minister said.

They do not want development and the country to become self-reliant, she said, adding "these forces in league with their foreign masters want to cripple the country."

They have imported 'human chain' in the country from their mentors in the name of movement, she alleged and urged the people to identify them and unitedly foil all conspiracies of the vested quarters.

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Delhi opposes UN call to make S Asia N-free zone

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 15: India has reiterated its stand that nuclear disarmament is a global issue and cannot be resolved by establishing nuclear weapon free zones, reports PTI.

Opposing a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly's Political and Security Committee calling for establishment of nuclear free zone in South Asia, ambassador Satish Chandra said partial

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Sharif invited to SAARC summit

ISLAMABAD, Nov 15: Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, now on a visit here, called on Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif this evening and handed over to him a letter of invitation from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for attending the Seventh SAARC summit to be held in Dhaka next month, reports BSS.

The Pakistani Prime Minister said that he was eagerly looking forward to attending the forthcoming SAARC summit and assured the Bangladesh Foreign Minister that the Pakistani delegation would actively participate in the summit to contribute to

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Visit evokes protest

By Staff Correspondent
 Arrival of the World Bank (WB) President Lewis T. Preston in the capital yesterday was marked by demonstrations.

Several student and voluntary organisations held rallies and marched through the city streets protesting, what they said WB's anti-people prescription for Bangladesh economy.

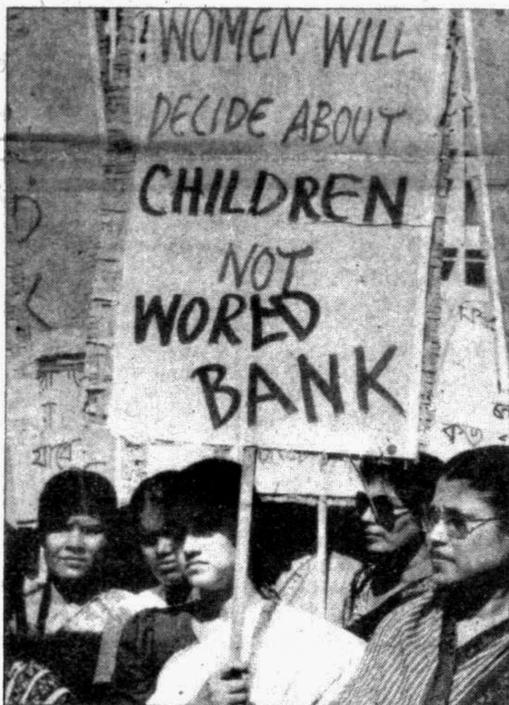
Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), an alliance of eight left-leaning student organisations, held a rally on the Dhaka University campus resenting the bank's "undesired" interference of the WB in Bangladesh's education system and its conditional loans for the country's development projects.

Addressing the rally, the GCO leaders observed that the WB assistance instead of helping reduce poverty had increased it significantly.

Our DU Correspondent quoted the GCO leaders as saying, "imposition of conditionalities by the WB hindered the national development and obstructed the process of achieving a self-reliant economy."

The rally was followed by a procession on the campus.

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Activists of the Protirodh Network demonstrating against the World Bank policies in city yesterday. —Star photo

Preston stresses consensus for economic adjustment

World Bank President Lewis T Preston last night highly applauded Bangladesh government's courage in implementing various reforms and adjustment programmes and assured the bank's continued support for the country, reports BSS.

Preston was addressing a reception accorded to him and his wife by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Mrs Rahman at the State Guest House Padma.

He emphasised on the need for a broader consensus for successfully pursuing the economic adjustment programmes.

Preston said the country now having democracy, freedom of press and confidence of the private sector was also building up for the smooth implementation of the adjustment programmes.

He reminded that adjustment process was very painful and Bangladesh had shown courage to proceed on with in even after the catastrophic cyclone of April 1991. The World Bank chief said that if one starts a programme one must

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Gunshots rock BUET campus again

By BUET Correspondent
 Gunshots rocked BUET campus again last night on the eve of the last date for filing EUCSU nomination papers today (Monday).

