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VOL. X NO. 268 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2000

3rd Millennium

KARTIK 2, 1407 BS

RAJAB 18, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Hasina leaves London for Washington

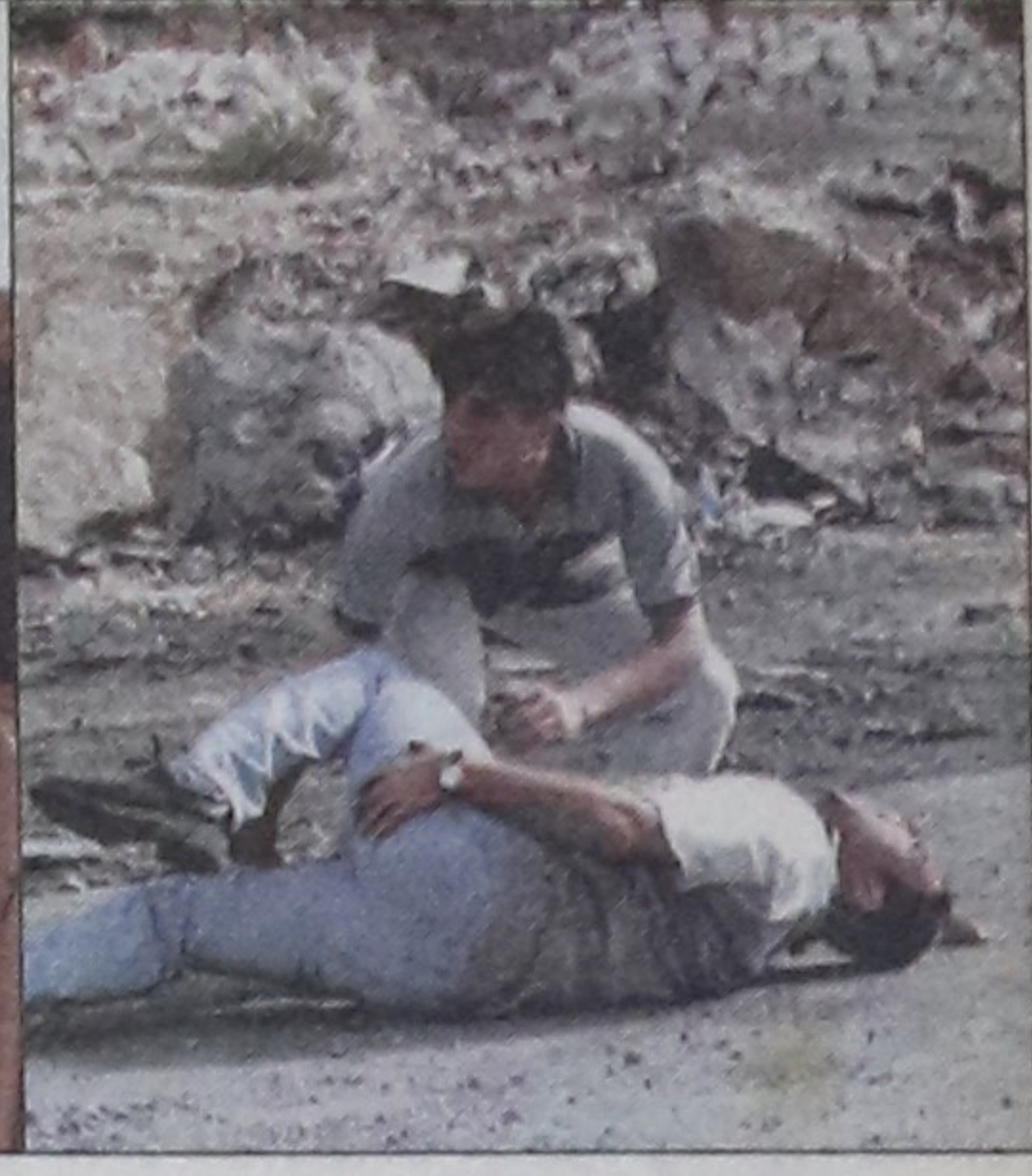
LONDON, Oct 16: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left here this morning for Washington to begin her official visit to the United States, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina's official visit to the United States will be the first by any Bangladesh head of state or government to that country since independence in 1971.

