

## Inside Today

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Tk 17.50cr Dutch grant

Bangladesh will receive a grant of approximately Taka 17.50 crore equivalent to 7.863 million Dutch guilders for 'the crop diversification project phase-two' under a memorandum of understanding, signed between the two countries here yesterday, reports BSS.

### Panni leaves for Cyprus

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni left for Cyprus early yesterday morning to attend the 39th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which began there on September 3. Panni is leading a four member Bangladesh delegation to the conference, reports UNB.

### Gano Forum EC meets tomorrow

The first meeting of the Executive Council of the Gano Forum will be held at the Hotel Renaissance Sundaram, Motiheel at 5pm tomorrow. All members of the council have been requested to attend the meeting, reports BSS.

### Dhaka div Nirmul body confce today

The Dhaka divisional conference of the Ghatik Dal Nirmul Samanayak Committee will be held at the Ali Ahmed Chanka auditorium in Narayanganj today. Dr Khan Sarwar Moshed will inaugurate the conference at 10 in the morning. Samanayak committee convenor Jahanara Inam will address the conference as chief guest.

# PLO-Israel peace deal likely to be delayed

JERUSALEM, Sept 5: Cabinet ministers expressed hope today that Israel and the PLO would sign peace agreements on September 13 but a Palestinian source in Washington said a delay was likely, reports Reuters.

The United States has proposed September 13 as the date for the signing in Washington of the Israeli-PLO agreement on principles, which offers Palestinians early autonomy in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Environment Minister Yossi

Sarid said Israel and the PLO were still working out the final details of mutual recognition. "Let's hope that the two agreements will be signed at the same time," Sarid told reporters.

The Palestinian source in Washington said the PLO and Israel would reach agreement this week on recognising each other, which they have to do before they can publicly sign their outline agreement on self-rule.

But he said PLO institutions

could take up to a month to approve the document.

Asked if the deal could still be signed a week on Monday, the source said: "I don't think so... the (PLO) executive committee is meeting Thursday, after that the central council. It is going to take some time."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on CBS television today that Israel would be ready before September 13 to sign a peace deal with the PLO, but a Palestinian official said approval could take two or three

weeks.

PLO strategist Nabil Shaath said on the same programme, "It is possible but highly improbable" that the PLO would get the approval it needed by September 13.

Shaath said it would probably take two or three weeks to get approval from the executive committee and the central council of the PLO.

However, Shaath said there would likely be statements on mutual PLO-Israeli recognition

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In spite of the eviction drive by the Dhaka City Corporation and police against street hawkers a large number of vendors carry on with impunity on the Bishwa Road near Malibagh Bazar. — Star photo

## Rao gets opposition mandate to better ties with China

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: India and China, whose relations improved decisively after the collapse of the Soviet Union, will discuss ways next week to get along with the United States, diplomats and politicians said today, reports Reuters.

Indian opposition leaders said they had given a rare unanimous mandate to Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to improve relations with China during his three-day visit to Beijing starting on Monday.

But, they said, differences over India's future ties with the United States had sharpened recently after Washington pressure Russia to cancel a cryogenic rocket engine deal with New Delhi.

The United States also announced sanctions last month against China and Pakistan, charging Beijing with transferring forbidden missile technology to Islamabad.

Indian analysts said that

Washington's move was as arbitrary as its steps against India's rocket deal.

The United States has provided sufficient motivation to India and China to get together in opposing US hegemonism, said K Subramanyam, a defence expert close to the government. Chinese diplomats said Rao and Chinese premier Li Peng could sign an agreement to demarcate a ceasefire line separating their troops since the two neighbours fought a brief border war in 1962.

Indian officials said they were hopeful the agreement, a major component of confidence building measures they have proposed along the 4,056 km border, would eventually lead to a final settlement of the Himalayan boundary.

We are in no hurry to sign a border agreement. But the nation is unanimous that we should improve relations with China, the leader of the opposi-

tion in parliament, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, told Reuters.

