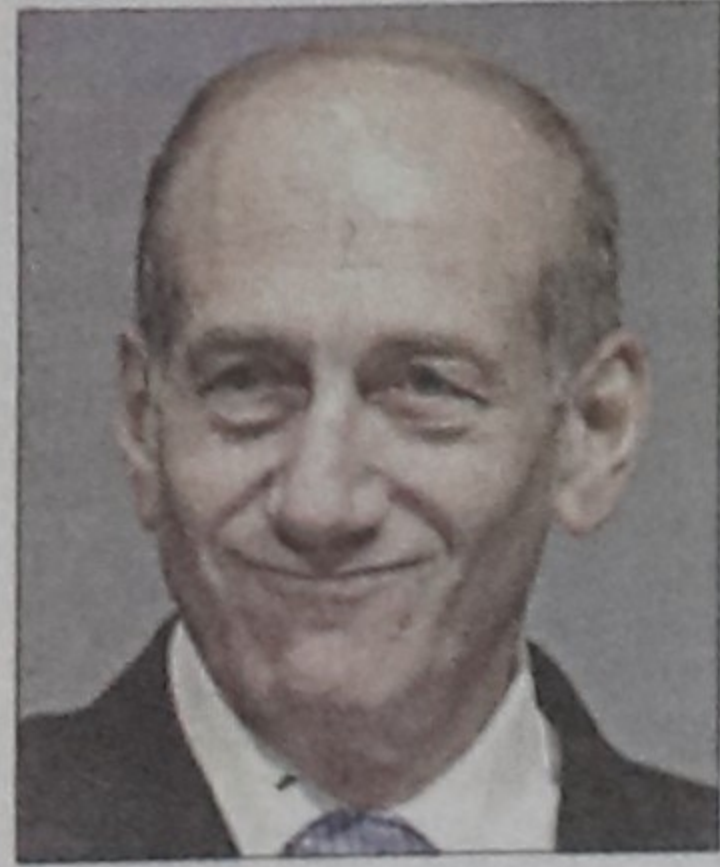


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Olmert resigns amid lingering turmoil

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced his resignation yesterday, but the political uncertainty gripping Israel and casting a shadow over US-backed Middle East peace talks is far from over.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Poverty up despite bumper Boro output

FAO-WFP report underlines impact of rising food prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's undernourished population has increased by 7.3 million -- from 39.6 million to 46.9 million -- largely because of the impact of higher food prices and the damage of Aman rice last year, says a report of FAO and WFP.

The Mission assessed the 2008 Boro and wheat production and estimated Boro rice output at 17.54 million tonnes, increased by some 17.2 percent from the previous year and 29.3 percent above the five-year average.

achieved nationally, this does not fully compensate for the heavy losses some farmers suffered in the previous Aman season in the south and east of the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

CA in NY to attend UNGA session

UNB, New York

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed reached New York yesterday morning to lead Bangladesh delegation to the 63rd UN General Assembly at the UN Headquarters.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Humayun Kabir and Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ismat Jahan received Fakhruddin at the JFK Airport as an Emirate Flight carrying the chief adviser and his entourage landed at 8:10am (NY time).

The chief adviser will make country statement in the UNGA session on September 26. This will be his second participation in the UN General Assembly as the head of the caretaker government after his assumption of office on January 12, 2007.

The chief adviser is scheduled to return home on September 30.

No REPAIR IN 2 YEARS

DCC stops ward-based fund to curb graft

ROADS UNCARED FOR 11

HELEMUL ALAM

Most of the roads under the Dhaka City Corporation tell a sorry tale, as no repair on the roads, especially the lanes and bi-lanes, was carried out in the last two years.

last fiscal year. Lack of fund is the main reason behind the poor state of the roads, they argue. As many wards commissioners are on the run or behind bars, there was virtually no-one to raise the issues of the roads before DCC authorities, locals observe.

As the contractors of DCC do the construction, monitoring of their work is also done by officials, who are mainly responsible to ensure quality, he said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Drive against unfit buses suspended

DMP cites 'public sufferings' due to withdrawal of old buses

KAILASH SARKAR

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) halted the drive against unfit buses and minibuses on Saturday, only two days after its launching, saying that the drive has led to public suffering as the owners stopped running the buses without replacing them.

According to BRTA sources, over 5,500 buses and minibuses ply the city streets with route permits and at least 20 percent of them are older than 15 years.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Transport Committee (DMTC) on Saturday...

