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ANNOUNCEMENT

Read The Daily Star special on women trafficking on FOCUS page (p-5). A leading women rights activist appeals to the SAARC ministers now meeting in Dhaka, for urgent collective action to face this growing problem.

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STOCK MARKET

DSE price index	770.85 (+0.09%)
Market capital Tk	47.87 billion
Transactions in volume	136428
Transactions in value Tk	19.55 million

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Dhaka Day by Day



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NEWS BRIEFS

Dhaka-Calcutta flights

Indian Airlines has decided to restore four flights a week between Calcutta and Dhaka from August 2. An airlines press release said here yesterday. The airlines will from now on operate flights in this route on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Because of operational reasons, the Indian Airlines has been running two flights a week for the last two weeks, the press release added, reports BSS.

Schoolgirl killed in road mishap

CHITTAGONG, July 29: Laki Rani Dey, a 17-year-old girl student, was killed when a speeding bus ran over her at Shitalpur under Sitakunda thana on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway today. According to district police, a Ramganj-bound bus from Chittagong smashed her on the spot while she was crossing the road. Laki was a student of class nine of Shitalpur Girls' High School, reports BSS.

7 fishermen rescued

BARISAL, July 29: Police rescued seven fishermen in a trawler who got lost during a storm last week in the Bay of Bengal. The body of an unidentified fisherman was also recovered, police said today. The rescued were among a total of 148 fishermen in 23 trawlers and mechanised fishing boats who were feared drowned in the Bay of Bengal when they were fishing in the deep sea, south of Kuakata. The search for the rest of the fishermen and their boats, is continuing, police said, reports BSS.

PM opens SAARC ministerial meet in city

Broadbased movement needed for women's rights, security

A two-day SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Women began in the city yesterday with a call from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for launching a collective campaign to end discrimination and repression on women, reports UNB.

"Social inequality among men and women in almost every sphere of life is a great challenge before us," she said, inaugurating the meeting at the International Conference Centre (ICC).

Begum Zia said this meeting is entrusted with the task of formulating a common SAARC position on the various issues which will be deliberated in the Beijing moot.

The conference, split into two plenary and one concluding sessions, will adopt

Dhaka Resolution" today.

Focusing on multifarious problems of womenfolk, the Prime Minister said they, despite having great potential, are not getting equal opportunity in education, health, nutrition, jobs, politics, economic activities and management of environment.

She identified some factors like erosion of social and cultural values, caste system, unequal position of women in family and society, drug addiction, regional and international conflicts causing discrimination against women.

Identifying lack of social security and poverty as obstacles to women development, Begum Zia stressed the need for building a broadbased women movement to ensure overall security for them.

Referring to the poor socio-economic condition of women in the SAARC countries, she said they are deprived of loan facilities, suitable employment and share in production.

Singling out education as an important factor for women development, Begum Zia said education is an

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essential tool for ensuring their rights in society and for full realisation of their potential for the benefit of entire society.

"We feel that investment in women development is far more profitable than industry and trade," the Prime Minister told the inaugural session of the meet, preparatory to the Beijing confer-

ence on women.

In this connection, she drew the attention of participants of the meeting to the Constitution of Bangladesh, guaranteeing equal rights for men and women.

She went on to say, "Islam, the religion of majority people of Bangladesh, also emphasises equal right of men and women."

The Prime Minister referred to a number of measures undertaken in Bangladesh for empowerment, development and security of women.

She mentioned that in government jobs ten per cent quota for gazetted officers and 15 per cent for non-gazetted staffs had been reserved for women in addition

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the SAARC ministerial meeting on women yesterday. — Star photo

Dhaka seeks help in water management Kathmandu sees overland transit vital for trade

The 9th meeting of Bangladesh-Nepal Joint Economic Commission began in Dhaka yesterday against the backdrop of a poor progress in economic interaction between the two neighbouring countries, reports UNB.

While the JEC is meeting after a lapse of four years, an official document revealed that most decisions of the 8th meeting still remained unattended.

