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Today's issue
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Unesco award Reception to PM today

By Staff Correspondent

A rousing reception awaits Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her return from Paris today after receiving Unesco's Felix Houphouët Boigny Peace Prize.

Hasina was ceremonially awarded the prestigious prize at the Unesco headquarters in Paris on Friday.

The ruling Awami League organised the reception at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm.

The prime minister is due to return at 10 this morning after a 13-day visit to New York and Paris. Senior AL leaders and ministers will receive Hasina at the airport.

Hasina left Dhaka on September 13 for New York to attend the UN General Assembly session and then went to Paris.

The ruling party has completed all preparations for the reception. Party units in Dhaka and nine neighbouring districts have been asked to mobilise people to attend the reception.

Big arches welcoming the prime minister have been erected on the Airport Road and elsewhere in the city.

Meanwhile, the city AL held a meeting at the party central office yesterday to review preparations for the reception.

Chaired by city AL President and Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif, the meeting was also attended by acting chief of AL Amir Hossain Amu, president member Abdul Jalil, joint secretary Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, publicity secretary Abdul Mannan and city unit secretary and state minister for shipping Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

They called upon people to attend the reception.

They called upon people to attend the reception.

Anti-government demonstration in Paris

By Staff Correspondent

BNP leaders and activists living in different European countries on Friday demonstrated in front of the Unesco headquarters in Paris against the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

As Hasina received the Unesco Peace Prize in Paris on Friday for the CHT Peace Accord at a ceremony inside, they demonstrated from 8:30 pm to 1 am BST.

According to a BNP press release here yesterday, BNP activists from Germany, Italy, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Portugal, and some other European countries assembled in Paris and joined the demonstration.

Besides, the France unit of Jatiya party, Jatiya Janata Party, Jajpa and Bangladesh Nagorik Forum participated in the demonstration, the news release said.

The demonstrators also burnt an effigy of Sheikh Hasina in front of the Unesco headquarters at Cameroon Plaza square.

Nearly 800 demonstrators carried banners, black flags and placards inscribed with various slogans and photographs depicting state and party terrorism, the party press release said.

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Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a four-page special supplement on receiving UNESCO Peace Prize by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

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Prayer Timings

September 26

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:00
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:05	6:04
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation



Invigilators at Jagannath College were more active than normal yesterday as they conducted a body search on all BCS examinees who sat for the compulsory English test. As a result, a huge queue was automatically created outside. —Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Autarky in gur production Committees and commitments remain a paperwork

By Reaz Ahmad

Gur (molasses) industry is still in its infancy while a government decision to make the country self-sufficient in gur production remains a paper work.

Despite formation of committees and preparation of reports since a 1987 cabinet decision for attaining autarky in gur production, no tangible progress has been made in this regard.

Experts expressed frustration over this, noting that gur is an easy source of calorie for the rural poor. It has high nutritional value and the current level of consumption accounts for 2.3 per cent of total caloric intake in the country.

As per FAO standard, annual

requirement of sugar per person is 13 kg, equivalent to 18 kg of gur. Bangladesh produces only about three lakh MT of gur, less than half its annual requirement.

According to the Agriculture Commission report, there has been no 'yield increase' in sugar cane production since independence. Per hectare 'cane yield' in India is double that in Bangladesh.

It blamed corruption in sugar mills, mismanagement and illegal activities of trade unions for the 'stagnation' in sugar and gur production in the country.

Formation of a Gur Development Board, as recommended by different expert

committees, still remains a far cry. Besides, the latest Agriculture Census report released on September 14 gave a sorry state of sugar cane production. It is the prime source of extraction of gur.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), after completion of the Tk seven crore first phase of the expansion of cane cultivation in June, launched the second phase involving Tk.12 crore recently.

But land area under sugarcane cultivation reduced by 17 per cent in recent years, the Agriculture Census report says.

Former director of Sugarcane Research and

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Protection for photo-journalists a must

There has always been political influence on police: IGP

By Staff correspondent

There has always been political influence on police and it will continue, Inspector General of Police AYBI Siddiqui said yesterday.

"There was political influence on police in the past, it is there now and it will continue in future. But the influence is decreasing day by day," he said at a roundtable discussion in the city.

In my view, political influence on police is least now compared to earlier time, the IGP said.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khosru, parliamentarians, leaders from ruling and opposition parties, journalists and high police officials took part in the roundtable on "Photo Journalism in Bangladesh: Obstruction and Challenge for the next Millennium". Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association organised the discussion at the Jatiya Press Club.

Police seldom goes for action without provocation, the IGP claimed. During any political programme, police try their best to refrain from action but that can not be done always. "Sometimes we have to take steps for saving our lives," he said.

Some photo journalists pointed out to him that lower level police officers always give an excuse that they act on or-

ders from their superiors. The IGP denied this. "No such order is given. They (police) act as per the police manual," the IGP said.

He however said that all powers under the police manual are not exercised during any action. "We have been given much power in the police manual which we do not exercise al-

ways. Had we acted following the police manual perfectly, incidents of fire by police would have been much more during any political programme," the IGP said.

He claimed that the tendency to attack police during any political programme is increasing. Powerful bombs were

Ershad Shikdar's wayward life

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, Sept 25: "It is a blunder in my life that I married Shova", Ershad Shikdar had said on the day of his arrest on August 11.

When asked by some local journalists, he declined to tell anything more about his marriage with Shova.

This beautiful woman is in full control of Ershad's house 'Swarnakamal' and his family now, his neighbours said.

Shanjida alias Shova, 28, was Ershad's sixth wife. Shova was forced to divorce her former husband, Kazi Manjudd-



Ershad Shikdar

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Experts differ on export Assess gas reserve, future demand first

By Staff Correspondent

Politicians, experts, academics and business leaders at a dialogue here yesterday differed on export of gas, some favouring it and some opposing it.

But both the groups underscored the need for making a correct assessment of gas reserve and future demand in the country.

The speakers opposing export said actual demand, production and supply position are yet to be assessed while a 'suppressed demand' is being projected now.

On the other hand, those favouring export said the demand is being 'over-projected' and gas should be exported for economic growth and development. The output under Pro-

duction Sharing Contracts (PSCs) will be significantly in excess of the country's demand, they said.

Representatives of some foreign oil companies operating in the country who took part in the dialogue pleaded for export saying, the country has enormous gas resources which the local market will not be able to absorb.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the dialogue on 'Optimising the use of Bangladesh's Gas Resources', held at the CIRDP auditorium. CPD Chairman Prof. Rehman Sobhan moderated the dialogue.

Presenting the keynote paper, Dr AKM Abdul Quader, Professor of Chemical Engineering at the BUET, said time is

now ripe to examine the present and future needs of gas for sustainable development of the sector and the economy as a whole.

Political leaders must examine everything related to it pragmatically, and choose the options considering national interests, he said.

The government must clearly state a policy that it wants a fixed revenue per unit of gas or electricity, Quader said.

Dr Quader argued that the gas reserve in the country remained almost static over the past several decades due to continued new discoveries and it had potential for more gas reserves.

"The issue of export of a part of the gas from the newly dis-

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Rain fails to dampen spirit Eighth SAF Games open in Kathmandu

First gold event today

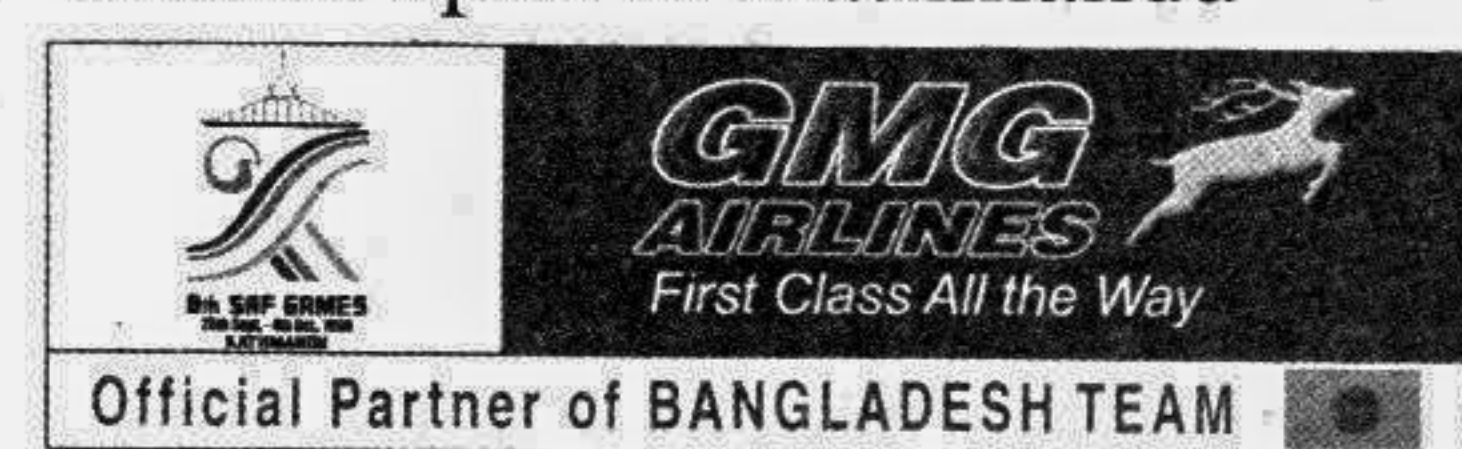
KATHMANDU, Sept 25: The first day of the SAF games will start the competition of three disciplines — athletics, swimming, taekwondo — tomorrow with Bangladesh's favourite events — 100m sprint (men) and 100m breaststroke. Two football matches will also take place the same day, says BSS.

The first gold event of the games will be the marathon (both men and women). The men's group will start at 6:30 am, followed by the women's event 10 minutes later. The first gold will go to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka or hosts Nepal, but not to Bangladesh, which did not enter the event.

Bangladesh will take part in only one out of the nine athletics events scheduled for tomorrow and that is the 100m sprint (men) — the main attraction of the games. Bangladesh's Abdul Hel Kafi is expected to vie for the gold to regain the glory of late Shah Alam and Bimal Chandra Tarafdar.

Kafi will however face very

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From Hasan Masood

KATHMANDU, Sept 25: The 8th South Asian Federation Games began here this evening. King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev formally declared the seven-nation meet open at the new-looking Dasharath Stadium. The colourful show lasted for more than three-and-a-half hours.

A total of 1063 athletes from the seven regional countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and hosts Nepal — will vie for 159 gold medals in 12 disciplines.

The meet will conclude on the 4th of next month.

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal will compete in all the 12 disciplines while Bhutan and Maldives will participate in six and

seven disciplines respectively.

Although it was raining during the opening ceremony, the adverse weather condition could not dampen the spirit of the capacity crowd from enjoying the magnificent programme, considered as the best opening function in the history of SAF Games.

The ceremony began with 120 priests reading Hindu mantras followed by the descent of ten paratroopers, who carried the flags of the seven SAARC nations, the games logo, the mascot and the symbol of the South Asian Sports Federation (SASF).

However, it was some 13,000 performers from different cultural and ethnic groups who kept the crowd glued to their

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Two former Miss Nepal, Punam Ghimire (L) and Ruby Rana (R) escort the eighth SAF Games mascots "Hium Kanchha" (Snow Leopard) during the opening ceremony in Kathmandu yesterday. — AFP photo

BNP vows to resist further agreements with India

By Staff Correspondent

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday declared that the Awami League government would not be allowed to sign any more agreement with India and warned that any such effort would be resisted.

"All agreements signed by this 'subservient' Awami League government had gone completely in favour of India. We can't allow the government to sell out our national interests to India," he said, adding "the government is nakedly protecting Indian interests, ignoring its own people and the country."

Addressing a big public rally at Muktangan in the city, Bhuiyan also urged the Indian people to create pressure on their government to refrain from patronising 'Bangladeshi agents' and put an end to 'unholy' attacks on Bangladesh.

"As a neighbour, we want to maintain good relations with India and we expect the same from the bigger neighbour," he said.

BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote separately organised protest rallies and brought out proces-

sions in all district and city headquarters to protest recent killings of BDR personnel and civilians by the Indian BSF.

