

Commerce ministry for duty cut to check price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The commerce ministry recommends that taxes and duties on all imported essential commodities should be determined in accordance with people's purchasing power.

A report containing a set of such recommendations will be placed before the parliamentary standing committee on commerce ministry today, official sources said.

The report points out that tax reduction is the only instrument the government has to bring prices down to a tolerable level.

The government has to choose between collecting a few crore taka in taxes or meeting people's demand of price control by reducing import duties and thus protect its image, said the report.

The report recommended formulation of a policy on imported items rather than dealing with the situation on an ad hoc basis.

"Ad hoc decisions can not contribute to the establishment of good

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Judgement in Sgt Ahad murder Nov 19

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the sensational Sergeant Ahad murder case will be given on November 19.

Judge Hossain Shahid Ahmad of the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka fixed the date yesterday after both prosecution and defence completed their arguments.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 36 out of 47 prosecution witnesses.

Sergeant Ahad was killed allegedly by a gang of muggers on October 28, 1999 while he was on duty at Shapla Chattar in the city's Motijheel area.

Sub-inspector Mesbahuddin filed a murder case with Motijheel

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2 more US troops, 2 top judges killed in Iraq

Bush vows no retreat

AFP, REUTERS, Baghdad/ Mosul

Two more soldiers of the US-led coalition and three Iraqis were killed while gunmen shot dead two prominent Iraqi judges as Iraq plunged further into violence.

But despite the surge of violence and mounting military and civilian death toll and stiffening guerrilla resistance, President Bush vowed that the United States would not run from its "vital" mission in Iraq.

A coalition soldier was killed and another wounded when an explosive device blew up in Baghdad yesterday, a military spokeswoman said, adding that

the two were probably Americans.

If the soldier is confirmed to be American, the US combat toll will climb to 141 since May 1, when Washington declared major hostilities had ended.

The figures include the death on Monday of a soldier from the US 4th Infantry Division killed when an explosive device blew up in Tikrit, 180 km north of Baghdad, a hotbed of anti-US violence.

In Kirkuk, further north, a judge was shot dead by US forces who intended to ambush anti-coalition forces, according to police. The judge's cousin, who was driving the car, said he suffered bullet wounds.

The US president's comments were his first since 16 American soldiers were killed when guerrillas shot down their CH-47 Chinook helicopter on Sunday in the worst single attack since the US invasion.

"The enemy in Iraq believes America will run. That's why they're willing to kill innocent civilians, relief workers, coalition troops. America will never run," Bush said, despite falling approval ratings in the United States over the war.

"The mission in Iraq is vital," Bush added. But he did not refer to the downing of the helicopter or three other deaths which made

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Traffic jam eases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic congestion in the capital slightly eased on the eighth day yesterday of the operation of mobile courts and strike forces.

The courts filed 290 cases against vehicles and fined them Tk 1.09 lakh for violation of traffic rules on the day.

In all 1,688 cases were filed against vehicles for violating rules and they were fined Tk 7,13,215 in the last eight days.

Twenty mobile courts and 40 strike forces backed by over 5,000 police, Bangladesh Rifles and ansar personnel began a special drive against illegal parking of vehicles and other traffic rule violations on the first day of Ramadan.

A mobile court in Demra yesterday awarded seven days' imprisonment to three traffic rule violators as they failed to pay fine. A court in Mirpur arrested four people for violating traffic rules and another court in Uttara seized a car for failing to produce necessary papers.

In Hazaribagh, a court seized 21 faulty scales and seven doctored weighing stones.

Moreover, mobile courts drove away hawkers and removed illegal

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Saudis 'foil terror attack' on pilgrims

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef said yesterday his country had foiled a terror attack on pilgrims in the holy city of Makkah.

"These people are targeting the (holy Muslim) month of Ramadan. This is an evil aim. They wanted to make the entire country a place for terror without any exception and even in the holiest place on earth where Saudis and non-Saudis come to pray to God," he told the leading newspaper Saudi al-Riyadh.

The minister was speaking about a shootout in Makkah on Monday in which Saudi Arabia said previously it foiled an imminent terrorist attack and killed two Muslim militants.

The clash came just over a week after US and British authorities warned of a threat of attacks on

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PHOTO: STAR

Customs officials inspect a pile of mobile phones worth about Tk 60 lakh recovered at Zia International Airport Monday night.

Govt pushing country to chaos: Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the government is pushing the country towards chaos through rampant violation of the constitution.

Addressing a discussion of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) as chief guest to observe the Constitution Day, Dr Kamal noted the constitution talks about safeguarding the people's fundamental rights, but the government has been stomping the rights.

