

# DOWN TO EARTH

## A 'limited' profit

By Khalilur Rahman

The black marketeers selling railway tickets earn limited profit. Usually the rate is fixed at Taka 10 per ticket or little less than this. Even if a ticket is sold at the highest price outside the railway counters, the seller gets the same rate.

Several black marketeers disclosed to The Daily Star correspondent that they have been operating at the Kamalapur Railway Station for quite a long time under 'special arrangement' with a section of the staff.

No outsider is allowed to practice the trade without approval. Many of us have different vocations and black marketing of railway tickets is a part-time job, some of them stated.

On special occasions when the rush of passengers is heavy they suspend their normal work and concentrate fully on selling tickets till the volume of traffic drops.

The tickets are not sold always at the station. Many passengers head for the eating houses, 'pan' shops and the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) terminal situated near the Kamalapur Railway Station directly.

A passenger procured three tickets of inter-city train, 'Upakul' from Dhaka to Noakhali three days before Eid-ul-Azha on June 24 from a wayside vendor in front of Kamalapur Station.

The price of each ticket of 'Shovan' class is Taka 70. But he bought it at Taka 110 per ticket in the black market.

The passenger saw that tickets were being sold freely and the sellers were totally unconcerned in presence of railway policemen at the station.

Some of the black marketeers, while talking to the Star correspondent, claimed that they had enough authority to influence the transfer of any obstinate booking clerk refus-

ing to cooperate with them. Another passenger who got tickets at their actual price under influence even after the booking counter announced the stock to be exhausted said after boarding the coach he found that the seats were beside the toilet.

He got down and talked to an official of the station. The official changed his seats to a comfortable place. To his astonishment the passenger later saw that the seats along the lavatory, emitting offensive odour, were allotted to some other persons one of whom said that they booked their tickets much earlier. No doubt the railway official succumbed to pressure by the passenger to change the tickets.

A railway ministry source admitted that railway tickets were being sold in black market when there was heavy rush of passengers on special occasions. But he denied 'deep connection' between the black marketeers and the members of the railway staff.

With regard to the annual loss to the tune of Taka 150 crore sustained by the railways during the last few years a ministry source said that it was not 'proper' to term it as a loss.

The railway authority spends about 98 per cent of its total earning to maintain 51,000 members of its staff. The sanctioned strength of railway staff is 58,000. In addition to the expenditure on account of staff salary and all other allowances, the railway authority has to bear expenses for running hospitals, schools and police personnel for its own purpose, the source added.

He further said that the government spends a huge sum of money for running hospitals, schools and police force out of its own fund for the benefit of employees working in various other agencies and departments except railways.

But the railway is not getting any money from the government for maintaining these facilities for its staff, the source stated.

Another official of the railway ministry regretted that during the last 20 years of independence of Bangladesh the railway saw no development. Rather, portions of railway tracks and some other establishments in different places have been decaying due to long neglect.

Referring to the setting up of the first railway track up to a length of 53.11 kilometres between Darsana and Jagati section in Kushtia district inaugurated on November 15, 1862, the official said that the then British government had commercial consideration on the top of its mind.

In 1885, 14.98 km line was set up between Dhaka and Narayanganj. This section was opened to traffic on January 4.

During the partition in 1947 the then East Bengal (erstwhile East Pakistan) had 2,603.92 km-long-railway line including 924 km broadgauge and the rest metre gauge.

In 1971, the independent Bangladesh inherited 2,766 km railway line from the erstwhile Pakistan. Since then no new track could be laid during the last 20 years of independence.

There was remarkable progress in the road communication during the last 20 years.

The number of vessels in the riverine route has also been increased considerably. But the railway communication showed no progress.

The existing facility has to be just tripled by procuring more engines and coaches to meet the demand of an ever-increasing number of passengers and the volume of railway cargo, the source asserted. Otherwise public complaints will remain mostly unattended, he added.



Vietnam Communist Party (VCP) new Secretary General Do Muoi (2nd L) talks to local and foreign reporters in Hanoi on Thursday after closing the seventh party congress. — AFP photo

### 3 killed, 2 hurt, one missing

## Israeli hostages, Kashmiri kidnappers clash

SRINAGAR, June 27: Six Israeli men, threatened with death for being Jewish, tried to overpower their Kashmiri Muslim kidnappers and in the ensuing fight one Israeli and two kidnappers were killed, officials said Thursday, reports AP.

At least two of the Israeli tourists were wounded and at least one was missing after the escape attempt, the officials said.

Indian government officials and the Israeli Consul gave conflicting versions of the Israeli's fate, but both agreed that one was killed.

