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NEWS BRIEFS

Postal stamp on birds Aug 31

Bangladesh post office will release commemorative stamp on birds of Bangladesh on August 31. The stamp will be of Taka four and six denomination. The post office will soon release a souvenir envelope of Taka 25 in this connection. A first day cover of Taka five will also be released and a special canceller will be used, reports BSS.

2 bodies recovered from Padma

MANIKGANJ, Aug 28: Bodies of two people who drowned in a boat capsized in the Padma on Saturday were recovered today near Leshraganj of Harirampur thana. The victims were identified as Alamgir, 28, of Bera thana and Makhles, 30 of Talimnagar village of Sujanagar thana in Pabna district. Local people found the bodies near Leshraganj, three km away from the spot, where the mechanised boat sank with 25 passengers on board. Another two people were still missing, reports UNB.

H-2 rocket blasts off

TANEGASHIMA, Japan, Aug 28: Japan's second H-2 rocket blasted off from the Tanegashima space centre today and successfully placed a large satellite into a transfer orbit to mark a new milestone in Japanese technology. The launch went off without a hitch and came 10 days after a liftoff was aborted due to a faulty computer chip that failed to ignite the rocket's two solid-fuel boosters, reports AFP.

Opposition ready for talks on specific agenda

By Asiuzzaman

The opposition parties are ready to sit for a dialogue any day if the ruling party comes up with a specific agenda and announces it publicly, Opposition sources said.

"We are ready for a dialogue but the ruling party should specify the agenda and announce it publicly or inform us in writing," Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim told The Daily Star last night.

"I was requested by my ruling party counterpart to join a dialogue on the present political impasse. I told him to specify the agenda," Nasim said.

The caretaker government issue should top the agenda of the proposed dialogue, Nasim demanded.

Earlier, Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury told reporters that the ruling party was ready to hold dialogue on a two-point

agenda — the caretaker issue and the treasury bench bill for strengthening the Election Commission.

An Awami League source said the party's central working committee endorsed the proposal for a dialogue but made it clear that the caretaker issue should be the main item on the agenda.

A meeting of the AL parliamentary party would be held today, ahead of the parliament session beginning August 30.

Leaders of the two major allies of the AL in Parliament boycott and caretaker campaign — the Jatiya Party and Jamaat — were learned to be unaware of any dialogue with the government.

Jamaat's parliamentary party chief Moulana Matur Rahman Nizami said that he was not informed about the much-talked-about dialogue.

"I have not been communi-

cated anything I think the ruling party is not serious about resolving the crisis," Nizami told The Daily Star.

He said that his party was always in favour of a dialogue on specific issues to end the political stalemate.

A JP source said the party was least interested in any dialogue.

"The ruling party has been propagating for a dialogue but at the same time started harassing and repressing the JP leaders and workers," one source said pointing to the August 23 incident at Panthapath in the city.

The boycotting opposition parties will meet tomorrow to discuss the overall situation.

Ruling party sources earlier hinted that they were hopeful about a formal dialogue with the Opposition within a couple of days.

BMA seeks PM's intervention

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) has sought urgent intervention of the Prime Minister to resolve the outstanding problems of the country's doctors and accept their 21-point charter of demand.

In a memorandum to the PM, leaders of the BMA warned that they would launch an indefinite strike throughout the country from September 21 if their demands were not met.

The four-page memorandum alleged that the promises made by the government to resolve the doctor's problems were yet to be honoured due to the 'indifference' of the Health Minister and 'sabotage' by a vested quarter in the bureaucracy.

The demands of the BMA include cancellation of the vigilance team, making the Health Service Development Committee led by the Members of Parliament effective and withdrawal of the recent

Two soldiers hurt in Shantibahini attack

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 28: At least two soldiers received serious bullet wounds when a group of outlawed Shantibahini men launched a sniper attack on a routine patrol of the security forces at Naniarchar under Rangamati district this morning, official sources said.

The injured — a Naik Subeder and a Lance-naik — were flown to Chittagong by helicopter after the incident and admitted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

Official sources say, the tribal rebels numbering about a dozen ambushed the security patrol from a hill-top in Guniapara area under Naniarchar thana of Rangamati at around 11 am today. The rebels, in olive-green uniform, opened fire indiscriminately on the patrol team, seriously injuring two of them.

The security patrol then started chasing the rebels and managed to capture two of them along with two foreign-

made semi-automatic weapons. But the rest of the Shantibahini men fled into the deep forest.

The captured tribal rebels were later handed over to the local law enforcing agency.

During interrogation the arrested rebels identified themselves as 'Sergeant' Newton and 'Sepoy' Mong Thai Chu respectively.

