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BNP leader Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury addressing party workers in front of its central office in the city yesterday before bringing out a procession to mark the party's 19th founding anniversary.

## Najma now struggles on a new Jamuna char

From Shehab Ahmed

CHANDANI, Bhuapur, Sept 3: Najma Khatoon, in her late teens clutched her son watching the Jamuna flowing down its new char, eroding away chunks of it.

Najma is one of the many whose houses had been swallowed by the mighty river when engineers tried to tame part of it to protect Sirajganj town. But the swirling currents simply tore through Rehali Chandani char where Najma had her straw hut and dreams of a teenaged housewife.

She stood helplessly on the other bank of the river, gazing at the distant Sirajganj town hidden under a veil of haze and clouds. Her husband and other settlers on nearby as we, some journalists from the capital, visited it to have a look at the settlements and know their fate.

Some 40 families had crossed the river and built houses with whatever they could salvage from the clutches of the river. But rebuilding their lives posed various problems, part of which is to be mitigated by a German-funded NGO, Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project (JCIDP).

The German government last month decided to supplement the efforts of the JCIDP, providing 25,000 marks. Under the programme, tubewells and sanitary latrines are coming to this new settlement in the next two weeks.

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

From Page 1  
the Unit and was holding the charge during the incident. There were four squadrons in the Unit.

In the chain of command above the four squadrons of the Bengal Lancer Unit was the Army Headquarters and was headed by Maj Gen Shahjahan.

The four squadrons of Bengal Lancer had assembled for a combined exercise in the night of August 14, 1975. From the kote of my squadron headquarters, I collected a G-3 rifle and ammunition under instructions from my superior officer. During that time Lance Dafader Nurul Huq was in charge of the kote, located almost 200 yards from our barrack.

The Army Headquarters were responsible for directing the exercise programme. The squadron commanders had authority of making some amendments without changing the main programme.

Tanks were brought for the exercise after taking permission from the Army Headquarters.

I do not know what kind of arms others had taken from the kote which had a variety of arms including Chinese rifle and sten gun, other than G-3 rifles.

The police had called me a witness in the case. I had recorded my statement at the CID office first. Later, they took me before a magistrate to record my statement. ASP Kahan Akhanda had told me to tell before the magistrate what I knew regarding the incident.

I do not remember whether I was taken before the magistrate after filing of the charge sheet in connection with the case," he said.

On Tuesday, defence lawyers of the accused in custody pleaded that the testimony of Bashir was not admissible because he was an accomplice and that his evidence was liable to be expunged.

In reply, prosecution side

submitted that the PW-11 was not an accomplice. Even if he is thought to be an accomplice, his evidence is admissible under Section 133 of the Evidence Act. The court assured the defence counsel that necessary order would be passed directing the defence counsel to enter the cross-examination.

The court pronounced that the petition will remain pending for disposal till the time of disposal of the case.

There was a noise in the court at the end of the day's proceedings when a defence lawyer of an accused in custody was cross-examining Bashir. The defence lawyer alleged that prosecution was prompting replies to the question put to the witness. But this was denied by the prosecution.

An MP told the meeting that jute growers had been exposed to a "big crisis" as they were compelled to sell their products at a price below the production cost. Wrong policy of the jute ministry was responsible for this, he said.

State Minister for Jute Faezul Huq assured the meeting that the jute market would take off within a week. In this connection, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria informed the meeting that the government had so far disbursed Tk 152 crore through the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) for buying jute.

Another MP strongly criticised Education Minister AHMS Sadeque for his alleged failure to run the ministry effectively. The MP observed that Sadeque was very apt in detecting the failures of the previous government in the education sector, but he himself has proved to be a failure in improving the situation now.

The Education Minister, however, was not present at the meeting.

The people are conscious now and the final say is with them", Shahabuddin said.

