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# The Daily Star

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### President assents to one more bill

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday assented to the "State-owned Manufacturing Industries Workers (terms and condition of services) Bill, 1993," passed by the Sangsad, reports UNB.

# Combat population boom unitedly: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia yesterday identified the excessive growth of population as a national problem and called for combating it nationally, reports UNB.

She urged all irrespective of their opinions or party affiliation to make concerted efforts to curb the rate of population growth.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating a conference of parliamentarians on Population and Development at the Osmany Auditorium in the city yesterday morning.

Begum Zia hoped that all members of Parliament will actively involve themselves in the

implementation of the national family planning programme in their respective locality and contribute towards motivating the people to have small families.

"We want to transform the family planning programme into a social movement for the greater interest of the nation," she said, seeking well-considered opinions and suggestions in this regard.

The Prime Minister said: "You (MPs) can wield enormous influence in motivating people to contain the population.... This has to be combated nationally," Begum Zia said. She observed that the rapid

population growth had become a phenomenal problem for the nation, causing poverty, environmental imbalance and economic disparity. The problem also widened the inequality between men and women and had caused socio-cultural degeneration, crimes and abuse of drugs.

"We have to consider in great details the problems arising out of the population explosion. There is no scope for hesitation or indecision in this regard," Begum Zia observed.

"You are representatives of the people. You are partners in their sorrow and happiness. See page 12 Col 1



Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia inaugurated a conference of parliamentarians on Population and Development in the morning, while Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina (Right) was the chief guest at the concluding session in the afternoon at the Osmany Auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

### Mostafiz assures ROK investors of all cooperation

SEOUL, Dec 11: Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman today called on Lee Pyong Kyun, acting President of Korea Federation of Small Industries at his office here, reports BSS.

The acting President introduced the Foreign Minister to the assembly of the prominent chiefs, executives and representatives of important business organisations and private firms in South Koreans.

The Bangladesh minister while addressing them explained in length the investment opportunities that are available to foreign investors in Bangladesh. He spoke about the market-oriented reforms, new industrial and investment policies, liberal exchange-control regulations and various incentives provided by the government to foreign investors in Bangladesh.

Mostafizur Rahman invited the Korean investors to make investments in Bangladesh and assured them of all possible support and cooperation of the government of Bangladesh.

### 160 feared trapped in KL bldg collapse

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11: Upto 160 people are feared trapped in the rubble of a high rise apartment which collapsed here today, police and eyewitnesses said, reports AFP.

They said that many expatriates were among those trapped in what was once a block of 44 luxury apartments and two penthouses perched on a slope in the Ulu Klang area, popular with foreign workers and diplomats.

Rescuers working with shovels and their bare hands under floodlights were today searching for survivors under the rubble of a luxury apartment block which collapsed burying some 100 people.

Two women, a Japanese, an Indonesian, and an unidentified baby girl, were among the first survivors pulled out of the twisted steel and concrete heap.

The 12-storey block one of the three in the exclusive highland towers complex perched on a hillside, about 10 kilometres (six miles) from here, collapsed like a pack of cards, eyewitnesses said.

Fifteen people scrambled from the building as it came down and estimates of those trapped varied from some 40 to 160.

"We hope to find survivors," police chief Haniff Omar said. Selangor state Chief Minister Muhammad Muhammad Taib said that a landslide triggered by heavy rains over the past few days may have caused the collapse.

"We will continue searching the rubble until we are absolutely sure that no one is underneath," he said.

Early reports said that upto 160 people may have been in the 44 apartments and two penthouses popular with expatriate workers, among them Japanese, South Koreans and Egyptians.

But Haniff said that some 50 people were in the block based on records kept by the building's security guards. "But we are not sure," he said.

### Condom plant in country still uncertain

The setting up of a condom factory in the country remains uncertain as the government is yet to mobilise its own funds for the project or attract any entrepreneur from the private sector.

According to a feasibility study completed early this year, the 10 million US dollar-project with a production capacity of 160 million condoms a year was deemed viable. With assistance from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), a group of local and foreign experts conducted the study. Earlier, the project was approved by the ECNEC in 1991.

Originally conceived as a public sector enterprise the government, in keeping with its See Page 12 Col 3

### Involve MPs in family planning: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday resented the government's performance in population control and called for involving the people's representatives and political workers with the family planning programmes for their success, reports UNB.

The elected representatives could give more attention to implementation of the family planning programme in their respective constituencies by improving the services, she told a seminar in the capital yesterday afternoon.

Workers of different political parties should also be encouraged, to keep their families small, the Awami League president further suggested while speaking as chief guest at the concluding session of the day-

long seminar on Population and Development at the Osmany Memorial Hall.

