

# The Daily Star

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## Inside Today

### Article

**Kamal's New Party  
Creates Waves, but  
Faces Challenges**

Column: Behind The  
Headlines  
by Chapal Bashar  
Page 4

### International

**King Hussein for  
Arab summit**



**US Secretary of De-  
fence Les Aspin speaks  
during a Pentagon  
press conference**  
Page 5

### Business

**Israel looking to  
economic benefits of  
autonomy pact with  
Palestinians**

**Iraq urges UN Council  
to lift economic  
sanctions**  
Pages 6, 7

### Weekend Magazine

**Crackdown in  
Peshawar: A Century  
after a People Return  
to Namibia: The  
Forsaken Warriors:  
Bangladesh Plays its  
Part in ITI: Interest in  
German Waning  
World-wide: A Tome in  
Aid of Develop-  
ment Workers:  
My World by S M Ali:  
Is a War Tribunal  
Enough to Try Crimes  
against Humanity**  
Pages 9, 10, 11

### Metropolitan

**Dhaka Day by Day**



**Changes in Social  
Standards—the Key  
to Better Health**  
Page 3

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Body to probe Zia Museum fire

The government yesterday constituted a 4-member inquiry committee headed by Moslem Ali, Joint Secretary of the Cultural Ministry to investigate the fire incident Wednesday at the auditorium of the Zia Memorial Museum in Chittagong. Other members of the committee are: The representatives of Chittagong district administration, Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate and National Museum. The committee will submit its report and recommendations within next three days, an official handout said, reports BSS.

### Two DC 10-30s join Biman

Two more wide-bodied DC 10-30 aircraft have joined the Biman fleet. With the induction of these two leased DC-10s into Biman fleet, the carrier has been able to restore full normalcy in its flight schedule and introduced additional one weekly flight to London raising the number of total flights to London to 5 per week, reports BSS.

## US asks Serbs, Croats to accept Bosnian demand



Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic displays a map of Bosnia, denoting the occupied regions and "Areas of Genocide," to a press conference in Geneva Wednesday. The Bosnian government balked at signing the proposed peace plan, which demands more than 30 percent of the territory for Muslims who represent 44 percent of the population. — AFP photo

WASHINGTON, Sept 2: Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in unusually stiff terms, called Thursday on Serbia and Croatia to yield to demands from Bosnian Muslims for a larger chunk of territory, reports AP.

Strong messages, known to diplomats as demarches, were sent to Presidents Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia outlining the tough US position.

Christopher, speaking to reporters, said the negotiations suspended in Geneva, Switzerland, should be resumed and Serb and Croat negotiators "should show greater flexibility."

If there is a breakdown "because of the stubbornness and intransigence of the Serbs or the Croats, the world community will certainly hold them responsible," Christopher said.

Reuter adds: President Bill Clinton said today that the United States would do what it could to restart stalled Bosnian peace talks but warned that a

See Page 12 Col 1

## Arafat firm to return to Jerusalem soon

JERUSALEM, Sept 2: Yasser Arafat predicted Thursday that he and the Palestine Liberation Organization will return soon to their "homeland" in the Israeli-occupied territories, report AP, Reuter.

The optimistic statement — issued in a letter to a West Bank university — came as Palestinian and Israeli leaders tried to narrow their differences on establishing ties and signing an agreement on Palestinian autonomy.

Another report said, the PLO expects the United States to recognise it soon after the PLO

recognises Israel, a senior PLO official said today.

The PLO said it wanted Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to sign peace agreements with Israel at the same time as Palestinians sign an accord on self-rule.

"We are making efforts for the agreements to be signed at the same time," Hakam Bilewi, a close aide to PLO Chairman Arafat, said.

Arafat, who heads the PLO, must seek backing from Arab nations. The accord also faces strong opposition from hard-line factions on both sides.

In Amman, King Hussein said in an interview published Thursday that Jordan rejected any agreement in which his kingdom was not a party. He called for a summit meeting of Arab leaders on the subject, but fell short of condemning the pact.

Officials on both sides indicated that the sticking points were over the language of recognition and the form the PLO announcement would take. Israel wants an authoritative declaration.

Israel expects the PLO to

See Page 12 Col 5

## Dhaka to host regional meet on water-sharing next Nov

by SY Bakht

A four-nation regional meeting scheduled for November in Dhaka is likely to achieve a breakthrough in identifying common ecological and other problems, including water sharing disputes, which can be resolved through a regional approach, according to an official source on Thursday.

