

Inside Today

Article

New Promises to Keep

by Connie Samdani and G Samdani
Page 4

Focus

Set Code: Whose fault?
Tree plantation campaign: The question of survival
Page 5

International

Opposition seeking consensus for Benazir's removal

Lankan govt comes under fire for news blackout on war
Page 8

Business

Sea fishing zone of Bay of Bengal not endangering turtles
EC set to propose WTO study on labour standards
Pages 6, 7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1099.84 (+1.00%)
Market capital Tk 7545.59 cr
Transactions in volume 373610
Transactions in value Tk 8.71 cr

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Wandering in Wonderland
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Biswas greets Shahabuddin

President Abdur Rahman Biswas whose five-year tenure will end on October 8 felicitated Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on his election to the presidency yesterday. Congratulating the President-elect, Biswas hoped that the new President with his long experience would be able to fulfil hopes and aspiration of the people, said an official of the presidential palace, reports UNB.

2 more ordinances placed in JS

Two more ordinances were placed in parliament yesterday. State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru placed the Consolidated Fund (Supplementary Allocation and Appropriation) Ordinance 1996 and the Consolidated Fund (Additional Allocation and Appropriation) Ordinance 1996. Thirteen ordinances were placed earlier in the House on the opening day of the first session of the new parliament, reports UNB.

Acid thrown on woman in Barguna

BARISAL, July 24: One Sahidul Islam allegedly threw acid at her severely burning her neck and body. She was immediately taken to hospital. The local people caught Sahidul.

Appointments

The government has appointed Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Md Shahidul Islam Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce. Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Mohammad Nuruzzaman Mia has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Industries, says a PID handout.

Formation of JS bodies sparks heated debate

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday once again witnessed a heated debate on the formation of parliamentary standing committees.

BNP lawmakers also questioned the neutrality of the Speaker in conducting the business of the House during the two-hour long unscheduled debate.

The House also witnessed another heated debate on the address by President Abdur Rahman Biswas in Parliament on the opening day of the current session.

The heated debate began when JS Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, after a long speech, proposed in the House the names of the members of two parliamentary standing

bodies — the privilege committee and the committee on JS Rules of Procedure.

During the debate, senior lawmakers of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said that the ruling Awami League once again unilaterally proposed the name of the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia, without consulting her or the Chief Whip of the Opposition. Referring to a similar incident in the House on Tuesday, the Opposition members alleged that the ruling party was behaving autocratically.

The committees were eventually adopted by the House, by voice votes while the BNP lawmakers protested.

Immediately after the proposal regarding the 10 mem-

ber-Privilege Committee, Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain sought the floor, but Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury put the proposal to vote without hearing Delwar.

Once the committee was passed, the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia took the floor to accuse the Speaker of "consistently showing bias" for the ruling party.

In response to the opposition leader, the Speaker said that the JS Rules of Procedure did not permit him to give floor to the Opposition. In her reply, a visibly angry Khaleda Zia said: "Do not show the rules again and again," adding, "Immediately after the pro-

See Page 12 Col 4

Diarrhoea at many places Houses in Madaripur town inundated

Flood situation around the capital and the districts in greater Dhaka and Faridpur further worsened yesterday due to continuous swelling of rivers of the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins, reports UNB.

The situation in northern districts improved slightly while it remained static in greater Mymensingh and Tangail districts.

Five people, including four children, drowned in the flood water while one died from snakebite in Sirajganj and Madaripur districts.

Flood situation in Madaripur took an alarming turn with many houses in the district

town being inundated as the river Padma and Ariakhan continued swelling.

About four lakh people still remained marooned in four thanas of the district Shibchar, Kalkini, Rajor and Sadar. Four children drowned in the flood water in Shibchar thana.

Flood water entered into 40 per cent of the houses in the district town while river erosion hit Matbarer Char, Bandar Khola, Shiruail of Shibchar thana.

