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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the annual conference '96 of the Dhaka Reporters Unity at a city hotel yesterday.

PM: Press freedom

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She also gave away 'Monazuddin Memorial Gold Medal' award to one reporter and 'DRU President Award' to two reporters for outstanding performance. The awards have been introduced by the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina observed that professionalism in journalism and strong editorial institutions could not develop in the past due to the legacy of autocratic regimes, censorship, use of advertisement and newsprint quotas, division of the journalists' union and harassment of newsmen.

"I believe that newsmen belong to no party. They will work for the greater causes of the people and the country. Blind political views suppress truth and encourage yellow journalism," the Prime Minister said. She, however, expressed her great pleasure to see that all reporters of the city irrespective of their political beliefs got united under the banner of the DRU and hoped, "this unity will definitely help raise the professional standard of journalism."

Leaders of the DRU took the opportunity in urging the premier to repeal the Official Secrecy Act and provide facilities required for development of journalism.

The Prime Minister assured her government's best efforts in offering more facilities to newsmen for development of journalism.

The Prime Minister said her government has a plan to turn the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) into a 'centre for skill development' and added, "our efforts will always be for developing professional skill of newsmen and give them the latest information technology". In this regard she mentioned that through the Internet, Bangladesh has become a part of the global information super-highway.

She said that journalists' working styles and technique have changed a lot with the development of information technology in the world but Bangladesh is lagging behind. Facilities like satellite television, Internet and other advanced tele-communication systems have made the world a 'global village' observed Hasina adding that the government would render all assistance to develop the profession of journalism in the country.

The Prime Minister said the Fifth Wage Board for journalists has already been formed to review salaries and other facilities and assured that the housing problem of newsmen would be considered.

The Prime Minister recalled that newsmen were subject to attacks during BNP rule when police had entered into Jatiya Press Club and beat journalists. Terming reporters the lifeline of newspapers, she said, "reporters' job is very risky. It is reporters' responsibility to gather news and present those in an objective way." In this regard, she praised late reporter Monazuddin.

Sheikh Hasina said, people's participation was missing in the process of transfers of power from 1975 to 1990. "But ballot is more powerful than bullet and the right to franchise has been achieved. Now our fight is to establish peoples' right to have meals," said the premier.

She lauded the courageous role of journalists in democratic movements.

Prof Abu Sayeed said, the quotas of government advertisements and newsprint are not used now as a tool to suppress the press. He said that the government was well aware of

Maid dies at Mugdapara in city

By Staff Correspondent

A maid died at a house at South Mugdapara in the city Friday, police said yesterday.

Police took the body of

Fatema Begum, 20, from her

employer's residence Friday

evening and sent it to the

Dhaka Medical College Hospi-

tal (DMCH) for autopsy.

Fatema, daughter of one

Siddique Miah of Bipara vil-

lage under Indurkana thana of

Pirojpur district had been

working in the house for about

three years, police added.

ADB concerned

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that BOU had been doing under Prof Ali's leadership, who met all the basic criterion set by it regarding appointment of a VC.

The five criterion set by the Bank, which provides 85 per cent funding for BOU, say that the VC should be at least 55-year old, should have an excellent academic background with national and international experience on distance learning and should have publications and technical expertise on the method that heavily relies on electronic media.

ADB also noted that while appointing a new VC, these criterion should have been taken into consideration, and it should have been taken into confidence about a successor to Prof Ali, sources said.

The new VC is likely to take charge on October 21. He was elected to the VC panel for Dhaka University recently.

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Habiganj by-polls: Fight between Suranjit, Siraj

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Sept 5: Electorating in Habiganj-2 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad comprising Baniachang and Ajmiranj thanas has gained momentum.

By-election in the constituency will be held on October 15. The seat fell vacant following the death of Sharifuddin Ahmed MP of Awami League.

Six candidates had filed nominations for contesting in the by-election. Two of them including BNP candidate former minister Jakaria Khan Chowdhury withdrew their candidature earlier leaving four in the race including Awami League's Suranjit Sengupta and Jatiya Party's Sirajul Hossain Khan.

There will be a tough contest between the AL and JP candidates, according to political observers. The election scenario had changed following the withdrawal of BNP candidate, they said.

Suranjit is facing a "little problem" from some local AL leaders who aspired to be candidates, an observer said. "But he is trying to manage the situation with blessings from the party high command," he said.

Sengupta has an advantage because he is a ruling party candidate, another observer said.

The JP nominee is also facing some intra-party conflict. The local and non-local issue may also give him an advantage, the observers said.

Total number of voters in the constituency is 176,407 including 88,506 female voters, said an official.

ALCWC urges govt to intensify rice procurement drive

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked her partymen not to lobby for freeing any terrorist.

She also asked the partymen not to take terrorists in the party and to take actions against terrorists if there be any party.

Sheikh Hasina was talking to some senior leaders during a visit to the central office of the party at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday afternoon. She also exchanged views on various issues with the party leaders and workers, says a press release issued yesterday.

Presided over by party chief Sheikh Hasina, the meeting deplored the fact that instead of accepting the peoples verdict in the June 12 elections, the BNP was now bringing baseless allegations of rigging against the Awami League.

The ALCWC meeting reviewed the activities of the government over the last 100 days and appreciated the performance of the Awami League government during the period.

It also stressed on intensifying the process of rice procurement by the government and ensuring proper marketing of fertilizer, adequate distribution of power and irrigation facilities during the Irr-Boro season.

