

Inside Today

Article

The Fall of the Shah and Ceausescu: A Grim Reminder for Third World Countries

by Md Asadullah Khan
Page 4

International

Bosnian Serbs reject international peace plan

Karachi now a crisis city
Page 5

Business

Proshika plants 500 million trees in five years

Murayama calls for more trade cooperation from US
Pages 6,7

Feature

Health

An endeavour to prevent blindness; Prostitutes just like a pilot involved in an accident; Lake of Jodine afflicts Indonesia; Fresh hope for Paraguayan mothers; and Feats of doctors not too far from home
Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



A Messy Living
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

ROK PM begins 3-nation tour

SEOUL, Aug 29: Prime Minister Lee Yung-duk left Monday for a visit to Vietnam, Singapore and Bangladesh. Lee will discuss with leaders of the three countries bilateral and regional issues, including the situation on the Korean peninsula after the death of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung in July, officials said, reports AP.

Hasina visits ailing Sarwar

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina went to see the Daily Ittefaq's News Editor Golam Sarwar at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. She also visited Lalbagh thana Awami League leader Anwar Hossain and Raipur thana Juba League leader Mubashiruddin who are undergoing treatment at the hospital, reports UNB.

Rally in CHT for land

KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 29: More than a hundred landless tribals and non-tribals marched through the tiny hilly town today demanding allocation of five acres of land for each of the landless families of the district, reports UNB.

200 BRTC workers join AL

More than 200 members of the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation Sramik Karmachari Dal yesterday met Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at 29 Minto Road and joined her party.

Opposition unbending as JS goes into session today

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Sangsad (JS) goes into its 16th session at 4 this afternoon with the Opposition still determined to remain outside the House.

The opposition parties have been boycotting Parliament proceedings since March 2 this year to press home their demand for a constitutional provision for holding general elections under a caretaker government.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has so far rejected the demand publicly, arguing that the concept of a caretaker administration is contrary to the spirit of democracy.

Meanwhile, the opposition parties once again said yesterday that they would not return to the House until the treasury

bench moved a bill seeking provisions for a caretaker administration.

If the situation remains unchanged, the session beginning today would most likely be a short-lived one, ruling party sources said.

Four bills, including the Zila Parishad (amendment) Bill, are likely to be tabled during the session. Besides, a few private members' bills are also likely to come up for discussion in the House, the sources added.

According to Parliament Secretariat sources, about 400 questions have so far been submitted by the BNP and Jamaat MPs.

Meanwhile, Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury contacted Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus

Samad Azad yesterday morning for a dialogue to end the present impasse in the country's political arena, sources said.

Samad Azad is learnt to have informed the ruling party leader that the Opposition is ready to go for a formal dialogue outside the House, if the agenda specifically includes the caretaker government issue and if it is made public before the talks. Opposition sources said.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Awami League parliamentary party yesterday resolved that there was no scope for returning to the House because the government was totally indifferent to the Opposition demand for a caretaker administration. After the meeting, See Page 12 Col 4

Opposition skips 20pc of JS sittings so far

By Nurul Kabri

The opposition parties in Jatiya Sangsad (JS) boycotted its sittings on 61 working days out of a total of 317 — spread over 15 sessions of the present Parliament.

Besides, the Opposition staged 62 brief walkouts to protest various treasury bench measures and statements in the House, Parliament Secretariat sources said.

Hasina leaves Dhaka today to perform Umrah

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka for Jeddah today to perform umrah haj at Makkah-al-Mukarram, reports UNB.

Hasina will be accompanied by her daughter Salma Wajed and younger sister Sheikh Rehana Siddiq. After performing umrah, Hasina will go to Madina Munawara to pray at the Masjid-e-Nabbi (Prophet's mosque) and offer fatha at the Rauza Mubarak of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM).

The Awami League chief will stay in Saudi Arabia as royal guest, her office said. She is expected to return home on September 3.

The Opposition is now on its longest boycott of House proceedings for a total of 35 working days of the JS's 13th, 14th and 15th sessions, already over. The parties are yet to decide whether they would return to the next session beginning today.

Meanwhile, the lone MP of the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) entered the House on the closing day of the last session. But the IOJ legislator, despite his return to the House in the last session, is now again undecided about his next course of action.

The present Parliament witnessed the first Opposition boycott on April 16, 1992. The boycott lasted three days.

The second boycott was an eight-day one, beginning June 18, 1992; the third was for nine days, beginning October 27 the same year, the fourth for one day January 3, 1993, the fifth a two-day one, beginning June 8; the 6th was for three days from November 24, 1993 while the seventh boycott of the Opposition, which is still continuing, began March 2 this year.

Asked to comment on the Opposition boycotts, a political analyst told The Daily Star last night that the phenomenon did not help growth of democracy. See Page 12 Col 8

BTV's satellite telecast from Jan '95

Star Report

Starting next January Bangladesh Television (BTV) will start transmitting its programmes through the AsiaSat-2 satellite to the Asia-Pacific region, said official sources.

An agreement between the government and the Asia Satellite Telecommunication Company Ltd of Hong Kong, which owns the satellite, will be signed soon. The details of a draft agreement for five years are being scrutinised by both sides.

The government has already sanctioned Tk 26.50 crore for BTV to avail the facilities of AsiaSat-2, to be launched in December this year.

Bangladesh will have to spend Tk 16 crore for installation of an earth station which will link the satellite to pick up BTV's programmes. BTV will pay Tk 10.50 crore annually as rent for one channel of the AsiaSat-2.

