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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**364 Rohingyas repatriated**

COX'S BAZAR, July 16: A group of 364 Rohingya refugees of 84 families today (Friday) voluntarily returned to their home in Myanmar under the supervision of UNHCR. The 65th batch of the refugees went back to their homeland from Rangikhal and Nayapara transit camps, raising the total number of repatriated refugees to 29,597, official sources said. Repatriation Officer Baharul Islam and three other UNHCR officials were present during the repatriation, reports UNB.

**15 parties to meet today**

A meeting of the leaders of 15 political parties will be held today (Saturday) at 6 pm at Awami League central office. Awami League Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu has requested concerned leaders to attend the meeting, reports UNB.

**Boat capsizes: 3 missing**

By Staff Correspondent  
 BARISAL, July 16: Two women and a child were missing when a passenger engine boat sank in Kirtan Khoira river near Barisal town at about 8:30 am Friday.  
 The engine boat coming from Char Kauwa towards Barisal ghat sank near the town when it was caught in a strong current. The boat was carrying about 40 passengers, one of the rescued passengers said.  
 Most of the passengers, however, swam ashore but two women and a child remained missing.

## SKOP rejects govt offer

By Staff Correspondent

Talks between the government and the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) yesterday failed to make any headway, meeting sources said.  
 The fresh round of dialogue to resolve the impasse over labour demands, called at the government's behest with a view to averting an impending 48-hour country-wide labour and road-rail strike July 19-20, stalled when both sides refused to move from their original positions.

The nearly three-hour long discussions ended inconclusively at 1:30 pm with the government urging the labour leaders to call off the proposed shutdown and road-rail barricade and the SKOP delegation turning down the request.  
 Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan Wednesday convened the meeting with the SKOP leaders at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training in the city.  
 At yesterday's talks, while the Labour Minister, who led

the government side, reiterated the offer of Taka 950 as minimum wage for the public sector employees, the SKOP leaders rejected the proposal by saying it was nothing new.  
 On the question of minimum wages for the private sector, the minister said he found it impossible to fix a common minimum salary for all private enterprises.  
 However, meeting sources said, the minister informed the meeting that the authorities were trying to work out mini-

mum salaries for 14 sectors and that an announcement to this effect would be made soon.  
 In reply, the agitating SKOP leaders insisted they could not accept anything beyond the government-SKOP agreement, signed on July 6 last year.  
 The National Wages and Productivity Commission recommended a minimum basic salary of Tk 1000 for the public sector and Tk 900 for the private sector, as mentioned in the July accord.

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Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan presiding over the meeting with the leaders of the Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) at the Manpower and Employment Bureau auditorium in the city yesterday. Among others, State Minister for Textiles Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan is on his left while Md Ashraf Hossain, Whip in the Jatiya Sangsad, is on his right. — PID photo

## Rumours on compromise formula Pak elections in Oct, Sharif and Ishaq to retire

ISLAMABAD, July 16: Political tension eased here today after the postponement of a protest march which Pakistan's opposition wanted to unleash on Islamabad, but the nation's political crisis remained unresolved, reports AFP.  
 The armed troops, called in to protect key installations in Islamabad, moved out of the capital but units of para-military troops are still stationed here.  
 The decision to delay the so-called "long march" planned for

today with stated objective of overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, was taken late on Thursday after all-day intensive consultations between the head of the military and politicians.  
 Rumours swept political and press circles today that "horse-trading" between President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Sharif and opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, under the auspices of military chief General Abdul Waheed, had resulted in a deal to end the crisis which has

paralysed the country for some four months.  
 The terms of the agreement would include:  
 Dissolution of the National Assembly and "free and impartial" elections in October under army supervision.  
 The retirement at least temporary, of the President and the Prime Minister, whose disension sparked an open power struggle which plunged Pakistan into political crisis.  
 The establishment of an in-

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## 'Release of Azam proves his arrest was unlawful'

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh, at a public meeting yesterday said that the release of their leader Professor Golam Azam had proved that his arrest and confinement for 16 months was "unjust, unlawful and inhuman."  
 They also pledged to continue their struggle to establish the tenets of Islam in the country.  
 The meeting was organised by the city unit of the Jamaat at the north gate of the Baitul Mukkaram mosque Friday afternoon as part of its country-wide thanksgiving day following the release of its Ameer Thursday.

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## 15,000 join BNP BNP committed to bring welfare of people: PM

More than 15,000 members of different organisations and political parties of Rajshahi district joined the BNP in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.  
 Addressing the joining ceremony at her Sugandha office, the Prime Minister made a clarion call to those who joined the BNP to work sincerely for strengthening the party at the grassroots level because the party was committed to bringing welfare and prosperity of the people.

