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Govt pry teachers haven't seen pay hike in 32 years

Their salary lower than a government chauffeur's

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Although teaching is a noble profession and the education sector always gets the highest allocation in the national budget, the abysmally low scale of salary for the teachers of government primary schools is pushing them fast towards disaffection.

Around 1,80,000 teachers for over one crore children in 37,000 government primary schools across the country, remain stuck in miserable living conditions with monthly salaries of only Tk 2600. Discontent that has been brewing for the last 32 years over poor salary, finally led the government primary teachers to go on a stern

job action like an indefinite strike.

They started an indefinite strike from last Saturday across the country compelling most of the government primary schools to remain closed yesterday. The striking teachers are demanding elimination of wage discrimination and blaming the government of failure to take effective measure to deal with the problem.

The teachers said they have long been trying to call the government's attention to their plight but to no effect. Although the ministers on numerous occasions had assured them of bringing an end to their distress, in reality they never even seemed interested in taking steps to that end, the teachers

added.

A 20-member team from the Bangladesh Primary School Teachers Association met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on October 20 last year and she assured them of taking effective measures to eliminate the wage discrimination but no effective step was taken to realise the teachers' demands even after eight months of the PM's assurance, the striking teachers added.

The government ordered State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman to deal with the issue and he met with the teachers on Sunday but could not reach a solution.

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Iajuddin returns today

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed, who underwent heart bypass surgery at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore on May 26, returns home today.

An official handout from the Bangabhaban said yesterday, "Health condition of the president continues to improve and he is feeling well."

M Mokhlesur Rahman Chowdhury, press secretary to the president, said the president will arrive at Zia International Airport from Singapore at noon by a VIP flight of Biman.

The president was flown to Singapore on May 24 for treatment of his cardiac complications. He had felt chest pain and was admitted to Dhaka CMH on May 23.

Singapore President SR Nathan visited the president at Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

President Iajuddin thanked the Singaporean government, physicians and others concerned for extending their cooperation to him during his treatment.



PHOTO: STAR

A collapsible gate is being installed on the first floor of the Election Commission Secretariat at Agargaon in the capital yesterday for 'security reasons'.

Why siege won't be declared illegal

HC issues rule on 5 opposition leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule on five top opposition leaders to explain within three weeks why the programmes in the name of aboroth (siege) and strike declared by them should not be declared illegal.

Five leaders, who are respondents of the rule, are Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil, MP, its presidium members Suranjit Sengupta and Tofail Ahmed, President of Bangladesh Workers Party Rashed Khan Menon and President of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Hasanul Huq Inu.

Following a writ petition filed by advocate Gazi Rabiul Islam, a High Court bench comprising Justice Syed Md Dastagir Husain and

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Nasreen Huq's body exhumed, autopsy done

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors carried out autopsy on the body of Nasreen Pervin Huq, the deceased country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, after the body was exhumed yesterday about two months into her mysterious death.

On June 8, a Dhaka court ordered exhumation of the body for post-mortem, as requested by the investigation officer (IO) of the

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REMARKS ON HASINA AL men ransack vehicles in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) activists went on a rampage in the capital last night following ruling BNP legislator Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu's remarks in the parliament about Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

AL activists and its front organisations held violent protests in different areas of the city including

