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NEWS BRIEFS

PM felicitates King Albert-II

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated King Albert-II on his accession as the King of the Belgians. In a message to King Albert yesterday, Begum Khaleda Zia said, "Bangladesh and Belgium have a long history of interaction and close relationship which we greatly value. I am convinced that under Your Majesty's guidance the bond of friendship will continue to be strengthened."

Hasina leaves for Tungipara today

The Awami League chief and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka for Tungipara this morning to open a week-long programme marking the 18th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She is scheduled to return to Dhaka on August 12, said a party press release.

Dhaka Dist BNP meet today

An emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of the Dhaka District BNP will be held today at 5 pm at its central office at Naya Paltan in the city. Information Minister and Dhaka District BNP President Barrister Nazmul Huda will preside, reports BSS.

DESA cuts 1,100 illegal lines

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) through a mobile court cut 1,100 illegal power lines in Tejgon Industrial and Mohakhali areas on Sunday, reports BSS.

5-hr gunbattle: Arms recovered Ctg Medical College closed sine die

CHITTAGONG, Aug 9: The Chittagong Medical College today has been closed sine die following a gunfight last night between the supporters of two rival student factions, official sources said. Immediately after the gunfight, a combing operation launched by the police inside college hostels recovered huge arms, ammunition and explosives.

Police arrested ten persons during the operation for their alleged involvement in the gunfight which began at 1:30 am and continued for at least five hours. But no casualty was reported.

All the boys' hostels were vacated before 5:00 pm today as per instruction of the college authorities while the female students were asked to vacate

their hostel by Tuesday.

The Principal of the college Nurjahan Bhuiya told this correspondent over telephone that the trouble, which began at the Nasrabad hostel as a sequel to yesterday morning's altercation between two medical students, spread to the main hostel. The supporters of two rival student factions locked in a gunfight amid a series of exploding cocktails and crackers, the Principal said.

Campus sources said the exchange of gunfire between the pro-BNP JCD and the pro-AL BCL (M-I) rocked the whole campus.

Immediately after the trouble broke out police in a large contingent rushed to the spot but in the face of gunshots and explosions they stayed outside the hostel. When the battle ended

early morning police entered the hostel and raided the rooms.

During the raid, one SMG, one LG, one pipe-gun, one wireless set, over fifty rounds of ammunition, 28 live cocktails, 12 live bombs, one grenade, eight swords and some hockey sticks were recovered, police said.

Tension is still prevailing on the campus, sources said. Police has been deployed around the college hostels to prevent any fresh outbreak of violence.

UNB adds: Some 50 hostel rooms were ransacked and burnt during the encounter.

Witnesses said trouble erupted at 2:00 am following a dispute over a hostel seat between two students. A group of students along with outsiders

Hosokawa forms 20-man cabinet Key portfolios for LDP defectors

TOKYO, Aug 9: Japan's new Prime Minister, Morihiro Hosokawa, assembled a relatively young team of reformists and seasoned conservatives for his cabinet today, completing a transfer of power from the long-governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), reports Reuter.

Hosokawa's 20-member cabinet was sworn in by Emperor Akhito, who had just returned from attending the state funeral of Belgium's King Baudouin.

Hosokawa, champion of wide-ranging reforms and the founder last year of the Japan

New Party, rose rapidly to power largely thanks to the LDP's refusal to clean up politics. He was elected Prime Minister last week by both houses of parliament.

The scandal-ridden LDP, in power for 38 years, lost its parliamentary majority in elections last month and failed to persuade centrist parties — one of them Hosokawa's party — to form an LDP-led coalition.

The average age is 59.4 years, the youngest cabinet so far," Hosokawa, 55, said after forming his team. "I was able to

bring in all the important people."

He is the second youngest Prime Minister in post-World War Two Japan, after Kakuei Tanaka who came to power in 1972 at the age of 54.

Only one of the new administration, Tsutomu Hata, has held a cabinet post. Hata, Finance Minister until last year, will serve Hosokawa as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

All of the leaders in Hosokawa's seven-party coalition



Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa (2nd L) smiles as he toasts with new cabinet ministers at the Prime Minister's official residence Monday in Tokyo. From left to right are Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, Hosokawa, State Minister for Political Reform Sadao Yamahana, Management and Coordination Agency Director-General Koshiro Ishida, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Masayoshi Takemura. — AFP photo

JS probe being hindered, says Hasina

The Awami League President and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged the special parliamentary committee, set up to probe the allegations against Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Majid-ul-Haq, is not being allowed to function, reports UNB.

