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Notice

Due to lack of space, our regular feature Dhaka Day by Day has been held over for today

Supplement

Today's issue of *The Daily Star* contains a 4-page supplement on 'Swiss Week, Dhaka '92' marking the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Swiss confederation.

NEWS BRIEFS

PM visits injured JCD leader

CHITTAGONG, Nov 24: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) here today to see the condition of injured Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader Omar Faruq, reports BSS.

Omar Faruq was earlier admitted to the hospital with bullet injuries. He was a victim of clashes between rival groups of students at Rajan College.

Hasina leaves for Gafargaon tomorrow

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will visit Gafargaon tomorrow on an organisational tour to address a public meeting of her party at Islamia High School ground. She will leave Dhaka for Bhola on November 27 on a 4-day byelection campaign in Charfashon-Manpura constituency, reports UNB.

Coordination meet of BNP leaders

A coordination meeting of BNP leaders will be held tomorrow at 7.30 pm at the party head office at Naya Paltan. Secretary General of BNP and LGRD Rural Development and Cooperative Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Tahukder will attend the meeting as chief guest, reports BSS.

Duncan Director dead

Anisur Rahman Director of the Duncan Brothers, died at a city clinic yesterday after a prolonged suffering from lung ailment, family sources said. He was 47. He left behind his wife, mother, sisters and a large number of well-wishers, admirers and friends to mourn his death, reports BSS.

Kaliganj College closed sine die

LALMONIRHAT, Nov 24: Kaliganj College was today closed sine die in the face of mounting tension caused by clashes between rival groups of students which left more than 20 injured, reports UNB.

Arms haul at ZIA godown

By Staff Correspondent

Customs officials recovered and seized 10 German-made sophisticated pistols from a consignment at the airfreight godown at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Tuesday.

The pistols, each bearing model number ARC-800 cal-8mm, were concealed in a washing machine imported to Bangladesh from Pakistan, Customs sources said.

The value of the pistols was estimated at Taka 15 lakh. Airfreight Customs officials,

on suspicion, scanned the package and broke the washing machine at the airfreight godown in presence of others concerned and recovered the arms yesterday.

The pistols hidden inside the machine did not have magazines in the package, the sources said.

Experts believed that the magazines might have been smuggled into the country in another consignment.

The parcel with the pistols

arrived November 17 from a Pakistan company, SA Enterprise, 7/6, 5/C Nazamabad, Karachi on a flight of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Customs official said.

The parcel was booked from Karachi in the name of one Faisal of 113 HK Das Lane, Dhaka, the officials said.

Meanwhile, a local Customs clearing forwarding agent, Tonmoy Enterprise submitted

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The arms cache recovered from inside a washing machine at Zia International Airport yesterday. — Star photo

Govt will do everything to modernise army: PM

CHITTAGONG, Nov 24: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here today the government would do everything possible for the modernisation of the army, reports BSS.

Addressing the officers and troops of the Bangladesh army at a ceremonial parade marking the presentation of national standard to the "Durnibar Egaro" and "Striking Twelve," two battalions of the East Bengal Regiment, at the Shaheed MR Choudhury parade ground of the East Bengal Regimental Centre (EBRC) at Chittagong Cantonment this morning, Begum Zia said her government wanted to build up a well-disciplined strong army.

Stressing the need for skill

development through continuous hard training and practice Begum Zia, who is also in charge of the Ministry of Defence, said despite resource constraints increased facilities were being created for higher training of the army at home and abroad.

The Prime Minister handed over two national standards to the "Durnibar Egaro" and "Striking Twelve" as a mark of their brilliant and commendable services to the nation. The national standards are adorned with traditional military decorations along with Arabic inscriptions of the holy Kalima-e-Tayyeba.

Begum Zia also gave away gallantry awards the "Bir Bi-

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Harun-ur-Rashid, Mollah dead

Alhaj Harun-ur-Rashid Mollah, MP elected from Mirpur on BNP ticket died of a heart attack at Suhrawardi hospital at 6 pm yesterday. He was 52, reports BSS.

According to family sources, Mollah fell pain in the chest while climbing up the stairs to a third floor chamber at Haji Kudrat Mollah Market at Mirpur where he was to attend a meeting. He was rushed to Suhrawardi Hospital where he breathed his last.

He left behind his wife, four sons, five daughters and a large number of friends and well-wishers to mourn his death.

The namaz-e-janaza of Mollah will be held at the South Plaza of Sangsad Bhaban at 11 am today. Another Janaza will be held at Pallabi Jame

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Benazir threatens counter steps if govt stops holding meet

HYDERABAD (Pakistan), Nov 24: Pakistan opposition leader Benazir Bhutto has threatened counter steps if the authorities prevent gatherings during her 1,600-kilometer (1,000-miles) train journey to Rawalpindi, reports AFP.

