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BEA rejects Wage Commission Report



Anis-ud Dowla, BEA president, speaking at the press confce. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent
 Bangladesh Employers' Association (BEA) Saturday rejected the Wage Commission Report terming it "incomplete."
 The association also demanded the withdrawal of the proposed minimum wages and called for the reactivation of the commission or the formation of a new one to link productivity to wage increases.
 Without such a linkage, it added, the dismal state of the country's industrial sector would worsen.
 "Although the commission was named 'Wages and Productivity Commission', no substantive discussions on the subjects had been held," M Anisuddowla, president of BEA told a press conference at Sheraton Hotel. "Therefore, we cannot accept its report as

recommendations," he added.
 The report of the Wage Commission, finalised December 30 last, recommended the national minimum wages for the public sector workers at Taka 1000 and Taka 900 per month for the private sector workers. The report is currently with the Prime Minister's secretariat and is scheduled to be published soon.
 "One of the major components of the terms of reference of the commission was to establish relationship between wages and productivity of labour which it failed to do," the BEA president said.
 The press conference organised by BEA was attended by representatives of different private sectors including gar-

Govt can't give in to SKOP blockades, says Saifur

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday lashed at unrest in the industrial sector, saying "anarchy in the labour front" must be checked if people's welfare and overall development of the country were to be ensured, reports UNB.
 The elected BNP government cannot bribe special interest groups like the fallen autocrats as economic interest of the people must be upheld at any cost," he said while exchanging views with leaders of chambers of commerce and industries on the current socio-economic situation in the country.
 The government, he told the business community leaders, has responsibility for people's welfare and cannot give in to "threats of blockades, barricades and other forms of economic terrorism."
 Finance Minister's tough
 See Page 12 Col 8

President's Awards distributed New agri policy will focus on farm-based management: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said a national agricultural policy integrated with the objectives of sustainable development, social justice and ecological balance is being formulated, reports UNB.
 "The focus of our attention will be on farm-based management. With this end in view, agriculture sector has been brought under free-market operation which will help accelerate the agricultural development," she said.
 Referring to the salient features of the proposed policy, she said application of modern technology will be promoted and agriculture will be transformed into a profitable enterprise. "The competition will generate productiv-

PM discusses SAARC summit at Foreign Ministry

Star Report
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday chaired a special meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that, her aides said, reviewed the country's foreign policy agenda.
 "She reviewed the broad issues of foreign relations including the holding of the SAARC summit and its preparations," said Foreign Secretary Reza Rahman of the 90-minute meeting attended by seven senior ministers.
 Yesterday's visit was the first by the Prime Minister to the Ministry since she took over two years ago. Foreign Minister, officers and employees greeted her.
 The Foreign Secretary said that the meeting mainly discussed the details of the twice-postponed summit preparations. The suggested dates for
 See Page 12 Col 7



Railway authorities evicting slum dwellers from Shahjahanpur area yesterday. — Star photo

NEC may okay revised Fourth Plan today

Revised Fourth Five-Year Plan (1990-95) is expected to be approved today (Sunday) by the National Economic Council reducing its size to Tk 62,000 crore from the original outlay of Tk 68,930 crore, reports UNB.
 Public sector outlay is proposed to be slashed to Tk 34,700 crore from Tk 41,930 crore but the size of the private sector investment is expected to be raised to Tk 27,300 crore from Tk 27,000 crore.
 Planning officials said the draft of the revised plan was sent to the cabinet six per cent growth in GDP for the next three years as against the actual 3.6 per cent and 3.9 per cent during the past two years.
 The government philosophy of Dhal-Bhat for the masses is to be given emphasis in the revised plan, they added.
 Of the total revised outlay, Tk 34,550 crore will be mobilised from domestic re-

Historic March 7 today

By Staff Correspondent
 Historic March 7 will be observed throughout the country today by different political parties and their front organisations.
 On this day in 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in his historic speech at the Race Course Maidan (Suhrawardy Uddan) in Dhaka called the people for taking about preparations for the struggle for independence and emancipation.
 In observance of the day, Awami League will garland the portrait of Sheikh Mujib at the
 See Page 12 Col 4