Important decisions, including initiatives for setting up joint-venture cement and pharmaceutical units in Nepal, joint boulder mining and technical cooperation in the areas of garments and jute, were not followed up during the last four years as, said the document, the Nepalese side continued to show apathy to follow up.

According to an official, the current session will concentrate on reviewing the follow-up of the decisions of the last meeting, held in

September 1991 in Kathmandu, rather than add fresh agenda.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman is heading a 12-member home-side at the meeting. Nepalese Minister for Finance and Civil Supplies Bharat Mohan Adhikari is leading an eight-member delegation of his country.

Senior officials of different ministries and a representative from the FBCCI are included in the Bangladesh delegation.

Although Saifur Rahman did not explicitly refer to the lacklustre scenario of Dhaka-Kathmandu economic ties, he lamented the sloth in regional cooperation in South Asia.

"We (SAARC countries) are still practising the regional cooperation only as a theory," Rahman said.

Volume of trade between Dhaka and Kathmandu currently figures a meagre 10 million US dollars a year with

the balance overwhelmingly tilted towards Bangladesh. Joint-venture is still out of venture.

In 1993-94, Bangladesh's exports to Nepal grossed Tk 44 crore against its import bills of Tk 1.81 crore. Large-scale import of Bangladeshi urea fertiliser by Nepal results in the trade gap.

Problem of transportation was identified yesterday by the finance ministers of both the countries as the main obstacle responsible for the staggeringly low level of bilateral trade.

Expressing his concern at the trade imbalance, the Nepalese minister, however, told the inaugural session that arrangement of overland traffic-in transit facility was vital for expanding the two-way trade. He said his country would initiate dialogue with India for allowing the landlocked Nepal the use of land route, as in case of

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EC asks bidders to submit quotations for ID cards

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday asked the firms who bought tender schedules to submit their bids for preparation and distribution of identity (ID) cards in at least one parliamentary constituency.

The work would be done on turnkey basis and (the bidder) would have to take photographs of individual voters and distribute the laminated cards among them," said EC Secretary Ershadul Haq at a pre-tender meeting with the bidders. A total of 280 tender schedules were sold.

The EC has abandoned its earlier plan for an electoral database and decided to prepare ID cards only. Subsequently a tender was floated to this end. The time limit for submission of tender has been extended till August 8 from August 5.

Elaborating different aspects of the tender, the EC

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Dissolve parliament immediately: AL

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) yesterday resolved that the Prime Minister should immediately advise the President to dissolve Parliament and take measures for holding general elections under a non-party caretaker administration.

According to a senior AL leader, the party is now waiting for a fresh government offer for dialogue on the issue of a caretaker government for conducting the next general elections, insisting that it would be the only option to overcome the long political standoff.

Chaired by acting party chief Abdus Sajjad Azad, the meeting also viewed that only such steps could rid the nation of the long standing political crisis. Otherwise, it warned, the nation would be

thrown into a deeper crisis.

Regarding the Supreme Court opinion on the opposition MPs' absence from Parliament and vacation of their seats, the meeting said, "It proved that the Opposition demand for a caretaker government was justified. The SC opinion also made it clear that parliament could not survive without the opposition parties."

The AL is now closely monitoring the latest developments in the BNP as regards its two options — holding by-elections to a large number of JS seats or announcing fresh general elections.

Turning the prospect of by-polls bleak, the AL leader said, the party would never compromise on the popular demand for a caretaker gov-

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Young man beaten to death in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A newly married young man was beaten to death allegedly by hired goons of a manpower exporter at Malibagh in the city yesterday noon.

The tragedy occurred when the victim, Sajjad Hossain, 28, tried to get back the money he had earlier paid to the manpower exporter, his family sources said.

Sajjad, son of one Moslehuddin of Kotgaon, Munshiganj went to Malibagh for collecting some Tk 3.2 lakh from the manpower exporter, the sources said.

Sajjad, who got married only about six months ago, came to Dhaka two days back. He rented a house with another man in East Nakhla-para.

Sajjad's wife Ratna was

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News Analysis Polls or by-polls — that is the question

By Farid Hossain

When he met with a group of journalists at his residence on Friday night Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali displayed a man-in-a-hurry mood.

