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Indian water minister due tomorrow

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Indian State Minister for Water Resources Bijoya Chakravarty arrives here on Monday on a five-day visit to Bangladesh.

She would be coming on a good will trip at the invitation of Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzaq.

She is expected to visit the confluence of Padma and Meghna rivers near Chandpur, the Bangabandhu Bridge and the Brahmaputra river bank protection project.

The Indian State Minister will also pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

However, a likely date for the next ministerial level meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission may be discussed with the visiting State Minister. It was learnt.

The 34th ministerial level meeting of JRC is due to be held in Dhaka this year. The last meeting was held in April last year in Delhi.

Bus strike on 18 routes in greater Ctg

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 23: Bus Owners' Association began an indefinite strike on 18 routes, including Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway, causing suffering to hundreds of commuters, reports UNB.

The association leaders said they have compelled to enforce the strike as some passengers assaulted a number of transport workers at different places on the routes during the last few days over bus fares.

The routes on which bus service remained stopped included Lala-Ali Kadam, Kanungopara, Banshkhali, Anwara, Sakkaria, Patia, Barkal, Lohagara and Dohazari.

A good number of tourists who came to the district headquarters remained stranded due to bus strike.

Kotalipara incident

CID verifying statements of three accused

The CID investigators are verifying the statements of Gazi Khan, Ansul Haque and Marfat Ali, now on a ten-day remand, regarding the case of Kotalipara bomb planting incident, reports BSS.

Two CID officers, Munshi Atiqur Rahman and Abdul Kader Akand separately interrogated them yesterday at its office in the city, according to official sources.

ASP Munshi Atiqur, the investigation officer (IO) of the case, recorded the statement of Gazi Khan under Section 161 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) yesterday.

Earlier, Akand, the IO of the remand charge, recorded their confessional statements.

7 injured, 8 houses looted as rival groups clash over land in Gournadi

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 23: At least seven people were injured and eight houses looted during a clash between two rival groups at village Kamalapur in Gournadi upazila this morning.

According to police and witness, two rival groups - one led by Razzak Howlader and Siddique Munshi and the other by Abul Mridha and Sattar - clashed over possession of a land left by one Jaga Mitra who migrated to India some years ago.

Gunshots were fired and bombs exploded during the clash that continued for three hours.

The injured identified as Khalid, 30, Mostafa, 28, Jahangir, 32, Sattar, 40, Rahim, 42, Sohel 10 and Forian, 14, were admitted to Gournadi hospital.

The armed men belong to

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US to tap 30m barrels of oil from reserve in Oct

WASHINGTON, Sept 23: The White House decided yesterday to tap the nation's emergency oil reserve to prevent heating oil supply disruptions this winter, reports Reuters.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson announced 30 million barrels of oil would be removed from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during October. It was the first release for a national emergency since the 1991 Gulf War, when a much smaller 17.5 million barrels of crude was used.

The United States consumes about 20 million barrels of oil and refined petroleum products each day.

"We are prepared to take further action if necessary," Richardson told a hastily convened news conference after meeting with administration officials earlier in the day.

US oil prices tumbled for the second straight day on Friday even though Richardson's announcement came after mar-

kets closed. Futures prices fell in anticipation of the move, with crude closing at \$32.68 a barrel, bringing losses in the past two days to more than \$2.50.

The announcement followed an intense and unusually public debate by administration officials in recent days.

Republican Presidential nominee George W. Bush accused the White House of trying to help Democratic Vice President Gore win the Nov 7 election by ensuring that heating oil prices did not soar in the approaching winter.

The debate intensified after Gore urged President Bill Clinton on Thursday to release between 30 million and 35 million barrels of oil from the reserve in batches of 5 million barrels.

Gore's call, made within weeks of the November election, was criticised by Bush as a "bad policy" that put the nation's security at risk and which

was motivated by the need to assure Gore's election victory.

"It's a bad idea because the Strategic Petroleum Reserve needs to be used in case of war or a major disruption," Bush told reporters in response to Richardson's announcement, at a campaign stop in Tampa, Florida.

"I believe that the vice president has made this decision with the president's support to achieve short term political gain," he added.

But Richardson denied that the Clinton administration was motivated by politics or by the aim of trying to manipulate the price of oil to a lower level, even though the plan for the release of oil was similar to that proposed earlier by Gore.

"This is not political. The president wants the American people to get home heating oil and have enough heat in their homes," Richardson said.

"We have extremely low

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Gazipur declared illiteracy-free

Foil conspiracy to undo upcoming polls: Hasina

GAZIPUR, Sept 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today alerted people against "conspiracy to foil upcoming national elections," reports UNB.

Power must be changed through ballot, not by bullet, she said.

"Government must be formed through election, not by wielding arms or promulgating martial law," she told a crowded public function at Rajbari ground here this afternoon marking the formal declaration of Gazipur as "illiteracy-free."

Thousands of people from different upazilas of the district assembled at the historic Rajbari playground braving rain and rough weather to listen to Hasina.

Some 325,647 men, women and children were lettered to free the district from the darkness of illiteracy under the

mass literacy project.

With the declaration Gazipur joined the list of illiteracy-free districts. Previously Magura, Lalmonirhat, Chuadanga, Rajshahi and Jyotipurhat have been under the government's own resource funded project titled Total Literacy Movement.

Prime Minister Hasina also launched government's primary school stipend project by distributing stipends among 15 poor students.

The Prime Minister renewed her ambitious plan to drive out illiteracy completely by 2002 and elevate Bangladesh to the

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Eve teasing: 22

Boiling oil sprinkled on thirsty girl

A city hotel employee yesterday sprinkled boiling oil on a minor girl as she took water from its glass to quench her thirst, inflicting burn injury on her throat, reports UNB.

Police said Parveen, 9, who lives in Joynal Basti in Ramnagar area, went to nearby hotel Surma at about 11 am and sought water from waiter Jafaruddin.

The waiter refused. But the thirsty girl took water defying him that angered the waiter. He threw boiling oil on her.

Hearing the girl's scream local people rushed to the spot and beat Jamal. Later, police arrested Jamal. Parveen was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

KU students punished

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Sept 23: Khulna university authorities have punished 22 students including four females on charge of creating a law and order situation on the campus and in the halls on July this year.

Two groups of students of the university clashed on the day before eve teasing. Both groups chased each other and ransacked some rooms in the dormitories.

The authorities took the decision at a meeting yesterday on the basis of the recommendations of the disciplinary committee.

A case was filed with Khulna police in this connection.

The committee submitted its report to the Vice-Chancellor on September 13 recommending actions against the students.

According to the recommend-

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Killing at Jurain club: None arrested yet

By Staff Correspondent

None of the FIR-listed accused in Friday's murder of one person at Janata Club at East Jurain in the city was arrested till yesterday.

The victim, Idris Molla, 45, a vendor, died while being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after he was beaten at the club.

The accused are Mahbub Akhter Ratan, Mokbul, Tutul and Hatkata Chandu, according to the FIR lodged with Shyamprana thana.

The report said the accused came to Khulna on September 13 to kill some top political leaders. A

People are now united to topple this govt, says Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has said the Awami League government, after "completely failing" to run the country, has intensified repressive measures on people and resorted to killing, kidnapping and anarchy to cling to power.

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