Today's incident, in violation of the ceasefire now in force in the CHT, happened on a day when informal talks between the parliamentary sub-committee and Shantibahini leaders were in progress at the Dudukchhari border village under Panchari thana of Khagrachhari hill district.

In another ambush on a security patrol by the armed tribals on March 28 this year, one soldier was seriously injured in the Nabanga area under Kaokali thana of Rangamati district.

CHT truce extended till Nov 30

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 28: The parliamentary sub-committee on hill tracts affairs and Shantibahini leaders during informal talks held today agreed to extend the ceasefire until November 30 in order to continue the peace talks to solve the problems in CHT.

The third round of informal talks lasting five hours from 10 am at Dudukchhari border village under Panchari thana of Khagrachhari hill district was attended by a four-member team of Shantibahini leaders headed by Shanto Larma, president of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS).

The parliamentary sub-committee included Rashed Khan Menon, Kalparanjan Chakma, Md Shahjahan and Shahjahan Chowdhury. Both sides had detailed discussions on how to narrow down their differences of opinion for an early settlement of the CHT issue. See Page 12 Col 7

IMF for faster reforms in 4 areas

By Staff Correspondent

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) feels that Bangladesh should go for more reforms for achieving desired growth level and for efficiency of the economy.

"We still believe there's a lot to be done in structural reforms to raise growth rate to seven or 7.5 per cent for poverty alleviation," said an IMF official at a press briefing in the city yesterday.

The IMF stresses the need for faster reforms in four areas — tariff reduction to remove protectionism, privatisation, wider financial sector reforms, and domestic resource mobilisation," the official said at the briefing organised by the IMF resident mission on the fund's

1994 annual report, published a month back.

"There is a need to reduce the level of protection for better growth and efficiency," the official said. "We have to avoid fictitious growth in highly protected economy."

The official, who could not be named because of IMF rule, told the press that his organisation was currently working with the government to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers.

The official also emphasised that the privatisation process must be expedited for employment of the workforce. He showed enthusiasm about the development of the country's capital market and said the privatisation process could be

expedited by offering shares of the state owned enterprises in the stock market.

In the financial sector, the IMF official briefly said "a very wide programme is needed for banks to make them more efficient." He also expressed concern at the 'stalemate' in privatising the state owned banks.

He also said the tax base has to be broadened and VAT expanded to retail level.

A photo copied page of the IMF Annual Report was distributed among the newsmen. It said the fund had approved Bangladesh's request that its programme for 1993-94 be monitored under the enhanced surveillance procedure. See Page 12 Col 8



Outgoing Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan addressing officers and troops at a 'darbar' as part of his farewell visit to the Chittagong cantonment yesterday. — ISPR photo

Noor Uddin pays farewell visits to Ctg, Comilla cantts

Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan paid farewell visits to Chittagong and Comilla cantonments yesterday, reports UNB.

General Noor Uddin, who goes on normal retirement on completion of his tenure tomorrow, was received at Chittagong by the local Area Commander Major General Mohammad Azizur Rahman while acting Area Commander Brig Nasiruddin Sarwar welcomed him at Comilla.

The Army Chief addressed officers and troops of the areas at central "Derbars," said a Defence Ministry press release.

During the visits, General Noor Uddin was accompanied by the Master General of Ordnance Major General Mohammad Abdur Rab and Adjutant General Amin Ahmed Chowdhury.

Janmastami today

Janmastami, a religious festival of the Hindu community, will be celebrated across the country today to mark the birth anniversary of Sree Krishna, who preached for universal humanity and love, reports BSS. See Page 12 Col 8

Tk 1 cr project to deal with GATT impact

Star Report

The government has taken up a Tk 1 crore project aimed at bringing about 'certain readjustments' in the legal arena and the trade and financial sectors in the light of the recently signed GATT accord, according to official sources.

The project concept paper (PCP) has already been approved and the government is now looking for a donor for the project.

According to Commerce Ministry sources, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) may provide funds for the project. It would recommend ways and means of benefitting from the global trade accord, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Under the project, efforts would be made to assess the export potentials of the country and find out how to utilise that in the most efficient way for capturing markets abroad.

Consultants for the project would be appointed after confirmation of the receipt of funds from the donors.

Under the project, an export strategy would also be prepared for boosting export. Recommendations for amending laws relating to

trade, investment and commerce would be made to make those consistent with the global trade accord, the sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star, an official of the Commerce Ministry said although the GATT accord failed to reflect the aspirations of the Third World nations, there is scope for taking advantage of an open global market. Efforts are being made to take that advantage by formulating an effective strategy, he said.

