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NEWS BRIEFS

Internee docs call off strike

By Mitford Correspondent
 Internee doctors of the Mitford Hospital withdrew their indefinite strike yesterday. The internee doctors began strike for an indefinite period from 18 of this month demanding allocation of seats in the hostel. The Director of the Hospital yesterday assured the doctors to resolve their problem.

BNP confce body meet held

The draft sub-committee of the BNP National Council '93 held a meeting yesterday at the residence of the Labour and Manpower Minister to review its progress. Presided over by sub-committee Convener Nazrul Islam Khan, the meeting was attended, among others, by Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Ahmed Nazir and Shamsul Arefin Khan. Later, the committee also discussed with the BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Tahukder, reports UNB.

Storm lashes Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 22: A minor boy was killed by lightning and eight people were injured in house collapse during a storm that lashed four unions of Kazipur thana Saturday night, reports UNB.
 The storm, accompanied with heavy downpour, swept over the areas for about half an hour at midnight with a speed of about 50 km.

Reforms face opposition from within: Saifur

By Staff Correspondent
 He, however, said he was 'fairly optimistic' about the country's economic future, as it had 'excellent' human resources and 'limited but good' natural resources, provided there is a measure of good governance and national consensus on economic issues.
 Speaking at a meeting of the American-Bangladesh Economic Forum in a local hotel, Rahman also announced that the government is planning to make the currency fully convertible by October 1.
 Acknowledging that implementing economic reform is a 'tough job', the minister said 'Even a revolution is easier than bringing about economic reform. I've to face opposition even from my own party and the cabinet.'

Presided over by Forest E Cookson, president of the forum, the meeting was also attended by US Ambassador William B Milam, Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed, ERD Secretary Lutfullahil Majid, NBR Chairman Dr Abkar Ali Khan and other senior government officials, diplomats and leading businessmen.
 Later, during a question-and-answer session, Rahman acknowledged the need for bringing about legal reform, re-

moving tariff anomalies and increasing public sector spending on infrastructures.
 Speaking on the 'economic future of Bangladesh', the Finance Minister said, 'I am absolutely confident that we can have a self-reliant economy by 1995 provided we can manage the politics constructively instead of diverting attention from issues to non-issues.'
 Production in the country, he noted, recorded a 12 per cent growth in the last eleven months. 'The country's exporters have proven that they can face the challenges' of the international market.
 However, he identified political divisiveness as a factor stifling the economic progress of the country when other regional

Exports rise by 20 pc in '92-93 fiscal

By Staff Correspondent
 The country's export earnings in the last fiscal marked an increase of about 20 per cent. The increase has been estimated at 19.88 per cent in terms of the dollar and 21.96 per cent in terms of the Taka.
 Export earnings in the '92-93 fiscal stood at 2382.89 million US dollars (equivalent to Tk 9257.54 crore), while it was 1993.92 million dollars (equivalent to Tk 7590.86 crore) in 1991-92 fiscal year.
 Director of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Major (Retd) Nizamul Alam told a press briefing yesterday that the growth in export earnings in neighbouring India was 3.6 and in Sri Lanka 17.2 per cent during the same period.
 He said the export market of the country had expanded to 140 nations with 12 new states being added to the list of im-

Bangladesh signs proclamation on rights of disabled

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday signed 'The Proclamation for Equal Rights of Disabled' reiterating Bangladesh's social commitment to the disabled in the society, reports BSS.
 Addressing the signing ceremony at the International Conference Centre (ICC), the Prime Minister said 'We are expressing solidarity with the announcement of the leaders of Asia and Pacific for the disabled by the signing of the proclamation and this has initiated a fresh effort for the welfare of the disabled.'
 Begum Zia said it was being assumed that a large segment of country's population was disabled according to the United Nations which said 10 per cent of population in every country of the world was disabled. She underscored the need for utilising the merit and labour of this huge disabled population to attain the desired development.
 The Prime Minister pointed out poverty as one of the major reasons for the disability apart from malnutrition, ignorance, environment pollution and carelessness in child health care.
 Begum Zia said the government had taken up a number of steps for the welfare of the disabled persons which included poverty alleviation programme, expansion of nutrition and health care facilities, successful

Ganatantri Party won't join Dr Kamal

Star Report.
 The Ganatantri Party (GP) will not participate in the National Grand Convention (NGC) of Dr Kamal Hossain and his allies, scheduled from August 27 to 29. The GP has also officially decided not to merge with the new party to be floated from the NGC.
 The decisions were taken last night at the end of two-day national council of the party held at the party central office at Siddique Bazar. GP chief Ahmedul Kabir presided over the meeting attended by 180 out of 200 councillors.
 The party sources said that a resolution, passed unanimously by the council, called for building up the Ganatantri Party as a bigger organisation and to form a united front with all the pro-liberation, democratic and progressive forces.
 See Page 12 Col 6