She arrived here Sunday morning on a day's visit during which she addressed a community meeting and gave interviews to different print and electronic media.

A large number of leaders and workers of Awami League from various parts of the United Kingdom saw her off at the Stansted Airport as she left for the high profile visit.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to the United Kingdom A H Mahmood Ali and senior officials of the high commission were also present.



Last resort for lost peace: As the Gaza Strip convulses with unceasing violence, world leaders have thronged at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh for an emergency summit to give peace in the Middle East one last chance. US President Clinton had separate meetings with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak prior to the start of the summit. —AFP photo

Move beyond blame, Clinton asks Arafat & Barak

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt, Oct 16: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat sat face-to-face at a table with US President Bill Clinton and other leaders in an emergency peace summit today. "We have to move beyond blame," Clinton declared, reports AP.

The tense summit included UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a European Union representative and key regional leaders. It opened as new violence tore through the West Bank. A gunbattle erupted near Nablus and Palestinians threw rocks at Israeli soldiers in two other towns.

"We cannot afford to fail," Clinton said. "The future of the peace process and the stability of the region are at stake."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, summit host, called for "saving what is left of the credibility of the peace process."

He pointed the finger at Israel, saying, "The aggressions to which

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Oct 16: Israeli and Palestinian leaders reported little progress at the peace summit today. Clinton's words for peace appeared to have little impact and participants said there was no improvement in the atmosphere between the two sides. The atmosphere was so bleak that Arafat and Barak sat across from each other without talking at a lunch hosted by Hosni Mubarak, diplomatic sources said. Neither Barak nor Arafat addressed the half-hour plenary summit session after a series of side meetings between participants, reports Reuters.

the Palestinian people were subjected during the last two weeks persuaded me to convene this meeting."

Clinton, however, said that in an atmosphere "piled high with grievance... we have to move beyond blame."

The leaders were trying to end the recent mayhem on the West Bank and Gaza that has cost nearly 100 lives and fractured whatever trust remained between Israel and the Palestinians.

Almost wistfully, Clinton called attention to "how far we had gone" from conflict only a

few months ago before the US-driven peace process collapsed and the region exploded in violence.

On a key issue, Clinton called for a fact-finding mission to probe the causes of the most serious fighting between the Israelis and Palestinians in years and to prevent a recurrence.

"We want to get negotiations started again," he said.

The morning meeting lasted for about 30 minutes. After Clinton and Mubarak made opening remarks, the meeting took a recess.

P.J. Crowley, a White House spokesman, said Clinton did not plan to remain for an extended period, even if Israel and the Pales-

tinians fail to come to an agreement. He said Clinton planned to depart at midnight, but could delay that for up to 12 hours.

Each country's team kept to itself. Barak stood up and talked to his advisers. Clinton turned in his chair to speak with National Security Adviser Sandy Berger and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The leaders sat about three meters apart around a horseshoe table, with Clinton and Mubarak sitting at the head. Also at the table were King Abdullah II of Jordan and Javier Solana, EU security chief.

With a little more than three months left in his presidency, Clinton still hopes to broker a peace accord. But for this summit, the most optimistic outlook is for a truce and a date set for new negotiations between the two sides.

"We shouldn't give it all up for what has happened in the last few

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Satkhira water to remain 'stagnant' for 2 weeks more

By Shehab Ahmed

Flood water in Satkhira is likely to remain 'stagnant' for at least two weeks more as rivers in the south-west region cannot discharge it quickly with a network of roads, embankments and polders obstructing the natural flow.

