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Today's issue
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BSF firing Dhaka demands compensation for the victims

Bangladesh yesterday asked for compensation from India for the deaths and injuries of both civilian and BDR personnel in the firing last week by Border Security Force (BSF) of India near Hilli station in Dinapur district, official sources said, reports BSS.

One civilian and one BDR personnel were killed and four others, including three civilians, were injured in the unprovoked firing by BSF, sources added.

The Deputy High Commissioner of India in Bangladesh was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) yesterday morning for handing over an aide-memoire which contained, among other things, demands for compensation for the deaths and injuries. Bangladesh also requested the government of India to take immediate steps to restrain BSF from acting in future without provocation in the greater interest of maintaining peace and stability on the border and

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PM's appeal to the nation Sink differences, face calamity unitedly



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the nation yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday appealed to the nation to work unitedly for the flood-hit people "at this time of national distress," forgetting all differences, reports UNB.

"Face the calamity with patience and courage. Let us sink our differences and unitedly work at this time of national distress," she said in an address to the nation over Betar and television last night.

The Prime Minister urged all political parties, socio-cultural organisations, professionals, government and non-government bodies and institutions to stand by the people devastated by the terrible flood.

In the speech recorded just before her departure for Saudi Arabia to perform 'Umrah' yesterday afternoon, Hasina fer-

vently requested all to "come forward with whatever you have and distribute relief among the flood victims."

"Inshallah, we will be able to overcome this severe calamity through concerted efforts and courage," she said.

The Prime Minister urged the Bangladesh's development partners, international agencies, private organisations, expatriate Bangladeshis and the well-to-do people to assist in the post-flood rehabilitation and quick recovery from destruction wrought by the flood.

Hasina said her government is giving top priority to ensure food security for the people. This prolonged flooding damaged Aus paddy and is also harming the Aman paddy.

Detailing the present food See page 11

Low-priority ADP projects 'Cut expenditures, send money for post-flood rehabilitation'

By Inam Ahmed

The Planning Ministry yesterday asked all the line ministries to cut expenditures on low priority projects and redirect the money for flood rehabilitation.

"It would be desirable that until the flood situation normalises, expenditures on low priority projects of the current ADP should be curtailed as much as possible and implementation of flood rehabilitation and other essential programmes should be geared up," the directive given by State Minister for Planning Dr Mohtuddin Khan Alamgir said.

The Ministry now views that the ongoing flood will affect this year's Annual Development Programme (ADP) on a massive scale, sources said.

The Tk 13600cr ADP has already faced a severe setback this year. According to the sources, most of the infrastructure work in the Eastern part of the country have almost come to a halt since July.

"The first quarter of the year is always a sluggish period for ADP implementation," said a high official in the Planning Ministry. "We are yet to get reports from project implementation directors, but this year, progress on the programmes is really slow."

It is from the third quarter that ADP implementation rate picks up and as such, the initial setback may not affect the overall ADP utilisation, officials said.

However, last year the government had also failed to make a good utilisation of the development funds which evoked donor criticism.

The State Minister for Planning in his letter to the ministries also said, "The current ADP will come under severe strains because of emergency rehabilitation of the damage caused to the projects."

According to sources, the money saved from the ADP projects will be utilised till donors' assistance comes for post flood rehabilitation.

Annan's call to help flood-hit Bangladesh

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 30: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the international community on Saturday to provide generous assistance for flood-stricken people of Bangladesh, reports Reuters.

The secretary-general is deeply distressed over the widespread devastation caused by flooding in Bangladesh, where two-thirds of the country now lie under water," a statement issued through a UN spokesman said.

"He calls upon the international community to respond quickly and generously to the appeal launched by the government of Bangladesh on Wednesday."