The leaders and workers who joined yesterday belonged to the Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh, the Samyabadi Dal, the National Awami Party and the Muslim League. Some Union Parishad chairmen and members, college teachers and labour leaders were also among them.  
 The Prime Minister said members of the BNP have to work hard to fulfil the party's commitment to the people of bringing about progress and development for which the people had voted it to power.

## 5 killed in Ctg road mishap

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 16: Five people — four Middle East returnees and their microbus driver — were killed this morning in a road mishap on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Mirersara.  
 Police said the accident occurred when the Chittagong-bound microbus from Dhaka collided head-on with a Noakhali-bound bus.  
 The victims were identified as Kiron Bikash Barua of Rangunia, Alamong Marma of Chandraghona, Lokman Hakim of Hathazari, Md Hanif of Raozan and driver of the hired microbus Babul of Dhaka. The four passengers had just arrived from Abu Dhabi and were proceeding home.  
 All the five died on the spot, police said.

The Prime Minister said the politics of violence, anarchy and strikes must be shunned to attain the cherished goal of development. She said the people have to be motivated to take a greater part in the development activities to foil the evil designs of the vested quarters out to disrupt the development process.  
 Begum Zia said the parties which did not have any programmes for the welfare of the people were creating indiscipline only to disrupt the development process initiated by the government.  
 The Prime Minister said the quarters which did not want the nation to become self-reliant were out to create chaos and confusion with a view to turning Bangladesh into a market for the foreign interests they represent.  
 Detailing the development programmes of the BNP government, she said.

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## Abbas to continue as acting Jamaat Ameer

Star Report

Abbas Ali Khan will continue to be the Acting Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh for an unspecified period although Prof Golam Azam, who was elected Ameer of the party in December 1991, was released from detention on Thursday.  
 Jamaat insiders yesterday said Prof Golam Azam had personally insisted that Abbas Ali Khan continue as the Acting Ameer "for sometime more."  
 Since Prof Azam was detached from organisational activities of his party due to his detention and would like to attend to urgent family affairs as well as meet well-wishers, Abbas Ali Khan should continue

as the Acting Ameer, the sources said conveying Azam's intention.  
 Golam Azam, who was released from detention on Thursday, did not address the public meeting organised by the city unit of the Jamaat. Presided by the Jamaat city unit chief Azharul Islam, the meeting was addressed by Abbas Ali Khan who was introduced at the rally as the Acting Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh.  
 Prof Golam Azam, however, conducted a thanksgiving *munajat* at a mosque near his Maghbazur residence after the Friday prayers yesterday.

## UN may have to pull out of Bosnia, fears Ogata

GENEVA, July 16: UN aid chief Sadako Ogata conceded for the first time today that the United Nations may have to pull out of Bosnia because of security fears and lack of funds, reports Reuter.

Addressing a major donors' meeting that delegates said could decide the fate of UN operations in Bosnia, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said: "We want to carry on, but the parties are rendering impossible our work in many areas."  
 "Never have the obstacles and risks been so dreadful and unacceptable as during the last two months."

## Professionals give 3-month ultimatum

The action committee of three professional groups of engineers, agriculturists and physicians and 26 cadres of BCS has given an ultimatum to the government to meet their demands for restructuring the administration within three months, reports UNB.  
 A national representatives' conference of the action committee in Dhaka yesterday decided to hold meetings throughout the country until October 19 when it would go for a day-long work stoppage if effective

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## Nirmul rally calls for half-day hartal July 19

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the Ekattorer Chhatra-Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday renewed their demand for trying Jamaat chief Golam Azam for his alleged 'war crimes' under a special tribunal.  
 At a rally in front of the committee's Tophkhana Road office, the leaders announced a countrywide six-hour hartal from 8:00 am on July 19.  
 The programme, which coincides with the hartal called on the day by several political organisations including the Awami League and the Jatiya Party, was announced to

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## Bangladesh Bank decision effective from today Foreign exchange rates unlikely to fluctuate

By Inam Ahmed

Although the exchange rate of the Taka to the US dollar would be announced on a daily basis from today, it is unlikely to markedly affect the foreign exchange market, a highly placed official of the Bangladesh Bank said.  
 The source elaborated that the daily rates would not be quoted on the basis of the New York or Tokyo exchange market rates as expected by the bankers.  
 "We have a real effective exchange rate and our currency is trade weighted," the official said, on condition of anonymity. He added that because of this the fluctuations in the New York or Tokyo rates will have nothing to do with the