The meeting also took stock of the political situation and took some important decisions on organisational matters, the release said.

2 policemen hit by truck, die

By Staff Correspondent

Two policemen were killed when a truck hit them on Jatrabari-Postogola road in Demra thana in the city early yesterday morning.

Constables Amzad Hossain and Motur Rahman of Demra thana were fatally injured when the Narayanganj-bound truck hit them from behind at about 5 am. They were on patrol duty, police said.

Another police patrol and local people immediately took the injured policemen to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

The bodies of Amzad and Motur were sent to their village homes in Narsingdi and Jhenidah districts under Khulna division.

The revised targets were fixed so that price of foodgrains remain stable and the growers are not deprived of fair price for their produce.

Nat'l body on CHT continues

By Staff Correspondent

Taheruddin Thakur, said to be one of the masterminds of the Bangabandhu's killing, was interrogated for the third day yesterday by the CID investigators.

He was arrested early Thursday on charge of jail killing and later brought under Criminal Investigation Department (CID) custody on a eight-day police remand.

Police said Derek was staying in the house alone. A driver with a transport of the UNDP went to Derek's residence at about 7:30am yesterday to pick him up. But after repeated calls the driver did not get any response from inside the house and nobody came out, police said.

Tornado hits Jhalakathi: One killed

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 5: One person was killed and about 500 thatched houses were razed to the ground when a tornado lashed eleven villages under Kathalia thana of Jhalakathi district late last night.

Abdur Rashid, 42, of village Soulajala died when his house collapsed during the storm which lasted for about six minutes.

Sixty more people were injured and a large number of trees were uprooted. Eighteen of the injured were admitted to Bhandaria and Kathalia thana health complexes.

Meanwhile, the authorities have taken measures to ensure fair polling, the official said.

He said that as per decision taken at a high-level meeting in Dhaka last week, 100 magistrates will be deployed in 115 polling centres in the constituency. A total 3334 members of police, BDR and Ansars would be deployed on the election day. Of them 1638 will be police personnel, 600 BDR and 1100 Ansars. There will be 4 SPs and 2 ASPs for maintenance of law and order, the official added.

Slum dweller killed in Ctg wall collapse

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 5: A slum dweller was killed and another injured when a hill-protection wall collapsed due to torrential rainfall last night at Chatte-shari road, police said.

The well collapsed over the hut of Abdur Razak, 65, killing him instantly and injuring another family member, police added.

Police recovered the body this morning and recorded a general diary with Panchalchana thana.

Met office said 110 mm rainfall was recorded during the 24 hours between 3 pm on Friday and 3 pm today.

Arsenic-panic grips Chandpur village

CHANDPUR, Oct 5: Panic gripped Chandpur village in Faridganj thana of the district after arsenic elements were detected in tubewell water, reports UNB.

The panic created in the area after excessive quantity of arsenic was found in water tested by a specialist of Japan's Asia Arsenic Network who visited the village late August.

Several people of the village who fell ill after taking tubewell water were rushed to Dhaka, according to doctors of Faridganj Thana Health Complex and Chandpur Sadar Hospital.

Public Health Engineering Department's (PHE) Executive Engineer A K M Mainuddin in an exclusive interview with UNB has sealed up as many as 5/6 tubewells in the village and directed the villagers to drink pond and lake water after proper boiling to avoid arsenic related diseases.

Meanwhile, a government official and a primary school teacher of Hajiganj thana have been attacked by the arsenic disease. The Atomic Energy Commission, Dhaka, confirmed this after scanning and analysing their hair.

Clash over relief distribution; 19 injured

By Staff Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 5: Nineteen people were injured, five seriously, in a row over the distribution of relief materials in Belkuchi thana today, reports UNB.

Police sources said some distressed mothers and supporters of Chairman of Bhangabari Union Parishad, Abdul Matin, clashed following altercation over distribution of VGD rice.

During the 40-minute clash, lethal weapons and brick bats were used.

The seriously injured were admitted to Belkuchi thana health complex.

Alleging maldistribution of the relief materials, the women refused to receive a lesser quantity of 16 kilograms of rice.

According to government instruction, every card holders are entitled to get 31 kilograms of rice.

UNDP employee found dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

An employee of UNDP was found dead at his residence at Narsingdi in the city yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Derek Pollack, 42, from his first floor residence and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

The body of Derek, a radio telecommunications technician of UNDP's Dhaka office, was found naked lying face-down, police said quoting the FIR filed with the Ramma thana by his brother.

Police said Derek was staying in the house alone. A driver with a transport of the UNDP went to Derek's residence at about 7:30am yesterday to pick him up. But after repeated calls the driver did not get any response from inside the house and nobody came out, police said.

Speaker: Bill in next JS session for decentralisation of adminn.

By Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 5: A Bill for the decentralisation of the administration will be placed before Parliament in the next session, reports BSS.

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Humayun Rashid Chowdhury said this while inaugurating a five-day training course for tashibiders and assistant tashibiders of Sylhet division.

He said under the Bill, representatives of village, union parishad and zilla parishad will be elected by direct voting of the people.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ayub, the function was also addressed by Ms Jebunessa Huday MP, and divisional commissioner of Sylhet Habibur Rahman.

These programmes are aimed at increasing income and employment for rendering better quality of life for the people.

Kibria said, according to a message received in the city Satur-

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PHILIPS



BGMEA President Redwan Ahmed presenting a crest of the organisation to BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia at the concluding ceremony of BATEXPO '96 at a city hotel yesterday.

— Star photo

Khaleda assures investors