Rao briefed senior opposition leaders on his proposed China visit, but Vajpayee said relations with Beijing could have improved earlier had New Delhi not tied its foreign policy to a 1971 defence pact with the Soviet Union.

He said the Soviet Union had derailed previous Indian attempts to improve relations with China.

As Foreign Minister in 1979, Vajpayee became the first Indian leader to visit Beijing since 1962.

Indian diplomats say New Delhi has raised with Beijing the issue of Chinese arms supplies to arch-foe Pakistan. India is also worried Chinese arms in neighbouring Myanmar could be acquired by Maoist rebels in the northeastern Assam state.

Rao is expected to discuss the issue with Li.

## JP announces 7-pt programme

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party (JP) yesterday announced a series of programmes including a grand rally in Dhaka to demand resignation of the present government and mid-term elections under a neutral interim government.

The agitation programmes were finalised after the party Central Working Committee's today meeting, held at the Dhaka District Sports Association Auditorium (DDSA) in the city.

District and thana-level leaders of the party addressed the meeting and urged the central leaders to plan anti-government programmes.

The extended meeting adopted a seven-point charter of demands that also includes release of the jailed JP leader and former President HM Ershad, eradication of terrorism from the campuses, restoration of the Upazila system, checking smuggling and protecting the local industries.

The meeting resolved that the party would observe a 'demand week' from September 10 demanding fulfillment of the aforesaid demands. The central leaders also would tour the districts for mass contacts from October 7 and a grand rally would be organised in the city. However, the date for the planned rally was not decided.

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## Prisoners in Feni boycott court

FENI, Sept 5: The undertrial prisoners in the sub-jail here have not been appearing in the court for two days demanding removal of the District and Sessions Judge, reports UNB.

Sources said all the 235 prisoners signed a memorandum and submitted it through the Sub-jailor to the Deputy Commissioner.

They alleged that the Judge, Shah Jamsedur Rahman, did not examine witnesses and took unnecessary long time in delivering judgement.

The DC termed the stand of the prisoners illegal and said necessary action would be taken against them.

It's duty of the administration to make sure that the prisoners appear in the court, he said without disclosing what step the administration would take in this regard.

The Deputy Commissioner and the Police Super visited the jail.

## WB concerned over wage increase in public sector

By S Y Bakht

The World Bank has expressed serious concern about the viability of the jute sector following the recent government decision to increase wages of workers of the loss-making nationalised industries.

According to an officials source, the government announcement enhancing the minimum basic pay of public sector industrial workers to Tk 950 per month, nearly derailed the ongoing negotiations for securing World Bank financing for the Jute Sector Restructuring

Project (JSRP).

Announced on July 17 amid mounting pressure from the SKOP, the new basic pay would increase the minimum salary of a public sector industrial worker to Tk 1493 per month, up from the previous minimum of Tk 1103.

Earlier on August 2, WB Vice President for the South Asian region Joseph Wood, in a letter to the Finance Minister, expressed concern about the viability of the jute sector and

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## Simple interest on agricultural loans

The government has decided to impose simple interest on agricultural loans from July 1 this year to ease the burden of loan of the small and marginal farmers, reports BSS.

A Bangladesh Bank press release issued here yesterday said simple interest will be charged on all agricultural loans subject to their repayment within stipulated time.

But if any loanee does not repay the loan during the next six months of the specified time then compound interest will be charged on the loan from the date of receiving it. After the size of the principal is doubled with interest, no other interest will be charged on the loan, it added.

Reasonable incentive rebate may be given to the loanees if they repay the loans within stipulated time. The banks and institutions advancing agricultural loan will themselves be able to decide the rate of rebate. These facilities will be applica-

ble upto the maximum agricultural loan of Taka three lakh with a view to giving loan benefits to maximum number of farmers.

Bangladesh Bank has already issued necessary directives to the loan giving banks for the implementation of these decisions quickly and effectively.

