

Fuel dealers demand 7.5 pc commission

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Jalani Tel Paribeshak Samity (Fuel dealers' association) yesterday demanded that the government should immediately raise the dealers' commission from the present rate of 1.5 to 7.5 per cent.

Raising a number of demands at a press conference yesterday, the samity leaders warned that if the government failed to accept the demands by May 12, they would observe a half-day token strike at all filling stations of the country, to be followed by all-out agitation.

The conference, held at the Jatiya Press Club, was addressed by samity president Abul Kalam Azad, secretary general Md Golam Sarwar Munshi, Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury, Shahjahan Sinha, Haji Abdur Rahman and others.

Abul Kalam Azad pointed out that the government had reduced the dealers' commission to 1.5 per cent from 3.35 during the 1990 Gulf War crisis through a mutual understanding that this rate would be enhanced to 7.5 per cent as soon as the war ended. Simultaneously, the government had raised the price of petrol to Tk 14 per litre from Tk 7 because the international price had gone up.

"After the war, the international price has gone down.

Air services agreement with Egypt

The designated airlines of Bangladesh and Egypt can operate two weekly flights between Dhaka and Cairo with aircraft equivalent similar to DC 10-30, reports BSS.

A bilateral air services agreement between the government of Bangladesh and Egypt was signed at the headquarters of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh in Dhaka yesterday.

Sahidul Alam Chowdhury, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and M Kamal Elmilky, ambassador of Egypt to Bangladesh signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan was present at the signing ceremony.

Contraband medicine seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs surveillance men seized contraband medicines worth about Taka 4.5 lakh from a Pakistani citizen at ZIA International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

They recovered the medicines which were hidden in a luggage of one Abdur Rauf, who arrived in Dhaka from Karachi by a flight of the Pakistan International Airlines at 11:10 am.

A departmental case was lodged and the man was released later on.

Biswas visits Samad Azad

President Abdur Rahman Biswas visited ailing Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad at the PG hospital yesterday, reports BSS.

President Biswas spent sometime with Samad Azad and enquired the attending doctors about the progress of his treatment.

The President also prayed for his early recovery.

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resist Sayeedi on the ground that he had actively collaborated with the Pakistani occupation army during the nation's Liberation War in 1971.

The All-Party Committee (APC) has also decided to hold a rally at the same venue simultaneously.

Advocate Mahtab Hossain, a leader of the Islami Samajikayan Parishad, told this correspondent this evening that they were ready to face the All-Party Committee activists. "We will definitely hold our rally by violating the prohibitory order," Advocate Hossain said.

On the other hand, the leaders of the APC told this correspondent that they would definitely resist the "religious peddlers."

The local authorities have deployed police at different road intersections of the municipal areas and asked the Home Ministry to deploy members of the para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrak, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a mammoth public meeting at the Shukurorhat High School ground at Mithapukur thana in Rangpur yesterday. — PID photo

Jamuna Bridge to have rly line: Oli

The Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge will have rail-line from the very first day of its commissioning and the bridge will open to traffic for all vehicles including trains, reports UNB.

In a press statement yesterday, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed said the present government never thought of the bridge without railway.

Referring to some "misleading" reports which appeared in a section of the press, the minister called upon all to refrain from making any statement which may create confusion in the mind of the people in this respect.

He also urged them to keep in touch with Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMPBA) office, if need be, to get correct information before making any statement regarding railway track over the Jamuna bridge, the foundation of which was laid on April 10.

Five killed as truck, bus collide

CHITTAGONG, Apr 12: A truck and a minibus collided at Ghoramara on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway today, killing at least five people and injuring 15, reports UNB.

Two of the dead were identified as Jamal Uddin, 22, and Akkas Mia, 30, of Noakhali.

The injured admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital are Md Yusuf, Sadirur Rahman, Uttam Das, Kazi Abdul Kasem, Chandra Lal Shah, Abdus Shahid, Taher Ali, Farid Miah, Md Rafiq, Amir Hossain, Dadan Miah and another unidentified man.

Police and hospital sources said a Sonapur-bound minibus from here and an onion-laden truck collided head-on at Ghoramara in Shitakunda thana. The minibus skidded off the road and turned turtle.

One of the bus passengers died on the spot, two others on way to hospital and another two at the hospital, witnesses said.

Police arrested the truck driver and seized the truck, but the driver of the minibus managed to flee the scene.