As parts of the central programme, the city BNP organised the rally with its convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP in the chair.

Addressing the rally, the BNP secretary general strongly condemned the killing of two BDR jawans by Indian BSF at Chapainawabganj and termed it an outcome of AL government's weak-kneed policy.

He said that since the assumption of power, the AL government had continued to pursue a subservient policy towards India.

Bhuiyan said that the BSF was launching attacks almost every couple of days in different borders and looting Bangladesh's properties, kidnapping innocent people and BDR personnel, violating border rules, occupying lands and providing shelter to the criminals and smugglers.

The BNP secretary general said that the BSF opened fire whenever our patriotic BDR men chased the smugglers and killed both BDR and civilians

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Quake makes mountains disappear

TAIPEI, Sept 25: The most powerful earthquake in Taiwan's history has fundamentally reshaped the island's landscape, making whole mountains disappear and transforming rivers into lakes, reports AFP.

Chiufeng Twin Peaks, two mountains almost directly over the epicentre of Tuesday's quake near Sun Moon Lake, have been flattened from their original height of 1,174 metres (3,500 feet).

A massive landslide from the peaks filled what was once an idyllic mountain valley 200 metres (600 feet) deep, burying at least 40 people alive in a nearby township. The "valley" is now a plateau of mud and rock.

In Nantou county, another scenic peak, "99", has been stripped bare of all greenery by landslides during Tuesday's giant quake, which measured a massive 7.6 on the Richter scale.

Chingshuishi or "Clear

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12 hurt as police, people clash at B'baria

By Staff Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Sept 25: Twelve people were injured, two of whom were hospitalised, during a clash between police and people present in a rally in the district town today.

The clash erupted between police and those present at a rally called by district Jamia Yunusia Madrasa after some unruly people threw brickbats fire brigade. About 2000 people gathered at the rally.

Two of the hospitalised policemen were among those who tried to pacify the crowd.

Police and volunteers intervened and brought the clash under control in a matter of ten minutes.

Later, the unruly crowd broke windowspanes of local T&T, fire brigade and telegraph offices.

Some 300 armed police were deployed at the rally site. Law enforcers from the capital, Comilla and Chandpur districts were also deployed.

Besides, six magistrates were put on alert, two of them at the riot while others were on mobile duty.

Meanwhile, the anti-NGO activists in the district town at a rally today demanded an end to activities of NGOs in the district.

Moulana Sirajul Islam of Jamia Yunusia made the call at a rally this morning held at Poura Mukti Mancha in the district town.

Announcing an ultimatum.

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Hartal in Rajshahi, C'nawabganj today

RAJSHAHI, Sept 25: The opposition has called for a half-day hartal in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj tomorrow to protest Thursday's killing of two BDR personnel by the Indian border security force (BSF) and 'subservient' policy of the government, reports UNB.

BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami brought out processions and held separate rallies in Rajshahi city to drum up support for the 6 am to 12 noon hartal. The processionists chanted slogans against 'aggression' by India on the borders while speakers at the rallies condemned the unprovoked firing by BSF and killing of two BDR jawans.

In Chapainawabganj, the hartal programme was announced by the District BNP leaders at a press conference today.

Onion prices soar

By Staff Correspondent

The price of onions rose by Tk 10 in the city markets over the last seven days.

Onions are now selling at a price between Tk 32 and Tk 35 per kg. Previously the average price was Tk 26 per kg.

Meanwhile, the wholesale rate for onion went up to Tk 3,300 to Tk 3,400 per quintal against the previous rates of Tk 2,200 to Tk 2,300.

A numbers of retail traders told The Daily Star that due to recent hindrances in matters of import from India the price of onions had gone up. Meantime, a section of traders alleged that some unscrupulous wholesalers had created the 'artificial' crisis of onions.

They said that there was no reason behind the exceptional rise in price of onion in our local markets.

The supply of imported onion declined owing to shortage of its flow from India, traders said.

The prices of onion begun to fall marginally from yesterday. Traders said that imported onion started to reach the country and that the situation would get corrected soon.

The prices of onion rose rather abnormally to Tk 65 per kg last year because of non-availability of Indian onion in the local markets.