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Barak gives 48-hr deadline to Arafat Stop riots or peace process will be considered 'dead'

JERUSALEM, Oct 8: The Israeli military today blew up two multistory apartment buildings overlooking a Gaza intersection that has been the focus of riots there, sending the level of Israel's response to more than a week of violence up another notch, reports AP.

In the West Bank, the Israelis sent attack helicopters into Hebron for the first time, blasting hilltop positions used by Palestinians to fire on the Jewish settler enclave below.

This followed an ultimatum delivered by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who said that if Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat does not stop the riots within 48 hours, Israel would consider the peace process 'dead' and use all

means to restore order.

The Israeli military waited only a few hours. Military engineers set off explosives in the two tall Gaza buildings called the Twin Towers, overlooking Netzarim junction, the military said. Palestinians had been using the buildings as firing points to target the Israeli outpost below. There was no immediate word about casualties.

EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip, Oct 8: An Israeli army commander announced today that Israel and the Palestinians had reached an accord for an immediate halt to fighting in the Gaza Strip, reports AFP.

Thousands of Palestinian demonstrators have tried to storm the Netzarim junction outpost, which guards an isolated Jewish settlement. Israeli helicopters fired rockets at the apartment buildings during the riots.

Also, the military destroyed another nearby building known as the factory, and cleared an area of several dozen yards around the fortified position to prevent attacks, the statement said.

The military warned that the Palestinians must understand that any firing from a position on (Jewish) settlements or Israeli military forces turns (the position) into a target for attack or destruction.

Thousands of Palestinian demonstrators have tried to storm the Netzarim junction outpost, which guards an isolated Jewish settlement. Israeli helicopters fired rockets at the apartment buildings during the riots.

Before daybreak today, helicopters flew into Hebron, divided between Palestinians and Jews, and attacked a hilltop in the Abu Sneh neighborhood where Palestinians were firing on one of the concentrations of Jewish settlers below, the army said.

In the West Bank city of Ramallah, an Israeli army commander advised Palestinians in houses near the Jewish settlement of Psagot to leave their homes. For several days, Palestinians have been firing at the settlement from the houses, and the Israeli Officer indicated that he was about to direct tank fire at them.

Barak called his Cabinet into special session after issuing the statement.

See page 11 Col 7

Woes of flood victims only beginning

By Shehab Ahmed

The flash flood sweeping the south-west region of the country is now on the retreat but roads, unauthorised cross dams on rivers and canals for fisheries are obstructing a faster flow of water, a leading water resources expert has said.

"The woes of flood victims are only beginning. It is a long way before the water recedes from the region", said Dr Ainun Nishat, Country Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The real threat lies in water logging once the flood waters roll over the roads and obstacles, he said pointing out the long term problems to be faced by people in the areas.

They never faced floods in about half a century in a region which is rich in fish resources and agricultural products, specially vegetables, Dr Nishat said.

"Not only Aman paddy is lost, but also vegetable fields, fish hatcheries and other crops are damaged."

See page 11 Col 7



Flood damaged standing crops including Aman paddy in vast areas of Satkhira. Photo shows two farmers at village Kaliyani under Sadar thana are trying to reap whatever remained of Aman crop in a submerged field for use as fodder.

—Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Humphrey back again to talk some issues on PM's visit

Star Report

US energy official Calvin Humphrey, who recently visited Dhaka to discuss oil and gas issues, is back from Bangkok to further negotiate some issues likely to come up during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Washington.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs in the Department of Energy Humphrey was asked by the US government to pay a further visit to Dhaka and negotiate the unresolved issues. It is reliably learnt.

Humphrey met Finance Minister SAMS Kibria's secretary. He will meet Sheikh Hasina today on an agenda.

During his recent visit, Humphrey said that the US authorities would continue their efforts to change the prevailing attitude of some quarters in Bangladesh against export of gas.

See page 11 Col 5

Akhter to reply to Speaker's letter today

Akhteruzzaman MP, expelled from his party, will demand from the Speaker referendum for his electorate to decide whether he should lose parliamentary seat, reports UNB.

The embroiled lawmaker said he would place the demand in reply to the letter of the Speaker who wanted to know Akhter's comment about the BNP petition seeking to vacate his seat.

Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain has requested Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury to take measure to strip the MP of his membership following his expulsion from the party.

The Speaker on October 4 faxed a letter to Akhter asking him to reply along with his comment by October 9.

Talking to UNB from his constituency at Kottadi in Kishoreganj district, the soldier-turned politician said he will hand over his reply to the Speaker this morning.

See page 11 Col 5

Inside Today

Article

Israel's Next Great Challenge
Column: Perspectives
By Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz
Page 4

Focus

The right ride of 'digital divide'; and The Yugoslav drama
Page 5

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 9		5:38 pm
Oct 10	5:53 am	

Prayer Timings

October 9

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:45	5:15
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:50	6:55
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Ctg WASA losing Tk 1 cr a month on pretext of 'system loss'

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Oct 8: Chittagong WASA is reportedly being deprived of over Tk one crore revenue per month on the pretext of 'system loss', sources said.

