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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina leaves for Tungipara

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka yesterday for Tungipara. She will inaugurate a fortnightly programme on mother and child healthcare today. The programme has been organised by the Gopalganj district administration, reports UNB.

Granted bail

Former ministers Anisul Islam Mahmud and Ziauddin Ahmed were granted bail when they surrendered to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday. The court had issued warrants of arrest against them on August 20 after a criminal case was filed against them for trespass and assault. The case was lodged by the chairman of the Aziz Amrunnnessa Trust M A Gofran, reports UNB.

6 bodies recovered

PABNA, Aug 24: Six bodies of Monday's boat capsized at Trimohini in Bera thana at the confluence of the Padma and the Jamuna were recovered today from Hujirchar in Chatmohor thana. Chatmohor police said, the bodies were identified as those of Solaiman, 38, of Fajlana village, Rahmat Khan, 45, and Hasan Pramanik, 32, of Mulgram village, Jamshed, 25, Mansur Ali, 35, and Obad Miah, 55, of Baharpur village under Chatmohor thana, reports UNB.

Transport strike

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 24: The Motor Sramik Union of the district today threatened to enforce an indefinite transport strike in eight routes of the district from August 27 if the students who damaged buses were not arrested. The union leaders alleged that a group of students of the Kazipur Mansur Ali Government College had beaten up a bus driver on the Kazipur-Sirajganj road on August 17 and damaged six buses following a dispute over bus fare, reports UNB.

Govt, Opposition take step toward dialogue

By Asiuzzaman

The much-talked-about dialogue between the government and the Opposition for resolving the present political impasse has started on a positive note.

Chief Whip of Parliament Khandaker Delwar Hossain held talks with Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim at the Sangsad Bhavan

on Tuesday, sources said yesterday. Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was also present at the hour-long meeting, the sources said.

"We sat across the table, it is true but I cannot elaborate," Delwar told The Daily Star.

In reply to a question on what sort of proposal the ruling

BNP placed before the Opposition, the Chief Whip said "We received some proposals from the Opposition and we are discussing those."

He declined to disclose the Opposition proposals.

He said this was part of the process which began a couple of weeks ago. "It is important

Final draft of nat'l health policy by Dec

The final draft of the National Health Policy is expected to be completed by December next, reports BSS.

The sixth meeting of the national health policy formulation committee which was held at the conference room of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf in the chair decided to hold an international seminar before finalising the policy.

Floods may follow in drought's wake

The Drought-like situation will go away by the end of this month with more rainfall across the country, according to a top weather expert of the country.

The situation in Rangpur and Dinajpur districts, which were experiencing a near-drought situation, is also expected to improve by this month. Director of Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation

Mother & Child Fortnight '94 begins today

The national Mother and Child Health Fortnight '94 will begin across the country today with a pledge to improve the health of mothers and children and reduce the mortality rate, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the fortnight at the International Conference Centre in the capital at 10 am.

Elaborate programmes have been planned on the occasion
See Page 12 Col 2



Wasim Akram



Diego Maradona

The high & the low

Sports Reporter

See-saw swings of fortune marked out two celebrated international sporting personalities yesterday.

Pakistan's star fast bowler Wasim Akram carved a niche in the record books as the highest wicket-taker in the annals of one-day cricket.

The twenty-seven-year-old left-arm speedster yesterday pushed up his tally to 254 wickets from 174 one-day internationals when he claimed three wickets to shape a Pakistan's 27-run win over hosts Sri Lanka in the last match of the series which the visitors pocketed at a comfort-

able margin of 4-1. The former Pakistan captain had drawn level with Indian allrounder Kapil Dev as the top wicket-taker last Monday with a haul of 251.

Akram, who was not among the wickets initially in the

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just-concluded series, far outshone the former Indian skipper's achievement by the sheer weight of his striking rate.

Kapil's now forfeited reign as the top wicket-taker with a collection of 251 wickets came
See Page 12 Col 4

JP hartal call goes almost unheeded

By Staff Correspondent

A half-day hartal called by the Jatiya Party in the city yesterday passed off peacefully almost without disrupting the normal life.

Stray pickets, however, damaged nearly a dozen vehicles in Demra, Sutrapur, Ramna and Uttara areas while several crackers exploded in Moulhool and Farmgate areas during the 6 am to 12 noon hartal. They also damaged two vehicles of a diplomatic mission at Baridhara.

Police arrested 41 people, mostly JP supporters, who were engaged in picketing and damaged vehicles, police sources said.

