

Inside Today

Article

Coastal Tourism : The Money- Spinner

Column: Window On
Asia
by Shahed Latif
Page 4

International

Euro-Parliament Votes for use of force in Bosnia

Benazir-Murtaza rift
hurting PPP's image
ahead of polls
Page 5

Business

US-Indonesia row over sale of French choppers to Iran

Developing states need
\$700b for water pro-
jects: World Bank
Pages 6, 7

Rising Stars

Parents vs Children :
Accept, Your Baby has
Grown up; Friends;
Steps Toward Success
II; If I was Invisible; A
Minor Electrical Fault;
Jokes; The Achievers
Page 8

NEWS BRIEFS

Mostafiz leaves for NY today

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafiz Rahman leaves here for New York today to attend the 48th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The UNGA session will begin from Monday (September 21) at the UN headquarters in New York, reports UNB.

OIC standing body meets tomorrow

The three-day sixth meeting of the OIC Standing Committee on Technological Cooperation will begin in Islamabad tomorrow. State Minister for Science and Technology Prof MA Mannan left Pakistan last night to attend the meeting. Mannan is leading a three-member delegation, which include Deputy Scientific Adviser Ahmed Al-Farooq and High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Anwar Hashim, reports UNB.

Rabiussani moon sighted

The Rabiussani moon was sighted yesterday, according to an Islamic Foundation press release. The National Moon Sighting Committee, which met here yesterday evening with Religious Affairs Minister Keramat Ali in the chair, reviewed the reports received from the district and divisional offices of the Islamic Foundation and also from the Met Office about the sighting of the Rabiussani moon yesterday, reports BSS.

Three Indians pushed back

LALMONIRHAT, Sept 17: The Bangladesh Rifles pushed back 10 Bengali-speaking Indian Muslims through Srirampur border of Patgram thana of the district Thursday night. These Indian nationals were pushed in Bangladesh territory by the Border Security Force on Wednesday night through the same point. BDR sources said, a patrol team of the BDR arrested the people in Bangladesh territory, reports UNB.

Two killed in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Sept 17: Two people were killed on the spot when a running bus hit a tempo at Kazir Shimla on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at 8 tonight. Witnesses said two passengers of the tempo, including a woman were killed and four others injured when the bus hit the tempo from behind. Identity of the victims was not immediately known, reports UNB.



Palestinian Maher el Tabbah, 25, and his bride Nermine, 18, walk with bridesmaids holding a Palestinian flag through Gaza City yesterday. They are the first Palestinian couple to marry on the occupied Gaza Strip since the signing of PLO-Israel accord. — AFP photo

PLO diplomatic office in US next month

TUNIS, Sept 17: The Palestine Liberation Organisation, honoured along with Israeli leaders with a peace prize today, said it would open its diplomatic office in the United States next month, reports Reuter.

Despite the international plaudits over the historic accord, the PLO came under more fire from Palestinian radicals — who denied they had agreed a truce with the organisation in the Israeli-occupied territories. But PLO officials loyal to Chairman Yasser Arafat said they were winning the battle for the hearts and minds of Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

In the occupied territories there is now more support than opposition. Arafat has been bombarded with phone calls of support, said one official at PLO headquarters, which keeps in close touch with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) said it

was awarding its annual Felix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Arafat.

UNESCO's announcement in Paris came just four days after Israel and the PLO signed an accord on Palestinian self-rule, raising prospects of ending decades of Arab-Israeli bloodshed.

A panel chaired by former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger awarded the prize, worth 800,000 French francs (143,000 US dollar) and named after the president of Ivory Coast.

The peace accord paved the way for a resumption of US-PLO contacts severed by Washington in 1990.

Saeed Erakat, deputy head of the Palestinian negotiating team at the Middle East peace talks, said the PLO will open "an official Palestinian mission" in Washington next month.

In Amman, the radical Islamic group Hamas denied it had reached a truce with the

PLO but called on its followers in the Israeli-occupied territories to avoid inter-Palestinian clashes.

