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# The Daily Star

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## World hit by unlucky run of deadly tremors

EDINBURGH, Sept 21: Big earthquakes are not striking the earth more often this year than before, but the world is suffering an unlucky run of deadly tremors near vulnerable populated areas, scientists said today, reports Reuters.

The powerful earthquake that rocked Taiwan on Monday and has claimed at least 1500 lives came only a month after devastating tremors that killed some 15,000 people in Turkey and at least another 122 in Greece.

"Earthquakes happen all the time, and this year we are not seeing more than usual. We've just had a bad year in terms of the casualties," Alice Walker, a seismologist at the British Geological Survey in Edinburgh, told Reuters.

While three major quakes in just over one month may seem like a lot, the world is hit by 18 earthquakes measuring 7.0 or greater every year on average, and four or five above the very dangerous 7.6 level, according to See Page 12 Col 1

## Quake kills over 1700 in Taiwan

TAIPEI, Sept 21: Thousands of dazed Taiwanese — many wearing only underwear or pajamas — stumbled into dark, chaotic streets early today, shaken awake by an earthquake that killed more than 1,700 people, destroyed thousands of homes and toppled buildings islandwide.

Officials struggled through the day to rescue survivors and recover bodies, but as night fell the death toll kept rising and hundreds were believed still alive but trapped in collapsed buildings.

With a preliminary magnitude of 7.6, the quake was the strongest to hit Taiwan in a decade. It was about the same strength as the devastating tremor that killed more than 15,000 people in Turkey last month, although the damage here appeared far less severe.

The quake's epicenter was 145 kilometers south of Taipei, the US Geological Survey's National Earthquake Information

Center said. It struck about 1:45 am local time while most of Taiwan's 22 million people were sleeping.

By late evening, the Interior Ministry's disaster management center reported 1712 people had been killed and more than 3,800 were injured. Some 4000 people were believed trapped, while 225 were reported missing, the center said.

Most of the deaths occurred near the epicenter outside the central city of Taichung, where more than 700 people died in Taichung County, and nearby Nantou county, where some 500 died.

Most buildings in the area were left standing, although those that collapsed were new high-rises. The region has experienced an explosion in development in recent years, and shoddy construction has been a problem.

The foundations of some of the apartment blocks in the cities crumbled into piles of

concrete boulders, sending the structures crashing into neighboring buildings. Soldiers raced out of buildings with bloodied victims moaning in pain on stretchers.

The damage could come to 100 billion Taiwan dollars (US \$3.2 billion dollar), according to a Taipei newspaper, the United Evening News, which cited information it got from government officials it did not identify.

But the government said it was too early to assess the monetary damage. Nantou County Executive Peng Pai-hsien appealed for donations of bulldozers, cars, quilts and food, saying that 100,000 people were left homeless.

Peng said morgues were full of bodies, and the county needed body bags and freezers in the summer heat.

One distraught woman told local television her parents

See Page 12 Col 8



A residential building in Wufeng tilts precariously after Taiwan was hit by a massive earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter Scale early today. — AFP photo

## BNP stages sit-in near UN HQ

By Staff Correspondent

BNP leaders and activists in New York yesterday staged a sit-in near the UN headquarters protesting Awami League government's "anti-people and anti-state" activities and submitted a memorandum to the office of the UN Secretary General.

According to a BNP press release issued here, hundreds of BNP activists joined the sit-in protesting the government's decision to provide a corridor to India, deterioration in law and order, politicisation of the administration, incidents of rape on campuses, arrest and killing of opposition activists and filing of false cases against them.

During the demonstration, BNP activists also chanted slogans against the government's "fascist, undemocratic and

See Page 11 Col 8

## BNP to stage countrywide demonstration today

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance will stage demonstrations across the country today to protest various issues, including "latest government clampdown" on opposition leaders and activists.

The opposition campaign is also aimed to protest "attack on sit-in demonstration on Sept 12, killing of Juba Dal leader at Natore on Sept 13, deterioration of law and order, government decision to provide transit to India, arrest of and harassment on opposition activists, filing of false cases against them and price hike of essentials."

As parts of the programmes See Page 12 Col 7

## Inside Today

### Article

## In the Land of Cola Politics

Column: Window on Asia  
by Shahed Latif  
Page 4

### Focus

Subcontinent of Nuclear Peril  
Page 5

### Business

IT industry hopes to increase export earnings next years

Western protectionism forces poor nations to rely on foreign funds: UNCTAD

DSE, CSE price quotations  
Pages 6, 7 & 8

## Prayer Timings

September 22

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:00
Juma	12:15	1:30
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:05	6:09
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Decline in donors' commitments to UN system worries Dhaka Development of LDCs a must for peace, PM tells UN



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Monday. — PID photo

NEW YORK, Sept 21: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the international community to take special measures to support development efforts of the LDCs and thus fulfill the main precondition for world peace, reports UNB.

She pleaded for cooperation between the developed and developing nations to banish poverty from the planet for the sake of peace and economic progress.

"Without development there can be no peace and without cooperation, no development," the prime minister said in her address to the 54th session of UN General Assembly Monday afternoon.

She called for a strong, effective and efficient United Nations to meet the evolving needs of humankind in the next century.

Presenting her five-dimensional vision to face the issues in the new millennium Hasina said, "We consider peace to be a fundamental human right to be attained, sustained, promoted

See Page 11 Col 7

## Smuggled heroin was set to be trafficked to Britain

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

The 24.1 kg of heroin recovered from Hotel Razmoni Isa Kha in the city on Monday was set to be trafficked to Britain, according to insiders at the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

A DNC investigation has revealed that several local racketeers including a frozen food exporter, some airport officials and a section of clearing and cargo agents were involved in the business that was going on for some time.

Had the DNC failed in recovering the shipment it would have been successfully smuggled to Birmingham, Britain, as sniper dogs at the British airports cannot trace any drug hidden in a pack meant for frozen food.

During the heroin haul three

Pakistanis were arrested from a city hotel when they were about to hand over the powdery substance to their buyers. The "absolutely pure and high quality" heroin, worth about Tk 25 crore, was wrapped in 118 packets of Lux soap.

The arrested have been sent to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court. Police have sought seven days' remand for questioning the accused.

DNC lodged a case with Ramdhan yesterday. Meanwhile, security was tightened in and around the residence of the Director General of DNC, Modabir Hossain Chowdhury, who led the Monday raid.

International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has already issued an alarm to its

member countries including Bangladesh, asking them to track down the international racketeers involved in the drug trafficking, the investigators said.

They said finger prints and pictures of the arrested will be sent to international agencies to check out if they had previous record of drug trafficking.

DNC officials said they have collected "several clues and telephone numbers of people including those of some high-ups" who might be involved in the international drug trafficking.

Asked if there is any possibility of their arrested any time soon, the DNC DG said they were closely monitoring the

See page 11 Col 3

## EC to announce schedule for by-polls soon

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission is likely to hold parliamentary by-elections in its Faridpur-4 constituency in the last week of October, while the by-polls in the Tangail - 8 constituency are likely to be held the middle of November.

The Faridpur - 4 constituency fell vacant following the death of ruling party MP Advocate Mosharrar Hossain on August 19, while Tangail - 8 constituency got vacated following the resignation of AL legislator Abdul Kader Siddiky on September 29.

The EC would announce the schedule for the by-polls in Faridpur constituency in a couple of days, EC sources said.

Meanwhile, some leaders of the ruling Awami League yesterday discussed about the possible dates for the by-elections

See Page 12 Col 8

## DSE calls councillors' meeting today Fake shares scare stock brokers

By M Shamsur Rahman

Organised groups of forgers of share certificates and allotment letters have created panic among stock brokers, forcing the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) to restrict entry of unauthorised persons into the brokers' workplaces.

The forgers have become more active in recent days after DSE steps to deal with fake shares. Sources said the organised gangs, desperate to ensure a return on their investments already made, were also trying to encash the forged scrips by the end of this year.

In a desperate bid to salvage the capital market from the clutches of these forgers, the DSE had recently stopped trading of allotment letters and had

decided to ban trading of share certificates without bearing hologram from January 1, 2000.

Since the DSE decision, there has been an increased flow of fake share certificates being deposited for encashment before January 2000.

"It is causing further erosion of confidence in the market," said DSE chairman Rakibur Rahman.

The DSE officials say that despite increased surveillance they are failing to stop the entry of fake shares.

In this backdrop, the DSE Council is meeting in an emergency session today to decide on "how to fight the menace of fake

See Page 11 Col 6

## India's Law Commission proposes

## Every elected parliament should last a full five-year term

NEW DELHI, Sept 21: India's Law Commission has proposed that every elected parliament last a full five-year term to prevent recurring national elections, AFP quoting a report said today.

The Commission also said independent candidates should be barred from contesting local and national elections. The Times of India said.

The recommendations came down heavily on politicians who switched allegiance after the elections.

The panel, headed by a former Supreme Court judge, said: "In order to contain defections a 'pre-political coalition' or a 'front of political parties' should be treated as a political party."

Slamming endemic corruption in politics, it said every election candidate should declare both personal and family assets and provide details of any criminal cases pending

against himself or any immediate relative.

The Law Commission recommended an end to the plethora of small parties, whose presence in a hung parliament paved the way for horse-trading. The last three elections have resulted in a fractured house.

It said any party winning "less than five per cent of the total vote" should "not be entitled to any seat" in the 545-member House and mooted curbs on the use of a parliamentary motion of no-confidence.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's multi-party minority coalition was toppled in April after 13 months in power in a political initiative engineered by the main opposition Congress party.

The coalition lost a motion of confidence by just one vote, and fresh elections were called after Congress failed to pull to-

gether an alternative administration.

A Congress spokesman, Kapil Sibal, said the panel's recommendations should be acted upon.

"It is the duty of all political parties to make the electoral process cleaner and therefore it is necessary to have a constructive attitude."

"The recommendations should not be thrown to the winds as has been done in the past."

However, J P Mathur, a spokesman for Prime Minister Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist BJP party said the move to keep out independent candidates from the electoral process was heavy-handed.

Mathur argued that each voter had three rights — to vote, to propose another person's name for contesting elections, or to contest the elections him-

See Page 12 Col 6

## DU abduction: 2 more suspects arrested

By DU Correspondent  
Police arrested two persons from Polashi intersection on the Dhaka University campus yesterday evening, suspecting them to be involved in the alleged kidnapping incidents on the campus recently.

The arrested were identified as Anser Ali of Sariatpur and Md. Nazrul Islam of Barishal. High officials of police, Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor and proctor of the university Prof. Nur-un-Nabi were also present during the arrest at around 6 pm, sources said.

According to Makkbul, brother of arrested Anser, he is a businessman and owner of SI Computer Institute, a computer training and photocopy centre at Polashi and Nazrul is employee at the business centre. "None of them were involved in the incidents", Makkbul claimed.

However, Ramna Police was in too hurry to disclose further details in this connection last night.

Two alleged kidnapping incidents took place on the campus in last seven days. A 16 year See page 11 Col 5

## Factional clash

## BCL activist shot dead in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Sept 21: A BCL activist was shot dead in a factional clash at Sonagazi College under Sonagazi Thana of the district yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mohiullah Nayan, 17, an activist of BCL Sonagazi College unit.

Police said, two rival groups of BCL — one led by Sohel and Noman and the other by Mamun — clashed at noon over control of the college campus at around noon.

Mohiullah, supporter of BCL faction led by Mamun, received bullet injuries during the clash. He died on way to Dhaka.

Mohiullah was admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital. As his condition deteriorated, doctors suggested sending him to Dhaka.

He was buried at his family graveyard at 3:30 pm today. UNB adds: A private car dropped the body of a seven-year-old boy in front of Feni College in the town at noon today. Police took the body of the unidentified boy.

In another incident, three innocent people were wounded as armed terrorists traded fire with police when the law-enforcers launched an operation at the opposition BNP-dominated Nayazpur village in Daganbhuiyan thana on Monday night.

The injured were identified as Humayun, 15, Chhuttu, 14, and Abdul Gafur, 35. They were admitted to a local hospital.

## Pakistan plays down fear of possible coup

ISLAMABAD, Sept 21: The Pakistani government today played down a surprise US statement of concern about a possible military coup because of political turmoil and opposition demands that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif quit, reports Reuters.

"The opposition is making noises and wasting time," information Minister Mushahid Hussain told reporters at an official function. "They are desperate."

Hussain declined direct reference to the report, the first public statement by any foreign government about a wave of speculation in Islamabad's political circles of possible military intervention and army-government tension.

"There is no threat to the government. It is stable and strong. Elections will be held, as scheduled, in 2002," he said.

Opposition parties, most of which have rallied under the See Page 12 Col 2

## Honouring PM 118 DU teachers favour decision

One hundred and eighteen members of the Academic Council of Dhaka University yesterday felicitated the university authorities for taking decision to confer honorary doctorate degree on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reports BSS.

In a statement the teachers said although late, the decision of the Dhaka University was appreciable as Sheikh Hasina had already received five honorary doctorate degrees from the universities of Boston (USA), Waseda (Japan), Apartad (Dandy), University of Benin (India) and Luwan (Belgium).

The statement said, the historic role of Sheikh Hasina in restoring peace in Chittagong Hill Tracts after a long period of bloodshed got worldwide recognition and appreciation.

See Page 11 Col 7