This was reported to the authorities by a task force of the Water Development Board formed to identify causes of the floods and suggest remedial measures, WDB sources said yesterday.

A group of experts including members of the task force is leaving for Satkhira today to find out how to ensure quick discharge flood water.

They would identify the spots where to cut the roads, embankments and polders built over the last 40 years to protect the region

from tidal surge from the Bay.

They would also examine sluice gates on the polders and recommend measures to improve their functioning, the sources said.

The flood sweeping the region since September 23 continues to

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submerge fresh areas, affecting thousands more.

Experts said it occurred because late monsoon clouds, instead of moving towards the Himalayas as usual, dumped 1700 mm of rains in the area below Farakka Barrage in West Bengal of India in 10 days from September 17.

The south-western districts of Bangladesh, which had never

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Muggers at ZIA manhandle BBC reporter 'for dollar'

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers pounced on a BBC reporter inside the security enclosure of the Zia International Airport (ZIA) as he was leaving the airport in a car at around 3:40 a.m. yesterday.

Moazzem Hossain, a reporter with the BBC Bangla Service in Dhaka, was manhandled and frisked by six muggers who demanded "dollars". All this happened on the exit ramp of the airport in presence of several people nearby. A police patrol van of the Cantonment police station was hardly 30 yards away.

Moazzem said having failed to trace his relatives due to arrive from New York he walked to the car through the parking area. As he got into the car, a man tapped on the window and asked him

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Cyclone moving towards Tamil Nadu

By Special Correspondent

The deep depression over the west central Bay turned into a cyclonic storm and was moving westward, apparently heading towards Tamil Nadu in south India, sources in the Meteorological Department said here last night.

The cyclone, packing winds up to 88 km per hour (KPH), is unlikely to hit Bangladesh coast unless it changes direction, they said. But rainfall is likely.

At 6 pm yesterday, it was centred at about 960 km south-west of Chittagong port and 870 km south-southwest of Mongla port.

It is likely to intensify further. The sea will remain rough. Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal No. three.

All fishing boats and trawlers in the north Bay and in deep sea have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution.

Sultry weather continued to prevail in the country for the second day yesterday due to the deep depression.

Mystery shrouds death of a foreigner

By Staff Correspondent

Mystery shrouded the death of a foreigner whose body was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. DMCH sources said.

Some policemen left the body at the hospital in the morning. Identity of the foreigner aged about 65 or that of the policemen who brought it, could not be known till last night.

Gulshan and Cantonment police were under pressure to ascertain identity of the dead, the sources said.



SM Ali's death anniversary today

By Staff Correspondent

Today is the seventh anniversary of death of SM Ali, the founder editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

Syed Mohammad Ali, popularly known as SM Ali, died at the age of 65 in a Bangkok hospital on this day in 1993 after prolonged suffering from lung cancer.

Ali had a celebrated career in journalism as a media and communication professional, spread over forty-four years.

He held key positions in different newspapers and other media organisations in Southeast Asia.

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CMCH plagued with problems

Proposal to increase doctors, logistics shelved since '98

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Oct 15: Chittagong Medical College Hospital is plagued with problems.

The 500-bed hospital was built in 1967. At least 1500 patients remain admitted now while thousands of others are treated at the outdoor every day but posts of doctors have not been increased over the years, CMCH Director Col. Zillur Rahman told this correspondent.

The country's second biggest hospital caters to the needs of people of greater Chittagong and neighbouring districts but doctors, other manpower and logistics are too inadequate to cope with the rush of patients. The rush is increasing every day.

"The number of patients tripled, but the manpower and other facilities have not been increased. Against the originally sanctioned posts of 187 doctors for the 500-bed hospital, 29 are vacant now," he said.

"It is really difficult to cope with growing number of patients due to lack of required manpower and infrastructure facilities," he said.

