

BUY NOW PAY LATER

Whirlpool
HOME APPLIANCES USA

Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited
Authorized distributor for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

The Daily Star

TOSHIBA AC

MADE IN JAPAN
The Perfect Combination of Style and Performance

RANGS GROUP

VOL. IX NO. 216 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

BHADRA 17 1406 BS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 1999

JAMADIUL AWAL 19, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

Confce of Asian parliamentarians begins today

Parliamentarians as well as representatives of civil society and distinguished persons from 36 countries will meet in the city today to identify their role in promoting peace in Asia, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the four-day Asian Parliamentarians' Conference for Peace and Cooperation (APCPC), the first of its kind, at Sonargaon Hotel at 10:30 am.

The conference will create an opportunity for the parliamentarians as representatives of civil society to exchange views and find ways and means to promote peace in Asia, said Quazi Md Manzur-I-Mowla, secretary of the Parliament Secretariat, who was elected secretary general of the conference at the secretaries general meeting yesterday.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, he said the secretaries general meeting proposed that no bilateral contentious issues

Khaleda terms attack on Janakantha a conspiracy

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia has termed the attack on the Daily Janakantha and subsequent move to shift blame on others as unfortunate.

In a statement yesterday, she also termed the incident as conspiratorial and alleged that certain vested quarters organised the incident to undermine the massive success of the BNP's mass procession.

She said the propaganda that party leader Anwar Zahid got down from the procession truck and led the attack on the Janakantha office is totally false. He was never on the truck during the procession.

Anwar Zahid joined the procession and walked upto Bangla Motor crossing and he was in the front portion of the procession, Begum Zia said and added that Zahid along with other party leaders were at Bangla Motor when the attack on the Janakantha office occurred.

The BNP Chairperson alleged that the "subservient" Awami League government has

Four staff of a foreign firm killed in Ctg road accident

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 31: Four employees of a foreign construction firm were killed and three others injured when a microbus and a city service bus collided at Guptakhal under Bandar thana here this morning.

All the victims were the staff of Shimizu Corporation of Japan.

The dead were identified as Engineer Dhana Ranjan Majumder, 58, Safety Officer Khalilur Rahman, 40, Assistant

Inside Today

Article

Problems Confront Russian and Chinese Leadership

Column: Connecting the Dots
by Dr A R Choudhury
Page 4

Focus

Chittagong University and the Crisis: Looking at the Roots
Page 5

Business

Increasing urea prices threaten aman production

China unveils huge stimulus package

DSE, CSE price quotations
Pages 6, 7 & 8

Prayer Timings

September 1

Azan 4:20 Jamaat 4:25

Fajr 4:20 Jamaat 4:25

Zohr 12:45 1:30

Asr 4:35 4:40

Maghrib 6:20 6:24

Esha 7:37 8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

More areas in city submerged Half of Chandpur town flooded

By Staff Correspondent

Flood waters inundated half of Chandpur and a portion of the Chandpur-Comilla road yesterday.

In the city and its outskirts, more low-lying areas were flooded overnight as the major rivers continued to rise due to rains and onrush of waters from the upstream.

Boats replaced rickshaws in Badda, Demra, Manda, Sabujbagh, Nandipara, Khilgaon and Swarnighat areas.

Flood also hit fresh areas in Narayanganj.

The Flood Information Centre here told The Daily Star yesterday that more areas in the city and in western and central

districts would be inundated in the next couple of days. The districts to be affected are Chapainawabganj, Rajbari, Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Manikganj, Munshiganj and Chandpur.

The rivers around Dhaka and Narayanganj will rise further, worsening the flood situation, the FIC said.

Our Chandpur Correspondent reported deterioration of flood situation in the district due to torrential rain and rise in water level in the Meghna due to onrush of hill waters.

At least half of Chandpur town has gone under water. Portions of the Chandpur-Comilla

road and the Kalibari road were submerged yesterday.

The worst hit areas in the district are Chandpur Sadar, Hajiganj, Shaharati, Haimchar and Matlab thanas, official sources said.

Ferry service between Chandpur and Haimchar remained suspended for the last four days. The district town's road links with Faridganj and Matlab also remained snapped.