"There was no agreement at all between Hamas and the PLO," Hamas representative Mohammad Nazzari told Reuters. "This is a fabrication by Yasser Arafat."

A statement released in Tunis on Thursday and signed by Hamas and PLO prisoners in Israeli jails said the two rivals had agreed on outlawing internal fighting and violence.

Nazzari denied that the Tunis document was authentic.

A Hamas spokesman in Jordan, Ibrahim Goshie, said the group had sent a senior delegation to Syria to rally Arab support for efforts to foil the peace accord.

Nayef Hawatmeh of the Damascus-wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine told a news conference in Damascus that the United States and Israel were piling pressure on Syria to silence opposition to the deal.



Arafat's picture
in White House

WASHINGTON, Sept 17: Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat has received the ultimate compliment for joining in a peace accord with Israel — his picture is hanging in the west wing of the White House, reports Reuter.

Ten photos taken by White House photographers of Monday's signing ceremony, including Arafat's historic handshake with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, now grace a hallway in the west wing leading to the Oval Office.

Govt reduces bank rates

Government has decided to reduce the bank rate from 6.5 per cent to 6 per cent and the floor rate of fixed deposits from 6 per cent to 5.5 per cent, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting held yesterday with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in view of "overall improvement of the macro-economic management, including the declining inflation rate which is at present 2.5 per cent."

The meeting, attended by the officials of Bangladesh Bank, Finance Division and the Internal Resources Division, reviewed the structure of interest rates of banks and savings instruments.

The Finance Minister emphasised on speedy reduction of lending rates by commercial banks to stimulate and activate the economy through higher investment in productive sector.

The meeting also discussed the effects of unusually high interest rate of savings instruments fixed by the past gov-

ernment at a time of high rate of inflation in bank lending and securities markets.

The Minister directed the concerned officials to rationalise the rates of savings instruments directly competing with the banks and securities markets.

He expressed the hope that banks would respond to the measures taken by the government and take effective steps to provide credit at a lower rate.

Pranab Mukherjee may visit in Oct

Indian Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee is likely to pay a visit to Dhaka in the first week of October at the invitation of his Bangladesh counterpart, reports UNB.

Officials said the visit will provide an opportunity for Dhaka and New Delhi to review the trade position between the two countries, marked by persistent imbalance for Bangladesh.

See Page 12 Col 8

Kategaya lauds primary edn system Uganda to replicate Bangladesh model

By M Anwarul Haq

"We consider education as the most formidable political weapon for development. And we had no hesitation in coming to Bangladesh to see some of your novel educational projects."

This was stated by Eriya Kategaya the First Deputy Prime Minister of Uganda in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star at the end of his five-day visit to Bangladesh yesterday.

Kategaya who led a ten-member Ugandan delegation to have a first hand knowledge of the education programmes at the primary level here said, "Even in Uganda we have heard about your mass literacy programmes, especially about the activities of the BRAC."

"My team which includes officials from our education department and the Deputy Minister of Education has been impressed with the methods adopted by your government and particularly the BRAC in training primary school teachers."

We have visited some BRAC schools and have seen them training primary school teachers within a few weeks which takes two to three years elsewhere."

Kategaya said he was also impressed with the relevance of BRAC teaching methods involving the local community. Teaching students to take clean drinking water and enlightening them to adopt basic hygiene for prevention of many diseases like diarrhoea was a remarkable linkage in BRAC's efforts to provide 'essential literacy' the Ugandan Deputy Prime Minister remarked.

He told that Bangladesh was very fortunate to have an innovator of the stature of BRAC's Fazle Hasan Abed and said that his delegation will try to replicate some of Abed's works in Uganda.

"We may not be able to have another Fazle Abed, but we will try to integrate some of his methods we have seen in

See Page 12 Col 1

Border talks with Yangon Sept 23

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Sept 17: A five-member team of Bangladesh border guard officials is expected to leave Dhaka for Yangon on September 23 to attend special border talks with Myanmar, for the first time at the Director General level.

The team, headed by the Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Major General Anwar Hossain, is expected to return on September 28 after holding discussions with the Myanmar side led by its Border Immigration and Manpower Director General Maung Aung.

