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## President told BRCS facing severe resource constraint

A 14-member delegation of the managing board of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

Chairman of the Society, Major General (ret'd) Abdus Salam MP led the delegation.

Welcoming the members of the delegation, President Shahabuddin, who is also president of the Society, directed them to gear up relief operations in flood-affected areas. He said that the Red Crescent Society, having dedicated volunteers as well as experienced officers, can help mitigate the suffering of the people affected by flood.

The members of the delegation apprised the President of the relief operations already started by the Society in different areas of the country. They said that 60 medical teams will soon be sent out to the flood-hit areas.

They also apprised the President of the situation in the flood-affected areas.

See Page 12 Col 1

## Babul murder Hartal observed in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 10: Normal life was disrupted during the half-day hartal called by BNP in the city today.

The hartal was called to protest the killing of Babul Ghazi, a JCD activist, on Saturday allegedly by some Jubo League supporters at Nijhama-Satkhira highway, some two kilometres from the city.

All modes of vehicles stayed off the roads. All shops and academic institutions remained closed and transactions in banks and insurance companies suspended during the hartal hours.

At least three BNP activists were injured when a procession was attacked allegedly by BCL supporters at about 11:30 am. Police brought the situation under control by resorting to lathicharge and lobbing two tear gas shells.

## 45 detained with Rubel to be questioned

By Staff Correspondent

The CID is likely to start interrogating today the 45 people who were detained at the DB office in the city along with Rubel on July 23.

The 45 people were released soon after Rubel's death in DB custody.

The CID has already informed those people through thanas concerned to appear before the CID by today, a CID official said. But a 'problem' has arisen as some of the 45 people may have given false addresses in the DB register.

Besides, the judicial commission will also record their statements, sources said.

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## DSE messes it up on first day of automation

By M Shamsur Rahman

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday failed to carry out its regular full trading session on the first day under the automated screen-based system. The day also witnessed suspension of trading of some 10 securities.

The day's trading on DSE began at 10:30 am and continued till 3:30 pm without the scheduled 30-minute post-closing session. DSE officials said that the post-closing session was suspended due to technical reasons.

Trading of Beximco Pharma, a blue chip and one of the most liquid stocks, started at 10:30 am and ran till 12:51 pm before being suspended due to technical reasons. AMCL Pran, another blue chip, was traded till 12:31 pm before it was suspended on the same ground. Trading of the issue again resumed at 12:49 pm, but only to be suspended again at 12:55 pm.

The other issues, which remained suspended on the day,

## CID 'almost' convinced AC Akram ordered Rubel's arrest

By Staff Correspondent

The CID is almost convinced that AC Akram Hossain ordered the arrest of university student Shamim Reza Rubel who was later killed in DB custody on July 23, said the investigating officer (IO) of the case.

The IO, Munshi Atiqur Rahman, was talking to The Daily Star at the PG Hospital, where the principal accused in the Rubel murder, Akram, was admitted last night.

Akram has been on a three-day CID remand since Sunday. CID interrogated him for a total of about six hours before he was admitted to the hospital.

According to PG Hospital sources, Akram was admitted as an outdoor patient under Assistant Professor Atiqul Haq. He is suffering from diabetes, said a doctor, adding that his condition is improving.

The CID will seek further remand for Akram when the three-day remand expires today, sources said.

CID interrogated Akram from 6 pm to 11 pm Sunday night, following which Akram went to bed. Before he fell sick yesterday afternoon, he was interrogated for an hour, CID officials said.

"I have been interrogating him alone and this morning (Monday morning) also I interrogated him for about an hour after he took his breakfast at about 9:30 am, the IO said.

Akram then went to bed and was awakened for lunch at about 2:30 pm. He then went to the bathroom attached to the IO's room and while coming out complained that he was feeling uncomfortable, sources said.

CID officials then called their doctor and on his advice, See Page 12 Col 7

## BJP move to amend India's secular constitution

NEW DELHI, Aug 10: India's Hindu nationalist-led government will set up a commission soon to amend the country's secular constitution, home minister Lal Krishna Advani said on Sunday, reports AFP.

The nationalists, who came to power in March, have been accused by the opposition of plotting to re-tailor the Constitution and turn the world's largest democracy into a Hindu Theocracy.

The Home Minister is widely seen as one of the most headline leaders in his Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Advani told reporters in the central Indian city of Bhopal that the state-sponsored panel was likely to begin its work before parliament resumed its final session of the year in October.