In declaring the seats of Opposition MPs vacant with effect from June 20 he said, "My secretariat will not waste any time in preparing the report on the absentee MPs. We have all the records almost prepared and the notification will be made in a couple of days."

Better late, than never. The vacancy will now be effective back-dated, since June 20. Had the Speaker been allowed to take action on his own, he would most likely have declared the concerned seats vacant on June 20 or couple of days later. The authority, which he lost briefly because the government took the issue to the Supreme Court for constitutional interpretations, returned to him on Thursday.

In its unanimous opinion the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, presided over by Chief Justice ATM Alzal, reverted to the Speaker the authority to decide the fate of the absentee MPs.

Happy with the Supreme Court decision the Speaker was apparently in no mood to waste any more time to exercise his powers. However, the Presidential reference to the Supreme Court has helped the government to delay the Speaker's decision by more than a month.

His authority (to run the affairs of Parliament and the MPs) reverted back to him. Shaikh Razzak Ali appeared to be keen on taking bold decisions — at least from now on.

There is a view that the government could gain more time if the Speaker defers his decision until the next session of Parliament is

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Speaker discusses latest situation with PM

By Staff Correspondent

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali met Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday and discussed the latest situation following the Supreme Court's opinion on the Presidential reference on MPs' absence.

According to ruling party sources, the Speaker also discussed with the Prime Minister the issue of vacation of seats of the absentee opposition MPs.

Begum Zia also discussed with senior party colleagues the latest political situation, the sources said.

Meanwhile, another BNP leader told The Daily Star that the party was considering two options — going for by-elections or general elections.

"Some top-ranking party leaders had informal discussions among themselves," the party leader said. "Final decision will be taken soon at the party standing committee meeting."

"We are reviewing the political development, espe-

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Serb forces torch and loot Zepa



French President Jacques Chirac (2nd R) and his wife Bernadette (L) welcome British Prime Minister John Major (2nd L) and his wife Norma (R) in the court of the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. Chirac and Major are due to discuss the Bosnian crisis during a "private lunch". — AFP photo

SARAJEVO, July 29: Bosnian Serb forces have torched the town of Zepa, snatched men off convoys and reportedly executed the government commander of the Muslim "safe area", UN officials said today, reports Reuter.

"UN peacekeepers only looked on helplessly," said a UN official.

Bosnian Serb army chief General Ratko Mladic told a UN officer that Zepa's defence commander Colonel Avdo Palic had been killed after an impasse was reached in surrender negotiations. UN spokesman Alexander Ivankovic said.

Another Serb officer, General Zdravko Tolimir, refused to confirm or deny Mladic's claim, but Ivankovic said Palic had not been seen since Thursday.

There was no immediate comment from the Bosnian government in Sarajevo.

"The town of Zepa has

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20pc inmates of Tanbazar are teenaged

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, July 29: At least 20 per cent of girls in Tanbazar 'red light' area in the town are 'teenaged', according to district administration sources here today.

The number of prostitutes in the area increased to about 5000 from 1055 over the last 3 years, the sources said.

Meanwhile, no fresh initiative was taken today to rescue the two teenaged girls — Hashi and Nazu — from the Tanbazar 'red light area'.

Hashi and Nazu, along with four other teenaged girls, were earlier rescued from the area Thursday by Advocate Salma Ali of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association. But were taken back to the brothel the next day (Friday).

Hashi and Nazu were kept

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star, as part of its SAVE DHAKA campaign, will hold a day-long Open Discussion on "Streets of Dhaka" tomorrow, in collaboration with BUET and the Dhaka City Corporation. The meeting will be participated by city planners, administrators, researchers, DMP, NGOs and concerned multilateral bodies. Representatives of hawkers and rickshawpullers are also expected to be present to speak on the occasion.

The Open Discussion will take place at the Nagar Bhavan. It will be divided into two sessions. The plenary session will be held from 10 am to 1 pm and specific working group sessions from 2-4 pm.

All interested citizens are invited to join us at Nagar Bhavan tomorrow, and strengthen our SAVE DHAKA campaign.