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The Daily Star



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Functions of PM, ministers, secretaries to be redefined

New rules of business framed

By Moinuddin Naser.

The Cabinet Division has prepared a set of draft rules for transaction of business by the Prime Minister, Ministers and Secretaries under a parliamentary form of government.

A four-member committee headed by Agriculture Minister Maj Gen (Rtd) Majidul Haque has been formed to review the draft.

The existing Rules of Business was framed in November 1975 to discharge business under a presidential form of government.

The other members of the committee are Commerce Minister M K Anwar, State Minister for Land Zamir Uddin Sircar and State Minister for Food Nazmul Huda.

According to a Cabinet Divisions source, the committee would review the draft rules of business before making any ordinance or law for the execution of administrative functions under a new system of government.

Insiders say that according to the existing Rules of Business the secretaries were given more power than the ministers and that the secretaries were made directly responsible to the President in respect of appointment in the President's Secretariat, Public Division, Supreme Command Headquarters Division, functions of the Cabinet Division, Ministry of Establishment, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance Division, Ministry of Law and Justice etc.

During the Ershad regime the Rules of Business 1975 were however changed several times to tighten the grip of the President over administrative affairs.

In July 1989 all appointments to the posts of colonel or equivalent and above in the Army, Navy and Air Force were brought under direct control of the President.

In the same period appointments to the post of chairman or managing director of statutory bodies were also brought under the direct supervision of the President.

Just after Ershad's taking over of power in 1982, promotion to the rank of Superintendent of Police in See Page 12 Col. 1



Acting President Justice Shahabuddin giving assent to the Constitution 11th Amendment Bill, that guarantees his return to the Supreme Court Bench, on Saturday. — PID photo

12th Amendment Bill sent to EC for holding referendum

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Sunday referred the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill to the Election Commission for conducting a referendum under Article 142 (IA) of the Constitution, reports BSS.

The referendum is to ascertain whether or not the Acting President should assent to the Bill.

The Acting President has however, assented to the Constitution 11th Amendment Bill and the referendum bill 1991 at the President's Secretariat in Dhaka.

The Constitution 12th Amendment Bill is regarding switch-over from the existing See Page 12 Col. 4

Strategy for environmental protection underway

By Staff Correspondent

The draft of a National Conservation Strategy came under scrutiny at a two-day workshop that began in Dhaka on Saturday.

Inaugurating the workshop



A new tactic to lure cinema-goers: a caravan of rickshaw vans mounted with cinema hoardings and loudspeakers snakes its way through a city street — Star photo

Abdullah Al-Noman, State Minister for Environment and Forests called for assessing our own capabilities, conserving and harnessing our own resources and restraining their wasteful use with a view to ensuring sustainable development.

He also urged experts to put future development strategies on the right track to 'help ourselves develop as a self-reliant and self-respecting nation.'

The National Conservation Strategy is meant for providing guidelines for development without depleting the resources base. It covers a total of 18 sectors.

Prepared by the National Conservation Project of the government and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) with funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD) the strategy is expected to be finalised by the end of this year.

The draft conservation strategy is based on 18 sectoral resource papers by 18 experts. The papers were reviewed by another 18 experts. Finally six specialists compiled the draft report, said a Conservation Strategy Project source.

The draft also incorporates inputs from a total of five sectoral workshops held earlier, the source said.

The sectors covered are human resources, land, agriculture, forestry, wildlife, fishery, livestock, genetic diversity, water resources, energy and minerals, human settlements, health and sanitation, industry, rural development, transportation, natural hazards, environmental education and awareness, and international dimensions.

See Page 12 Col. 7

Karnaphuli Fertilizer Agreement terms to be renegotiated with Japan

Terms of an agreement for the proposed Karnaphuli Fertilizer Factory with Japan under joint venture are now considered 'unequitable and against the national interest.'

The government is trying to renegotiate the terms stipulated in the agreement entered at the age end of Ershad regime. Industries Secretary Shaiful Alam told UNB Saturday.