"Although I cannot set any deadline for the setting up of the commission on the constitution, I hope that it will be formed before the winter session of parliament," the Press Trust of India quoted him as saying.

"The commission will give suggestions about changes and amendments in the Constitution in the light of experience since (India's 1947) independence," Advani said without elaborating.

National political groups including the main opposition Congress Party have accused the BJP of harbouring ambitions of destroying India's secular credentials.

## Flood waters to recede fast from today



THEIR WOES KNOW NO BOUNDS: Shanties at a city slum at Gulshan-1 have been submerged by flood waters. — Star photo

By Special Correspondent

The overall flood situation in the country is likely to improve further if there are no heavy showers in the coming days, according to a senior meteorologist.

"Pressure of water in the major rivers would be on the wane from today following the full moon", Sajedur Rahman told The Daily Star last night.

So far the water had been moving down the Gages delta to the Bay of Bengal slowly because of the interaction of the lunar cycle, influencing the tidal flow, he said.

Sajedur Rahman said there had been no heavy rainfall in the past fortnight which contributed to the improvement of the flood situation.

The floods sweeping 37 out of 64 districts affecting nearly two million people are likely to roll on and off until middle of September.

There are chances of heavy rainfall because of one or two monsoon depressions, forming in the Bay, a long range forecast for August by the Meteorology Department said last week.

It said there are possibilities of 'more than normal rainfall' in August. The flood situation, now improving, may deteriorate later, it said.

Sajedur Rahman said, during June there had been 'less than normal rainfall'. But in July, there were 'more than normal' precipitation, breaking See Page 12 Col 1

## 7-party to stage mass hunger strike on Aug 18

The BNP-led Seven-party Alliance will observe a day-long programme of mass hunger strike and mass processions on August 18 to protest the deteriorating law and order in the country, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Alliance, held at 29 Minto Road on Sunday night with BNP leader Abdus Salam Talukder in the chair, said a press release yesterday.

In a resolution, the meeting condemned what it said the government's attempt to divert See Page 12 Col 1

## Cabinet meet held

A meeting of the cabinet was held in the city yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, reports UNB.

The cabinet was informed about the details of the meeting in Dhaka with the consortium of development partners in May this year.

## Drug cos form oligopoly, fix price at much higher rate

Star Report

Taking advantage of a weak regulatory body, a number of pharmaceutical companies have formed an oligopoly, fixing the price of a raw material for an essential drug at a much higher level than the international rate.

The biggest beneficiary of the situation is Beximco Pharmaceuticals, being the largest producer of the raw material. Others who also manufacture the same are Square Pharmaceuticals, Ganashastha and Drug International. But the losers are the patients who could buy the drug at a much reduced price if the regulatory body, Drug Administration Authority (DAA), had functioned properly.

According to sources, the DAA had last fixed the price of Amoxycillin, which is purchased by drug companies for conversion into capsules for final consumption, in 1992 at Tk 3950 per kg. The rate was fixed upon an invoice quotation by Beximco Pharmaceuticals, which showed the international price of 6 APA, the immediate earlier stage of the raw material Amoxycillin, at 65.5 US dollar per kg.

Since then, prices of 6 APA have come down substantially. For example, this year the Amoxycillin manufacturing companies have imported 6 APA at rates ranging between 51 dollars and 43.4 dollars.

But the DAA did not reflex price of Amoxycillin to reflect the dropping international price of 6 APA.

Pharmaceutical companies which depend on these four companies for procurement of Amoxycillin, have several times brought the matter to the notice of DAA. But no action had been taken.

However, on August 2, DAA sent letters to the four manufac-

## Six children killed in Comilla road mishap

COMILLA, Aug 10: Six children, including two siblings, were killed and 25 injured when a Dhaka-bound bus tumbled into a roadside ditch near Daudkandi Bridge on Homna-Daudkandi road today, reports UNB.

Police said the accident took place at about 3:00 pm when driver of the bus coming from Homna lost control, leaving over 30 passengers injured.

Of the injured, six minor boys and girls succumbed to their injuries at Gouripur Hospital.

Four of them were identified as Saleh Musa, 10, and his brother Shahin 4, of Gobindapur and Konom, 7, of Baiddarkandi in Daudkandi thana and Shafiq, 10, of Chunarchar in Homna thana of the district.

A case was filed with Daudkandi thana.

