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Notice

Today's issue of The Daily Star includes an 8-page tabloid on Computer Special.

NEWS BRIEFS

President assents to two bills

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday gave assent to two bills passed by the Jatiya Sangsad. The bills are: The Government and Autonomous Bodies Employees Benevolent Fund and Group Insurance Ordinance (Amendment) Bill, 1994 and the Public Corporations (Management Co-ordination) (Amendment) Bill, 1994, reports BSS.

Alim, Fazil exams begin today

The Alim and Fazil examinations, 1994 under the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board will begin today. A total of 29,533 and 16,702 students will take part in the Alim and Fazil examinations respectively in 205 centres all over the country. Meanwhile, 8,556 students will take part in the Kamil examination under the same board scheduled to begin on September 11, reports UNB.

ALCWC meets tomorrow

The Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will meet at an emergency session tomorrow at 29 Minto Road with party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair. The meeting is expected to review the latest political situation with particular reference to 'Dhaka Siege' on September 10, its strategy for the day and future programmes, sources said, reports UNB.

OIC FMs' confce opens in Islamabad Disunity ruining Islamic world, says Benazir

ISLAMABAD, Sept 7: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto bluntly told the world's Islamic countries they were 'weak and divided' and said today they must unite to end conflicts stretching from Afghanistan to Bosnia, report AP, Reuter. 'Today it is the Muslims who are the main victims of aggression throughout the world,' Ms Bhutto said as she opened a meeting of foreign ministers from the 51-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) here. Ms Bhutto said most Islamic nations remained impoverished and underdeveloped,

and a lack of Muslim solidarity left them open to exploitation by others. 'The Islamic world is weak and divided,' said Ms Bhutto, one of the only women in a packed hotel conference center. 'Many of us are locked in a disputes with each other. Most of our people live in poverty. Many delegates consider the Bosnian war the most pressing issue, and the Islamic states appear unanimous in calling for the lifting of the UN arms embargo against Bosnia, where the Muslims have been outgunned by the rival Serbs. Bosnian Prime Minister

Haris Silajdzic said his Muslim fighters were evading the embargo with smuggled weapons, though he refused to say which countries were involved. 'We are smuggling arms into our own country. We make arms. We shall take arms from wherever we can,' Silajdzic told a news conference. 'It is unbelievable that (the arms embargo) is still valid although it has not brought anything at all but death, misery and destruction,' he said. 'It is time to change.' A new policy may be in the works. The United States says See Page 12 Col 1

Move to revamp Export Promotion Bureau

By Special Correspondent Reorganization of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) to expand and strengthen its activities is under active consideration of the government. A high-level committee formed by the Ministry of Commerce has already reviewed and approved a draft proposal and submitted final report to the higher authorities. The proposal contains detailed recommendations in terms of autonomy, manpower and resources for the EPB, said an official source. 'These aspects are important to reorganise the EPB -- the vital organ for promoting the country's exports.' According to the source, the proposal was prepared in 1988 by the EPB itself and was sent to the Commerce Ministry, but no steps were

taken for a long time. A high-level committee headed by the Additional Secretary of the Ministry was constituted last year to review the proposal and submit a report. The seven-member body included officials of the ministries of Finance, Establishment, Commerce and representatives from the EPB and the FBCCI. The committee studied and scrutinised the draft proposal and approved it with some modifications. The proposal suggested the EPB be turned into an autonomous body with a 15 to 17-member board, including at least four representatives from the private sector. Presently, the EPB enjoys a semi-autonomous status, as provided by an ordinance promulgated in 1978. See Page 12 Col 8

Anti-Islamic campaign worries Dhaka

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman yesterday said the Islamic Ummah is faced with serious challenges in the post-cold war era as the Muslims are coming under increased attacks in various parts of the world, reports UNB. Mostafiz was addressing the inaugural session of the seventh extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad, according to a message received in Dhaka. 'It is tragic that an ominous wave of anti-Islamic campaign has swept various parts of the world, he said adding that a number of crucial issues were confronting the Muslim world. Referring to global economy, Mostafiz said the international economy continues to be uncertain and complex and the OIC members of the least de-



A rally was brought out in the city yesterday on the eve of the International Literacy Day. — Star photo

Int'l Literacy Day today

By Staff Correspondent The International Literacy Day will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world, today with the objective of ensuring education for all by the year 2000. In a message on the eve of the day, President Abdur Rahman Biswas said illiterate people are an obstacle to development and only education can turn the population into productive human resources. Editorial on page 4

The President called upon the people to take a fresh vow to remove the curse of illiteracy from the country and build up a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. In a separate message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called upon the conscious people of the country and the social welfare organisations to supplement the government efforts in eradicating illiteracy. Begum Zia said the present government has given top priority to education and taken initiatives to ensure primary education for all children. She said the International Literacy Day is observed to create awareness about the See Page 12 Col 4

'Polls under multi-party govt will strengthen Nepalese democracy'

By M Anwarul Haq Democratic institutions in Nepal can be consolidated and the electoral process strengthened only if the popular demand for holding the next general elections under a multi-party government is accepted. This was stated by Dr Devendra Raj Panday, a former finance minister and a member of the interim government which conducted the first elections in Nepal after the abolition of the partyless Panchayat system that existed for 30 years. He is now President of the Prajatantrik Lok Dal. The elections in the Himalayan Kingdom are scheduled for November 30. An interview with The Daily Star yesterday, the former Nepalese minister, who is now in Dhaka to attend a seminar, gave his views on the past and present state of democracy in Nepal, the experience with the donor dictated liberalisation programme and also on SAARC.