Under the joint venture agreement, Bangladesh is to have 30 per cent share of the 459 million dollar Karnaphuli Fertilizer Factory to be set up in Chittagong.

The Japanese investors are demanding a letter of guarantee from Bangladesh government that it will repay the entire credit of 229 million dollars. See Page 12 Col. 3

AIDS scare in Sylhet

SYLHET, Aug 10: Three residents of Kanaighat upazila who returned from Dubai in June are suspected to be carrying AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), officials here said today, reports UNB.

Altmuddin (27) of village Uzanpara, Kashed Ali (30) of Narayanpur and Nasiruddin (30) of Chhatrapur village had been working as ordinary labourers in Dubai and were sent back home when it was detected that they were carrying AIDS.

The Civil Surgeon and the Additional Superintendent of Police said they are aware of it but will not give details. District officials said the Health Ministry in Dhaka sent a wireless message on Thursday asking the local administration to immediately bring them See Page 12 Col. 2

Jute goods export prices decontrolled

Star Economic Report

The government has decontrolled the prices for export sales of jute goods. The decision comes into immediate effect.

The Ministry of Jute has abolished the Minimum Export Price (MEP) to relax its controls on sales of jute goods in the international markets.

The latest move to decontrol the export prices of jute goods has come to neutralise the effects of the recent devaluation of the Indian currency by about 20 per cent on Bangladesh's jute export operations.

India is the major competitor of Bangladesh in the international jute markets.

The devaluation of the Indian currency has strengthened the price competitiveness of its exports.

The Jute Ministry has issued the directive on the withdrawal of MEP. The decision is aimed at bringing dynamism, enforcing discipline and restoring a healthy climate for export operations, it said.

Under the decision, only the existing arrangements for registration of export sales of jute goods with Bangladesh Bank will be operative. The Bank will keep the Ministry of Jute informed on any registration of export sales of any jute goods on the same day at 'unusual rates'.

Meanwhile, the jute mills in the public sector under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) had unsold stocks of over 1.20 lakh metric tons on June 30, the highest volume for the last three fiscal years from 1988-89.

Stocks stood at 75,790 tons and 1.04 lakh metric tons at the close of fiscal 1989-90 and 1988-89 respectively.

In the private sector jute mills, unsold stocks of jute goods were however lower at the close of 1990-91 than that of the previous fiscal year.

It stood at 38,922 tons on June 30, '91 compared to 45,887 tons on June 30, '90.

Unsold stocks totalled 37,224 lakh tons in private sector jute mills at the close of fiscal 1988-89.

The aggregate export sales by both private and public sector jute mills declined to 3.22 lakh tons in 1990-91 from 4.66 lakh tons in 1989-90. Total exports were 4.57 lakh tons in 1988-89.

For the BJMC mills, exports dropped from 3.21 lakh tons in 1989-90 to 1.76 lakh tons in 1990-91. The corresponding figure for the same mills in 1988-89 was 3.01 lakh tons.

Decision on CU in 24 hours: Badruddoza

CHITTAGONG, Aug 10: Education Minister Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury today said the government would take a decision within 24 hours to resolve the deadlock in the Chittagong University campus, reports UNB.

The Education Minister who met Vice-Chancellor Prof. Alamgir Mohammad Strajuddin during a surprise visit to the Chittagong University campus this afternoon was talking to Islamic Chhatra Shibir activists in front of the VC's residence.

'You have to show more patience to keep academic atmosphere in the campus,' Prof. Chowdhury told the Shibir activists.

The Shibir-backed Sangrami Chhatra Oikya continued their siege of the VC's See Page 12 Col. 3

BCCI depositors call off hunger strike

Star Economic Report

Depositors of the Bank of Credit & Commerce (International Overseas) Limited (BCCI) called off their hunger strike and the proposed grand rally showing respect to the announcement of the Prime Minister to provide interest-free advance upto Tk 50,000 to them.