The hartal was called to protest what the JP said Tuesday's police action which foiled a scheduled rally of the party at Panthapath in the city.

Offices and business establishments remained open in almost all areas of the city. Traffic Movement was, however, less than usual.

Many of the city dwellers were even unaware of the hartal call.

Police and BDR men patrolled the strategic points in the capital to avert possible trouble.

Police chased and baton
See Page 12 Col 8



The Shapla Square in the city's busy Motijheel Commercial Area during hartal hours yesterday morning.
— Star photo

Sharif behaving like an Indian agent: Assef

ISLAMABAD, Aug 24: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ahmed Assef Ali today accused former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of acting like an "Indian agent" by stating that Pakistan has a nuclear bomb, report AFP. AP

The government strongly denied Sharif's statement at a rally on Tuesday and Ali accused the former premier of acting unpatriotically, in comments reported by The Muslim newspaper.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman reaffirmed Islamabad's long standing denial that it

has a bomb. "We have the technological capability but we have taken a conscious decision not to acquire nuclear weapons," he said in reaction to the controversy caused by Sharif's declaration.

Related Story on Page 5

The Foreign Minister added that Sharif should not be making such controversial remarks because he is a former prime minister. The Muslim reported.

"Whatever Nawaz Sharif is saying lacks sense of patriotism," he said.

"Nawaz Sharif and his party are behaving like Indian agents."

"We do not possess nuclear weapons and we have no intention of making one," he stated.

Sharif, Prime Minister from 1990 to 1993, told a public rally at Neela Butt in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir that both Pakistan and India had nuclear bombs. He also warned India against launching a nuclear attack against Pakistan.

The independent Pakistan Press International (PPI) news agency quoted him as saying.
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THE SEARCH IS ON: (Top) Thousands of people, mostly relatives of those who went missing in the launch capsized at Chandpur on Saturday, maintain a patient, hopeful vigil on the banks of the Meghna in the hope of sighting the bodies of their near and dear ones; and (bottom) many who can afford it mount their own search for missing relatives on hired country boats.
— Star photos

An unending wait for them

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Aug 24: Thousands of people maintained vigil on the banks of the river Meghna for the fifth consecutive day today in the hope of sighting the bodies of their near and dear ones who perished in last Saturday's launch capsized here.

Yet, for all their patient wait some of them could catch only glimpses of two badly bloated bodies which surfaced fleetingly on the turbulent Meghna before being washed away by the ebb tide this afternoon. It was impossible to recover those.

However, the Deputy Commissioner of Chandpur Golam Kibria said today that two bodies — of an unidentified woman and a man — were recovered from the Meghna near village Sheba of Ramgati thana in the evening.

He said that another body, of a 12-year-old boy, was also found at Nikomol in Haimchar thana, 20 kilometres south of Chandpur.

This brought the number of recovered bodies to 17.

A combined salvage team comprising members of the Bangladesh Navy, Inland Water Transport Authority (IWTA),

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Stench from two badly decomposed bodies recovered Tuesday fill the air near this place, close to Chandpur town.
— Star photo

SSC results next week

By Staff Correspondent

The results of the Dhaka Board SSC examinations are expected to be published next week.

Chairman of the Dhaka Education Board Prof Lutfur Rahman, while talking to The Daily Star last night, discounted speculation in a section of the press about possible publication of the results today. He, however, hinted that the results may be published sometime next week.

DU teachers call for putting up Mujib's photo

By DU Correspondent

Some hundred teachers of the Dhaka University yesterday called for putting up the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in all the offices of the government, semi-government and autonomous organisations in order to uphold the Constitution by showing respect to the "Father of the Nation."

The teachers also congratulated Dr Syed Modasser Ali, departmental head of the DMCH, for hanging the photograph of Bangabandhu in his office room at the Dhaka Medical College.

The signatories to the joint statement of DU teachers include: Dr. A A M S Arefin Siddique, Dr Syed Humayun Akhter, Dr Md. Afabuddin, Dr A K Azad Chowdhury, A B M Khaled, Professor Q A I M Nuruddin, Dr. Sheikh Abdus Salam, Dr Durgadas Bhattacharya, Dr Md. Harunur Rashid, Dr Nurur Rahman Khan, Dr Abdul Khaleq, and Dr Altaf Hossain.

'Quota withdrawal won't affect garments export'

By Staff Correspondent

The withdrawal of quota system as per the Uruguay Round Accord will not affect the garments export from Bangladesh to the US because countries like Korea and Taiwan were phasing out from the business due to increasing labour costs, according to an American economist.

