



Vehicles get stuck in a gridlock as the police barricaded a number of roads in the city during the AL-led 14-party opposition combine's PMO siege programme yesterday. The picture was taken from Shahbagh intersection.

Put forward your demands to PMO as my initiative not enough

Saifur advises members of BCS economic cadres

UNB, Dhaka

The members of BCS Economic Cadre, who placed their four-point demand at a meeting with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the city yesterday, were advised to put forward their demands to the Prime Minister's Office.

"I am personally in favour of your demands, they are logical. But my initiative is not enough for the change," the finance minister told the meeting.

Their demands include changing their official designations, establishing an Economic Academy, setting a new planning division and creating scopes for training and higher education for them.

The Finance Minister said approval is needed from a number of ministries, including the Establishment, to implement the demands.

"So, it's better to send the demands to the PM Office for the quick approval," he said.

The minister urged the public servants to emphasise the real life economy instead of the academic one in formulating a project.

"Many of our economists live in dreamland, so you need to come down to earth for successful implementation of projects," he said.

BCS Economic Association President Dr M Idris Ali Dewan presided over the meeting.

Inadequate rainfall won't affect Aman production

Agriculture minister says at JS

BSS, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar yesterday said the country would not face any setback in Aman production due to inadequate rainfall this year as the water crisis was already met through using deep tube wells and other means under proper irrigation management.

"We have targeted to bring 52 lakh hectares of land under Aman plantation this year across the country and we have almost achieved it," he said while replying to supplementary questions raised by Jatiya Party lawmaker Golam Habib Dulal in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Responding to a question from Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Abdus Subhan, the agriculture minister said the government has increased subsidy and other facilities in the agriculture sector to further boost crop production.

"Of all the facilities, subsidy in agriculture sector has been raised from Tk 100 crore to Tk 1200 crore during the last five years of this government. As a result, 26.71 million tonnes of crops were produced in 2004-2005 fiscal year and 28.00 million tonnes in 2005-06 fiscal year," he said.

MK Anwar also told Abdus Subhan that 30 percent cash incentive was given in exporting agricultural goods while, he told BNP lawmaker Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny, the rate of interest on agricultural loans was brought down to 8 percent from the earlier 11 percent.

Giving details, the agriculture minister said the government has

fixed interest rate on loans at 2 percent from 8 percent on 15 crops to encourage farmers to increase production of pulses, oilseeds and spices in the country.

Replying to another question from Delwar Hossain Sayidee, MK Anwar said Tk 1200 crore subsidy would be given in urea, TSP, DAP, MOP and sugarcane cultivation during the current fiscal year.

On another question, the minister informed the house that four more cold storage would be set up in the country under a project being implemented by Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) to preserve potato seeds.

Under this project, he said, these cold storage would be set up in Comilla, Meherpur, Dinajpur and Satkhira respectively. The capacity of each cold storage is 1,000 tonnes, he added.

Cop succumbs to injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police constable, who received injuries during Sunday's hartal, succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Rafiqul Islam, 30, a traffic constable of Motijheel traffic zone, was seriously injured as a Demra bound truck hit his back while performing hartal duty at Matoail area in the city on Sunday, Jatrabari police said.

He was sent to Rajarbagh Police Line Hospital first and then shifted to DMCH as his condition deteriorated.

Two prisoners fall sick, die in hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two prisoners of the Central Jail died at Sir Sallimullah Medical College Hospital in the city in the last two days.

Krishnachandra Rajbankshi, 34, of Sutrapur, fell sick on Monday night, sources said. The attending doctors declared him dead when police rushed him to the hospital.

Ataf Sheikh, 71, of Khulna, was admitted to the hospital by the jail police on September 5 due to illness, jail sources said. He died at 3:15pm yesterday.

The jail police, however, failed to give the details of the deceased.

Fabric worth Tk 1 crore seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

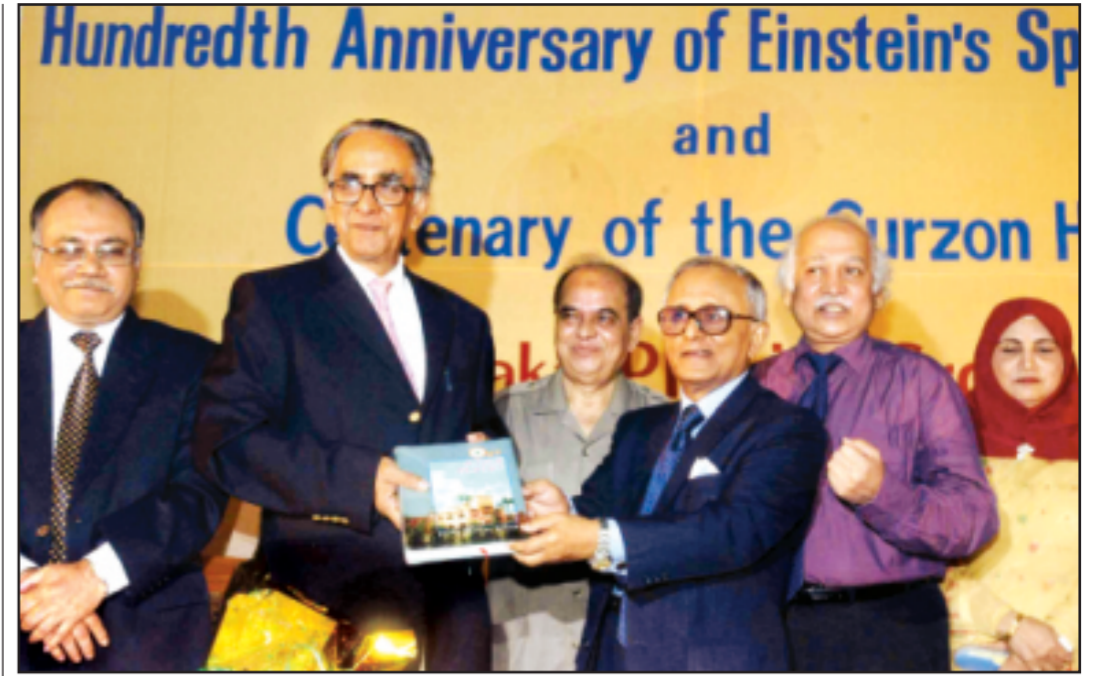
Customs officials unearthed an attempt to release cotton fabric worth about Tk 1 crore with fake documents and seized the fabric.

