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NEWS BRIEFS

Student leader killed in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, Oct 1: Jatya Chhatra Samaj joint convener, Biplob, 25, was stabbed to death by a group of unidentified youths at 6 pm today near Kadam Rasul at Bandar thana. He died on way to the Narayanganj Hospital. A case has been filed at Bandar thana.

AL shocked at loss of lives in quake

The Awami League has expressed deep shock and grief at the death and devastation caused by Thursday's earthquake in India. In a joint statement yesterday party's acting president Abdus Samad Azad and general secretary Zillur Rahman also conveyed sympathy to the members of the families of those killed in the tremor, reports UNB.

BDR, BSF hold flag meeting

LALMONIRHAT, Oct 1: A company level flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) was held at Panbari BOP in Patgram thana of the district today. The meeting was held to dispel any misunderstanding following an incident on Thursday in which the BSF took away 52 cows from Dahagram-Angorpota enclave. Later, the BSF returned the cows to local leaders the same night, reports UNB.

21,000 killed in 2 Maharashtra villages : Rains hamper rescue operation

Quake death toll may cross 28,000

KHILARI, Oct 1: Funeral pyres flickered around dozens of villages Friday in southwestern India where a violent quake killed more than 21,000 people, many of the crushed by collapsing roofs as they slept, report AP, PTI, AFP.

With more bodies being exhumed from the debris, the toll is likely to go up to 28,000, the official sources said.

Khilari and Umarga in Osmanabad district alone accounted for about 21,000 deaths.

A BJP leader in the region said the death toll could rise as high as 30,000.

Indian authorities meanwhile launched massive rescue and relief efforts yesterday.

Nearly 5,600 troops had moved into the disaster zone, about 400 kilometers east of Bombay, with excavators and bulldozers and medical teams to rescue trapped residents and treat the wounded.

Doctors and relief material—ranging from food to bedsheets and tents—were also pouring into the region as the enormity of the disaster stunned the nation.

Incessant rain hampered efforts to claw through the rubble overnight in an increasingly hopeless search for survivors. An aftershock at 4:30 a.m. Editorials on Page 4

Friday (2300 GMT Thursday) rumbled across the plains and sent rescuers and survivors scurrying into the open in panic.

NEW DELHI, Oct 1: An earthquake shook Solapur and Gulbarga, two districts in India's south and west late today adjacent to quake hit areas, reports AFP.

The quake, India's worst in half a century, measured at least 6 on the Richter scale as it ripped through southwest India at 3:56 a.m. Thursday (2226 GMT Wednesday).

Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan, who flew over the



Women in Khilari village of Latur district in Maharashtra state wailing over the bodies of relatives killed in a massive earthquake in the early hours of Thursday. — AFP photo

Quake released energy like H-bomb

LONDON, Oct 1: The massive earthquake in Maharashtra yesterday released energy equivalent to a hydrogen bomb explosion and was apparently caused by reactivation of a crack in the earth's crust, according to geologists here, reports PTI.

This quake proved especially damaging because it was geologically shallow, allowing a great deal of earth movement to affect a highly populated area at the surface of the earth's crust, Christ Brownitt of the Global Seismology Unit in the British Geological Survey said.

The shallow epicentre means that its violence reached the surface swiftly, without a chance to dissipate in the earth's crustal rocks, he said.

The death toll is also high not just because it struck at night, when almost all the victims were asleep, but also because the region is dominated by structures not designed to withstand seismic convulsions, he said.

Russian crisis continues as both sides harden positions

MOSCOW, Oct 1: Hard-line lawmakers Friday rejected an agreement intended to ease the tense standoff around parliament, refusing to lay down their guns first as President Boris Yeltsin demanded, report AP, Reuters.

Yeltsin demanded that rebel lawmakers, surrender their weapons prior to any deal that would lift the blockade of the building by security forces.

The Speaker of the Russian Parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, meanwhile said local administrations throughout Russia were rallying behind the parliament and called on the army to take a stand in the crisis to avert Russia's breakup.

"All negotiations — all — must begin with the handover of arms," Yeltsin said in an interview broadcast on Commonwealth of Independent States television news.

The Russian leader noted that the government had restored electricity to the parliament in line with an agreement reached during the night that,

he claimed, the parliament had failed to respect.

"We turned on the lights but they did not turn over their arms," Yeltsin said. "It is very difficult to negotiate with them."

"Any gunshot, even accidental, could provoke bloodshed," Yeltsin warned.

