

drawing world on a single line

NCC Bank Ltd.  
Where Credit and Commerce Integrates  
www.nccbank.com.bd

# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Today's issue 24 pages

PHILIPS

Real Flat TV (21PT 2327)

TRANSFORMER ELECTRONICS

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 243

DHAKA WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

ASHWIN 2, 1415 BS

RAMADAN 16, 1429 HIRI

24 PAGES PRICE: Tk 10.00

## SEA BOUNDARY Talks on river channel issue continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No progress was made in the second day of Bangladesh-India Maritime Delimitation Talks as the delegations decided to continue their talks on the third day on the same Hariabhanga channel issue.

The second day's talks ended yesterday noon. The Indian delegation is yet to consider Bangladesh's claim over South Talpatty Island on the estuary of the Hariabhanga, which is bogging the talks down.

"We discussed the same issue today [Tuesday] but ended without any results. Tomorrow morning [Wednesday] the talks will resume again," said a high official of the foreign ministry, also a member of Bangladesh delegation.

When asked about other issues, the official said they would discuss other issues once the delegations reached a consensus. The expert-level talks end today.

The three-day Bangladesh-

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## China pledges help in N-power project

Three agreements signed at talks

UNB, Beijing

China will provide special preferential treatment for access of some Bangladeshi products to its market to reduce the prevailing trade imbalance between the two countries and cooperate in paving the way for implementation of the Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant.

It assured cooperation in construction of two more bridges—Meghna and Gomti bridges—in Bangladesh.

China will also consider Bangladesh's request for engaging itself in the Bangladesh-Myanmar road link scheme meant for enhancing trade and people-to-people contact.

The assurances came during

official talks between Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao at the Great Hall of the People yesterday.

It was hoped at the official talks that trade volume between the two countries would reach a targeted \$5 billion by 2010.

The talks lasted about an hour, covering politics, trade and economic cooperation and investment as well as agricultural cooperation.

The chief adviser requested China's involvement in Bangladesh-Myanmar road communications to connect Kunming of China with the trans-border road link and sought Chinese government's cooperation in constructing a 111-kilometer road.

Responding positively to Bangladesh's request, the Chinese side said they would talk to Myanmar. Similarly, Bangladesh side said they would also carry it forward with Myanmar.

The meeting emphasised tripartite meeting involving Bangladesh, Myanmar and China.

Responding to the request of the chief adviser, the Chinese side instantly declared that they would double the present number of Bangladesh's student scholarships from 50 to 100.

At the official talks it was told that China would send a delegation to Bangladesh over the matter of Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant.

On investment, Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

VOTER LIST

Special step taken to enrol Khaleda, other left-out VIPs

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) is making a special arrangement to register former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and other VIPs, left out during the nationwide voter-listing drive, as voters.

Apart from the VIPs, the EC will also consider the enrolment of those who remain out of the voter list.

"The commission will exercise its special powers to register the VIPs and others who were left out of the voter list," EC Secretary M Humayun Kabir told a press briefing at his office yesterday.

He said instructions have been sent to the district election offices to scrutinise whether anybody was excluded from the voter list. "This matter will be finalised within the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

## Strong tidal surge swamps the coast

Over 100 fishermen missing, thousands marooned; depression formed in North Bay

STAR REPORT

Over a hundred fishermen went missing when their trawlers capsized in rough waters caused by depression in North Bay Monday night.

Accompanying tidal surges inundated Patuakhali town, Nijhumdip and more than 100 other offshore islands across the coastal districts, leaving thousands of people marooned.

The Met Office advised the authorities to hoist local cautionary signal number three and asked all fishing boats to hit shelters immediately until further notice.

The depression still hovering on

the Northern Bay is expected to cross to Orissa coast, slowly though.

Tidal surges, whipped up by the full moon, snapped ferry services on the Kuakata route in Patuakhali and washed away a flood-prevention embankment along the Baleshawar River in Bagerhat.

Citing survivors, reports from Khulna, Bagerhat and Bhola said 25 trawlers with over 300 fishermen on board were caught in gusty winds, accompanied by driving rain, and went under.

They said the winds packed speeds of up to 80 kilometres per hour.