About 10,000 people in Char Bhairabi, Nikamal and Char Kashem have been marooned, they said.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre said water lev-

See Page 12 Col 4

Akhtaruzzaman Babu relieved of party post

By Staff Correspondent

Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu has been relieved of the post of Industries and Commerce Secretary of ruling Awami League, a party press release said yesterday.

Signed by AL Office Secretary Abdul Mannan Khan, the press release said the action was taken 'as he has taken part in activities contrary to the party's ideals, programmes, constitution, rules and interests'.

Babu allegedly led a group of armed hoodlums who storm into the boardroom of United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL) when a Board meeting was going on at its head office in the city on Thursday last and forced five directors of the bank to resign at gun point.

When contacted the AL Office Secretary told The Daily Star over telephone yesterday evening that a letter was sent to

See Page 12 Col 4

Bangladesh Bank yet to begin probe Akhtaruzzaman Babu 'orders' UCBL MD to toe his line

By Staff Correspondent

Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, continuing to stake his claim to UCBL chairmanship, yesterday 'directed' the managing director of the United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL) not to allow Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury into the bank.

According to sources, Babu in a letter to K C Rezaul Huq warned that he (MD) would be held responsible for any loss of bank documents and asked him not to cooperate with the board chaired by Zafar Chowdhury.

The sources said many employees of the bank's head office had not gone to work since the incident at the bank boardroom on Thursday.

Some 50 men allegedly

backed by police stormed the boardroom of UCBL during a meeting and forced five directors to resign at gunpoint.

Chairman Zafar Chowdhury and fellow directors later alleged that Babu, a former chairman of UCBL, led a gang of hoodlums into the meeting and declared himself as the chairman of the bank. He allegedly forced the directors to sign a resolution on his election.

A day after the incident the central bank put its own administrator in charge suspending the activities of the board.

The regulators also issued two notices to Babu and Zafar addressing both of them as chairman asking them to explain why the board would not

be dissolved.

Zafar and 10 of his board members later filed a petition with the High Court challenging the BB notice which stayed it for two weeks and directed the central bank to investigate and submit a report to the court 'as soon as it is ready'.

Zafar Chowdhury and fellow directors later took over control of the bank after the court order.

The central bank on Monday also formed a three member inquiry committee headed by its Executive Director Murhsid Kuli Khan following the court order.

The BB probe team could not begin functioning as the ED was

See Page 12 Col 8



Bangladesh forward Mizanur Rahman (sitting on the ground) looks after heading in the match winner against Malaysia last night.

Deserving win for Bangladesh

Sports Reporter

A first-half goal by striker Mizanur Rahman gave Bangladesh a 1-0 victory over the Malaysian Olympic team in the 2nd Bangabandhu Cup International Football Tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mizanur scored the all-important goal in the 28th minute amidst thunderous applause from the near-capacity home crowd at the big bowl.

The match also marked an early exit for the Malaysians from the 12-team fray with two consecutive defeats.

The creditable victory of the spirited boys of Shamir Shakir, the Iraqi coach of the national team, kindled Bangladesh's hopes of a semifinal berth. They will now have to beat the Kerulet FC of Hungary in the last Group A match on September 3 for a passage into the last four.

The rare win for success-lorn Bangladesh in international meets also prompted the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to make a brief visit to the Bangabandhu National Stadium to congratulate the heroes after the match.

It was a deserving win for Bangladesh, who dominated over their more colourful South Asian neighbours in every department of the game. And had the strikers been a wee bit more agile it would have been a more flattering victory for the home side.

Although Mizanur struck the match-decider, he was

equally responsible for denying Bangladesh victory by a bigger margin. The dapper forward, who headed home a Masud Rana flag-kick from the left, also missed two easy sitters in the first half, much to the horror of his teammates.



Masood Rana ... m-o-m

But the loyal home supporters could not think of a better performance from the national team after a heart-breaking experience in the first match where the much-vaunted Brazilian side produced a woe-of display.

While the Rio de Janeiro side of Brazil, the country with a strong band of followers in this part of the world, was a sheer

frustration for the expectant audience, the laudable showing of Bangladesh on this very standard ground more than paid their money's worth.

