



Inside Today

Article

**Reforms at Crossroads: Increased Efforts Needed to Ensure Fairness and Transparency**

Column: Along My Way  
by S B Chaudhuri  
Page 4

International

**Aideed warns against US troops deployment**



'Gross intrusion' into privacy angers Diana  
Page 5

Business

**Third World receives more private money: OECD**

How to monitor and control money market  
by KA Majid  
Pages 6, 7

Feature

Health

**Diagnosis, Management and Care of Cancer; Combined Efforts to Combat Cancer; Greater Awareness Needed to Avert a Catastrophe; Need for Cancer Control**  
Page 8

Metropolitan

**Dhaka Day by Day**



Beauty of Mellow Mists  
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

**RU Khaleda Zia Hall**

RAJSHAHI, Nov 8: The fourth women dormitory of Rajshahi University has been named as 'Begum Khaleda Zia Hall', reports BSS.

## Aman procurement price reduced

By Inam Ahmed

The government has reduced its aman paddy procurement price to Taka 200 from the earlier price of Tk 210.

The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting yesterday which approved the aman procurement policy for the current year.

Food Minister Lt Gen (rtd) Mir Shaukat Ali, while talking to The Daily Star, said the decision was taken in view of the current agricultural scenario of the country.

"We will act and react to regulate the food market," the Food Minister said.

Mir Shaukat Ali said the laws of economics demand that the rice price comes down because production has been increasing steadily.

He dismissed the idea that higher government rates for rice would help the farmers get better prices and said past experi-

ence showed that the middlemen were the sole beneficiaries of higher government crop prices.

The Food Minister also did not rule out the smuggling of rice from across the border where the price is now Tk 147 per maund of paddy.

"I visited the farmers in Dinajpur recently and talked to them about their expected prices and our new price has been fixed according to their suggestions," the Food Minister said.

The government will procure about three lakh metric tons of paddy this season, 90 per cent of which will be from the Dinajpur and Rajshahi regions.

Despite the lowering of the paddy price, there has been a rise in rice prices in the past two weeks.

Mir Shaukat Ali said the government will begin open market sale of rice from today

at a rate of Tk 7.50 per kg. The minister felt that with the open sale, the retail prices of rice would come down within a day or two.

However, he ruled out the possibility of any price collapse because the government would be constantly monitoring the market.

"We will try to prevent any sudden fluctuations," he assured and added that the government would maintain a stable price through its open sale policy.

The country has a food storage capacity of 17 lakh tons. At present there are only eight lakh tons in the silos.

Most of these empty godowns are located in areas where crop production has stagnated, such as Barisal and the southern districts.

Sources in the Food Ministry  
See Page 12 Col 8

## JP, BNP clash in Tongi: 50 injured

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, Nov 8: At least 50 people, including eight policemen, were injured in a triangular clash involving the Jatiya Party (JP), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and police at Tongi Sunday afternoon.

Police sprayed rubber-bullets, lobbed teargas shells and resorted to baton charge to disperse the feuding rivals who chased each other and brick-batted the police.

The clash occurred when the BNP workers attacked a JP meeting venue and set fire to the dais just before the start of the meeting at the Tongi mill gate — some 50 yards from Tongi police station — at 3 pm, witnesses said.

Kazi Zafar, Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Khaledur Rahman Tito were present to address the JP gathering.

Witnesses said a group of armed men entered the venue chanting slogans in favour of the BNP. They soon went on a rampage and spoiled the JP  
See Page 12 Col 3

## Govt, WB to initiate JSRP by year end

Star Report

The government and the World Bank have resolved all outstanding issues in the stalled negotiations for finalising the Jute Sector Restructuring Project (JSRP), according to both government and Bank sources.

"All outstanding issues in finalising the jute sector reform programme have been completely negotiated with the World Bank," said a high-placed Jute Ministry source.

Earlier, the World Bank funded JSRP, scheduled to begin last month, got derailed after the government announcement of a wage hike for the public sector workers in July. The government and the World Bank (WB) were differing on ways to offset the increase in costs of the proposed project due to the wage hike.

A source at the WB Resident Mission also confirmed that the talks on JSRP have been completed. "There are no outstanding issues left and the [jute  
See Page 12 Col 6

sector reform] programme has nearly been finalised."

The ministry source said that the negotiations are likely to be concluded during the meeting between the visiting Bank Vice President for South Asia Joseph Woods and Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman today.

