



VOL. VII NO. 215 REGD. NO. DA 781

BHADRA 15 1404 BS.

DHAKA SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 1997

RABIUS SAANI 25 1418 HIJRI

12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

## JS goes into autumn session today

The Seventh Jatiya Sangsad goes into its autumn session at 4 pm today after a recess of about two months, reports UNB.

Although the session is likely to be of one week's duration, it would deal with some pressing economic and political issues, and several important legislations.

One of the main tasks left unresolved before Seventh Parliament is the formation of parliamentary standing committees on different ministries.

The last budget session ended on July 10 with a note of optimism from both the treasury and opposition benches that the parliamentary committees, now long overdue, would be constituted during this session.

The two sides were learnt to have reached an understanding on the representation to the standing committees, to be headed by non-minister MPs instead of ministers.

However, during the long recess of parliament, there has not been any communication between the negotiators on the two sides, and the main opposition BNP has not sent the list of its MPs to be inducted into the standing committees on 35 ministries.

Law, Justice and Parliament—See Page 12 Col 3

## Lawlessness grips country, Khaleda tells Rotarians in Los Angeles

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia said in Los Angeles yesterday that lawlessness was on the rise and human rights were being trampled every day in Bangladesh.

"Extortion, toll collection, campus violence, rape and repression on women and political killings have become commonplace," the BNP chief said while addressing a conference of Rotarians, the Media Syndicate reported.

The news agency delivered a copy of Begum Zia's speech at the conference but did not mention the venue of the "Rotary International Conference."

Begum Khaleda Zia, now in a visit to the US, was also scheduled to open a three-day conference of the Federation of Bangladesh Associations in North America (FOBANA) in See Page 12 Col 6

## US Open

### Spirlea moves into 4th round

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan  
NEW YORK, Aug 29: Irina Spirlea of Romania moved into the 4th round of '97 US Open today defeating Lilia Osterloh in straight sets. Spirlea, who had earlier in the second round created quite a sensation by defeating the much-heralded Anna Kournikova won a lacklustre match 6-2, 7-5 against an opponent who committed as many as 10 'double faults' in a two-setter. At the time of filing this report, the Wimbledon runners-up Cedric Pioline has won his match against Lapenttin in straight sets 6-0, 6-4, 6-2 and Woodforde of Australia was leading 6-3, 6-4, 2-3 against the former French Open champion Kafelnikov at Stadium 1. Tim Henman of Britain who accounted for Thomas Muster Wednesday will play W Ferreira of South Africa at Stadium 2.

## Inside Today

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Rescuers carrying a body recovered from the Ichhamati river near Uthali in Manikganj where a bus plunged, killing at least 14 passengers yesterday.

## 14 killed as minibus plunges into river near Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Aug 29: At least 14 people, including two women and five children, were killed when a mini-bus fell into the Ichhamati river after breaking the railing of a bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway near Uthali under Shibabala thana, reports UNB.

Many passengers were still missing as the rescuers continued their search for the bodies of survivors in 25-feet deep water.

The accident occurred at about 11.25 am when the driver lost control over the packed Aricha-bound bus while crossing a speed-breaker at high speed. Fire brigade sources and local people said.

Of the dead, eight were identified as Pannu, 16, Matin, 10, Ripon, 10, Tanjina, 6, Dina, 9, Nur Mohammad, 50, Joyonuri Begum, 17, and Abir Hossain, 10.

Some sixteen injured passengers were admitted to Ghior

hospital and some were taken to Manikganj sadar hospital.

The seriously injured passengers, admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital, were: Rahim and Amir of Bachamara, Nasrul of Madarbaria, Pabna, Siraj of Manikganj DC office, Monowara of Paschim Dasra, Rokeya of Nabinagar, Kefatulla of Dhamrai, Jhantu of Baghuti, Badsha of Kashinathpur and Matur Rahman of Pabna.

