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Varsity student beaten to death allegedly by DB police

By Staff Correspondent

A university student was allegedly beaten to death under the custody of Detective Branch of Police yesterday evening after he was picked up from city's Siddheshwari area in the afternoon.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital officials identified the youth as Shamim Reza, aged about 24. Relatives said he was a BBA student at a private university. A neighbour said his nickname was Rubel.

Shamim was pronounced dead at the emergency section of DMCH by doctors at 9:45 p.m. He was brought by a group of plainclothesmen who identified themselves as members of the DB.

Witnesses said the healthy

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Visa problems: 'Note verbal' to US Charge d'Affaires

The Foreign Office yesterday called in US Charge d'Affaires Theodore Nist and handed him a "note verbal" on harassment of Bangladeshi nationals seeking US visa allegedly by visa and consular officers at the US Embassy in Dhaka, reports UNB.

A senior officer at the Foreign Office while handing the note requested the Charge d'Affaires (CDA) to take necessary steps so that this kind of incidents should not take place.

"We told him that the issuance of visa will depend on credential of individual and assessment of the US embassy but people applying for visa should be treated politely," the official told UNB.

The matter was informally raised on several occasions in the past, but this is for the first time it has been taken up officially.

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Pak embassy's clarification

Pakistan High Commission, in a clarification yesterday, said the statement attributed to Senator Akram Zaki was not made by him during his visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The High Commission said when it approached the senator he expressed his surprise to know that his name has been dragged into an interview which he had not granted.

Senator Zaki was quoted by the High Commission as em-

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All BNP MPs to deposit letters of resignation with Begum Zia

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP high command decided that all the party MPs will deposit their letters of resignation from the Jatiya Sangsad with party chief and Leader of the Opposition in the House Begum Khaleda Zia.

The highest decision-making body of BNP — the National Standing Committee — has also authorised the party chief to "decide, if necessary, on resignation from the Sangsad at an appropriate time after discussing the overall political situation in the country".

The standing committee, at a meeting on Wednesday night with Begum Zia in the chair, took the decisions after more than three hours of stormy debate ending at 11:35 pm.

When approached by newsmen, after the meeting, neither Begum Zia nor any other leader said anything about the decisions. A press release containing resolutions adopted at the meeting was issued yesterday.

The decisions came in the wake of debates in the main opposition party's rank and file on some 30 BNP MPs' depositing their resignation letters with the party chief last week.

The meeting, held at the Opposition Leader's Minto Road official residence, further decided that the BNP lawmakers would deposit their resignation letters in prescribed forms through the Chief Whip of the

Speaker should keep himself above all feuds: Samad Azad

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, July 23: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has said that the Speaker should keep himself above all types of party feuds.

"He should even be careful about passing comments against the opposition parties. There should be no criticism from one holding this prestigious post," he said. "All should give up nasty politics."

Samad Azad was addressing as chief guest at the foundation laying ceremony of an extension of the Sylhet Press Club building this evening.

Refuting the allegation of postponing the function of railway station renovation project on July 11, the Foreign Minister said, "It was simply a matter of the Communication Ministry and the Railway. Not a single official of the Railway or of the district administration was present at the so-called foundation laying function at the premises of Sylhet Railway Station on July 11."

The Railway officials had informed me that there should be a proper and long-term plan about the proposed new station. Accordingly, it will be done in time."

Giving a list of the development projects being implemented in the Sylhet division,

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Final draft of Nat'l Health Policy handed over to PM

Final draft of the National Health Policy was handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday, reports UNB.

The 26-member health policy formulation committee, headed by Health Minister Salah Uddin Yusuf, handed over the draft policy to her at a simple function.

The main objective of the policy will be to reach the best possible health service to the people, and ensure the availability of treatment for the poor in urban and rural areas.

The policy will also contain guidelines to maintain the quality of government health services at all levels, including the thana and union levels, and integrated programmes to increase the nutrition level, particularly of mothers and children.

The policy will provide steps to control child and maternal death and bring it down to an acceptable level in next five years, increase delivery facilities.

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Flood-hit people in the city's low-lying areas using boats as means of communication. — Star photo

Turag, Buriganga swell further Flood situation in Dhaka alarming

The overall flood situation deteriorated yesterday with further rise of water levels in the country's three major river basins, reports BSS.

The gushing waters from upstream would aggravate the situation during the next two days, said the Flood Forecasting and Warning Center.