An Indian official in New Delhi said three Israeli men were wounded but escaped and were later taken to an Indian army hospital in Srinagar. The other two Israeli men were missing, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Girish Saxena, Governor of Jammu-Kashmir, also said one Israeli was killed and three were wounded, including one who was shot in the abdomen.

Giora Becher, Israel's Consul in Bombay, said only one Israeli was missing. He said the other four men escaped but two were wounded.

An Israeli woman and a Dutch woman, kidnapped from the same tourist houseboat, were allowed to go free, the officials said. Becher said the kidnappers freed the women before the men tried to escape.

The Indian official in New Delhi quoted one of the Israeli escapees as saying the eight tourists were abducted from a houseboat on Srinagar's Dal Lake about midnight (1830 GMT) Wednesday.

The Israeli, identified as Hagay Caspi, was quoted as saying eight Muslim militants abducted the tourists at gunpoint from their houseboat and rowed them in two small boats for about 25 minutes.

Then they were made to walk for about 15 minutes. They were taken to a house in downtown Srinagar, and they were questioned there. They were told because they are Jews they would be killed," the Indian official said. "Then they separated the two women."

The Indian official said Caspi told investigators the six men's hands were tied behind their backs.

"Hagay Caspi was able to untie his hands. He managed, quietly, to untie the others' hands, also," the Indian official said. "And then they pounced on this one (militant) who was on guard, trying to snatch his rifle. Meanwhile, the other guards who were outside must have come in and in the ensuing scuffle one Israeli was killed."

The Indian official in New Delhi, speaking on condition of anonymity, said two Muslim militants were killed and a third was injured when the Israeli men grabbed their AK-47 assault rifles.

"After that, they [the Israeli men] ran out of that place and took shelter in a neighbouring house and they were rescued in the morning," the official added.

Becher, the Israeli Consul, said more than 50 Israelis were vacationing in Kashmir when the attack occurred.

The Indian official estimated that about 40 Israelis were in Srinagar. "The government has given them protection. They were on different boats, and we are giving them security," he said.

Becher said the name of the dead Israeli man was being withheld pending confirmation that relatives in Israel had been contacted. He declined to identify the others Israeli but confirmed the Indian official's report that Hagay Caspi was among the survivors.

Reuters adds: It was the second abduction of foreigners in three months. A group called the Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF) has been holding two Swedish engineers since March 31.

Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson issued a personal appeal to the MJF urging that they free the two engineers, who were working on a hydro-electric project.

Jan-ole Loman, 37, and Johan Jansson, 35, were seized on March 31 while returning to Srinagar from a Sunday family outing.

Police have reported more than 2,400 deaths in the separatist campaign. Security forces are frequently accused of rape, murder and torture. See also Page 5

### Vietnam

From Page 1 Col. 3

Cambodia. Hanoi withdrew its troops in 1989.

"But after we have effectively withdrawn our troops from Cambodia, the United States said it would normalise relations after we found a settlement to Cambodia," he said. "We very highly appreciate the very rich imagination of some Americans. But I'm afraid that once these conditions are fulfilled, the Americans might think of some new conditions," he said.

Thach said he told Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama in Hanoi this month that Japan could do more to help Vietnam. Nakayama told Thach Tokyo would give Hanoi a lot of aid once it helped solve the Cambodian problem.

"I have told the Japanese foreign minister that the Vietnamese are poor, but they are not beggars," Thach said, since 2.5 million Vietnamese starved to death in 1945 under Japanese occupation, Tokyo was not entitled to make demands on Vietnam.

"The Japanese have no right to raise such conditions. We, the Vietnamese, do have the right to raise such conditions," he said, raising his voice in a rare display of emotion.

He said there was encouraging movement to improve relations with Beijing and Washington, although barely visible.

He praised China for its new helpful role on Cambodia. "China's recent change in position is indeed positive," he said in an apparent reference to Beijing's tacit approval of new agreements between Chinese-backed guerrillas and the Cambodian government to form a national reconciliation body.

He said Vietnam's troops used to be the problem in Cambodia but now it was how to prevent brutal Khmer Rouge leaders ousted in 1979 from returning to power.

Hanoi diplomats said recently they thought it ironic that Thach, the politburo member best able to communicate with the West, had fallen victim to US policy.

### Advani vacates New Delhi seat

NEW DELHI, June 27: The BJP leader, L K Advani, has resigned his New Delhi Lok Sabha seat. Advani said he would keep his Gandhinagar seat in Gujrat, reports PTI.

## Y'slav tanks roll into Slovenia

From Page 1 Col. 5

and soldiers to resist this aggression against their own people," Kucan said.

