

SAVE DEKA



It's sometimes good to have pets. But not when pets for sale are displayed on the sidewalks — or the road itself — by the shopkeepers of the Dhaka University Market at Katabon near Elephant road, one of the busiest commercial areas of the city. — Star photo

Hazy Maze of Political Funding-II

From page 1

Ministers. The ruling party has 251 central executive committee members, 172 MPs, 15 members in the standing committee and about 60 members in the secretariat. If everybody pays, the monthly income from the above sources should come to around Tk 50,000.

BNP treasurer Shah Alam said that office expenses are met by the regular collections from the central leaders. He added that there was hardly any deposit in the bank and that funds are raised before every major programme.

The party Constitution makes it mandatory that one who desires to become a member of the BNP should fill up a prescribed form and pay Tk 2 for primary membership. After becoming a member, a general member should pay Tk 1 per annum for the continuity of his or her membership.

The investigation revealed that the party's general members usually do not make regular contributions and funds are separately raised for different occasions. The central committee does not receive any contribution from the district committees.

The opposition Awami League has two offices in the city — one in the Bangabandhu Avenue and another in Dhanmandi. The Bangabandhu Road central office is a party property but the party has to pay Tk 20,000 monthly rent for its Dhanmandi office.

A party worker whose name was not disclosed, has paid one-year's rent in advance when the office was rented in January this year.

Treasurer of the party Ashequr Rahman said that total monthly office expenditure is about Tk 5,000 to Tk 7,000 which is collected from among the party leaders.

Sixtyfive members of the central working committee are supposed to pay Tk 200 each while MPs (now resigned) contribute Tk 300 each per month. If this contribution is realised regularly the monthly collection should be at least 40,000. But Rahman said the party had no savings with the bank and the funds for special programmes are collected through special drives when a political programme is undertaken.

The Jatiya Party currently has a small rented office in Mogbazar which is now closed for several months. It has a Tk 50 lakh fixed deposit which was blocked immediately after the party's ouster from power.

Party treasurer Nurunnabi Chhand said currently they have no regular income and funds are collected occasionally from senior leaders.

Party insiders say that the JP has some wealthy leaders and sometimes the central leaders procure funds from the party sympathisers.

Only the Jamaat-e-Islami had a well-established mechanism for collecting funds. Jamaat has a total of 9,500 listed members (Rokon) who pay five per cent of their total monthly income to keep their enrollment in the party. The monthly regular income is about Tk 600,000 to Tk 700,000 and the regular monthly expenditure is around Tk 200,000 to 300,000, according to party sources.

Jamaat has its own office in Mogbazar with about 25 regular staff. The party offers two paid attendants for the party chief Golam Azam and elderly leader Abbas Ali Khan, the source added.

The party president and secretary general are guarded by party cadres during their tours.

The district and thana wings sends their contribution every month to a central account. For example, the Dhaka City Unit provides Tk 125,000 and the Chittagong unit Tk 50,000 per month.

The party even pay the residential telephone bills of the central leaders for the calls made for organisational matters.

Saifur for proper policy to protect consumer rights

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said consumer rights should be protected amidst strong lobbying by the manufacturers for satisfying their own interests, reports UNB.

"Consumers' voice is always unheard, consumers are never given a fair treatment," he admitted at a seminar on "Consumers' Protection: A Comparative Review between Bangladesh and European Union".

The finance minister pointed out that for last one month, various chambers and associations discussed with him their interests, but there was no representation from the consumers, because there is no organised body to protect their interest.

"It's very unfortunate," he regretted and called upon the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) to come up with missionary zeal to help the consumers.

Rahman also underlined that proper policy, besides a strong consumer movement, be formulated to harmonise the conflicting interests of both the consumers and the manufacturers.

Prompted by criticism over the free market economy, he also spoke in favour of government mechanism that should be kept in existence to correct the market behaviour, if acts badly.

CAB arranged the seminar at the Jatiya Press Club to discuss the consumer protection in Bangladesh, in comparison with the protective measures, the people in the countries of European Community are enjoying.

The finance minister termed "misplaced" the comparison between the nations of European Union and Bangladesh as the EU standard has gone very high.

At the same time, he noted with dissatisfaction that many European countries are blocking imports, particularly of fish, of the countries like Bangladesh in the name of health standard.

He said the European Union was also trying to prevent entry of goods of the country to European market on the plea of labour standard. "This is not acceptable. I don't accept it," he added.

