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Biswas concerned

President Abdur Rahman Biswas expressed his deep concern at the rising number of deaths due to recent launch disaster in the river Meghna near Chandpur. President Biswas, who has been keeping day to day information about the progress of rescue operation of the ill-fated motor launch MV Dinar, expressed his profound sorrow at the loss of so many lives at the tragic incident, reports BSS.

Body begins probe

CHANDPUR, Aug 27: The four-member enquiry committee to probe the Chandpur launch disaster began its function here today, examining 20 eye-witnesses, reports UNB.

Hasina goes to Chandpur today

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will visit Chandpur today to console the bereaved family members of the victims of the launch capsize in Chandpur. She will also offer special prayers for the victims there, reports UNB.

Businessmen call hartal in Pabna

PABNA, Aug 27: District Business Unity Council called a dawn to dusk hartal in the district tomorrow demanding abolition of present committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries. In support of their hartal call, the business community brought out a procession in the town today and paraded the main thoroughfares.

BDRCS relief for flood victims

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has sent truck-load of relief goods for the flood affected people of Pabna, Chapainawabganj, Kushtia and Rajshahi. The relief goods included sarees, lungies, shirts, frocks, old cloths and emergency foods, reports BSS.

Formal dialogue soon, hope BNP leaders

By Asiuzzaman

A formal dialogue between the ruling party and Opposition negotiators may begin within a couple of days, a ruling party source hinted yesterday.

We are waiting for a reply from the Opposition and I hope the reply would be positive," said the source, who is also one of the three negotiators designated by the BNP Standing Committee to begin dialogue with the Opposition.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, on condition of anonymity, the source said both sides agreed on the need to end the deadlock.

Another BNP source said

that the proposal for a formal dialogue was conveyed by the Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury to his counterpart Abdus Samad Azad.

The source also claimed that the two-day meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALWC) which concluded in the city yesterday had been convened to discuss the issue of a dialogue.

The Opposition response is expected to be conveyed within a day or two after consultation among the major parties, yet another source limited.

This source said the Parlia-

ment session beginning August 30 would last a week. However, should a fruitful dialogue get started then the session might be prolonged.

Expressing optimism, the source, a senior minister, said "If we discuss the issue of fair elections then I hope we will reach a consensus. But if the Opposition keeps insisting on its so-called one-point demand to topple the government, then it would be futile."

He admitted that both the ruling party and the Opposition were now facing public pressure to resolve the impasse, which should anger well for an early resolution of the crisis.



Maj Abdul Halim, accused of murdering his wife, covers his face while being produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court yesterday. — Star photo

Govt, Shantibahini informal talks today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 27: The parliamentary sub-committee on hill tracts affairs is scheduled to hold the third round of informal talks with the leaders of the Shantibahini tomorrow at Dudukchhari under Panchhari thana of Khagrachhari district.

According to an official source, the informal talks aim at paving the way for the next round of crucial dialogue between the parliamentary committee headed by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed and the Shantibahini leaders.

Army major arrested on charge of murder

By Staff Correspondent

Major Abdul Halim, charged with murdering his wife Rehana, was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Halim made a confessional statement before Metropolitan Magistrate Abdul Hannan.

Later, he was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Halim was arrested yesterday at 9:30 am from his Cantonment office and produced before the court at 12 noon. Earlier, Cantonment police obtained permission from the Army for his arrest.

Magistrate Hannan recor-

ded his confessional statement as per article 164 of the CRPC. Halim, in his statement, reportedly confessed that he hit his wife with an iron rod being irritated with her behaviour. But, he didn't expect to cause her death, he said.

Halim alleged that his wife was very arrogant and aggressive. They were not at all happy in their 11-year married life, he said and added that Rehana 35, had even neglected and misbehaved with his mother. Rehana also reportedly made very derogatory re-

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Muslim extremists threaten to hit foreigners at Cairo confce

CAIRO, Aug 27: The outlawed Jamaa Islamiyya made a comeback today by warning foreigners to stay away from the UN World Population Conference in Egypt's capital and claiming the murder of a Spanish Teenager, reports AFP.