In Manikganj, about 2,000 marooned people in the flood-affected areas of the district

See Page 12 Col 3

Cabinet decision on relief, post-flood rehabilitation

The cabinet yesterday decided to make all-out efforts to undertake relief operations and post-flood rehabilitation programmes in the flood-affected areas of the country, reports BSS.

The decision was taken after reviewing the overall flood situation, at a meeting of the council of ministers held at the Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The meeting directed the authorities concerned to take effective steps to arrange easy availability of seedlings, seeds and fertilisers for the flood-affected farmers. It was decided that the unserviceable tube-

See Page 12 col 8

India to fence off 896 km border

NEW DELHI, July 24: Indian government has a scheme for constructing 896 kms of barbed wire fencing along selected stretches of Indo-Pak border, reports BSS.

The fencing will run through Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal and is expected to be completed by March, 1998. Indian Home Minister Inderjit Gupta told this is the Lok Sabha yesterday.

Gupta said the government was contemplating wide-ranging measures including intensifying naval patrolling and raising of additional Border Security Force (BSF) battalions to

check "infiltration from across the borders, especially in the north-eastern region." He said the government was carrying out a regular review of the situation based on reports received from the BSF West Bengal and north-eastern states.

Measures would be taken to strengthen the BSF, said Gupta and disclosed the information of a new water wing in the force and provision of night vision devices and surveillance equipment for its personnel. Other measures, he said, include reducing the distance between border checkpoints and increasing the number of observation towers. Surveil-

lance along the coastal areas has also been stepped up, he said.

He further informed the parliament that the Indian naval ships were keeping an intensive surveillance and were patrolling the high seas while a joint coast guard navy operation was combing the territorial waters.

On land, the Home Minister said, new roads and fences were being constructed along the Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-Pak borders. Sensitive stretches of these borders have been floodlit and intensive patrolling has been launched "to deter infiltration."



Chinese stalwart Qingmei (R) staves off a stiff challenge from Denmark's Kamma Flaeng during their first round match of the women's Olympic soccer tournament at the Orange Bowl Stadium in Miami Tuesday. The Chinese rolled up the hapless Danes 5-1.

— AFP/UNB photo

Employees hang portrait of Bangabandhu

BIRDEM strike ends: Body to review demands

By Staff Correspondent

The employees of the BIRDEM hospital ended their four-day strike yesterday evening at the intervention of the Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Secretary to the PM Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, through discussion with the leaders of the Employees' Welfare Association and the BIRDEM Council, formed a three-member committee to review the employees' demands and find a solution.

The Employees Welfare Association of the BIRDEM had called the strike to realise its demands which include cancellation of the contract service rules and action against

alleged irregularities in the administration.

Following the withdrawal of the strike, the employees, amid "Joi Bangla" slogans, hung a portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the lobby of the hospital in presence of Mohiuddin.

A press conference attended by BIRDEM Council members including Bangladesh Diabetic Society (BDS) Secretary General Dr Fasih Uddin Mahtab and Mohiuddin was held at the committee, headed by Joint Secretary of the Health Ministry Azizur Rahman, would begin its task today.

The government does not

intend to interfere in a non-government charity organisation like BIRDEM. However, I am here to remove the deadlock through friendly discussions between the employees and the authorities," Mohiuddin said at the press conference. He said he came to the BIRDEM at the instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Earlier, the employees were staging a demonstration when he came to the hospital in the evening. The employees' leaders then complained to him that the BIRDEM authorities were not allowing them to hang any portrait of

See Page 12 Col 1



(Top) Employees of the BIRDEM staging a demonstration inside the hospital yesterday to press their 12-point demand; (Bottom) an almost empty ward of the hospital before the strike ended yesterday evening.

— Star photo

Readymade garments export to US

20pc of quota may remain unutilised this year

By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

The country's readymade garments (RMG) sector has performed poorly in exports to the US under a nearly one billion dollar quota and it is feared that by the end of 1996, there would be a shortfall of about 20 per cent exporters say.

According to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), 40.31 per cent of the US quota was fulfilled till mid-July of the current calendar year, which is 14.41 per cent lower than that of the previous year.

The impact of this is far reaching, exporters point out. A loss of market, further closing down of factories and an even lower volume of export are the immediate threats.

Vice chairman of the EPB Anisul Haq Chowdhury, said, "It is true that the gap is big. During February and March there was less export. But the situation started normalising since April and May."

He, however, expressed hope that the quota would be fully utilised since there would be a major rush in export during the months of October to December.

But exporters are in a less

optimistic mood, saying that a dull market would make it difficult to fulfil quotas.

In one of the biggest category — 340/640 for shirts — quota utilisation was 51.07 per cent till July 8 this year against 58.1 per cent the corresponding period of last year. Entry of items under this category will continue till February, but still there is possibility of a 20 per cent shortfall, they say.

Another major category — 341 for shirts and blouses — is even worse with only 29.73 per cent of the quota filled till July 8 against last year's 62.1 per cent. The market for this category is bad in the USA and there may be a 50 per cent shortfall here, exporters point out.

Quota utilisation rate for trousers under category 347 was 69.52 per cent against last year's 75.8 per cent they said. Items from category 847 (trousers, slacks and shorts) could be shifted to category 347, but since the market is slack, there could still be a shortfall here, they added.

The quota will remain unutilised, the manufacturers will face a major financial de-

bacle as regards their massive investment based on quotas. It is a billion dollar informal market where quotas are sold among the manufacturers. Those who had bought quotas and would not be able to fulfil those would suffer a big loss on their investment, sources concerned said.

Some 500 factories have already gone out of business, according to an estimate by the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

The causes of this poor performance are mainly loss of order due to the political crisis of the country went through for the last two years, and especially the slack in the consumer market for apparels in the USA.

The garment manufacturers said there had been no order for Spring 97. The orders supposed have been placed between January and March, the most volatile period in the country's politics, were cancelled and diverted to other countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India and Vietnam.

Orders for Holiday 96

See Page 12 col 7

JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf

Awami League lawmaker Abul Kashem brought several packets containing samples of SSP and TSP fertiliser to the parliament to show those to the Chair while speaking about the fertiliser crisis during the BNP rule.

Showing the polythene packets, the treasury bench member alleged that the people were deceived by the previous government by marketing SSP fertiliser in the name of TSP.

The vacant chair of Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad in the House was seen used by BNP MP Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Fazle Rabbi of

See Page 12 Col 1

Main accused in Shahabuddin murder case arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested the main accused in the city ward commissioner Shahabuddin Ahmed murder case yesterday. Abul Kashem was picked up by Mohammadpur police during a raid in Mirpur section-10 area at about 6 pm yesterday, police said adding Kashem was named in the FIR filed in connection with the murder.

Shahabuddin Ahmed, a city Awami League leader and commissioner of ward No 41, was gunned down by terrorists near his house at Agargaon in the city in the last week of May.

The accused was sent to the Detective Branch police who are now investigating the case.

ECNEC okays 16 projects worth Tk 1961.54 cr

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved 16 development projects worth Taka 1,961.54 crore including project assistance of Taka 673.74 crore, an official press release said last night, reports BSS.

The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was held at the cabinet room of secretariat.

Among the approved projects seven were in agriculture sector for which Taka 1084.81 crore have been earmarked. Other projects included rehabilitation of railway lines worth Taka 713.33 crore, development of postal department worth Taka 22.60 crore and development of Sylhet Tamabil-Jaffong road worth Taka 178.52 crore.

Besides, the meeting gave consent to 18 approved projects worth Taka 1066.58 crore. Among these projects, there are 11 in the Water Resources Ministry, two in the Agriculture Ministry and one each in Road and Railways Division, Fisheries and Live Stock Ministry, Planning Division, Environment and Forest Ministry and Posts and Telecommunication Ministry.