Such a high level talks are aimed at resolving the outstanding border issues between the two neighbours in a bid to maintain a permanent peace along their 176-mile long border, sources said.

The decision for attending the talks was taken following an invitation sent on May 20 by the Director General of

Myanmar Border Immigration and Manpower. The invitation reached the BDR Director General via the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry in which the Myanmar counterpart proposed to hold such high level dialogue, sources added.

However, since the attack on the Banderban Rajapur BDR Camp by Myanmar border guards on December 21, 1991 — an act that chilled relations between the two neighbours — many border talks were held either at the Sector Commander, Battalion Commander or the Company Commander levels to resolve the crises.

The Rajapur incident left two persons killed, including a BDR personnel.

Meanwhile, in the backdrop of a recent killing of a Bangladeshi fisherman by Myanmar border guards, a Sector Commander-level flag meeting

See Page 12 Col 7

Concern over slow implementation Donors monitoring programmes

By Inam Ahmed

Concerned by the slow implementation of development programmes, the donors have sped up their vigil on external assistance from the start of the new fiscal year, according to officials in the Planning Commission.

The donors, with a view to expediting the implementation process, have also appointed own consultants — in addition to the government's ones — to their different projects.

Explaining the donors' move, a high official of the Planning Commission said, this has happened mainly because of the donors' concern over the slow rate of progress in the government's development programme.

The supervisory role of the donors has increased on the complex and huge projects, especially having critical engineering aspects. Some projects of the Annual Development Programme (ADP), which the

donors view as 'over optimistic', are also under their close scrutiny, sources said.

The BNP government has been trying to speed up its development projects since coming to power in 1991. It has already taken a number of measures including monitoring of projects on a regular basis, prioritising them and warning the agencies trailing behind the required level of project implementation.

Despite these efforts, the ADP continued to witness shortfalls in project implementations, statistics shows.

The last year's ADP itself was scaled down to Tk 8121 crore from the original of Tk 8650 crore. But indications are there that the actual implementation is far below the revised ADP line.

Against this backdrop, the donors are not that optimistic about the outcome of this year's ADP of Tk 9750 crore, according to sources.

The supervisory role of the World Bank (WB) and NORAD clearly indicated that the donors are mounting pressure on the government for timely completion of the programmes, sources said.

The WB decided to appoint a consultant of its own to supervise its coastal embankment and flood protection programme.

The consultant, working as engineer for the Water Development Board, would pass all bills and reports relating to its implementation.

The NORAD has also appointed its own consultant to supervise the small industries development programme being implemented by the Bangladesh Bank.

Planning Commission sources observe that the present supervisory role of the donors would help the government narrow its gap between the original and revised ADP this year.

National body for urban development in offing

By Chapal Bashar

The formation of a National Housing and Urban Development Council is being considered by the government. A proposal in this regard is expected to be placed soon before the Cabinet for approval.

An authoritative source in the Ministry of Works told this correspondent yesterday that the proposal is being prepared according to the recommendations made by the experts at a workshop held in the city recently.

The proposed council, the first of its kind in the country, will formulate policies and guidelines for coordinated and

integrated development of metropolitan cities as well as other towns and urban areas.

The experts have recommended that this national-level body should be headed by the Prime Minister while the Minister of Works and the Minister of Local Government would act as joint vice-chairmen. The members would include representatives from the various ministries and agencies as well as from the private sector, the NGOs and academic institutions.

The Urban Development Directorate (UDD) of the Ministry of Works would act as the secretariat of the council.

The workshop, where the said recommendations were made, was sponsored by the Ministry of Works, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Kuala Lumpur based Urban Management Programme (UMP). The workshop was participated by 60 experts on urbanisation and housing, including some foreign consultants.

The deliberations at the workshop was based on the final report on Urban and Shelter Sector Review prepared in March this year by the UNDP and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/

Habitat).

According to Works Ministry source, the proposed council will coordinate the activities of ministries and agencies involved in rural and urban housing and in urban development programmes in both the public and private sectors. The ministries and agencies will implement administrative, legislative and institutional reforms and initiate action in response to the housing and urban development policies formulated by the council.