The major rivers including the Brahmaputra (Jamuna), Ganges (Padma) and Meghna continued to rise and were flowing above their danger levels at 20 points across the north, northwestern, northeastern and central parts of the country.

The flooding has also worsened in the suburban areas of Dhaka as the Turag river was flowing 41 centimetre and 19 centimetre above the danger level at Mirpur and Tongi this morning while the Buriganga has nearly touched the danger mark with a further rise of 9 centimetre.

Officials said with the rolling waters from the upper riparian areas the flood situation in 19 of the 33 affected districts has deteriorated. In most districts, standing crops on a vast area of land and livestock were washed away and homes inundated with the collapse of embankments and burst of river waters.

According to disaster management ministry estimates, the number of the affected people stands at 7,502,109 as the flood hit 1249 unions of 174 thanas in 33 districts.

They said the government has so far sanctioned 2,481 tonnes of rice or wheat and Tk 40,50,000 in cash besides sares, lungis and biscuits for the affected people.

Chittagong, Comilla, Madaripur and Jamalpur are the worst-hit districts where the flood disrupted the lives of millions of people, many of whom were compelled to shift to safer areas.

With the improvement of flooding in the southeastern hill basin, the situation in Chittagong returning to normal.

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Bhutanese King won't attend SAARC summit

COLOMBO, July 23: King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan, who recently relinquished much of his authority to an elected Cabinet, will not attend a summit of South Asian nations this month and will send his new head of government instead, it was announced Thursday, reports AP.

Ravinatha Arayasinha, the Foreign Ministry spokesman for host country Sri Lanka, confirmed the king will miss his first of the 10 summits held by the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation. The delegation will be led by Foreign Minister Jigmi Thinley.

Two weeks ago, the 150-member National Assembly endorsed a royal edict transferring executive powers from the king to the cabinet, and subsequently held an election for cabinet minister for the first time in the history of Bhutan's 91-year-old monarchy.

TUs at Ctg port split over setting up new terminal

CHITTAGONG, July 23: Trade union bodies at Chittagong port are divided over the installation of a private container terminal at Patenga by an American company, port sources said.

Ruling party-backed Dock Jatiya Samik League welcomed the move of the government for setting up the private container terminal here and formed a committee named "Prime Minister's plan implementation council", port sources added.

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Attention to infrastructure, social sectors praised Raise in defence budget a step in wrong direction: WB

By Inam Ahmed

The World Bank has praised the government's targeting the infrastructure and social sectors for improvement through bigger allocations in the national budget for fiscal 1998-99.

But it has termed some expenditure allocations including the increased defence expenditure as 'steps in the wrong direction'.

"A positive feature of the proposed Tk 136 billion ADP is the increase in the shares of infrastructure and social sectors, which together account for over 47 per cent of total ADP allocations," said the Bank's Periodic Economic Update.

But it pointed out that the total budgetary allocation for defence has been increased to Tk 2900 crore and said, "The defence budget is almost equivalent to the cost of one Primary Education Development Project (PEDP) every year. A 2 to 3 per cent cut in the defence budget would be enough to sustain the Female Secondary Stipend Project from the government's own resources."

The Bank also observed that there was considerable room for 'improving efficiency of the ADP' and for better prioritising the projects contained in it.

La Nina effect Country heading for extensive flood this yr

HONG KONG, July 23: The weather pattern known as La Nina, expected to bring heavy rain to Asia this year, meteorologists say, reports AFP.

La Nina, Spanish for little girl, usually forms directly after El Nino years and is not considered as destructive.

During La Nina, the equatorial Pacific Ocean drops to unusually low temperatures compared with abnormally high temperatures during El Nino.

Rob Allan, a climate researcher with Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), said the biggest impact from La Nina would be felt in countries bordering the India and Pacific Oceans.

"If it occurs there is the possibility of massive problems," Allan said.

Meteorologists in Bangladesh and Nepal say their climates are already feeling the effects of La Nina, raising fears of extensive flooding this year.

Experts in Nepal say the Himalayan country has been experiencing daily downpours in mid-hilly and low-land tropical regions since the beginning of the monsoon season. The rains have already flooded many areas.

Bangladesh, ravaged by La

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Tajuddin's leadership was unique: President

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday described former prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed as a talented statesman whose outstanding leadership helped achieve independence within nine months, reports UNB.

