



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES



REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XIII No. 176

DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 15, 2003

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

ASHAR 31, 1410 BS

ZAMADUL-AWAL 14, 1424 HJRI

20 PAGES PLUS STAR LIFESTYLE PRICE: Tk 10.00

## Dhaka, Delhi agree to talk FTA after Oct

Upbeat Sinha flies in to sit with Morshed today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday agreed to talk free trade agreement (FTA) in October as top-level officials of two sides met on the first day of the Joint Economic Council meet.

The meeting, sixth in the roll and being held after six years, also discussed the framework of transit.

The sentiment of the discussion was echoed by Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha, who arrived on a special aircraft in the evening.

Sinha sits today with his Bangladesh counterpart M Morshed Khan at the National Economic Council (NEC) conference room at

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at 10:00am and will issue a joint statement at the end of the talks.

On arrival at ZIA, the Indian minister told newsmen his country is very much interested in signing FTA with Bangladesh.

He said that he was happy that the issue was discussed at the last commerce secretary level meeting between the two countries.

Expressing his happiness over the Dhaka meeting, he said the discussion would mainly focus on trade and other related issues like transshipment and transit.

Hoping that the JEC meeting would "take important decisions on key issues", he said bilateral issues,

economic cooperation, security issue and matters of mutual interests would also come up for discussion at the talks.

At the secretary level meeting that ran from 9:30am to 5:00pm at the NEC, Dhaka raised the issue of huge trade deficit tilted in favour of Delhi and voiced its concern over various trade barriers -- both tariff and non-tariff -- posed by India.

"We will discuss the FTA after the fifth WTO ministerial meeting in September," Indian External Affairs Secretary Kanwal Sibal, who led a 15-member team, told journalists after the meeting.

About the trade issues, he said: **SEE PAGE 11 COL 8**



A woman cooks food on a platform as floodwaters slosh beneath at Dhunat in Bogra yesterday. Flood situation turned worse with major rivers marking further rise in water level.

## Sadarghat staff get one week to put things in order

RAFIQ HASAN

Freshly posted officials and employees of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) at Sadarghat yesterday were given one week's time to put the prime launch terminal in order.

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain called up the new band of staff at his office and spelt out the warning yesterday, a day after he was reprimanded by the prime minister for his failure to ensure safety of passengers in riverways.

They have also been asked to immediately implement five specific tasks or find their jobs on the line.

The responsibilities are checking overloading of passengers and goods in launches, supervising

location of passengers and goods, examining availability of life saving equipment in vessels, preventing vendors from entering the terminal areas and saving passengers from the harassment by porters.

"You have to solve a national problem, and if you fail to deliver your job would be at stake," the minister warned.

He also asked them not to give in to threat or strike by the launch owners.

"Your prime responsibility is to see whether the passenger vessels are complying with the government rules. If they do not, file cases and take legal actions," said Akbar, asking them to exercise total authority for maintaining discipline and saving lives. **SEE PAGE 11 COL 7**

## DCC plans it big

7km flyover, 33-storey car park-cum-commercial building on as mayor unveils Tk 763cr budget



Sadeque Hossain Khoka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction of a seven-kilometre-long flyover from Jatrahari to Gullistan at a cost of Tk 500 crore is likely to begin this November and scheduled to be complete in three years.

Moreover, a 33-storey car park-cum-commercial building will be constructed at Motijheel.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka announced these ambitious

programmes yesterday while presenting a Tk 762.96 crore DCC budget for fiscal 2003-04 at the Mahanagar Natyamancha auditorium.

The new budget has its thrust on road construction and repair, better conservancy and eradication of mosquito.

"There will be no rutted roads in the city by February next," the mayor declared.

The DCC's original budget last **SEE PAGE 11 COL 1**

## Rivers rise relentlessly

Diarrhoea breaks out in north

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Monsoon rains and onrush of swirling inflow of water from upstream have worsened the spell of floods and waterborne diseases have spread among hundreds of people.

