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Inside Today

- Article**
- Campus Violence: How Long the Lip Service?**
- Column: Beneath the Surface**
by Abdul Bayes
Page 4
- Focus**
- Back from Beijing Women's Conference**
Page 5
- International**
- Israel intends to pull out of six West Bank towns by '95**
- Iran denies shift in N-accords with China**
Page 8
- Business**
- Import of tyres finalised to defuse market**
- US dollar falls against most major currencies**
Pages 6, 7

NEWS BRIEFS

3 feared drowned in boat capsizing
 PABNA, Sept 29: Three people were feared drowned after a Shahjadpur-bound mechanised boat capsized in the river Gupiani near Chatmohar here today. Survivors said the boat carrying 20 passengers from Tarash overturned amidst downpour and gusty wind. Seventeen passengers swam ashore, reports UNB.

Housewife commits suicide in city

By Staff Correspondent
 A housewife succumbed to her burn injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the city yesterday morning. Police said the victim, Parul, 16, wife of one Swapan, doused herself with kerosene and set fire to her body in their residence at 9/2, Secretariat Road, Fulbaria early yesterday. She was rushed to DMCH where she died at around 10:30 am. The cause of the death could not be known immediately.

Jatiya Mahila Party chief resigns

President of Jatiya Mahila Party Mariam Hashimuddin yesterday tendered her resignation to the acting chairman of the Jatiya Party. In her two-line letter she did not mention any reason for her resignation. However, she attached some newspaper clippings with the letter which contain stories on internal feuds in the Jatiya Mahila Party and incidents of armed attacks at her house at different times, reports BSS.

Pabna Commerce College closed

PABNA, Sept 29: Government Commerce College was closed today for a fortnight following violence on the campus, police sources said. They said some unruly elements exploded bombs and broke doors and windows of the college as authorities reportedly declined to admit some students as demanded by supporters of the Jatiyatibadi Chhatra Dal (JSD). The authorities later stopped the admission and declared the college closed till October 14, reports UNB.

Lockout in Times of India

NEW DELHI, Sept 29: The management of the Times of India, one of India's oldest and most respected newspapers, declared an indefinite lockout today amid a labour dispute, reports AFP.
 About 50 policemen were posted outside The Times building here and workers were prevented from entering the building, witnesses said. Hundreds of workers waited outside as union members shouted anti-management slogans.

BNP plans 'grand rally' before 96-hr hartal

By Krishna P Roy

The ruling BNP, in a move to face the Opposition's fresh agitation programmes politically, has decided to hold a 'grand rally' in the city sometime before the Opposition's planned 96-hour hartal from October 16, sources in the party said.
 Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the rally and urge the people to stand against the Opposition's "destructive programmes".
 This was decided at a meeting of the PM and some of her senior cabinet colleagues at her Hare

Road office last night.
 The meeting reviewed the latest political situation, with particular reference to the Opposition's fresh programmes.
 The three major Opposition political parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami on Thursday called a 48-hour hartal in the divisional headquarters on October 7-8 and a 96-hour hartal across the country from October 16 to press the demand for general elections under a neutral caretaker government.
 The programmes, which

were announced from separate 'grand rallies', also include mass contact, rallies, demonstrations and processions throughout the country between October 9 and 15.
 A senior minister who attended the meeting, told The Daily Star that BNP would 'tackle' the Opposition agitation politically. "We will try to mobilise public opinion against their destructive programmes," he said, requesting not to be named.
 He, however, said they did not discuss any formula to resolve the persisting political

See Page 12 Col 4

Hartal can't solve crisis, says PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said hartals and strikes create immense suffering of the toiling masses and appealed to the conscious people to come forward against this injustice, reports UNB.
 "It is duty of every citizen to protest against all sorts of injustice. It is not also wise to tolerate injustice silently," she said.
 The Prime Minister said the opposition parties are doing injustice to people through various programmes, like hartal, strike and blockade, that caused untold suffering of the commonman.
 Begum Zia was addressing

See Page 12 Col 1



Trucks at a city stand on the first day yesterday of the two-day transport strike called by Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity (Abbas). — Star photo

PM imbalanced by Opposition agitation: Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the Prime Minister of resorting to falsehood and of making "imbalanced statements," reports UNB.
 "The Prime Minister has been imbalanced by the united opposition agitation and is resorting to falsehood," Hasina said while addressing a group of ulema and hafez, who joined the Awami League, at the party's Dhanmondi office.