Alexander Rutskoi, the acting "president" appointed by the rebel parliament, said the parliament's weapons would be turned over only if the blockade of the building were "totally lifted" immediately, the parliament's news service said.

Rutskoi also demanded that the troops manning the blockade around the building be withdrawn from Moscow and said the parliament's envoy to talks with the Kremlin had been instructed to adhere to this position, the report said.

These conditions were certain to be rejected by the Kremlin.

The hardening of positions on both sides concerning disarmament of the parliamentary guards came amid continuing

BTV news boggles the mind

By Staff Correspondent

Of what importance is the news of an earthquake that kills 21,000 people and injures lakhs? How should we treat a news of villages over a vast area, being razed to the ground within a few seconds, especially when it occurs, not on the other side of the world, but to our next door neighbour? BTV has once again given us a lesson(?) in news treatment.

Yesterday, Law Minister Mirza Golam Haiz's meeting with the Nepalese parliamentary delegation (already in town for several days); Information Minister Nazmul Huda's visit to his constituency (which is his duty as an MP from that area); Energy Minister Mosharraf Hossain's public meeting at a village where 157 families got electricity connections; the stale news of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, becoming Chairman of WB- See Page 12 Col 4

Tea production records rise

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Sept 30: The country's tea output recorded a rise in the past eight months by 1.24 million kg compared with the corresponding period last year, official reports said.

The country produced 29.88 million kg of tea between Jan and Aug last, up from 28.64 million kg in the same period in 1992. This year's target is 52 million kg of tea from 156 gardens.

In 1992, tea output was recorded at 48.93 million kg, an increase of 3 million kg compared with 1991, the reports said.

The rising trend in tea production began from 1990 when the output jumped to 45.16 million kg from only 39 million kg produced in 1989, officials and growers said.

They attributed the growth to the prevailing favourable climatic conditions and the mandatory expansion of tea plantations every year at a rate of two and a half per cent of total garden areas.

The tea officials here are expecting even better crops in the coming years if such favourable climatic conditions persist.

The country's tea gardens are capable of increasing output by introducing intensive cultivation, they also said.

A senior official of a leading British-owned tea company here said production in the company's 30 gardens had recorded an increase of 13 per cent during Jan-Aug this year compared with the corresponding period last year.

He informed this correspondent that the company had already pumped in a huge sum into those gardens for the modernisation and replantation projects aimed at raising the yield.

Presently, Bangladesh's tea plantations cover 47,000 hectares. Bangladesh tea is exported to about 25 countries around the world.

AL bill won't go unchallenged, says Jamaat

Jamaat leader Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami yesterday said his party will resist "constitutionally and lawfully" the opposition's plan to bring a bill in next session of Parliament seeking a ban on politics based on religion.

"The move will not go unchallenged... All Islamic forces and religious people in the country will frustrate it," Nizami told UNB responding to Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim's recent remarks about the planned bill.

Nasim told a discussion meeting here Thursday that a bill will be moved in November session seeking a ban on politics by the Jamaat-e-Islami and other fundamentalist and communal forces.

The Opposition Chief Whip appealed to the ruling party MPs to support the proposed bill to be moved on behalf of the opposition.

Nasim, also the Organising Secretary of Awami League, made the appeal in the backdrop of reported consensus on September 20 between the treasury and opposition benches in See Page 12 Col 7

Govt college teachers' strike Oct 7

By Staff Correspondent

Teachers of all government colleges will observe strike on October 7, protesting terrorism in the educational institutions of the country.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the BCS General Education Association held at the Jagannath University College on September 29.

Presided over by Principal of the college Dr Q A T M Habibur Rahman, the meeting protested the attack on the principal of Rajbari Government College Prof Yahya Islam, his family members and others on September 23.

Seriously injured Principal Yahya and his wife Prof Rabeya are undergoing treatment at the Holy Family Hospital in the city. The meeting demanded punishment to the culprits.

Stable Sino-US ties a must for world peace: Li

BEIJING, Oct 1: China will not accept outside interference in its internal affairs, Premier Li Deng said Thursday in a speech stressing the importance of 'mutual trust' in Sino-US relations, reports AFP.

In an address marking the 44th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Li said stable Sino-US relations were important to the maintenance of world peace.

But he also insisted that Washington had to do more to improve bilateral ties.

"So long as the US government strictly abides by the principles set forth in the three joint communiqués between the two countries and works together with the Chinese side, development of normal Sino-US relations is possible," Li said.

