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NEWS BRIEFS

DF meeting at Jinjira today

National Grand Convention '93 of the Democratic Forum will hold a meeting at Jinjira Eidgh Maidan today (Friday) at 3 pm with Jamaluddin Ahmed in the chair. Dr Kamal Hossain will present at the meeting as the chief guest while Barrister Amirul Islam, Advocate Zahurul Islam, Salfuddin Ahmed Manik, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Shahjahan Straj MP, Mafizul Islam Kamal and Mostafa Mohsin Montu will address the meeting, said a press release, reports UNB.

DCC realises Tk 2800 as fine

A mobile court of the Dhaka City Corporation yesterday filed cases against 30 persons and realised Taka 2800 as fines from the Mauchak to Badda areas on various charges. The charges included disposal of garbage outside the stipulated places and occupying the public roads, reports BSS.

41 thousand tonnes wheat distributed

Government has distributed 41 thousand metric tonnes of wheat worth about 30 crore taka in all the 460 thanas of the country on the basis of population and poverty to reduce unemployment of jobless people. The wheat will be used as test relief for development works like repair of roads, culverts in the rural areas, reports UNB.

US jets bomb Iraqi missile site again

NICOSIA, Aug 19: US warplanes bombed an Iraqi air defense battery Thursday after spotting the launch of an anti-aircraft missile, the Pentagon said, reports AP.

The missile site near the northern city of Mosul was destroyed, US officials said. Iraq reported the incident without comment.

At the Pentagon, Marine Lt Col. Charles Boyd said US aircraft on patrol over northern Iraq spotted an SA-3 missile being launched at them from the missile site. Two F-16s dropped cluster bombs, and two F-15s that were not on the patrol were ordered to the site and attacked it with four laser-guided bombs, Boyd said. "The site appears to have been destroyed," Boyd said. "The pilots were reacting to a perceived threat upon visibly sighting the SA-3 missile launch."

He said the American planes were not hit.

A US-led air force based in southern Turkey since the end of the 1991 Gulf War has been monitoring Baghdad's treatment of its Kurdish population in northern Iraq. The warplanes fly daily reconnaissance flights over a no-fly zone in northern

Iraq carved out to protect the Kurds.

A report from the state-run Iraqi news agency, monitored in Nicosia, said Iraqi anti-aircraft guns opened fire after the bombing and later prevented the US planes from attacking another defense battery. According to the report, a soldier and a civilian were wounded in the attack on Mosul.

The last confirmed attack by US planes on an Iraqi installation was on July 25, when a US F-4G fired HARM missile at Iraqi anti-aircraft missile site after the plane was tracked by the battery's radar.

The Iraqi News Agency quoted an Iraqi official as saying US planes dropped parachute flares today near an artillery battery 13 miles west of Mosul at about 9 am (0600 GMT).

The report claimed that the aircraft returned about 15 minutes later and dropped cluster bombs near civilian and military personnel trying to put out fires started by the flares. It said one Iraqi was wounded and two vehicles were damaged.

INA said the battery opened fire on the aircraft, but did not say whether any were hit.

The US warplanes reportedly attempted to approach another defense battery at 9:40 am and again 30 minutes later, but were driven off by anti-aircraft fire, INA said.

It said the planes then dropped cluster bombs on a roadway, injuring a civilian. There was no immediate comment from the Pentagon on this claim.

Reuters adds: Iraq denied today that its air defenses fired missiles at US planes patrolling an air exclusion zone in northern Iraq.

"This American claim is a fabricated lie and has no gain of truth," an official spokesman said in a statement.

The air defence battery did however fire anti-aircraft guns at the planes after the attack, he added.

"The US planes attacked without any reason an air defence battery," the unnamed Iraqi spokesman said.

He said the battery unleashed its anti-aircraft guns against the aggressive American planes and forced them to flee.

Nurses' strike continues

By Staff Correspondent

The sufferings of patients in the government hospitals across the country aggravated yesterday — the second day of an indefinite strike by the nurses.

According to hospital sources, the nurses refrained from performing their duties except in certain extreme emergency cases.

Many patients, denied proper care, reportedly left the hospitals voluntarily yesterday as a direct consequence of the strike.

Only a few emergency operations were carried out by the doctors with help of a limited number of nurses.

The Bangladesh Diploma Nurses' Association (BDNA) and the Student Nurses' Association (SNA) struck work Wednesday protesting the transfer of the Nurses' Welfare Directorate to the Health Directorate.

BDNA sources told The Daily Star yesterday no negotiation had taken place yesterday with the authorities.

In the past one year, the BDNA and the SNA observed two separate strikes demanding regularisation of their services.

