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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### BNP council body meets today

A meeting of the management sub-committee of the BNP's National Council will be held today at 5 pm at the Manik Mia Avenue. Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal will also hold a meeting at the BNP central office at 3 pm today. The central convening committee of the Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal will also meet at No-2 MP Hostel premises at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at 4 pm today, reports UNB.

#### Phensidyl syrup seized

By Staff Correspondent

Mirpur police seized some 480 bottles of contraband Phensidyl syrup from Bagbari, Wrispara on the outskirts of the city yesterday morning. Acting on a tip-off police swooped a slum near the Gahabali bus terminal and seized the hallucinogens.

## Kamal launches new party Gano Forum

Star Report

The Gano Forum (People's Forum), a new party, announced its arrival upon the country's political stage yesterday.

Headed by Dr Kamal Hossain, the new organisation vows to unite the people on the basis of progressive and pragmatic political and economic programmes to usher a new trend in the politics.

The formation of the party was unanimously approved at the concluding session of the three-day National Grand Convention (NGC) held at the Institute of Engineers.

The Forum will have a 111-member organising committee

of which the names of 84 were announced.

Kamal Hossain, a former Foreign Minister, was elected president of the 12-member Council of Chairman while a Secretariat consisting another 12 was also formed.

Earlier yesterday morning, Dr Kamal, who was in the Awami League (AL) for over two decades, resigned from the primary membership of the AL. His resignation letter was sent to AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

With the formation of the Gano Forum, the CPB

(reformist), the NAP led by Pankaj Bhattacharya and the JSD (Siraj) formalised their merger with the new party in which a large number of dissidents from the AL have joined. Besides, some prominent individuals hitherto not involved with any political organisation have also joined forces.

The newly-elected Council of Chairmen includes Pankaj Bhattacharya, Shamsuddoha, MP, Ziaul Haque, Barrister Amirul Islam, Advocate Zahirul Islam, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, AMA Muhiit, Begum Nurjahan Murshid, Major General (ret'd) Khalilur Rahman, Matur  
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## 'Greater unity GF's goal'

By Staff Correspondent

Gano People's Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain Sunday said greater unity among the people would be the pivot of his newly-floated party politics.

With a promise to act as a social ombudsman, the People's Forum (GF) would strive to bring about qualitative changes in the national life for making the independence meaningful, he said.

Dr Kamal Hossain was speaking at a press conference at the Engineers' Institution auditorium immediately after launching of the newest political platform of the country.

In reply to a question, Kamal Hossain said his party would not have any student or labour wings.

He called upon the people to  
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## President signs order closing down BJC

By S Y Bakht

President Abdur Rahman Biswas last Saturday signed the Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC) Repeal Ordinance enabling the immediate and complete winding-up of operations of the financially troubled government-owned corporation, according to a well-placed official source yesterday.

The Law Ministry has sent the ordinance to the government press for publication in the official gazette.

Promulgation of the ordinance effectively seals the fate of the corporation, dealing in the purchase and sale of raw jute, and its remaining 500 or so employees.

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The BJC head office

## Dam burst in China kills 223

BEIJING, Aug 29: A dam burst in China's remote western Qinghai province, sending cascades of water that wiped out several villages and killed at least 223 people, officials and local health workers said today, reports Reuter.

Police in the provincial capital of Xining confirmed a local television report today which said at least 223 people had died, but declined to give details.

The Xinhua News Agency said the dam burst about 11 pm Friday, but gave no details on the number of dead or the amount of property damaged other than to say there were "big losses."

An official at the State Flood Control Headquarters in Beijing, who refused to give his name, said 100 to 200 people died.

## Ministers fail to resolve Ctg BNP discord

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 29: Discord in the Chittagong chapter of the ruling BNP heightened after a marathon closed-door caucus until Saturday midnight failed to resolve the long-standing inner party conflict here.

Forests and Environment Minister Abdullah Al-Noman and Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan, on being asked by the BNP high command, tried in vain yesterday to settle the dispute between the two rival factions of the party's local unit.

The closed-door meeting was held amid tight security with hundreds of BNP workers gathered at the party office at Nasimn Bhaban.

According to party sources, one of the feuding groups is led by Minister Abdullah Al-Noman, president of the Chittagong City unit of the BNP while the other is headed by Ekramul Karim, general secretary of City unit.

Party insiders said yesterday's marathon discussions could not patch up the differences of opinion between the two factions which cannot tolerate each other.

