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VOL. VII NO. 237 REGD. NO. DA 781 ASHWIN 6 1404 BS. DHAKA SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1997 JAMADIUL AWAL 17 1418 HIJRI 12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

## Some banks keep open branches on Saturdays

Business people yesterday welcomed the decision to keep some commercial bank branches open on Saturday, the weekly holiday.

Yesterday Prime Bank and ANZ Grindlays Bank kept some of their branches open, giving their clients a much needed relief providing them with banking transaction.

The Prime Bank, a private sector institution, kept all their 11 branches open while three branches of the multinational ANZ Grindlays Bank were open — two in Dhaka and one in Chittagong.

The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), and other private and foreign banks are yet to decide which branches will remain open on Saturdays.

Abdur Raquib, an Executive Director of the Bangladesh Bank, said the banks have been given the option to keep open some of their branches at the country's most commercially.

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## Feni BCL leader stabbed to death

FENI, Sept 20: A student leader was stabbed to death early today at Dharmapur village in Sadar thana of the district, reports UNB.

Police said Shahidul Islam, 22, son of Abdul Gafur of the village, was attacked and knifed to death while returning home.

The body of Islam, said to be a local leader of Chhatra League, was recovered by police early in the morning and buried after postmortem examination.

In a protest meeting at Dharmapur Battola today, the ruling party student front, Chhatra League, blamed BNP student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal for the killing.

Addressing the meeting dis-

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## MD of H & H Group of Cos kidnapped in city

By Staff Correspondent.

Five unidentified persons kidnapped the Managing Director of a group of companies from Dilkusha Commercial Area in the city yesterday morning.

Police said Abdul Kader Hawladar, MD of H & H Group of Companies, came near his office at Sadharan Bima Sadan building by a rickshaw at about 9:10 am.

The five men in a microbus intercepted Kader's rickshaw and forcibly picked him up in their vehicle and drove away.

The motive behind the kidnap could not be known immediately. Police could not rescue the abducted person till last night.

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## EU deadline to Dhaka

# Verify 2253 more 'suspect' GSP certificates by Oct 2

Star Business Report

Bangladesh must fulfil a new European Union condition if the garments industry here wants to use imported yarn and cloth for products enjoying duty-free access to EU countries.

Brussels has asked for a scrutiny of another 2,253 'suspect' GSP certificates, and slapped a strict deadline to respond.

The results of the 're-examination' must be ready by October 2, if Dhaka is expecting a positive response from the EU to its plea for the derogation it has sought for knitwear and sweater, an EC news release said yesterday.

The statement from Brussels came after meetings between the visiting Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed and EC Vice President Manuel Marin and Commissioner Mario Monti, during which they hailed the government decision to withdraw some 13,500 GSP certificates, improperly issued earlier.

"They praised the courage of the Bangladesh authorities in agreeing to comply with a Commission request to cancel around 13,500 fraudulently issued GSP certificates and to re-examine the validity of a further 2,253 suspect certificates," the EC press release received in Dhaka said.

In return, they promised support to Bangladesh's demand for the derogation which will be discussed and decided October 8.

"They (Marin and Monti) undertook to urge EU governments to back a Bangladeshi request for a derogation from the rules of origin of raw materials used in all-important garment industry.

"This would then allow the country, in common with other least developed countries such as Laos, Cambodia and Nepal to use imported yarn and cloth in its garments production and still qualify for the crucial customs duty concessions given in the EC's GSP scheme," it said.

"The government of Bangladesh must now move quickly to fulfil its commitment to complete the certificate re-verification process and, by October 2, it must inform the Commission of its findings," the Brussels statement said.

"Such positive cooperation at this stage puts the Commission in a strong position to urge EU member states to vote on October 8 in favour of a Commission proposal which give Bangladesh the derogation the government and the textile industry have been seeking."

The new EC demand is rather surprising, if not shocking, for Dhaka officials who were sure to win a two-stage transformation for Bangladesh's knitted and sweater products after they had withdrawn the certificates much to the dismay of many exporters.

The EU had demanded withdrawal of 6910 certificates (Schedule B), and verification of another 8652 under what was classified as Schedule C. The government announced cancellation of the certificates, and then the commerce minister travelled to Brussels with findings that more than 80 per cent of the latter group were not properly issued.

The new EU move also gave a bit of credence to some exporters' warnings that floodgates to problems would open if the government cancelled the disputed certificates.



Police dispersing Jamaat-e-Islami activists from in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. — Star photo

## Resist conspiracies to disturb political stability: ALCWC

Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) urged the people to resist all conspiracies by BNP to destabilise the political situation, obstruct foreign investment and disrupt public life, reports UNB.

The call was made in a resolution taken in yesterday's working committee meeting held at Ganobhaban with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

"After losing power, they (BNP) are hatching conspiracies to disturb political stability and impede foreign investment. They are working to disrupt public life and showing audacity by creating chaos on the street without any reason and damaging cars," said the resolution.

It said BNP is trying to make parliament inoperative either by boycotting or abstaining from parliament session without any reason.