Convened by the Japan-based Global Infrastructure Fund (GIF), the two-day meeting would be attended by government delegations from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.

Meanwhile, three reputed private research organisations from Bangladesh, India and Nepal concluded a separate 3-day meeting in Dhaka on August 25 last in a bid to identify common ecological and environmental problems which can be tackled regionally.

Participants at the meeting, including water experts, identified regional issues relating to water sharing, environment,

inland water transport, natural disaster prevention and energy and also prepared a draft report on some of these issues which can be dealt within the framework of a regional approach.

The draft report—prepared by the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, the Centre for Policy Research of India and the Institute of Integrated Development Studies of Nepal—is also expected to be finalised in Dhaka in November.

Observers noted that both these recent developments indicate a major change in the attitude of India, which had consistently refused to discuss such issues on a regional basis, insisting on bilateral solutions.

A regional approach, they added, towards solving these problems would vindicate the position held by Bangladesh, which had strongly advocated the inclusion of Nepal in resolving its long-standing water sharing dispute with India.

The upcoming meeting,

scheduled to begin on November 22, would also be attended by independent experts from the four nations, along with those from Japan and the United States.

The participants at the meeting are expected to discuss specific regional ecological and environmental issues, including water sharing, and would identify regional projects to solve the problems, the source said.

"If specific regional projects are identified and agreed upon by all sides then the GIF has assured of financing the projects," he added.

The meeting is also expected to formulate a framework for promoting networking among related regional organisations, the official source noted, and the GIF has also agreed to provide funding for setting up a regional institution or secretariat.

The last regional meeting convened by the GIF was held

See Page 12 Col 6

## Protest against price hike in Karachi, Lahore



Hundreds of supporters of right-wing Pakistan Islamic Front (PIF) burnt tyres in Lahore yesterday during a general strike against recent price increases. — AFP photo

### Rain paralyses city life

By Staff Correspondent

Incessant rainfall under the influence of an active monsoon and low pressure paralysed life in the city yesterday.

Many low-lying areas of the city went under six inches to a foot deep water due to the heavy continuous rainfall since Wednesday morning.

Offices, educational institutions and business establishments were poorly attended. Fewer numbers of transports were seen on the city streets. Passengers were thin in the public transports.

As a result of the rainfall, the temperature across the country was relatively lower yesterday. In the city, the highest tempera-

See Page 12 Col 5

### Col (Retd) Akbar contradicts Mannan's statement

Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain, MP, vice-president of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, last night denied to have requested Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina to deliver a welcome address at the opening function of the BNP council session Wednesday, reports BSS.

The BNP leader described as "untrue and misleading" the statement purported to have been made by the assistant publicity secretary of the Awami League Abdul Mannan, on the refusal of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina to attend the inaugural session of the BNP council on September 1, a BNP press release said.

In a rejoinder issued here last night Col Retd Akbar said that he had gone to the official residence of the opposition leader twice but he could not see her on the first occasion as she was reportedly sick. Col (Retd) Akbar said he had requested Sheikh Hasina to attend the opening session of BNP council when he went to her residence for the second time and could see her.

## BNP council extended till this noon Councillors castigate MPs, ministers

By Staff Correspondent

The regional leaders of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) blasted the central leadership, mainly ministers and MPs for, what they called, ignoring the grassroots leaders and workers.

"After winning the election they have forgotten the village-level leaders and workers and now hold talks with the government officials during their

visits to the districts and thanas," one councillor was quoted as saying on the second day of the two-day council session.

The council was, however, extended until this noon. Sometimes they were not even been informed about their leaders' (ministers) visits to the districts, one councillor alleged.

Some of the delegates alleged that the BNP workers were being harassed by the police in different parts of the country but the workers find no remedy from the central leaders, a meeting source, requesting anonymity, said.

They also said the coordination between the central leaders and the village level workers should be coopted in all development programmes.

Some 115 councillors out of over 2000 had taken part in the discussions in three closed-door sessions until yesterday and some others will speak today before party chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia delivers her concluding speech.

See Page 12 Col 3

### Constitution amended

By Staff Correspondent

Major amendments in the BNP constitution, including abolition of the electoral college, have been adopted on the second day of party's fourth national council yesterday.