Bangladesh currency rates.  
 "What we used to do on a weekly basis, we will now do on a daily basis," the source said.  
 The Bangladesh Bank (BB) will quote the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the morning. The exchange rate committee headed by Sonali Bank will then set the rates for commercial banks.  
 Earlier Thursday, the BB had announced that the exchange rate of the Taka to the US dollar would be announced henceforth on a daily basis.  
 The move was seen as a step towards convertibility of the Taka which was proposed in the budget this year.  
 Meanwhile, BB sources said although the Finance Minister

has been eager to make the Taka convertible, implementation may take some time because of 'enormous' preparatory works.  
 A BB source said the country's nationalised commercial banks (NCB) are not yet quite prepared to take up the challenge once the Taka becomes convertible and the market dominates the rates of the dollar. The source added that the BB itself is also not yet prepared for it.  
 However, he said extensive studies are on the subject in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to expedite implementation of the new system, much sought by the country's business circle.

## Jamaat, Nirmul activists clash in Dhaka, Chandpur

By Staff Correspondent

At least seven people were injured in clashes between the Jamaat-e-Islami and Nirmul Committee activists at around 4 pm yesterday at Tophkhana Road in the city.  
 The incident occurred when a procession of about 50 to 60 Jamaat activists proceeding towards the Jamaat's thanksgiving rally at the Baitul Mukkaram came upon a gathering of the Nirmul Committee activists near the committee office close to the Press Club.  
 The skirmish, which lasted for about five minutes, was broken up by the police who were deployed in the area in large strength.  
 While the Jamaat supporters were heading for the rally organised in connection with the release of their leader Golam

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## IDB formulating strategic agenda

By S Y Bakht

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is formulating a medium-term strategic agenda identifying specific development areas and sectoral emphasis for its operations, said Enam Ahmad Chaudhury, Vice President of the Jeddah-based bank, here on Friday.  
 A draft paper has already been prepared and the IDB is now soliciting the opinions of selected member governments on the matter, he added.  
 Presently on an official visit to Bangladesh, Chaudhury said the primary purpose of his visit is to discuss the contents of the draft with government officials here.  
 "The IDB management feels it would be worthwhile to dis-

cuss with some important member governments, seek their views, and incorporate acceptable suggestions to make the plan more meaningful," he said.  
 The draft emphasises the IDB's involvement in development projects, cooperation among member nations, poverty alleviation, science and technology, human resources development and private sector assistance, he said.  
 On sectoral priorities, the paper lays importance on agriculture and food security, industry, health and education and transport and communications.  
 In an interview with The Daily Star, Enam Chaudhury, a

former Bangladesh civil servant who joined the IDB recently, also spoke about the bank's involvement in Bangladesh, the possibility of recruiting Bangladeshis for jobs in the bank, the future course of the development finance institution serving the Muslim countries and his own reactions regarding his new appointment.  
 "My initial feeling is very encouraging and I think there is a lot to do because the job offers challenging opportunities. The working conditions seem quite congenial," he said about his new assignment. Before joining the IDB Chaudhury retired earlier this year as the Secretary, Economic Relations Division of

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Enam Ahmad Chaudhury

**আপনার সবাইকে ধন্যবাদ**

১৯৯২-৯৩ অর্থ বছরে ৫৩৬ কোটি টাকা ঋণ আদায় ও ৪৬৫ কোটি টাকা ঋণ বিতরণ করতে সাহায্য করায় বাংলাদেশের অগণিত চাষী ভাইদের কৃষি ব্যাংকের বার হাজার কর্মী জানায় আন্তরিক কৃতজ্ঞতা ও ধন্যবাদ।

বিভিন্ন ধরনের কৃষি ঋণ প্রদান ও আদায় আরও সহজতর করা ও চাষী ভাইদের দুর্দশা লাঘবের লক্ষ্যে বর্তমান বছর থেকে সরকার নিম্নোক্ত পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছেনঃ

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- দুগ্ধ খামার স্থাপনকল্পে সংগৃহীত গাভী বন্ধক হিসাবে গ্রহণ ও বীমাকরণ
- মেয়াদোত্তীর্ণ কৃষি ঋণ পরিশোধের জন্য আসলের সমপরিমাণ টাকা জমা দিলে সাধারণ সুদের সর্বোচ্চ ৫০% মওক্ফকরণ
- সার্টিফিকেট মামলায় জড়িত কৃষি ঋণের হিসাবও মামলার খরচ ও আসলের সমপরিমাণ টাকা জমার পর নিশ্চিতকরণ
- দায়মুক্ত চাষী ভাইদের আবেদনের সাত দিনের মধ্যে নূন ঋণ প্রদান

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