Another report adds: Bangladesh Bank has decided to extend some facilities to the peasants and cultivators of flood affected areas with regard to repayment of loans and granting of new loans, a press release of the bank said yesterday.

Loans for TP Aman will be distributed upto September 30 in view of the damage of the crop due to recent floods. Those who have already taken loans on this account and in the meanwhile have been affected by floods will once again be given loans for the same purpose.

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## Canal digging programme lagging behind target

By Inam Ahmed

The government's canal digging programme has been lagging behind its target because of some inherent weaknesses, according to a recent report.

The report, prepared by the Planning Commission, found that voluntary labour for canal digging seldom works and projects are not always prioritised according to the need of the people.

The report, based on a sample of 100 projects through out the country, will be reviewed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on September 9, sources said.

The canal digging projects were supposed to be done un-

der the Food-for-Work programme and by voluntary labour. However, in most cases, voluntary labour was not put in and canals were dug only under Food-for-Work.

This resulted in the digging of shallow canals which often have failed in their objectives of facilitating irrigation.

In some instances, authorities of different educational institutions raised money from the students and employed paid labourers replacing the voluntary labour system.

Also, on many occasions villagers objected to the digging of canals on their farm lands

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## PM's directive to implement SAARC summit decisions

SAARC Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday directed all concerned to accelerate the implementation of the decisions taken at the Seventh SAARC summit, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister was presiding over the meeting of the ministerial sub-committee on follow-up action on the decisions of the Seventh SAARC summit held at the International Conference centre here.

Begum Zia asked the officials to properly monitor the developments of the summit decisions which mainly focused on socio-economic uplift of SAARC

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## No classes held as DU teachers observe strike

By DU Correspondent

No classes were held at the Dhaka University yesterday as the teachers observed a day-long strike demanding arrest and trial of the persons involved in the violence at two universities in July last.

However, some department offices and seminars remained open yesterday. The presence of students on the campus was thin.

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Associations (FBUTA) called a two-day strike on Sunday and next Wednesday protesting the terrorist activities at the Jahangirnagar University on July 29 and at the Islamic University on July 5 last.

According to the FBUTA no classes were held at Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, BUET and the Agricultural universities because of the strike. Jahangirnagar and Islamic universities have since been closed.

Examinations were, however

## Hasina ill, cancels tour

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina was taken ill and has been advised complete rest by her physicians, AL sources said yesterday.

The Awami League chief has cancelled her scheduled programmes of visiting Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur and Saidpur from Sept 7 to 9 because of her sudden illness.

Sheikh Hasina is under the treatment of Dr M A Malek, Prof Mahmudul Hasan, and Prof M A Quadri.

The scheduled public meetings and peasant gatherings at Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur and Saidpur, however, will be held with other Awami League central leaders attending, party sources said.

## 5th meet with PCJSS on Sept 18 likely

CHITTAGONG, Sept 5: The fifth meeting between the government and Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political wing of Shantibahini, is expected to be held on September 18 at Khagrachhari.

Sources in the Parliamentary Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts told UNB tonight (Sunday night) that date and venue of the meeting had been communicated to PCJSS for their confirmation.

The committee formed by the government was assigned with the task of resolving the problems of the Hill Tracts where some tribals have been engaged in insurgency since mid-1970s.