Dr Kamal pointed out several instances of constitutional violation. He referred to the recent death of a man in police custody at Khilgaon Police Station, bomb blasts in Khulna and the oppression of garment workers in Narayanganj.

"We want remedy to such incidents," he said, urging the lawyers to unite for upholding the constitution.

He criticised the government for unduly delaying the separation of

judiciary. "We must take a strong position against the government if it further delays the process."

The discussion presided over by Bar Association President Rokanuddin Mahmud was addressed by Amir-UI-Islam, Abdul Baset Majumder, Suranjit Sengupta, Rafiqul Islam Mia, Abdul Matin Khasru, Mahbubey Alam and Mahbub Ali, among others.

"The Supreme Court as the guardian of the constitution is losing its supremacy as the government does not maintain transparency in appointing judges," said Rokanuddin.

Drawing attention to the investigation against a judge, he said, "The proceedings of the Supreme Judicial Council should be transparent so that people know how seriously this issue is being handled."

Other speakers demanded reintroduction of the 1972 constitution. They said people should be made aware of the constitution by observing the day as a national day.

Child-lifter sent to life in prison

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court yesterday sentenced a woman to life imprisonment for kidnapping an infant in September 2001.

Judge Kaniz Akhter Nasrin Khanam of the Fourth Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, delivered the verdict against Maleka alias Mala, 22, in a crowded courtroom.

The prosecution story in brief is that Mala, a domestic help at Abdul Hamid's house in city's Khilgaon area, kidnapped the baby daughter of Shamima Parveen Mukti from the house on September 16, 2001, and took the 13-day-old baby to her (Mala's) home at Gulavita under Trishal in Mymensingh.

Two days after the incident, Khilgaon Police recovered the baby from Mala's village and arrested her on September 20, 2001. A case was filed with Khilgaon Police Station accusing Mala of abduction.

The investigating officer of the case pressed charges against the accused on November 8, 2001. The

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Trader abducted in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

Tribal miscreants abducted a trader from Noapatang in Royangchhari upazila on Monday night.

Police quoted family sources as saying a group of miscreant kidnapped Aung Sinu Marma while he was going to attend a religious function.

Law enforcers began a joint operation to rescue the trader.

Meanwhile, tension heightened in the upazila following murder of Union Parishad member Sathowai Marma. He was chopped to death by unknown assailants at Byang-chharipara on Sunday.

Sehri, Iftar timings			
Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
9	5		5:21
10	6	4:46	5:20

Prayer Timings		
November 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-23	5-30
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

BSF finally frees 63 fishermen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least 63 Bangladeshi fishermen detained by Indian navy personnel 10 months ago were handed over to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) after a flag meeting between the BDR and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Koikhali in Shyamnagar upazila yesterday morn-

ing.

The BDR sources said the fishermen were nabbed while fishing in the Bay of Bengal. The BSF also handed over four trawlers that was seized by the Indian navy during the operation. The fishermen are from Sharankhola of B a g e r h a t

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Three new BB directors appointed

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday appointed three directors to the central bank's board of directors in a management reshuffle.

Dr Momataz Uddin Ahmad, pro-vice chancellor of the State University of Bangladesh, replaced business magnate Latifur Rahman who was removed on Monday, two months before the expiry of his contract.

Momataz, also former professor of economics at Dhaka University and former Planning Commission member, has been appointed for a two-year term, says a finance ministry notification.

ERD Secretary Mirza Tasadduk Hossain Beg and NBR Chairman Khairuzzaman Chowdhury are the two other directors appointed to serve the Bangladesh Bank "until further order".

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AL sees change of govt by next April

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday predicted a change of the government by April next year for what it called restoration of a democratic rule and blamed the ruling alliance for becoming friendless on the international front.

"The prevailing situation is known to all and it will be good for people if the coalition quits as early as possible," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said at a press briefing, the latest in a series timed to coincide with the alliance's celebrations of two years in office.

Jalil said the AL would wrap up party councils of different tiers by December-January and vowed an anti-government movement, counting law and order downslide, price spike of essentials and unrest in society as the signs of the government's failure to run the state.

"Bangladesh has gradually become

friendless in the international arena because of the failure of the coalition and lack of diplomatic professionalism," Abdus Samad Azad, AL presidium member and former foreign minister, said at the same press conference, designed to expose what he said was wrong foreign policy of the government.

If the coalition continues to rule, Bangladesh will be pegged as a 'failed state', he cautioned.

"Bangladesh signed a defence treaty with China during Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's visit early this year -- at a time when it has misunderstanding with India, centring on several issues. It exposed diplomatic bankruptcy of the government."

Recalling former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Beijing in 1996, the senior AL leader viewed it as paving the way for greater cooperation and Chinese investment in Bangladesh.

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