

## Tk 336 cr dredging scheme under consideration

By Staff Correspondent

A Tk 336-crore dredging programme for improving the alarmingly declining navigability of the country's waterways is now under consideration of the Planning Commission.

Shipping Minister M K Anwar said this while inaugurating a four-day workshop on 'Multimodal transport - how to become a multimodal transport operator at a city hotel yesterday.

The workshop was organised by the Shippers Council of Bangladesh with the assistance of the UN-ESCAP.

FBCCI President Salman F Rahman, Shippers Council Chairman M R Ali and Vice Chairman Rezaul Karim also spoke on the occasion.

The shipping minister said, due to unilateral withdrawal of Ganges water our inland waterways reduce to only about 4,000 kilometres during the dry season. In the past, the total length of the country's inland waterways was about 12,000 kms. he mentioned. Referring to various devel-

opment programmes in the shipping sector, the minister said a Tk 310-crore interim development programme for Chittagong Port has been undertaken to increase container and cargo handling efficiency.

Besides, an inland container port will be set up on the Buriganga river at Pangaon under Keraniganj in Dhaka at a cost of Tk 277 crore, the minister pointed out.

M K Anwar said, multimodal transport system together with containerisation has brought

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about revolutionary changes in international trade, transport and shipping. It is of vital importance for us to develop and efficiently operate the system for promotion of our exports, he added.

In this regard the minister also stressed the need for co-ordinating banking rules, Customs procedures and insurance policies to facilitate efficient operation of multimodal transport system.

## Hasina promises subsidy

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said creating a crisis of fertiliser, rice, paper and other essentials, for not granting subsidy in the agricultural sector, killing farmers as they agitated for fertiliser at fair price and the workers for demonstrating against unsuitable industrial policy, sale of public sector industrial units at throw-away prices and retrenchment of workers without ensuring alternative jobs for them.

The AL organised the peasants-workers rally as part of the Opposition's agitation

## Ctg road mishap

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Four others including BTV cameraman Mohammad Hossain and PRO of fisheries minister Abdullah Al Noman - Mostafa Kamal and another TV staff Abdur Rahim, were injured. They are now under treatment at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital. The condition of Hossain was critical, hospital sources said.

Among the four killed, **Monir Hossain (Muku)** succumbed to his injury at Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police said the accident took place when their jeep collided head-on with a passenger bus bound for Chittagong from Cox's Bazar at 9:00 am today. All the passengers of the bus except one remained unhurt, police added.

Sources said the victims were on way to Cox's Bazar to cover a programme of Live-stock Minister Abdullah Al-Noman scheduled for this afternoon.

## Dalim

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the country's ambassador there. But it was reportedly reluctant to clear the agreement accepting Dalim as envoy, it is learnt.

The government will now send the name of a new nominee to be the ambassador to Brazil. The post of Bangladeshi envoy in Brasilia has been vacant since the retirement of Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdus Salam some months ago.

Meanwhile, Dr Afsarul Quader, who is Director General of the United Nations desk in the Foreign Ministry, is expected to proceed shortly to Kenya to take up the post of High Commissioner. Dr Quader's agreement has already been approved by the Kenyan government.

## New Postings

Syed Muazzem Ali, who is a Director General in the Foreign Ministry, will shortly take over as ambassador to Iran. His agreement has already received approval of the host government.

Major General Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, whose services have been placed at the disposal of Foreign Ministry and who has been appointed ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman is expected to take up his assignment within a few weeks. The post in Muscat which was so long at the charge d'affaires level is being upgraded with the new posting.

## Ajax Jute Mills laid off

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 16: The Mirerdanga Ajax Jute Mills has been declared laid off from April 15. A spokesman of the zonal office of BJMC said, the lay off came because of heavy losses, financial crisis and inability of the mills to pay the wages of the workers.

Meanwhile, workers are reportedly continuing production voluntarily keeping officials confined to the offices.

The besieged officials are being guarded by two contingents of riot police.

## JP urges PM

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Hossain, secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju and assistant secretary general Munirul Haq Chowdhury.

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury reiterated the party's demand for general elections under a caretaker administration, saying there was no consistency between the activities and words of the present government.

He also announced a fresh agitation programme, including a sit-in by the MPs who had submitted their resignations on December 28 last in front of the Speaker's office on April 24.

Moudud Ahmed accused the government of creating the food and fertiliser crises. The country was facing a food shortage of 34 lakh tonnes which would increase by 10 lakh tonnes due to the fertiliser crisis, he said.

Moudud Ahmed described the Gen Abul Manzur murder case as politically motivated and demanded publication of the report of the enquiry commission formed on June 6, 1981 in connection with the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman.