Clearing and forwarding agent M/S Luna Traders imported the fabric from China on August 22, which was kept at Internal Container Depot (ICD) for examining, says a press release.

While checking the documents on August 28, ICD Unit Superintendent of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Department M Nuruddin became suspicious about the documents attached with the consignment of the 58944.20 metre fabric.

In the investigation, the intelligence team later found that the bill of lading, invoice, packing list and LC were fake, the press release added.

A case was filed in this connection.



Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, second from left, and M Saiduzzaman, third from right, unveil the cover of a book titled 'Our Alma Mater' at Dhaka University yesterday. DU Pro-VC AFM Yusuf Haider, extreme left, M Habibullah, third from left, VC SMA Faiz, second from right, and Prof Tajmeri Islam, extreme right, were also present.

Set up nuclear power plant to meet growing demand

Speakers tell book launching ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academics yesterday suggested setting up of nuclear power generation plant to meet growing power demand in the country.

The suggestion came at the launching ceremony of a book titled 'Our Alma Mater' at Dhaka University (DU).

The ceremony was organised by Dhaka Physics Group to celebrate the International Year of Physics 2005, one hundredth anniversary of Einstein's Theory of Relativity and the Centenary of Curzon Hall at its auditorium.

The speakers laid emphasis on science-based education for improving the standard of life and socio-economic status of people.

They said beside conducting goal-oriented researches on applied science, there is also a need for basic science researches.

Until recent time, the developed countries had been reluctant on building nuclear power plants in the developing countries, but now they are shifting from that position and Bangladesh should take this opportunity, said Dr Anwar Hossain, former chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.

"If the government has a political will, it can seek help from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Money is not a problem. The government can float international tenders for Independent Power Plant for nuclear power generation," he suggested.

There is also about 250 acres of land at Rappur in Pabna fixed for nuclear power plant, but it has not been utilised due to lack of govern-

ment initiative, he told The Daily Star after the ceremony.

The nuclear energy expert said coal and gas are limited in the country, while these have huge negative environmental impacts. On the other hand, after the initial investment the generation cost of nuclear energy is very low and it has no environmental impact, he said while speaking as guest of honour.

Speaking as chief guest Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman said development of science requires much more patronisation which is not present in the country.

There were many discussions on the reforms of madrasa education, but nothing significant has been done in this regard, he added.

Presiding over the ceremony,

Dhaka Physics Group President M Saiduzzaman proposed for making an appeal to the Unesco for declaring Curzon Hall a world heritage.

Recalling the memories associated with Curzon Hall, DU Pro-Vice-chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider said this is the place where the students protested the decision of the then Pakistan government for imposition of Urdu as state language.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Chairman of physics department RIM Aminur Rashid, Dean of science faculty Prof Tajmeri SA Islam, former chairman of SPARSSO Dr Faruk Aziz and Prof AM Harun-ar-Rashid of University Grants Commission also spoke on the occasion.



Team members of 'BDF-National School Debate 2006' Chittagong Divisional Round champion Chittagong Government Girls' High School and runners-up Silver Bells Girls' High School pose at the prize giving ceremony with the guests in Chittagong yesterday. Sitting from left are Hasibur Rahman, executive director, MRDI, Tahsin Uddin Mahmud, president of BDF, Abul Momen, Chittagong resident editor of the Prothom Alo, and Syed Ahsanul Alam Parvez, faculty member of Chittagong University.

POLLS OBSERVATION EU team likely to arrive eight weeks ahead of election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The EU election observation team is likely to arrive in Bangladesh five to eight weeks ahead of the general election.

Andrew Bruce, chief of the visiting European Union (EU) Election Observation Exploratory Mission, said this after a meeting with NGO representatives and the media people.

"The EU will send a sophisticated and more competent team this time to observe the elections," he said.

"At the meeting, the Mission members wanted to know about the present human rights situation and what might be the situation during the tenure of the caretaker government," meeting sources said.

Representatives of Odhikar, BNWLA, Netz Bangladesh and Prip Trust and some leaders of minority community were present at the meeting.

Earlier, the EU mission members exchanged views with journalists on the role of the media in covering elections.

Information minister off to Jeddah

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam left here yesterday for Jeddah to attend a conference of information ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

The conference will be held on September 13 and 14, an official handout said.

The information minister is expected to return home on September 18.



PHOTO: STAR

With sticks in their hands, activists of Mahila Awami League stage a sit-in at Agargaon in the city yesterday as part of the AL-led 14-party opposition combine's PMO siege programme.