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Life threats can't stop me, says Hasina

KOTALIPARA (Gopalganj) July 22: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said bomb, life threat or obstructions could not stop her efforts for establishing the people's rights, reports UNB.

Threats and obstacles will not be able to stop me from doing good to the people. I am ready to sacrifice my life for the people, she said while addressing the inaugural function of Kotalipara Municipal Water Supply Project.

Referring to the planting of explosives near her meeting venue, the PM said she is not afraid of death and vowed to continue her work for people's welfare taking the risk.

Some 76 kgs of powerful explosives, planted in the ground only 50 feet from the rostrum, were recovered by a team of Army on Friday.

Ignoring the bomb threats a large number of people from far and near gathered at the function that virtually turned into a public meeting.

Hasina recalled a similar incident in 1986 when the terrorists of the then government had threatened her not to come to Kotalipara.

"But I came defying the threat. Because I was never afraid of such threat," she said adding "this time my admirers also advised me not to come here, but I've come."

The Prime Minister said: "I did not learn to be scared. I am working for the people and I believe that life and death are in the hand of Almighty. I will live as long as I am destined to live."

She further said: "I might have been killed on the black night of August 15, 1975, when all my relations — my father, See page 12 col 3

Gopalganj bomb: Intelligence yet to find clue

By Special Correspondent

Intelligence agencies are trying to find out the clue to planting of the large metallic device containing explosives near the rostrum from where the Prime Minister addressed a public meeting at Kotalipara in Gopalganj yesterday.

The 76 kg device was recovered by Army personnel on Friday.

Intelligence analysts and field level operators of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), National Security Intelligence (NSI) and Special Branch (SB) and CID of police are fine-combing large areas in Gopalganj and adjoining districts to find how such a large device could be transported to Kotalipara and planted there.

Questions are being raised why the area around the rostrum was not kept under police guard.

Some security experts said that the agencies concerned and police did not 'sanitise' both the helipad and the rostrum at least 72 hours before the rally. Normally, a rostrum of the Prime Minister is put under round the clock surveillance and armed guard immediately after

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Prayer Timings

July 23	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 23	4-15	4-45
July 24	5-24am	6-46 pm

Prayer Timings

July 23	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	1-00	1-30
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star-BGMEA Roundtable

Declare port service essential

Restructure management & develop infrastructure, speakers demand

Star Report

Speakers at a dialogue on the country's port situation yesterday said Chittagong port is now hostage to a handful of employees and demanded immediate restructuring of its management along with infrastructure development.

They demanded that port service be declared essential to avoid work stoppage because the situation is now virtually choking the economy and the export-oriented industries.

Organised by The Daily Star and BGMEA, the dialogue held at a local hotel was participated by a wide range of port users,

members of parliament, stakeholders, donors and government officials. It was moderated by The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam.

Plagued by politically-backed trade union activities, Chittagong Port has already become the costliest one in the world. The port now faces the danger being tagged as an 'exclusion zone' by international shipping lines, they said.

The dialogue recommended a set of immediate, mid-term and long-term suggestions to make the port efficient.

Short-term recommendations

The short-term proposals include introduction of green channel at the port for customs clearance to reduce check points to seven from 42 now.

The speakers also recommended privatisation of some of the functions, such as allowing private container handling equipment and private ICTs to handle Import Laden Containers.

They also suggested rationalisation of charges basing on productivity to match competitors.

Medium term recommendations

As medium term recommendations to be implemented in six months, the dialogue suggested full computerisation of ports and customs operations and updating and implementation of the master plan for all-round development of Chittagong port to facilitate multi-modal transport system.

The roundtable also suggested completion of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and construction of an alternative

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An empty cargo section at Bhomra Land Customs in Sathkira lacks minimum facilities for an office and storing imports like rice, pulse and coal from India. Bhomra is very close to Calcutta by road. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin

G8 asks India, Pakistan to resume peace talks

From Monzurul Huq

NAGO, Okinawa, July 22: The leaders of G8 countries issued a joint statement on political issues at the end of their working dinner last night.

In the statement, the leaders praised the steps taken by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to reach an agreement for permanent settlement of all outstanding issues related to Middle East crisis.