Fellow of the Institute of International Economics, Washington, William R Cline, at an inter-continental satellite transmitted dialogue with South Asian officials and business leaders, said that the quota system would be withdrawn in phases by 2005 to create a real competitive export-import market.

The least developed countries (LDCs), like Bangladesh are exporting labour intensive

products. Over the next 10 years, I am sure, the garments of Bangladesh will become more competitive. The exporters will not need any quota to protect their business," he said while responding to a question from Vice-Chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Anisul Haq Chowdhury.

The theme of the dialogue, on GATT and MFA telecast by the SkyNet, USA, was organised in Dhaka by the United States Information Service (USIS) at its office yesterday evening. President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Redwan Ahmed, MP, also participated in the dialogue.
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New govt for lifting ban on Tamil regions

COLOMBO, Aug 24: The coalition that won last week's parliamentary election by promising to negotiate with Tamil rebels may ask the president to lift a four-year embargo that has devastated guerrilla-controlled regions, reports AP.

"We are ready to end the war through negotiations... to find a political solution to the problems of the Tamil people," Anuruddha Ratwatte, the new deputy defence minister, said, repeating the main promise his coalition made before the ballot.

dent to lift the embargo on about 40 items, such as fuel, fertilizer, batteries, candles and soap.

The embargo and air strikes have impoverished rebel-held areas such as Jaffna Peninsula in the war between rebels from the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese-controlled government.

The Peoples' Alliance ended the United National Party's 17-year rule by winning the August 16 parliamentary election.

Although the coalition now controls parliament and its leader, Chandrika Bandaranaike, is prime minister.
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Kishoreganj brought under gas network

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 24: Kishoreganj district was brought under the gas distribution network today to speed up the pace of industrialisation and development, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia formally inaugurated the distribution system at the local circuit house premises in the morning, saying her government aims at expediting national development through optimum utilisation of natural gas.

Proper utilisation of our resources, including oil and gas, will bring about a revolution in our economy, she said.

The Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company has installed a 45,280-metre long gas pipeline in the district at a cost of Tk 8.22 crore with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank.

It will provide gas to 626 industrial, commercial and residential consumers in the first year.

The Prime Minister said natural gas and oil produced by the Petrobangla are now meeting 70 per cent of the demand for commercial fuel saving Tk 2,000 crore in foreign currency a year.

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New RU VC takes charge

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 24: The newly appointed Vice Chancellor of the Rajshahi University Professor Md Yusuf Ali has formally taken over charge of the university this morning.

In a meeting with the university correspondents in the afternoon, the VC said his aim would be to remove the session jam, root out terrorism from the campus and build a dynamic-administrative system in the university.

The formal charge handing ceremony in the morning was attended by RU Syndicate members Professor Azharul Islam and Professor Tasnim Alam, Registrar M Umar Faruk and Treasurer Professor Mokbul Hossain.

Professor Ali replaced Professor M Anisur Rahman as the 15th VC of the Rajshahi University.

In the VC panel nominating polls on August 12, Professor Ali had bagged 52 votes, the highest among three candidates.

Meanwhile, Altaf Hossain, a Professor of the Zoology Department, was appointed the new pro-VC yesterday.

Drug traffickers using JU campus as transit point?

By JU Correspondent

Drug traffickers have been using Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus as a transit point for quite sometime.

This was alleged by Dr Enamul Haq Khan, Provost of the Maulana Bhasani Hall, at a Senate meeting recently.

Campus sources said, traffickers are using some JU Halls as their 'warehouses' for storing ganja (cannabis) and phenisidyl syrup brought from the northern part of the country. The drug-lot is later taken to the capital reportedly by the university buses. Sources alleged involvement of some resident students in such drug trafficking.

This has resulted in a spate in drug consumption among the students, the sources added. On 1 July, Dr Khan also informed the Senate that there had been a sharp rise in drug addiction on the campus.

"Students are mainly addicted to ganja, phenisidyl and alcohol," one student said, preferring anonymity. "Ganja is mainly procured from the

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Documents set on fire at Grameen Bank in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 24: Some documents were burnt when a branch of the Grameen Bank at Kanaighat was reportedly set on fire last night.

Sources say, a group of unidentified people entered into the Chotul Bazar branch of the Grameen Bank and set fire to a number of important files around midnight last night.

A case of arson has been filed with the Kanaighat police station.