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VC leaves KU handing over charge to hony Treasurer

By Quazi Amanullah KHULNA, Aug 9: Vice Chancellor of Khulna University Prof Golam Ali Fakir left the city bag and baggage yesterday afternoon handing over charge temporarily to Sardar Abdur Razzak, honorary Treasurer of the university and Senior Vice President of City Awami League.

The handover of charge to a leader of the ruling party has evoked indignation among the teachers of the university.

When contacted, a spokesman of the Academic Council said that the VC handed over charge to a political leader with the ulterior motive of vitiating the academic atmosphere. This was done in total disregard of senior professors who deserved the post as per university rules, he added.

Meanwhile, the teachers have made it clear to the honorary treasurer that he should not use the VC's office.

JRC standing body meets in Lalmonirhat today

From Our Correspondent RANGPUR, Aug 9: A meeting of the Standing Committee of the Indo-Bangla Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) is scheduled to start in Lalmonirhat from tomorrow.

The four-day long meeting will include inspection of Teesta river water flow and embankment across both Bangladesh and Indian sides in Lalmonirhat and Jalpaiguri.

A five-member team led by Suresh Chandra Mondal, a JRC member, will represent the Indian side while a four-member team led by Khalilur Rahman, a JRC member will represent Bangladesh.

Both the teams will visit the Bangladesh side of Teesta tomorrow and the day after and will hold a meeting at Teesta Barage Project rest house. During the next two days they will go on a similar visit on the Indian side.

The standing committee during their four-day programmes is expected to chalk out a final decision on construction of flood protection embankment along the right bank of Teesta across both edges of Zero-point in Lalmonirhat and Jalpaiguri districts.

A JRC source said that a ministerial level JRC meeting will be held in India in November next in which an accord on Teesta river water sharing and construction of embankment is expected to be signed.

Khaleda leaves for US Aug 23

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to leave Dhaka for Los Angeles on August 23 on a 10-day visit to USA, party sources said yesterday, reports UNB.

The details of her US visit, at the invitation of the Los Angeles unit of BNP, will be formally announced in a couple of days.

During the visit, the BNP chairperson will attend a conference of the party's Los Angeles unit. She will also attend

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Rival body of PCJSS formed in Agartala to foil peace talks

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Aug 9: A rival organisation of the Parbatya Chittagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) has been formed in Agartala, capital of Tripura State of India, to foil the peace talks by Jotin-driya Bodipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma, according to reports from across the border.

The organisation, named New Chittagong Hill Tract Council, has been formed under the leadership of Priti Kumar Chakma, who remained inactive after his followers, numbering over 200, surrendered en masse in 1985 at Rangmati.

Since then, Priti Kumar has been at Agartala. When the ray of hope for settlement of the long-drawn hill tracts problem flickered, the mentors of Shantubahini reportedly became active to keep the insurgency alive in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They prompted Priti Kumar Chakma to form a rival faction to torpedo the move for a solution of the hill tracts issue, according to the reports.

The new organisation was formed at the end of June. Informed sources believe that with the emergence of such a rival faction under the leadership

of Priti Kumar Chakma, aided by Bhabatosh Dewan Giri, the hope for an end to insurgency in the CHT is now almost bleak.

Bhabatosh Dewan Giri was once a stalwart of the PCJSS. He was sacked for his alleged involvement in defalcation of funds.

The rival organisation led by Priti also enjoys the support of hardliners backed by Ushatan Talukdar known as 'Major Moloy' who supports continuation of armed struggle to establish 'Jummland', according to the reports.

Activists being appointed in varsities, says Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the standard of education has declined sharply following politicisation of the administration and appointment of 'inefficient and unqualified' people in higher positions, reports UNB.

As a result of appointment of 'activist-type people' in higher seats of learning, she said, a near-deadlock situation is now prevailing in the universities. The campuses have become 'safe haven' for the terrorists, she added.

Begum Zia was talking to a group of Dhaka University teachers who called on her at her 29 Minto Road official residence in the city last night.

She said capturing of residential halls, eviction of opposition supporters from campuses and terrorism became a regular phenomenon since assumption of office by the present government.

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Most halls to be evacuated tomorrow Fresh DU move to rehabilitate 'genuine' students

Most of the residential halls of Dhaka University will be evacuated on Tuesday for rehabilitating genuine students in their respective dormitories by the day, reports UNB.

This was decided at a meeting of the university's Paribesh Parishad at Senate Hall on the campus yesterday.

The meeting, presided over by DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, also decided to strengthen implementation of an eight-point agreement, between authorities and student bodies reached earlier, from today.

Yesterday's Paribesh Parishad meeting was scheduled for discussion on the latest situation of the university plagued by showdowns between the activities of dominant student bodies.

According to the decisions, all the portraits made at the

campus with 'political motivation' will be removed this morning.