Toxic fertilizer: Punitive action against importers recommended

The probe body on the toxic fertilizer imported from the United States submitted its report yesterday recommending punitive action against the importers and ban on import in future, reports UNB.
 Chairman of the seven-member high-power investigation committee and Vice-Chancellor of the Open University Dr Shamsur Ali handed over the report to Environment, Forest and Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al-Noman. Additional Secretary of Environment and Forest Dr A Selim was present on the occasion.
 The investigation committee was formed in November
 See Page 12 Col 1

Tk 23.5 lakh looted from Madhukhali Sonali Bank

FARIDPUR, Mar 6: About Tk 23.5 lakh was looted from the Faridpur Sugar Mills branch of Sonali Bank in Madhukhali thana Friday night, reports UNB.
 Police said the manager, the cashier and a guard of the branch and another guard of the nearby thana branch of the bank were detained today for interrogation in connection with the robbery in the un-guarded bank.
 The robbery was committed in a very clean way with the doors of the branch and its vault found unbroken, but open.
 Bank employees came to the office this morning and found the doors and the vault open and Tk 23,49,550 stolen.
2 muggers beaten to death in Narayanganj
 From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Mar 6: Enraged people beat to death two muggers and critically injured five others of a gang of armed muggers after they shot and injured a bus passenger while robbing his hand-bag on the Narayanganj-Demra Highway this noon.
 Witnesses and police said, the gang of eleven muggers stopped a Narayanganj-bound bus from Meghnaghat at Choudhurypara area of Siddiganj thana and forced Abdul Halim
 See Page 12 Col 2

Over 300 diarrhoea patients arrive at ICDDR,B a day

More than 300 patients are arriving everyday at ICDDR,B in the city, reports UNB.
 A large number of patients are also being treated at PO Hospital, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Mitford Hospital, Shishu Hospital, Narayanganj General Hospital, 200-bed Hospital at Narayanganj and other district hospitals and clinics.
 Diarrhoea has claimed 951 lives and attacked 62,837 people in different parts of the country since the outbreak of the disease in early January, Diarrhoea Control Room sources said yesterday.
 At least 5 people died of the water-born disease and another 1,420 people were attacked in the country in 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday they said.
 Of them, two people died in Patuakhali, two in Jhalakathi and one in Khulna.
 More than 1,500 people were attacked during the last 24 hours. The district wise break up: Barguna — 56, Pirojpur — 52, Bagerhat — 74, Patuakhali — 102, Khulna — 86, Jhalakathi — 58, Bhola — 270, Barisal — 161, Narayanganj — 64, Gopalganj — 8, Kishoreganj — 5, Netrokona — 33 and Dhaka — 449.
 Unofficial sources, however, said the death figure and the number of people attacked by the disease would be much higher as poor communication makes it difficult to collect information from distant areas.
 The highest number of 242 people have died in Pirojpur district, followed by 165 in Borguna and 141 in Patuakhali since January 1, the control room sources said.
 The death toll in other districts are: Bagerhat — 136, Khulna — 59, Jhalakathi — 84, Bhola — 72, Barisal — 19, Narayanganj — 2, Gopalganj — 12, Kishoreganj — 10 and Netrokona — 9.
 According to official sources, the disease killed more than 5,000 people out of nearly 5,68,000 afflicted patients last year.
 Doctors said one of the reason of this year's untimely epidemic was contaminated water. The epidemic had broken out in the city and elsewhere in the country due to presence of bacteria in the drinking water.
 Officials said more than 692 medical teams, one in every union of the affected districts, and 169 mobile teams are working round the clock to combat the disease. About 395 government doctors are engaged in the teams.
 Besides, a number of Non-Government Organisations are also working in the affected areas.

CPB hardliners, reformists sit together, talk differently

By Staff Correspondent
 Hardliners and reformists sat side by side on the same platform and expressed opposite views at a discussion Saturday, the 45th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).
 Party President Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, who chaired the meeting held inside the party office, said that that glorious 70 years of communism had faded in the world, and so new ways had to be found for people's emancipation.
 But Mujahidul Islam Selim, known as a hardliner and opposed to the party's reformation, said that "We will be free from dogmatism but communism is still the best way to help the downtrodden of the country."
 Among others, Nurul Islam Nahid, Barun Roy and Nurul
 See Page 12 Col 6