Insiders also said the Ekram group which reportedly enjoys the covert support of Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, Sunday held its annual conference at the Engineers' Institute here, guarded by a police contingent outside. Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan, who was expected to attend as chief guest, did not turn up while only one MP — Wahidul Alam — attended the conference presided over by Humayun Kabir, acting chief of the splinter group's city committee.

Humayun Kabir is the husband of Rosy Kabir, the only lady MP from Chittagong who herself has sided with the group led by Noman.

The supporters of Ekram also brought out a procession that paraded the city roads accompanied by a band.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Al-Noman, in a hurriedly called press conference here this afternoon, announced the postponement of the Chittagong City Unit conference of the BNP, scheduled to be held tomorrow (Monday) at the Lalidighi Maidan. The postponement reportedly came following a directive from the BNP high command, Noman said.

## Sarbahara men kill one in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 29: One person was shot dead and 12 others were injured last night at the village Bihangal under Kotwali thana when the suspected activists of the outlawed Sarbahara Party locked in clash with a group of devotees at a local mosque.

The dead was identified as Shaded, 20, brother of a VDP member.

Two of the injured, Manik Karmakar, 27, and Habib Tarafdar, were admitted to the Barisal Medical College Hospital in critical condition with bullet wounds.

Three of the gunmen, identified as Saleem, 23, Sekandar, 27, and Haque Muhiur, were caught and mobbed by the people of the area. The mob gouged both the eyes of Sekandar and one eye of Saleem. They were also admitted to the hospital.

## Khaleda opens 'Food for Education' programme

FENI, Aug 29: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today launched a countrywide "Food for Education" programme aimed at encouraging the poor and underprivileged boys and girls to go to schools, reports UNB.

The scheme, which adds a new dimension to the government's compulsory primary education programme, has been undertaken initially in one union of each thana across the country, including the three hill districts and the metropolitan areas.

Begum Zia inaugurated the programme this morning at the Mirzanagar Government Primary School in the remote border thana of Parshuram in Feni district where 172 boys and girls of 89 poor families will be benefited.

A total of 1,24,000 tons of food worth about Tk 89 crore will be distributed under the programme this year, covering about 4,600 schools across the country. This will benefit some seven lakh children from nearly five lakh families.

Under the programme, each student will be provided with 15 kg of wheat or rice every month if one attends at least 85 classes.

A family sending two or more children to the school will receive a maximum of 30 kg wheat or rice or an equivalent amount of money each month.

Begum Zia, during her day-long tour to Feni district, also opened the "Food for Education" programme at Purba Shahebpur Govt Primary School in Mirzanagar Union and also in Nikunja and Daulatpur Govt Primary Schools of Ghopal Union in Chhagalnaya thana.

Addressing the functions at these schools, the Prime Minister said the programme is meant for children who are forced to work instead of going to school due to poverty.

Begum Zia warned against any misappropriation or corruption in implementing the programme aimed at raising the literacy rate and salvaging the poor section of society from the curse of illiteracy.  
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## Benazir smells politics in defaulters' list

ISLAMABAD, Aug 29: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto accused the caretaker government of partisan politics after a hefty list of loan defaulters, which reads like a Who's Who of Islamabad, hit the streets, reports AP.

It's estimated that delinquent loans taken from Pakistan's state-owned banks since 1985 total nearly \$2 billion, or two-thirds of this impoverished nation's foreign debt.

The list weighs 20 kilograms, according to some banking sources. It was prepared by state-owned financial institutions at the request of interim Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi.

Several weeks ago, Qureshi, a former World Bank vice-president, said candidates in the Oct. 6 general elections would

be disqualified if they were found to be delinquent on loans in excess of one million rupees.

Bhutto, her mother and her husband are on the debtors' list. The Bhutto loan was taken out to finance a party newspaper that was seized by military rulers in 1979, said Shafiq Mahmood, a party spokesman.

At a news conference Saturday at her ancestral home in the central Sindh city of Larkana, Bhutto accused the caretaker government of partisan politics.

"I don't know who was behind these conspiracies. Either the president, fooled the prime minister or the latter himself was involved," she was quoted as saying in the English-language daily newspaper, The Muslim.  
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## Israeli cabinet may okay Palestinian self-rule today

JERUSALEM, Aug 29: Israel and the PLO have tentatively agreed to reconvene each other in a plan for Palestinian self-rule in land occupied by Israel, the PLO said Sunday, report AP, Reuter.

An aide to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, speaking in Tunisia on condition of anonymity, said Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and US Secretary of State Warren Christopher struck the deal and that Israel's government must take the next step.

Israel's Cabinet met Sunday to hear details of the accord, which would involve granting Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho before expanding it to other occupied land.