Bangladesh started the match on a positive note with Masud Rana leading the charge with menacing moves down the left flank. Called to the national team at the last moment, the graceful left wingback broke open the Malaysian defence in the very third minute with an imaginative cross. But Monwar spoiled the chance, shooting the ball wide off the mark.

Bangladesh came close to scoring several minutes later when Monwar set Alfaz up with a defence-slicing through. But the Malaysian custodian Samy Fahmi parried off Alfaz's feeble shot. The Malaysian custodian came to his side's rescue again in the 20th minute when he fisted away a Masud Rana goal-bound header for a corner. But that set the stage for the only goal in the match with Mizanur making no mistake to head home from the resultant flag kick.

It would have been a delightful double for Bangladesh in the 35th minute had Mizanur been a little less selfish and fed the ball to an unmarked Alfaz instead of taking the shot from an acute angle.

Bangladesh had to remain satisfied with the slender lead after Mizanur shot the ball out from a hand-shaking distance at the stroke of the short whistle.

See Page 12 Col 4

DESA engineer suspended for corruption

By Staff Correspondent

For the first time, a DESA engineer was suspended yesterday on charge of corruption and irregularities, sources said.

Engineer Md Ibrahim Mia was suspended when State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Rafiqul Haq, during a surprise visit to Dhaka Electric Distribution Project office at Gulshan, found that he was absent from office for the last one week. The state minister also detected gross irregularities in office documents.

The Head Clerk of the office, Moatakur Rahman, was also suspended. "Exemplary disciplinary action" will be taken against him soon after investigation, the sources said.

The Power Secretary and DESA Chairman accompanied the state minister during the visit.

Services in the power sector was recently declared "essential", making attendance at office mandatory.

In the past, there were many allegations of corruption against many DESA engineers. "The government is taking the allegations seriously now and is trying to clean up DESA," said the source.

It was alleged that some unscrupulous DESA engineers, in connivance with linemen, meter readers and other employees were involved in irregularities and corruption in procurement

See Page 12 Col 8

7 killed by lightning in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 31: Seven people were killed and three others injured by lightning at Mongla and Batiaghata in the district yesterday.

Two of the injured were admitted to Khulna General Hospital, while the other to Mongla Health Complex.

According to police, five people were killed by lightning at about 2 pm yesterday while they were planting aman seedlings in a field at village Urebumia in Mongla thana.

The dead were identified as Muktar Ali, 50, Rafiq, 40, Rezaul Ghazi, 22, Miran, 45, and Gaz Mohammad, 40.

In Batiaghata thana, two persons were killed by lightning the same day.

The victims were identified as Lokman, 30, and Shaheed, 25.

The incident occurred when the two were tilling land at village Baintala.

Two separate UD cases were filed with Mongla and Batiaghata thanas.

Asian lawmakers' confce PM regrets 'planned' Opposition boycott

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the opposition parties' decision to boycott the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference for Peace and Cooperation amounts to opposition to democracy and an effective parliament.

"The conference is not of any importance to them because they don't believe in democracy and the functioning of parliament. I find such politics not worthy for the country," she told a discussion meeting in the city.

Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of the ruling Awami League, organised the meeting at the Ramna Batamul to mark the end of its month-long programmes on the occasion of the National Mourning Day.

"We're hosting the conference of the Asian parliamentarians to make our democracy stronger by sharing experiences. We want to strengthen parliamentary democracy and establish peace in the region through mutual cooperation," said Hasina, also president of ruling Awami League, about the five-day conference of the MPs from 35 countries. The conference begins in the city today.

Regretting the planned boycott of the regional conference

by BNP and its allies, Hasina said a BNP letter to the Speaker said it had found the conference of no use. It even raised question about the UNDP's sponsoring such an event.

The prime minister also criticised the BNP for holding the ruling party responsible for yesterday's attack on its 'mass procession' in the city. "It's a blatant lie that the activists of Awami League and Chhatra League have attacked the BNP procession and a newspaper office. It is BNP which has records of attacking newspaper offices and the Jatiya Press Club."