Talking to reporters on board the Khyber Mail Express after leaving Karachi late Monday she said, "we will take counter steps if they prevent people (gathering) or obstruct our journey."

Bhutto, who appeared optimistic said, "it will make people more militant against the government and help in our struggle."

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500 more Rohingyas return home today

Star Report

More than 500 Rohingya refugees are expected to be sent home today (Wednesday), officials said reporting "satisfactory progress" at the three-day Bangladesh-Myanmar repatriation talks that began on Monday.

Officials reached at Cox's Bazar town by telephone said the refugees are awaiting repatriation at Rangikhal transit camp near the frontier town of Teknaf.

The Myanmar authorities already have cleared 209 refugees for repatriation and we expect they would clear names of another 300 refugees by tonight (Tuesday), said Solaiman Chowdhury, addi-

tional Rohingya Refugee Repatriation Commissioner. Another official said the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have started interviewing the possible returnees to find out if they are returning voluntarily.

It will be the fourth and largest group of refugees to be sent back home in Arakan, western province of Myanmar (Burma), since Sept 22 when the repatriation of nearly 265,000 Muslims started.

A Foreign Ministry official said the 11th round of talks between an 11-member Bangladesh delegation and a Myanmar delegation and a Myan-

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Nepal ready to help utilise common rivers

Kathmandu is willing to cooperate with other countries of the region in harnessing and utilisation of water of the common rivers, Nepalese Prime Minister Girtija Prasad Koirala has said.

"Development of water resource and its management is vital for the development of South Asia as a whole... it will be a step forward if we are able to take a regional agenda for developing water resource", Koirala said in an interview in Kathmandu last week with weekly Dialogue, an advance copy of which was made available to UNB.

He, however, hastened to add, "But India and Bangladesh should jointly approach Nepal" for regional cooperation in

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141 killed in Chinese plane crash

BEIJING, Nov 24: All 133 passengers and eight crew aboard a Boeing 737 that crashed in southwest China today were killed, the official Xinhua news agency reported, says Reuter.

The China Southern Airlines flight, which took off from Canton, crashed about 27 kilometers (15 miles) from Guilin, said an official from a Western aviation company in Beijing.

The Foreign Affairs Office in Guilin said debris from the crash was scattered over a wide area of mountainous terrain, making it unlikely that anyone had survived.

Hasina's security Home Ministry's statement untrue: Amu

Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu yesterday termed the government's version on security to opposition leader Sheikh Hasina as "untrue and ill-motivated", reports UNB.

In statement, Amu protested the government's clarification on the security arrangement for the Leader of the Opposition in parliament and Awami League President.

He said, after the fall of Ershad, Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed arranged full time security for both Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia. But Begum Zia all on a sudden withdrew the security for Hasina and provided "relaxed security" in the face of

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Fighting cold and drizzle.

—Star photo

Scramble for warm clothes

By Staff Correspondent

A pre-winter drizzle accompanied by a light breeze yesterday sent city dwellers scrambling for their warm clothes.

The sky had stayed cloudy since dawn and a drizzle started at around 11 am catching commuters fully unprepared.

Slum dwellers, especially those occupying the city's pavements, suffered the most.

A westerly disturbance over the Bay of Bengal caused the light rain and cold across the country Tuesday although the temperature rose by 2-3 degrees Celsius over the previous day's, weathermen said.

One westerly low, followed by the dead cyclone, crossed the sub-Himalayan region,

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Rice to replace wheat in FFW

By S Y Bakht

The government has decided to substitute rice in place of wheat for all Food for Work (FFW) and other relief programmes with immediate effect.

According to a Food Ministry source, the move was taken because of a huge stock of rice remaining unsold in government godowns due to low market price resulting in poor offtake from the godowns.

Furthermore, a bumper harvest is being predicted for the current season.

Presently there is about 6.6 lakh tons of rice and paddy stocked in the government silos and CSD and ISD godowns around the country.

Earlier this month, the government announced the Aman procurement policy, to ensure a fair selling price for the farmers, under which another 2.75 lakh tons of rice and paddy will be purchased.

Substituting wheat for rice in the government's relief programmes will use up about 5 lakh tons of rice from the government godowns, the ministry source pointed out.

In addition to FFW, the other government relief programmes for which wheat is used are Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), test relief and the gratuitous relief programmes around the country.

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The way to the 7th SAARC summit

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

A six-day series of formal and informal sessions—attended by diplomats and Foreign Ministers—precedes the seventh SAARC Summit to set the stage for the grouping's highest policymakers meeting.

These meetings dubbed "highly business-like" will virtually set things in order only to be formally okayed by the heads of state and government.

The run-up to the second Dhaka summit begins with the Programme Committee meeting December 6.