He said that the project document would now be placed for funding before the WB board meeting in Washington during the first week of December. The JSRP is expected to be initiated before the end of this year.

The International Development Agency (IDA), the soft-term lending arm of the WB, has tentatively agreed to provide a 250 million US dollars loan to fund the project.

However, both sides were reluctant to provide further details about the latest negotiations till the final project document, to be placed before the board meeting, was prepared.  
See Page 12 Col 6

## Solidarity Day observed

The nation observed the historic National Revolution and Solidarity Day on Sunday with a renewed pledge to build the country as a happy abode for all with readiness to make any sacrifice for safeguarding its independence and sovereignty, reports UNB.

On this day in 1975, about three months after the August 15 changeover, a sepye-people uprising frustrated conspiracy against the country's independence and salvaged the nation from a political vortex. Patriotic members of the armed forces and heroic people took to the street to foil the plot.

The day was declared a public holiday. The national flags were hoisted atop all public and private buildings.

Different political and socio-cultural organisations organised elaborate programmes like milad mahfil, seminars, discussions, symposia, feeding of the destitute and cultural function.

Special prayers were offered in different mosques, temples and churches for continued  
See Page 12 Col 6

## JU classes resume today

By JU Correspondent

Classes at the Jahangirnagar University resume today after a hundred-day lay-off.

On the eve of resumption of classes, all the seven dormitories were opened to the residential students yesterday morning.

The university was closed sine die following vandalism by some unruly students on July 29. The university authorities also forced the students to vacate the halls soon after.

The institution, on the outskirts of the capital, remained closed for the last three months because the teachers and employees refrained from their duties demanding arrest of the culprits involved in the July 8  
See Page 12 Col 7

## Wood, Saifur discuss pace of reforms today

By A Special Correspondent

World Bank Vice-President D. Joseph Wood, who arrived in Dhaka on November 7 on a five-day trip to Bangladesh, yesterday spent a hectic day in the port city Chittagong visiting some industrial units at the Export Processing Zone and some selected World Bank funded project sites.

The visiting World Bank executive also exchanged views with a number of leading exporters and businessmen and expressed his concerns for Bangladesh's economic future, WB sources said.

Wood calls on Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman today and is expected to highlight some new measures to raise the investment rate and evaluate  
See Page 12 Col 3

the financial sector reform strategy, the WB sources added. During his discussion with the exporters and businessmen Wood said that the government's success with macroeconomic stabilization offers a fine opportunity to push ahead with structural reforms to boost growth and investment.

In particular, Wood was understood to be in favour of implementing further trade liberalization and deregulation with the objective of encouraging competitive private investment.

According to WB sources, Wood is here to discuss specific measures to promote investment and growth in Bangladesh.  
See Page 12 Col 3



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting on the occasion of the National Revolution and Solidarity Day at the Democracy Square, Gulistan in the city on Sunday. — PID photo

## Hartals no longer reflect people's will: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said Sunday that the politics of hartals no longer reflect the desire or demands of the people since a democratically elected parliament is effectively working for them.

"The mentality of the people has changed, since they started enjoying the benefits of the development activities undertaken by the BNP government during the past two and a half years," Begum Zia told a huge rally at the Democracy Square at Fulbaria, a popular venue for BNP meetings during the anti-autocracy movement.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party organised the rally as part of its celebration of

the National Revolutionary and Solidarity Day.

"We are being accused of calling frequent hartals in the past but people know why we called those hartals," Begum Zia, wearing a white chiffon with matching chador said amid resounding cheers.

She said that agitation against an autocratic ruler and agitation against a democratic government were two different things.

"Most of those parties which are accusing us had also campaigned and called hartals at that time. But people do not support hartals now," the Prime Minister said.  
"Go for hartals and stay on

the streets. The people will not bring you to power because they consider hartals an impediment to development," Begum Zia said.

Presided over by one of its vice-chairmen Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky, the rally was addressed, by among others, party Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah, Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Food Minister Mir Shaukat Ali, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas, State Minister for Women  
See Page 12 Col 4

## Hasina, Chinese leaders hold extensive talks

Awami League Chief Sheikh

Hasina had extensive bilateral talks with the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing Sunday, according to a message received here last night, reports UNB.

"I have come to China with a lot of expectation," Sheikh Hasina was quoted to have told the hosts during her 3-hour talks held in a cordial atmosphere.