The statement pointed out that the trilateral summit meeting provides a real opportunity for achievement of a comprehensive peace, based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the agreements of Madrid and Oslo.

The G8 leaders' statement on regional issues surprisingly starts with a call to India and Pakistan to join international

efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

The statement said that the level of tensions between India and Pakistan remains a cause of international concern. The leaders called on the two countries

Related story on page 6

tries to resume dialogue as soon as possible for a sustainable peace in the region.

According to some observers, the opening part of the statement is a clear reflection of host country's position on nuclear arms issue. Japan is a vocal critic of nuclear proliferation.

The prominent mention of South Asian situation in G8 statement also gives an indication that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori is giving se-

rious consideration to his forthcoming visit to three South Asian countries including Bangladesh.

Although it has not yet been announced officially, Japanese media have disclosed recently that Mori is planning to visit Bangladesh, India and Pakistan during the third week of August.

The main purpose of his visit would be to pursue India and Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

In Bangladesh Mori is likely to discuss issues related to Japanese assistance.

AP adds: The Group of Eight industrial powers vowed today to help poor nations join the information technology revolution so they can one day leave

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PDB fails again to settle Meghnaghat site issue

By Sharier Khan

The Power Development Board (PDB) has once again failed to settle the Meghnaghat power project site issue as per schedule resulting in delay in implementation of the project by one more month, official sources said yesterday.

Even two months after the signing of a supplementary agreement with US power company AES to end all disputes regarding handing over of the 100-hectare site for the Meghnaghat power plant, the PDB could not get the Land Lease Agreement (LLA) registered.

However, the sources said registration and handing over of the site to AES would be done this week. "All procedures for the registration are now complete," one source said.

As per the agreement between AES and PDB signed on May 25, the LLA was supposed to be registered by June 25. Once the LLA is registered, AES would take over the site. But PDB could not get it registered due to its inefficiency, sources said.

The PDB-AES dispute over

the project site cropped up in December last year when AES declined to take over the land from PDB on the ground that it was poorly developed. PDB said in January this year that the site was ready for handover.

However, after the May agreement, PDB took initiative for registration of the LLA which is required for the transfer.

PDB obtained tax exemption from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for the 100 hectare site owned by it. However, it overlooked paying one per cent tax or obtaining exemption of the same from the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Ministry. PDB took note of its mistake in mid-June.

As the government decided to exempt all taxes relating to this site, PDB went to the LGRD Ministry for tax exemption. But due to bureaucratic tangles, the issue continued to linger on. "The tax exemption itself would not be much in terms of taka. But the procedure is taking longer than we expected," said a PDB official. "However, last

week we obtained the exemption from the Ministry."

AES was now preparing to arrange finance for the project from various lenders including the Asian Development Bank, IDCOL and others. The plant would need around 300 million dollars of investment. Around 30 per cent of the amount would come from AES' own funds, sources said.

The project site was originally scheduled to be handed over to AES in mid-July last year. But due to failure of the land site contractor, PDB convinced AES to take the site on November 15 without any Liquidated Damage (LD). But PDB could not hand it over till January 3.

Schedules for setting up of all components of the power plant are now directly linked with the LLA registration, meaning that AES has to complete the project and go for commercial operation 37 months after the registration.

AES would have to pay a LD of 45,000 dollars per day if it failed to meet its deadline for

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BNP office ransacked

Narayanganj AL declares Khaleda persona non grata

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, July 22: Local Awami League has declared the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia persona non grata in the town.

This was announced by AKM Shamim Osman, MP, at a rally at Diamond Hall Square in the town today.

Narayanganj district and city units of Awami League jointly organised the rally to protest attempt on life of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Kotalipara in Gopalganj and killing of six BCL activists in Chittagong.

After the rally, the AL activists ransacked the city and district BNP offices in Mandalpara and Diamond Hall areas.

They also set fire to the portraits of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda.

The city BNP leader Abdul Majid blamed the ruling party cadres for the attack.

He said, the local AL cadres led by BCL leader Abu Sayem Mithu ransacked the BNP offices.

