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PM orders immediate disbursement of farm loans

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked officials to disburse farm loans immediately and ensure that the genuine and affected farmers get the loans, reports UNB.

Hasina was chairing a high level meeting on disbursement of agricultural loan at the Prime Minister's Secretariat.

The government has already allocated Tk 3,270 crore for disbursing fresh agricultural loans among the farmers who were badly affected by the devastating flood.

The prime minister also directed officials to closely monitor the loan disbursement so that all the affected farmers, including vegetable and betel leaf planters get the credits.

If necessary, activate the See Page 12 Col 7

Tenders to be floated soon to procure 2 lakh MT of foodgrains

Tenders will be floated soon for procuring two lakh metric tons of foodgrains.

This is in addition to 4.1 lakh tons now in the process of shipment, and 14,000 tons reached the port, a Food Ministry official told UNB yesterday.

The government has planned to import a total of 10 lakh metric tons on cash to meet the post-flood emergency.

The decision to float tenders was taken at a meeting of the special committee on food held at the Finance Ministry yesterday.

Chaired by Anisuzzaman, adviser to the Prime Minister, the meeting was attended by Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Food Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury and State Minister for Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleque and high officials.

The meeting reviewed the food situation in the country. It decided to gear-up measures to See Page 12 Col 7

Start OMS of rice at Tk 10 per kg : Khaleda

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday asked the government to immediately start OMS (open market sale) of rice at subsidised price of Tk 10 per kg, reports UNB.

She said the people, devastated by flood, cannot buy rice which is being sold up to Tk 20 per kg. Price of other essentials has also went beyond the purchasing power of the people.

"The poverty-stricken people will stream to cities in search of food if government failed to ensure food and work for them immediately," Begum Zia warned.

She was addressing the flood-affected people at Matoail Madrasa bazar. She also visited the most affected areas and distributed saree, lungi, rice, potato, pulses, salt and ORS at Jatrabari crossing, Matoail Mridha Bari, Jaitia, Paity School, Manda, Manikdi Bridge and Sheikh Jaiga Bridge under Demra thana.

BNP chairperson accused the government of its 'failure' to mitigate the suffering of the flood-victims. She said relief activities of the government has been confined to the state-run electronic media.

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EU urges Japan to push ahead with banking sector reforms

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Wreckage of Cessna-150 training aircraft that crashed near Postagola in the city yesterday morning. —Star photo

Cessna crash kills two young pilots

By Special Correspondent

Two young pilots were killed in a crash near Postagola in the city after apparently losing control of their Cessna-150 training aircraft in gusty winds and heavy rains yesterday morning, witnesses said.

Fareea Lara, 26 and Syed Rafiqul Islam, 24, of Parabat Flying Academy, were the victims of the tragedy. They were training themselves to qualify as instructors.

The control tower at Tejgaon received the "May Day" distress call from Lara at 10:23 a.m. and there had been no further contact, officials said.

The aircraft, on a routine training flight, was coming from Barisal. It was scheduled to land at 10:25 a.m., they said.

There was unusually high winds and heavy rains in the area," said K M Mohsin, a Postagola resident. The plane, caught in the whirlwind, was seen coming down apparently to avoid it, he said.

But the small plane went in a spin and headed straight down, landing between the two flourmills in a narrow passage. Probably, it was aiming at a field adjacent to one of the mills, Mohsin said.

A ball of fire charred their bodies beyond recognition as the young pilots tried desperately to come out of cockpit when the aircraft fell in the narrow passage, hitting a tinshed of a flourmill, witnesses said.

See Page 12 Col 1

120 Ctg city BNP leaders allege Mir Nasir, Dastagir using party for personal gains

CHITTAGONG, Sept 27: A rift in the local BNP came to surface as 120 leaders out of a 158-member committee of Chittagong city unit of BNP brought allegations including corruption against two top city unit leaders, reports APB.

In a press statement today, they alleged that incumbent city unit president Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and general secretary Dastagir Chowdhury had sold out possession of some rooms of the party office to some businessmen.

When contacted, Mir Nasir turned down such allegations saying the statement might have been issued by vested quarters "who are interested in using the office building for anti-social activities."

The dissident leaders including three vice presidents and four joint secretaries have urged party workers to be united "to foil the conspiracy against the party being hatched by the two top men."

They alleged that the two were using party banner for their personal gains and engaged in corruption and fraudulent activities.

The immaturity and inefficiency of the Nasir-Dastagir duo has tarnished the party image and disappointed all its See Page 12 Col 3

Water receding fast from rest 8 districts

Flood water has totally receded from 44 districts and is expected to fall back from the remaining eight in a couple of days, officials said yesterday, reports UNB.

Relief Control room said the flood situation is improving fast in the eight districts which are likely to be free of flooding soon. The districts are - Dhaka, Narayanganj, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Noakhali and Laxmipur.

Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said all the rivers in the country's four basins fell and were flowing below their danger marks in 46 points.

See Page 12 Col 7

Low remains stationary

By Special Correspondent

The low over the west central Bay remained stationary yesterday, but the rains it influenced lowered the temperature by about one degree Celsius from Saturday's 36.2 degrees Celsius.

The day temperature may drop further by one to three degrees today, the Meteorological Department said last night as a good shower started cooling off the day's sultry weather.

Earlier in the day, most parts of the city had showers which however failed to smother the hot and humid weather.