Panday said the opposition parties have urged King Birendra to form a multi-party government, but this is not possible as the present constitution does not give such power to the constitutional monarch. G P Koirala, is now caretaker Prime Minister following the dissolution of parliament by the King on his advice. See Page 12 Col 1



Dhaka to oppose anything un-Islamic

CAIRO, Sept 7: Bangladesh would not endorse anything emerging from the deliberations of the Cairo conference which went against the tenets of Islam, reports BSS. Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said this while delivering his speech at the plenary session of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) '94 here today. He said 'our future initiatives in the population field will be in conformity with our cultural, religious and traditional values, consistent with our heritage, social norms and customs.' The minister underlined the need for South-South co-operation to utilise their See Page 12 Col 6

Compromise in Cairo seems far cry More countries back Vatican stand

CAIRO, Sept 7: A compromise agreement on a hotly disputed abortion issue faltered today as at least eight countries joined the Vatican in opposition to language they maintain is pro-abortion, reports AP. Top negotiators at the UN population conference made a breakthrough in late-night talks yesterday getting Iran, Pakistan and Benin, which previously siding with the Vatican on the abortion issue, to accept the language. The European Union, Norway and Sweden also accepted it as their 'rock bottom' compromise. But when negotiations re-

sumed this morning, delegates said Malta, Argentina, Guam, Honduras, Guatemala, Slovakia, Uruguay and Ecuador announced their support for the Vatican position. Namibian delegate Henning Melber said he believed up to 20 countries now oppose the language. There is absolutely no progress on the matter,' he said. 'For those who came to a consensus, this is very frustrating.' Unable to reach consensus, the negotiators broke up into informal groups to discuss the next step. Mary Ellen Glynn, spokes-



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina releasing a pigeon while inaugurating Chhatra League (M-I) Council '94 at Ramna Batamul in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Hasina opens BCL council '94 BNP allergic to interim govt issue

By Staff Correspondent Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has said the ruling party is keeping the doors shut for talks on the issue of a caretaker government. 'The BNP is not ready to hold the next elections under a caretaker government, it wants to hold elections in its own way so that it can resort to rigging,' the Awami League (AL) chief said at the annual convention of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Ramna Green in the city yesterday. The present rulers had participated in elections under a caretaker government in 1991 but they are now allergic to the caretaker government issue. The remedy to this is a mass movement for removing it from power, Hasina told the gathering of over 6,000 BCL activists and leaders coming from all the districts of the country. Urging people to join the 'Dhaka siege' programme on Saturday, Hasina said, 'We have to put such a pressure on the government that it is compelled to call elections under a caretaker government.' She was critical of the rule

which played a vital role in the liberation war. Presided over by the outgoing President of BCL Moinuddin Hasan Chowdhury, the convention was also addressed by among others, General Secretary of the organisation Iqbalur Rahim. It was attended by senior leaders of the AL and See Page 12 Col 6

One AL source claimed the party would strive to mobilise half a million supporters for its programme. Meanwhile, an emergency meeting of the AL central committee will be held tomorrow to plan and review final preparations. AL presidium member and Deputy Leader of the Opposi-

3 murdered in city

By Staff Correspondent Two young men and a housemaid were brutally murdered in two separate incidents in the city Tuesday night and yesterday morning. While two friends, both aged 25, were murdered by gangsters in Maddhya Badda, a 15-year-old maid was found dead by police at a house in Road 2, Block B, Section 2, Mirpur. Police believed the victim, Jharna, was tortured to death by her masters. According to Gulshan police, James Arindam alias 'Christian' Babul alias Tuhin Mia and Mizanur Rahman alias Swapan were stabbed to death by members of their own drug gang following a dispute over spoils late Tuesday night. They were stabbed near the Alatunnessa High School where they See Page 12 Col 3

Opposition busy preparing for 'Dhaka siege'

By Staff Correspondent The Opposition's preoccupation with its preparations for the planned September 10 'Dhaka Siege' appears to have pushed all talk about a government-Opposition dialogue to the backstage. The largest opposition Awami League (AL), which originally announced the siege plan in June, has been organising its activists to make the programme a success. The Jatiya Party (JP), too, has announced its own siege programme on the day. The other major parliamentary opposition party the Jamaat-e-Islami has also lent its support to the agitation programme designed to press the ruling BNP to concede the demand for holding the next general elections under a caretaker administration. The Jamaat is to hold a public meeting in the city on the day. The AL plans to organise its activities mainly around the Secretariat while the JP supporters will rally in Motijheel, the capital's busiest commercial district. One AL source claimed the party would strive to mobilise half a million supporters for its programme. Meanwhile, an emergency meeting of the AL central committee will be held tomorrow to plan and review final preparations. AL presidium member and Deputy Leader of the Opposi-

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