

Inside Today

Article

Economy A Positive Note?

by Tanya Gupta
Page 4

Focus

Special employment creation schemes; Teaching crisis as hard-up staff abandon classes

Page 5

International

Chirac presses Israel to resume ME peace process

Saudi Arabia must do more to protect US troops, a senator says

Page 8

Business

Govt to expand merchant fleet of ships soon

Most Asia-Pacific currencies weaken against dollar over the week

Pages 6, 7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index: 1044.81 (+2.80%)
Market capital Tk: 301246
Transactions in value Tk: 10.58 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index: 336.00 (+1.69%)
Market capital Tk: 3928.39 cr
Transactions in value Tk: 1.19 cr

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Illusive Addresses
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina invited to visit DPRK

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been invited to visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The invitation was extended, on behalf of his government, by Dr Kim Ky Duk, Ambassador of North Korea in Bangladesh when he paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister at her office yesterday. Matters of economic and technical cooperation between the two countries came up for discussion in the meeting, reports UNB.

Unsuccessful BNP candidates' meet

A meeting of BNP candidates, "who could not succeed" in the June 12 parliamentary elections, will be held at the party's central office on July 11 at 5 pm. The BNP secretary general have requested all unsuccessful party candidates to attend the meeting with centre-wide comprehensive results, said a press release, reports UNB.

Nasim leaves for Tehran

Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim leaves for Tehran last night to attend an OIC session. The 3rd two-day ministerial session of Post and Telecommunications Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Countries begins in the Iranian capital on July 10. He said leading a four-member Bangladesh delegation, reports UNB.

Samad Azad acting AL president

By Staff Correspondent
Abdus Samad Azad, a member of the Awami League presidium and Minister for Foreign Affairs, will act as the president of the Awami League till the AL chief and Prime Minister returns home on July 11. Sheikh Hasina, who is also the president of Awami League, left Dhaka for Saudi Arabia last night to perform umrah.

Home Minister will monitor 'exclusive files' 'Law enforcing agencies to be neutral, corruption-free'



Home Minister making a point at the press confce.

The Home Ministry is working on a plan to restructure the law enforcing agencies to free those from corruption and political influence and make those welfare-oriented, Home Minister Maj (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam said here yesterday.

"I have talked with police officials of different levels and the press in the last 15 days. I will continue these parleys to take suggestions. Uprooting terrorism from the society is the number one commitment of the Awami League government," the Minister said at a press conference at the Home Ministry.

He reiterated his commitment to keep the police neutral, non-partisan and free from any political influence. "Police action will not wait for instruction from higher au-

thorities. They will act as per the law of the land," he asserted.

"Nobody will be victimised by police. Criminals will be identified as social enemies. Therefore, no political consideration will be allowed," the Home Minister elaborated. The minister said that police had been assured of non-interference in their action against terrorism. "There will be no interference... the IGP has been given the signal."

He said that steps will be taken soon to curb the authority of the police in requisition of public vehicles "on any ground". The government will also pay "special attention" to extortionists in the terminals and to campus violence.

The government will also review arms licences issued at

the district level during the BNP rule. If it is found that any licensee is not qualified, the licence will be cancelled, Rafiqul Islam said.

To incorporate ideas and suggestions to improve the performance of the law enforcing agencies, the Home Ministry will hold a day-long "national conference" on July 20. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the conference which will be participated by leaders of political parties and socio-cultural organisations, representatives of chamber bodies, university teachers, and journalists.

The Home Minister said he has decided to personally monitor progress regarding all "sensational cases" by opening up exclusive files. In this process, See Page 12 Col 1



Artistes of Surer Dhara rendering songs at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday on the occasion of Rabindranath Tagore's death anniversary. — Star photo

'BNP to resist water accord at cost of country's interest'

MIRERSARAI (Chittagong), July 8: BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia today said her party would resist any attempt to sign a water sharing agreement with India sacrificing the country's interest, reports UNB.

Begum Zia was addressing a series of public meetings at Baroirhat, Aburhat, Abutorab and Mithachhara bazar in Mirersarai south-eastern region.

"We want due share of Ganges water, we'll not accept less than what we got as per the agreement signed during the government of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman," she said.

She further said that the BNP had tried its best for resolving the water sharing issue in a just manner through bilateral meetings. "It never begged for water or bowed down to any country," she added.

The BNP chairperson warned that her party would give a befitting reply both in parliament and on the streets, if any quarter sells out the country's interest or ignores the fundamental rights of the people.

BNP is the ever largest opposition in the parliament and it will play a responsible role as opposition party," she said.

Begum Zia pointed out that within only a couple of weeks of the new government, the law and order had seen a serious deterioration causing concern among the people. "It reminds us of the '72-75 period," she said.

