

## Govt drafting bill

## Body to hear VAT appeal cases likely

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said that the government was drafting a bill to set up an Arbitration Council like in France for consideration of the appeal cases of those who were not satisfied with the Value Added Tax (VAT) assessment, reports BSS.

We are not getting the expected amount of revenue from VAT mainly due to the administrative and organisational weaknesses, the Finance Minister said adding: "We have to improve the entire tax collection machinery for reducing the harassment of the tax payers and better revenue realisation."

Rahman was addressing the tax officials of VAT Collectorate here in the afternoon at the conference room of the Finance Division. Internal Resources Division Secretary and NBR Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan and a number of VAT collecting officials also spoke.

"You pursue the people to give properly the VAT. But for

God's sake do not harass them", the Finance Minister told the VAT officials.

Rahman said that the VAT was the most modern, flexible and transparent tax collection system but the country was yet to enjoy the maximum benefits out of it as most of the officials did not apply their wisdom and common sense.

The Finance Minister expressed his dissatisfaction at the performances of the VAT collecting officials and repeatedly asked them to improve their level of efficiency and realise the targeted amount of VAT.

He said that the government had reduced the rate of customs duty and expressed his regret that the realisation of VAT was not proportionate with the reduced customs duty.

He said unless we would strengthen the whole revenue collection machinery, we could not be successful in reducing the cascading effects of taxes.

## Somali gunmen kill four US soldiers

MOGADISHU, Aug 8: Somali militiamen killed four US soldiers in an ambush here early today, inflicting the first US fatalities since the United Nations took over the Somalia operation, a UN spokesman said, reports AFP.

Major Leann Swieczkowski said the men's vehicle had probably struck a mine while driving in convoy through the capital's Medina district at about 8:45 am (0545 GMT).

Militiamen then attacked the convoy with small arms and hand grenades.

Reinforcements from the UN's Egyptian, Pakistani and US forces were rapidly sent to the scene.

UN forces ordered journalists out of the immediate vicinity as the troops feared that militiamen would use them, and the Somalis crowding around them, as a human shield.



The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) brought out a silent procession in the city yesterday protesting the attack on the teachers of the Jahangirnagar University on July 29 and demanding the arrest of the culprits.

## Hosokawa may announce his cabinet today

TOKYO, Aug 8: Japan's new Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa worked overtime today to shape a reform-minded cabinet with something for every partner in his coalition, embracing conservatives, socialists and Buddhists, reports AFP.

With Hosokawa scheduled to announce his cabinet on Monday, former Finance Minister Tsutomu Hata loomed as a possible Foreign Minister and socialist leader Sadak Yamahana as a minister for 'political reform', press reports said.

"Yes, just about," Hosokawa told reporters as he entered the Prime Minister's official residence, replying to a question if the cabinet lineup would be complete by the end of the day.

Accompanied by his wife Kayoko, the dapper 55-year-old aristocrat inspected the mansion, which the couple described as "really antiquated," before sitting down with his aides to finalise his cabinet roster.

Japan embarked on a historic political transition this weekend with the election of a new Prime Minister, but questions remain as to the durability of the coalition which swept Morihiro Hosokawa to power.

"The political scene will probably prove very unstable in coming months," said Mitsuru Uchida, political science professor at Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University.

## King Baudouin buried

BRUSSELS (Belgium), Aug 8: Fighter jets gave King Baudouin a final salute Saturday before his casket draped in Belgium's red, yellow and black flag was pulled on a gun carriage from the palace where he reigned for 42 years, reports AP.

His widow, Queen Fabiola, followed on foot, leading a slow procession of heads of state, passed tens of thousands of people to St. Michael's Cathedral 900 metres (yards) away.

The queen wore a white suit, and had asked other mourners not to wear black or come veiled.

Baudouin died on July 31 of a heart attack while vacationing in Spain. He was 62. On Monday, Prince Albert, his 59-year-old brother, will be sworn in as Belgium's next monarch as Baudouin and Queen Fabiola were childless.

Joining the procession were Emperor Akihito and Empress Nichiko of Japan, King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, Grand Duke Jean and Grand Duchess Josephine-Charlotte of Luxembourg, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia.