The Cabinet was to vote on the plan Monday.

Israel radio said Israel and the PLO were considering mutual recognition and that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin might also seek a Cabinet vote on that Monday.

In Jerusalem, ministers said today Israel was on the verge of an agreement with the PLO which could break a deadlock in peace talks and lead two of the Middle East's bitterest foes to recognise each other.

They said after today's weekly cabinet meeting that the proposal for limited self-rule in Gaza and Jericho first would be approved tomorrow.

Environment Minister Yossia Arid, who took part in the secret contacts with the PLO, told re-

porters, "we are talking about an agreement that is ready to be signed."

But ministers said they would not vote tomorrow whether to recognise the PLO.

Sari Nusseibeh, an adviser to the Palestinian peace talks team, told Reuters, "we have tentatively reached an agreement on general principles. The details still need to be worked out."

He said it was not clear whether Israel would pull all its troops out of Gaza and place Jewish settlements there under Palestinians authority.

Israeli Health Minister Haim Ramon said soldiers would be pulled out but added, "no Jewish settlement in the territory."  
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## Pakistan urges US to help settle Kashmir dispute

QUETTA, Aug 29: Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister on Saturday urged the United States to help settle his country's territorial dispute with India over Kashmir, which he said could turn into a flash-point, reports Reuter.

Moeen Qureshi told a news conference Pakistan did not want to have major issues with the United States.

"We would particularly like the United States to involve itself in the problem of Kashmir because we believe Kashmir can be a flashpoint of a conflict in this region," he said.

His appeal came only days after Islamabad protested against a US decision to impose arms control sanctions on Pakistan and China over alleged missile technology transfer to Beijing, which both sides deny.

## 'BNP council to groom leadership'

The forthcoming council session of the BNP aims at giving the party an organisational structure to suit the needs of the coming century. The grand meet also bears a special significance with regard to the country's future.

Talking to BSS here yesterday convenor of the council preparatory committee Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky said steps in this regard would be taken during the two-day council session at the Manik Mia Avenue from September 1.

"A process will be initiated under the organisational structure to develop leadership from the grassroots to the national

level," he said.

Siddiky said no political party has so many front organisations as the BNP and the party wants to see all its front organs as strong and mass-oriented in their respective areas.

"Nearly 2023 councillors from all the thanas, districts and municipalities are expected to attend the session," Siddiky said adding all political parties, leading intellectuals, professionals, diplomats and representatives of foreign mission here have been invited.

The councillors, during the two-day session, will touch mainly upon the political, organisational and economic as-

pects, he said.

Tanbir Siddiky said leaders and workers of the BNP were politically pledge-bound to build Bangladesh as a welfare state, as dreamt by its founder chairman Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

"Our aims and objectives will be truly reflected in the declaration of the 4th council. The party has initiated a new style in the national politics," he said.

From 1979 to March 24, 1982, the BNP had been able to offer the nation an efficient and dynamic government, he said.

Later, the party under he  
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## French CP leader in city to attend BNP council

Jacques Denis, member of the central committee in charge of external policy and international relations of the French Communist Party arrived here yesterday to attend the two-day fourth national council of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), reports BSS.

Chowdhury Tanbir Siddiky, convenor of the council preparatory committee, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan, Dr Motin Khan, MP, Akhter Hamid, MP, Azizul Hoque, MP, former  
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## 'Garments exporters must diversify'

Star Report



Redwan Ahmed, MP

Unless Bangladeshi garments exporters go for product diversification, the country is likely to face stagnation in apparel export.

This was observed by the newly-elected president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Redwan Ahmed, MP, in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star.

"There are about 130 kinds of garments currently in fashion in the US, the biggest market for Bangladesh," the BGMEA president said. "But our ex-

porters have mainly concentrated on 31 quota items."

The situation has now reached almost saturation point and further expansion will be at a diminishing rate, Ahmed observed.

"Now if the new garments industries that are coming up also go for these same items, the sector will face a self-defeating competition stifling the growth in earnings," he said.

Ahmed termed the 1992-93 growth of the sector — officially put at 24.7 per cent — as a moderate one and said this

year's growth would also be at a similar rate.

He said the country exported garments worth Taka 2930 crore in the first six months of this calendar year compared to Taka 2610 crore for the same period last year and hoped the figure would reach Taka 7000 crore by the year end.

Talking on the trend of coming up new garments industries, he said there had been a great increase in the number of factories in 1992.

"From 934 industries in  
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Benazir Bhutto, co-chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), addressing a hastily-called press conference in her home village Larkana Saturday. — AFP photo