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DCC to 'clean up' city thru' FFW programme

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will start cleaning the leftovers of the prolonged flood through a food-for-work scheme, DCC sources said.

The DCC will soon submit a proposal to the ministry concerned requesting an allocation of 3,028.77 tonnes of foodgrains for this. The corporation has identified 728 spots in the city where the scheme would be implemented, under 10 zonal engineers, DCC sources said.

Meanwhile, DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif yesterday gave a go-ahead to start the food-for-work scheme immediately with "the four tonnes of undistributed wheat and rice, initially kept for the city relief shelter."

The decision to start a scheme was taken recently at the DCC-level in view of the massive leftovers presently littering many city areas. The existing DCC resources have proved too inadequate to clean the massive deposits of sludge and solid waste.

DCC sources said during the two-month long flooding, people of the submerged areas did not have any option other than dumping all sort of rubbish in the water.

As the water receded, the de- See Page 12 Col 6

Kohl concedes defeat

BONN, Sept 27: Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced after conceding defeat in Germany's general election today that he would give up his post as chairman of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), reports Reuters.

"There is no debate about this defeat. I will of course accept the consequences," he said in announcing he would not be available for re-election at a party congress later this year.

Social Democrat Gerhard Schroeder promised today to pursue foreign policy continuity and battle mass unemployment as Germany's new chancellor.

"After 16 years, the Kohl era is at an end," Schroeder told cheering supporters at SPD party headquarters.

Schroeder will be Germany's new leader after his party emerged as the largest after today's election.

Earlier Schroeder beat veteran German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in a general election today, an exit poll for ARD television said.

The poll gave Schroeder's Social Democratic Party 41 per cent compared with 36 per cent for Kohl's conservative Christian Democratic Alliance.

A separate exit poll for ZDF television gave the SPD 41 per cent and the Christian Democrats 35 per cent.

The environmental Greens, a likely coalition partner for the SPD, won 6.5 per cent of the vote, according to both exit polls, tied with the Liberal Free Democrats (FDP). Kohl's 16-year coalition partner for the last 16 years.

The Reform Communist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) won 5.0 per cent of the vote, enough to bring them back into parliament in full strength.

The results, if confirmed, would mean that Kohl's 16-long reign has come to an end. But it appears to be too early to tell if Schroeder will lead a left-leaning coalition with the Greens or a so-called 'grand coalition' with the CDU.

AP earlier reported: After one of the tightest races in post-war Germany, voters today elect a chancellor to shepherd Europe's largest nation through historic changes: the government's move back to Berlin, and the switch from the trusted German mark to the euro - Europe's common currency.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, 68, who merged communist East Germany with the West in 1990, is seeking an unprecedented fifth term after 16 years in office. His appeal is stability and his clout with world powers at a time of economic turmoil in Russia and on-going conflict in the Balkans.

His challenger, Gerhard See Page 12 Col 8

Rape charge: Only 5 appear before JU Syndicate

By JU Correspondent

Two BCL leaders accused of rape and three charged with abetting them appeared before the Syndicate of Jahangirnagar University yesterday to defend them.

Five of the seven accused of rape and three of the six charged with abatement failed to appear before the Syndicate.

Two alleged rapists who appeared yesterday are Nabiul Haq Rani and Anisur Rahman, three abettors who appeared are Ferdous, Rafiq and Sohag.

The 13 accused were served with showcause notices on Friday. Eleven of them fled the campus when a BCL faction led by Kakor, a chargesheeted accused in a murder case, 'captured' the five JU residential halls for male students on Saturday. Two others were injured and hospitalised.

The seven accused of rape are BCL leaders Jasimuddin Manik, Miradul Islam, Hasibur Rahman - Barkat, Mohammad Ali Dalas, Nabiul Haq Rani, Atiqur Rahman Naim and Anisur Rahman.

The six accused of abatement are BCL leaders Titu, Ferdous, Rafiq, Ruhul, Sohag and Kajol. Meanwhile, the General Students' Unity (GSU) in a memorandum submitted to Vice Chancellor Prof Alauddin Ahmed yesterday demanded expulsion of the rapists from the university for life and cancellation of their university certificates.

GSU threatened of tougher agitation programmes "if the authorities were soft to the rapists."

No untoward incident took place on the campus since the 'capture' of halls by "Kakor group" and subsequent deployment of police at the JU.

More students were leaving the campus as the JU authorities announced a seven day Puja vacation from Saturday.

See Page 12 Col 4

Sharif siphoned off millions of dollars

LONDON, Sept 27: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has amassed a personal fortune siphoning off millions of dollars from his country's coffers, according to a Pakistani police report passed to The Observer newspaper, reports AFP.

The Pakistani Federal Investigation Agency report, revealed to the paper by the FIA's suspended second in command Rehman Malik, was delivered to the country's President Rafique Tarar last week, the paper said today.

The Observer said the 200-page report was initiated while Sharif was out of power but effectively stifled after he and his Islamic Democratic Alliance party returned to lead the country in February 1997.

It said the investigation revealed how Sharif's assets included four flats in London's exclusive Mayfair, worth more than three million pounds (five US million dollars).

More than 70 million dollars was also said to have been traced to accounts and companies controlled by the family.

The inquiry was said to have focused on Sharif's Ittefaq See Page 12 Col 3

Police report to Pak president

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