"We are opening a market of only eleven crore people for the world, but at the same time, a huge market of about 500 crore people is being opened for our exporters through the implementation of GATT," the official said.

The accord finalised in See Page 12 Col 5

Hasina depllores 'failure' to salvage launch

CHANDPUR, Aug 28: Sheikh Hasina today depllored the 'irresponsibility and negligence' of the government in salvaging the sunken launch that capsized in the Meghna-Dakatia confluence last week, reports UNB.

She also questioned the way investigation was being conducted by the enquiry committee.

How this government could ensure security to life and property of the people when it failed even to locate the launch that sank with around 300 passengers eight days ago? she told a condolence gathering at Chandpur rail station at Chandpur in the afternoon.

The Awami League President also pointed at the Prime Minister and her cabinet colleagues who 'waste crores of taka in fuel for helicopter to attend their party rallies but not even visit the place of accident and stand by the victims' families."

She said while relatives of the launch victims were searching frantically for bodies of their kins the government seemed totally indifferent at the gravity of the situation.

She alleged that mystery shrouded over the failure in salvaging the launch that sank on August 20 and asked why

the launch could not be located.

Even the enquiry committee is trying to suppress the facts about the accident, she said accusing that the authorities were trying to conceal the number of passengers who were onboard.

She was also critical of the government for not taking any measures for burial of the recovered bodies.

The Awami League chief said after the BNP assumed power, a series of natural calamities and mishaps took place including April 29 devastation. See Page 12 Col 3

MV Dinar-2 yet to be located

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Aug 28: The search operation to locate the ill-fated motor launch MV Dinar-2 failed here today with no sign of the vessel even a week after the capsizing.

District officials said, the search was on but could not locate the ship that sank on August 20.

However, villagers recovered the body of another victim from the river near the Haimchar thana.

So far, 30 bodies have been recovered from the river.

'BNP blocking Opposition's return to JS'

COMILLA, Aug 28: Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina today urged the ruling BNP to bring a constitutional amendment bill in Parliament for neutral caretaker government, otherwise she warned that people would realise the demand through a mass agitation, reports UNB.

Addressing a series of spontaneous rallies on her way from Dhaka to Chandpur, she blamed the BNP for blocking the Opposition's return to Parliament by not responding to the popular demand for election under a neutral caretaker government.

"After riggings and killings during by-elections and city corporation polls, it has been proved that people's voting rights and their lives are not safe at the hands of the BNP," she told a big rally at Hajiganj in the afternoon.

Criticising the three-and-a-half-year rule of the BNP, she said the Opposition had moved a number of pro-people resolutions but the ruling party — rejected those by sheer majority. After assuming power, the BNP has forgotten its commitments and indulged in accumulating illegal wealth through corruption, she added.

She also addressed rallies at Nandanpur, Muddafarganj and Jagotpur.

Women more keen about literacy drive

By Nazmul Ashraf, back from Lalmonirhat



A mass literacy centre at Kaligonj thana in Lalmonirhat district.

Senwara Begum with a two-year-old baby in her lap was attending classes at a mass literacy centre under Jagatbar Union of Patgram thana Wednesday afternoon.

She also convinced her husband Aminul Islam, a farmer, to go to another centre where classes are held in the evening.

Basiran, in her sixties, was found sitting beside her daughter Tahmina, 30, at the Munshipara literacy centre of Angurpota-Dahagram enclave. "I am coming here of my own as others of my area are doing," Basiran said when she was told that the arrangements were for the people of 11-45 age-group. Widow of a peasant, Basiran told this correspondent that four of her five sons were attending different literacy centres of Dahagram Union.

Asked what was the benefit See Page 12 Col 1

Hilsa export to India resumes this week

Export of Hilsa fish to India resumes this week following settlement of the dispute over price, exporters and officials said, reports UNB.

The Benfish, the state controlled fish importing agency of West Bengal, has agreed to buy at the price stipulated in the contract, ending the trade impasse.

Hilsa, a delicacy in West Bengal, occupied a place in the country's export list for India following duty on its import waived by Delhi last year.

A contract of West Bengal's import of 600 metric tons of Hilsa during the current season at the rate of Indian Rs 54 per Kg was reached between the Benfish and six Bangladeshi exporters mid June. The shipment began on July 29 by air and road.

The buyer, however, stopped issuing LC (Letter of Credit) to exporters after receiving 60 tons and started in See Page 12 Col 8

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার সমন্বিত উপানুষ্ঠানিক শিক্ষা বিস্তার কার্যক্রম প্রাথমিক ও গণশিক্ষা বিভাগ বাড়ি নং ৩২০, রোড নং ১৫ (পুরাতন), ৮/এ (নতুন) পশ্চিম ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা