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Today's issue
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Border incidents Dhaka summons Indian envoy to express concern

Indian Acting High Commissioner Hamid Ali Rao was summoned to the foreign office yesterday morning to express Dhaka's grave concern at a series of incidents which took place during the past few months along the Indo-Bangladesh border, reports BSS.

The Indian envoy was told that those border incidents contributed to the undesirable build-up of tension in the border areas, a senior foreign ministry official told the news agency yesterday.

He said, "we are gravely concerned to observe that a series of incidents during the past few months along the India-Bangladesh border have contributed to the undesirable build-up of tension in the border areas. We have expressed our concern in this regard earlier also."

The incidents referred to above concern areas termed as adverse possessions, which have been in existence since 1947, the official said, adding that a special dispensation was made with regard to these areas in the 1974 Border Agreement with a provision for maintaining.

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BDR-BSF flag meet

Muhurir Char declared 'disputed land'

FENI, Sept 10: Bangladesh and India struck an agreement declaring entire Muhurir Char "disputed land" for cessation of hostilities, reports UNB.

"The 79-acre char has been declared disputed and nobody will cultivate or intrude into the area until a permanent solution to the longstanding border problem is reached", said a BDR official today about the accord.

Both sides agreed that the land would not be cultivated further after harvesting the paddy on the land under respective possession in the current season.

The agreement was signed after a flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles and Indian Border Security Force at Belonia at midnight last night.

Officials said they also decided to hold DG-level meeting between the two forces soon for a permanent solution of the dispute.

The flag meeting was held following a fierce frontier battle between BDR and BSF over intrusion of Indian people into Bangladesh territories on August 22.

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Prayer Timings

September 11		
Fajr	4:20	5:00
Zuma	12:15	1:20
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:20	6:23
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation



The job jinx

As many as 12,000 job seekers sat for a written test for the 300 posts of field organisers under the Rural Livelihood Project of Bangladesh Rural Development Board. Pictured here are the applicants emerging from the Home Economics College, a test centre, in the city yesterday.

—Star Photo by Anisur Rahman

2 out of the three agri colleges to lose identity

By Reaz Ahmad

The government has decided to convert the Haji Danesh Agriculture College and Patuakhali Agriculture College into science and technology universities ordered the agriculture ministry to hand over those to the education ministry, disregarding the Agriculture Commission's report and views of experts, researchers, agricultural scientists and officials concerned.

The order was issued last week, official sources said.

The decision is a deliberate attempt to squeeze agricultural education in the country, the experts commented.

The Agriculture Commission suggested that the Haji Danesh College be upgraded to an agricultural university and three more agricultural universities be set up in the eastern, south-western and northern regions, keeping all those under

the agriculture ministry. The Commission, headed by Prime Minister's Food and Agriculture Advisor AM Anisuzzaman, stressed that agricultural education was a specialized one and both its theoretical and practical sides were linked with research and agricultural extension work.

"Institutions for agricultural education should be under agriculture ministry", the Commission said in its report.

The seven-member commission includes Shahidul Islam, former director general of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Dr. Zahurul Karim, Executive Chairman of BARC.

It noted that Bangladesh's economy would continue to depend largely on growth of the agri-sector and services of over one lakh agriculture graduates and diploma holders would be

required in near future.

When contacted, top officials of the agriculture ministry were tight-lipped about the government's abrupt decision.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture Ministry has however taken the issue "seriously".

Expressing deep concern at the government decision, Chairman of the Committee T I M Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday that the committee would meet soon to take a "strong position" against hand-over of agricultural colleges to the education ministry.

"If agricultural colleges are converted to science and technology universities, that would be the death of agricultural education in this country. This should not be done", he said.

Md Yasin Ali, a former gen-

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No obstruction to peaceful demonstration, says Nasim

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim has said there would not be any obstruction from the government if the opposition stages Sunday's sit-in demonstration in front of the Secretariat peacefully, reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting at the Dhanmondi playground, he urged Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia to accept the invitation of the prime minister to discuss her demands over a cup of tea.

"If you (Khaleda) have moral

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Merchant workers continue strike at Ctg Port

CHITTAGONG, Sept 10: Merchant workers at Chittagong Port continued work abstention for the second day today, demanding advance "gang booking", reports UNB.

Members of the Merchant Workers' Union went on strike on Wednesday following a dispute between them and the ship owners and C&F agents over permission for rotation work so that all of them could work for earnings.