A section of meter inspectors, revenue department employees and subscribers are allegedly involved in the racket causing the huge loss to WASA, the sources said.

The 'loss' of water sometimes rise to about 90 per cent, which remain unaccounted or is shown as 'system loss', WASA sources said meters can be easily manipulated due to use of poor technological device in those.

Officials at WASA revenue department denied the allegation of involvement of a section of its employees in the racket.

Chairman of Chittagong WASA Md. Zakaria when contacted said mobile courts have been operating in the city for the past one year to detect manipulators and illegal water connections.

But it is difficult to run mobile courts regularly as police and magistrates are not always available, he said.

"We can not go for action against meter inspectors or revenue section employees as specific complaints are hardly lodged."

"We have reduced the system

loss to 32 per cent from 39 per cent in about a year now", he claimed. "We are trying to minimise it further".

He said 'special squads' are active in the city to check leakage of WASA water to reduce the system loss.

WASA's unrealised bills amount to about Tk 30 crore, most of which are with government organisations, WASA sources said.

Chittagong WASA supplies 35 million gallons of water against a requirement of 100 million gallons for a population of over three million, they said.

Airbus finally returns from Calcutta

By Special Correspondent

The Biman Airbus A310 carrier, stranded at Calcutta airport with trouble in its hydraulic system since Saturday afternoon, finally landed at ZIA at 11:55 last night.

A team of engineers and technicians were flown to Calcutta with spares at 5 p.m. yesterday to repair the hydraulic system, Biman sources said.

The aircraft was originally scheduled to land at Zia International Airport on Saturday evening. The stranded passengers, numbering about 200, were lodged in hotel in Calcutta, Biman sources said.

With the trouble in the Airbus, Biman had to reschedule two of its international flights yesterday.

The BG 039 flight for Riyadh left Dhaka at 4:30

pm instead of 7 am. The BG 041 flight for Kuwait, which was scheduled to depart at 7:45 pm yesterday, will now take off at 3:30 am today, the sources said.

The Airbus A310 is one of the two which were added to Biman's fleet in 1996. One Airbus recently developed trouble in its hydraulic system at Heathrow airport in London.

It was not known whether the aircraft now stranded in Calcutta was the one which developed trouble at Heathrow.

Earlier, some of the relatives of the stranded passengers talking to this correspondent complained that they were not getting information from Biman when the plane would return to ZIA.



The image of Goddess Durga being carried in a boat for immersion in the river Buriganga as Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Hindus ended yesterday.

—Star photo

Pakistan pummel Sri Lanka

NAIROBI, Oct 8: Saeed Anwar smashed an unbeaten century as Pakistan thrashed Sri Lanka by nine wickets to reach the semi-finals of the ICC Knockout Trophy tournament here today, reports AFP.

Set an easy 195 to win, Pakistan overhauled the target with consummate ease, thanks to an

evergreen Anwar who notched his 18th one-day century with an aggressive display of strokeplay. The attacking left-hander's 105 came off 134 balls and included 12 fours and a six which took him to his hundred.

Man-of-the-match Anwar seemed to have found a consistent opening partner in Imran

Nazir. Together they made the tournament highest partnership of 90 for the first wicket before Nazir was run out in dramatic fashion by Marvan Atapattu.

Unperturbed by the loss, Anwar maintained his composure, and he was ably assisted by his new partner Yousuf Youhana.

See page 11 Col 7

IJO members meet today in quest of a successor body

By Mustak Hossain

Bangladesh has launched a hectic lobbying to save the International Jute Organisation (IJO), now under a process of liquidation, sources said yesterday.

Representatives of all the 25 IJO member countries are now in Dhaka to attend a working group meeting tomorrow to discuss formation of a successor organisation, an IJO official told The Daily Star. "Tomorrow's meeting will be followed by a special session on October 12", he said.

The liquidation process began last year when IJO members failed to reach an agreement on giving it another lease of life as its European members insisted that the 16-year-old organisation could not produce any effective formula to make jute products competitive with cheaper synthetic products.

The European members of IJO now favour continuation of international cooperation to develop diversified use of jute. They have extended their support to formation of a successor organisation to IJO, the sources said.

They now feel that some of the projects initiated by IJO has potential to compete with cheaper synthetic products, they said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while inaugurating an international exhibition on jute and jute products in the city on Saturday urged the IJO members to continue their support to the organisation.

The IJO was established in 1984.

See page 11 Col 6

Durga Puja ends with immersion of goddess

Hindu community's largest religious ritual, Durga Puja ended with immersion of the image of the goddess yesterday amid funfair and festivity, report agencies.

Members of the community, led by organisers of the festival in city's all 'Mandaps', joined a huge procession carrying Durga idols from the Dhakeswari Temple in the afternoon.

The devotees in more than 35 trucks, private cars and auto-rickshaws, paraded the city streets through Dhaka University campus, Jatya Press Club, Purana Paltan and old parts of the city.