Professing the PM's remark that the Opposition is calling hartal-strike-siege at the dictate of their masters, Hasina charged the PM with "telling blatant lie".
 The AL chief said the Prime Minister will have to prove the veracity of her statement and explain under whose dictate the Opposition is waging agitation.
 A party press release said more than 100 ulema and

See Page 12 Col 1

Flood situation in 4 dists worsens

By Staff Correspondent

Flood situation in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Sirajganj and Gaibandha districts worsened yesterday due to incessant rains.
 Meanwhile, a violent storm lashed seven villages of Sadar and Palashbani thanas in Gaibandha late Thursday night.
 At least 57 people were injured and 1500 houses damaged in the storm, according to our correspondent.
 More than 1.50 lakh people of 40 unions under nine thanas of Kurigram district have been affected by the flood intensified by heavy rain in 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday, UNB quoting officials said.
 The situation is 'grim' in Rourmari thana, said a district official. Thousands of people in five unions of the thana are passing their days almost

without food and work.
 The district has experienced 69 mm rain since Thursday evening. The river Dharola was, however, flowing below its danger level at Kurigram and Chilmari.
 Standing Aman crops on 23,000 hectares of land and vegetables on 315 hectares were submerged.
 In Lalmonirhat, flood has affected at least 20,000 people of 15 unions in five thanas, officials said.
 They said the water released through the Teesta Barrage caused substantial damage to crops and homesteads. All the gates of the barrage were opened this morning due to tremendous pressure of water.
 Flood situation in Sirajganj deteriorated further as new areas of seven thanas, including the district's municipal

See Page 12 Col 5

Hasina's speech provocative, says Rafiq

A cabinet minister and member of the BNP Standing Committee yesterday described as "provocative, instigating and irresponsible" the alleged issuance of threat by Awami League president Sheikh Hasina to storm the Prime Minister's residence to realise the Opposition's demand for elections under "a caretaker government", reports BSS.
 "The threat issued by Sheikh Hasina Thursday to go to the Prime Minister's house is intended to incite a state of chaos, anarchy and lawlessness in the country," Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah said giving his reaction to Awami League president's Thursday's speech at the Manik Mia Avenue.
 Sheikh Hasina called upon the Prime Minister "not to create a situation in which

See Page 12 Col 5

Strike disrupts road communication

By Staff Correspondent

Road communication across the country was severely disrupted as a section of private buses, minibuses and trucks stayed off the roads on the first day yesterday of the two-day strike called by the Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity (BSPS).
 The BSPS, one of the two transport owners' associations, led by ruling party MP Mirza Abbas, called the strike to press its 12-point demand.
 The demands include lowering of fares and fuel prices, withdrawal of enhanced ferry fare and bridge toll and protection from illegal toll collection.
 "The strike was a total success and there was no report of any untoward incident from anywhere", claimed Kafil Uddin Ahmed, acting secretary general of the BSPS.

Transport workers also joined us as all of our demands are very much legitimate and genuine," he told The Daily Star last night.
 About reports of plying of buses on some routes in Bogra and Tangail districts, the BSPS secretary said, "Those are only a few stray attempts."
 As elsewhere in the country, no buses, minibuses, trucks or tank-lorries plied on the city roads and inter-city bus terminals — Gabtoli, Mohakhali and Sayedabad — looked deserted as the vehicles were kept in garages and lined up at roadside open places.
 In separate statements yesterday, leaders of the BSPS and the Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity thanked the transport workers and owners for observing the

See Page 12 Col 8

World Chess

Anand's blunder, Kasparov's joy

NEW YORK, Sept 29: Title holder Garry Kasparov seized a 6-5 lead in the Professional Chess Association World Championship Thursday, when challenger Viswanathan Anand made an extraordinary blunder, reports AP.
 Observers were stunned by Anand's 28th, 29th and 30th moves in the 11th game that allowed the 32-year-old champion from Russia to win two pawns and push his king into a corner.
 "No, no, no Vishy just fell for a trick," US Grandmaster Larry Christiansen said in the press room. "There goes the match," Christiansen said after the Indian's resignation on move 31 after less than two and a half hours at the board.
 Kasparov, defending his crown for the fifth time since winning it in age 22 in 1985, deployed his usual Sicilian defence with the black pieces but chose the sharp Dragon variation, a system he had never before used in competitive play.
 (Details on page 11)

Durga Puja begins today

By Staff Correspondent
 Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Hindu community, begins in the country today with due fervour and gaiety.
 The worship of goddess Durga or Sharadiya Uthsab (autumn festival) symbolises the victory of good over evil.
 The puja programme includes mahashasti, mahasaptami, mahastami and mahanabami and vijay dashami. Kumari puja (worship of divine mother through a little girl) will also be celebrated on Monday.
 In the city, final touches were being given to the image of Durga at Ramkrishna Mission, Dhakeswar Mandir, Bangla Bazar, Shankhari Bazar, Tantibazar, Rayer Bazar.
 See Page 12 Col 7