Campus sources said about a dozen of gunshots were heard at about 8 pm yesterday just after a cocktail explosion at the Sher-e-Bangla Hall of the University.

BUET observed a day-long strike yesterday at the call of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) to protest the violence on campus.

During the strike BCL and BCU at separate rallies threatened university authorities of boycotting the Nov 26 Engineering University Central Students Union (EUCSU) polls unless steps were taken against 'the terrorists'.

A tense situation prevailed on the campus since Thursday when 4 bombs were exploded and one gun shot was fired allegedly by a faction of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Several rounds of gunshots and explosions were also heard late Friday in and around the Sher-e-Bangla Hall of the uni-

versity during a meeting held by JCD.

The agitated students belonging to BCL and BCU yesterday blocked the BUET main gate for about 45 minutes from 7.45 am.

Acting Vice-Chancellor Dr Abu Taher Ali along with some teachers rushed to the spot and Professor Iqbal Mahmud managed to open the gate.

No student attended class yesterday.

Police have been deployed on the campus in connection with violence.

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Examinee beaten up, DU exams postponed

By Staff Correspondent
 A group of unidentified students assaulted an examinee leading to the postponement of all the scheduled examinations of the Department of Finance and Banking of the Dhaka University yesterday.

Golum Gaus, a Masters final

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Wrong policy has deepened economic crisis: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday (Sunday) said the wrong policy of the BNP government and its anti-people steps have further deepened the economic crisis facing the nation, reports UNB.

Talking to the CBA representatives of Kishoreganj Textile Mills and the Jatiya Sramik League leaders at her parliament office, Hasina said the party in power had failed to initiate steps for the wellbeing of the working class.

On the contrary, she said,

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Fresh BSF attempt to push in 15

LALMONIRHAT, Nov 15: Bangladesh Rifles foiled another Indian attempt to push into Bangladesh some 15 Bengali-speaking people through borders at Hatibandha early today (Sunday), reports UNB.

The situation became tense in the area when BSF tried to push those people across the border, local people said.

Earlier on Friday, BDR also thwarted another Indian effort to send a group of 67 people near the border pillar Nos 898 and 909.

The Indian BSF at a company-level flag meeting with BDR on Saturday at Dolkhawa Border reportedly observed that they were carrying out their push-in operations under orders from higher authorities.

The BDR protested the push-in operation and said they will resist the move and protect the sovereignty and independence at any cost.

It was learnt that BSF had brought 250 people and assembled them at camps at Bara Morichya, Nayahata and Morichabar near the border to push them into Bangladesh.

Bhashani's death anniversary tomorrow

The 16th anniversary of death of great populist leader Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani will be observed tomorrow (Tuesday) throughout the country, reports UNB.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day with due solemnity.

National Awami Party (NAP-Bhashani) will hold a discussion on the great leader's role at the party's Elephant Road central office today (Monday) at 4:00 pm.

NAP will also hold a rally and offer fatiha and floral

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National theatre to be set up

By Nurul Kabir

The government has decided to set up the national theatre consisting of two auditoriums. The auditoriums would be equipped with modern facilities to provide the country's professional theatre groups adequate technical support to stage dramas regularly.

The theatre groups of the country — both professional and amateur had been struggling for the setting up of the national theatre since the country's independence in 1971.

Already approved by the Cultural Affairs Ministry, the project worth Taka 14.30 crore, is expected to get the approval of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) by

the end of this year. According to sources in the Cultural Affairs Ministry, the implementation of the project designed under Fourth Five Year Plan starts February next year and is scheduled to be completed by June 1995.

According to the project proposal already signed by the State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof. Jahanara Begum, two auditoriums — one for staging final performances of dramas and the other for dress rehearsals — would be built in the Shilpakala Academy premises in the city.

The first one would be a 500 seat auditorium while the other would have the capacity to seat 300.

Both the auditoriums would

have the same facilities including audience lobby, snack lounge, leisure room for the artists, greenroom, separate dressing rooms for the male and female artists, and central airconditioning systems.