Responded Ambassador Michael Drury, the head of delegation of the European Union in Dhaka, who also attended the seminar, the provision of health standard is "not to restrict import, but to maintain the standard of the Community."

He said they had no problem regarding standard of textile products from Bangladesh, but faced some difficulties in ascertaining the country of origin.

No-tobacco Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The World No-tobacco Day will be observed in the country today.

The day is being observed in the wake of a World Health Organisation (WHO) prediction that in the next 30 to 40 years, tobacco related epidemic will claim 10 million people around the globe if the present trend of smoking continues.

At present, tobacco-related diseases account for over three million deaths annually and the tobacco epidemic has mostly affected the developing countries with the per capita cigarette consumption having increased by 67 per cent since 1970, according to the WHO.

In observance of the day, different socio-cultural organisations have drawn up programmes to create public awareness against smoking and the health hazards caused by it.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina have issued statements calling for building a tobacco-free society.

The Midnight File

Pak rockets kill 22 in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, May 30: Twenty persons including 16 militants were killed, 22 injured and Pakistani troops fired four rockets to blow up the office of United Nations observers group in Poonch sector in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday evening, an official spokesman said here today, reports PTI.

Israel-PLO talks bogged down

CAIRO, May 30: Talks between Israel and the PLO on extending Palestinian self-rule were bogged down today over how much authority Israel is willing to concede, reports Reuter.

Informal talks

From page 1

The government side proposed to withdraw the transfer order and appoint Dr Alamgir, Member, Planning Commission, the sources said.

The association rejected the proposal and demanded appointing him Secretary, Science and Technology Division, they added.

The association pressed for acceptance of their demands in one go, insiders said, while the government's line was to consider the demands one by one.

The association had earlier issued an ultimatum to the government to accept its demands by June 8. Otherwise its members would go for a large-scale campaign, it said.

Meanwhile, secretaries at a meeting yesterday lent their support to the six-point demand made by the association and called for an end to political interference in the administration.

26 offloaded from Thai flight

By Staff Correspondent

The immigration authorities at the Zia International Airport yesterday offloaded 26 passengers from a Bangkok-bound Thai International flight.

The passengers were headed for Malaysia via Bangkok with forged passports and documents, sources said.

They were promised jobs in Malaysia by a local travel agency.

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Intruder at Madonna's home shot

LOS ANGELES, May 30: Police shot a man who apparently scaled a fence to get into the back yard of Madonna's Hollywood Hills home while the pop star was away, reports AP.

Robert Roland Hoskins, 37, was shot three times in the arm and abdomen Monday evening, police said. He was in fair condition today at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre, a hospital spokeswoman said.

There have been reports made by Madonna that he has been threatening her and stalking her," police Detective Mike McDonagh said.

Hoskins confronted a security guard in the back yard, about 13 meters (40 feet) from the house, McDonagh said.

Police planned to transfer Hoskins to the jail ward at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center and book him for investigation of attempted burglary, police Detective Andrew Purdy said.

ALCWC meet today

An emergency meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held today at its Dhanmandi office at 10 am. Members of the working committee have been requested to attend the meeting, reports UNB.

ROK to recruit

From page 1

Minister will soon visit Seoul to work out the details of recruitment of manpower from Bangladesh.

Seoul has a plan to hire 22,000 workers in the coming year from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Quake in Russia: Mourning day today

MOSCOW, May 30: Russian President Boris Yeltsin declared today a national day of mourning for victims of the devastating earthquake on Sakhalin island which left at least 2,000 people feared dead, reports AFP.

As rescuers today searched the rubble of Neftegorsk, an oil town virtually wiped out by the massive quake two days ago, the Russian Ministry for Emergencies said 325 corpses and 353 injured had been recovered from the ruins.

HSC examinees go on rampage in Gopalganj: 50 hurt

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, May 30: At least 50 people including five children and four women, were injured when a group of student of the Government Bangabandhu College went on rampage and damaged a BRTC bus near the local Press Club this morning.

The students were demanding shifting the date of the HSC examinations beginning in the first week of June.

The seriously injured passengers of the Khulna-bound BRTC bus are Romela, 35, Jabbar, 48, Shimon, 5, Ripon, 3, Kabir, 22, Mobarak, 18, and Yasmin, 20. They were admitted to the Sadar Hospital.

Gopalganj Police arrested six students.

Kidnappers

From page 1

Bashir, Anwar Hossain, Iqbal Faruk, Md Sakir Hossain and Nipu Chandra alias Nibeton.