In reply, prosecution side

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Printed by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 and published by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091, Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet address: <http://www.dailystarnews.com> and Email address: [dstar@bangla.net](mailto:dstar@bangla.net)

## President

From Page 1  
committees comprised of 10 members and the ruling party agreed to take three members from BNP in each committee. But, arithmetically one-third of 10 comes to 3.3. That is why BNP has demanded raising of the number of committee members to 12 from 10 and taking four members from the party in each committee.

The ruling party, in no way, is accepting this demand, as if the sky would fall on them if they accepted it. BNP is also rigid on its position. They need one-third representation, no matter the Sangsad functions or not.

The President was of the view that democratic process is being impeded in such a situation. He urged both the ruling party and the Opposition to work together keeping aside "obstinate and irrelevant statements for the greater cause of the country."

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## Plane crash

From Page 1

citing Taiwanese businessmen and lawmaker Tseng Chennung from Phnom Penh's airport, said at least 21 Taiwanese had been aboard.

Khieu Kanharith, Cambodian's secretary of state for information, said the passengers were also believed to include some Germans.

In reply, prosecution side

# The Daily Star

## Bill on extension of retirement age rejected

The Jatiya Sangsad disallowed adoption of the Public Servants (retirement) (amendment) Bill, 1997, placed by Jatiya Party MP Dr M Rustam Ali Farazee on the Private Members' Day yesterday, reported BSS.

The bill aimed at further amendments to the Public Servants (retirement) Act, 1974, was opposed by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru. He said if the bill was passed, it would create discontent among fresh graduate and post graduate job seekers.

Telecommunications Minister Young man stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified gang stabbed a young man to death in the city yesterday afternoon.

Police said Prantosh, 27, sustained injuries as he was stabbed indiscriminately at Ramakanta Nandi Lane, known as Ghee Patty under Kotwali thana at about 2 pm.

Prantosh was immediately rushed to the Mitford Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

The motive behind the killing could not be known till last night. It was alleged that the incident was sequel to a conflict between two local groups.

New Pay Scale to be implemented by Nov: Kibria

The new National Pay Scale for the government officials and employees will be implemented by November at the latest, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria said yesterday.

"However, how much of the salary will be increased is yet to be decided," Kibria told UNB in an interview. "I am still awaiting the report of the Secretaries committee."

He said the new pay scale would be given retroactively from July 1.

The finance minister made it clear that he would not go beyond the budgetary allocation for implementation of the Pay Commission report, submitted to the government in June last.

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## AL-BNP talks

From Page 1

national representation (3.33 member in each committee) after the 113 party lawmakers are represented," he said. "We also demand a clear statement from them on how many heads of the committees would be chosen from our party."

Contacted over telephone, Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Suranjit Sengupta said, "Shifting from our previous stance, we raised the number of members to 110 from 105, the number they (BNP) can get if their one-third representation is guaranteed and that at the cost of reduction in our strength."

Sengupta called it "negative politics," by BNP "which weakens parliamentary democracy."

The tripartite meeting also agreed on the formation of a five-member body, headed by Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim and having two members from each party to look into the "political" cases against BNP MPs and the alleged attacks on some of them.

The Opposition Chief Whip yesterday named Barrister Aminul Haq and Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed as BNP members of the committee. The AL nominees — Advocate Rahmat Ali and Mizanur Rahman Manu — were named the day before.

## Hasina

From Page 1

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In reply, prosecution side

## Discussion on Abul Mansur

From Page 1 and spirit, and his thoughts unfolded the spirit and thoughts of the masses of Bengal, especially of the Muslims," he said.

The President read out a brief life sketch of Abul Mansur Ahmed, who was born in 1898 and died in 1979, and said, "The main objective of observing birth or death anniversaries of great personalities is to take lessons from their belief, experience, failure and success."

"Abul Mansur Ahmed fought for a democratic social system throughout his life," he said.

The President quoted Abul Mansur as saying in a speech in the Gana Parishad in 1956, "Pakistan is a nation of two states... where the minority rules the majority," Pakistani newspapers termed the state anti-state and demand his trial, he said.