She alleged that the people cannot sleep at night as theft, cattle-lifting, dacoity, mugging, looting and killing were taking place everyday in large numbers across the country.

Replying to the Prime Minister's allegation that the country's economy was shattered during the BNP regime, Begum Zia said the country's economic base became much

liament and on the streets, if any quarter sells out the country's interest or ignores the fundamental rights of the people.

BNP is the ever largest opposition in the parliament and it will play a responsible role as opposition party," she said.

Begum Zia pointed out that within only a couple of weeks of the new government, the law and order had seen a serious deterioration causing concern among the people. "It reminds us of the '72-75 period," she said.

She alleged that the people cannot sleep at night as theft, cattle-lifting, dacoity, mugging, looting and killing were taking place everyday in large numbers across the country.

Replying to the Prime Minister's allegation that the country's economy was shattered during the BNP regime, Begum Zia said the country's economic base became much

Newspaper ads Body to formulate guidelines

The Bangladesh Sammilita Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSSP) has formed a six-member committee to formulate guidelines for the decentralisation of advertisements in newspapers, reports UNB.

The committee was formed at a meeting of the BSSP yesterday after long discussion on the advertisement policy, emphasising on decentralisation of newspaper advertisements.

Members of the committee are: Kazi Shahed Ahmed (Ajker Bago), Prof. Majidul Islam (Dinkal), Mizanur Rahman Mizan (Khabar), Abul Asad (Sangram), Abul Kashem Majumder (Samachar) and Enayullah Khan (Dhaka Courier).

Dainik Rupali Editor Mustafizur Rahman MP presided over the meeting held at the Ajker Kagaj office.

Convenor of BSSP sub-committee on advertisement policy and Dainik Khabar Editor Mizanur Rahman Mizan presented a proposal on the subject.

The meeting also co-opted another six members in the BSSP convening committee raising its members from 16 to 22, the release added.

Cabinet approves draft bill to set up permanent law commission

The Cabinet yesterday approved a draft bill for the setting up of a permanent law commission in the country, reports UNB.

Formation of the law commission aims, inter alia, at reforming and updating outmoded laws in keeping with need of the present time.

The approval was given at a Cabinet meeting held in the Cabinet room of the PM's office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presiding.

The Cabinet extended its full support to the Prime Minister's recent declaration that Ministers will not be the chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committees.

However, the matter will be finally disposed of in Parliament.

Ministers and State Ministers in-charge of different ministries attended the meeting. Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and secretaries were present.

Two young men shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent
Two young men were shot dead and three others injured in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

A young man was shot dead while another person was stabbed by some unidentified persons at Mohakhali under Gulshan thana in the city in the early hours of Monday, police said.

Monirul Islam Khan alias Tuhin, 27, died on the spot when the attackers shot him in the head at his residence at the Roads & Highways colony at Dakshinpara, Mohakhali at about 2 am, police said.

Tuhin's friend and neighbour Mosharrar Hossain was also stabbed by the armed gang. He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), police said quoting the FIR filed with the Gulshan thana yesterday.

It was alleged that the incident was a sequel to a rivalry between Tuhin and a group of local youths, over trading of cut pieces of garment cloths.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy.

Tuhin's elder brother alleged in the FIR that Tuhin went to the Mohakhali bazar

\$70m WB project to arrest depletion of fish resources

The government plans to initiate a 70 million US dollar World Bank (WB) financed fisheries and aquatic resources management project to arrest depletion and enhance fish and shrimp production in a sustainable manner, according to official sources.

Of the total project cost, the WB's soft term lending window, International Development Association, is expected to finance foreign exchange cost tentatively estimated at about 50 million dollars. In addition, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom may provide technical assistance, the sources said.

The project is likely to consist of six major components: inland fisheries management, floodplain fisheries, shrimp culture, marketing infrastructure, institutional development and fisheries research.

The project would "reorient" government and key public

institutions towards creating an "appropriate" resource management strategy to stop the deteriorating environment in shrimp production, the sources said.

"It would help create employment opportunities in the rural areas and provide avenues for improved income distribution through increased production," said a WB document. "It would diversify the country's export base through increased shrimp production."

The latest statistics reveal that per capita fish consumption have declined from 11.7 kg per annum in 1972 to 7.5 kg per annum in 1995, disproportionately affecting poor people.

The WB in its document said that unplanned expansion of shrimp area had caused degradation of environment, including encroachment on mangrove forests, conflicts with agriculture and loss of biodiversity.

The WB attributed to the fish production decline to over-exploitation of fish resources and adverse effect of road and flood control and water management infrastructure on fish habitat.

This decline occurred mainly in rivers and floodplains which together provide about 42 per cent of all fish landings and about 54 per cent of the inland fish catch, it added.

Production picked up in the 1980s due to increased fishing in coastal and artisanal fisheries and increases in fish and shrimp grown in ponds, the WB maintained.

"Inshore waters are heavily fished while offshore and deep sea stocks are reportedly exploited to a lesser degree," it pointed.

According to available statistics, the fisheries sector accounts for about 10 per cent of agricultural gross domestic

Giving political colour to mischiefs won't be tolerated: PM

By Staff Correspondent
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sounded a note of warning against what she described as hatching of conspiracy to create a law and order situation for 'petty political interests'.

"No hypocrisy will be tolerated," the Prime Minister told newsmen at the VIP Lounge of Zia International Airport (ZIA) last night prior to her departure for Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah.

In her first foreign visit as Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina left ZIA by a Bangladesh Biman flight at 8:30 pm. Her 42-member entourage includes State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Mohammad Hanif, some MPs and also some of her relations.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman and Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria saw her off at the airport. Chiefs of the three services, the Cabinet Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and Charge de Affaires of Saudi Arabia and Charge de Affaires of Nepal, now acting as Dean of the diplomatic corps, were also present at the Airport.

The Prime Minister urged the people to guard against "conspiracy by a certain quarter to destabilise the law and order for petty political interests".

"To serve one's political interest people can't be allowed

Comilla Board SSC results today

COMILLA, July 8: Results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination 1996 under Comilla Board will be published tomorrow simultaneously from centres in 10 districts, reports UNB.

Comilla Board Controller and Chairman said Deputy Commissioners of Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Sylhet, Habiganj, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj would send the results to the school centres of their respective districts.

A total of 81,703 students, including 35,715 female, appeared at the exam from 144 centres of the districts in April this year.

Earlier, results of SSC Examination under Dhaka and Jessore Boards were announced on Saturday.

Body to upgrade, revise curriculum, text books

The government has constituted a six-member committee headed by Prof A F Salauddin, former professor of history, Dhaka University, for upgrading and revising the curriculum and the text books published by the National Curriculum and Text Book Board to portray the correct history of the country, reports BSS.

Other members of the committee are Prof M Mostafa Chowdhury and Prof Marun Ar Rashid of Political Science Department of Dhaka University, Prof Muntassir Mamun of History Department of Dhaka University, Dr Montazuddin Patwari, Associate Professor of Department of History of Chittagong University and prominent journalist and researcher G M Gaus Khan.

The first meeting of the committee was held yesterday

Agri sector to get subsidy Checking budget deficit top priority: Kibria

By Staff Correspondent
Finance Minister SAMS Kibria said the Awami League government is firm to provide subsidy to the agriculture sector.

"We will give subsidy to agriculture. But the precise manner in which it will be done is being worked out," said Kibria while briefly talking to The Daily Star in his Secretariat office yesterday. The minister answered a set of written questions but declined to respond to any supplementary questions.

He said when he took charge as the finance minister the economy was in a bad shape. "I was surprised to find the interest payment on the national debt had increased to Taka 1,039 crore in 1995-96 from Taka 417 crore in 1991."

He further added: "In fact, taking both the internal and external debts into account, the interest payment is Taka 1,739 crore. This is a big chunk of money that makes the surplus available in the



S A M S Kibria

revenue budget for development work very limited."

Noting that the food situation is such that substantial foodgrain has to be imported, Kibria said, "the investment is almost stagnant. The employment budget for develop-

Flood situation in Dhaka, 2 adjoining dists unchanged

The flood situation in Dhaka and adjoining Munshiganj and Manikganj districts remained unchanged yesterday, report agencies.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Division said the flood situation of Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi, Chowhali, Shahajadpur, and Kaziur of Sirajganj district, Sonatola, Dhunut and Sariakandi of Bogra district, Rowmari and Kurigram Sadar of Kurigram district, Melanda and Jamalpur Sadar of Jamalpur district, Bera and Nagarbari of Pabna district and Pulchhari, Shaghata and Gaibandha Sadar of Gaibandha district may also remain unchanged or improve during the next 48 hours.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent says, flood situation in the district remained unchanged yesterday with further swelling of water-level in Ghagot and Bangali rivers.

Erosion by Bangali river hit Bamanhazra, Panthamari, Shalmara, Bochadaha villages under Gobindaganj Thana.

Fifteen unions of Sadar, Pulchhari and Saghatana thanas have gone under flood water.

Floods have hit these thanas following heavy downpour and onrush of waters.

Meanwhile, two large cracks have developed at Bchadaha and Balua points between Dewantola and Katakhal of the flood control embankment.

The water level of the Old Brahmaputra river at the Jamalpur point rose by 8 centimetres, submerging 35 new villages in Dewanganj thana of the district yesterday.