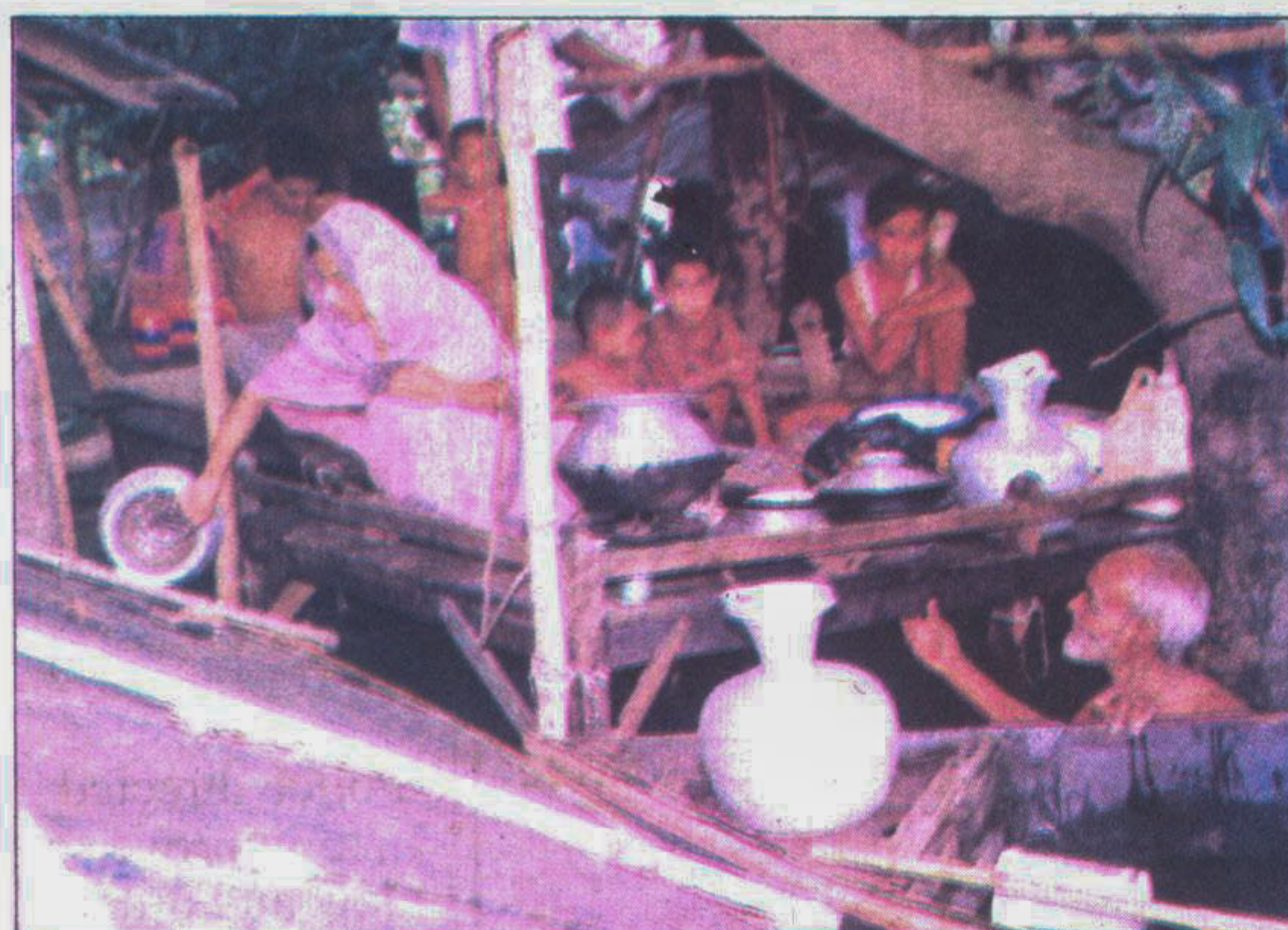
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OMS of foodgrains

Open market sale (OMS) of foodgrains will be introduced soon to mitigate the sufferings of the people, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food Ministry at the Sangsad Bhaban here yesterday with its chairman Mohammad Sayedul Huq in the chair, a parliament secretariat press release said.

The meeting reviewed country's overall food situation and it was informed that the food stock position was satisfactory.



LIVING WITH FLOODS: Rising flood waters have forced this family to take shelter on a wooden platform on a tree at Kamrangirchar. — Star photo

Tk 3.6 crore mugged from oil co car

By Staff Correspondent

Armed muggers took away about Tk 3.62 crore in cash and cheques by intercepting a car of an edible oil factory at Sarat Gupta Road under Sutrapur thana in the city yesterday morning.

According to police, three staff of City Oil Mill at Dhupkhola Math were going to deposit Tk 22.56 lakh and cheques, demand drafts and pay orders for about Tk 3.40 crore with a bank in Luxmibazar area.

Two young men on a motor cycle intercepted the car. Then four other young men on two motor bikes joined them and cordoned the car. This created a traffic jam on the road.

The gang took the key of the car from the driver at gun point, picked up the bag containing the money and cheques from the luggage compartment and drove off, police and witnesses said.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report last night.

Turag, Buriganga fall Flood situation in Dhaka to improve

With overall condition mostly static yesterday, country's flood situation may experience slight improvement, reports UNB.

The improvement may take place in and around Dhaka, northern parts along the Brahmaputra river and north-eastern areas in Sylhet region.

However, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said the situation along the Padma river is still likely to aggravate.

Meanwhile, fresh areas were inundated as water level of Muthuri and Halda rivers at South-eastern Hill Basin again rose to downpour in 24 hours till 9 am yesterday.