The opposition leader also asked the members of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to identify the irregularities in the family planning programmes and take steps to remove those.

"Let's strengthen our united endeavour to identify the loopholes in the family planning programmes and turn our population into a skilled workforce through education and training."

In this context, Hasina called for evincing a permanent and pragmatic policy to turn the growing population into an efficient productive force for a self-reliant economy. She stressed See page 12 Col 1

### Men at 25, Women at 20 MPs suggest minimum age for marriage

A day-long conference of the members of the Jatiya Sangsad on 'Population and Development' yesterday strongly recommended for taking effective measures to ensure the participation of the MPs in family planning programme to contain the menace of population explosion in the country, reports BSS.

The MPs observed that despite a little success in increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate, the country is still facing a danger of uncontrolled population growth which may lead the nation towards severe consequences.

See Page 12 Col 7

### Retailers reap high profits, survey says

The retail prices of essential commodities are about 24.44 per cent more than the wholesale prices.

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) estimated the difference after a recent survey conducted on some wholesale and retail markets.

"The difference is alarming in the prices of vegetables, spices, eggs, edible oil and rice. According to the survey, the retail prices of vegetables are 61.94 per cent higher than the wholesale prices while it is 41.37 per cent higher in case of spices, 30.88 per cent in case of edible oil, 25.22 per cent in case of eggs, 19.01 per cent in case of rice, 18.40 per cent in case of flour, 12.55 per cent in case of pulses, 6.95 per cent in case of soaps and 2.79 per cent in case of powdered milk.

The CAB has urged the government to bring down the differences between the wholesale and retail prices to protect the interest of the consumers.

### Chief Justice regrets delay in separation of judiciary

The Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has expressed dissatisfaction over the delay in separating the judiciary from the administration.

"Both the ruling party and the opposition are talking of independence of the judiciary but no concrete step has been taken in this regard. If they were sincere the issue could have been resolved long ago," Justice Ahmed said at a discussion meeting organised in the city yesterday in observance of the second anniversary of the death of Justice Amin Ahmed.

Justice Amin Ahmed was one of the first six judges who came to Dhaka from the Calcutta High Court after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

He retired in 1959 as chief justice of the then High Court of East Pakistan. The Amin Ahmed Memorial Council organised the discussion at the South Plaza of the Supreme Court Bar Association building. Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed regretted that the fate of a bill introduced by an opposition member in Parliament two and a half years ago seeking the separation of the judiciary from the executive still remained undecided.

"I hope the fate of the bill will be decided in the House

through discussion," he said, adding if the issue were put to vote then it would be clear who were in favour of the independence of the judiciary and who were against.

The Chief Justice, who headed a care-taker government after the fall of the Ershad regime, said that according to Article 116 of the Constitution the President should appoint the lower judiciary officials in consultation with the Supreme Court. But the rules were not being followed, he pointed out.

As the government is appointing the lower judiciary officials the standard is not up to the mark. The situation could have improved if the appointments were made in consultation with the Supreme Court.

Article 116, he said, permits the President to appoint the judiciary officials but Article 116 (a) says that the judiciary will work independently. As the two clauses are contradictory, Article 116 should be amended, he added.

With the Justice Amin Ahmed Memorial Council president Justice Maksudul Hakim in the chair, the meeting was addressed by, among others, former President Justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, former Chief Justice Kemaluddin See Page 12 Col 7

### Pranab Mukherjee due Dec 26 to attend JEC talks

Indian Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee is due to arrive here December 26 on a four-day visit to Bangladesh to lead his country's delegation to the ensuing meeting of the Indo-Bangla Joint Economic Commission (JEC). The talks are scheduled to begin in the capital the same day.

The Bangladesh side to the meeting will be headed by Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman.

A source confided to UNB yesterday that the Commission would deliberate on the present economic relations between the two countries and devise ways and means of improving it by offsetting the existing trade imbalance against Bangladesh.

Pranab Mukherjee, who is the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in his See Page 12 Col 4

### Professionals go on 3-day mass leave

Professionals belonging to the Prokrichi and the 26 BCS cadres yesterday went on three days' mass leave as part of their renewed agitation to realise their 17-point charter of demands.

Editorial on page 4

A large number of officials in the Roads and Highways Department, Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, the Water Development Board and the Public Works Department did not attend offices after filing applications for three days' casual leave.

Leaders of the Prokrichi claimed that their mass leave programme was being observed See Page 12 Col 5

### JS body reviews preparations for SAF Games

The 6th SAF Games will be colourfully inaugurated at the Dhaka National Stadium No 1 on December 20 at 2:30 pm, reports UNB.

This was told at the 13th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Youth and Sports Ministry, held at the Sangsad Bhavan yesterday with State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain in the chair. See Page 12 Col 6

## ANNOUNCEMENT FOR COMPUTER SPECIAL

THE NEXT ISSUE OF MONTHLY The Daily Star COMPUTER SPECIAL WILL BE PUBLISHED ON SUNDAY, 19 DECEMBER 1993.

FORUM MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SEND IN THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS INCLUDING COMPANY NEWS AND PRODUCT NEWS BY WEDNESDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2 PM. DUE TO 16TH BEING A HOLIDAY, WE REQUEST ALL MEMBERS TO RESPECT THE DEADLINE.

### 2 m Bangladeshis displaced by Farakka, says Indian expert

An Indian researcher has said that some two million people in the Khulna region of Bangladesh have been displaced as a direct consequence of the Farakka barrage.

Ashok Swain, a Research Fellow at the Uppsala University of Sweden, told The Daily Star that most of the population of the Khulna and Kushtia districts, as well as Rajshahi, have been forced to leave their homes because of the economic hardships due to water diversion by the Farakka barrage.

Swain is working on a study under the Department of Peace and Conflict Research on the Ganges water sharing dispute between India and Bangladesh.

Swain came to Bangladesh last month in connection with his on-going research work which is being funded by the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC).

Ph. D. holder on the security of small states from the Jawaharlal Nehru University at Delhi, Swain joined the Department of Peace and Conflict Research of the Uppsala University in 1991.

He said he plans to specialise in conflict resolution research. Quoting preliminary findings

of his study, the 28-year-old researcher said the Farakka barrage has hit hard the small farmers in particular and made them landless, thereby kicking off a disastrous 'eco-migration' from the region.



Ashok Swain. The Farakka barrage, only 18 kilometres from the Bangladesh border, is located in the West Bengal state of India. Commissioned on April 21, 1975, the 40,000-cusecs-capacity barrage was built for maintaining the navigability of the Calcutta port by diverting waters from the Ganges to the

Bhagirathi-Hooghly rivers. The Bangladesh government charges that the country's economy and environment have been seriously affected due to the adverse impact of water withdrawal by India at Farakka.

Pointing out the absence of any agreement between the two countries for sharing the Ganges waters at present, Swain said Farakka was the most irritating factor in the Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Although the nature of the dispute is still 'no-armed' in character, yet it has seriously strained relations between the neighbours over the past two decades, he said.

An excellent relationship, founded with India's assistance to the independence struggle of Bangladesh, promptly eroded within three to four years mainly because of the Farakka barrage, the researcher pointed out.

The way Bangladesh is being pushed into institutionalising the Farakka issue at various fora would eventually go against the strategic interest of India in the near future. "India should now consider whether its national interest is rightly served by Farakka or not," observed the articulate researcher from the Indian state See Page 12 Col 6

## স্বচ্ছায় অবসর গ্রহণকারীদের জন্য ঋণ সহায়তা প্রদান

- সরকারী, স্বায়ত্তশাসিত ও আধা-স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বচ্ছায় অবসর গ্রহণকারী কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারীদের আত্মকর্মসংস্থানের লক্ষ্যে সহজস্বর্তে ক্ষুদ্র প্রকল্পে ঋণ সহায়তা প্রদানের জন্য সরকার পাবনিকভাবে পঞ্চাশ কোটি টাকা অবিলম্বে বিনিয়োগের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেছেন।
- এ স্বীমের আওতায় বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক, রাজশাহী কৃষি উন্নয়ন ব্যাংক, ইষ্টার্ন ব্যাংক লিঃ এবং ব্যাংক অব স্মল ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ এন্ড কমার্স বাংলাদেশ লিঃ সংশ্লিষ্ট অবসরগ্রহণ কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারীদের মধ্যে যারা প্রকল্পস্থাপনে উৎসাহী তাদের ক্ষুদ্র প্রকল্পে ঋণ সহায়তা প্রদান করবে।
- এ স্বীমের আওতায় তিন বছরের মধ্যে ব্যবহারযোগ্য সর্বাধিক, বিশ লক্ষ টাকা ঋণ সুবিধা প্রদান করা হবে।
- স্বচ্ছায় অবসর গ্রহণকারী কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারীদেরকে এ স্বীমের আওতায় ঋণ সুবিধা গ্রহণের জন্য ঋণ সংক্রান্ত শর্তাবলী ও বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য পছন্দ অনুযায়ী চারটি ব্যাংকের যে কোনটির সংশ্লিষ্ট শাখা ব্যবস্থাপকের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে অনুরোধ করা হল।

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