To the government's dismay and after a lull of several months following widespread arrests, Egypt's main Islamic militant group warned that "foreigners taking part in the 'licentious conference' put their lives at risk."

The conference, which is being held here from September 5 to 13, will be attended by 20,000 delegates from more than 150 countries, including several heads of state or government.

Jamaa said in a statement

sent to AFP that the forum had been rejected by the Egyptian people and the highest Sunni Muslim authority, Al-Azhar.

Muslim fundamentalists have said the gathering, which will agree and action plan on population control, would promote extra-marital sex and homosexuality. They also charge it was aimed at "exterminating Muslim".

According to Al-Azhar, the draft working document should be revised so that it contains nothing that runs counter to the Islamic law of Sharia.

The Jamaa also claimed an attack in southern Egypt on a tourist mini-bus Friday in which a 13-year-old Spanish tourist was killed and his father and mother wounded, along with two other people.

The shootings marked a

new stage in its campaign against the "heretic Egyptian regime," it warned.

As the authorities fought back, five Islamic militants and two policemen, including an officer, were killed in separate clashes in southern Egypt, police said.

The officer died in a gun-battle today as police raided the village of Hod Hamada in Sohag province to arrest a group of militants on the run, police said.

Militants also shot dead a policeman and wounded another in Qena village late Friday.

The Jamaa has spearheaded a violent Muslim fundamentalist anti-government campaign in which more than 400 people have died, including nine tourists, since March 1992.

PM cancels Cairo visit

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has cancelled her visit to Cairo to attend the UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to be held in the Egyptian capital from September 5, reports UNB.

The visit of the Prime Minister has been cancelled due to "pressing pre-occupation at home", said a Foreign Ministry press release yesterday.

ROK PM due Friday

South Korean Prime Minister Yung Dug Lee will arrive in Dhaka on Friday night to discuss with Bangladesh leaders ways for bolstering the existing Dhaka-Seoul ties, reports UNB.

Lee, who will come on a three-day official visit on the third leg of his tour of four Asian countries, will be accorded a ceremonial reception at state guest house Korotoa on Saturday morning.

He will fly in Dhaka concluding his visit to Vietnam and Singapore and leave for Kathmandu on September 4.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman will receive him at Zia International Airport.

During his stay in Dhaka the Korean PM will visit National Memorial at Savar to pay homage to the freedom fighters who laid down their lives during the Liberation War of 1971.

ALCWC calls for making 'Dhaka Siege' a success

The Awami League has urged the people to make the September 10 'Dhaka Siege' programme a success to press for the resignation of, what it said, the corrupt and vote-diluting BNP government and general elections under a caretaker government, reports UNB.

The Awami League made the appeal yesterday at the end of its two-day central working committee meeting held with party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

In a resolution, the meeting blamed the ruling party for obstructing the institutional growth of hard-won democracy and making Parliament ineffective by "blocking the Opposition's return to the House."

The present government has also failed to give security

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Murder charges against N'ganj AL leaders withdrawn

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 27: In the wake of alleged threats, Mohammad Selim who had filed a police case accusing 10 leaders of the local Awami League and its front organisations of killing his brother Shamsol Alam earlier this month, has withdrawn his complaint.

Alam was killed during an armed clash between two feuding groups of the AL's local unit on August 15.

According to a press release issued today by the AL town unit office secretary, Khokon Saha, Selim applied to the relevant authorities on Wednesday for the withdrawal of the FIR.

Selim had accused Nazma Rahman, president and Shamim Osman, general secre-

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Ban on shrimp catching during mating season

By Special Correspondent

Shrimp catching in the Bay during its breeding season has been banned for one month from January 15 to February 15 every year.

Besides, addition of more trawlers to the existing fleet for deep sea fishing will not be allowed from now on.

The decisions have been taken by the government to ensure uninterrupted growth of marine resources.

The latest situation regarding operation of trawlers in the Bay as well as the reserve of marine resources were reviewed recently by the higher authorities. The policy-makers maintain that since the reserve of shrimp and white fish in the Bay cannot be considered plenty, some control and restrictions on trawling have become essential.