The FFWC officials said water level in and around Dhaka city was found to be receding slowly with slight fall in water levels in Turag and Buriganga.

But, they said, water level of high and low tide still remained at significantly higher stage in Chandpur.

In Chandpur, the low tide was maintaining a height of over 37 cm above danger mark till Saturday night affecting the flow of main rivers.

See Page 12 Col 8

Cairn frustrated No gas found in Halda

Star Report

British company Cairn Energy's much expected drilling in Halda ended amid frustrations and cost over-runs, sources said.

Cairn suspended its Halda operation recently as it found no gas there. Sources said that the huge cost involved in this operation would affect Cairn's financial status. The news of Cairn's failure in Halda has also affected Cairn's share price in London's secondary share market. Cairn's share price shot up in 1996 when it struck gas in Sangu valley.

It was earlier expected that a huge gas reserve might be found in Halda. "The initial pressure detected while drilling upto 3000 metres was so good that everybody took it for granted that it is going to be a huge success," said a source.

But as the company drilled on, it could detect nothing but water. Ultimately, Cairn drilled further till it reached its prime zone and gave up.

Meanwhile, Cairn's other See page 11

UP chairman shot dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 30: Golam Faruque Howlader, 28, chairman of Nalhati Union Parishad under Rupsha thana was shot dead by four unidentified assailants at about 10-30 am today.

A leader of Rupsha thana Awami League, Faruque was in the union parishad office when the assailants fired in his head.

He was rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

All modes of transport went off the roads from Rupsha east to Bagherhat soon after the murder. Ferry services between Khulna and Rupsha East remained suspended protesting the killing of the UP chairman.

Police said the alleged killers are armed cadres of an outlawed organisation. The UP chairman reportedly used to protest their toll collection and involvement in other crimes.

Body of the UP chairman was sent to his village home at East Rupsha after autopsy.

Golam Rasul Howlader, elder brother of the deceased, has filed a case with Rupsha thana without naming any one as accused.

JCD activist See page 12 Col 8

Hasina arrives in Jeddah

JEDDAH, Aug 30: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived here this evening on a two-day visit at the invitation of Royal Saudi government to perform Umrah, reports BSS.

On her arrival at the King Abdul Aziz International Airport, the Prime Minister was received by Governor of Jeddah Prince Mishal Bin Mazed.

High officials of the royal protocol and the foreign ministry welcomed the Bangladeshi guest. Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi, Arabia A. Momen Chowdhury was also present at the airport to receive the prime minister.

Sheikh Hasina was offered 'gahwa' (a kind of drink) at the royal terminal in the Saudi traditional way of welcoming distinguished guests.

During her performance of Umrah at Makkah, Ziarat at See Page 12 Col 3

Corruption case against Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) has lodged a case against former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia and two others on charges of embezzlement of Tk 140 crore, according to police sources.

The case was lodged with Motijheel thana yesterday.

The BAC charged Begum Zia, former minister of state for Civil Aviation Maj (rtd) A Mannan and an official of Bangladesh Biman, Mahmudur Rahman, with embezzlement of the amount in a purchase deal.

Harun-ur Rashid, an inspector of BAC, filed the case.

GD accusing Tofael of threatening life of Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has filed a General Diary with Motijheel thana accusing Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed of threatening the life of Begum Khaleda Zia, BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad, police sources said.

The GD was lodged on Saturday.



BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia at the district court premises yesterday. — Star photo

Khaleda granted bail

By Court Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia was granted bail yesterday in a corruption case against her for interior renovation and repair of her cantonment house during the tenure of her government.

District and Sessions Judge Kazi Golam Rasul granted the bail when she appeared before the court at noon. A large number of BNP leaders and workers thronged the court.

The case was filed with the Cantonment thana by the Bureau of Anti-corruption alleging that Begum Zia had used her official influence for renovation of her house and that Tk eight lakh was spent for it from the public exchequer.

Later chargesheet was submitted under Section 409 of the Penal Code and Section 5(2) of See page 11

A privately-run gruel kitchen feeds over 6000

By Shehab Ahmed

Ignoring the drizzle, Yaron Bibi, 36, awaited her turn patiently in a S-shaped queue to get food for her seven-member family from the gruel kitchen at the flood shelter opened Armanitola Government High School yesterday.

She is among the 6215 flood affected people who are being fed cooked lunch and dinner and given half litre of milk for each child every day at the camp.

The first ever known to be gruel kitchen run by individuals, it was opened by a group of 15 businessmen of the locality under the aegis of Pesh Imam of the famed Tara (star) Masjid on July 31.

Starting with 500 people at the camp on that day, the inmates grew in number, making it difficult for the organisers to feed them, Hajj Mohammad Enayet Hossain, said.