Anwar Hossain Manju said the BNP would have to resign to facilitate the formation of a caretaker government if it wanted the constitutional process and democratic order to continue.

## English

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progress of introducing English language as a compulsory paper in all the departments of the universities. It also decided to introduce English language as compulsory subject in Degree (Pass and Honours) from 1995-96 session.

The meeting was informed that the government had taken steps to introduce English language at all levels of education.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated the NID at the Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI) building at Mahakhali by dropping polio vaccine into the mouths of three minor girls at noon yesterday. She took the children in her lap and patted them with motherly affection.

Education Secretary and University Grants Commission chairman were present.

## Power plant

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based company is also negotiating a production sharing contract (PSC) with Petrobangla to explore natural gas in the western part of the country.

The MOU was signed at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources by Additional Secretary Jamal Hossain and President of Geopetrol W E Richards on behalf of their respective sides.

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khondaker Mosharrar Hossain, Energy Secretary Faizur Razzak, acting Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh John Deyell and other high officials concerned were present at the signing ceremony.

Noting that the country's electricity demand is expected to double by the end of the century, the Energy Minister welcomed signing of the MOU to set up a private sector power plant. He assured full government support to the private investors in the power sector in line with its liberal economic policy.

Bangladesh has so far signed six MOUs with foreign private investors for setting up power generation plants. Of these, the proposal of Geopetrol is the most advanced as it was earlier approved by the Cabinet Sub-committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Geopetrol said that the proposed power plant would be equipped with dual burners capable of using either furnace oil or natural gas or both. Initially the plant would use furnace oil and would switch to natural gas in the future if the company's exploration efforts proves successful, it added.

The project would be partially funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

## Khaleda

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ated the people of the forces who gave legitimacy to the autocratic government by participating in their elections.

"And they have again joined hands with them to foil democracy and the development process initiated by the present elected government."

Begum Zia also asked the people to count the days of hardships that affected the mills, factories and schools.

The Prime Minister reminded the people that when the Opposition failed to get the people's support after submitting their resignation from Parliament, they started politics with rice and fertiliser.

She charged the Opposition with hindering smooth transport of the much needed agricultural input by calling programmes of hartal and siege when the government took things under its control from the private sector.

Referring to the problem of a huge number of weavers in the area, she said the government is actively considering to bring about a solution.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister also inaugurated the ISD (International Subscribers Dialling) telephone network by talking to President Abdur Rahman Biswas from the dais.



A child is being administered oral polio vaccine at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, the second phase of the National Immunisation Day. — Star photo

## Phase II: Children immunised at 1.5 lakh centres

By Staff Correspondent

The second phase of the National Immunisation Day (NID) was observed across the country yesterday with the aim to immunise some two crore children under five against polio.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated the NID at the Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI) building at Mahakhali by dropping polio vaccine into the mouths of three minor girls at noon yesterday. She took the children in her lap and patted them with motherly affection.

Some 1.30 lakh centres were opened on the day in villages, market places, schools, clinics and other public places to immunise the children under the 25 crore taka vaccination programme. Some six lakh volunteers were engaged for the purpose.

The government had declared March 16 and April 16 this year as NID to eradicate polio from the country by the year 2000. The NID will be observed in the same way in the next two years.

The Health Ministry, in collaboration with UNICEF, WHO, Rotary International, USAID and socio-cultural organisations, is implementing

the programme. The day began at 8 am and continued till 4 pm. Parents with their children spontaneously came to the vaccination centres where the children were also given vitamin A capsules.

The first phase of the NID was observed on March 16 in which some 1.53 crore children were given the polio vaccine.

Polio vaccines were also given to the children in different ward commissioners' offices, hospitals, maternities and dispensaries.

Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif administered the oral vaccine to the children at Sramajibi Hospital at Naya-Bazar.

The Radda MCH-FP centre at Mirpur vaccinated over 23,000 children at its six centres in the area. The WHO representative, Dr W Hardjotanojo and officials from the USAID, Bangladesh Rotary Polio, EPI and Radda Barmen and others visited the MCH centres.

The Rotary Club of Motijheel and Progoti S/W organised a vaccination programme at the Jane Alam Sarker High School and at the college premises in Khilkhet where some 1,000 children were given the polio vaccine.

Meanwhile, Mostafa Golam Qudus, the police officer who became famous after arresting the fleeing Gen Manzur on June 1, 1981, and who was injured in a serious road accident near Sitakundu last April 3, returned to Dhaka yesterday after undergoing treatment at a Bangkok hospital.