"We have forced the ruling party to form the parliamentary committee to probe into the charges of corruption against the Agriculture Minister and his ministry by organising agitation and hartal," she said adding "but the Committee is not being allowed to work."

Hasina was addressing the

newly elected office bearers of the Janata Bank CBA and several thousand workers and employees of the Bank at her 29 Minto Road residence.

The Awami League chief further alleged that the present government was wallowing in corruption and called for united resistance against it. "We have got a lot of evidence of corruption by ministers," she claimed.

Hasina said her party did not oppose flourishing of the private sector but was against the privatisation of profitable industrial units.

The Kohinoor Chemical, worth Tk 125 crore, was a vi-

German MPs visit Bangabandhu Bhaban

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting German parliamentarians yesterday stood in silence for a minute at the spot where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in a military putsch on August 15, 1975.

The three-member parliamentary delegation, while visiting the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi, also garlanded the portrait of Sheikh Mujib as a mark of respect to the great leader of Bangladesh's struggle for independence.

They went through rooms of the house and were visibly

Co-financiers of JMB end meet without firm decision

By Sohail Manzur

No concrete decision on the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project (JMBP) could be taken in the meeting of co-financiers in Washington since Japan — one of the donors — is yet to complete its own review of the project, according to official sources.

Japan has, however, assured of completing the review within the 15th of this month and another meeting has been convened in Tokyo on August 18 and 19 to take a decision on the project, the sources say.

A joint appraisal mission representing the co-financiers is expected to visit Bangladesh on the 30th of this month instead of August 20, as per earlier schedule.

The three-day meeting of the co-financiers that was held in Washington Aug 5-7 discussed in detail the methods of co-financing, the amount to be contributed by each co-financiers and the project processing

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Banks asked to sanction Tk 2000cr as investment credit

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday directed the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) to sanction Tk 2,000 crore as investment financing credit in the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

He has directed that out of this money, at least Tk 1,500 crore should be disbursed during the period to activate the internal investment market.

The minister was presiding over a meeting on investment position in the economic activities of the country at the con-

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Bank employees protest extension of business hrs

Transactions in banks, specially in the state-run ones, were disrupted at 1 pm on the second day of extended banking hours yesterday as trade unions staged protests against the government order, reports UNB.

Banking also virtually remained closed from 8:30 to 9:30 am as all the federations of the Sonali, Janata, Uttara, Agrani and Rupali banks held gate meetings protesting the extension of the business hours without providing any additional financial benefit for work during the extended time.

The Bangladesh Bank on Saturday extended the normal banking hours for public transactions upto 3 pm Saturdays through Wednesdays and from 9 am to 12 noon on Thursdays, with effect from August 8.

President of the Bangladesh

3 top Palestinian negotiators resign

TUNIS (Tunisia), Aug 9: Three top Palestinian negotiators have resigned in a fallout with PLO chairman Yasser Arafat over peace talks, reports AP.

Faisal Hussein, Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat submitted their resignations Sunday night, delegation head Haidar Abdul Shafi said Monday in Amman, Jordan.

Top officials asked the negotiators to reconsider, but the three said their decision was final.

The row broke out over a document drafted by the PLO and submitted to US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, which the three delegates reportedly criticised because it put crucial issues such as the status of Jerusalem on the back burner.



Dhaka Mayor Mirza Abbas(L), who failed in his bid to unseat Mir Shawkat Ali as president of the Dhaka City unit of the BNP, seen making a point to the retired general prior to the start of yesterday's conference of the unit at the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Mir Shawkat remains BNP city chief

By Staff Correspondent

Contrary to widespread speculation, the conference of the Dhaka city unit of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was held without a hitch at the Institution of Engineers yesterday.

Braving a heavy downpour, several thousand workers and supporters descended upon the venue. A huge canopy set up besides the main auditorium of the Institute was jam-packed with a capacity crowd.

The arrival of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, chairper-

son of the BNP amid pouring rain at 11:30 am was greeted with loud cheers. The curtain was raised formally at around 11:45 am on the city conference, held after long five years.

Lt General (Retd) Mir Shawkat Ali, MP, and Salauddin Ahmed, MP, were re-elected president and general secretary of the vital unit of the ruling party.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who reportedly had to intervene in the finalisa-

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PM asks opposition Shun criticism, help build nation

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the opposition parties to shun unguarded criticisms and cooperate with government for building the country unitedly, reports UNB.

"Failure cannot be blamed only on the government... let's all take the responsibility of the country," she said, adding the BNP not only wants democracy but also wants to work together.