The trader, who deals in iron sheet and steel, is the driving force behind the gruel kitchen, working until 1:30 am.

"It is difficult for us to manage too many new faces everyday. Now the shelter is full to the brim. We are finding it hard to refuse shelter or food to any one," Hossain said.

The rush of people has continued. But Hossain and his committee members, collecting funds from their neighbours' dared to keep the kitchen open.

Quality rice, lentils cooked with vegetables or meat are the standard meals for the camp inmates who consumed 12 maunds of rice yesterday.

Like Bibi, they have come mostly from the city's western suburbs, outside the flood embankment that rings the city.

Hossain said the inmates are provided with medicare when they are sick. Doctors from the neighbourhood attends the pa-

See Page 12 Col 4

Rubel murder case Handwriting samples of Akram, Mukuli collected

By Staff Correspondent

Samples of handwritings of AC Akram Hussain, the main accused in the Rubel murder case, and Mukuli Begum, a neighbour of the victim and a local Awami League leader, were collected by the CID investigators yesterday.

Our Court Correspondent reports: Sample of the handwriting of AC Akram was taken in the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Aminul Islam yesterday.

Earlier the CID had filed a petition for taking his signature and handwriting samples to verify it with handwriting on a 'chit' seized by the investigators of the case.

No bail petition was moved for him yesterday. After taking the specimen, Akram was sent back to the prison cell of the PG Hospital where he is under treatment.

CID police, investigating the sensational murder of Shamim Reza Rubel in DB custody on July 23, recovered the 'chit' from an almirah at the residence of SI Hayatul Islam Thakur, another accused in the case.

The 'chit' contained the address and location of Rubel's residence, written on one side, and the name of Cambridge Coaching Centre on the other side.

Akram earlier admitted that he had written the name of the coaching centre on the 'chit', but denied having written Rubel's name and address.

The CID investigators suspect that there were handwritings of three persons on the 'chit'.

Sample of handwriting of Mukuli Begum was also collected at her residence by CID investigators.

Meanwhile, the CID is See Page 12 Col 1

Runner editor shot dead

JESSORE, Aug 30: Editor of The Daily Runner was killed by some gunmen at Charkhamba intersection in the town tonight, police and hospital sources said, reports BSS.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Malek Mian said R M Saiful Alam Mukul was returning to his Deshpara residence when the gunmen sprayed bullets at him at around 9-30 pm killing him on the spot.

He was rushed to the Jessore General Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Police said none was arrested in this connection till 11 pm.

Intern docs observe token strike

Intern doctors at eight medical colleges yesterday observed token strike from 9 am to 12 noon to press home their six-point demand including increase of salary and allowances, introduction of a policy for the private clinics and fixation of minimum salary, reports BSS.

Implementation of HPSP yet to start as funds not placed

By Naimul Haq

Implementation of the Tk 15,314 crore Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) launched on July 1 could not be started as scheduled because funds have not yet been placed, sources in the Health Ministry said.

A steering committee which is to approve funds for the HPSP is yet to be constituted.

A source in the Health Directorate told The Daily Star "Relevant suggestions were given to the ministry about launching of HPSP long ago. Ministry's cautious move is delaying actual implementation of HPSP."

All activities under the five-year HPSP (formerly projects under the fourth five-year plan) have virtually come to a halt. Since the launching of HPSP in July, a shift from projectised approach to sector-wide programme management, none of the programmes is being implemented in the field level as the ministry is still working

out the 'plan of actions' of the individual programmes.

A decision on 'unification process', the key element of HPSP, is awaiting confirmation. Besides, incorporating the Family Planning Department workers in the revenue budget and retention of 'surplus' manpower are yet to be determined, an official pointed out.

A World Bank (WB) high official said, "World Bank's money (Tk 4,795 crore) under the 'donor trust fund' is available but the ministry has not yet applied for withdrawal of the money from its account."

He added, "The WB officials are in a confusion due to delay in execution of HPSP."

A source in the Health Ministry said, the scheduled training for the line directors who would implement the programmes could not be started yet as the higher authorities were yet to finalise the list of selected line directors.

Majority of the line directors had been selected. Mohammad Ali, the then secretary of health ministry, had settled it. However, since his transfer, the 'settled' list of line directors was changed and a fresh list of line directors were being prepared, the source said.

"The unresolved issue may further jeopardise the ongoing crisis because a fresh list is being prepared as per 'choice of an influential quarter inside the ministry'."

Other sources in the ministry said, "In the absence of 'leadership', (Secretary) questions like who would negotiate with the donors, how would resources be mobilised and the action plans be executed, are being asked."

"The activities of HPSP have virtually come to a halt," a health directorate official said.

When contacted, Director General of Health Services Prof See Page 12 Col 7

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