Slovenian officials said tanks, paratroopers and helicopters had sealed off several frontier crossings and were ready to take them over from Slovenian border guards.

Information Minister Kacin said the army had dropped paratroopers and taken over five border crossings. Apart from the death of the soldier, another soldier and two civilians had been wounded, he said.

"Now we are firing at tanks but selectively," he said. The Yugoslav government appealed for a three-month moratorium on the use of force but gave no immediate details of its proposal.

Slovenia, a northwestern republic of less than two million people, declared independence on Tuesday, threatening the 72-year-old Yugoslav federation with collapse.

The government in Belgrade is confronted with a chain of separatist, ethnic and economic crisis throughout the Balkan federation which was welded together at the end of 1918.

The crisis has touched off worldwide anxiety that Yugoslavia might once again become a powderkeg threatening European stability.

In Vianden, Luxembourg nine West European countries

agreed to use a security forum, set up by the 35-nation conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE), to probe the crisis in Yugoslavia, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said.

Dumas said that Luxembourg, President of the European Community, would seek the four extra votes needed under new CSCE rules.

Washington, which has urged Slovenia and Croatia to stay in a federal Yugoslavia, has said the crisis could have "tragic consequences."

The Slovenian capital Ljubljana became a city under siege. Thousands of territorial defence members patrolled with automatic weapons and machineguns. The streets were barricaded.

Outside Ljubljana, columns of armoured fighting vehicles smashed through barricades and road blocks leaving a trail of twisted metal, flattened cars and shattered glass.

The army said it would take over border crossings and expected Slovenia to cooperate.

"We will act in accordance with the rules of combat. All resistance will be crushed," General Konrad Kosek, commander of the 5th army district which includes Slovenia, said in a message to the Slovenian government.

Slovenian Prime Minister Lojze Peterle said he was recalling all Slovenian ministers from the federal government.

Distancing itself from the violence, the federal government said it did not favour the use of force.

"The army high command met last night and now as I can see it is acting under its (own) orders," Deputy Prime Minister Zivko Pregl said.

AFF adds: Five of the eight members of the federal Yugoslav presidency have been meeting in Belgrade since early 1990 to discuss the crisis sparked by Croatia and Slovenia's declarations of independence. Tanjug news agency said.

Quoting unofficial sources, the news agency said Interior Minister Peter Gracnin and the head of parliament, Slobodan Gligorjevic, both Serbs, were at the meeting.

An official announcement late Wednesday said Prime Minister Ante Markovic, Defense Minister Veljko Kadijevic and Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar were expected to attend.

Representatives of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia said earlier they would boycott the meeting because the agenda called for it to study the secession crisis and not the nomination of Croatian representative Stipe Mesic as head of the rotating presidency.

The collective presidency, which is also commander-in-chief of the armed forces, has been paralysed since May 15 after Serbia and Montenegro vetoed the nomination of Mesic to take over.

## The Midnight File

### Mandela-Klerk win UNESCO peace prize

PARIS, June 27: Nelson Mandela and South African President FW de Klerk were named by UNESCO on Thursday as joint winners of an international peace prize. De Klerk, who recently fulfilled his pledge to abolish all major apartheid laws and Mandela, a leader of the African National Congress, were honored "to them to in their efforts to conquer" encourage persevere prejudice, reports AP.

### Pakistan finds new oil field

ISLAMABAD, June 27: Pakistan's state-run Oil and Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) has found a new oilfield near the capital Islamabad, government officials said today. Petroleum and Natural Resources Minister Nisar Ali Khan told a news conference the first well at Missa Kaswal, 55 Km (34 miles) south of Islamabad, was providing about 3,000 Barrels Per Day (BPD), reports Reuter.

### Ali seeks Gulf support for Islamic Centre

ABU DHABI, June 27: Former World boxing champion Muhammad Ali asked the president of this oil-rich federation Thursday for support for his Islamic Centre in Chicago. "The president, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, confirmed his support for the centre and for the spread of Islam as the duty of every muslim," said a companion of Ali Fayiz al-Ahidin, who was present at the meeting, reports AP.

## Immune system mistake may cause diabetes

LOS ANGELES, June 27: The most severe form of diabetes may develop because the body's immune system mistakes insulin-producing cells for an invading virus, and so attacks the cells in error, researchers said Wednesday, reports AP.

The finding may help scientists develop a test to identify the disease in its early stages so it can be treated to halt its progression, said Allan J. Tobin, a biology professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Tobin reported his team's findings in Washington, DC, at the International Diabetes Federation Congress.