They had allegedly kidnapped Malek and his son, at gun point when they went to the Motijheel branch of Sonali Bank for withdrawing money Sunday, the police said.

The kidnappers then took them to a house at Tikatuly by an autorickshaw.

On that night, they forced Malek to sign in a blank stamp paper and later took him and his son to a house at Agha Masih lane. The kidnappers locked them up in a room on the rooftop of the house, police added.

The police Monday night rescued Malek and his son from the filling station when the kidnappers were preparing to take them somewhere in a microbus.

A case has been filed with the Motijheel thana in this connection.

Rohingya

From page 1

refugees were still reluctant to return home until Myanmar allowed international agencies access to that country to ensure that the Rohingya Muslims, a minority in Buddhist-dominated Myanmar, will not be persecuted again. Then, in November 1993, Myanmar signed an accord with the UNHCR, allowing the agency to monitor the return of the refugees and their rehabilitation.

This worked almost like a magic. The refugees changed their mind and started heading home. Since then there has been no report of fresh persecution of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. According to UNHCR officials, they are being treated well after their return.

Today, with most of the refugees returning home, officials see a bright light blinking at the end of the tunnel. Bangladesh will be too happy to see that the UNHCR representative's optimism proves right. The countdown for winding up the refugee camps may have already started. All involved in the repatriation process are expected to work sincerely to take the hard work to the final stage of celebration.

Gen Latif

From page 1

February 28 last. Latif was arrested on March 12.

Lt Col (Rtd) Shamsur Rahman and Major (Rtd) Kazi Emadul Huq are the two other ex-army officers accused in the case, now pending before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Chittagong.

A R Yusuf was assisted by Mahmudul Ahsan, Abul Kalam and Ferdous Akhter Wahida, Attorney General Aminul Huq, appearing on behalf of the State, was assisted by a Deputy Attorney General.

Trade gap

From page 1

crone due to installation of modern leather processing units in the country.

Frozen food or fish and shrimp export fetched 881.8 crore — 32.7 per cent higher than that of the previous year.

Newsprint export earning declined by 48.1 per cent to Tk 1.4 crore and that from handicraft rose by 38.4 per cent to Tk 29.2 crore.

Bangladeshis working abroad sent home Tk 4,354.9 crore — 656.5 crore more than that of the previous year. Of the amount, Tk 1772.6 crore was sent from Saudi Arabia, Tk 740.7 crore from Kuwait, 352.4 crore from the UAE, 314.7 crore from USA and Tk 288.1 crore from Oman.

The foreign currency reserve in 1993-94 significantly rose to Tk 11,128.9 crore from the previous year's 8,440.7 crore.

As regards the imports, Bangladesh spent Tk 5,195.9 crore for capital goods, Tk 3,364.4 crore for textile and related materials for petroleum products Tk 671.3 crore, iron and steel 518.7 crore, crude oil 465.5 crore, coconut oil 466.2 crore, cement 399.2 crore and for cotton Tk 287.9 crore.

9 held by BDR

From page 1

by deploying additional forces in a bid to prevent any attempted infiltration. Movement of local people within three hundred yards from the no-man's land along the border has been banned from dusk to dawn.

Special BDR guards and patrols have been set up at every two hundred border posts. Powerful electric searchlights have also been set up whenever possible to ensure night-time visibility.

Awards have also been declared for the local people if they can inform the BDR about infiltration of any person from across the border.

ADP

From page 1

Communication sector would get Tk 546 crore in the proposed ADP as against Tk 502 crore in the revised ADP.

Tk 520 crore and Tk 466 crore have been allocated to family welfare and health sectors respectively in the proposed ADP. Allocations to these sectors in the revised ADP are Tk 536 crore and Tk 410 crore.

Arafats to have a baby girl

JERUSALEM, May 30: It's a girl!

At least that's what doctors have told Yasser Arafat's pregnant wife Suha, an Israeli newspaper reported Tuesday, reports AP.

Mrs Arafat, who is due in the first week of August, has returned to the Gaza Strip after spending much of her pregnancy at her mother's home in Paris.

It was in the French capital that doctors determined the sex of the fetus, said the daily Yediot Ahronot.

The 31-year-old wife of the PLO chief has kept a low profile since her return from Paris. "I feel normal, very happy," was all she would tell the paper.

Mrs Arafat's mother, Reymonda Tawil, dismissed the newspaper report, saying that neither her daughter nor Arafat knew the gender of the unborn child. "They want to keep it a surprise," Mrs Tawil told The Associated Press from Paris.