"The Chinese people have stood up," Li said, echoing the words of Mao Zedong at the See Page 12 Col 8



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia speaking at a press conference at the United Nations Thursday following the UNICEF roundtable on "Keeping the Promise to Children" which marked the third anniversary of the World Summit for Children. Begum Zia co-chaired the roundtable with Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro(L). — AFP photo

US State Deptt lauds Dhaka's development programmes

NEW YORK, Oct 1: Assistant Secretary of South Asian Bureau of US State Department Ms Robin Lynn Raphael yesterday commended the socio-economic development programmes undertaken by the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports BSS.

The commendation came when she called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the WVIP suite of UN Plaza hotel Thursday afternoon.

Raphael remarked that in South Asia, Bangladesh was progressing very steadily in different fields.

She appreciated the programmes taken by the present government on child and women development and measures for promoting women education, primary education and See Page 12 Col 8

NGOs renamed PVDOs

By Masud Hasan Khan

However, they pointed out the draft was yet to be finalised and was being scrutinised by different members of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), the apex coordinating body of the PVDOs.

A copy of the Draft Code of Ethics, made available to The Daily Star, suggests the PVDOs build up solidarity and encourage democratic leadership amongst the poor with special emphasis on women.

The PVDOs would seek to collaborate and complement the development efforts initiated by the government and their relationship would stand on mutual openness and respect, it said.

The Code suggested the PVDOs be transparent in their use of funds for development so that the government could know those were well spent.

"We seek to clearly show what work is carried out with such funds, and to account for the receipt and the expenditure See Page 12 Col 1

Road mishaps go up in Sept

By Farid Ahmed

fell victims to reckless driving on the roads.

The crime incidents in September include robbery, mugging, extortion, clash and violence.

A Deputy Secretary of the Industries Ministry, Zakera Begum was robbed off her gold ornaments while she was going to her office in the morning on September 13.

A 23-year-old student, Altaf, was murdered at Manikdi area, Dhaka Cantonment, Saïdur Rashid Rubel, 20, was stabbed to death at Shaheenbagh, Tejgaon, a hawkler Karam Ali, 50, was murdered at Uttara, a young boy Selim who was severely beaten up at Shampur, Demra, died at the Mitford Hospital and Harunur Rashid — a fish trader — was stabbed to death at Lalbagh during the last month.

A total of 31 people were killed in road accidents. In two severe road accidents the Chairman and the Managing Director of Samsons Group of Industries Farukuzzaman and two of his companions died on the Dhaka-Naraindi highway at Demra when his jeep collided with a passenger-bus. In another accident four members of a family died on the spot when an autorickshaw on which they were travelling collided with a bus at Mohakhali.

Five women and a student of the Dhaka College reportedly committed suicide in the city See Page 12 Col 7

MQM threatens to boycott polls

KARACHI, Oct 1: A regional Pakistani party today threatened to boycott next week's general election in protest against what it called an undeclared ban on its activities, reports AFP.

The Mutahidda Qaumi Movement (MQM) — considered the main political force in the urban part of Sindh province — said it would pull out of the race if the ban was not lifted within 18 hours.

In a statement, the party accused its splinter group MQM(Haq) as well as the army of "harassing" its candidates contesting the October 6-9 polls.

One MQM activist was shot dead Thursday and six others were injured in a clash after which the police took an MQM(Haq) activist into custody See Page 12 Col 7

Gen Asif Nawaz's body exhumed for autopsy

ISLAMABAD, Oct 1: The body of former army chief Gen. Asif Nawaz was exhumed Friday for an autopsy to investigate his widow's claim he was poisoned, reports AP.

Forensic experts from the United States, France and Britain witnessed the exhumation at the general's ancestral village of Chakri Rajgan, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) east of Islamabad, authorities said.

The army sent a lieutenant general.

The general's body was taken from its hilltop grave several miles away to Jhelum, where an autopsy was performed and samples collected for testing, the family said. Results were likely in two days.

Doctors said the general had suffered a heart attack when he dropped dead after a morning jog last January.

But his widow, Nuzhat Asif Nawaz, said she had proof her husband was poisoned with arsenic over a three month period. The claim was bolstered by American forensic experts, who found excessively high levels of arsenic in hair his widow said came from the general's hairbrush.

In keeping with Islamic tradition, Nawaz was buried within hours of his death and without an autopsy.

The widow has hinted that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, seeking re-election in the October 6 polls, may be linked to her husband's death. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League has called the accusa- See Page 12 Col 2