Press Note

The government yesterday made it clear that the placing of the Nursing Directorate under the jurisdiction of Director General of Health is a temporary measure. — Star photo



A lady doctor attending a patient at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday while the nurses continued their strike. — Star photo

Industries may be spared peak-hour rates

Star Report

Industries which operate three shifts a day will be allowed to pay power tariff at flat rates. So long, these industries had to pay bills at a much higher rate for using electricity during peak hours — 6 pm to 11 pm.

The ministries of Finance, Commerce and Energy have been authorised by the government to work out a formula under which the industries can be exempted from paying at the peak hour rate.

According to existing power tariff, industries pay Taka 1.90 per unit consumption during normal hours while the rate goes up to Taka 4.80 per unit at peak hours.

The authorities concerned said that a good number of export-oriented industries operate in three shifts. Since power tariff was increased substantially over the past few years, coupled with the higher peak hour rates fixed by the Power Development Board, the production cost of these factories also went up, said the authorities, adding that the country's exportable goods were facing tough competition in the international market due to this enhanced cost. Hence the Commerce Ministry proposed an exemption of peak hour rate for the export oriented industries. — Star photo



President Alija Izetbegovic gestures on his way to the peace talks, currently at the Palais des Nations in Geneva yesterday. Izetbegovic threatened to renew a boycott of the talks saying that Bosnian Serb forces remained on the strategic Mount Igman overlooking Sarajevo. — AFP photo

Aid convoy enters Mostar after 2 months No progress in peace talks

GENEVA, Aug 19: Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic said today after a delay of nearly five hours of talks on Bosnia's future ethnic division, reports Reuter.

But, speaking during a break in the talks, Izetbegovic appeared to drop a threat to quit the Geneva peace negotiations if Serb forces do not withdraw from a disputed mountain overlooking Sarajevo.

The Geneva talks resumed this Monday after a delay of nearly two weeks caused by the Serb occupation of Igman and nearby Bjelasnica. The Serbs withdrew most forces from the mountains over the weekend, but UN peacekeepers said on Wednesday some still remained.

Izetbegovic also criticised an agreement reached on Monday to put Sarajevo under UN control for two years after a final peace settlement, saying it did not provide for the immediate lifting of the Serb siege of the city.

"No progress has been made," Izetbegovic told a news conference after an afternoon of negotiations between the three warring Bosnian factions and the presidents of Serbia and Croatia, set to resume at 1500GMT.

Izetbegovic said he did not expect an early settlement at the Geneva talks. "In that respect I am not an optimist."

The Bosnian President read out a list of eight conditions for the peace negotiations to succeed, including the implementation of a UN Security Council resolution designating Sarajevo a 'safe area' and the withdrawal of Serb forces from the strategic Mount Igman.

But he made clear they were staying at the talks: "These are not conditions for the continuation of negotiations. We are staying at the negotiations."

Meanwhile, a United Nations aid convoy made it into the embattled Bosnian city of Mostar today for the first time in two

months, UN officials said.

Medicine was delivered to the main hospital in the Croat-held part of Mostar and negotiations were under way to send another convoy on Friday into its Muslim east side, where 35,000 people are believed to be desperately short of food and water, a senior UN official said.

Another report says Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has won Montenegro's top literary prize for his poetry, the Tanjug news agency reported today.

A psychiatrist by profession, Karadzic was awarded the Risto Ratkovic Prize for the Slav guest, a collection of poetry published recently in Belgrade and Montenegro, the agency reported.

The prize is named in honour of the first modernist author produced by the small republic which together with Serbia forms the rump Yugoslav federation. — Star photo

JP expels Huda from presidium

By Staff Correspondent

The Central Working Committee of the Jatiya Party yesterday expelled presidium member Shamsul Huda Chowdhury for anti-organisational activities.

In a resolution the 108-member body also decided to expel joint-organising secretary of the party Sajjad Hossain on similar ground. The policy-planning body of the party also issued notices to central leader Toufik Karim, and Hasna Banu Shirin to show cause why they, too, should not be expelled.

The above-mentioned dissidents and some others had recently joined hands with Shamsul Huda Chowdhury to float a new party, scheduled to be announced formally on September 10 at a press conference.

Former Deputy Prime Minister of deposed President H M Ershad, Dr M A Matin and See Page 12 Col 1



Utpal Dutta dead

CALCUTTA, Aug 19: Eminent stage personality, playwright and cine actor Utpal Dutta passed away here this afternoon at his residence at the age of 64, reports PTL.