The ship owners and the C&F agents turned down their

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Khaleda, Ershad serving India's interest: Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said both Khaleda Zia and HM Ershad are out to serve India's interest under the cover of their anti-Indian postures, reports UNB.

"While in power you had bowed down to lick the boots of India undermining the image of Bangladesh," she said pointing at the former prime minister and the former president respectively at a big public meeting in the city's Kalabagan playground yesterday afternoon.

Her remarks came just two days ahead of the opposition's sit-in demonstration in front of the Secretariat, planned for September 12, demanding cancellation of a Cabinet decision to examine the proposal for transshipment of Indian goods across Bangladesh.

Hasina said former rulers Ershad and Khaleda did not resolve the long-running problems in sharing the Ganges water with India and the insurance in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Rather, they had allowed the country's mar-

ketswamp with Indian goods by withdrawing all tariff restrictions.

Hasina, also the president of the ruling Awami League, said her party came to power with people's mandate and is doing politics with the support and trust of the people.

"We don't need to serve any country. Those who grabbed power at gunpoint served the cause of India," she said, adding her government has insured access of Bangladeshi goods to Indian market.

Ridiculing Khaleda's anti-Indian campaign, she said Indian Ashoke Leyland trucks were imported during the BNP rule. The Quranic verses inscribed on roadside placards and banners were removed by the Zia government during Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to Dhaka, Hasina said.

Responding to BNP chief Khaleda Zia's repeated allegation that country's sovereignty is at stake, Hasina questioned whether the people who are say-

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Khaleda's call to stage disciplined, peaceful sit-in

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has said the sit-in demonstration in front of the Secretariat tomorrow would be "completely peaceful and disciplined".

In a statement yesterday, she asked her party leaders and workers and the people to keep patience and maintain peace

Ctg BNP asked not to join sit-in

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Sept 10: BNP Chittagong unit has dropped its plan for sending party activists to Dhaka to join the Secretariat siege programme on September 12, party sources said.

As per decision of BNP high command, local leaders have been asked not to send party activists to Dhaka, rather to keep them stand-by at the party office here so that they could go for action in the port city in

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and discipline in the face of 'any type of provocation' from the government.

"Our sit-in programme will be completely peaceful and disciplined. Through this democratic and peaceful sit-in demonstration, we want to ventilate people's protest against the government decision to provide corridor to India," said the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

But she warned that the government would have to bear responsibility of the consequence of any obstruction to this peaceful and democratic sit-in demonstration.

The BNP-led opposition alliance has taken up the programme to protest the government decision to provide corridor facility to India in the name of transshipment. The sit-in will begin at 9am and continue till 2 pm.

BNP leaders and activists and people have been asked to assemble in front of the House Building Finance Corporation building at 9 am. They have also been asked to sit on the

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Ershad Shikdar case: Navy divers recover more human bones, car

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 10: Navy divers today recovered five more pieces of human bones, private car of businessman Munir Hossain, a trouser and some pieces of "cake cement" from the bed of Bhairab river.

Munir Hossain, 38, severely injured in an attempt on his life by Ershad Shikdar in July last, is still undergoing treatment at hospital in Singapore.

The car, worth Tk 15 lakh, was thrown into the river by associates of Ershad after police rescued Munir from Skid Ghat.

Eleven drivers of the Navy began the search on Thursday. On the first day, they recovered six pieces of human bones, some clothes, ropes and gunny bags containing "cake cement".

The DC (South) of KMP who heads the six-member inquiry committee said today the search will continue for some more days to find out remains of the persons killed by Ershad Shikdar and dumped into the river.

The search of the river bed is being carried out in presence of Noor-e-Alam who was bodyguard of Ershad Shikdar and witnessed 19 murders.

Noor-e-Alam earlier made confessional statement before the Metropolitan Magistrate.

The bones and other articles recovered from the river bed will be seized as evidences (alamat) and sent to Dhaka for chemical test, said DC (South) of KMP.

The clothes are yet to be identified. Wives and family members of the victims will be called for identifying the clothes, police said.

Muggers scuffle with security men: 2 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

A police constable and an Ansar were injured when a gang of muggers exploded crackers during a scuffle with security men in front of Notre Dame College in the city yesterday.

One of the muggers, identified as Babul, was arrested and a dagger was recovered from his possession, police said. Angry people nearby torched the auto-rickshaw used by the muggers.

A team of Motijheel thana police was checking vehicles in front of the Notre Dame College. They asked an auto-rickshaw to stop, but it sped away.

As police chased the auto-rickshaw, four persons left it and started fleeing. Police also left their vehicle and ran after them. Police grabbed one of them, Babul, but three others escaped.