Teachers' rally

From Page 1 Col 2' Sheikh Amanullah, Dr M Akbar Taruzzaman, Hajaera Begum, Rasheda, Rafiqul Islam, Azizul Haq, and Chowdhury Khursid Ali.

The liaison committee claimed that "the Prime Minister had verbally accepted their demands in early 1992 and had then promised to fulfil their demands within two months but her commitment was yet to be materialised."

The CMEC's proposal for the second phase, however, did not clearly mention anything regarding provision for a hot-start system.

The hot-start system which allows a unit to begin power generation within two hours after start, is absent in the first phase. As a result, it takes at least three days to re-start the unit whenever it trips. "This occasional power failure results in heavy loss to national productivity," an expert commented.

Before November last year, the PDR had claimed compensation of about Tk 52 crore for the delay in the implementation of the first phase as per the terms of the agreement. The CMEC is yet to settle the issue.

The authorities should act according to the experience of the first phase. No doubt Bangladesh needs more power. But that does not mean we would set up something unreliable. Why is the hurry to sign such an accord now?" commented an expert on energy requesting anonymity.

See also Page 7.

Mahbubur Rahman observed that with the emergence of new blocks and integration of the North, there is an urgency for acquiring technological capabilities and enhancement of competitiveness and productivity in the South.

He urged the RPG Enterprises chairman to cooperate in setting up textile mills and telecommunication industries as well as in natural gas exploration in Bangladesh.

PM: Investors feel shy

From Page 1 Col 7 together with the government. "Let us all work shoulder-to-shoulder to build the country."

The Prime Minister asked the people of greater Rangpur to change their attitude in the light of the existing realities. "Development is not possible with emotion and falsification. You should lend your support to the BNP to ensure development."

Although there is no BNP representative in Parliament from this district, the government has not let down Rangpur, the Prime Minister said, adding that her government had taken up massive development programmes for the district.

Begum Zia said the fallen Ershad regime had harassed the farmers with certificate cases and loan burdens. But the present government had waived agricultural credit up to Tk 5,000 and land tax upto 25 bighas. It also withdrew certificate cases.

She said the prime need for the nation is to educate the people because it is not possible to ensure development without literacy. Begum Zia called upon the

BNP preparations

From Page 1 Col 7 said, would be finalised at an extended meeting of the party's working committee early next month. The AL has also announced a package programme including gheraos (sieges) to the district administration offices on April 20 and another day-long hartal on April 26.

The BNP, during its nationwide preparations, would be trying to highlight some issues before the public to discredit the agitating opposition, one leader said.

He said the AL's hartal call on the day of the foundation stone laying of the much-touted Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge would be explained as "the opposition impeding development activities." The country's achievements during the past three years under the BNP government and how the opposition's agitation had deterred foreign investment in the country would also be part

of the BNP's strategy to counter the opposition.

When contacted, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder told The Daily Star that being the ruling party, the BNP had some responsibility to make Parliament effective.

"But this does not mean that we have to accept all the demands of the opposition," he said.

It is difficult for us to give a befitting reply to the opposition's agitation, but if they force us to take to the streets, we shall have to do so.

"But we will leave no stone unturned for an amicable settlement," Salam Talukder added. If the opposition tries to embarrass the government it will ultimately cause suffering for the nation, he added.

Salam Talukder said that reorganisation of the BNP's central bodies had boosted the morale of the workers who would now actively participate in different party programmes.

Coalition meets today to select Hosokawa's SUCCESSOR

TOKYO, Apr 12: Japan's ruling coalition moved to settle its differences today after a bitter internal feud over how to choose the next prime minister, increasing chances it would opt for Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, reports Reuter.

The demands include removal of disparity between the government and the private schools and colleges, bringing all non-government teachers under the government pay scale, the setting up of a trust for the welfare of the teachers, and regularisation of non-government teachers.

We are disappointed at the government's reluctance to accept an 'employment security bill' for the private school-college teachers and ensure equal opportunities for the students of the government and the private institutions", said Prof Mansur Rahman.

"As 85 per cent of the students of the country study in private institutions, the government should allocate 85 per cent of the education sector budget for them," he suggested.

The speakers at the rally said, the quality of education in the country had deteriorated due to the government's wrong policy.

"We believe, the education sector should be kept above all group or party interests. We urge all to save this sector from an impending catastrophe", said Kamruzzaman.