The resolution asked the people to remain alert about the conspirators who are trying to

## Task Force report

**'Students failing in one or more subjects should be given chance'**

By M M Aminul Islam

The Task Force for evaluation of activities of country's education boards in its report has suggested that students failing in one or more subjects be given a second chance to pass in those subjects.

"The system can be introduced from 1999 session," the report said.

"Students failing in one or more subjects should be given a second chance to clear those subjects," it said. The nine-member Task Force, formed in April, submitted its report to the Education Minister in August. The report also suggested that the 'word fail' should be dropped from the examination system to increase the rate of literacy.

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## Police action to disperse Jamaat rally

By Staff Correspondent

Police used batons and tear gas to scatter Jamaat-e-Islami supporters trying to stage a planned rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

At least a dozen people were injured, two of them seriously, when police cleared the Jamaat supporters from the area, witnesses said. Jamaat leaders said ten of their supporters were arrested.

But Matur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General of Jamaat, who also had a baton charge on his back led his party's supporters to regroup at Paltan crossing.

They squatted on the street to offer prayer and mungfal, which ended with a rally addressed by their leaders under the watchful eye of the police.

Later they marched in a demonstration, parading down

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## Venues for public meeting

**Mayor, PM to be blamed for consequences: BNP**

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition party BNP yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of the decision of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) allowing public rallies only at seven designated venues in the city.

Otherwise, it warned, the Mayor of DCC and the Prime Minister would be responsible for the consequences.

Addressing a press conference at the party central office, acting Secretary General of BNP Abdullah Al Noman termed the DCC decision 'mischievous'.

"We don't accept this decision. This has been done for petty party interest when not only BNP, rather, people from all strata of life have launched movement against misuse of the present government," said Noman.

About removal of the floating bridge on Crescent Lake in the city, the BNP leader said, "the government is telling lies, it has not taken the bridge to Shyeshthaganj."

BNP city unit convener Sadek Hossain Khoka also spoke at the press conference attended by, among others, BNP vice-chairman Aiswar Ahmad Siddiky, party chairperson's information adviser Anwar Zahid, Jubo Dal leaders Mirza Abbas and Goyeshar Chandra Roy and a number of DCC ward commissioners belonging to the party.

Khoka said the Mayor should withdraw the decision immediately and take a fresh initiative for getting the views of all parties regarding holding

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## Probe into death of Biman crew

# CID preparing chargesheet alleging murder in custody

Star Report

The CID is almost convinced that Biman crew Nuruzzaman Sharif died following torture in custody at Tejgaon police station in June last.

CID sources said, after about a three-month probe, investigation into the crew's death is now at final stage.

The investigators have also found that a constable of Tejgaon thana had assaulted Nuruzzaman with belt and kicked him indiscriminately while in custody.

The constable allegedly used a rope to tie Nuruzzaman with an iron rod of the security gate of a cell in the thana.

Nuruzzaman, 37, a cabin crew of Bangladesh Biman died after he was taken to court custody in the city at the end of two days' police remand on June 16.

He was arrested on charges of illegal trespass into the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at Tejgaon three days before his death.

Later, he was placed on two days' remand as police wanted to interrogate him to find out the reason behind the alleged trespass.

A senior CID official said they are now preparing to submit the chargesheet to the court in connection with the "murder" of the Biman crew.

"We will have to verify and examine some more things before finalising the report," said a top CID official. He, however, did not disclose the details of findings.

Family members of Nuruzzaman came to know about his death after they moved a bail petition in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) court in the afternoon of June 16. The court granted him bail but Nuruzzaman was taken to the National Hospital from court custody at that time, about 4 pm. Doctors at the hospital declared him dead.

The CID investigation team led by ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman, traced out and interrogated the two persons who witnessed the assault on Nuruzzaman in Tejgaon thana.

CID sources said one of the witnesses, a young man, had been known as a 'source' of Tejgaon thana. The other person, a woman, was at the thana at the time of the assault. She was arrested by Tejgaon police under the Act of the Dhaka Metropolitan.

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## BNP condemns attack on Jamaat procession

BNP's acting secretary general Abdullah Al Noman has protested police attack on a Jamaat procession, in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, Noman also condemned the arrest of Jamaat leaders and workers during its programme.

Criticising the government for designating seven meeting venues, he alleged that police were being used to implement this "autocratic order" against fundamental and constitution rights of the people.

The BNP leader said the government is not only obstructing political meetings, it is also attacking processions and pre-procession gatherings.

He referred to the police attack on the supporters of Islami Okyo Jote on September 18 and said, "No opposition party is being spared by this fascist government."

Noman also condemned fil-

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## Negotiations for ESAF loan

# Govt faces difficulty in meeting conditions

By Inam Ahmed

The negotiations with the IMF on availing the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) loan have entered a crucial stage as the government finds some of the conditions set for the getting the loan difficult to carry out.

The difficult points in the conditions, as identified by the government, fall in the areas of banking, privatisation, exchange rate liberalisation, public finance, trade and fixation of government-administered prices, sources said.