Qudus had suffered a compound fracture in his left humerus (upper arm) in the accident which occurred when he was accompanying some CID investigators to Fatikchhari to identify the spot inside a tea garden from where he had arrested Gen Manzur along with his family.

He left for Bangkok on April 4 and was admitted to the Samithevji Hospital, a leading medical centre in the Thai capital.

Doctors had to operate on his arm and use steel plates to join the bones. His arm is still in a cast.

He was advised to return to Bangkok for a check up after two weeks.

Emdad's lawyers said they would move the higher court if their client's prayer for bail is rejected by the CMM.

A previous prayer for Emdad's bail was rejected by CMM Matjur Rahman on March 28.

## Dhaka to seek more food aid

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per cent import growth. The import bill will be between US dollar 5.5 to 6 million next year.

The national savings also reached nearly 15 per cent of the GDP, he said, adding if the current trend continues, the saving investment ratio will eventually reach up to 17pc.

Rahman suggested more discipline in fiscal and monetary management by cutting down wastes and extravagances. He also underlined the need for involving the private sector in the economy.

Referring to reforms, the Finance Minister said the World Bank and donors sometimes insist on speedy implementation of the reform programmes.

But ironically, he pointed out, it may not be possible to implement reforms overnight

"because of our unique political culture, sensitivity and social compulsions... We can't implement them with the speed the World Bank and donors often want."

"If I can't realise the political reality and social compulsions, then I will be an unrealistic Finance Minister," Saifur said explaining his predicaments. "Whatever the World Bank and donors say may not be axiomatic... We're trying to improve our situation."

He said, "reform and good governance" had become the catchwords for many western donors.

"But their perception of good governance may not always be the same as that of ours... Here democracy and development go together. We have to maintain social and democratic equilibrium. We are a much more debate and

## Gas explosion

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stage, gas leaking from a freshly snapped pipeline led to the blaze.

Fire engines rushed to the spot immediately and doused the blaze after a nearly 25-minute struggle.

Laibagh police said no case was registered in this connection till late last night.

Meanwhile, two more persons, injured in the gas stove explosion at 69, Ulan Road, Kampura, have died at the DMCH, raising the death toll to 11.

Those who succumbed to their burn injuries yesterday are, Khandaker Babul, 28, and Rahima, 20.

The conditions of three other injured undergoing treatment at the DMCH, namely Labu, 6, Laily, 35, and Nurul Islam, 30, were stated to be critical.

Fifteen persons, including three children, were injured in the explosion which occurred in the kitchen of the two-storied building last Tuesday.

## Mujibnagar Day

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Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Munsur Ali, A H M Kamruzzaman and Mushtaque Ahmed.

The Awami League and its front organisations have drawn up an elaborate programme to observe the day throughout the country. A three-day programme has also been arranged at Mujibnagar.

The programme includes hoisting of national and party flags at the party offices at 6:00 am and garlanding the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Bhavan in the city at seven in the morning. There will be discussion meetings in different areas of the capital.

The Bangladesh Mujibnagar Karmachari Kalyan Sangsad has arranged a discussion meeting at 4:30 pm at the Hotel Rajmuni Isha Kha auditorium. It will be followed by a cultural function.

In a statement yesterday, the AL chief Sheikh Hasina said the Charter of Independence was adopted on this day in 1971. The constitution of Bangladesh was written on the basis of this charter, she added.

Sheikh Hasina accused the ruling BNP of distorting the history, working against the hopes and aspirations of the people, democratic values and infringing fundamental human rights.

## Fertiliser, rice

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Cabinet at any next meeting, would take a decision regarding an 'emergency stock' of rice.

The wheat procurement drive is now in progress, he pointed out.

In reply to a question if he, as the ruling party Secretary General, apprehended a negative impact of the fertiliser and rice crisis on his party's prospects in the next elections, Salam Talukdar said "I don't think so."

"In fact the crisis was exaggerated in the media and in some places opposition parties tried to create disturbance out of it," the BNP leader said.

"Does a farmer carry cock-fails during purchase of fertiliser," Talukdar asked. He hoped that *boro* production would not fall in the current season.

## Kuwait

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nearly 63 per cent are overseas people including skilled and unskilled workers. While the number of Egyptians, Pakistanis and Indians employed in Kuwait had either declined or marked nominal increase after the Gulf war, Bangladesh workforce now dominated the Kuwaiti manpower market. Its number has increased from around 60,000 to nearly 1,06,000 presently.

Responding to a question, the Foreign Ministry official also mentioned that 51.5 million US dollars have been earmarked as compensation for the Gulf war affected Bangladeshis.