The Public Works Department would construct the auditoriums under the supervision of the Shilpakala Academy authorities.

On completion of the project, the national theatre would be under the guidance of the Shilpakala Academy.

A 20-member administration headed by a deputy director, however, would be added to the present administrative strength of the Academy for the smooth functioning of the national theatre.

Paracetamol has link with renal failure

Consumption of a certain type of Paracetamol syrup had led to the loss of lives of a large number of children during the past few weeks, reports BSS.

This was revealed at a symposium on 'Acute Renal Failure: Situation Analysis' at the auditorium of Bangladesh Institute of Child Health (BICH) in Dhaka yesterday.

Dr Mohammad Hanif, Dr Reaz Mobarak and Dr Dilruba Rahman jointly conducted the study recently on children who suffered from acute renal failure.

Presenting the paper, Dr Hanif said laboratory test done

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Ciba-Geigy chief says VAT on pesticides to affect crop output

By Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Nov 15: Imposition of Value Added Tax (VAT) on pesticides will lead to substantial price increases that will have a detrimental effect on crop production in the country.

This was disclosed by Gerhard G Doege, the Managing Director of Ciba-Geigy, Bangladesh in his welcome address at the "decade completion celebration day" function of the company's pesticide plant in the port city today.

Mayor of Chittagong City

Corporation Mir Mohammad Nasrullah attended the function at the Sholoshahar plant as the chief guest while Dr Ayubur Rahman, Director General of the Directorate of Agricultural Extension, was the special guest.

The Ciba-Geigy MD noted that VAT was normally passed on to the end consumers, resulting in pesticides becoming 'significantly' more expensive.

This may force farmers to dilute the pesticides more than recommended and thus

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Ship with 3000 Somali refugees runs out of food in mid-sea

DJIBOUTI, Nov 15: A French Navy ship raced down the Gulf of Aden today with desperately needed water, food and medicine for 3,000 Somali refugees fleeing civil war on a freighter limping towards Yemen, reports Reuter.

A UN spokesman in Yemen said an unknown number of refugees had already died aboard the jam-packed 1,600-ton motor vessel Somali, which has run out of supplies and is still at least three days from its destination, Aden.

A French embassy spokesman in Djibouti said the navy vessel commandant Ducuing left today at meet the Somali with emergency supplies for the refugees, believed to include about 400 children.

Diplomatic sources said the ship, which left Merca in southern Somalia four days ago, was overcrowded and could not carry enough food and water for the journey.

According to Tawafik Ouaneq, who represents the UN High Commissioner for

Refugees in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, its original destination was the East Yemen port of Mukalla, but UNHCR told it to head for Aden, 300 miles further west, which has better facilities for refugees.

It was last reported halfway between Mukalla and Aden, about 300 miles from Djibouti, a former French colony at the entrance to the Red Sea.

The ship's captain sent a radio message to the UN on Saturday saying he had run out of food and water and did not

expect to reach the Yemeni coast until Wednesday.

United Nations officials say the supplies being carried by commandant Ducuing will not be enough and more will be needed before the Somali reaches Aden.

Ouaneq, a Tunisian, said he was contacting the Yemeni government to get permission for the Somali to dock.

Meanwhile, AP adds: Attacks on a convoy of Western relief workers and UN troops guarding Mogadishu's airport

have increased fears among relief workers for their own safety.

"The security situation is deteriorating," said Steve Rifkin, the field director for the relief agency Save the Children. "We may be targets of looting."

Gunmen attacked a group of international relief workers and their guards in Somalia's capital on Friday, and UN soldiers in armored personnel carriers came to the rescue. An unidentified aid worker was

shot in the arm.

UN troops at the airport also exchanged gunfire with troops of Mohamed Farrah Aidid, Somalia's main warlord. No one was hurt.

It was the first attack on UN troops, who have been in Somalia since October to help deliver food to Somalia's starving masses.

As many as 300,000 Somalis have died from drought and warfare since the beginning of the year, and an additional 2 million are at risk,