Presently, 56 trawlers are operating in the Bay with most of those engaged in shrimp catching round the year. Of those, seven belong to Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC) while the rest are owned by private companies.

According to official statistics on fishing in the Bay during the last seven years, the total catch by those trawlers remained around four thousand tonnes a year. This only indicates that the reserve of marine resources in the Bay was not adequate for unlimited exploitation.

An earlier survey on shrimp reserve in the Bay showed that at least seven thousand tonnes of shrimp were available for trawling a year.

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3 electrocuted inside cinema hall in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 27: Three persons were electrocuted inside a cinema hall here during a show Friday night.

Five others were injured in the tragic incident while witnessing a Bangla film 'Moner Agun' at Nupur cinema hall in the port city, police said.

Two of the deceased were identified as Faridul Alam, 18, a bus helper and Amanat Ullah, 22, an employee of a shop. The other person could not be identified.

The injured were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital and private

clinics. Police and witnesses said a short-circuit occurred at around 10 pm causing the deaths and injuries.

The incident created panic among the cine-viewers who raised a hue and cry and stampeded out of the hall. Later, a rumour that 20 more bodies were found lying inside the cinema hall triggered a violent attack on the hall by a frenzied mob, witnesses said.

The angry people pelted stones at the hall and damaged nearby shops.

Police rushed to the spot

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Leaders for 'fruitful talks' to end impasse

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the ruling party and the Opposition at a seminar in the city yesterday agreed that a solution of the present political impasse was the need of the hour.

Both the sides also agreed that there was no alternative to a 'fruitful dialogue' to resolve the impasse but reiterated their respective party stands in this regard.

BNP leader and Chief Whip of Parliament Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Awami League leader and Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim were the main speakers

at the seminar on "How Parliament can be made effective." A non-government organisation (NGO), the Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD), organised the seminar held at the Jatiya Press Club.

The discussants at the seminar included Anwar Hossain Manju of the Jatiya Party, Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Salauddin Kader Chowdhury of the NDP, Prof. Talukder Moniruzzaman of Dhaka University, journalists Atiqul Alam and Amanullah Kabir and Barrister Lutfar Rahman.

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Pak President denies Sharif's claim

ISLAMABAD, Aug 27: Pakistani President Farooq Leghari, denying opposition leader Nawaz Sharif's claim that Pakistan has nuclear weapons, said today his country needed nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, reports Reuters.

"If France can produce 80 per cent of its electricity from nuclear energy why cannot Pakistan also consider exploiting this renewable source of energy?" he said at a solar energy workshop.

Pakistan imports two-thirds of its oil needs and its electricity output is about 2,000 megawatts less than demand. Leghari said Islamic countries should pool resources for research into renewable energy sources because technology embargoes imposed by the west were "going to get worse."

Pakistani commentators have voiced fears that the United States and other western countries may tighten technology restrictions on Pakistan following Sharif's disclosure.

Leghari said Sharif, who was Prime Minister for 30 months until July 1993, had no access to current information on Pakistan's nuclear programme and should not make statements which could be exploited by the country's enemies.

"I think it is an unfortunate statement because it is not based on reality," he said.

Meanwhile, AFP adds from Karachi: The estranged brother of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said today that Pakistan must have a nuclear bomb to deter foreign aggression.



Gen ASM Nasim new army chief

Major General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Bir Bikram, PSC, has been appointed to the post of Chief of Army Staff, Bangladesh Army, with effect from August 31, the Defence Ministry announced yesterday, reports UNB.

A notification of the min-

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Tributes to poet Nazrul

By Staff Correspondent

The 18th death anniversary of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was observed yesterday in the country with due solemnity.

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad placed wreaths at the mazar and prayed for the peace of the departed soul yesterday morning.

Party and front organisation leaders were also present.

BNP Secretary General Salam Talukdar and other party leaders also laid wreaths and offered *fateha* at the poet's mazar on the occasion.

