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NEWS BRIEFS

Bangabandhu Museum opens today

By Staff Correspondent

The inauguration of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman Memorial Museum will take place today at 4 pm at the Dhanmondi residence of the late leader. Awami League chief and daughter of Mujib, Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the museum.

Rocket attack on Kabul: 11 killed

ISLAMABAD, Aug 12: At least 11 people were killed and 103 injured in a heavy rocket attack on the Afghan capital Kabul today, state-run Radio Kabul reported, reports AFP.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star Roundtable on "The Future of Jute: Problems & Prospects" will be held on Tuesday, August 16, 1994.

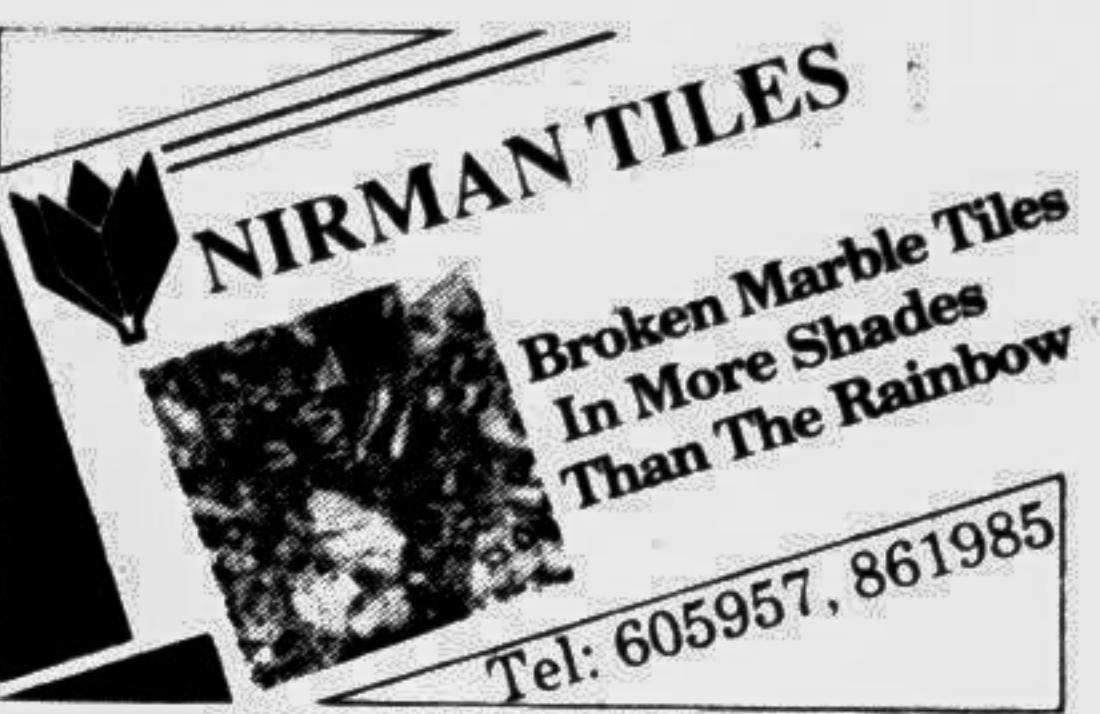
The main participants will include Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah, political leaders, Members of Parliament, representatives of trade bodies and associations, labour leaders and well-known experts in the jute sector.

With a view to involving our valued readers in the deliberations of the Roundtable, we invite them to send in any questions or suggestions that they would like raised in the discussions. These may be either hand-delivered or faxed (863035) to us latest by noon, August 16. Envelopes should be clearly marked "Daily Star Roundtable on Jute".

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS TO HELP ENRICH THE DELIBERATIONS

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AL urged to move from boycotts to dialogue

Democracy will take roots in Bangladesh, hopes US

WASHINGTON, Aug 12: The US government is optimistic that democratic institutions will prevail in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, even though some are under severe strain, a senior US State Department official said, report AP, USIS.

New or still-fragile democracies are undergoing harsh tests not only in Eastern Europe but also in South Asia, Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphael told a congressional panel Thursday.

Recent setbacks in Bangladesh are regarded in Washington as growing pains expected where democracy is still fragile, she testified before the House of Represen-

tatives Asia subcommittee. In 1991, Bangladesh, one of Asia's poorest countries, had its first truly free and fair elections in two decades of independence, Raphael said. The new government led by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expanded press freedom and organised fair local elections.

She said that compared with its predecessors, the current Bangladesh government has improved human rights

Ambassador Raphael said: There is substantial freedom of the press, the judiciary acts independently of government influence at the appellate level

and above, and the government has held a number of free and fair elections at the local and national levels as well as parliamentary by-elections.

But she said, 'new questions about protection of free speech and religion were raised' by the treatment of Taslima Nasreen, the feminist writer who was charged with insulting religious beliefs. She flew to Sweden this week after being granted bail.

US officials repeatedly urged the Khaleda Zia government to safeguard Nasreen's rights and protect her from extremist death threats. 'We were relieved' when she was allowed to leave, said Secretary Raphael. She also voiced con-

cern about the Bangladesh Special Powers Act being used for long periods of political opponents without charges.

Raphael said the United States is urging the main opposition party led by Sheikh Hasina to move from boycotts and threats of demonstrations to a 'productive dialogue' with the government to resolve a current crisis over charges of rigging a parliamentary by-election.

She said the United States believed that adherence to the laws and constitution of Bangladesh is vital for the survival and development of democracy in Bangladesh.

US officials in Bangladesh
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JS body to review govt pledges

Ministries asked to submit statistics

By Nurul Kabir

The parliamentary standing committee on government pledges has asked some ministries to send their representatives, with necessary statistics, to its meetings this month for review of the progress of implementation of the government commitments made in Parliament during its first five sessions.