In recent years, seven new departments were opened. With 35 wards, there is only one ward master out of three sanctioned posts. The number of nurses and other employees are also far short of the requirement, he said.

Hospital sources said proposals for raising the number of doctors, other manpower and logistics were sent to the authorities concerned in 1998, but to no effect.

The budgetary allocation for diet is for one thousand patients, at the rate of Tk 30 for each per day, they said.

During a visit, the hospital wards were seen crammed with patients, many of them lying on floors.

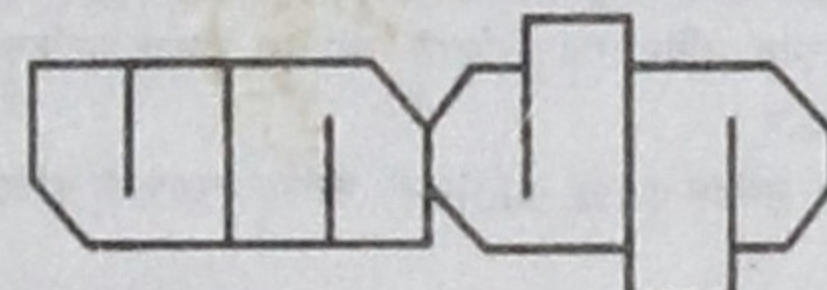
A persistent water crisis has added to the sufferings of patients. Fifty-year-old Shahar Banu said, "I bought one bucket of water for

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For the flood-hit: Members of the Gono Sangskritik Front collect donations from bus passengers in front of the Jatiya Press Club as part of its fundraising campaign for the flood-hit in the country's south-west. —Star photo

HIV/AIDS and Poverty



HIV and poverty form a complex circle of vulnerability, heightened impact and increased vulnerability that affects a country at the individual, household, community and national level. Several factors create and sustain this cycle that pushes back the hard-won gains of development and affects a range of sectors.

Poverty heightens the vulnerability of each community, family and individual to HIV/AIDS. Evidence from around the world demonstrates that a combination of information, outreach, services and an enabling environment where people can exert greater control over their lives, particularly their sexual lives, is essential for effective prevention. In several ways, poverty intervenes in each of these components.

At the individual level, access to information is strongly mediated by education, and socio-economic status. This is more significant in the case of new information, as with HIV/AIDS, where the information has not yet become integrated into "folk" or popular informal networks of communication, where people communicate by word of mouth. Comprehending fairly little known and complicated concepts (like the immune system) therefore requires not only the ability to read, but familiarity with anatomy and physiology, and the functioning of different systems in the human body. This knowledge base usually comes from several years in a formal education system, an experience which poverty cuts short. At the household and individual level, in households with poor socio-economic status children are frequently withdrawn from school early to supplement the family income. Or because keeping them in school is a cost the family cannot take up.

Further, access to information is affected by participation in social networks, through which information is disseminated. Access to information through purchase of newspapers, magazines, attending film-shows, dramas, where information is made available, are often outside the reach of the poorest.

Poverty also restricts the choices that people can make—as it restricts the skills they have the opportunity to develop, and therefore their ability to find gainful employment. The combination of pressing economic need and limited skills and opportunities leads to occupational situations that place persons at greater risk—for example, men and women have to leave home and seek employment far away as migrant labour. This causes a break in normal family life, leads to loneliness and alienation, as well as the establishment of new relationships and new patterns of behaviour, including sexual behaviour, which can place the person at increased risk. As well as limits the power of negotiating terms and conditions beneficial to themselves in their place of employment.

Women in poverty are at even greater risk. With few occupational options, and open to exploitation, they are constrained to exchange sex for survival, for themselves and their dependents. In some cases

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Default Culture and the Unholy Alliance

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The politics of globalisation and trade

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 17		5:31 pm
Oct 18	5:57 am	

Prayer Timings

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:45	5:20
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:10	4:25
Maghrib	5:40	5:45
Esha	7:30	8:00

Source: Islamic Foundation