Leaders of the different student organisations will provide lists of their 'displaced' supporters who were not residing in their respective halls due to hostility of rival student organisations.

Authorities will verify the list on Monday.

On Tuesday all the residential halls, except three female dormitories and Suryasen and Jagannath halls, will be vacated and students be brought back there one after another under direct supervision of the authorities in presence of student leaders.

Students will be allowed to enter their halls only after checking identity cards.

According to the agreed process, Kabi Jasmuddin, Bangabandhu and Ziaur Rahman

halls will be evacuated at 9:30 am and students will enter their halls by 11:30 am.

The process will be repeated at Mohsin Hall and AF Rahman Hall between 11 am to 12 am, Shahidullah and Fazul Haq halls 12 am to 1:30 pm and for SM Hall and Jahurul Haq Hall from 3 am to 4 am.

Classes will not be held on Tuesday while other official activities be held as usual.

For this, a meeting of the house tutors has been scheduled for today at 6 pm at the Senate Room.

Among others, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie, Habib-un-Nabi Sohel, Shahabuddin Laltu and Selimuzzaman Selim of JCD, Enamul Haq Shamim, Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, Abdul Wadud Khokon and Bahadur Bepari of BCL attended the meeting.

Demolition of ablution room of mosque sparks protest

By Staff Correspondent

At least 15 people including four policemen were injured during a clash yesterday over demolition of an ablution room at the Nawab Bari Jame Mosque in Old Dhaka on Thursday night.

Police said the incident occurred when a group of local people who had allegedly demolished the ablution room came to the mosque area near Ahsan Manzil at about 2 pm yesterday. More than one hundred people supporting the mosque committee which is opposed to the demolition, chased the group.

The feuding groups exchanged bricks and staged chase and counter-chase till police dispersed them.

The injured persons were taken to local clinics. The wounded policemen including a sub-inspector, Zahid, were taken to police hospital.

Witnesses said a group of local people, reportedly backed by some influential persons in the area, came to the mosque at about midnight Thursday. All of a sudden, they partially demolished the ablution room saying that a multi-storied building would be built there.

After Thursday's incident, secretary of the mosque committee Abdus Sattar filed a general diary with the Kotwali thana in this regard.

After yesterday's incident, the secretary filed a case with Kotwali thana under sections 143, 448, 380 and 427 of the Penal Code. He accused about 50 people and named 10 of them in the FIR.

However, none was arrested.



Local people protesting demolition of the ablution room of Nawab Bari Jame Masjid in the old part of the city yesterday. — Star photo

Abul Hossain calls on PM again to explain position

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reportedly expressed disappointment when State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Syed Abul Hossain met her last night to explain his position regarding his controversial visit to Singapore last week.

This was for the second time the state minister met the Prime Minister since her return from the US on August 6. Earlier, Abul Hossain met her on Thursday.

The state minister went to Singapore on August 3 carrying a green passport, instead of his diplomatic passport.

Abul Hossain, however, did not attend the Awami League Central Working Committee meeting on Friday.

All members of the cabinet belonging to AL were invited to attend the meeting. As LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman is now on a visit to the US, the state minister was invited to attend it.

At the meeting Sheikh Hasina enquired about the developments under various ministries during her three-week stay abroad.

A cabinet member confirmed Abul Hossain's absence from the meeting and said that the meeting held at the Ganobhaban did not discuss the state minister's controversial foreign trip.

None can possess two passports at a time. This is unethical and embarrassing, said the minister, preferring anonymity.

Miladunnabi function incident: Time for probe body extended

By Special Correspondent

The three-member committee probing the untoward incident at the Miladunnabi function at Baitul Mukarram mosque on July 17 has been given further seven days to complete its enquiry, officials said yesterday.

The committee, headed by Sohrabuddin Ahmed, Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs, was scheduled to submit its report on Thursday. But the authorities extended its tenure for another week to complete the enquiry.

Earlier, the enquiry committee was formed on July 22 by the Islamic Foundation (IF) after a meeting of its governing body, presided over by State Minister for Religious Affairs Nurul Islam.

The meeting also decided to serve a showcause notice upon Maulana Obaidul Huq, Khatib of the National Mosque Baitul Mukarram. He was asked to explain his role on the July 17 incident when some unruly elements hurled shoes at the

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Statement against finance ministry position PM rebukes Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir

Star Report

Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has rebuked her party colleagues not to consider themselves indispensable for any position in the party or the government and asked them to keep in mind that she had 'thrown away many gems' while leading Awami League to power.

She was presiding over a meeting of the party central working committee on Friday. Some ministers, who are not members of the committee, were also present at the meeting.

At a stage, the premier strongly criticised State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir for a recent public statement that went directly against 'an official position' of the Finance Ministry, meeting sources said.