Former employees of the BRTC crowd the BRTC Bhaban on RAJUK Avenue yesterday demanding their 'Golden-handshake' payments.
 — Star photo

Talks with striking nurses today

By Staff Correspondent
 The government starts negotiations with the leaders of the Bangladesh Diploma Nurses Association (BDNA) today to end the on-going strike by the nurses.
 Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf told The Daily Star last night that he would begin talks this morning with the nurses' leaders to resolve the problem.
 The minister hoped the strike would be called off in a day or two.
 Medicare services at the state-owned hospitals of the country almost collapsed Sunday, the fifth day of the nurses' strike.
 Some 15,000 staff, assistant and student nurses in the government hospitals and clinics stopped work since Wednesday to press a single demand — to remain under the Nursing Welfare Directorate instead of the Health Directorate.
 The minister was strongly critical of the strike, saying the nurses' leaders were 'behaving like trade unionists'.
 Kamal Ibne Yusuf insisted the government decision to place the nurses under the Director General of Health was only a temporary measure.
 The DG Nursing has retired. There are 29 posts lying vacant in the Nursing Directorate and the services of the nurses have to be under somebody, he said.
 In the new system, the jobs of the nurses would never be affected, the minister assured.
 Our Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) correspondent said that 62 patients left the 850-capacity hospital yesterday where routine functions were seriously hampered.
 Conditions of the patients, particularly the poor, aggravated because there was none to look after them. They could not afford treatment at the more expensive private clinics run by the renowned doctors and specialists.
 Striking nurses claimed that several emergency squads were working at the DMCH but they



I've never seen Golam Azam in person

Film actor Illiyas Kanchan yesterday described as 'false and intriguing' a front page report published on Friday in a vernacular daily which said 'Illiyas Kanchan was present at a meeting of Jamaat leader Golam Azam' reports BSS.
 Kanchan said this was far from the truth. He had never met Golam Azam and added, 'Other than his photographs in newspapers and posters, I have never seen Azam in person.'
 'I am a professional film artiste and not involved with

Murtaza Bhutto may contest 24 seats from Sindh

From M J Zahedi
 KARACHI, Aug 22: Mir Murtaza Bhutto who has created quite a big uproar in the political arena of Pakistan by announcing that he will take part in the country's next general elections as an independent candidate, seems to have taken at least the first step towards that end.
 The self-exiled son of the late Z A Bhutto has obtained a National Identity Card which every adult Pakistani is required to possess, a requirement his father had introduced when he was President. A candidate or a voter has to produce this card either before the Returning Officer or the Polling Officer.
 According to details available here, Murtaza had applied for the card to the Pakistan embassy in Damascus where he has been living in self-exile for the last 15 years or so. The embassy had sent the application to Islamabad for action. The Registration Department, it is learnt, had directed the Registration Officer of Larkana, the ancestral home of the Bhuttos, to issue the card. Murtaza's mother, Mrs Nusrat Bhutto, it is said, collected it from the office on behalf of her son. The No of the card, according to reports, is 421-93-308090.
 The first three digits being the identification of the issuing registration office, the two next denote the year of issue and the remaining digits represent the number of the card, which also contains the name of the holder's father, his address and date of birth. The obverse contains a photograph of the holder.
 Although some interpret this as an indication of Murtaza's imminent return to Pakistan, the announcement by the caretaker Prime Minister, Mr Moeen Qureshi, on Saturday in Karachi, that cases against political leaders pending in the courts will not be withdrawn is forcing many an observer into reconsidering their predictions.
 A decision to this effect was taken in Islamabad on Friday at a meeting between the Prime Minister, other federal ministers and Army top brass including the Chief of Staff. The decision was interpreted as a warning to Murtaza Bhutto and MQM chief, Altaf Husain, another self-exiled political leader, both of whom have considerable political influence in Sindh, that they would be arrested and tried if they returned to Pakistan. It is also said that it showed that the Army has given no green signal for the return of Murtaza whose mother had sought a meeting with the Chief of Army Staff.
 Mr Qureshi's unambiguous

Deemed exporters to get bonded warehouses once again

Star Report
 The government has decided to reintroduce bonded warehouse facility for the deemed exporters.
 The National Board of Revenue (NBR), following a directive of the Finance Minister on August 17, has taken the decision.
 A source in the NBR said the facility would be allowed for one year on an experimental basis and decisions to either extend or stop it would be taken upon a study of the results.
 The deemed exporters earlier enjoyed the warehouse facility but it was withdrawn in December, 1992 following widespread allegations that they were smuggling their products to the local market, thereby making the domestic producers non-competitive.
 The NBR source said the facility was revived because the business chambers had been