Besides, Jashim of Fulhara, Rabeya of Nadapur, Matiar of Shariatpur, Shashanka of Kalagaria, Chan of Charkatari and Korshed of Bachamara were admitted to Uthuli Hospital.

The bus was also carrying passengers on the rooftop, said a survivor.

Immediately after the accident, fire brigade, police and local people started the rescue operation. Later, a team from Dhaka fire brigade joined the rescue work.

A crane from Dhaka reached the spot in the evening to salvage the bus.

In another road accident in Comilla, three members of a bridal party were killed and 10 others injured at Lalbagh in Sadar thana on Dhaka-Chittagong highway today.

Police said three men, including a Union Parishad member, died on the spot when a microbus carrying the bridal party collided with a bus.

The dead were identified as Tofazzal Hossain, 50, a UP member of Burichang thana, and Zahurul Huq, 40, and Moqbul, 20, of Chotora area of the town.

Of the injured, four were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition and two admitted to Comilla General Hospital.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: A collision between an auto-rickshaw and a tempo left See Page 12 Col 4



## Actress Shama killed as truck hits car

By Staff Correspondent

A promising young actress of the Dhaka film world, Shama, and two of her relatives were killed when a truck hit their car on Tongi Division Road at Tejgaon in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Four others were injured in the accident that took place at about 3:15 am, police said.

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## Depression

### Low-lying areas of southern dists inundated

From Staff Correspondent

The country's southern parts experienced day-long gusty wind, drizzles and inclement weather due to a depression that crossed coastal areas early yesterday morning.

The storm moved to the Indian state of Orissa at 3 am and lashed Madhya Pradesh yesterday evening.

The capital city witnessed a gloomy weather under the influence of the monsoon depression.

Our Barisal Correspondent says, low lying areas of the southern districts of Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Pirojpur, Jhalakati and Barguna have been inundated due to heavy rain caused by the depression.

Water levels in major rivers like Meghna, Padma, Atrial Kha, Paira, Bishkhali, Sandha, Tetulia, Baleswar and Kirtonkhola have marked sharp rise. The Bay of Bengal was also very rough.

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## 'Representation of women in JS should be increased'

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar here yesterday stressed the need for increasing women's representation in the Jatiya Sangsad for their empowerment.

Political parties can play a vital role in this regard, they said while speaking on "Consideration for amendment of certain provisions of constitution for women empowerment in Bangladesh," at the city's WVA auditorium. The seminar was organised by Women for Women, a research group.

"If women had one third representation in Parliament, the country would then prosper in many other ways. Women can hardly ventilate their problems

See Page 12 Col 2

## Formal talks today to finalise proposals for Teesta accord

LALMONIRHAT, Aug 29: A secretary-level informal meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) between Bangladesh and India was held tonight at the Teesta Barrage rest house, Abashar, 64 kilometres from here, reports UNB.

The much-awaited secretary-level formal talks of the JRC will be held tomorrow at the same venue to formulate the final proposal for an agreement on sharing of water of the Teesta river.

In the light of the decision of tomorrow's meeting, an agree-

ment is expected to be signed at the 33rd ministerial meeting of the JRC in New Delhi in November.

A 10-member Bangladesh delegation headed by Water Resources Secretary, Dr ATM Shamsul Huda and a 9-member Indian delegation led by Water Resources Secretary, Mata Prasad arrived here tonight and held the informal meeting.

Earlier, the two delegations flew to Saidpur from the capital in the afternoon and visited the canal of the Teesta Barrage project at Dhundibari in Jaldihaka thana of Nilphamari district.

During the informal talks, the officials mainly analysed data of the river's water flow of last 50 years, particularly the records of lean period. Local officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) assisted both the delegations.

An informed source told UNB that the Bangladesh side will highlight the issue of unilateral withdrawal of the Teesta water by India in lean season in the formal talks.

There are two barrages in the river which comes from Sikkim, one at Gazaldoba in India and the other at Doani in Bangladesh, the distance between them being only 60 kilometres.