Engine of Qatar Airbus catches fire

By Special Correspondent

A Qatar Airways Airbus 300 returned to the Zia International Airport (ZIA) shortly after take-off yesterday as one of its two engines caught fire.

Aviation sources said the aircraft with 173 passengers on board had left ZIA at 7:52 am for Qatar capital, Doha.

When it was leaving the circuit area of ZIA at 7,000 feet on the air, the control tower detected some emanating from its left engine and ordered its captain to run a check.

The captain after detecting the smoke decided to return back to the airport or further check.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), alerted by the tower, ordered its fire tenders and crew to take emergency steps to tackle the situation.

The aircraft landed safely at 8:40 am. Later, it left for Doha after checking its engine and instruments.

A high CAAB official said that it was not serious. "It might have been due to power fluctuation when extra fuel got into the

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Sharif banned from public office for 21 years

14-year jail for tax evasion

ATTOCK, Pakistan, July 22: A Pakistani court today sentenced ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif to 14 years jail for corruption and banned him from public office for 21 years, court officials said, reports AFP.

Judge Farrukh Latif also fined Sharif 20 million rupees (380,000 dollars), with provision for an extra three years jail if he fails to pay.

Sharif, who was ousted in a military coup by General Pervez Musharraf in October, was accused of tax evasion and concealing assets. Sharif vehemently denied the charges.

The case, filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) headed by an army general, related to the private import of a Russian Mi-8 helicopter in 1993.

Co-accused Saffur Rehman, who led the Sharif government's anti-corruption bureau, was acquitted of charges of abetment and manipulating the deal through a Qatari businessman.

Sharif heard the verdict calmly and was allowed to speak to reporters and his family in the court after it was announced.

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Nawaz Sharif

NAM Summit

Under political or caretaker govt?

By M Anwarul Haq

Bangladesh will have to host the 13th NAM Summit in early September next year as per tradition of the 114-member global organisation.

The Summit is necessary for the member states to adopt any relevant resolution before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session which begins in the third week of September.

If the government wants to hold the Summit under a political government, which most of the member countries expect, it will have to advance the next general elections by about three months, if not more. The tenure of the present government expires on July 13 next year, considering the date of the first sitting of the present Parliament.

To hold the Summit under a political government, the national election will have to be held tentatively in March, either before or shortly after Eid-ul-Azha, which falls on March 16. This will leave a few weeks time for the Summit after formation of a new government, observers said.

Otherwise, the Summit will have to be held under a caretaker administration.

If the Awami League government decides to complete its tenure, just as its predecessor BNP government did after 1991 polls, then there will a caretaker administration during the NAM Summit in September.

The NAM Summit, held every four years, is normally a three-day mega event where some 50 to 60 heads of state or government participate.

The Summit is preceded by a meeting of foreign ministers, which is preceded by a meeting of senior officials. Normally, around 100 foreign ministers or other ministers attend both the Summit and the foreign ministers' meet.

The NAM Summit will be the biggest international event in Bangladesh. Holding of the Summit in September is essential for building Bangladesh's image in the world, diplomatic sources said.

They said the September schedule of the Summit is crucial.

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DSE price index dips below 600 pts

By M Shamsur Rahman

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) price index yesterday dipped below 600 points, a level it crossed on July 5 after long 20 months.

This week's trading began on retail sale pressure pulling down the benchmark All Share Price Index to 586.20 points from 619.44 points at the close of previous week.