A meeting of the committee

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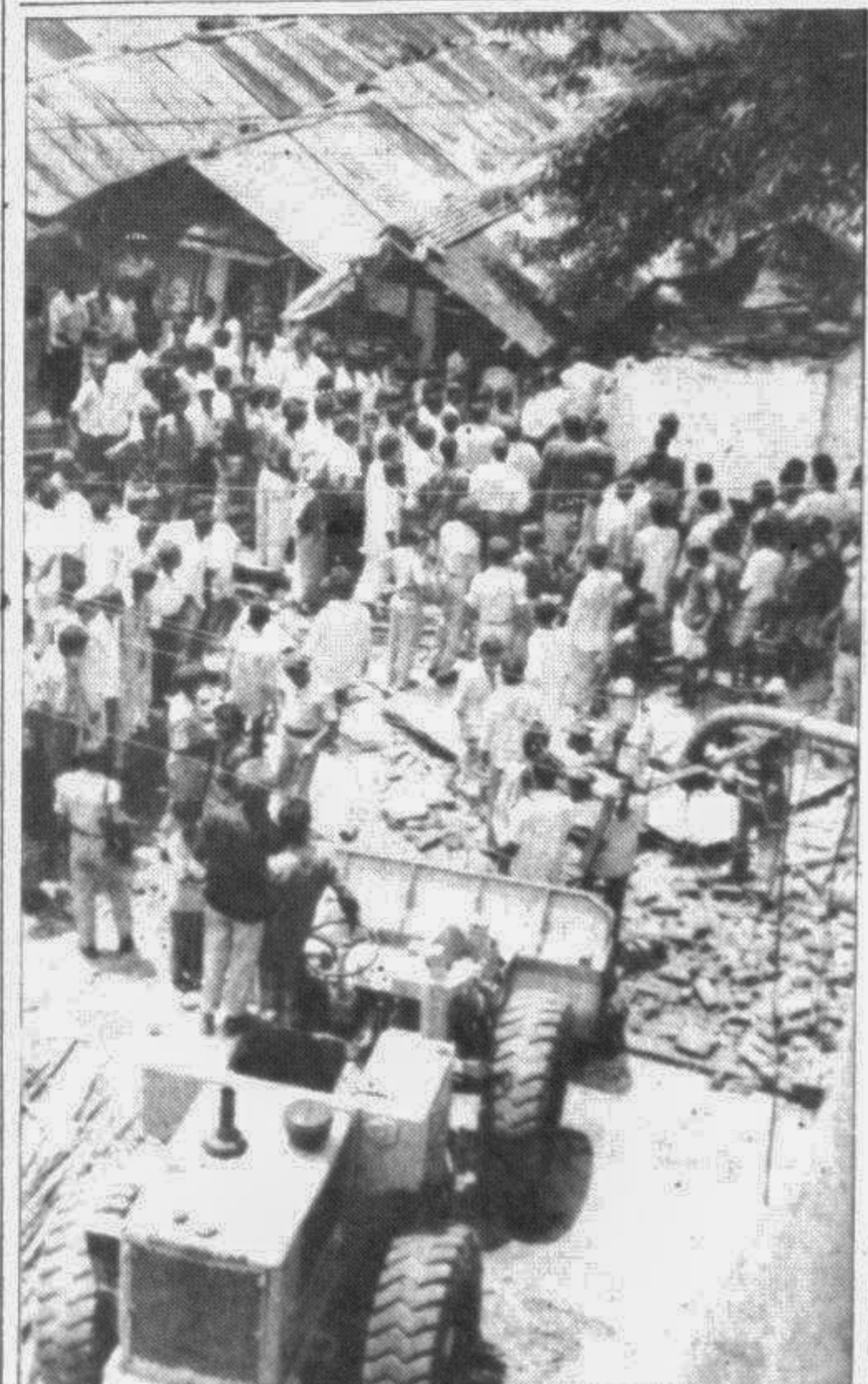
## Iraqi PM sacked

NICOSIA, Sept 5: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Hamza Al-Zubaidi has been relieved of his post, Baghdad Radio said today in a report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, reports Reuters.

He was replaced by Finance Minister Ahmed Hussein Khudayir, who will retain the Finance portfolio, it said.

Iraqi Radio said the appointment of the new prime minister was contained in one of three decrees issued on Sunday.

The decree also named Tareq Aziz as Deputy Prime Minister and appointed Safa Hadi Jawad as Oil Minister, the radio said.



The Dhaka City Corporation demolished some unauthorised shops at the Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday. — Star photo