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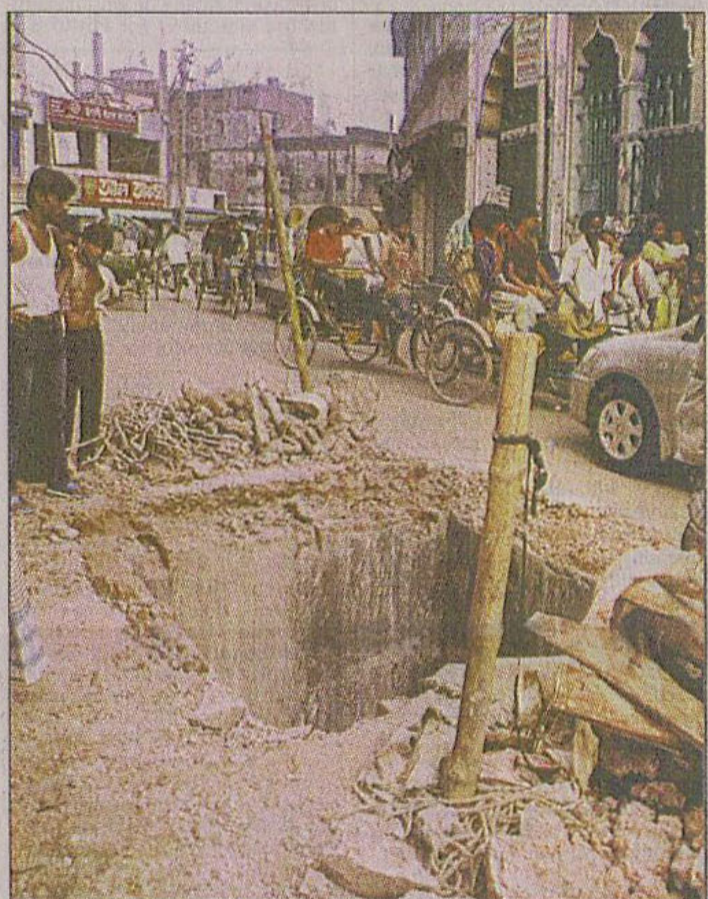


PHOTO: STAR

Plying of heavy vehicles destroyed the concrete lid of this manhole in a Sutrapur road posing threats of accidents.

Paban denied bail again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again rejected the bail petition of Aktar Hamid Paban, son of Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, arrested on charge of carjacking.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas issued the order following a petition seeking bail filed by his lawyers.

Earlier on June 8, another Dhaka court rejected Paban's bail when the investigation officer of the case

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Sacked security guards shoot 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Sacked private security guards allegedly attacked ansars on duty at Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) and shot five people in the port city yesterday.

The injured ansar personnel were identified as Mohammad Salim, 28, Kafi Ullah, 26, and Harun-ur-Rahsid, 27, and the other injured are Kamal Uddin, 35, a night guard of KEPZ, and another

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PRICE CONTROL MEASURE

Law needed to prevent syndicated trading

Discussion on budget told

UNB, Dhaka

The government should build a strong institutional capacity within the framework of free market economy to control prices, a post-budget discussion was told here yesterday.

It also stressed the need for enacting a law to prevent syndicated trading, making it illegal.

The recommendations came from the discussion between the country's leading economists and Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) at the Jatiya Press Club amid concerns that the inflation rate will go beyond the 6 percent level, as projected in the budget proposal.

It was observed at the meeting that tariff-cuts on import of essentials do not work out as the trade syndicates determine the prices.

Participants in the discussion pointed out that the finance minister also recognised in his budget

speech that the tariff-cuts would not help reduce prices.

Prof Abu Ahmed, Dr Atiur Rahman, Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, Dr Abul Barakat and Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya took part in the discussion with The Financial Express Editor Moazzem Hossain as moderator.

ERF Acting President Masumur Rahman Khalili gave address of welcome while General Secretary Nazmul Ahsan gave vote of thanks.

"There is no scope to marginalise public sector role on prices...An institutional capacity must be there within the government," Hossain Zillur Rahman told the discussion.

He however explained that it does not mean that the economy will have to go back to a controlled economy from the free market economy.

Rahman referred to the recent crisis over sugar as well as lack of a

proper mechanism to provide fertilizer subsidy to the farmers.

Prof Abu Ahmed said syndicated trading should be declared illegal in the country and suggested enacting a law if there is no legal provision in this regard.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya apprehended that inflation rate would go beyond the level of 6 percent as estimated in the proposed budget for the fiscal 2006-07 due to the influence of prices in the international markets.