Record trading at DSE

By Sharier Khan

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) last week witnessed the highest trading of shares and debentures so far this year and all its indicators shot up to the highest level.
 The all-share price index of the DSE reached 837.54 points at the closing of the week Thursday, marking an increase by 22.35 points or 2.67 per cent from the previous week's 815.19 points.
 The index had reached a record level of 852.67 points Wednesday but slid down sharply next day, indicating that the trading may not continue to boom in the next

coming weeks, according to market operators.
 With the entry of few new issues last week, which included Delta Life Insurance and 7th ICB Mutual Fund, the market capitalisation also reached a new height of Tk 52.05 billion, an increase of Tk 1.39 billion from the previous week's Tk 50.66 billion.
 In line with the ups and downs of the index, the capitalisation had also reached a record position of Tk 52.99 billion Tuesday, but slid down with the index in the following two days.
 At least five DSE enlisted

companies like UCBL, Monno Jute, Panther Steel, Bangladesh Hotels and Aramit closed books and held their Annual General Meetings (AGMs) on Wednesday and Thursday. The buying spree was partially triggered by the closure of books by these companies and in anticipation of closure of books by some other companies in the coming weeks, market operators noted.
 A record volume of trading of shares of Beximco Pharma (over 13 lakh) and Apex Weaving (over 1 lakh) by foreign investors marked the

See Page 12 Col 7

Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka campaign continues

By Staff Correspondent
 The "Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka" campaign continued for the third consecutive Friday yesterday with several areas of the city being cleaned by local youths, scouts, school children and community leaders.
 The main focus of the campaign yesterday was an youth rally and neighbourhood cleaning, carried out in the Faridabad-Gandaria area, organised by Maitree Samaj Kallyan Sangha.
 See Page 12 Col 3

13 killed in Karachi gunbattles

KARACHI, Sept 29: At least 13 people including two policemen and three opposition activists were killed in overnight gunbattles between militants and security forces, officials said today, reports AFP.
 Tension ran high in central and western parts of the strife-torn city of Karachi today after intense night-long firing by snipers and an exchange of gunfire between militants and paramilitary rangers and police, residents said.
 Militants in central north Nazimabad district ambushed a police van carrying two de-

tained opposition Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) members, Feerozuddin Baba and Ali Motta late Thursday.
 Officials said the arrested men were escorting the police to the hideout of party comrades in the area.
 The two activists and a policeman were killed in the attack, they said.
 Security officials said an MQM supporter called Pervez also died in the clash with police while three police constables were injured.
 Four others, including a woman police officer, were shot dead in another ambush in the same area, police said.

2 brothers to die for killing Jubo League worker

KHULNA, Sept 29: Two brothers have been awarded death sentence for murdering a Jubo League activist in the city in 1993, reports UNB.
 The convicts are: Oshik, 35, and Moshfek, 32, of Mollarhat thana in Bagerhat district. The trial was held in their absence.
 According to the prosecution story, the two brothers shot dead Jubo League activist Farhad Hosain Tutul near Shankha cinema hall in the city on November 5, 1993.

JU teachers threaten to boycott classes

By JU Correspondent
 Teachers of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) will refrain from taking classes from October 16 if the authorities failed to take measures against the terrorists on the campus.
 The decision was taken at a general meeting of the JU Teachers' Association (JUTA) on Thursday.
 Presided over by the president of the JUTA Prof. Enamul Haq Khan, the meeting expressed concern

See Page 12 Col 4

Tigers overrun Lankan police post, kill 23 & loot arms

COLOMBO, Sept 29: Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas overrun a police post in eastern Sri Lanka, killing 23 policemen and capturing weapons in an overnight raid, police and military sources said today, reports Reuters.
 An army spokesman confirmed the attack on the Kalkudaha police post, saying his information indicated 15 policemen were killed but adding that the death toll could rise.
 "Terrorists came in large numbers," he told the news

agency. "We sent reinforcements and the police post is now back in our hands. A clearing operation is going on."
 The attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels, who are fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east, began late on Thursday night and lasted till the early hours of today, military sources said.
 Nine police were wounded on the firefight and eight were missing in action.

Earlier reports said up to 28 policemen were missing but police sources in Batticaloa said the missing had begun trickling back to base.
 Rebel radio traffic intercepted by army electronic warfare experts indicated the Tigers had lost at least two fighters in the raid, carried out to mark the death anniversary of a rebel leader named Dilerpan, sources said.
 The attack appeared to be part of a campaign by the separatist Tamil Tigerst to

pin down the military's eastern garrisons to prevent them from joining an expected army assault on the northern Jaffna peninsula rebel stronghold where they run a virtual mini-state.
 Chief army spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe warned civilians in Jaffna, stronghold of the LTTE, on Thursday to keep away from the guerrilla bases after 70 people were killed in an air raid there last week.
 Analysts said Munasinghe's warning appeared to be

aimed at preparing civilians for the major offensive, which diplomats say the army must launch before the start of October monsoon rains.
 "We reiterate one thing in appeals made hitherto by us to civilians in Jaffna, please keep away from LTTE bases, processions and ceremonies," Munasinghe said.
 "We are attacking the LTTE. We have to do that. Therefore, we are only requesting very kindly to the civilians, kindly keep away," he warned

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International said on Monday that some 800,000 civilians were at risk of being caught in the crossfire between the LTTE and the army.
 Since 1983, the Tamil rebels have been fighting for a homeland in the north and east for minority Tamils, accusing majority Sinhalese of discrimination in education and jobs. The Sinhalese control the government and the military