Insulin-dependent diabetes — also known as Type I or juvenile-onset diabetes — affects about 1 million Americans. Their bodies produce too little insulin because of damage to the insulin-producing beta cells of the pancreas, following the attack from the immune system.

The disorder occurs mainly in young people, who must carefully control their diet and inject insulin two to four times daily. But many diabetics nevertheless develop blindness, kidney failure and nerve damage that can lead to amputation of limbs.

Prior research suggested that very early in the disease, the immune system attacks an enzyme in the beta cells called glutamic acid decarboxylase, or GAD.

Tobin and his colleagues found that the molecular structure of GAD strongly resembles that of a protein in coxsackieviruses, a disease-causing group of viruses.

That may mean that as the

immune system fights off a coxsackievirus infection, it also destroys beta cells because of the resemblance of GAD to the virus protein, Tobin suggests.

Previous evidence had suggested the viruses played a role in causing insulin-dependent diabetes.

The new work is "an extremely interesting development," said biochemist Joan Harmon, executive director of diabetes research at the National Institute of Health. "It doesn't quite prove that the ... virus is the culprit, but it's very suggestive evidence."

Richard Khan, chief executive and medical officer of the American Diabetes Association, said Tobin's study "certainly lends further support to the belief that a viral infection triggers an autoimmune response against the pancreas."

Previous research by University of Florida pathologists Mark Atkinson and Noel Maclaren found that antibodies against GAD are in the bloodstream up to seven years before people develop symptoms of insulin-dependent diabetes.

Researchers who participated in Tobin's study were Atkinson; Maclaren; Daniel L Kaufman, a UCLA psychiatrist; Mark G Erlender, a postdoctoral scholar at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla; and Michael Clare-Salzer, a UCLA endocrinologist.

### Clarification

From Page 1 Col. 8

The handout said that from the next fiscal year, tax period of motor vehicles would be counted from the date of registration instead of existing July one.

The road tax on vehicles for personal use would be realised on annual basis while those on vehicles plying on hire would be realised on half-yearly or yearly basis.

The vehicle owners whose tax-taken date would expire on June 30 would be given 15 days time for renewal without fine.

The owners of concerned vehicles have been asked to collect books for depositing vehicles tax and fees from the local registration office of the BRTA 15 days ahead of the expiry date of registration or fitness or route permit licences.

The owners whose vehicles' fitness certificate or route permits have already expired have been asked to collect tax and fees depositing books from any local BRTA office on any working day after July one.

### Embassy women

From Page 1 Col. 8

diplomatic community, Saudis and expatriates, specially from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

A cultural evening and fashion show was arranged at the residence of Bangladesh Ambassador in aid of cyclone victims. It was largely attended by the wives of ambassadors and diplomats. Saudi and expatriate ladies. An amount of Taka 1.83,000 was collected from the show. Besides, 6 lakh 30 thousand Taka was received as donations from various diplomatic missions. The amount includes Taka 2,60,000 collected through holding of a concert at the British Ambassador's residence.

A charity show organized by the friends of Bangladesh at a hotel in Riyadh raised about Taka 10 lakh. Bangladesh Ambassador Major General Quazi Golam Dastagir was the chief guest.

These amounts have been donated to Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

### Baluch minister

From Page 1 Col. 8

Abdul Hafeez Pirazada, against a government candidate for the seat.

Party sources said four of the politicians arrested were Bhutto supporters and the rest Pirzada's.

Bhutto traded charges on Wednesday with one of her political foes over the murder of a judge that led to a crackdown on Bhutto's supporters.

She told reporters in her home town, Larkana, that judge Nabil Sher Junejo's assassination by unknown gunmen on June 18 was an excuse to arrest members of her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and rig the Sind by-election.

But provincial Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali told a news conference in Karachi the PPP was directly involved in the killing of the judge, who was trying Bhutto's jailed husband Asif Ali Zardari on several disputed charges.

Related story on Page 5

### Pay Commission

From Page 1 Col. 2

Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Establishment Motaher Hossain, Senior Finance Controller of Air Force Asif Ali and Joint Secretary of the Finance Division Syed Amir-ul-Mulk.

The committee will recommend pay scale in the light of the report of the Pay Commission and maintaining consistency with the financial position of the government.

### Electric supply

From Page 1 Col. 6

"Give us a chance to prove our efficiency and we will reduce the system loss within this period, this is our challenge to the authorities," union leaders said.

Senior officials of PDB, however, said workers made similar pledges many times but the situation did not improve during the last decade. They counter blame "inefficient and corrupt workers" for high system loss.