The decision to call off the hunger strike was taken at a meeting of the depositors on Saturday with Kaiser Md Katum, convener of the BCCI Depositors Association in the chair.

See Page 12 Col. 3

Committee on session jam is jammed

By Sohel Manzur, DU Correspondent

The committee, formed by the government to recommend measures to remove session jam in country's higher education institution, has made no progress so far.

The eight-member committee was formed on March 28 with Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddiqi as convener and was scheduled to submit its recommendations to the government within three weeks.

The committee, however, in its first sitting within seven days of its birth prepared a Tk one lakh budget for its functioning and submitted it to the government forthwith, but to no response yet.

When contacted Prof. Siddiqi told The Daily Star that 'some new factors are hindering its normal functioning' and that the devastating cyclone in the coastal belt immediately after its formation has 'diverted the government's attention away from it.'

He however said he has maintained contacts with the education ministry in this regard. He said he would say See Page 12 Col. 8

80 seek BNP tickets for bye-elections

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has received a total of 80 applications from candidates seeking nominations for bye-elections in 11 Jatiya Sangsad constituencies.

A BNP source said that as many as 26 applications have been received for nominations from the Dhanmendi-Mohammadpur constituency in Dhaka city.

Interview of the candidates seeking nominations will be held at the Prime Minister's Sugandha office at 4 pm on See Page 12 Col. 1

NEWS BRIEFS

- Nawaz Sharif greets Khaleda**
Pakistan Premier Mohammad Nawaz Sharif congratulated Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on the unanimous passage of the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill by the Jatiya Sangsad, reports UNB.
- 19 killed in train accident**
BHOPAL, Aug 10: At least 19 people travelling on the roof of a packed train were crushed to death and some 150 more injured today in central India.
The train was passing under a bridge outside Gwalior city in Madhya Pradesh state when the accident occurred, reports AFP.
- ULFA insurgents kill journalist**
NEW DELHI, Aug 10: United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) insurgents in the far eastern Indian state of Assam kidnapped and killed senior journalist Kamala Saitika, the PTI reported today.
- Perez in London**
LONDON, Aug 10: U N Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar arrived here Saturday from New York for a meeting Sunday with freed British hostage John McCarthy, who will hand him a sealed message from his captors, the Islamic Jihad, reports AFP.

China to sign Non-proliferation Treaty

BEIJING, Aug 10: Premier Li Peng told visiting Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu on Saturday that China agreed in principle to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, reports AP.

China was one of the world's last major holdouts, and the decision is a major step toward satisfying Western demands that China cooperate with international weapons-control efforts.

The state-run Xinhua News Agency said Li made the surprise announcement during a closed-door meeting with Kaifu a few hours after the Japanese leader arrived.

Li did not explain whether any obstacle exists to China signing the treaty, which limits its transfer of nuclear materials.

Kaifu's spokesman, Sadaaki Numata, asked if the Chinese had attached conditions to signing the treaty, said, 'Not that we are aware of.' He said Li did not set any date for signing.

The treaty has been signed by 140 countries. China is the only declared nuclear power that has not accepted its terms. France said recently that it would adhere to the treaty terms although it has not signed it.

Xinhua reported that Li said China's nuclear weapons were purely for self-defense and that China does not encourage or engage in nuclear proliferation. China has angrily denied Western accusations that it has transferred technology to Pakistan, Iran, Algeria and other Third World countries that would aid them in building nuclear weapons.

'China has been following the main parts of the treaty,' Numata told a briefing at a Beijing hotel. But he said Japan considered Li's announcement very important.

Japan said last month that its aid funds could be tied to the receiving countries' disarmament efforts. One of the aims of Kaifu's visit was to press China to join international efforts to curb weapons sales. Xinhua did not comment on this issue.

He is the first head of an industrialised power to visit China since the Chinese army opened fire in 1989 on student-led demonstrators for democratic reform. The visit thus marks a major step in China's efforts to recover from the condemnation