Sources said the government plans to utilise the AsiaSat-2 channel for 24 hours by adding extra programmes to its existing eight-hour transmission daily.

The new additions will include special programmes for the SAARC countries, which should also attract TV viewers of the other regions, BTV planners hope. See Page 12 Col 1

Driver's wit puts seven hijackers behind bars

From Our Correspondent

SAVAR, Aug 29: A microbus driver's wit helped police arrest seven armed hijackers from Savar Cantonment area today.

Police said two of the miscreants hired a microbus from a rent-a-car firm at Moghbazar in the capital at around 7 am to go to Zia International Airport (ZIA).

But sooner after boarding the microbus, they brought out a pistol and forced its driver — Mohammad Abbas — to head for Aricha.

On the way, near Amin-bazar, five others vehicle joined the two — Raju Mia and Majibur Rahman.

When the vehicle reached See Page 12 Col 8



General Danny Rothschild (L), Israeli coordinator for the West Bank, and Palestinian negotiator Wabil Shaath (R) exchange copies of the just signed landmark accord in Erez yesterday for the Palestinians to run their daily affairs on the West Bank for the first time since 1967. Smiling behind is Israeli Foreign Ministry legal adviser Joel Singer. — AFP photo

Security stepped up for Cairo confce

CAIRO, Aug 29: Egypt has launched a massive security operation a week before the UN World Population Conference opens here to protect delegates following death threats from Muslim militants, reports AFP.

The police have been on maximum alert since Thursday, said an official in the security services. All leave has been cancelled so as to prevent any terrorist attack aimed at blackening Egypt's image. It will be hard to carry out any major attack.

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.

Providing security for all the delegates is a major headache for the authorities in a vast city filled with dense traffic and 15 million people, many of them crammed into slums.

The outlawed Jamaa Islamiyya (Islamic group) staged a comeback on Saturday by warning foreigners to stay away from the conference and claiming Friday's killing of a Spanish teenager in southern Egypt in the first attack on tourists in six months.

The resurgence of the Jamaa, Egypt's main armed fundamentalist group, came

after a lull in its violent campaign which the authorities attributed to a successful crackdown by security forces.

The Jamaa has spearheaded anti-government violence in which more than 400 people have died, including nine tourists, since March 1992.

The militant group warned that 'foreigners taking part in the 'licentious conference' put their lives at risk.'

A Tehran report adds: Draft resolutions for the UN world population conference must be revised and brought into line with Muslim Law, the head of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference said today.

Hamid Al-Gabid, Secretary General of the Jeddah-based OIC, told the English language Tehran Times that at least 'three major aspects of the resolutions are contrary to Sharia, or Islamic Law,' including the right to have an abortion.

The other two were liberalising pre-marital relationships and giving children 'unlimited freedom to resist parental pressure,' he was quoted as saying.

'For these reasons, all Muslim countries believe that the anti-Muslim provisions should be omitted from the population draft.'

Gabid, who was in Iran to attend a seminar on Bosnia, See Page 12 Col 6

Accord signed on Palestinian affairs on WB

EREZ, Gaza Strip, Aug 29: Israel and the PLO signed today a landmark accord for the Palestinians to run their daily affairs on the West Bank for the first time, reports AFP.

The 'early empowerment' agreement covering education, health, welfare, tourism, and taxation was inked at the Erez checkpoint linking the autonomous Gaza Strip with Israel.

Top Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath and Israeli coordinator for the West Bank General Danny Rothschild signed the deal they struck last Wednesday in Cairo which follows the May launch of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

Shaath described early empowerment as 'a step that opens the way for the full interim agreement in the West Bank'. See Page 12 Col 8

Serbs vote down peace plan

SARAJEVO, Aug 29: Bosnian Serbs said today voters overwhelmingly voted down the latest peace plan in their makeshift referendum as Russia's foreign minister held talks to keep peace efforts alive, reports Reuters.

Election organisers said more than 90 per cent of

Earlier Story on Page 5

Bosnian Serb voters rejected the peace plan in the weekend referendum fulfilling predictions by their leadership.

'According to almost half of the votes counted by this noon, the turnout was more than 90 per cent. More than 90 per cent voted against the map,' Petko Cancar told Reuters, citing unofficial results.

He said the official results will be known by tomorrow.

Benazir cancels visit to Gaza

ISLAMABAD, Aug 29: For the second time in as many days, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Monday cancelled a visit to the Gaza Strip, accusing Israel of violating its autonomous agreement with the Palestinians, reports AP.

Ms Bhutto was to travel to the Gaza on September four. She would have been the first foreign leader to set foot in Gaza since the start of Palestinian self-rule in May.

But she cancelled the visit after Palestinian diplomats in See Page 12 Col 2

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Where spirit triumphs over pain

By Inam Ahmed



A patient who was paralysed following an accident at the age of 14 is painting Christmas card designs using an adapted hand splint at the centre.

How does one face life when half of his body dies?

'It as well kills your soul and spirit,' says Abul Hussain, once an auto-mechanic, but now a paraplegic in his 30s. 'Life becomes an unending agony.'

Abul's fate was written when he went to Oman one and a half year ago to work in a garage. The lower part of his body from the waist became paralysed when a jack gave way and a car crashed on his spine.

Abul is now confined to a wheelchair at the centre for the rehabilitation of the paralysed (CRP) at Savar.

Only a slip on the wet homestead ended Bacchu's dream of learning truck driving. His head hit a wall in his fall. 'My whole body lost its See Page 12 Col 1