In the first phase, the sub-committees will examine the progress of implementation of the pledges made in the first session of Parliament.

During the first five sessions, 205 commitments were made. Of them, 44 were implemented completely and 102 partially while information relating to the rest 59 are yet to reach the parliamentary body.

One sub-committee, a three-member one headed by Keramat Ali Talukder, will examine the pledges made during the first, third and fifth sessions. The other sub-committee, also a three-member body, headed by Abdul Wahab,

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Opposition has impeded uplift efforts: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the present democratic government could have done more for the people if the Opposition had played its due role in the development process, reports UNB.

Bangladesh has achieved almost self-sufficiency in food and 38 per cent of the Annual Development Programme is being contributed by domestic resources, she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing leaders and workers of the BNP and its front organisations and representatives from newly-elected students' unions of different colleges of Manikganj district, who met her at the Hare Road office in the evening.

Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Education Minister Jamir Uddin Sircar, members of Parliament Amannullah Anam, Harun-ur-Rashid Monno, Nizamuddin
See Page 12 Col 7

Hasina urges BNP to hand over power to caretaker admin

From Our Correspondent

TUNIPARA, Aug 12: Sheikh Hasina has demanded the BNP government hand over power to a caretaker administration without further delay for holding the next parliamentary elections in a free and fair atmosphere.

The sooner power is transferred, the better for the nation, the Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said while inaugurating a week-long programme here in observance of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 19th death anniversary. Organised by the Jatir Pitar Mrityubashiki Palon O Smriti Rakhyat Committee, the programme is being held at the G T High School ground.

Sheikh Hasina said the BNP government has failed to fulfil its pledges to the people and this 'inept' government has no right to stay in power any more.

This government should resign immediately to facilitate holding of elections under a non-party caretaker one since any fair election with BNP in

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DMC classes resume today

By DMC Correspondent

Classes at the Dhaka Medical College (DMC) resume today as students have called off their indefinite strike.

The All Party Students' Union (APSU) and the Central Students' Union of the college called the strike from June 26 demanding removal of an unauthorised slum from the DMC area.

The demand was made following a clash between the students and the slum dwellers, many of whom are Class Four employees of the DMC.

The DMC authorities then closed the college sine die and later announced that it would reopen on July 13.

The students decided to continue their strike until their demand was met.

The ministry concerned initiated steps to remove the slum following a Daily Star report in this regard recently.



LET THE SMILES BE EVERLASTING: Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University Prof. Enamuddin Ahmed (5th from left) arranged a joint meeting with the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Bangladesh Chhatra League (M-I) in a bid to restore normalcy on the campus, broken by a gunbattle between the two rival organisations on August 4.

— Star photo

Mostafiz leaves for Brunei tomorrow

Accord with Myanmar 5000 Rohingyas to go home each week

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Aug 12: Officials of Bangladesh and Myanmar, at a meeting here today, agreed to ferry 5,000 Rohingya refugees to their homeland each week in a bid to expedite their repatriation.

Earlier, some 3,000 Myanmar refugees were repatriated each week from their camps in Cox's Bazar.

In addition, from now on, the repatriation would take place five days a week, instead of three days.

The decision to expedite the repatriation was taken at the 17th meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar officials at a hotel here.

A seven-member Myanmar delegation led by Director General of Myanmar Immigration and Manpower General U Maung Aung took part in the two-hour talks.

An 11-member Bangladeshi team was led by Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Shafiqul Islam.

The Myanmar delegation handed over a list of 15,000 Rohingyas to the Bangladesh authorities for their repatriation.

The next round of talks will take place in the Maundow township of Myanmar.

NC to accept Koirala as PM if parliament reinstated

KATHMANDU, Aug 12: The ruling Nepali Congress (NC) president said Thursday that caretaker Premier Girija Prasad Koirala may be reinstated as head of government if the Supreme Court restores the disbanded parliament, reports AFP.

NC President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai told a party meeting that if the House of Representatives was reinstated, 'We will accept this eventually and run the Nepali Congress government for the next two years.'

Koirala may have to resign after the reinstatement of parliament, but the Nepali Congress will re-elect him as leader of its parliamentary party as there is no competent person inside the party to succeed him and become the new prime minister.

Koirala begged off from Thursday's meeting, citing health reasons.

Two ex-parliamentarians from the NC and the Nepal Communist Party filed the court petition last month questioning the constitutionality of Koirala's recommendation for the King to dissolve the House.

Petrobangla revises its Shahbazpur plan

By Ashfaqul Haque and Sharier Khan

Petrobangla has revised its original plan to drill an exploratory well at Shahbazpur in Bholia due to technical difficulties and has taken up an alternative plan to determine the existence of gas or oil in the area. Work on the new scheme began Tuesday said.

The drilling of the well began on December 7 last year but it came to a halt on April 21, when a drilling string got stuck at a sub-soil depth of 3,630 metres.

As all efforts to continue further drilling or to recover

Jamaat-backed men sweep RU VC panel polls

RAJSHAHI, Aug 12: The Jamaat-e-Islami-backed candidates won the election of the Rajshahi University Vice-Chancellor panel today defeating the BNP and Awami League supported panels, reports UNB.

Candidates of the Jamaat-backed Green Panel Prof Yusuf Ali (Chemistry) secured 52 votes, Prof A K M Azharul Islam (Physics) 51 votes and

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Officials of the Malaysia-based Dural Arqam Muslim sect talking to journalists in Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday shortly after they failed to hold a dialogue at a scheduled meeting with an Indonesian Muslim organisation — Muhammadiyah. An Al-Arqam official said they were seeking to hold dialogue with several Muslim organisations in Indonesia in the future. Jakarta is to decide the fate of the controversial Al-Arqam sect soon.

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