Hasina recalled Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's visit to China in 1953 and 1957 and said her party would extend all-out cooperation to China in all fields and support on international issues.

Deputy leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, party's Advisory Council member SAMS Kibria and  
See Page 12 Col 6

## No breakthrough in Pak-US talks

ISLAMABAD Nov 8: High-level talks between the United States and Pakistan here have not produced any breakthrough on the nuclear issue or Kashmir, a senior US official said Monday, reports AFP.

"I would be misleading if I said there was any opening on the nuclear non-proliferation issue," the official told reporters at a briefing following Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphael's talks with the government.

Raphael, who is in charge of South Asian affairs had talks with acting President Wasim Sajjad, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Foreign Minister Farooq Leghari and Army Chief General Abdul Waheed.

The American official who did not want to be named said the US government had an ongoing dialogue with both Pakistan and India on the nuclear issue in South Asia.

"We have been exploring ways to deal with the regional security issues," the official said pointing out that two rounds of talks had been held earlier with Indian officials in Washington.

Asked whether Pakistan could sign the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) without India agreeing to do so, the official said "I don't see that in the near future".

The official indicated that US aid suspension applied to Pakistan under the American Pressler law on non-proliferation in 1990 was likely to continue.

"We are working very hard to cooperate with Pakistan but we are stuck in a legal bind that provides no flexibility," he said of the law which bars assistance to countries pursuing a weapon-oriented nuclear programme.

Pakistan which insists its programme is entirely peaceful wants a regional non-proliferation regime in South Asia because of a perceived nuclear threat from its traditional rival India.

On Kashmir, the American official said the US believed that India and Pakistan should sit down at the negotiating table to find a "peaceful" solution to the problem.

The official said much of the Indian press behaved "very mischievously" about the recent American declaration that Kashmir was a disputed region which was widely welcomed in Pakistan.

The official said the US would like Pakistan and India to take mutual confidence building measures to improve their ties such as implementing a 1989 bilateral draft agreement on the Siachen Glacier.  
BCIC 611-8/11

## GRATITUDE

The Board of Directors of Mediaworld Ltd. and all members of the staff of The Daily Star are deeply grateful to all the valued readers of The Daily Star, from home and abroad, including political leaders, academicians, litterateurs, artists, high civil and military officials, leaders of the business community, members of the diplomatic corp and the representatives of NGOs, and social bodies, who were kind enough to condole the death of our founder-editor, S M Ali, through messages or by signing the condolence book at our office.

The extremely kind words and generous praises for S M Ali and The Daily Star have been a source of strength and a cushion of comfort for us in our hour of grief.

Since it is not possible for us to reach everyone individually, we are expressing our profound gratitude to all through this announcement.

As in the past, we once again seek the gracious indulgence and unstinted support of all our readers, patrons and well-wishers to continue to help us so that we may serve our readers better.

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বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিলায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক

## Notification on Closure of Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory at Fenchuganj (NGFF) from 31st December, 1993

As announced earlier through newspapers and other mass media, the continued operation of the first urea fertilizer factory of the country, Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory at Fenchuganj, has become extremely risky due to loss of effectiveness and reliability of the control systems and productive instruments after having functioned over a period of 32 years.

In 1992, as per suggestion of the experts, a decision was taken to close down the factory in the month of June that year. However, taking cognizance of the sentiments expressed by the local people, it was subsequently decided to continue operation up to December '93 despite the hazards involved. The continuity of operation beyond December '93 would be extremely dangerous keeping in view the safety of life and property of the people working in the factory and also living around it. As such, there is no alternative but to stop operation of the factory by December '93.

The detailed study conducted by local and foreign experts has confirmed that this 32-year-old factory with outdated technology cannot be rehabilitated profitably through repair and renovation under any circumstances.

The government, after careful consideration and detailed analysis of the situation obtaining in the factory and the potential danger to which about 1100 people working in it are exposed, have decided to close down the Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory (NGFF) with effect from 31st December, 1993.

Government have also taken all possible steps to set up a much larger factory, namely, Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory with an annual production capacity of 3,30,000 MT urea fertilizer at the place of the existing factory keeping in view the greater socio-economic interest of the people of the entire region. The site for the factory has been already earmarked and the process of tendering is going on.

BCIC solicits active support and co-operation of all concerned for smoothly carrying out the shut-down programme of Fenchuganj Fertilizer Factory and establishing the new fertilizer factory 'Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory' as scheduled.