Among the other reigning royals attending were Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip.

Another two dozen nations

## ADB credit

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aware of the credit programme. Thalakada stressed the need for creating public awareness about the credit programme, saying that a large number of people were unaware of the credit line, which might have contributed to the non-utilisation of the funds.

The complex lending system of the banks was also responsible for the non-utilisation of the credit, Thalakada observed.

Referring to the ADB's decision of lending for the small-scale industries, he said such industries could create larger employment opportunity and generate better returns compared with medium-scale and large-scale industries. They also involved lower investments.

The ADB official also answered the questions raised by the businessmen on various issues.

The high interest rate on the credit given by the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and the private sector banks, as well as the system of collateral needed in the lending process, was the most discussed topic.

Thalakada justified the interest rates imposed by the banks for the loans, saying that the rates should be in line with the market economy.

Regarding the system of collateral he said the banks in Bangladesh are not in a position to lend money without it.

Those who participated in the open discussion included, A Rab Chowdhury Director of DCCI, M Yunus, Director of the Islami Bank Limited, Obaidul Huq, President of the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Association and Maleka Khan, President of the Bangladesh Handicraft Association.

## Top boy Mashrur wants to join army

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Aug 8: Ashiq Mohammad Tariq Mashrur Khan stood first in the combined merit list in the Science Group securing 900 marks and seven letters in the SSC examinations from the Jhenidah Cadet College.

He is the son of Abdul Wadud Khan, Circulation Manager of the Daily Janata, Dhaka and Mrs Hosne Monowara.

Mashrur who hails from Mymensingh district, wants to join the army.

Reading books and sports are his principal hobbies.

His father is his most favourite personality.

Mashrur is fond of television plays and novels by Humayun Ahmed.

He used to study four to five hours a day.



## Tagore Sanjay's favourite poet

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 8: Sanjay Dutta Banik stood second in the combined merit list in the Science Group securing 899 marks with letters in seven subjects in the SSC examinations of 1993 under the Jessore Board.

He used to study six to seven hours a day.

Sanjay wants to be a computer engineer or join the army in future.

He is the fifth among his brothers and sisters.

Rabindranath Tagore is his favourite poet while Papitya Sarwar is his favourite singer.

Sanjay also likes to play cricket and listen to band music.



## Murtoza wants to be a doctor

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Aug 8: Sheikh Ali Murtoza stood third in the combined merit list in the Science Group with 897 marks and seven letters in the SSC examinations of 1993 under the Jessore Board. He is a student of Jhenidah Cadet College.

He is the son of Golam Murtoza.

Ali Murtoza intends to be a doctor to serve the suffering humanity.

Reading books is his favourite hobby. He won the primary scholarship in the talent pool.

## The Midnight File

## Clinton condemns Somali attack on troops

WASHINGTON, Aug 8: President Bill Clinton today condemned a Somali attack that killed four US soldiers and vowed "appropriate action" against those responsible. "We will do everything we can to find out who was responsible and take appropriate action," he told reporters, reports Reuter.

## UN military officials in Georgia

TBILISI (Georgia), Aug 8: UN military officials arrived in Georgia on Sunday to prepare for the deployment of observers in the embattled separatist region of Abkhazia. The advance group of eight observers is the first contingent of UN peacekeepers sent to territory within the former Soviet Union. The unit is part of a group of 50 peacekeepers scheduled to assemble later this month in Abkhazia, reports AP.

## Dr Kamal on politics

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In a democratic manner. Corruption, terrorism and undemocratic and anti-people steps by the government were the main barriers on the path of fulfilling the people's expectations and changing the majority people's lot.

"Changing the nation's fortune means upgrading the standard of living of the down-trodden masses who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population", the noted Awami League leader, now leading the dissidents of the party, opined.

In his view, the national crisis must be identified first to be followed by appropriate actions. Quoting experts, he told the audience "The nation can be rid of the burning problems through proper utilisation of our rich human resources and distribution of its wealth."