The Programme Committee, composed of senior officials, in its two ses-

sions of the one-day meeting, will prepare a calendar of activities and budget proposals for the next year.

The calendar of activities is based on the reports of the technical committees on the 13 agreed areas of cooperation under the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA).

The reports of six committees—Agriculture, Health and Population Activities, Meteorology, Postal Services, Prevention of Drug trafficking and Drug Abuse, transport—were disposed of by the Programme Committee and endorsed by the Foreign

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Chronology of events

Star Report

Following is the chronology of events of the Seventh SAARC Summit:

Dec 5: Delegates to the Programme Committee arrive.

Dec 6: Formal meeting of the Programme Committee begins at 10 in the morning. Another session at 3 in the afternoon.

Chairman of the Programme Committee, Director General in charge of the SAARC Desk at Bangladesh Foreign Ministry Q A M A Rahim, hosts a reception to the delegates in the evening.

Foreign Secretaries arrive.

Dec 7: Foreign Secretaries sit informally at 9 in the morning.

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SAARC leaders to thrust on trade expansion, says Mostafiz

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman said yesterday the forthcoming SAARC summit in Dhaka would mainly focus on expansion of economic cooperation in line with Dal Bhat approach of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

The South Asian leaders will also give thrust on trade expansion among the member countries of the association, Mostafiz told newsmen at his office.

The Foreign Minister who attended the 6th summit in Colombo last year recalled the action programmes adopted at

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Move to link weavers with garments industry

By S. Bari

The government and Gramscen Bank, hoping for co-operation from the garments industry, are working out a plan to link up handloom weavers with the garments export sector.

The collaboration is expected to inject new life into the disappearing weaver's trade.

Everyday, somewhere in Bangladesh, a handloom weaver goes out of business. Each year, the country imports some Taka 200 crore worth of Madras check cotton, an essential commodity for our highearning garments trade;

and a commodity easily made by our weavers.

The impact of the deteriorating handloom market on *tantils* has been devastating. Nearly half a million families depend on weaving. According to Gramscen Bank's managing director Muhammad Yunus, "Power has displaced the handloom entirely. We have to adapt to new technology, not run away from it."

Yunus did some thinking on what need handloom could meet in Bangladesh's export economy. He found large amounts of foreign currency being spent on a cloth that lo-

cal weavers could easily reproduce. "It's basically your everyday lungi," he smiles. "I got some weavers we know to make this Madras check, and the quality was in every way comparable to what we import from India."

If Bangladeshi cloth can be substituted for imported material, the ailing handloom industry would get a new lease of life. Quality, according to buyers who have seen the local product, is satisfactory; buyers already have orders in the pipeline. "As long as quality is controlled, I don't see why the Americans would not prefer to

buy the stuff here," muses Yunus.

The government has reacted positively to a scheme that combines export earnings with employment for a dying community. The catch, though, is the duty structure, which many feel is loaded against the weaver.

Cloth for the garments industry is imported free of duty because it is meant for re-export. Local weavers, however, need to import certain raw materials: thread, colour and chemicals, to name a few. Duty has to be paid on these items.

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Eliadah and other accused were produced before the court yesterday. —Star photo

Charges against Eliadah, four others today

By Staff Correspondent

Charges against five accused persons, four of them foreign nationals, in the sensational drug-case will be framed in the Court of the Second Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka today (Wednesday).

Among the five accused, three foreign nationals including a teenaged American girl, who were earlier arrested, were produced before the Court Tuesday fixed for the trial.

But on a prayer by the lawyer of Robert Blankson and

Ochendo Goddy, the Court fixed the date of framing charges for today.

Three accused, an American girl, Eliadah McCord, a South African Robert Blankson and a Nigerian Ochendo Goddy were arrested in connection with an attempt to trafficking 3.27 kg of heroin to Zurich, Switzerland, from Bangladesh on February 25 this year.

During the days proceedings, a plea to allow Eliadah to

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5-party announces month-long programme

By Staff Correspondent

The five-party alliance Tuesday announced a month-long agitation programme to press home its demand for trial of Colam Azam and govt ban on politics based on religion.

After a day-long councillors' conference at the Auditorium of Dhaka District Sports Association, the alliance leaders also decided to strengthen the left political front to counter the 'bourgeois' politics of Awami League and BNP.

Under the month-long ac-

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SKOP, govt sit again Nov 26

By Staff Correspondent

The government and the leaders of the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) will have their second round of negotiations on 26 of this month.

The SKOP has announced a 48-hour countrywide work-stoppage on November 29 and 30 to press for implementation of the bilateral agreement signed with the government last July.

The government, in a bid to avert the workers strike, had first round of negotiations on November 21.

The SKOP, at a meeting held last night, resolved that they were left with no other options but to carry out the work stoppage.