Shahabuddin suggested that all literary works of Abul Mansur should be compiled and published.

Prof Rafiqul Islam later confirmed that Bangla Academy was now doing the compilation and hoped that it would be completed before the 100th birth anniversary of Abul Mansur next year.

The discussion was presided over by Prof Abu Rushd. Others

participating in the discussion included Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Prof Rafiqul Islam and Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury while Prof Anisuzzaman conducted the programme. Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam read out the key-note paper titled "The Literary Works of Abul Mansur Ahmed" written by Prof Rajib Humayun.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui praised the literary works of Abul Mansur and said, "These works rank among the best 30 in the country."

Prof Abu Rushd suggested that an academic research on Abul Mansur Ahmed and his works be taken up by the Dhaka University.

Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said Abul Mansur Ahmed wanted to understand the world and change it for the betterment. "In every domain of his multifarious career, be it journalism, literature or politics, he demonstrated a scientific outlook," he said.

Prof Rafiqul Islam later said that all literary works of Abul Mansur should be compiled and published.

Prof Chowdhury said Abul Mansur Ahmed had drafted the historic 21-point manifesto of the then Jukta Front in the 1954 election. "The 21-point was drafted in line with the spirit of February 21 Language Movement," he said.

In the power sector, he said, agreements have already been signed to invest 400 million dollars while three more contracts are going to be signed shortly for an investment of 700 million dollars.

In the gas sector, an amount of 100 million dollars has already been invested and an additional 270 million dollars will be invested within a year or two, Kibria said, adding investment in the 12 oil and gas exploration blocks would be at least 600 million dollars.

He said the representative of Unocal, a US oil giant, met him yesterday and informed that the company would invest 300 million dollars immediately and nearly one billion dollars in coming days.

In the telecommunication sector, he said, a total of 175 million dollars has already been invested and another 500

million dollars is expected to be invested within next three years.

"The overall picture of foreign investment is certainly bright and the prophets of doom, who are lamenting the situation, are going to be proved wrong," Kibria said.

About the capital market, he said the share market continued to cause concern, but informed that the government had not taken any steps to improve the market.

There is no reason why the market should not respond to the steps, the minister said. He informed about the 80 million ADB-funded loan for the capital market and approval of 18 merchant banks which are expected to start their operation soon.

The finance minister expressed satisfaction over the macro-economic situation and said the foreign exchange reserve now stood at 1713.07 million dollars.

Besides, the commercial banks are holding about 300 million dollars. Therefore, the total amount available for meeting the international obligation is about two billion dollars," he said.

"Of course, I'm not fully satisfied with the reserve level and we are actively trying to increase the reserve to a level which will give a more comfortable margin," Kibria said.

Regarding revenue collection, he said the collection of

liquidity crisis and said the banks had Tk 2107.60 crore excess liquidity on August 21 and Tk 2426.83 crore on August 14 as against the required liquidity of only Tk 1400 crore.

Asked about the bank loan situation, Kibria said the banking system has sanctioned industrial credit amounting to Tk 7932.35 crore and disbursed Tk 7818.56 crore in the last 1996-97 fiscal year.

On the other hand, he said, total industrial loan sanctioned and disbursed in fiscal 1995-96 was Tk 4662.5 crore and Tk 4906.13 crore respectively.

"A whispering campaign was launched by the opposition and supported by some business quarters that the banks have not given any loan and the economy was in a stagnant position because of the refusal of the banks," he said.

The working capital disbursed during the last year was Tk 6659.02 crore, which was about double the amount for the previous year, Kibria said.

About term loans, the minister said the growth in term loan is also satisfactory compared to 1995-96 and the initial two years of the BNP regime.

Kibria said an amount of Tk 3959.80 crore default loan — Tk 2798.46 crore in cash and Tk 1160.95 crore through rescheduling — has been recovered upto July this year.

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