The overall flood situation remained unchanged in the other thanas of Jamalpur district, officials said.

Our Sherpur Correspondent adds: Fresh areas under Sherpur Sadar were submerged yesterday following heavy rain on Saturday and Sunday.

More than 70 villages in Sadar and 50 more in Nakia are now under water.

Flood engulfed at least 11 unions in Sadar and 5 in Nakia due to rain in the last two days, according to officials.

Overall flood situation in the country, however, continued to improve further yesterday as monsoon rains were less active.

Very light to moderate rainfall has been recorded at most places over the Brahmaputra, the Ganges and the Meghna basins and very light rainfall at one or two places over the South-East Hill basin during the past 24 hours ending 9 am yesterday. Flood Forecasting and Warning Division said.

It said the Brahmaputra and the Ganges recorded fall at upstream points and that rivers in the Meghna and South-East Hill basins also registered fall except Kushiyara at Amalshid. However, the Brahmaputra at Bahadurabad, the Ganges at Bhagayakul, the Surma at Kanaihat and the Kushiyara at Amalshid and Sheola are flowing above their respective danger levels.

It further said, Brahmaputra at all major points such as Chilmari, Sirajganj and Aricha is likely to flow below the danger level, while the river though likely to fall, may flow above danger level at Bahadurabad in the next 24 hours.

The forecast said flood situation in the districts of Greater Sylhet will improve further in the next 24 hours.

HSC examinees go on rampage in city: 8 held

By Staff Correspondent
Police arrested eight youths when a group of angry Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinees went on the rampage, damaging at least a dozen vehicles near the New Market and its adjacent areas in the city yesterday.

Dhanmondi police said that of the eight, five were HSC examinees. They were reportedly expressing their anger because the economics question papers were hard and not to their liking.

Nearly a hundred students came out of the Dhaka College centre after the examination and started pelting stones, damaging cars parked near the New Market and Mirpur road and ransacking shops at about 2 pm, police said.

The arrested were identified as Moniruzzaman, Sirajul Islam, Farhad Chowdhury, Zahir, Al Mamun, Boppha, Shahin and Nasir.

Meanwhile, the HSC examinees also resorted to act of violence in the Bakshibazar area under Lalbagh thana. At least five vehicles were damaged.

Fund shortage Monitoring of water levels stopped

By Mizan Ali
The Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO) has stopped the functioning of 192 monitoring wells across the country, on grounds of shortage of funds, official sources said.

For effective planning and management of water resources, monitoring the level of ground water and surface water is of vital importance, they pointed out.

Besides, it is one of the primary objectives of the WARPO to determine the availability of surface and ground water for which constant monitoring is required, an official noted.

Director General of the WARPO M H Siddique, talking to The Daily Star, admitted that the functioning of the monitoring wells has been stopped since June.

According to him, the functioning of the monitoring wells has been stopped as those had already become outdated. Besides, there was no need of monitoring during the rainy

season, he added.

About the future plan regarding the monitoring wells, the DG said "The WARPO will prepare the National Water plan by the end of this year and will not only install new monitoring wells but also expand the area covered."

Sources concerned said around 110 persons were involved in monitoring these wells established in Rajshahi, Bogra, Thakurgaon, Mymensingh, Jessore, Tangail, Comilla and Faridpur, most of the areas suffer drought during the dry season. These people were paid Tk 500 per month per person, involving a total of Tk seven lakh per annum.

The monitoring system had been in operation for at least a decade the sources said and wondered as to why it was stopped without even consulting the ministry concerned.

Some of the 'well monitors' also alleged that they did not get their dues since June 1995.

Night coach dacoity in Bogra: 3 killed

BOGRA, July 8: Three people, including a police constable, were killed when dacoits opened fire in a Dhaka-bound night coach on the Bogra-Santahar road tonight, reports UNB.

Five others also received bullet wounds in the incident that took place at Kaliapukur at about 9.30 pm. A gunfight between police and the dacoits were reported, but no details were available.

Of the killed, two were identified as Abul Kashem, a police constable, and Abdul Mannan, helper of the night coach. The other was an unidentified passenger of the bus.

Mirpur robbery 8 on five-day police remand

By Staff Correspondent
Eight persons arrested on charge of snatching Tk 25 lakh at Sheorapara in Mirpur in the city Sunday were given five days' police remand by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court yesterday.

Of the eight, Shahana Kabir, Motaleb, Md Juman, Arfan, Babul and Javed were arrested from different parts of the city within an hour of the incident.

The Detective police picked up the two others — Moniruzzaman and Nurul Islam alias Shatuj — from Moinartek under Uttara thana early yesterday.

Police said they recovered Tk 5.5 lakh from the arrested persons and seized arms, ammunition and two microbuses.