See Page 12 Col 1

## Teams from India, Bangladesh to inspect border areas in Sept

RAJSHAHI, Aug 29: A two-day formal border talks between India and Bangladesh began here today focusing on issues, like smuggling, border crimes and repair of border pillars, reports UNB.

It was decided in the meeting that two teams from the two countries will jointly visit the frontier areas of Murshidabad and Rajshahi districts in the

See Page 12 Col 8

## Consumers owe Tk 800 cr to DESA & DESA owes Tk 730 cr to PDB

By Sharier Khan

Different government, semi-government and autonomous organisations and private consumers owe the Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (DESA) about Tk 800 crore, a sum equivalent to 11 months' bills.

On the other hand, DESA owes Tk 730 crore to the Power Development Board (PDB) which sells about 1000 MW of power a day to DESA, according to official statistics.

Of the outstanding DESA bills, some Tk 600 crore is due from private consumers. Tk 123 crore from semi-government and autonomous bodies and Tk 60 crore from government organisations.

One of the biggest defaulters is Adamjee Jute Mills which owes DESA about Tk 50 crore.

Private or domestic users consume 42 per cent of the power distributed and billed by DESA. It has more than 5.87 lakh consumers and their demand is growing by 8 to 12 per cent a year.

About the outstanding bills, DESA officials said besides non-cooperation from the defaulters, there was a lack of

drive among DESA workers in collecting the bills.

According to DESA records, all of its outstanding bills have piled up over the years as the gross collection and gross billing ratio steadily remained around a poor 80 per cent since 1992.

In fiscal '96-97, DESA's gross billing was Tk 874 crore and it collected Tk 708 crore.

DESA's performance, in terms of given targets and its achievements had remained far from satisfactory over the years.

The government had given a target of lowering the system loss of DESA to 22.82 per cent in 1992-93, but DESA could lower it to 31 per cent. In '93-94, the target was 22 per cent but it was lowered to 31.34 per cent; in '94-95, target 24.93 per cent, lowered to 30 per cent; in '95-96, target 22 per cent, lowered to 29.47 per cent and in '96-97, target was 23.96 per cent but it was lowered to 27.29 per cent.

DESA losses about Tk 400 crore in revenue because of system loss.

## 300 massacred in Algeria

ALGIERS, Aug 29: Attackers massacred at least 300 villagers, slitting their throats, decapitating many of them and then burning their bodies in the worst such attack since the Islamic insurgency began five years ago, villagers said today, reports AP.

The attackers placed the decapitated heads of some of the victims on the doorposts of their homes in the village of Rais, in the southern suburb of Sidi Moussa, where the overnight attack took place.

The attackers, whom villagers described as hooded and armed with knives and axes, arrived in trucks and cars. After the attack, they set off explosives at some of the homes before leaving.

They also kidnapped about 20 young girls from the village, the residents said. The villagers all spoke on condition of anonymity, for fear of reprisals.

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An AP journalist arriving at the scene this morning saw at least 100 bodies lying in their streets. But villagers said at least 300 had been killed. Their accounts could not be independently confirmed.

Earlier, hospital officials said dozens had been killed; but could not give a more accurate toll.

Many massacres have occurred in Sidi Moussa over the last two years. They have never been claimed, but authorities have attributed them to the Armed Islamic Group, the most violent of the Islamic militant factions in this North African country.

The attacks usually target vulnerable areas such as isolated farms and villages. As a result, civilians have increasingly been leaving the region over the past few months, as the bloodshed has worsened.

The violence in this North Africa.

See Page 12 Col 8

## US to exclude Indo-Pak issue during Clinton-Gujral talks

WASHINGTON, Aug 29: The United States today accepted India's stand that the proposed meeting between Prime Minister IK Gujral and President Bill Clinton in New York will focus on bilateral relations and not on Indo-Pak issues and said that the two leaders could meet on September 22, reports PTI.

The Prime Minister has said he believes the principle focus (at the Gujral-Clinton summit) will be on our bilateral relations and that is what it will be on," a senior State Department official told newsmen here.