In addition, he pointed out, a fuel-related cost-push would also be there to increase inflation while further pressure might come if the government really spends the money allocated in the budget.

Dr Abul Barakat pointed out that prices do not come down even if the budget proposes to reduce import duty.

Because, he said, "Price-terror

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SHAZNEEN CASE

Hasan's murder plot proved in trial court

Prosecution says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the death reference and appeal hearing of Shazneen murder case yesterday said the witnesses' accounts in the trial court undoubtedly proved Hasan plotted to kill Shazneen with the help of other accused.

Although the case does not have any eyewitness, the circumstantial evidence proves their guilt, prosecution lawyer Deputy Attorney General ABM Waliur Rahman said yesterday in his argument before the High Court (HC) Death Reference Bench.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, the youngest daughter of leading businessman Latifur Rahman and a class-nine student of Scholastica, was raped and killed at her Gulshan home on April 23, 1998.

The prosecution said the

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25 villages flooded as embankment washed away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Some 25 villages of Kazipur upazila in Sirajganj were flooded as strong currents of the Jamuna broke through a part of an embankment in Polashpur area on Sunday night.

The marooned villages include Meghai, Polashpur, Bilchitol, Dhekuria, Maizbari, Kunkunia and Shampdanga.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources said floodwater entered the Sirajganj municipality area yesterday morning. They also said several parts of Sirajganj town protection dam in Sailbari area also collapsed and flooded

low-lying areas of the Sadar upazila.

The dam at Nimaichora and Monakosha in Shahjadpur upazila also collapsed on Sunday evening and vast areas of the upazila were flooded.

WDB sources said the water level of the Jamuna increased further due to heavy downpours upstream and over 1,000 people have already been moved to safety.

Agriculture Extension Department officials said around 12,000 hectares of cropland went under water following the collapse of Polashpur embankment.

Criminal killed in crossfire

UNB, Munshiganj

A top criminal was killed in an encounter between his cohorts and the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Bajrajogini area of Sadar upazila early yesterday.

He was identified as Khoka Bhuiyan, 45, son of Abdul Majid Mia of Kalinchipara village.

Rab-8 members arrested Khoka, an accused in seven cases, including three for murder, in Kalinchipara area on Friday night.

According to his confessional statement, Rab men took Khoka to Bajrajogini area at about 4:00am to arrest his accomplices and seize hidden firearms.

Sensing the presence of the Rab men, Khoka's accomplices opened fire and hurled crackers at the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate.

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Talks start on drafting Nepal's interim constitution

AFP, Kathmandu

A committee which will draft a temporary constitution for Nepal - paving the way for rebel Maoists to join an interim government -- has started consulting the rebels and civil society leaders, officials said Monday.

"We are discussing with civil society, professionals and community groups to collect their opinions for preparing an interim constitution," said Laxman Prasad Aryal, coordinator of the six-member committee.

But Aryal said the committee, formed after the new government and the Maoists reached a landmark deal Friday to share power and end a decade of war, is not yet an official body.

The two sides, who allied to force King Gyanendra from power during bloody protests in April, pledged to draft a temporary constitution within 15 days that would be the basis for power-sharing within a month.

"We have not yet received the green light from the government to operate our activities formally. Nevertheless, we are preparing basic grounds for the proper functioning of the committee," Aryal told AFP Monday.

"The time period might be extended if we could not complete it within 15 days."

The rebels have fought a 'people's war' since 1996, during which at least 12,500 people have been killed. They agreed to a ceasefire in

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BSF kills 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi farmer on Poladanga border in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila on Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Sadequul Islam, 35, of BMC Paschimpara village under Godagai upazila of Rajshahi.

BDR sources said the Indian border guards of Char Renuka outpost under Murshidabad district fired on Sadequul while he was returning home after irrigating his

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Prayer Timing		
June 20		
	Azan	Jamast
Fajr	4:05	4:40
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:52	6:55
Esha	8:17	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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