The floods this year have left around two lakh people homeless and cut off 10 lakh more from help.

Two children died of diarrhoea in Dimla upazila in Nilphamari yesterday, as waterborne diseases were spreading fast with gradual recession of floodwaters in the areas that reported slight improvement in the situation.

Major rivers are bursting their banks, washing away villages and forcing people to live in the open or use rafts and boats to move to higher ground. They have been left without drinking water and medicine and are also running short of food.

Officials said hundreds of medical teams are working round the clock, distributing oral saline, anti-diarrhoeal medicine and water purifying tablets among the affected people. But locals said the supply of medicine and government aid is too inadequate.

The flood situation in Jamalpur, Pabna, Tangail, Manikganj,

Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Narayanganj, Kishoreganj, Rajbari and Madaripur continued to worsen and may go down more notches, as the Ganges is likely to rise further.

The Flood Forecasting and **SEE PAGE 11 COL 4**

## Army may supervise launch terminals

Akbar says not at this moment

STAR REPORT

The government is considering deployment of special forces including army at Sadarghat launch terminal and other major terminals to help the civil administration restore

discipline and ensure safety of marine passengers, sources said.

However, Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain ruled out the possibility of army deployment at this moment. **SEE PAGE 11 COL 1**

## Sunken launch spotted 120ft deep in Meghna

BSS, Chandpur

The search operators traced the sunken vessel MV Nasrin-1 in the Meghna river yesterday afternoon after a six-day operation.

The commander of the navy ship BNS Shaibal, Captain Shahiduzzaman, confirmed it.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Chandpur Md. Nuruzzaman at a press conference said the sunken launch was

traced 120 feet deep in water and 150 feet off the river bank. The launch is covered in sands, he said.

The divers of the navy and the BIWTA said it was not possible to salvage the launch, as the river was very turbulent. "We cannot dive more than 50 feet into the water due to strong current," they added.

The BIWTA salvage ships Rustam and Hamza can jointly lift only 120 tonnes but the weight of the sunken **SEE PAGE 11 COL 7**

## Daily Star editor serves legal notice on SQ Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The editor-publisher of The Daily Star, Mahfuz Anam, through his lawyer, Dr Kamal Hossain, has served a legal notice on Salauddin Quader Chowdhury MP for making false and defamatory statements in an article under his signature published in The Daily Inqilab on July 2, 2003. A similar notice was also served on AMM Bahauddin and ASM Bakibillah, the editor and the publisher of The Daily Inqilab.

In his legal notice Mahfuz Anam said that Chowdhury in the signed article titled "বঙ্গবন্ধুর ভূত এখনও আঙুরমৌ লীগারদের বাড়ি থেকে নাহেনি" (Ghost of BKSAL still haunts the Awami Leaguers) made, without **SEE PAGE 11 COL 2**

## Govt swings between EPZ unionism and investors' threat

NAZMUL AHSAN

The government is in a dilemma over allowing trade unionism in the export processing zones (EPZs) from January 1, a deadline set two years ago, official sources said.

The indecision stems from threats from a number of foreign investors who said they would withdraw from the EPZs and go to the courts, both domestic and international, if unionism was allowed.

Investors at a number of recent meetings with the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) voiced their discontent and pointed out that when they invested in the EPZs, the government promised in writing that unionism has no space at the specialised zones.

On the other hand, the US reminded the government last month of its promise made with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to allow

trade union activities.

"How can we allow unionism in the EPZs as the foreign investors had been assured by the government that the zones are free of such activities?" Executive Chairman of BEPZA Brigadier General (rtd) Mofizur Rahman told The Daily Star.

The BEPZA chairman said he needs more time to allow trade unions in the EPZs.

The US reminder came following a petition by the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisation (AFL-CIO) to the USTR a couple of months back.

