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Proposal for barbed
wire fencing
along border
rejected

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh has not agreed to an Indian proposal for erecting barbed wire fencing along the "zero line" at Hilli of Fulbari, according to official sources.

The BBC and some local dailies earlier reported that Dhaka had agreed to erect wire fencing on the "zero line" although barbed wire fencing is supposed to be erected 150 metres from the international border zone.

The chief of BDR, Major General Azizur Rahman, when asked, told The Daily Star, "The news is not at all correct."

Mentionably, a border con-

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JRC talks begin
in Lalmonirhat
tomorrow

ALMONIRHAT, Aug 27: A two-day secretary level meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission will begin here on Friday to discuss sharing of the Teesta waters, according to official sources.

The meeting will be held at the Bashar rest house of the Teesta barrages project.

ATM Shamsul Huda, Secretary of Water Resources Ministry, will lead a 10-member Bangladeshi team at the talks while Sreemata Proshad, secretary of Water Resources Ministry of India, will lead a 9-member Indian team.

The Indian delegation will arrive Dhaka on Thursday and leave for Lalmonirhat on Friday by a Biman flight.

The secretary level meeting is being held as per a decision taken at the minister level JRC meeting held in Dhaka July 19.

The secretary level meeting will be followed by a minister level meeting in Delhi, the sources said.

US Open
Brugera fights
back to beat
Tebbutt

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan

NEW YORK, Aug 27: A fighter that he is, Sergi Brugera of Spain came back from two sets down to beat Michael Tebbutt of Australia in a gruelling five-setter at the brand new Arthur Ashe Stadium today.

Brugera is one of the seven Spanish players who make the bulk of the 16 seeds for this year's US Open.

Brugera is the number 7 seed and he moved into the second round with a 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 win over the young qualifier.

Brugera, a clay court specialist, fought back gamely, hitting the ball very hard. He was also assisted by a huge dose of unforced errors and double faults by his inexperienced opponent.

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Landless households up by 4 pc to 2.18m

The number of absolute landless holdings in the country increased from 8.7 to 12.4 per cent in a decade with a 27 per cent rise in the number of total households, reports UNB.

At present, some 2.18 million households, out of the total 17.58 million, have no land, according to preliminary results of the Bangladesh Census on Agriculture 1996.

The findings were presented at a press briefing in the city yesterday in presence of Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury and State Minister for Planning Dr Muhimuddin Khan Alamgir.

The final result of the survey is expected to be made available by end 1998. The last agri-census was done in 1983-84 and the next is expected to be launched

in 2002.

The new census shows that the percentage of absolute landless and tenant households is on the increase, but of farm households and agricultural labour households marks downturn.

It reveals that 63 per cent of the total households are farm households, 38.2 per cent agricultural labour households and 32 per cent tenant households.

According to the 1983-84 agricultural census, the percentage of farm households was 72, agricultural labour households 39.8, and tenant households was 27.

The number of farm households is now 11.11 million, non-farm households 6.47 million, households taken land from others for farming 5.65

million, and agricultural labour households 6.73 million.

The census collected and prepared data on land ownership and use, tenancy, cropping pattern, irrigation facilities, use of chemical fertiliser, live-stock and poultry and farm population.

Addressing the press, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury termed agriculture "the economic backbone" of the country, contributing one-third of the GDP.

About 70 per cent of our population are directly or indirectly involved in this sector," she added.

Replying to a question, she admitted jute price slump at some places and expressed her hope that the market would

pick up shortly.

"It is not realistic to fix any minimum or maximum price of jute under the current trend of market-based economy," said the minister.

State Minister for Planning Dr MK Alamgir told the Press briefing that a total of 4.87 million bales of jute was produced this season against 4.07 bales the previous year.

He said the total cultivable land in the country is now 22.3 million acres which had not shown any remarkable change in the last few years.

Agriculture Secretary Dr AMM Shawkat Ali and Statistics Division Secretary and Director General of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Waliul Islam were also present.



Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad addressing a rally in the city yesterday, organised by the City Awami League to protest the recent attacks on Sammilito Nari Samaj rally and Awami Ainjibi Parishad seminar.

— Star photo

Foil conspiracy by vested quarters: AL

Ruling Awami League leaders yesterday urged the people to foil conspiracy by vested quarters involved in disrupting democracy and development in the country, reports UNB.

Addressing a rally in front of the National Press Club in the afternoon, the government leaders questioned Begum Zia's trip to Pakistan and her alleged clandestine meeting with the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu there.

They called for unity against conspiracy by fundamentalist and anti-liberation elements who got united under Begum Zia.

Presided over by city Awami League President Mayor Mohammad Hanif, the meeting was addressed, among others,

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ECNEC okays 16 projects worth Tk 990 crore

A meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council yesterday approved 16 projects involving an estimated cost of nearly Tk 990 crore, reports UNB.

The ECNEC meeting, held at Prime Minister's office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, also endorsed the manpower export target set at

205,000 for the current year (1997).

Expressing concern over a slow in implementation of government projects, the Prime Minister directed the authorities concerned to quicken the implementation process of the ongoing projects.

The approved projects include Development of Soil Test, Management and Soil Resources Institute (amended), Establishment of Spices Research Centre (amended), Rural Development Project in Fisheries Sector, Poverty Alleviation under Livestock Development Project through Self-Employment, Larma-Saolok Road Development Project, Sewerage, Health Care and Water Supply Projects in the Rural Areas. Construction of a 33-kv Sub-station and Renovation of Existing 11-kv Sub-stations, Establishment of Fire Service and Civil Defence Station at 25 Important Thana

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Capacity 21: How
far to go?
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Condition of Habib remains unchanged

By Staff Correspondent

The condition of Habibur Rahman Habib, a staff photographer of Dainik Bangla, remained unchanged, hospital sources said last night.

He was shifted to the Intensive Care Unit of the Combined Military Hospital from Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Tuesday night in a critical condition.

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- * This has already been notified to the valued Gas Customers by letters and local miking and resumption of gas supply will also be informed to the Customers by Miking again on completion of the job.
- * Valued Customers are hereby requested not to use any gas appliance during the above period and to provide all necessary cooperations to the Company in this regard.
- * The Company regrets the temporary inconvenience thus caused to the valued Customers.

Authority

BNP lawmaker submits no-confidence notices against 2 ministers

By Nurul Kabir

An opposition MP yesterday submitted to the Jatiya Sangsads Secretariat two separate notices of no-confidence motion against two ministers of the government of Sheikh Hasina.

Major (retd) Akhteruzzaman, a legislator belonging to Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), submitted the notices against Education Minister AHSK Sadeque and Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Lt Gen (retd) Nur Uddin Khan yesterday afternoon.

Under rule 159 and 160 of JS Rules of Procedure, any member can move no-confidence motion against the cabinet and it needs support of 30 members for leave to be discussed in the House. The Rules also say that three days notice would have to be given for the motion to be accepted for discussion.

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But experts say the notices submitted by the BNP lawmaker have strong chances to be rejected on technical ground. "In a parliamentary system of governance, one has to move no-confidence against an entire cabinet, because the cabinet headed by a Prime Minister is collectively responsible to the Parliament," an expert told this correspondent on condition of anonymity.

When contacted BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan expressed his ignorance about the move. "I have not even heard about the move," Bhuiyan said when requested to give his views about the notice of no-confidence against the ministers. Admitting that he had no prior discussion with the party hierarchy, Akhteruzzaman

Liquidity situation in banks comfortable

'Shy lenders making it look like a crisis'

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Liquidity situation in commercial banks are quite comfortable if latest figures are any indication, but the "shy" lenders are making it look like a crisis, top regulators and bankers said.

"There is no liquidity crisis," shot Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfar Rahman Sarker yesterday, citing statistics.

On July 24, according to figures given by the governor to The Daily Star, commercial banks had Tk 2268.99 crore, in excess of 20 per cent mandatory cash reserves under different categories.

A foreign banker lent support to the governor. "I don't

think that there is liquidity crisis in banks. The banks are perhaps shy to lend money, especially in term financing," said Mamun ur Rashid at Standard Chartered Bank in Dhaka.

"In fact, the banking system is way above the mark which is considered comfortable," Rashid said.

Many, including donors, believe a Tk 1500-crore excess liquidity is considered comfortable by Bangladesh's market standards.

According to the Bangladesh Bank, excess liquidity stood at Tk 1700 crore on June 30, 1997 and six weeks later, on August

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Sifat-e-Manzur rendering Nazrul song at a city function yesterday.— Star photo

Tributes paid to Nazrul

The 21st death anniversary of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was observed across the country yesterday, reports UNB.

To mark the day, different organisations held various programmes, including placing of wreaths at the poet's mazar, discussion and musical soiree.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organised a discussion meeting at its auditorium in the afternoon which was followed by a cultural function.

Dr Razia Khan Amin, Dr Mohammad Abdul Quayum, Dr Abul Ahsan Chowdhury and Shantuani Kaiser took part in the discussion with Mostafa Nur-ul-Islam in the chair.

Dhaka University held a

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Bangladesh to open missions in Jordan, Brunei

Bangladesh has decided to open diplomatic missions at Amman in Jordan and Bandar Seri Begawan in Brunei. Darussalam, reports UNB.

Official sources said the Cabinet had already approved the decision to establish diplomatic missions in the two countries.

Dhaka opened its mission in oil-rich Brunei, located on the Coast of the South China sea, in early 1980s. But it was closed down in late 80's.

The government is considering to open a diplomatic mission in Male, the capital of the Maldives, one of the seven SAARC countries. Bangladesh has diplomatic missions in six other countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Dhaka opened its mission in

oil-rich Brunei, located on the Coast of the South China sea, in early 1980s. But it was closed down in late 80's.

At this, the PW-9 said, "It has been misprinted, and the word 'armed forces' should have been used instead of 'rakkhi bahini'.

Rezzak Khan, lawyer of an

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