Kalpana issue

3 CHT bodies reject Army statement

By Staff Correspondent

Three organisations of Chittagong Hill Tracts yesterday rejected the statement of the 24 Infantry Division of the Army regarding alleged kidnapping of Kalpana Chakma, saying it was "confusing, inconsistent and a distortion of the truth."

The organisations demanded of the government to form a judicial inquiry committee to probe the alleged kidnapping of Kalpana, take measures to rescue her and punish the criminals involved.

In a press statement, Chittagong Hill Peoples Council General Secretary Prast B Khusha, president of Pahari Chhatra Parishad Sanjay

See Page 12 col 8

Dhaka, Ctg EPZs exceed targets by 48pc

By Staff Correspondent

Country's two Export Processing Zones (EPZs) exported goods worth Taka 14,188 million (337 million US dollars) in the last fiscal year (1995-96), showing an increase of 48 per cent over that of the previous fiscal year (1994-95).

In 1994-95, export earnings by the two EPZs totalled Tk 9609.80 million, according to a press release of the Export Processing Zone Authorities here yesterday.

Of the amount, the Chittagong EPZ exported goods worth 263.80 million dollars and the Dhaka EPZ 73.22 million dollars.

The exportables included electrical and electronic goods, garments, computer diskettes, sports wares, audio and video tapes, camera lenses, leather products, stuffed toys, terry towel and surgical tools, automobile parts and camping items.

Importing countries included USA, Canada, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Greece, Spain, UAE, Austria, Australia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Russia and Singapore, the press release said.

Export Processing Zone Authority has so far sanctioned 109 industries for the Chittagong EPZ and another 47 for the Dhaka EPZ with a total

investment outlay of Tk 8313.91 million equivalent to 197.48 million dollars.

A total of 66 industries are in implementation stage in the two EPZs.

In the Dhaka EPZ, there are 19 industries with an investment of 30.94 million dollars. Of these, 16 are totally foreign-owned, 2 under joint venture and the rest one is owned by a Bangladesh national.

In the CEPZ, 44 units are 100 per cent foreign-owned, 2 under joint venture and the rest are owned by Bangladeshis.

Japan, with an investment of 47 million dollars is the

highest investor in CEPZ followed by Korea which has invested 41.60 million dollars, the press release said.

Japan has established 15 industries while another three will go into production shortly. South Korea has 17 operating units in CEPZ while another four are in different stages of implementation.

In Dhaka EPZ, South Korea is the leading investor with investment of 22.68 million dollars.

The EPZs have so far employed more than 43,000 Bangladeshi workers. Of them, 30,986 are working in CEPZ and 12,197 in DEEPZ, the press release said.

Our Staff Correspondent adds from Chittagong: The Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) exceeded its target by exporting manufactured goods worth 264 million US dollars in the 1995-96 fiscal year, official sources said.

The export target was 260 million US dollars.

In the current fiscal (96-97), the CEPZ Authority has set the export target at 375 million US dollars, the sources said.

The CEPZ, so far drew an investment of 170 million US dollars in 72 industrial units, which are now operational.

The exports in 95-96 fiscal

See Page 12 Col 3



LATEST FROM ATLANTA

Just to attract fans



Atlanta 1996
OFFICIAL SOFT DRINK
1996 OLYMPIC GAMES

The Australian women's Olympic basketball team is using a little sex appeal to attract the fans. The Aussies are wearing skintight body suits, an eye-catching contrast to the baggy long shorts and shirts most basketball teams—men and women—wear these days. "The Australian team wanted to try it as a way to get people to come and watch us play," guard Sandy Brondello explained. "We thought that once they came to see us play, they would see that we play good basketball and that the game can be exciting. On my European professional team, I wear the loose shorts and shirts and actually find the body suit to be just as comfortable as those."