About 200 fishermen managed to swim ashore. The missing could

not be traced till 6:00pm yesterday, Coast Guard sources said.

Besides, five fishing trawlers capsized in rivers at Kachikhali in Bagerhat's Sharankhola upazila and four others in Bhola. All fishermen, except one, managed to hit the riverbank.

Meanwhile several hundred people at Khalshikhali village of Southkhali union and Hilbunia village of Rayenda union in Sharankhola upazila became homeless when two embankments collapsed inundating their villages.

They were taken to safer places, our correspondent from Khulna reported.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Warrants from fake court saw 3 arrested

COURT CORRESPONDENT

They did not commit the crime yet they were arrested upon fake warrants issued by a fake court in connection with a case filed with Motiheel Police Station in May this year.

Nonexistent "Third Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court of Dhaka" issued the arrest warrants against Asar Sheikh, Ejazul Sheikh and Rahman Snekh of Gostargati village under Mukshidpur, Gopalganj, in connection with the case filed for cheating and breach of trust.

According to a provision, if a case is filed with any police station in Dhaka Metropolitan area, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court will deal with all functions of the case including bail hearing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## BNP asks EC to invite its allies to dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding lifting of the state of emergency and holding of the parliamentary election ahead of any other poll, BNP-led four-party alliance yesterday urged the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC) to invite all of its components to the anticipated dialogue.

"Four-party alliance is always interested in dialogues to ensure free, fair and participatory elections, but inviting only BNP keeping our partners outside the process will not be acceptable," BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said during a media briefing after a meeting of alliance leaders in the residence of Shafik Rehman, editor of the vernacular weekly Mouchake Dhill, also former editor of the daily Jai Jai Din.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia,

who was released from detention on September 11 more than a year into her arrest, presided over the meeting.

The BNP secretary general hoped that the EC will send them a letter regarding the anticipated dialogue. "The Election Commission has to inform us about the date of the dialogue and four-party alliance thinks that none of its components should be excluded from it."

The almost two-hour long meeting began around 3:30pm which was also attended by Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami and Joint Secretary General Muhammad Qamaruzzaman, BNP Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partho and Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun, Islami Oikyo Jote (IOJ--Aminee) Vice-

chairman Muhiuddin Khan and Secretary General Abdul Latif Nazami, and Khilafat-e-Majlish Ameer Maulana Mohammad Ishaque and Secretary General Ahmad Abdul Quader.

The meeting had originally been scheduled to be held in BNP's central office in Naya Paltan of the capital but later was shifted in an overnight decision to the Eskaton Garden Road residence of Shafik Rehman.

BNP sources said the meeting venue was shifted to avoid onrush of party leaders and activists in the party office and since on last Saturday the party chairperson had trouble climbing stairs there.

The BNP chairperson arrived in Shafik Rehman's house around 3:10pm and left at 6:45pm.

The latest political situation in the country, prices of essentials, and preparations for upcoming

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## 7 more utility service men confess to graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac) yesterday heard seven more government officials from Dhaka Power Distribution Company, former Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority, and Titas Gas who claimed to own ill-gotten wealth worth Tk 13 lakh only.

With yesterday's hearing, Tac has so far heard disclosures from 71 corruption-accused, mostly government staffs, and primarily ordered them to deposit about Tk 15.44 crore to the state.

Earlier in February last year, National Coordination Committee (NCC) on corruption and serious crime found that 135 of Titas staffs, high officials and minions alike are millionaires, owning on average at least Tk 1 crore each. But over 30 of them have so far confessed to having ill-gotten wealth worth only about Tk 30 lakh.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



People of Patuakhali town catch fish on roads yesterday as a depression over the Bay triggered unusually high tide inundating the district headquarters.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

## BB moves to make farm loan mandatory

It will ask all banks to disburse loans to buck up the sector

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) will make disbursement of agriculture loans among farmers mandatory for all banks, including the foreign ones, to ease farming activities in the country.

The BB would first ask the banks to disburse loans among farmers, BB Deputy Governor Nazrul Huda said yesterday, adding that if the banks do not comply with this, the central bank will force them to put

a certain percentage of their annual credit aside for agriculture loan disbursements.