Publicly opposing the min-

istry's position that 50 per cent equity was necessary for the industrialists to get fresh loans, Alamgir reportedly said that 20 per cent equity should have been considered adequate. The Prime Minister found Alamgir's statement 'acrimonious' against Finance Minister SAMS Kibria and said, 'I have come to the present position, throwing away many gems across my path. So none should consider himself indispensable for the party and the government.'

The issue of reported misbehaviour of two leading businessmen with the Governor of Bangladesh Bank also figured at the meeting and some leaders expressed 'resentment' at this.

Hasina asked the party leaders to devote themselves to the cause of the party and the people.

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BNP activist held for killing Jubo Dal leader

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Aug 9: An accused in the killing of a local Jubo Dal leader, Kabiruzzaman, was arrested last night.

Police said, Abdul Hai, an activist of BNP, was arrested with arms from near the Saikupa thana.

Acting on a tip-off, police challenged Abdul Hai at about 11 pm when he was passing through the area on a motorcycle. Police recovered a gun and two bullets from him. A case was filed with Saikupa thana in this connection.

4 bodies recovered in Savar

SAVAR, Aug 9: Police recovered four bodies from separate places in the thana today, reports UNB.

They recovered the body of one Mamata Mia, 20, from Mohanpur village. He died reportedly by hanging himself over a family feud.

Also in Savar, Tomas Kuzar, 23, died by taking poison. His body was recovered from Rajashan area.

Besides, the bodies of Jaimal Abedin, a worker of BFP and Noor Alam, a maid at Bank colony here were recovered today. Both of them were electrocuted.

Discontent in Ctg 'rebel' faction of BNP persists

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 9: A simmering discontent is prevailing in the rank and file of the 'rebel faction' of BNP in Chittagong although it has been somewhat tamed following intervention by the party high command, party insiders said.

The 'rebel faction', led by Abdullah Al Noman, had been opposing the new Chittagong city committee of the party, formed recently with Mir Md Nasiruddin and Dostagir Chowdhury as its president and general secretary respectively.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia had recently summoned party leaders of Chittagong to Dhaka and held a meeting with them.

The high command instructed the 'rebel' leaders not to defy the decision of the central leaders, they said.

The high command assured the 'rebel' leaders that their de-

mands would be looked into, the insiders said.

The high command also gave an assurance of an 'enquiry through individual channels' into the lapses, if any, in formation of the new committee. If any lapse is detected, the high command may go for a 'reshuffle' in the same committee and drop some controversial members', party insiders also said.

The sources said such an indication from the high command has helped a lot to calm down the agitators.

Party sources, however, hinted that the 'chronic' intra-party rivalry in Chittagong, might result in 'another outburst later' if no change is done in the new committee.

On Thursday, Abdullah Al Noman returned to Chittagong from Dhaka and held a meeting at the party office at Nasimn

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Cancellation of 'disputed' GSP certificates Govt in dilemma as rival lobbies active to influence decision

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi and Inam Ahmed

The government is in a dilemma as rival garment sector lobbies try to influence its decision to cancel 'disputed' GSP certificates, with the EU deadline less than two months away.

Senior officials indicated yesterday that the decision was unlikely to come soon while the EU remained tough in its stance.

'We will definitely try to protect our interests and decide accordingly,' Commerce Secretary Alam Farooq Chowdhury said. He said the government would weigh whether some exporters losing Tk 100-150 crore would matter much or not.

Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed plans to travel to Brussels

once again to do the last-minute lobbying with EU officials, while the leaders of BGMEA yesterday came up with strong statements denouncing the EC demand.

Chowdhury said the minister would make the trip around September 18 or 19, less than two weeks before the October deadline.

'It's irrational and we strongly protest the move,' BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Qudus said. 'The government will have to pay for the compensation if the certificates are cancelled,' Qudus said in an interview with BBC yesterday.

'The Export Promotion Bureau followed prevalent and

practical procedures in issuing the certificates,' the BGMEA president said. Qudus claimed that the EC team visited the factories against which complaints came and didn't report anything irregular.

Some 60 companies with 6910 GSP certificates come under the Schedule B category, which has been the bone of contention.

A knitwear factory owner gave a different view of the crisis. 'If the government does not cancel the certificates under the pressure of these 60 units, some of which belong to some very influential quarters, thousands of other units will suffer by the EU action,' the garment exporter said.

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Sonia urged to take over Congress leadership



CALCUTTA, Aug 9: India's Congress(I) Party today urged Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of slain Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, to take over leadership of the party, reports AFP.

Congress President Sitaram Kesri made the appeal while addressing delegates on the second day of a national convention here, being attended by Sonia Gandhi, 50.

'Though I am the elected president of the party, I have no hesitation in offering you the party leadership,' an emotionally-charged Kesri said at the end of his hour-long speech.