The grand procession concluded on the bank of river Buriganga where the goddess

See page 11 Col 7

Armed clash over bid to cut embankment :10 hurt

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 8: At least ten people, including a union parishad chairman were injured in an armed clash between two groups of flood-hit people at Komarpur in Debhata upazila today.

Witnesses said the clash broke out when one group led by Golam Farooq Babu, Chairman of Parulia UP, attempted to cut Komarpur embankment to release floodwater amid protests by the another group of Sakhipur Union.

Both the groups traded gunshots and exploded bombs during the clash that continued for five

hours from 9 am.

Of the injured, Parulia UP Chairman Golam Farooq Babu, Harun of Ghalghalia village and Mansur Ali of Panchpota village received bullet injuries. They were rushed to Satkhira Sadar Hospital.

Police, however, went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area. None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report at 7 pm today.

The flood situation in Satkhira town and Sadar, Tala and Assasuni upazilas has further

worsened with inundation of fresh areas.

In Satkhira town, some fresh areas have been inundated as floodwaters are rolling down from the south.

Flood water entered the court building telephone exchange and others important offices and installations in the district town last night, paralysing life of the residents.

Road communication between Satkhira and Khulna has been snapped. Gushing water has submerged Satkhira-Chuknagar-Jessore highway.

See page 11 Col 6

Fake LCs by NCBs detected

By Inam Ahmed

The central bank has detected that some nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) have opened huge fake letters of credit (LCs) to siphon money from the country.

These fake LCs were also used by unscrupulous exporters to illegally enjoy the government's cash subsidy on different export items.

According to sources, a section of NCB officials in collusion with fake exporters are engaged in such illegal practices.

The central bank has already warned all the dealer banks to be

careful in opening back-to-back LCs. It has also asked the banks to check authenticity of the master LCs under which back-to-back LCs are opened mainly for garments export.

The sources said a gang of smugglers has used these dealer banks to open back-to-back LCs under false master LCs. They imported duty-free fabrics under bonded warehouse facility and even received the government's export subsidy.

The central bank detected such anomalies in cases involving

some Tk 1000 crore. The officials who are involved in such fraudulent activities are working in the dealer banks for a long time and they are 'too powerful to be transferred to other branches', sources said.

Sonal Bank had once investigated similar cases in Chittagong and made a list of 33 officials and employees for taking action against them. The bank board discussed the matter but did not take any action, they pointed out.



Amit at Bangabandhu hospital waiting to be operated upon tomorrow.

—Star file photo

Amit finally undergoes operation tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Twelve-year-old Shaikat Rahman Amit is finally being operated upon tomorrow morning for implantation of a 'breathing pacemaker', sources concerned said.

The operation will be done at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) where the schoolboy is on an artificial breathing device for the last one year.

Amit is suffering from the worst form of paralysis caused by a wild poliovirus which destroyed his nerves that control breathing and limb movement. Only one such case in a million is found in the world.

The pacemaker which would enable Amit to 'breathe artificially' throughout his life was brought from the Dobelle Institute in New York on Wednesday. An engineer who would help surgeons transplant the device is due to arrive in the city today as per contract for purchase of it, the sources said.

The small device, about the size of a palm, is an electronic simulator and unlike conventional ventilator, it is silent and lightweight.

The pacemaker cost Tk 41.33 lakh, all of which came from donation. Till now, donations for Amit's treatment totalled Tk 79.50 lakh.

His father Moshir Rahman said the surplus money would be used to

buy a wheel chair and a portable ventilator for use in case of an emergency.

Paediatric Surgeon Associate Professor Saiful Islam of BSMMUH will conduct the operation on Amit. He will be assisted by Thoracic Surgeon Prof Sariful Islam, Neuro-Surgeon Prof Rashid Uddin, ENT Professor Alauddin and Prof K M Iqbal of Anaesthesia department.

The operation, first of its kind in the country, and all related tests are being done free of cost, sources at BSMMUH said.

30 injured as prisoners clash in Ctg jail

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 8: At least 30 inmates of Chittagong Jail were injured in a clash between two groups of prisoners this afternoon, police said.

The injured were being treated in the jail hospital. The trouble began at 4 pm when two groups of prisoners, one led by BCL cadre Iqbal and another led by BCL leader Mas (Ish) Kader were locked in a clash, police and jail sources said.

Both the groups used lethal weapons and bricks during the clash. Jail guards resorted to lathicharge on the clashing prisoners to bring the situation under control.

However, a tense situation was prevailing inside the jail, sources said.

Security was tightened in and around Chittagong jail to avoid fresh violence.

Around 1500 prisoners are staying in Chittagong jail against its capacity of 700, jail source said.

Kidnapped girl rescued in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 8: Police rescued an abducted schoolgirl at village Shaipara under Bagmara thana yesterday evening.

The girl was identified as Rozina 13, a student of Class X and daughter of Kudratullah of village Haludghar under Bagmara thana.

Rozina was abducted on September 20 from Bashantapur while she was going to Barishal High School. She was kidnapped for trafficking to Indian, sources said.

Acting on a tip off, Bagmara police raided a house at Shaipara in the same thana on Saturday.

See page 11 Col 6

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