Rabbani, Hekmatyar resume peace talks

ISLAMABAD, Mar 6: Afghan peace talks resumed here late today in a bid to resolve a deadlock over power sharing that was threatening to scuttle the six-day-old negotiations, sources said, reports AFP.
 They said that in order to overcome the deadlock, proposals had been made inside the negotiations for government portfolios to be distributed on the basis of the various Afghan factions' military strength.
 The Afghan leaders were still locked in negotiations late into the night at the Prime Minister's house, the sources said.
 There was no indication from Pakistani officials about how the talks were going, in contrast to a flurry of highly optimistic signals earlier in the week after the parleys opened from figures as high as
 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is sponsoring the talks.
 But high hopes that a peace accord was imminent faded against the backdrop of tough talk by Hezb-i-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in a public speech Friday.
 A routine official briefing was cancelled and Afghan sources expressed concern that the negotiations would fail, with rival Afghan leaders unable to reach a compromise on a formula for factional representation in the government and on the powers of the President and Prime Minister.
 The formula provides for President Burhanuddin Rabbani to continue in office for 18 months, with Hekmatyar as Prime Minister and portfolios being allocated so that no party had more than one.

Yeltsin to seek compromise with rivals

MOSCOW, Mar 6: Russian President Boris Yeltsin said today he would seek a compromise agreement with his parliamentary rivals before and during a special meeting of the Congress of People's Deputies on Wednesday, reports Reuters.
 "I favour reconciliation. I favour an end to confrontation between the various branches of power," the Russian information agency quoted Yeltsin as saying.
 Yeltsin and parliamentary chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov have been locked for months in a mounting power struggle over who rules Russia. Parliament has called a special congress meeting to discuss the issue.
 The Russian parliament on Friday rejected Yeltsin's proposals for a power-sharing deal between the presidency and the conservative legislature.
 Parliament said the deal would have curbed its powers, but Yeltsin said it was essential to allow the government to press ahead with economic reforms.
 Interfax news agency quoted Yeltsin as saying, "I am sorry parliament failed to support my proposals. I am not discouraged and will look for new options."
 The President was speaking to business leaders in Moscow.
 AFP adds: Leaders of the August 1991 coup and communist hardliners today joined forces to accuse President Yeltsin of being the "real traitor of the fatherland" and vowed to restore the former Soviet Union.
 About 1,200 people cheered and gave a standing ovation to the coup plotters who were invited by the ultranationalist Russian newspaper Dien to speak at the rally held in a Moscow movie theater.
 "We wanted to stage a coup that would have defended and saved our great fatherland," said former Soviet vice-president Gennady Yanayev, who led the eight-man emergency committee that temporarily ousted Mikhail Gorbachev.
 "Now, who is the real traitor?" he asked as the crowd yelled out "Yeltsin."
 The gathering resounded with the battle cries of the conservative opposition as hardline deputies followed coup plotters at the podium in calling on supporters to attend protests scheduled throughout the week.
 The Russian President faces possible impeachment at the hands of law-makers who on Friday voted in favour of an agenda for the congress that included a debate on "respect of the Constitution by the top organs of state power and state leaders."
 "If we loose the congress, we will lose Russia," said former Soviet KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, also among the 12 men accused of carrying out the August coup.
 Kryuchkov added: "Russia, without the republics, cannot survive."
 The gathering resounded with the battle cries of the conservative opposition as hardline deputies followed coup plotters at the podium in calling on supporters to attend protests scheduled throughout the week.

New law for protecting consumers' interest soon

By Sohel Manzur
 The government is planning to enact a new law to ensure fair trade in the country for the interest of the consumers, according to official sources.
 The need for such a law was felt in the context of malpractices being adopted extensively by the traders through marketing of sub-standard food and other essential items, the sources said.
 The matter of cheating the customers by making difference in weight and ingredients of the commodities with those referred to on their labellings was also taken into consideration, they added.
 The officials of the Ministry of Commerce had already collected papers on the provisions of law adopted by some foreign countries and were conducting study on those to make a new one applicable for the country, a high official of the ministry said.
 Another concerned official said the existing laws were not enough to protect the interest of the consumers. Even those were not being enforced properly, he said referring to the Pure Food Act, '59.
 Although the Ministry of Commerce was concerned with trade, the responsibility of the matter mostly lay with the Ministry of Health and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), he said, adding that a summary of recommendations would, however, be sent to the cabinet soon.
 Meanwhile, the officials of the Health Ministry were also working on how to protect the interest of the consumers, the sources said and added that
 See Page 12 Col 6

Sehri, Ifar Timings

Ram	Mar	Sehri	Ifar
12	7	—	6.11 pm
13	8	4.55 am	6.11 pm