Babul exploded at least three crackers during the scuffle, in-

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EU on CHT development Lack of govt strategy discouraging donors

By Staff Correspondent

Absence of a government strategy for development of Chittagong Hill Tracts is discouraging donors from allocating funds for the region.

Officials of European Union's Dhaka office said this while talking to a group of newsmen on Thursday.

"The European Union is very much interested to participate in development of CHT. Before going to take up any development programme there, we need a regional and integrated development strategy which the government is yet to formulate," said Antonio de Souza Menezes, EU ambassador to Bangladesh.

He observed that development activities in the CHT did not start even after signing of a peace accord, mainly because the government could not give any direction on how foreign

funds would be utilised there and what would be the 'code of conduct' for implementing agencies.

He also emphasised completion of land reform in the CHT before taking up a comprehensive development programme. "The Land Commission started functioning just a few weeks ago. So we will have to wait for long."

The people living in the CHT are divided into two groups—hill people and settlers. "If we take up any development programme there in absence of an integrated development strategy, one group may be antagonised", the ambassador said discussing various aspects of EU activities in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Centre for Development of Journalism and

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Pre-shipment inspection NBR conditions likely to keep away local firms

By Rafiq Hasan

The conditions set by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for being enlisted as pre-shipment inspection (PSI) companies have virtually barred the local firms from bidding for this, sources concerned alleged.

The NBR in a circular said membership of the PSI committee of International Federation of Inspection Agencies (IFIA), UK, is a pre-condition for applying to be registered as an inspection company. But the local companies are not its members.

The government has decided to make pre-shipment inspection mandatory for import and the NBR is taking steps to implement the decision. The system is likely to be introduced next month.

The NBR would soon invite applications from local and

foreign firms for being registered as inspection companies. The sources pointed out that only five foreign companies are members of the PSI committee of IFIA.

"As per the pre-condition set by NBR, only a few foreign companies would be able to participate in the bid and the total import of the country would go under their control," said Masud Zakaria, General Secretary of Bangladesh Inspection Companies Association (BICA).

"If pre-shipment inspection system is introduced and only a few foreign companies are awarded the work, the local inspection companies would face ruin in a few years," he said.

There are 25 inspection

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Today's polls to decide political future of Pawar, many others

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: An estimated 15 crore electorates is expected to exercise its franchise in the second phase of Indian parliamentary polls tomorrow after a high-pitched, often leader-centric, campaign by the two major contenders for power—ruling BJP and main opposition Congress.

The political future of a number of senior opposition leaders, including former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda of Janata Dal (Secular), Madhavrao Scindia, K Karunakaran, Rajesh Pilot (all three of Congress), former Congress leader Sharad Pawar, Parliament Speaker GMC Bhalayogi of Telugu Desam Party, an ally of BJP, and cinestars-

turned-politician Sunil Dutt (Congress) will be decided in the second phase which will witness polling in 123 Lok Sabha constituencies in eight states. They are among 892 candidates in fray for this phase.

In the first phase of polling held on September 5, electoral fortunes of over 1,000 candidates, including Congress President Sonia Gandhi and senior BJP leader and Home Minister LK Advani, have been decided.

The battlelines for the third and fourth phases of the elections have already been drawn and the same for fifth and final phase will emerge in a few days on completion of nomination, scrutiny and withdrawal process.

Poling for third and forth phases are scheduled for Sept 18 and 25 while the final leg is slated for October 3. Counting of ballots begins on October 6. Lok Sabha has a total strength of 542 members.

The electioneering for the second phase of polls witnessed on attempt by Congress for the first time to set the election agenda by levelling charges of wheat and sugar import scams against the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee which maintained it had nothing to do with the import or these two commodities.

Vajpayee himself refuted the charge saying import of wheat from Australia was ordered

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Sonia files nomination papers from Amethi

SULTANPUR, India, Sept 10: Indian opposition leader Sonia Gandhi filed papers here today to contest national elections from her family's traditional constituency of Amethi in the country's north, reports AFP.

The 52-year-old Italian-born Congress party president said after formalising her nomination the vast, mainly farming region of Amethi was her "second home".

"I am confident of my victory in Amethi," she told reporters. "I will surely win. The people of Amethi have always stood by my family, and they are with me."

Amethi, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, has been a Gandhi family bastion since 1980. It was last won by slain

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computer for all

BCS Computer City opening and

BCS

Computer Show '99

11 - 25 September
10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Venue
IDB Bhaban
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka

Bangladesh Computer Samity