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

All 13 acquitted in Barisal serial blasts case

A Barisal court yesterday acquitted all the 13 accused in a case filed in connection with the August 17 serial bomb blasts in Barisal city. Of the acquitted persons, Golam Morshed Chowdhury Reza, Jalal Arefin, Hafez Saiful Islam, Abu Yusuf Majumdar, Abu Solaiman Sujan, Md Maruf, Jasimuddin, Abdus Sobhan, and Giasuddin are in custody while Sarwar, Abdur Rahim, Zahid Babu, and Ziaur Rahman Zia are on the run.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



People watch from a distance as a CNG-run bus is in flames near Mohakhali flyover in the capital yesterday. The fire originated from the vehicle's battery and caused traffic jams in adjoining areas.

US hopes for full lifting of emergency

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United States (US) yesterday said it hopes that the conditions in Bangladesh will allow total withdrawal of the state of emergency at some point prior to the elections.

The US welcomed the chief adviser's statement that the state of emergency and Emergency Power Rules will be relaxed or repealed to...

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

4yr old boy dies while mom's suicide attempt fails in city

A four-year-old boy died while his mother was in critical condition yesterday evening, as the mother had tried to commit suicide by taking sedatives after allegedly killing her child in the posh Gulshan area of the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Democracy weakens as local govt ignored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democracy could not be strengthened in the country because of successive governments' negligence towards strengthening the local government system, especially the union parishads (UP), local government experts said yesterday.

The standard of education, local development and public services could not be improved to expected levels because of shortage of funds in the UPs and inactivity of UP standing committees, they said.

The remarks came at a policy dialogue titled 'Standing Committees' effectiveness: Critical issues and ways forward' organized by Democracywatch in association with Danida's Human Rights and Good Governance Programme at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

engaging people in the process of development and providing services. In reality there is no such effort, Majumder claimed. Dr Majumder, who is also a member of the Local Government Reform Committee formed under the present caretaker government, said, 'We talk of democracy, but we take neither ownership nor responsibility for it.'

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Hasina files bail petition in extortion case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bail petition for Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in an extortion case was filed with the High Court (HC) yesterday. The former premier is now abroad on parole for treatment.

Hasina's counsel Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh submitted the petition to a vacation bench of the HC comprised of Justice Sheikh Rezwani Ali and Justice Md Rais Uddin.

The HC bench will hear the petition today, the counsel told newsmen later. The extortion case was filed by businessman Noor Ali. The AL chief's counsel also said they will file two more petitions with the HC today for her bail in Niko and barge-mounted power plant corruption cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Saudi envoy meets Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Saudi Ambassador to Dhaka Dr Abdullah NA Al Bussairy yesterday met BNP Chairperson and former premier Khaleda Zia at her cantonment residence.

They also discussed the country's latest situation.



Consumers Association of Bangladesh and National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme of FAO give food carts to 11 street vendors in Dhaka yesterday. Story on page 2.

Stampede kills 43 in China nightclub fire

A fire and subsequent stampede at a club in southern China killed 43 people and left 88 injured, state media said yesterday, in the latest incident highlighting China's abysmal fire safety record. Witnesses and state media reports said the blaze late Saturday at the Dance King nightclub in the city of Shenzhen, near the border with Hong Kong, was caused by a fireworks stunt that went wrong.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Week that changed Wall Street forever

Wall Street will never be the same after a week that saw the White House, abandoning its laissez-faire attitude toward markets, organize an unprecedented bailout of private companies. The massive measures the government has announced to restore stability to the US banking system could cost up to one trillion dollars, including the 700 billion dollars for the rescue of financial firms confirmed on Saturday.

Republican administration of President George W. Bush have any choice? In the middle of the week, the huge US banking system was teetering on collapse: its lifeblood -- cash -- no longer circulated; its pulse, measured by short-term interest rates, was spiking. The morphine injected in massive doses -- liquidity infusions by central banks -- no longer had an effect.

Secretary Henry Paulson announced the broad outlines of a landmark plan proposed to Congress in which the government would buy toxic assets from financial institutions accumulated during the US real-estate boom and which since soured in the worst housing crisis in decades. In other words, the federal government would become the biggest hedge fund on the planet. That would follow the government's seizure of the ailing mortgage-finance titans Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the nationalization of the largest US insurer, American International Group (AIG), two extraordinary actions in a country where the state shareholder does not exist.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Table with 4 columns: Ramadan, Sep, Sehri, Iftar. Rows for dates 21, 22, 23, 24.

Table with 3 columns: Azan, Jamaat. Rows for Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.

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