Speaking about the planned grand convention, the convenor expressed his optimism that the move for reviving the mainstream politics and unity of the people, forged on the streets from the Fifties to the Nineties, was bound to bring a qualitative change in the national politics and help establish the people's supremacy.

Citing personal experiences from his meetings with people across the nation, Dr. Kamal mentioned that the disorganised general masses had an invisible unity on resolving the national problems and they prefer politics of improving their lot.

"Now what we need is to organise these people and work together to achieve the long-desired goal of bringing about the commonman's economic freedom to make the hard-won independence and democracy useful", he felt.

Criticising BNP rule, Dr. Kamal commented that people found it difficult to live honest and uninterupted lives because of undue barriers at each and every stage of social life. These barriers are bred by misuse, he added. Referring to political division, he said, "Dividing the political forces and misleading the people are two other symptoms of sick politics. Attempts are on to split the organisers of the grand convention, he alleged, without elaborating.

Speaking on poverty, Dr. Kamal blamed the affluent ruling class for giving a misconception to the international community that the nation was totally dependent on foreign donations and assistances.

"We have enough resources to develop the country but these are not being properly utilised", he regretted.

Chaired by NAP senior vice-president Advocate Ismail Khan, the meeting was also addressed by the CPB president Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and NAP general secretary Pankaj Bhattacharya.

In his speech, Manik said the planned grand convention would need to draft a political programme aimed at removing the failures of existing politics.

Pankaj Bhattacharya said, "Our aim is to establish a third force in the country's politics that will be able to rid the nation of its crises and change the lot of the down-trodden."

## Quake shakes Guam: 40 hurt

AGANA, (Guam) Aug 8: The world's strongest earthquake in more than four years rocked Guam on Sunday, knocking out power to the island's 133,000 residents, damaging bridges and injuring about 40 people, reports AP.

Tourists fled two hotels where parts of floors were damaged.

The quake measured 8.2 on the Richter scale, said Frank Baldwin, with the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo.

About 40 people went to Guam Memorial Hospital for treatment of minor injuries, mainly cuts, said hospital administrator Peter John Camacho. He did not know if any had been admitted.

There were no serious trauma cases and no reports of deaths, he said.

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## City BNP confce

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Ahmed, MP. However, the scenario changed dramatically yesterday when it became evident that Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas, MP, who is the chief of the youth wing of the BNP (the Juba Dal), was bent on making a determined bid for Mir Shawka's post.

Mirza Abbas, who reportedly organised a signature campaign in all the 14 thana committees which constitute the city unit over the past few days, claims to have won the endorsement of a majority of the thana presidents and secretaries.

Party sources informed The Daily Star that both Abbas and Mir Shawka were holding hectic parleys with their respective supporters last night at undisclosed venues. Neither side was willing to give up its bid without a fight and was determined to even risk a possible divisive vote at today's conference.

But one ranking party leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Daily Star that Begum Zia was well aware of the developments and was using her good offices and intermediaries to avert an acrimonious showdown between the supporters of Abbas and Mir Shawka.

The source also pointed out that Abbas was in a more advantageous position as of now,

mainly because as mayor, he has had a good opportunity to consolidate his influence over the city unit during the past two years. On the other hand, Mir Shawka and Salahuddin, both denied any cabinet or other significant positions, have failed to oblige many of their original supporters lured by the better prospects in the Abbas camp.

According to the source, should all negotiations and parleys fail to resolve the issue by the time today's conference commences, it might call for an intervention by party chief Begum Zia.

In such a case, Begum Zia might announce a panel of her own choice or defer the elections to a later date.

Yet, some other BNP stalwarts told this correspondent late last night that there was every possibility Mirza Abbas would succeed in landing the presidency of the Dhaka city unit for himself today.

In support of their contention they point out that the very fact that Abbas was made the mayor in preference to Mir Shawka suggests that Begum Zia might again choose him in place of the retired general to head the city unit, especially at a time when the Awami League-led opposition is planning a more vigorous anti-government agitation.