She alleged the opposition is desperate to find an issue to go for an anti-government agitation because the people have rejected their so-called movement against the government.

On her government's plan to allow transshipment facility to India, the prime minister wondered how the BNP could oppose the move despite the fact that the party itself had first agreed to give transit to India in 1980, renewed the deal twice and signed the SAPTA providing the same facility.

"We've only agreed in principle to examine the proposal for transshipment of Indian goods by Bangladeshi trans-

See Page 12 Col 4

Sundarbans Shell, Unocal give up exploration plan

Star Report

Shell Oil and Unocal yesterday said they will not go for exploration of oil and gas in the area of Block 5 and Block 7 respectively that include the Sundarbans - a World Heritage Site.

The announcements came following a discussion organised by the energy ministry with Shell, Unocal and Petrobangla. It organised the discussions yesterday to avoid misunderstandings between the two companies and the government.

The government had earlier decided to 'exclude' the Sundarbans from oil and gas exploration activity.

As per the discussions, Shell will not explore oil and gas within 20 kilometre area of the protected mangrove forest termed as 'impact area'.

Shell and Unocal will, how-

ever, continue their negotiations with Petrobangla for exploration in the rest of the areas under Block 5 and Block 7.

Both the foreign exploration companies said they will strictly abide by the international environmental and social codes while exploring and developing oil and gas fields in those blocks.

The energy ministry as per a suggestion made by the environment ministry decided in July to exclude the areas of Block 5 and Block 7 that are part of the Sundarbans from oil and gas exploration by announcing it a 'ring-fenced area'. Accordingly, a large area of Block 5 and a significant portion of Block 7 were to be excluded from the Second Round Block Bidding.

See Page 12 Col 8

Army set to be redeployed at Ctg port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 31: About 200 Army personnel will be redeployed at Chittagong port soon for security reason, port and security sources said.

A security source said that preliminary measures had been taken to redeploy Army personnel at the port after the order reached here today.

The redeployment of troops at port jetties will be completed within seven days, the source added.

Local Army authorities today asked the port officials to arrange accommodation for 200 Army personnel. A joint meeting of port officials and Army is expected to be held tomorrow in this regard, sources concerned said.

The order for redeployment of Army came following Prime Minister's approval to this effect.

On August 19, the army personnel deployed at Chittagong port were withdrawn. About 500 Army and Navy personnel were deployed in September last year for supervising food cargo discharge and maintaining security at Chittagong port.

After the withdrawal of Army, Chittagong port authority made a request to the government to redeploy some Army personnel at the port jetties.

Port Users Forum also appealed to the Prime Minister for redeployment of Army at Chittagong port to check pilferage, looting of imported goods and illegal toll collection inside the port area.

Floor crossing: Hearing begins Sept 8

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission will begin hearing on the controversial case of alleged floor-crossing by two BNP MPs on September 8. The three-member full bench of the Commission will hear the case.

The EC made the decisions following an initial hearing of the contending parties Monday. Election Commissioner Mush-taque Ahmed Chowdhury heard their lawyers Monday morning.

"We have decided to hear the case continuously from September 8. Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena told The Daily Star. The full Commission will hear the case, and we'll try to give the verdict as soon as possible."

The two other members of the 'Full Commission' are - Mush-taque Ahmed Chowdhury and Abidur Rahman.

The two BNP lawmakers, Mohammad Alauddin and Hasibur Rahman Swapan, joined the government of Sheikh Hasina in February last year against their party decision.

Since the joining, the BNP has been accusing them of violating the Article 70 of the Constitution. The party has, therefore, demanded that the two

See Page 12 Col 1

Transport strike in Khulna called off

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 31: Transport strike which began in 19 routes from Monday was called off at 3 pm today following assurance of the authorities concerned.

The authorities assured the transport workers of taking stern action against armed terrorists and dacoits who looted money and belongings of some drivers, conductors and supervisors on Saturday last at the central bus terminal at Sonadanga.

Transport worker Mahidur Rahman received bullet injuries while he was resisting the dacoits. He was sent to Dhaka Monday evening for treatment.

Police have so far arrested four persons in connection with the dacoity committed at the bus terminal.