## Fresh clash: BCL calls two-day strike at IU

KUSHTIA, Aug 10: At least 10 people, including a policeman, were injured in sporadic clashes in the town today, reports UNB.

Police said the violence erupted when the supporters of BCL brought out processions in the town and the Islamic University campus blaming Chhatra Shibir for the death of Khushid Hasan Mamun.

Mamun, sports secretary of the BCL local unit, was killed in a road accident at Bittipara Bazar in Sadar thana Sunday.

During today's clashes, at least 25 homemade bombs and crackers were exploded in the town, leaving 10 people, including constable Akbar Ali, injured.

Of the injured, Ifekharuddin Ahmed, an official of Delta Life Insurance, was admitted to Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Meanwhile, the BCL activists submitted a memorandum to See Page 12 Col 5

## KSA expels over one lakh illegal workers in three months

RIYADH, Aug 10: Saudi Arabia expelled 104,000 illegal workers from the kingdom in the last three months, newspapers said today, reports AFP.

The expulsions follow a 'Saudisation campaign' launched in October aimed at replacing several thousand expatriate workers with Saudi nationals.

About 750,000 illegal workers have already been expelled under the programme, the latest government statistics show.

Just under 400 Saudi nationals were jailed in the last three months for breaking immigration laws, the newspapers said, a further 1,400 were fined for the same offence. See Page 12 Col 6

## Strike paralyses Ctg port for 4 hours

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 10: All kinds of activities including cargo handling came to a halt at Chittagong Port as the coalition of 22 trade union bodies observed a four-hour work abstention from 8 am today, officials said.

The programme was observed in protest against the government's permission to an American consortium — Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) — for setting up of a private container terminals both in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The coalition leaders had already announced a nine-hour work abstention on August 26 also as part of their movement to oppose the government deci-

## CPA lifts higher charges on empty containers today

CHITTAGONG, Aug 10: The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has decided to withdraw higher charges on empty containers from tomorrow in the interest of overall export trade of the country, reports BSS.

According to a port press release today, the port authorities earlier raised the charges four times on empty containers to ease container congestion.

The port authorities further said the congestion of empty containers hampers normal activities of the port. It requested all exporters, importers and shipping companies to extend all-out cooperation to keep the empty containers inside the port for shorter periods for uninterrupted port activities, the press release said.

## Political high-ups, local admn blamed for Jalmahal tragedy

By Morshed Ali Khan, back from Satkhira

Interference from influential political quarters and failure of the local administration in assessing the situation have mainly contributed to the recent bloody incidents in Baburabad in which four landless peasants were killed and over 100 injured in police firing.

The July 27 incident also triggered a public outcry in the district town, about 30 kilometers away. Enraged by the 'unprovoked' police action, hundreds of people regardless of political affiliations took to the streets and gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office in Satkhira, ransacking the building, uprooting its iron boundary fences.

The police action on about 1,200 landless families in nine villages under Kaliganj and Devhata police stations was the second of its kind since May. The local administration claimed that they have been 'simply trying to hand over possession' of the 1,760 acres of Jalmahal (low-lying areas highly potential for shrimp culture) to the lease holders.

Local people in Satkhira said the administration failed to assess the situation and 'knowingly' launched the action against helpless peasants. They also blamed the administration for failing to inform the government about the real situation to avert such a tragedy.

The local AL leaders have been supporting the lease holders. This created a division between the AL leadership and its activists," said a Satkhira businessman requesting anonymity. He said the activists supported the landless people while the leaders interfered in the administration to serve the purpose of the rich shrimp cultivators.

The huge Jalmahal, originally belonging to a Hindu Jaminadar (landlord) known as the Sarnakars, has been an agricultural land for over hundred years. The landless peasants have been settling in the area since the land was declared khas in a court verdict in 1982. But in 1985 the government changed the pattern of the land use and declared the area a Jalmahal — an area for shrimp culture — and started to issue yearly lease. In the process of leasing out the land to some of the richest and most influential men in the area, the administration 'totally ignored' the landless families living there for years, some local people said.

To establish their right on the khas land, the landless people went to the court in 1993. Pending disposal of the case, the whole stretch of the Jalmahal remained without being leased since 1993 and under possession of the 1,200 landless families. Despite their existence in the shrimp rich Jalmahals, the socio-economic condition of these people remained unchanged. Local people at Baburabad said a lot of money is required to cultivate shrimp. See Page 12 Col 3



The family members of Zaheda, who was killed in a recent police firing in Baburabad Jalmahal area. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin