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VOL. VII NO. 213 REGD. NO. DA 781 BHADRA 13 1404 BS. DHAKA THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1997 RABUS SAANI 23 1418 HIJRI 12 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS: PRICE TAKA 9.00

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 Hill 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 commission is expected to be launched

JRC talks begin in Lalmonirhat tomorrow

LALMONIRHAT, 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 Bashur rest house of the Teesta barrage project.

ATM Shamsul Huda, Secretary of Water Resources Ministry, will lead a 10-member Bangladesh 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 19-20.

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

US Open Bruguera fights back to beat Tebbutt

From Tawfik Aziz Khan
NEW YORK, Aug 27: A fighter that he is, Sergi Bruguera 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.

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

Bruguera 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.

Bruguera, 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 17.59 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 Muhiuddin 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 household is on the increase, but of farm households and agricultural labour households marks downward.

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, livestock 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

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's 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



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



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

DU Dean polls White Panel bags 4 seats, Blue 3

By DU Correspondent
The pro-BNP White panel bagged four seats and pro-Awami League Blue panel got three seats in the Dean elections of Dhaka University held yesterday.

The left-leaning Pink panel did not get any seat.

Voting was held at the TSC of the university from 9 am to 1 pm. Prof M Shamsul Haq, Treasurer of the university, conducted the election.

Elections for six seats of Deans were held yesterday. Prof Moniruddin Ahmed of the Blue panel was earlier declared elected uncontested Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy.

Prof Asaduzzaman of White panel was re-elected Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. He

Tk 113 cr Japanese grant for three projects

Bangladesh will receive 2,984 million Yen or Tk 113.2 crore as grant aid from Japan for modernising BTV, improving weather warning service and eradicating polio, reports UNB.

Three agreements to this effect were signed at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) yesterday.

Officials at the Japanese embassy here said under the first Exchange of Notes, the Japanese government will provide 1,123 million Yen or Tk 42.6 crore for the Project to Supply of equipment for Bangladesh Television.

The fund will be utilised for the procurement of modern equipment and machinery to replace the old and dysfunctional audio, lighting and other equipment of Dhaka Television Centre.

Under the second Exchange of Notes, Bangladesh will receive a grant assistance of 1,473 million Yen (Tk 55.9 crore) from Japan for the project for Improvement of Weather Warning Service Related to Natural Disasters.

The grant amount will be used for the installation of a radar system in Rangpur and the replacement of the existing radar system in capital Dhaka.

Japan will provide Bangladesh with a grant assistance of 386 million Yen, equivalent to Tk 14.7 crore, under the third Exchange of Notes for the project "Eradication of Poliomyelitis (II)".

Among the six major diseases, which are covered by the routine EPI programme in the

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 Quyum, Dr Abul Ahsan Chowdhury and Shantunur Kaiser took part in the discussion with Mostafa Nur-ul-Islam in the chair.

Dhaka University held a

Foil conspiracy by vested quarters: AL

NEW YORK, Aug 27: Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia arrived here Tuesday afternoon ending her three-day visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, reports UNB.

The BNP Chairperson, who had embarked on her two-nation tour on August 23, will inaugurate a grand conference of the Federation of Bangladesh Associations in North America (FOBANA) on August 29 (Friday) in Los Angeles.

On her arrival at John F Kennedy Airport here, Begum Zia was received by her special envoy Monzur Morshed Khan MP, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP, Ehsanul Haq Milon MP, Haris Chowdhury and other leaders who came to New York earlier to coordinate the programme of Begum Zia in the USA.

Bangladesh Consul General

Khaleda in New York

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Bangladesh Consul General

PW-9 says during cross-examination Bangabandhu asked Shafiullah to send troops, but none came

By Staff Correspondent

The chain of command in the Armoured Corps and the Artillery Corps had broken down when Bangabandhu and his family members were killed on August 15, 1975. Lt Col (ret'd) M A Hamid, ninth prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu murder case, said during his cross-examination in the Court in District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka yesterday.

He, however said, "Break in the chain of command is not a mutiny or insubordination".

The lawyer of one of the five accused in custody completed his cross-examination of the PW-9 yesterday. The court was adjourned till 10:00 am Monday when cross-examination by the lawyer of another accused in custody was in progress.

Lt Col (ret'd) Hamid, the 66 years old former Station Commander of Dhaka, is also the author of the book: Three military coups and some untold stories. The book was frequently quoted by the defence counsels during the cross-examination.

Hamid said that the occurrence of August 15, 1975 was one of the three incidents about which the book has been written. "I do not consider it (the August 15 incident) to be a coup," he added.

M A Hamid also told the court that he had to privately investigate into the incident for writing his book. He had interviewed retired army officers for writing the book, he said. "I had already retired from the Army when I started writing the book."

Defence counsel Khan Saifur Rahman quoted a paragraph from the book which said, "As the President's house was raided in broad day light, 3000 troops of the Rakhi Bahini stood sullenly and silently only at a little distance while the police and the BDR were fast asleep. There were about 40/50 guards of Rakhi Bahini deployed in that house for security."

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

Rezzak Khan, lawyer of an-

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).

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 sloth 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, Lama-Soalok 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

Attack on slum in Bhasantek: Cantt Thana OC closed

The Officer-in-Charge of Cantonment Thana was closed yesterday as he failed to provide security to the dwellers of Bhasantek slum where terrorists made a series of attacks, reports UNB.

The terrorists finally attacked the slum on Tuesday, assaulting women, looting belongings of the inmates and forcing some 600 people to leave the slum.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Headquarters sources said Cantonment Thana totally failed to nab the terrorists despite repeated request from the slum dwellers.

The DMP closed OC Shahabuddin after Tuesday's attack and appointed Inspector Abdul Awal of Reserve Forces new OC.

Cantonment police said the situation is now normal in the slum area. The people who left the slum after Tuesday's attack returned to their homes.

BNP to hold demonstrations today

By Staff Correspondent
BNP will hold demonstrations in the capital and other divisional headquarters today to press for its demands including withdrawal of the price hike of fuel and release of its arrested leaders and workers.

A party statement called all its units and the front organisations of the areas concerned to organise rallies and processions to make today's programme a success.

BNP lawmaker submits no-confidence notices against 2 ministers

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

Major (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman, a legislator belonging to Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), submitted the notices against Education Minister Atiuk Siddique and Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Lt Gen (ret'd) 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.

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, Akhtaruzzaman

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