Local authorities in the cities or towns will also follow the

See Page 12 Col 8

Saudi Arabia to have 13 regional assemblies

DUBAI, Sept 17: Saudi Arabia's King Fahd on Thursday issued decrees dividing the country into 13 regions and outlining the structure of new regional assemblies, reports Reuter.

Following his appointment last month of a National Shura (consultative) Council to assist the government in ruling the vast desert kingdom, the new decrees will give Saudis at local level a greater say in running their regional affairs.

Regions under the decree will continue to be run by Emirs

(governors) appointed by the King, but in future they will each be advised by an appointed council, similar to the 60-member National Shura which included senior religious, business and intellectual figures from outside the ruling family.

The National Shura's appointment gave commoners a say in the running of the kingdom for the first time in almost 60 years.

Thursday's decrees said each region would be headed by an

See Page 12 Col 3

Fifth round of CHT talks today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 17: The fifth round of peace talks between the Parliamentary Committee for Hill Tracts Affairs and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) will be held at Khagrachhari tomorrow.

Official sources said the five-member Shantibahini team will be led by JB Larma alias Shanto Larma, president of the PCJSS, the parent organisation of the tribal rebels. Communications Minister Oli Ahmed will lead the government team.

The close-door talks is expected to begin at 10 am at the Khagrachhari Circuit House and continue till 5 pm with a break for lunch, sources added.

The repatriation issue of the Chakma refugees is expected to be discussed, sources said. The Shantibahini team will be flown to the venue of the talks from Dudukchhari, a border village under Khagrachhari district. The talks over, they will be flown back in a helicopter, officials informed.

BSS adds: A 17-member Bangladesh team is waiting to receive a 24-member team of

See Page 12 Col 8

AL 'Demonstration Day' today

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on the people to make today's countrywide 'Demonstration Day' an all-out success to free the nation from the 'misrule' of the BNP, reports UNB.

The demonstration has been called by the Awami League to press for repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance, removal of the 'corrupt' ministers, implementation of the four-point accord signed in parliament for holding trial of Golam Azam as 'war criminal' and scrapping the Anti-Terrorism Act.

In a statement, the Awami League President said that the 'illegal' autocratic regimes which came to power after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had systematically destroyed the spirit and values of the Liberation War.

Anti-liberation forces were out to jeopardize independence of the country under the patronisation of the government, she said, alleging that misdeeds of two and a half year's rule of BNP government had thrown the people into acute hardship.

Terrorism, politicisation and

See Page 12 Col 7

Ansar battalion withdrawn from Rohingya camp

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 17: A 162-member Ansar battalion was withdrawn from a Rohingya refugee camp in Ramu thana today (Friday) after the local people enforced a 12-hour hartal protesting their alleged attack on camp officials, reports UNB.

Witnesses said more than a hundred Ansars swooped on the office of the camp in-charge (Bethuapalung camp No. 2) during the 'shalish' (arbitration) of a 'girl kidnap case' on Thursday night, leaving 15 people injured.

The Ansars got furious when one of their colleagues, who was not allowed to attend the 'shalish', complained to them that an attempt was made on his life.

The attackers, armed with iron rods, bamboo sticks and other lethal weapons, ransacked the camp office, cut off

See Page 12 Col 6

7 newsmen hurt in bomb attack on Ajker Kagoj

By Staff Correspondent

Seven newsmen were wounded in a bomb-attack on the office of Ajker Kagoj, a daily newspaper, at Dhanmondi last night.

Witnesses said, some eight youths in two groups attacked the newspaper office at Dhanmondi Road No-2 at 7.30 pm and fled by a microbus. The attackers hurled at least 20 crackers and fired three gunshots into the air, they added.

News Editor Reza Arefin, Chief Reporter Mahbub Alam, four staff reporters — Asaduzzaman, Afiz Abu Bakar Siddiqui, Oza Choudhury, and Anisul Haque Gama, photographer Mamun Abedin and an of-

See Page 12 Col 3