Conspiracies kept AL out of power: Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that conspiracy hatched by vested groups over the years have obstructed her party returning to power, reports UNB.
 'Whenever there was prospect of going to power, conspirators struck the Awami League,' she said, adding that the party workers became angry when they saw some of their own leaders stabbing the organization on the back to fulfil their personal ambitions.
 Hasina was addressing a gathering of leaders and workers of Noakhali district Awami League who came to meet her at 29 Mintio Road under the leadership of newly elected Noakhali pourashava chairman Rabiul Hossain Kochi.
 In 1991 parliamentary election, people had expected that the Awami League would return to power but their aspiration was not materialised due to conspiracy, said Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.
 'We won the election through people's mandate but we suffered debacle because of conspiracy,' she alleged.
 Awami League is still the largest political organisation in the country, Hasina said adding the successful observance of August 15 hartal and the grand rally on August 20 again proved it.
 She said leaders and workers of the Awami League have been struggling for survival since the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975 facing all odds and obstacles.
 The Awami League chief further alleged that the workers of the Awami League were being harassed by enacting the Anti-Terrorism Act to take political revenge. The Act has not been applied against the terrorists backed by the ruling party.
 She accused the ruling party of 'naked politicisation' which has crippled all institu-

6 get life terms for murdering RMC student

RAJSHAHI, Aug 22: Six people were today awarded life terms for murdering Jamil Akhter Ratan, a Chhatra Mottree leader of the Rajshahi Medical College, reports UNB.
 Additional District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Mozammel Haq gave the verdict in which the accused were also fined Tk 5,000 each and, in default, to suffer another six months imprisonment.
 Nine other accused were acquitted.
 The convicted are: Shafiquzaman Swapan, Bazur Rashid, Nurul Islam, Akhter Hossain, Zahurul Islam and Tariqul Islam. The last four were tried in absentia.
 All of them are the leaders and workers of the Islami Chhatra Shibir.
 Jamil Akhter Ratan, Chhatra Mottree's Medical College unit president, was killed in a violent clash between the Islami Chhatra Shibir and the All-Party Student's Unity on May

Ex-PM of Algeria assassinated

ALGIERS, Aug 22: Former Prime Minister Kaedi Merbah who once headed the all-powerful political police, was assassinated in an ambush that also killed his son, brother, chauffeur and bodyguard, police said Sunday, reports AP.
 Merbah and his entourage were killed Saturday night while driving in two cars in the resort area east of the capital known as Alger-Plage where he has a vacation residence, according to state-run radio.
 There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the killings, which come amid a guerrilla-style battle with Islamic extremists trying to topple the military-backed leaders of this North African nation.
 Merbah, 56, is the second government figure killed since the start of the violence, after the army halted January 1992 legislative elections to thwart a Muslim fundamentalist victory.
 Mohamed Boudiaf, president of the ruling High State Committee was assassinated June 29, 1992, but it remains unclear whether Islamic extremists were behind the killing.
 Armed extremists were blamed for attacks on three government ministers at the start of the year. Former Defense Minister Khaled Nezzar, a member of the ruling committee, barely escaped a February ambush. Employment Minister Tahar Hamdi was wounded in another attack and equipments Minister Sifi Mokdad was unharmd in an attack.
 Armed extremists have been blamed for the killings of a half-dozen noted intellectuals, among more than 1,200 who have died in the violence.
 Merbah headed the government from 1988 to 1989, just after the October 1988 riots that pressed this North African

Biman likely to start NY flights next month

By Staff Correspondent
 Biman Bangladesh Airlines is likely to open its new route to New York from next month, a Biman source said yesterday.
 The parliamentary standing committee on the Civil Aviation Ministry, in a meeting yesterday suggested the third week of September as a tentative time to inaugurate the 30th route of the national carrier, the source said.
 He said the authorities were now working to obtain a preliminary operation order (POB) from the US Federal Aviation Authority.
 Meanwhile, the second DC-10-30 aircraft which has been leased from the manufacturers McDonnell Douglas for three years will reach here within a couple of days, the source said, adding that this would facilitate

Police pre-empts Nirmul body

By Nazmul Ashraf
 The Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannay Committee last night postponed the announcement of its fresh action programmes today, competent sources said.
 The postponement was reportedly prompted by a sudden action of the police who removed a 30-foot-tall effigy of Jamaat leader Golam Azam from the Art Institute premises at about 9 last night, committee sources said. Two earlier police attempts were foiled by the institute students during the day, the sources added.
 The effigy was made for burning at today's public gathering in front of the Jatiya Press Club.
 Officials in the Police Control Room and Ramna thana expressed their ignorance about the incident. The committee leaders, pre-empted by the re-

Biman's operation to New York. Biman loaned two DC-10-30 aircraft from the manufacturers — one for six months and another for three years — after one of its four DC-10s met with an accident last May at the Zia International Airport.
 The damaged aircraft is now undergoing repair at the Zia hangar. On completion of the repairs, Biman's fleet will have five DC-10s, two ATPs and two F-28 aircraft. Biman is also studying proposals to purchase two mid-haul aircraft possibly A-300 series airbuses to expand its network.
 The parliamentary standing committee, headed by State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan, also recorded a statement of Rashid
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Kaedi Merbah