Various socio-cultural organisations held separate pro-

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TCC adopts 12-pt code of conduct

The 34th meeting of the Tripartite Consultative Committee (TCC) was held in the city yesterday at the conference room of the Manpower Employment and Training Bureau with TCC chairman and Minister for Labour and Manpower Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting adopted a 12-point code of conduct unanimously with a view to improving the industrial relation and flourishing of industries in the country.

The meeting also discussed some important national issues and some ILO conventions and recommendations.

Dr. Sirik Mohammad Farid, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Manpower and Sheikh Ansar Ali MP were present.

United efforts needed to stop black money in polls: CEC

SYLHET, Aug 27: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Abdur Rauf today called on political parties to work unitedly for establishing a system to ensure free and fair election in the country, reports UNB.

"United efforts is needed to stop use of black money in the election. Mere law cannot stop it," he said addressing a freshers' reception at the auditorium of the MAG Osmany Medical College.

Organised by the 'Sandhani', a voluntary organisation, the function was addressed by UNB Chairman Amanullah Khan, Prof. Golam Kibria, Dr. Jamsed Bakht, Col. Fahim Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof. Sayed Lokman Ali, Dr. Shamimur Rahman.

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20 hurt as soccer fans clash in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Aug 27: Rival football fans of two schools in Kaliganj thana clashed twice today leaving at least 20 people injured, reports UNB.

About a dozen small shops were damaged during the clashes when at least 10 crackers were exploded.

Police used baton and tear-gassed the mob to quell the trouble.

Police said the clashes were a sequel to Thursday's scuffle between the supporters of the Bhushan Pilot School and the Mubarakganj Sugar Mills School when the former suffered a 4-0 goals 'defeat' at Kaliganj.

The authorities of the two schools were scheduled to meet this morning to defuse tension between the students

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Literacy drive turns into a social movement

By Nazmul Ashraf, back from Lalmonirhat

An experimental drive for eradicating illiteracy — Total Literacy Programme (TLP) — has turned into a social movement in the country's north-eastern district of Lalmonirhat.

Undertaken by the district administration four months ago with the objective of achieving 100 per cent literacy rate, the TLP is making steady progress with the voluntary participation of government officials, political leaders and activists, professionals, elite, public representatives, religious leaders, NGO workers and other social forces.

Official records show that the enrollment of learners of aged 11 to 45 for Non-Formal Education (NFE) under the TLP has been 100 per cent in the areas covered by 984 centres while the attendance of students in classes is more than 80 per cent.

While visiting different parts of the district, this correspondent found that most of the learners were now able to read and write on completion of two thirds of their six-month NFE course, which began on April 15. The poor and illiterate people including women and children are eagerly participating in the programme. A campaign through various means by the committees working at various levels has proved very effective in this regard.

A total of 29,520 among the district's 2,68,130 illiterate people have been brought under the TLP in the first phase. These learners, 30 at each



File photo shows women taking lessons at a mass literacy centre at Kaliganj thana under Lalmonirhat district.

— PID photo

centre, have been studying at 984 teaching centres, set up in 42 unions and municipal wards under five thanas of the district. The second phase of the TLP will start in mid-October to cover the remaining 2,38,610 illiterate people of the district. For this, 8700 more centres will be opened with the objective of freeing the district from illiteracy. The estimated five per cent drop outs of the first phase will be enrolled in the second phase while steps are underway to set up libraries and arrange another course for those interested to continue the process of learning after completion of the six-month NFE course.

Talking to The Daily Star, the DC of Lalmonirhat expressed optimism about the

success of the programme. "We have a target 100 per cent literacy in Lalmonirhat by 1995". The literacy rate in the district now is 18 per cent, he said.

Under the TLP, the first of its kind in the country, motivational programmes in the form of door-to-door campaign, newspaper reports, wall-writings, cinema slides, posters, banners, processions rallies, group discussions, video-shows, films and folk songs are being regularly held. Excepting the teachers all others involved in the programmes are working on voluntarily. They include teachers, students and unemployed educated people.

They would, however, be given awards depending on their success.