According to a programme announced at the rally, the teachers would also stage demonstrations and sit-ins, during their indefinite strike.

See also Page 7.

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He urged the RPG Enterprises chairman to cooperate in setting up textile mills and telecommunication industries as well as in natural gas exploration in Bangladesh.

2 more branches will soon go into operation at Bhola and Jhalokathi.

Force corrupt BNP govt out: Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the people to build a united resistance against the vote dacoit, corrupt and terrorist government of BNP and force it out, reports UNB.

In a statement, Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, condemned the killing of Chhatra League leader Mohammad Bacchu Mia by BNP terrorists in Laxmipur during the April 10 country-wide hartal.

She alleged BNP men armed with sawed off rifle, pistol, Chinese axe and ramdios attacked and killed Bacchu and wounded Joyinal and Omid of Juba League. The attackers cut the tendons of hands and legs of Joyinal.

Despite complaints, the administration is yet to take action against them, Hasina said.

The Awami League President said the alienated BNP government had indulged in killing people to stall the movement aimed at realising people's democratic rights.

"Nothing — democracy, life and property of the people is safe under the rule of this government."

The opposition leader also protested alleged BNP attack on an Awami League procession during the hartal at Galachipa. Ashikur Rahman and Raisan Sharif of Chhatra League have been admitted to Galachipa thana health complex with injuries.

Hasina demanded arrest and punishment of the attackers.

At the meeting more than 3000 leaders and workers from the Awami League and the Jatiya Party, led by Principal Zahidul Islam and Sree Uttam Kumar Shah, formally joined the BNP expressing their total support for the leadership of Begum Zia.

The Prime Minister distributed poultry birds and cattle among some distressed women.

She also inaugurated the Hena Memorial Hospital, a private charitable hospital, built by local BNP leader Nurul Huda Sultan.

3 aspirants for BNP standing body post

By Staff Correspondent

Following the formation of the new committee of the ruling BNP, the rank and file of the party have started discussing who will get the only vacant post of the powerful standing committee.

Fourteen members of the 15-member policy-making body were named during the April 4 reshuffle of the party committees.

"Who will be the lucky person to get the coveted post," is a common question being asked by party workers and leaders.

Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam are the likely candidates for the post. A technocrat BNP man may also be chosen, insiders say.

Nazmul Huda and Tariqul Islam are vice-presidents of the new committee while Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is a Joint Secretary General.

The members of the central committee would be named shortly, along with the remaining standing committee member.

Salam Talukder said that reorganisation of the BNP's central bodies had boosted the morale of the workers who would now actively participate in different party programmes.

AL hoodlums killed BNP men Paran, Milon, says Salam

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and Secretary General of the BNP Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday called for unity of the people to resist the politics of conspiracy by the Awami League, reports BSS.

Talukder was addressing as chief guest a big rally organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in protest against the killing of its workers Paran and Milon by the Awami League 'hoodlums' on the Secretariat Siege day.

Presided over by JCD president Fazlul Huq Milon, the rally was also addressed by Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia as a special guest.

DUCSU vice president Amanullah Aman, MP, DUCSU general secretary Khairul Kabir Khokan, JCD general secretary Nazim Uddin Alam, JASAS president Zahid Hossain Chunnu, JCD leaders Shirin Sultana, Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu, Kamruzzaman Ratan, Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anny, Moniruzzaman Monir and Monir Uzzaman Bulbul addressed the rally.

Indian tariff

From Page 1 Col 4 per cent understanding has not been achieved.

The Indian tycoon hoped the problems between the two countries, including the water-sharing issue, would be resolved.

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Mahbubur Rahman observed that with the emergence of new blocks and integration of the North, there is an urgency for acquiring technological capabilities and enhancement of competitiveness and productivity in the South.

He urged the RPG Enterprises chairman to cooperate in setting up textile mills and telecommunication industries as well as in natural gas exploration in Bangladesh.

No casualties had been reported immediately. The cause of the fire could not also be ascertained, the firemen said.

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The Daily Star

The Midnight File

Agreement to evacuate foreigners from Rwanda

NAIROBI, Apr 12: Tutsi rebels advancing on the Rwandan capital signed an agreement with UN officials today guaranteeing the evacuation of foreigners from the country, rebel radio reported. The radio of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), monitored here by the BBC, said the agreement took effect at 7:00 am (0500GMT) today and guaranteed free passage of convoys carrying foreigners and accompanied by UN observers