The BB took the decision at a meeting of its Agriculture Credit Monitoring Committee in Dhaka yesterday. The meeting also decided that the banks should introduce a Revolving Crop Credit Limit, distribute loans to farmers through identity cards and disburse collateral-free loans to fishermen and share croppers.

"More investment in agriculture

sector is inevitable in the wake of high food prices on the international market. That is why we took the initiative to increase the amount of agriculture loans," Nazrul Huda told newsmen after the meeting.

He said the directed lending practice has not been in place since the inception of the Financial Sector Reform Programme in 1990. As a result, it has been up to the bank whether to provide agriculture loans.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## No question of pressure

Hossain Zillur on Khaleda-Hasina meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Backtracking from his previous comments on putting pressure to make the chiefs of Awami League and BNP -- Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia -- sit together for talks, Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the question of any pressure on them from the government side does not arise.

"Question of creating any kind of pressure from our side does not arise... There is no scope to think the matter that way," Zillur said after a meeting with US Ambassador in Dhaka James

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

US-LED OFFENSIVES

## Pakistan orders its troops to retaliate

15 killed in military raids

AGENCIES, Islamabad/Khar

Pakistan's military has ordered its forces to open fire if US troops launch another air or ground raid across the Afghan border, an army spokesman said Tuesday.

The orders, which come in response to a highly unusual Sept. 3 ground attack by US commandos, are certain to heighten tension between Washington and a key ally against terrorism.

Pakistan's civilian leaders have protested the raid but say the dispute should be resolved through diplomatic channels.

However, army spokesman Maj Gen Athar Abbas told The Associated Press that after US helicopters ferried troops into a militant stronghold in the South Waziristan tribal region, the military told field commanders to

prevent any similar raids.

"The orders are clear," Abbas said in an interview. "In case it happens again in this form, that there is a very significant detection, which is very definite, no ambiguity, across the border, on ground or in the air, open fire."

US military commanders accuse Islamabad of doing too little to prevent the Taliban and other militant groups from recruiting, training and resupplying in Pakistan's wild tribal belt.

Pakistan acknowledges the presence of al-Qaeda fugitives and its difficulties in preventing militants from seeping through the mountainous border into Afghanistan.

However, it insists it is doing what it can and paying a heavy price, pointing to its deployment of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Hasina, Selim get bail in Azam J case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted three months' ad interim bail to Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and her cousin Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim in the extortion case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury.

An HC vacation bench comprising Justice Mirza Hussain Haider

and Justice Mamnoon Rahman also stayed the case proceedings against Hasina till October 19.

This is the first bail secured by the former prime minister in the five cases filed against her since the military-backed caretaker government took over on January 11 last year.

However, Hasina's counsel

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



## VIP gridlock avenue

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The stretch of the VIP road from Shahbagh to Jahangir Gate has apparently lost its status taking into account the persisting traffic congestion on the thoroughfare all day long.

The road, also known as Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, is free from slow-moving vehicles, but congestion has become a regular phenomenon here.

Traffic policemen say six roads crossing the around-four-kilometre road play a vital role behind the gridlock on the busy thoroughfare that always experiences heavy rush of traffic.

Stopping passenger buses on the road at Bangla Motor and Farmgate instead of bus bays violating rules and jaywalking of pedestrians also slow down vehicular movement.

In an attempt to ease the traffic movement, traffic sergeants halt traffic of other roads that cross the avenue at Shahbagh, Sheraton Hotel, Bangla Motor, Sonargaon Hotel, Farmgate and Bijoy Sarani for five to even 10 minutes during rush hours. But the move comes to little help and leads to long tailbacks on those roads instead.

"The situation sometimes turns so severe that it takes at least two hours to cross the four-kilometre stretch during rush hours," says Gulshan-Motiheel route bus conductor Abul Kalam.

As traffic remains standstill on the road for quite a long time during rush hours, adjoining Eskaton, Karwan Bazar, Panthapath, Rajabazar and Farmgate areas witness severe traffic jam that eats up huge work-hour and fuel.

Of these roads, Panthapath is the worst sufferer as a large number of vehicles park in front of shopping malls, hospitals, business centres and furniture shops

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



A shot of the Sonargaon intersection on the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city where vehicles mostly stand still in queues due to congestion and burn fuel.

PHOTO: STAR