Hasina criticises

From page 1

She also condemned the reported indecent behaviour of a minister and undue pressures brought to bear upon government officials.

The AL chief urged the government officials and employees to carry out their duties in a neutral manner as per the rules and regulations.

Zia's death anniversary

From page 1

Women and Children Affairs Sarwari (Rahman attended the discussion).

BNP Dhaka city unit, Juba Dal, Chhatra Dal, Krishak Dal, Anjilbi Forum, Bastuhara Dal, Mohila Dal, Shechshabak Dal and Zia Parishad also took up separate programmes to mark the day.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong adds: The death anniversary of president Ziaur Rahman was observed here yesterday.

BNP's district and city units observed the day through discussions, milad mahfil and placing of wreaths at the first mazar of the late president, at Rangunia.

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Woman hacked to death in Jhalakathi

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 30: A woman was hacked to death and her son and daughter were injured by some unknown assailants at Pokharzonia village under Rajapur thana of Jhalakathi district last night.

Witnesses and police said that at the dead of night some unidentified miscreants broke into the house of one Jambakhan and hacked his wife Sahera Khatun, 45, to death. Her son, Kashem, 17, and daughter Laila, 20, were also injured. The motive behind the killing is yet to be known, police said.

Body of the Sahera Khatun was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Hearing of writ against EC

From page 1

and fixed next Thursday for resumption of hearing.

Meanwhile, a UNB report adds: Attorney General Aminul Huq, arguing the Election Commission's case, the first day of any year when a voter list is prepared has been fixed in the Electoral Roll Ordinance as the date for a person to attain adult franchise.

Aminul Huq cited the Electoral Roll Ordinance No-61 of 1988 where the qualifying date for enrolling a person in the voter list has been fixed.

Petitioner Aminul Gani Tito challenged two core points in the voter registration form — fixation of January 1, 1995 as the date to attain 18 years of age to qualify to become an eligible voter, and the place of registration of a voter.

As the court resumed hearing yesterday, the petitioner's counsel said registration of voters began on May 25, but the Election Commission set the date to count 18 years, the eligible age of a voter, with retroactive effect from January 1 this year.

Some date will have to be taken as a basis, the Attorney General said, adding that the Election Commission has fixed January 1, 1995 as the date for preparing the new electoral roll.

The court earlier had wanted an explanation as to how the petitioner had been aggrieved to file the writ. Advocate Nurul Islam pointed to Article 122 of the Constitution which explains the eligibility of a person to register as a voter.

After a brief hearing, the petitioner's lawyer prayed for time for further interpretation of laws involving constitutional provisions and rules of the voter registration process.

Although the submission of Barrister KS Nabi was not admitted by the court, since a fresh date has been fixed, Nabi told the court that a person has a right to enrol as voter as soon as he reaches the age of 18.

"We shall abide by the Constitution, and no date has been fixed there making a person eligible to become voter. The Election Commission is not an independent authority, it is just an implementing agency," KS Nabi said.

Elections can be held anytime, but as soon as one reaches the age of 18, his name should have to be enrolled in the voter list, he argued.

Earlier, Advocate Nurul Islam, the chief counsel of the petitioner, at one stage of his submission, told the court that he was afraid that he would not get justice from the court and wanted to move to another court.

Sharply reacting, senior judge Ismail Uddin Sarkar asked Advocate Islam to file an application.

The matter was, however, settled when Islam and his colleagues apologised. Justice Sarkar advised the lawyer to exercise a some restraint while placing arguments in the court.

Pak-Bangla JEC session soon

Visiting Pakistan Prime Minister's special envoy Prof N D Khan said here yesterday that the next session of the Bangladesh-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC) would be held soon in Islamabad to discuss the increasing economic cooperation, reports BSS.

Prof Khan, who is also the Federal Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister of his country, talking to newsmen said that he had bilateral discussions with Foreign Minister, A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz Monday.

He said that Pakistan would host a meeting of the law ministers of South Asia in the near future and hoped that Bangladesh would participate in it.

Prof N D Khan leaves for Islamabad this morning.

2 killed in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Two people were killed and five injured in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

An unknown person age about 30, was killed on the spot as a speeding truck knocked him down on Biswa Road in Demra thana in the morning.

One Nazrul Islam, 22, who took poison at his home at Pallabi late Monday, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Business team

From page 1

men for inclusion in the delegation. The team will also include high government officials.

A seminar is scheduled to be held after their return where the members of the delegation will present their reports on their visit.