About press reports on obtaining debt relief of 200 million US dollars from the Kuwaiti government, the spokesman said that there was no question of such loan cancellation since the total amount obtained from Kuwait as loans was only around 70 million dollars. He, however, added Bangladesh has made a request to get a waiver of the existing amount of credit.

Regarding the Bangladesh Prime Minister's welcoming the Crown Prince at the airport, the spokesman agreed that it was a departure from standard protocol but said it was done as a personal gesture towards the Kuwaiti Prime Minister in view of the excellent relationship between the two countries. The Crown Prince, he recalled, also received and saw off Begum Khaleda Zia during her visit to Kuwait in May, 1991. A special royal aircraft was also provided by Kuwait during Begum Zia's trip to Dakar to attend the OIC conference.

## The Midnight File

### 11 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Apr 16: Eleven persons, including two security men and four militants, were killed in separate incidents in parts of the Kashmir valley since last evening. The security forces destroyed two underground hideouts and arrested six militants and seized a big cache of arms and ammunition in the valley during the period, an official spokesman said here today, reports PTI.

### 25 injured in N'ganj clash

From Our Correspondent

### Cong dissidents in Orissa form separate body

BHUBANESWAR, Apr 16: A group of rebel Congressmen in Orissa owing allegiance to expelled Congress-I leader Arjun Singh and senior party leader N D Tiwari have decided "to reorganise" the state Congress and work for the cause of the "poor and the deprived class to save the party's ideals and goals", reports PTI.

The rebel partymen, who had formed a "Congress Save" meeting here yesterday under the chairmanship of Dolagobinda Pradhan, a former minister, who was also named convener of the committee.

The meeting authorised him to form coordination committees to take up future programmes for "reformation" of the party under the leadership of Arjun Singh and others.

In another resolution, the meeting decided to request all opposition political parties to field Chintamani Panigrahi, former governor of Manipur as the common opposition candidate.

### Revenue

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Sources at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) said an import surge boosted collections at the import stage which ultimately contributed to the fattening of the public coffers above expectation.

Return from the income tax, on the other hand, was about Tk 239 crore, 26 per cent short of the target.

Collections of customs duty were to the tune of Tk 2376.12 crore, about Tk 315 crore or more than 15 per cent higher than the target of the period.

Customs duty collection during the period was also up by more than 21 per cent from that of the same period of the last fiscal year.

Similarly, earnings from both the Value Added Tax (VAT) and Supplementary Duty at import stage surpassed targets by big margins.

VAT collection from imported goods stood at Tk 1417.59 crore, a hefty turnover crossing the period's target by about Tk 269 crore or nearly 24 per cent.

Also, a Tk 69.96 crore collection as Supplementary Duty at the import stage surpassed over the target by an incredible 147 per cent. Supplementary Duty is imposed on some luxury items.

Additional receipt at import stage was attributed by NBR officials to uptrend in imports in recent months.

According to the Bangladesh Bank statistics, imports during July '94-Jan '95 rose 32.40 per cent to 3060 million US dollars compared to 2266 million in the corresponding seven months of last year.

Income tax collection during the period totalled Tk 673.23 crore, falling short of the period's target of Tk 912 crore.

NBR sources, however, said the poor income tax collection was due to a post-budget hike in import duty on petroleum that squeezed the profitability of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation usually the number one income-tax payer.

VAT collection at production stage was Tk 712.27 crore which exceeded the target by a little over 4 per cent.

### জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সরকার ঘোষিত লোড ম্যানেজমেন্ট নীতি বাস্তবায়নে সাহায্য করুন

- (১) সেচ পাম্পসমূহ পিক আওয়ারে অর্থাৎ সন্ধ্যা ৬টা থেকে রাত ১০টা পর্যন্ত বন্ধ রাখুন।
- (২) সরকার ঘোষিত বিশেষ উৎসবের দিন ব্যতিরেকে অন্যান্য দিনে সর্বধরনের আলোকসজ্জা বন্ধ রাখুন।
- (৩) সন্ধ্যা ৬টা থেকে রাত ৮টা পর্যন্ত ইন্ড্রি, হিটার, কুকার, ওয়াটারহিটার ইত্যাদির ব্যবহার বন্ধ রাখুন।
- (৪) এক শিফটে চালু শিল্প ও ক্ষুদ্র শিল্প কারখানাগুলি পিক আওয়ারে বন্ধ রাখুন।
- (৫) অহেতুক বাতি জ্বালাবেন না।

ঢাকা বিদ্যুৎ বিতরণ কর্তৃপক্ষ (ডেসা)

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