"We certainly hope that the Prime Minister will accept the invitation for the bilateral meeting with President on September 22," the official said.

Gujral said yesterday that he would meet President Bill Clinton if the talks focused only on Indo-US ties.

"If the visit or the meeting with President Clinton is in the context of bilateral relations, welcome, but we do not want any impression being given on any intervention in our bilateral relations with Pakistan," he said in Rajya Sabha.

The US official said, "we are looking forward very much to the prospect of President Clinton meeting with Gujral in New York," during UN General Assembly session.

Of course, the Indian Prime Minister will have to look at his schedule for a meeting on that date, he added.

Meanwhile Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today accused India of actions contrary to the aims of the dialogue started by the two countries to improve long-strained bilateral ties.

The recent "violations" of See Page 12 Col 2

## Aid Club meeting deferred

The Bangladesh Aid Group meeting, scheduled to be held in the city from November 3-4, has been deferred by one day because it coincides with the Jall Killing Day, officials said yesterday, reports UNB.

The two-day meeting will now be held from November 4-5, first time in the Bangladesh capital in its 26-year of history.

The Investment Forum, scheduled for November 5-6, has also been shifted and will now be held on November 6 and 7.

Paris, the French capital, is the usual venue of the Aid Club meeting. But this time, the 27th Aid Club meeting is going to take place in Dhaka on a proposal from the government.

Every year, the donors for Bangladesh meet in Paris and make commitment of new aid to be given to the country for its development projects.

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## Govt proposal for next CHT talks Sept 14

KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 29: The government has proposed to hold the next round of peace talks with Parbatya Chhatragram Jana Sangha Samity (PCJSS), the political wing of Shantibahini, in Dhaka on September 14, reports UNB.

The National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs made the proposal in a letter sent to the PCJSS through the Jogajog (liaison) Committee, committee sources said today.

Earlier, the PCJSS proposed to hold the meeting on September 7. The national committee regretted that the date of the talks has to be deferred due to 'unavoidable reasons'.

The sources said it would take two to three days to know if the PCJSS leaders would be able to attend the talks on September 14.

The government in its letter mentioned that all arrangements would be made for the talks as before. A helicopter will carry the PCJSS leaders to the capital from Dudukchhari frontier and drop them there after the talks.

## Pandemonium marks Ershad's reception in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Aug 29: A meeting arranged at the district Jatiya Party office today to accord a reception to party chief HM Ershad witnessed a pandemonium marked with brandishing of arms by rival groups, meeting sources said.

The reception was arranged jointly by the Jatiya Chhatra Samaj and Jatiya Juba Singhati, the students and youth fronts respectively of the Jatiya Party.

A number of JP parliament members including Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantoo, Mozammel Hossain Lahu and Karimuddin Bharasha and former MP Mozammel Hossain attended the function.

There is a rivalry between Mozammel Hossain Lahu, younger brother of Ershad and Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantoo, See Page 12 Col 4

## Sunday's incident

### Probe report delayed

By Staff Correspondent

The one-man committee formed with DIG Fazlul Huq to probe the incident in which photo-journalist Habibur Rahman was critically injured in a police tear gas shell will now submit its report early next week, officials said last night.

Habibur Rahman was hit in the head by a tear gas shell in front of the Jatiya Press Club during the BNP-called hartal on Sunday.

The committee was given three days' time to submit its report which has already expired.

See Page 12 Col 4

## 3 minor girls injured in N'ganj blast

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 29: Three children of a family were injured, one of them seriously, when hoodlums exploded cock-tails in a house at Bhugar Tushar Dhara in Fatullah this morning, reports BSS.

Police arrested four persons in this connection.

According to police, three sisters — Rahima, 10, Asma, 8, and Rozina, 7 — received splinter injuries when bombs were exploded in the house of one Jalaluddin, 50.

Two sons of Jalaluddin were in conflict and they hired hoodlums against each other, police said.