# Amendment bills

From Page 1 Col. 2

passage of national budget till Sunday night.

The Parliament sources indicated that the BNP bill might be placed within a day or two after the passage of the budget.

After being placed both the bills will come up for discussions in the House.

Competent sources said that the amendment bills of the BNP and the AL are similar in nature and both have suggested the switching over to a parliamentary system.

When contacted, leaders of the Treasury as well as the Opposition benches maintained that consensus of both the sides in the House will be essential for bringing the much desired amendment to the Constitution.

It is expected that the leaders of the BNP and the AL will sit together after placing of the amendment bills for making adjustments to reach a consensus.

Meanwhile, some backstage parleys between the two sides on the issue have already been initiated. It is reliably learnt. UNB says: Prime Minister

Begum Khaleda Zia has said a Constitution amendment bill seeking reversion to parliamentary system will be brought in soon and hoped all political parties will cooperate in its quick passage.

In an interview with the BBC broadcast Thursday night marking her 100 days in office, Begum Zia said she had committed to the people that system of government would be decided by Parliament elected under a neutral government.

"We have consulted people's representatives and took the decision the moment they gave their verdict," Begum Zia said.

Asked if she thought of any procedural problem in adopting the proposed bill, Begum Zia said people and their representatives were behind it.

However, she said, certain political circles had been creating obstructions both within and outside Parliament only for the sake of embarrassing her government.

The constitutional change will go through referendum smoothly "if it is necessary",

she said. On the student unrest, the Prime Minister appealed to all political parties to extend cooperation in her efforts to restore a congenial academic atmosphere.

Replying to a question, the Prime Minister said her government faced the biggest challenge on the 39th day of taking over the administration, when her party BNP was poised to carry out the primary responsibility of introducing democracy.

She said despite the April 29 devastating cyclone, food deficit was unlikely this year. A bumper harvest in areas outside cyclone-affected southern districts helped in reducing a large gap, she added.

Begum Zia said problems of reaching relief to the cyclone-hit people had been tackled. Rehabilitation work is now going on in full swing.

She expressed her gratitude to those foreign leaders and officials who visited the cyclone-battered areas and sympathised with the affected people.

### Gunmen snatch 2 guns

JHENIDAH, June 27: Unidentified gunmen numbering 10 to 12 snatched away two licensed SBBL guns with 29 bullets — one from village Dakhin Monoharpur under Saikupa upazila and the other from Paranpur in Jhenidah Sadar upazila on June 23.

According to Jhenidah and Saikupa thana police at about 4.30 pm the armed activists raided the house of Lutfor Rahman Miah of Dakhin Monoharpur and took away his licensed SBBL gun with 20 bullets.

Later at about 8 pm they raided the house of Ataur Rahman of village Paranpur and took away his licensed SBBL gun with 9 bullets. Police suspected the armed bandits to be members of an underground party.

### Body found

By Staff Correspondent Demra police recovered the body of an unidentified man aged about 45 from Shantakhra area Thursday morning. Police suspected the victim to be a bagger. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for post mortem.

### French company signs accord with Tamil Nadu Electricity Board

PARIS, June 27: French power company EDF signed a six-million-Franc (one-million-Dollar) contract here Tuesday with its counterpart in the Tamil province in India to upgrade the electricity system in the city of Madras, reports AFP.

EDF (Electricite de France) will install a high tension underground cable and two transformers, and will study operations of the city's central power office, an EDF statement said.

### British govt sued

LONDON, June 27: A businessman is suing the government for one million pounds (1.6 million dollars) for mishandling Britain's economy. Mark Harries, 46, from Cardiff, Wales, has taken out a High Court writ against the treasury alleging it caused unemployment which deprived his fancy dress hire business of customers, reports Reuter.

### Cuban-Chinese economic ties likely to grow

HAVANA, June 27: Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez said on Wednesday he saw a future of increasingly close political and economic relations between Cuba and China, reports Reuter.

Rodriguez who accepted an invitation to visit China shortly, told the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina that Chinese products increasingly filled needs in Cuba's economy at a time when its overall imports had fallen because of disruption to trading links with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, traditionally the Caribbean island's biggest trading partner.

Besides traditional exports like sugar, nickel citrus and seafood Cuba was also developing bio-technical and medical products for export which could be of interest to China. "We have no doubt that tourism may also play a part in future relations, Rodriguez said.

China and Cuba signed a five year trade agreement in January under which annual exchanges of raw materials food and goods were expected to top the 500 million Dollar bilateral trade achieved in 1990.

Cuban and Chinese leaders have said they will not abandon their one party communist systems.