Addressing the BNP city unit council at the Engineers' Institution, Begum Zia called upon the opposition to let her government run the country peacefully. Otherwise, she cautioned, none would be able to govern it properly in future.

Refuting the opposition allegations of politicisation of the

administration, the Prime Minister categorically said her government had not given any licence or permit to anyone.

"We have achieved sufficiency in food within three years and now we are making efforts for industrialisation of the country," the Prime Minister said.

She said the tree plantation and pisciculture movement should be strengthened, further to prevent pro-urban trend of the people.

Begum Zia identified poverty as the main problem of the country and said education is a must for removing poverty. "This is why, the BNP government has laid emphasis on education."

She said the BNP was im-

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150 killed as storm hits Caracas

CARACAS, Aug 9: At least 150 people died and 500 were injured when tropical storm Bret hit Caracas, causing landslides which buried makeshift homes in the city's poorest areas, according to unofficial figures today, report AFP, AP.

Officials said 95 bodies had been found, but press reports here put the death toll at at least 150. Some said the final figure could be as high as 350, taking into account those reported missing.

About 5,000 people were left homeless by the storm which hit the Venezuelan capital late Saturday, and the government declared three days of mourning for the victims.

The sun was shining over the battered slums, and storm Bret was breaking up as it moved off the northwest coast of Colombia, the US national Weather Service reported Monday from Miami. But Bret could gain strength before moving over Central America, the agency reported.

Janmastami today

By Staff Correspondent

Janmastami, the incarnation of Hindu god Lord Krishna, will be celebrated with due religious fervour in the capital as elsewhere in the country today (Tuesday).

The programme of the day includes the Sree Sree Krishna Abahan, Puja, recitation from the Geeta, bhog, aarti and distribution of prasad at all the Hindu shrines.

The day is a public holiday.

Different socio-cultural organisations have organised elaborate programmes on the occasion.

President Abdur Rahman

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Govt firm to maintain communal harmony

CHITTAGONG, Aug 9: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called upon the people of all religions to uphold the spirit of Bangladesh nationalism and exert concerted efforts toward building the country, reports UNB.

"Bangladesh is the land of communal harmony. We are all Bangladeshis. We unitedly liberated the country and established democracy. Now, with the same spirit, let us dedicate ourselves to build up the country," she said.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating a five day function organised by the Hindu community at the JM Sen Hall tonight on the occasion of Janmastami, a religious festival marking the incarnation of Lord Krishna.

She announced a grant of Tk

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ANNOUNCEMENT The second issue of The Daily Star Computer Special will be published on Wednesday, 18 August 1993. Following the enthusiastic reception of the first issue of the Star Computer Special, we have decided to expand the membership to our Computer Forum. Please call us to find out how you can enroll as a Forum member, and become a major actor in the information technology revolution in Bangladesh. Limited space still available for advertisement — both display and classified — in the August issue. Advertise in the Star Computer Special and reach the homes and the offices of the current and future computer users in Bangladesh. Forum members are reminded to send all relevant news, articles and "company news" as soon as possible.

Serbs withdrawing from strategic mountains

SARAJEVO, Aug 9: Bosnian Serbs withdrew of Monday from a contested mountain outside Sarajevo, but UN peacekeepers encountered problems taking over a more strategic peak from the Serbs, reports AP.

A brief UN report in Geneva said the Serbs and withdrawn from Mount Bjelasnica as of 10:45 am (0845 GMT), and had taken down the Serb flag, a UN source said.

But three platoons of French peacekeepers were reportedly blocked as they moved to positions on Mount Igman, considered the more strategic plateau because it was the last clandestine weapons supply route for Bosnian government forces.

Cmdr Barry Frewer, spokesman for UN forces in Sarajevo, said the peacekeepers

left the capital around 6 am (0400 GMT).

He had no immediate word on whether the 150 peacekeepers and engineers reached the peaks, or whether the Serbs had begun their withdrawal at 9 am (0700 GMT) as promised.

In Geneva, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic arrived for peace talks Monday warning against Western military intervention in Bosnia and promising a Serb withdrawal from two strategic mountains.

Karadzic said all Serb troops would be off Mounts Bjelasnica

an Igman by Tuesday. But the delay in the Serb withdrawal has cast doubts over the latest round of talks on the division of Bosnia into three ethnic republics.

The resumption of negotiations, scheduled for early Monday evening, coincided with a meeting in Brussels of NATO officials to review plans for air strikes to break the Serb stranglehold on the Bosnian capital.

"This is a civil war and nobody should come in and help any side," Karadzic told journalists. — See Page 12 Col 8