Market operators attributed

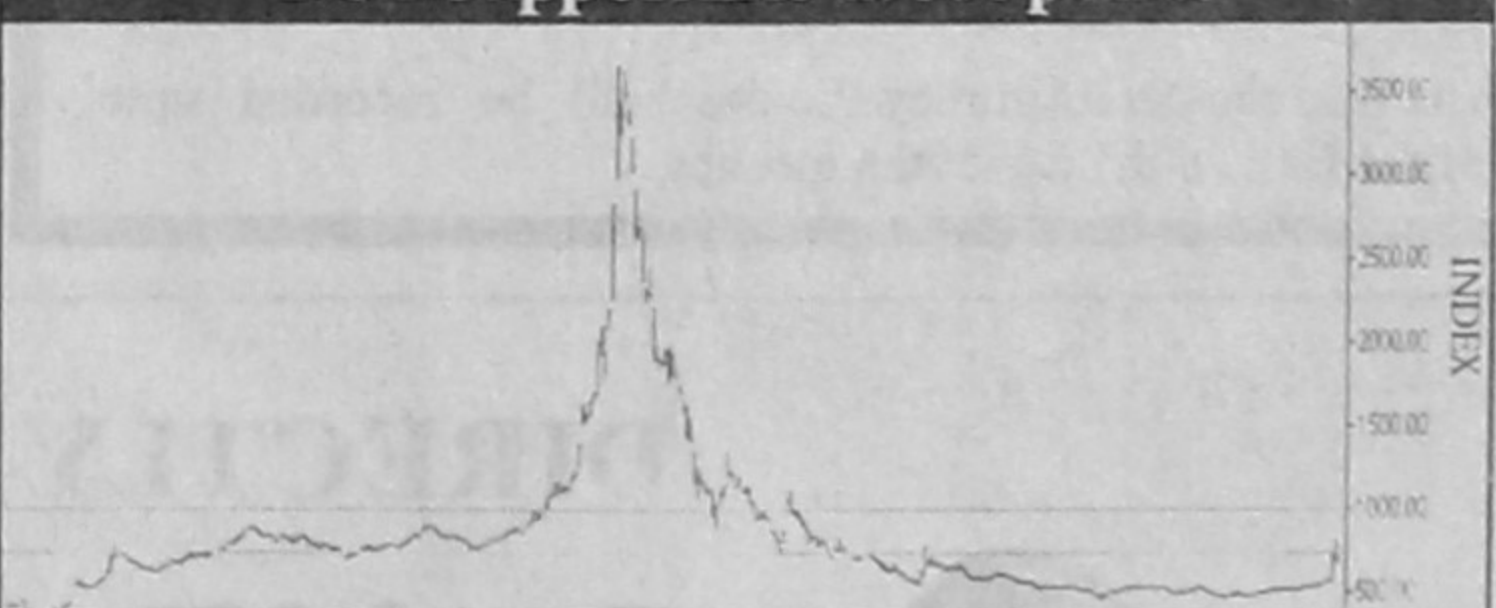
the fall to retail sale which forced the price index to shed 33.24 points.

They said the pressure is too much for the market to absorb in the absence of institutional investors like the mutual funds.

However, the institutional investors said they are shaky to invest in the market due to massive price fall.

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DSE support line at 535 points



Ctg killing

One FIR-named Shibir activist arrested

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 22: Police today arrested one of the main suspects in Bahaddarhat carnage that left 8 people, including 6 BCL activists killed.

The FIR-named accused, Salahuddin, was arrested from a madrassah in Bakalia at 11 am today.

A special team, comprising deputy commissioner (North) of CMF, assistant commissioner of Panchaish police and officer-in-charge of Bakalia Police Station raided Masjidia Islamia Madrassah and arrested Salahuddin from a room.

The team also arrested principal of the madrassah, Osman Ghani, for giving shelter to Salahuddin.

The FIR was lodged accusing 30 Shibir activists including Salahuddin on July 12.

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APAC calls hartal in Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 22: Security has been beefed up in the port city ahead of tomorrow's dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the All-Party Action Committee (APAC).

APAC called the hartal protesting arrest of eight people, including two Jamaat leaders yesterday.

Shamsul Islam, General Secretary of the city unit of Jamaat-e-Islami and member secretary of APAC, was arrested along with seven others.

Police said they were arrested on charge of their attempts to create unrest in the city.

Meanwhile, police have been

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Clarification

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has issued a clarification on a Daily Star report that the government laboratory is using date-expired reagents for testing dengue virus.

The report headlined 'Govt Lab using date-expired reagents for dengue tests' was published on July 19.

The clarification signed by

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মূল্য হ্রাস

জাতীয় বাজেটে কৃষিপণ্য প্রক্রিয়াজাতকরণ শিল্পে সংশোধিত শুল্ক কাঠামোর প্রেক্ষিতে

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