Family sources said that he felt a pain in the chest and suffered a massive heart attack immediately after he returned home from the SSKM Hospital, where he had undergone dialysis. — Star photo

Low-lying areas of Ctg city inundated

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 19: Torrential rainfall here today triggered a flash flood which inundated most of the low-lying areas of the port city and its surrounding areas.

As a result, normal life was almost paralysed while the sufferings of the flood-hit people mounted.

According to officials, the flash flood engulfed Chandgola, Bakalia, Chaktai and Sholakbar areas.

The Chandgola road was under about three feet water, forcing the suspension of traffic there, witnesses said. — Star photo

AL to announce new programmes today

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League is scheduled to announce a catalogue of fresh programmes today to "inject vigour" into the party's current anti-government agitation.

The new programmes, awaiting announcement at the grand rally this afternoon at the Manik Mia Avenue in the city, were discussed at length at an emergency meeting of the AL Executive Council last night. Party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina presided.

The closed-door caucus, which lasted more than three hours, decided to maintain secrecy regarding its deliberations. Attendees were tight-lipped when waiting reporters questioned them after the meeting at 8:30 last night.

According to meeting sources, the planned programmes, to be observed throughout the country, would mainly concentrate on the AL's long-standing issues for agitation — abrogation of the Indemnity Ordinance, trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujib and four national leaders, an end to the politics of killings and coups and establishment of the rule of law in the country.

Besides, the renewed anti-government agitation would also be directed against corruption of the government, price-hike of agricultural inputs and essential commodities, indiscriminate closure of mills and factories, politicisation of the administration, 'distortion of history', retrenchment of workers, non-implementation of the students' demands, and for the trial of 'war criminals' including Golam Azam, repeal See Page 12 Col 3

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BNP to do away with electoral college

By Asiuzzaman

The provision of an electoral college to elect and remove the party chairperson would be dropped from the constitution of the BNP during next month's council.

Instead of the electoral college, the councillors would themselves directly elect the party chief for a two-year term, a member of the constitutional amendment sub-committee told The Daily Star.

The committee, which met yesterday, also decided that the current seven Joint Secretary General posts would be reduced to either five or three, while the 15 vice-chairman posts would be pruned to seven or eight.

On the other hand, the 10-member advisory committee would be expanded. It would be the chairpersons's discretion to appoint an unlimited number of advisors for different subjects. The ruling Bangladesh National Party, founded in 1978, initially had an electoral college of 13,000 members, which was reduced to nearly 3,000 during the last council in 1989, the source said.

245 Islamic militants arrested in Egypt

By Staff Correspondent

CAIRO, Aug 19: Two hundred and forty-five Islamic militants and forty-five Islamic militants were arrested in Cairo Wednesday after suspected fundamentalist activists tried to kill the interior minister, missing him but killing three other people, it was announced, reports AFP.

Deputy Interior Minister General Abdel Rehim al-Nahass said security forces had detained 245 people. But "up to now no connection has been established between these people and the attempt" on the life of Interior Minister Hassan al-Ali, he said.

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Carrying of arms, ammunition banned in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has banned carrying of harmful and objectionable items like arms, explosives and sticks in the Dhaka metropolitan city area from 8 am today till further notice, a DMP press release said last night.

The ban was imposed in accordance with Article 28 of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance.

The press release signed by DMP Commissioner AN Hussain said of late the law and order was being obstructed by carrying of sticks and other harmful articles in processions and gatherings in the city area.

Roadside encroachers beware!

Star Report

The Bengal Highways Act, 1925 will be amended to enhance punishment for encroachers on the country's roads and highways. According to the proposed amendments, which will be placed before the next session of Parliament, fine for an offence like encroaching upon the roads or highways will be raised to Taka 10,000 from the existing Taka ten, fixed in 1925.

A habitual offender will have to pay Taka 100 as fine for each day. There will also be a provision for six months' simple imprisonment. The existing prescribed punishment for such offences is only one taka a day.

The authorities said the penal provisions in the nearly 70-year-old Act were totally inadequate today to save the roads from illegal occupation and hence more stringent measures are being proposed to cope with the situation.

The Cabinet, at a recent meeting, discussed the proposal and decided to amend the law accordingly.

Bombs hurled at Banglar Bani office again

By Staff Correspondent

The office of the Banglar Bani newspaper came under a bomb attack for the second consecutive day yesterday.

A group of unidentified youngsters, in an auto-rickshaw, hurled six crude bombs at the vernacular daily's office at Motijheel Commercial Area in the city at around 10:30 am, witnesses said. One of the bombs hit a wall of the office and exploded and the others went off nearby, witnesses added.

However, no one was injured. On Wednesday night, at around 11:15, some miscreants hurled two bombs at the paper's office which damaged an exhaust fan on the first floor of the building.