The petition urged the USTR to withdraw the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) facilities given to Bangladesh unless labour rights were established by January 1. Bangladesh exported items worth \$43 million in FY02 under the GSP facilities to the US. **SEE PAGE 11 COL 2**

## Lawyers stay out of SC for second day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lawyers of the Supreme Court yesterday boycotted the Appellate Division, protesting the appointment of Justice MM Ruhul Amin to the Division who superseded his senior colleague of the High Court Division.

As a result, the Appellate Division went without work.

The government appointed Justice MM Ruhul Amin on last Saturday though Justice Amirul Islam is senior to him.

After the boycott, the Supreme Court Bar Association in its adjourned general meeting decided to consult its former presidents and senior lawyers on the next course of action over the appointment. **SEE PAGE 11 COL 1**

### Announcement

Today's edition of The Daily Star includes both Star City and your regular Lifestyle supplements. Star City will now be coming to you three times a week.

**"Say Goodbye To Rust"**

STEELTECH INDUSTRIES LTD IS GOING TO INTRODUCE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN BANGLADESH **STAINLESS STEEL PIPES** OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARD MADE FROM THE BEST QUALITY STAINLESS STEEL STRIPS, CERTIFIED AND GUARANTEED BY EUROPE'S PREMIER STEEL MILLS WITH SPECIALISATION OF THIS KIND. WE WILL BE ABLE TO GUARANTEE QUALITY & EXCEPTIONAL EFFICIENCY BY USING EUROPEAN MACHINERIES.

THE EXPORT QUALITY **STAINLESS STEEL PIPES** FROM OUR STATE OF THE ART PLANT IS GOING TO MEET THE DEMAND OF THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. **STEELTECH INDUSTRIES LTD** WILL ALWAYS STRIVE TO MEET THE CUSTOMER'S DEMAND, WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE THUS HELP OUR NATION MOVE ONE STEP AHEAD TOWARDS SELF RELIANCE AND PROSPERITY.

**STEELTECH INDUSTRIES LTD.**

219-220 NAWABPUR ROAD, DHAKA-1100, BANGLADESH  
PHONE : +880-2-7114783, 7112334, FAX : +880-2-9564581  
E-mail : steeltech@agni.com

**YOU CAN PAY YOUR GrameenPhone BILL AT ANY TRUST BANK BRANCH**

Shortly we shall have addition of two branches in our service network

- Dhanmondi Branch, Dhaka
- Khatungonj Branch, Chittagong

**The Trust Bank Limited**  
Serves with Trust  
(A Bank sponsored by Army Welfare Trust)

**HSBC Bangladesh is proud to offer Bangladesh International**

Bangladesh International is an exclusive range of banking services for Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) and foreign currency services for Resident Bangladeshis. Bangladesh International foreign currency current account which is unique to HSBC in Bangladesh, can be accessed from 500,000 ATMs worldwide, 24 hours a day.

**Services Include:**

- Foreign currency time deposits with competitive interest rates
- Sale of Wage Earner Development Bond (WEDB) and US Dollar Bond (USDB) issued by Bangladesh Bank.
- Overdraft facility up to 80% of the value of the foreign currency time deposit and US Dollar Bond and 90% of the value of the Taka time deposit and WEDB hold with HSBC.
- Free ATM card with first year's annual fee waived if you apply to open an account between the period of 15 July to 15 August 2003.
- Taka current and savings accounts.
- Taka ATM cards.

Bangladesh International assists NRBs to send money back to Bangladesh through official channels and to keep their foreign currency savings in Bangladesh rather than overseas through some 9,500 HSBC offices in 80 countries.

For more information please call the Call Centre:  
Dhaka: (02) 9143423, 011811000, 011816108  
Chittagong: (031) 725740, 717479, 011708985-86  
E-mail Address: hsbc@hsbc.bd.net and please visit [www.hsbc.com.bd](http://www.hsbc.com.bd)

Operating for more than 135 years, the HSBC Group has over 9,500 offices in 80 countries and territories in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa serving some 38 million customers worldwide.

**HSBC**  
The world's local bank