## JB combined merit list

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School, Jhenidah (891 each); 9. Sohel Jahangir Ahmed, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 17, Mustafa Ali Mamun, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 35 and Qazi Nadir Hossain roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 46 of the Jhenidah Cadet College (887 each); 10. Rajib Bhattacharya, roll no.-Shaheen 2, BAF Shaheen College, Jessore, and Shah Borhan Strajli, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 1, Jhenidah Cadet College and Md. Faizullah Khan Shibly, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 17, Barisal

Cadet College (886 each); 11. Md. Niamate Tariq Ullah, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 16, Barisal Cadet College (885); 12. Md. Azizul Maqsood, roll no.-Jahanabad (Cant) 1, Cantonment Public School, Khulna, Sabrina Sharmin Lima, roll no.-Khulna Ma-600, Government Coronation Girls School, Khulna and Md. Enamul Huq, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 21, Barisal Cadet College, (884 each); 13. Nighat Sullana, roll no.-Shaheen-Ma 40 BAF Shaheen College, Jessore G M Haider Ali, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 2, and Md. Alimuzzaman, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 17 of the Jhenidah Cadet College (882 each); 14. Md. Bazul Rashid, roll no.-Jessore (Cantonment) 45, Cantonment High School, Jessore, Abdur Rahman, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 26, Barisal Cadet College, Shamim Masud Al Ifteker roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 19, Jhenidah Cadet College (881 each); 15. Md. Mahmudur Rahman, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 36, Jhenidah Cadet College and Rubayet Adnan, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 19, Barisal Cadet College (880 each); 16. Hasan Hafizur Rahman, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 12, and SM Ahaduzzaman, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 46 of the Barisal Cadet College (879 each); 17. Md. Samsul Alam Siddiqui, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 16 and Md. Zafar Sadiq, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 22 of the Jhenidah Cadet College (878 each); 18. Abdullah Al Zahir, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 40, Jhenidah Cadet College and SM Sumon Haider, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 39, Barisal Cadet College (877 each); 19. Md. Sohel Azam, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 40, Barisal Cadet College (876); 20. SM Riazul Ahsan, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 20 and Md. Arefur Rahman, roll no.-Jhenidah (Cadet) 39 of the Jhenidah Cadet College, Md. Zahidul Islam, roll no.-Barisal (Cadet) 9, Barisal Cadet College and SM Salahuddin, roll no.-Kalia 121, Benda Union High School, Narail (875 each).

## Social Science merit list

By Staff Correspondent

1. Md. Amir Hussain, roll no.-Galachipa 385, Galachipa High School, Patuakhali (843); 2. Farzana Mannan, roll no.-Khulna-Ma 4834, Rotary School Khulna (840); 3. Qazi Hafizul Huq, roll no.-Jessore 1413, Mahmudur Rahman High School, Jessore (837); 4. Ahmed Basir, roll no.-Dighlia 101, Dighlia Ma Mazid High School Khulna (836); 5. Rebeka Khan, roll no.-Jhikargachha-Ma 602, Sammiloni Girls High School (833); 6. Shyamal Kumar Chowdhury, roll no.-Bagharpara 743, Narikel Baria High School, Jessore, Md. Ishaq Ali roll no.-Jhenidah 706, Narikel Baria ZA School, Jhenidah and Ishrat Jahan, roll no.-Jessore Cantonment-Ma 65, Daud Public School, Jessore (832 each); 7. Nasrin Sultana, roll no.-Patuakhali-Ma 925, Patuakhali Government Girls School (830); 8. Md. Anwar Hossain, roll no.-Patarhat 248, Patarhat Muslim High School, Barisal (828); 9. BM Ashik Bin Azad roll no.-Magura 1597, Beril Bazar School Magura, Md. Mominur Rahman, roll no.-Shoilakupa 236, Garaganj High School, Jhenidah and Mosammat Naznin Sultana, roll no.-Shailkupa-Ma 1126, Kancher Kol Morium Nesa High School Jhenidah (827 each); 10. Mosammet Taslima Khatun, roll no.-Magura Ma-1100, Gangnalia High School, Magura (825)

## Editor: S. M. Ali

## Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11; Road No. 3; Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct) Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3287. GRAM: DAILY STAR DHAKA.