The party also formally adopted the parliamentary form of government in place of the presidential system while 'mixed economy' replaces 'mixed economy' in the manifesto.

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, who headed

See Page 12 Col 7

## Nazmul Huda accused of being undemocratic

By Nurul Kabir

Two members of the BNP's sub-committee for amendment to the party constitution yesterday accused committee chief Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda of undemocratic behaviour.

According to party insiders, two of the six-member body, in separate applications to the party Secretary General, alleged that the Information Minister had submitted the proposed amendments to the party standing committee without prior consultations with them.

Headed by Barrister Nazmul Huda, the other members of the committee included Works

Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, State Minister for Establishment Barrister Aminul Huq, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum, Whip Ashraf Hossain and Aisar Ahmed Siddiqi.

The accusers observed in their letters that it was necessary to involve all the members of the committee — even for the sake of avoiding any technical error — in the proposed amendments, a top ranking leader of the BNP told The Daily Star late last night, on condition of anonymity.

According to the source, See Page 12 Col 2

## Dr Kamal relieved of AL membership

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League (AL) yesterday relieved Dr Kamal Hossain of his membership in the party's advisory council following his launching of a new party on August 29.

The decision was taken in a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee in the city yesterday.

On the question of his membership of the party, the AL working committee resolved that as per Article 53 of the party constitution, primary membership of any person

stood automatically cancelled as soon as he became a member of any other political party.

Dr Hossain, however, submitted his resignation from the party membership the day he had floated the Gano Forum.

The ALWCW, on the second day of its meeting, also relieved Mattur Rahman of his Advisory position and stripped him of his party membership.

A resolution adopted in the meeting said the party also cancelled the primary membership

See Page 12 Col 1

## No changes in BNP leadership likely

By Staff Correspondent

Changes in the BNP leadership, including in the post of Secretary General are unlikely immediately after the current council, party sources hinted yesterday.

The source, holding a key post in the party, said incumbent Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder will continue in the post for the time being.

The announcement of fresh committees will also be delayed, the source, also a cabinet member, said. He added that party chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will analyse the reactions expressed by the district and thana leaders at the closed-door sessions.

The source said some new faces will come in the central leadership as most of the committees were expanded through constitutional amendments adopted yesterday.

He declined to name any possible candidates for the central leadership.

See Page 12 Col 4

## Majid leaves for Cairo today

By Staff Correspondent

Agriculture Minister Maj General (Retd) Majid ul-Huq leaves Dhaka today for three North African countries to lobby for Bangladesh's candidacy in the forthcoming election for the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), according to official sources.

The government has already nominated Salahuddin Ahmed, a former civil servant and at present the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), to contest the election.

The election, to be held in the first week of November, is also likely to be contested by the candidates of India, Senegal, Germany, Chile, Australia, the Netherlands, Ireland and Greece.

The third six-year term of the incumbent Director General

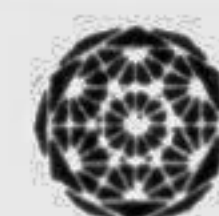
See Page 12 Col 8

## Duty, VAT on import of capital machinery lifted

The government has withdrawn duty, Value Added Tax (VAT) and supplementary duties subject to certain conditions on the import of capital machinery and spare parts up to certain limit for the export oriented industries, reports BSS.

This decision was taken as a part of strategy to promote export and consolidate the competitive position in the international field of the hundred per cent export oriented industries.

The import duty and tax rebate facilities were made effective from July 1, 1993, the handout added.



**Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation**  
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## Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক

**Reduction in the selling price of Urea Fertilizer by Taka 650 (Six hundred fifty) per metric ton and Tk 32.50 (Taka thirty two and paise fifty) per bag.**

The people, particularly the farmers, are well-aware that Government have reduced the price of Urea Fertilizer produced in all the Urea Fertilizer Factories under BCIC by Tk 650/- fixing at Tk 4075/- (Four thousand seventy five) only per metric ton and by Tk 32.50 (Taka thirty two and paise fifty) fixing at Tk 203.75 (Taka two hundred three and paise seventy five) only per bag respectively beginning of the current fiscal year.

Since the peak season for fertilizer use has already commenced, all concerned are hereby informed that there is sufficient stock of fertilizer in the factories and production is going on in full swing.

Buyers are therefore requested to contact the nearest factories for taking delivery of fertilizer and make the best use of the present price.

**Mohammad Habibur Rahman**  
Director (Commercial)