These conditions were prescribed by different donors over the last five years and could not be fulfilled by the government.

"The BNP government had left many reform programmes unfinished which have fallen on the present government to carry out," an official source said

about the negotiation process. "This has made it difficult to negotiate the loan."

According to the finance minister, the government has sought some 600 million US dollars under the ESAF scheme to support its fledgling balance of payment situation. But Bangladesh can get a maximum of 435 million dollars from the funds.

In the banking sector, the IMF is pressing for restricting government's taking credit from the central bank. The main argument here is that a bulk of the government expenditure goes for importing goods, which ultimately affects the BOP. But since ESAF loan is taken when a country is in trouble regarding its BOP situation, the aim cannot be fulfilled.

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## Home Minister says

# Crime rate appears high because more people now file complaints

Unveiling a comprehensive government plan to combat crimes the Home Minister yesterday urged all political parties to join an anti-terrorism march, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be requested to lead the procession shortly, Rafiqul Islam said.

The Home Minister was speaking at a dialogue on 'Terrorism: Its Multiple Facets', organised by Affluent Bangladesh Attainment Council (ABAC) at LGED auditorium.

Rafiq said all efforts would be put to eliminate terrorism from society and in the first phase an all-party anti-terrorism procession would be organised in the capital soon.

He said meetings and similar processions would also be organised at district level.

"An individual or a party cannot root out terrorism, society as a whole needs to come forward for the cause. All parties should unite on the issue for the sake of future generations of the country," the minister told the function.

"I believe it will be easier to curb terrorism if all political parties stand united on the issue," he said agreeing with the participants that terrorism will be gone if political terrorism is stopped.

Disclosing the government plans Home Minister Rafiq said reform of the policing system would soon be undertaken aiming to attain a "terrorism-free" Bangladesh.

He said police station administration would be made accountable and liable for terrorism under their respective jurisdiction.

Monitoring cell will be formed to monitor the crime situation across the country.

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## Principal of JN Varsity College killed in road accident

The Principal of Jagannath University College was killed in a road accident at Gajaria in Munshiganj district early yesterday, police said, reports UNB.

Prof Nurul Haq, 52, met with the tragic end of his life when a speeding truck collided with his microbus at about 2:30 am. He was rushed to a local hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police said Prof Haq was returning to Dhaka from his village home at Nayapara in Razoan thana of Chittagong district by the microbus.

Driver of the microbus, Khokon, was admitted to the

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## Jute, the Golden Fibre, about to become history?

From Ruhul Motin

TANGAIL, Sept 20: One day eleven years ago Ali Asgar, a poor farmer in this northern district, felt like a King. That was the day in 1986 when the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) crowned him as the best jute farmer in Bangladesh.

Today, Asgar hardly remembers the event, his life crumbling under worries about the falling prices of jute he sweats to grow. He is not more as young as he was in 1986. And he finds no reason why he should continue to grow jute whose demand is declining at home and abroad.

The legendary jute farmer is on the verge of making a painful decision: dump jute cultivation in favour of anything that will bring him money.

"Jute is no more the golden fibre. The returns are so poor. You don't even get your investment back. If the thing does not improve I will definitely give up jute, a despairing Asgar told this News Network correspondent.

Hundreds of thousands of farmers across Bangladesh, like Asgar, do no longer consider jute as golden fibre, their staple cash crop.

Jute was once the backbone of economy of Bangladesh. Today farmers complain the prices they are getting do not cover even half of the production cost.

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A boy in Tangail separating jute fibre from the plant. — News Network photo

## The Daily Star on the Internet

http://www.dailystarnews.com

## BNP's protest day today

The BNP will observe protest day across the country today demanding reinstallation of the floating bridge on the Crescent Lake and to protest police attack on party meetings in the city, reports UNB.

To mark the day, the BNP and its front organisations will organise protest rallies and processions in district headquarters, said a press release.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will lead a procession to be brought out from the party's central office at Naya Paltan at 4 pm.

Acting secretary general of BNP, Abdullah Al Noman in a statement called upon all district unit leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations to make today's protest day a success.

He said the consequence of police action will be dangerous and BNP will continue its movement despite repression and oppression.

Dhaka city BNP convener

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## Indian team in city: Talks on bus service tomorrow

A five-member Indian delegation, led by Joint Secretary of the Surface Transport Ministry KR Bhatti, arrived in the capital yesterday, reports UNB.

The team will have two meetings at the Communications Ministry tomorrow and Tuesday to discuss the proposed passenger bus service on Dhaka-Benapole-Calcutta-Ajmer route.

Bangladesh side at the talks will be led by Karar Mahmudul Hasan, joint secretary at the Communications Ministry, said an official handout.

## Ctg transport strike called off

CHITTAGONG, Sept 20: The 48-hour transport strike, which began in greater Chittagong since 6 am today was called off following a discussion between the district administration and leaders of the transport Workers Federation at the DC's residence here tonight, reports BSS.

Federation leaders have decided to call off the strike after the assurance from the district administration to end the alleged extortion and police harassment of workers, the press release added.