'Do what you feel like, Madame Gandhi, but don't delink yourself from the Congress. Be with us.'

'This party has a history closely linked with your family,' he said, referring to Sonia's assassinated husband Gandhi, his mother Indira Gandhi and grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru, who was India's first prime minister.

'Age is not on my side,' said Kesri, 77, who became president of the Congress, India's oldest party, after it was routed in the 1996 elections.

'I want to tell Sonia Gandhi that if the Congress breaks up, the country will break up. You are the symbol of strength... keep the Congress alive.'

'You are a source of inspiration. Millions of Congressmen want you to guide us.'

Sonia Gandhi, in a brief

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Mamata breaks with Congress

CALCUTTA, Aug 9: Rebel Congress MP, Mamata Banerjee today broke ranks with the Congress and launched a new party, Trinamool (grassroots) Congress, claiming it is the real Congress, reports PTI.

Announcing her decision at a massive rally of her supporters a little distance away from the venue of the Congress plenary, Banerjee lashed out at the Congress leadership for holding the 'left front government-sponsored plenary session.'

She proposed the name of Mr Pankaj Banerjee, MLA, as the president of the new party which the rally approved by show of hands. A former MLA was nominated as the Birbhum district president, she said adding that appointments would be made on August 13.

Stating that she wanted to continue her fight from within

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16 gunned down in Pak sectarian violence

MULTAN, Aug 9: Unidentified assailants gunned down 16 people today in two religiously motivated attacks in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province, reports AP.

Police said the attacks were the latest in violence between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim groups that has left almost 200 dead this year.

Shops in both towns closed soon after the attacks and residents took to the streets beating their chests in grief.

Many shouted slogans calling on the government to provide better protection against the sectarian violence wracking the province.

In the first attack, four men on motorcycles sprayed automatic gunfire at seven Shi'ite Muslims sleeping on mats outside their shops in the Punjab village of Muzaffargarh, 40

kilometers west of Multan.

The victims were members of the extremist Movement for Shi'ite Law, police said. They all died instantly.

In a separate attack in Warburton, 250 kilometers to the north, near the Punjab capital, Lahore, three motorcyclists armed with rifles killed nine people standing at a bus stop, police and hospital officials said. Seven people were injured, some critically.

Authorities said seven of the dead were Shi'ite Muslims and two were Sunnis. Police believe the Sunnis were caught in the crossfire.

Police in nearby Shaikpura arrested five men suspected of carrying out the attack. Punjab authorities said, the men were moved to the special Anti-Terrorist police unit in the Punjab

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Jyoti iterates support for implementation of water treaty

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad called on West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu at his Salt Lake residence yesterday, reports UNB.

During the meeting in the evening, they discussed matters of mutual interest, according to a message received in Dhaka.

Jyoti Basu reiterated the West Bengal government's continued support for the implementation of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty and said that his government was making efforts to augment the flow of the river Ganga at Farakka.

Azad, now in Calcutta to attend the 80th plenary session of All India Congress Committee, appreciated the role played by

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26 passports with forged visas

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) of police recovered a large number of passports with forged visas from a house in city's Kotwali thana area yesterday.

The police team during a raid in the house on Kailash Ghosh Lane also arrested one person identified as Manik Kumar Das, 50, in connection with the forgery.

Police said Manik was the leader of an international gang involved in forgery for a long time.

The seized goods included 26 international passports with forged visas of India, Pakistan, Romania and Thailand. Police also recovered forged seal of immigration officer of the Zia International Airport, embossed seal used in preparing fake passports and a large number of visa forms of Thai embassy.

A case was filed in this connection and police were interrogating the arrested person.

Two brothers electrocuted

TANGAIL, Aug 9: Two brothers were electrocuted at Chokpara village in Modhupur thana of the district today, police said, reports UNB.

Azharul Islam, 30, a Lance Nayek of Ghatail Cantonment, fell into a death trap while repairing a live-electric wire at his residence at about 1 pm.

His teenage brother, Babul, also lost his life when he tried to rescue his elder brother. Both of them died on the spot.

A UD case was filed with local police.

Terrorist Ratan arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police arrested Ratan, an alleged terrorist from the city's Shiddheswary area yesterday.

Police said he was the gang leader of a terrorist group called 'Ratan group', involved in various crimes including smuggling of phensydil in Shiddheswary, Shantinagar and Chamlybag areas of the city.

Ratan is an accused in more than half a dozen of cases with Ramna and Motijheel thanas, police added.

Bus strike in Sylhet-Sunamganj route from today

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Aug 9: The Bus and Minibus Workers Association of Sylhet-Sunamganj route has called an indefinite transport strike in the route from tomorrow protesting toll collection at the Lamakabi bridge point.

The Association claimed that toll collection at the bridge was withdrawn by the authorities but some local people are collecting it illegally and harassing transport workers.