"The charisma of Bangabandhu and organising capability of Tajuddin" showed the light at that critical time of the Liberation War, he said a discussion meeting on the 73rd birth anniversary of the late leader.

The President said the unprecedented leadership Tajuddin Ahmed had demonstrated while leading the war to a success is rare in the contemporary history.

He described Tajuddin as a trusted disciple of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and said he had performed all tasks bestowed upon him.

Citing the story of Ramayana, the President said "Tajuddin's relation with the leader (Bangabandhu) was similar to that between Rama and his younger brother Bharat."

The Tajuddin Smriti Sangsad organised the discussion at the Engineers' Institution. Eminent educationist Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid presided.

LGSD Minister Zillur Rahman, Prof Sardar Fazlul Karim, Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof

Gas reserve More wells have to be drilled at Bibiana for real figure

Some more development wells will have to be drilled at the Bibiana structure before an estimate of the gas reserve could be made, official sources said yesterday.

It has been reported in the media that gas reserve at the Bibiana structure is estimated at four trillion cubic feet.

"It is not possible to come out

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DU tense: Rival JCD factions hold processions

By DU Correspondent

Tension spread among activists of the BNP-backed Jatayatadhi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at the Dhaka University as two rival factions, which clashed on Wednesday, brought out separate processions on the campus yesterday.

Later, the activists of Anney group chased those of Pintu group out of the campus at around 12:30 pm.

Witnesses said that JCD city unit president Nasiruddin Pintu earlier entered the campus with a group of outsiders at

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Alternatives

Our next issue of Alternatives will come out on 29 July 1998 in The Daily Star and the theme for the issue is **Urban Public Toilet**.

Scholars, researchers, activists and all other interested parties at home and abroad are requested to send their articles by 26 July 1998 to Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, Executive Director, Centre for Alternatives, Room No. 431, Lecture Theatre, Arts Building, Dhaka University, Dhaka-1000. Tel: 9661900-59, Ext: 4550; Fax: (8802) 836769; E-mail: imtiaz@bangla.net

'Problems of governance must be resolved for fruitful reforms'

By Staff Correspondent

A group of economists and social researchers yesterday said unless the government institutions are reformed and made people friendly, economic and policy reforms would yield little results.

The group who authored the third Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD) prepared by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) also said efficient and quality governance is the key to development.

Prof Rehman Sobhan who led the team which prepared the report, the third in a row, said "unless the problems of governance are resolved, we will not be able to generate policy of our own."

"You cannot implement policies because of the existing administrative structure and political problems surrounding these," he said in a press briefing prior to the launching of the IRBD on Sunday.

He said the preparation of the report was a challenge to the authors to demonstrate Bangladesh's capability to maintain size and quality in preparing such a comprehensive report.

This year the theme of the IRBD report is 'crisis in governance'.

Prof Sobhan said the administration has no accountability to the society and the people and here had not been any process of consultation done with the people on the projects.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, who wrote a chapter on macro-economic management and reforms, said although economic and price reforms had been carried out over the years, private investment is not yet responding to these changes.

He said it is now the issue of government which must be addressed to create the environment for investment and the government must impose and implement regulatory framework conducive to the market economy.

"We have failed in institutional reforms of the judiciary, administration, state-owned enterprises, public utilities and tax administration which is breeding corruption," he said. "It is now a question of devising means to combat corruption."

Prof Mahmud said the people will be benefitted if the administration is made efficient and quality of democratic governance is improved.

He said economic policy reforms will not work unless institutional reforms are made. This would require public awareness and political commitment, he added.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, who wrote on the state of governance in the banking sector, said the financial sector epitomises the problems involved with lack of institutional reforms.

"The sustainability of the current five per cent growth of the economy will critically depend on how the financial sector is managed," said Dr Bhattacharya. "The crisis of the sector lies with the monitoring and regulatory mechanism."

He said the rate of classified loans is going up instead of falling which is posing a grave problem to the banking sector.

Dr Omar Haider Chowdhury, who contributed a chapter on fiscal management and

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The BBC World Service is looking for a journalist to join its Bengali Service in London on a 3 year fixed-term contract. The service is a key provider of news about major global, national and South Asian events to Bengali-speaking audiences around the world. Our listeners are concentrated in Bangladesh and India and we broadcast four times a day covering news and current affairs as well as sport, science and the environment.

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