

Inside Today

Article

The De Beers Make-believe

Column: As I See It
by Ikram Sehgal
Page 4

Focus

Biman—privatisation or rationalisation?; and Breastfeeding—a community responsibility
Page 5

International

Chechens take control of Grozny

Muslims, Croats sign agreement on governing Mostar
Page 8

Business

Govt urged to reconsider imposition of VAT on audit, accounting firms

Countries condemn US Sanctions Act '96 against Iran, Libya
Pages 6,7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1106.85 (-0.03%)
Market capital Tk 7614.22 cr
Transactions in volume 366043
Transactions in value Tk 8.33 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 468.92 (-0.75%)
Market capital Tk 4272.52 cr
Transactions in volume 91735
Transactions in value Tk 1.10 cr

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



The Charming Chowdhury
Page 3



A regular scene on the Kamalapur Mugdapara road in the city.

—Star photo

Depositors of illegal arms will be provided with jobs: PM

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called upon the illegal arms holders to surrender their arms within the deadline, announced by the Home Ministry, reports BSS.

Addressing a public meeting at the Jhenidah Government High School Maidan here, the Prime Minister said those who would deposit their illegal arms by August 10, would be provided with all kinds of facilities, including proper jobs so that they could lead a normal life.

District Awami League President Ayub Hossain presided over the meeting while Education Minister AHSK Sadeque, State Minister for Information Frol Abu Sayeed, Tavbur Rahman MP, Dr SM Akbar, MP, Biren Sikder MP, Mrs Rehana Akhter Hira MP and leaders of Awami League and its front organisations were present on the dais.

Sheikh Hasina said her government was committed to wiping out terrorism from society to ensure security of the

people. "Terrorists, whoever he might be, would be dealt with iron-hand," she said and added that the lives of the people were made miserable during the last regimes by giving political patronisation to terrorists and anti-social elements.

The Prime Minister said her government is pledge bound to establish a corruption-free society so that the benefits of independence could reach the common people. "We have been voted to power to serve the people and bring about their welfare, not to enjoy power," she said and directed the party's leaders and workers to dedicate themselves towards achieving that goal.

Sheikh Hasina said her government would undertake massive programmes to set up cottage and small scale industries to create job opportunities for the people, particularly for womenfolk.

The Prime Minister assured that her government would give all kinds of incentives to

the farmers with the ultimate objective to achieve food-autarky. "Inshaallah we shall fulfill our commitment to the people which we made in our election manifesto for socio-economic emancipation of the masses," she said.

The Prime Minister also visited the Udaipur Village home of late Matiar Rahman, General Secretary of Jhenidah district Awami League who died last month.

She offered *fateha* at the graveyard of late party leader and planted a Krishnachura tree there.

Later addressing the party leaders and workers at the Circuit House here Sheikh Hasina said that her government would help the distressed families who lost their breadwinners.

She advised them to prepare a list of those who were killed, injured or otherwise victimised during the movement and send it to her for proper action.

See Page 12 Col 1

Jhenidah TV relay station inaugurated

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today declared that the government would take immediate steps to give autonomy to state-run radio, television and news agency, reports UNB.

The government is committed to grant autonomy to radio, television and state-owned news agency to keep them free from party influence as it believes in free flow of information," she said while inaugurating Jhenidah TV relay centre here.

The relay centre has been set up on 1.36 acres of land at Gopinathpur in sadar thana at a cost of Tk 13 crore with the financial assistance of French government.

Covering 80 kilometres radius the relay centre will transmit BTV programmes in Jessore, Chuadanga, Magura and other adjacent areas through its 10-kilowatt transmitter.

French government is also providing financial assistance for setting up four more relay centres at Thakurgaon, Patu-

See Page 12 Col 3

PM-level talks on water issue, if needed: Gowda

NEW DELHI, Aug 7: Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda today said that his government was keen to settle outstanding issues with Bangladesh in the shortest possible time, reports BSS.

Deve Gowda said this when Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan called on him to hand over a letter from Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina here today.

Focusing on the sharing of the Ganges water, Deve Gowda hoped that the forthcoming foreign secretary-level meeting could create the groundwork for foreign ministers and water resources ministers level meeting. If required, there could be a meeting of heads of government to settle the issue permanently. The venue of the meeting could be either New Delhi or Dhaka, a member of the Bangladesh delegation told BSS.

According to official sources here, the Bangladesh Prime Minister in her letter to her Indian counterpart has expressed her 'firm belief that given the vast fund of goodwill

on both sides, our two governments will be able to work together in addressing all bilateral issues in a serious and constructive manner in the spirit of cooperation and understanding.

She has also mentioned in her letter that in the common effort to put bilateral relations on a firm footing, Bangladesh has heartened to note the Indian government's willingness to try and reach a permanent sharing agreement on the Ganges water in the shortest possible time.

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, while raising trade and economic relations with India referred to the huge trade imbalance against Bangladesh. In this context he said, "Although Indian exports to Bangladesh have grown by 30 to 40 per cent, and Bangladesh is one of its largest markets, Bangladesh's exports to India were still insignificant," the sources added.

Sobhan has expressed the hope during the meeting with the Indian Prime Minister that India would give zero tariff ac-

cess to a selective list of Bangladeshi exportables. The response of the Indian Prime Minister was positive and he also agreed to a visit of a Bangladesh trade delegation to Guwahati and Shillong to explore markets for their goods there.

Farooq Sobhan also called on Indian External Affairs Minister I K Gujral and handed over a letter from Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abus Samed Azad. Azad in his letter, while conveying his greetings to Gujral expressed his earnest hope that the deliberations at the foreign secretary-level meeting in New Delhi would be able to meaningfully move forward the process of dialogue, which the governments of the two countries have set in motion, reflecting the keen desire to settle all outstanding issues.

Azad has also expressed his confidence that the problem of the sharing of the Ganges water would receive priority attention, the sources mentioned.

See Page 12 Col 3

Draft WB report says

Public expenditure pattern still weak

by Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

The World Bank views that despite the past government's greater stress on social sectors and infrastructure investments, the pattern of public expenditure remains weak in terms of strategic prioritisation between and within sectors and among projects.

Moreover, technical efficiency in the use of budgetary resources is still to be achieved.

These observations were made in the Bank's Public Expenditure Review (PER) report which is still in a draft form.

The Bank under took the PER again in November last year, after a break of six years, against the backdrop of expansionary current expenditure which, it said, may reverse the macro-economic stability.

The years in review were 1990 to 1995. The last PER was done in 1989.

The government lacks

comprehensive and clear policy frameworks for its expenditure programmes in different sectors," the report reads. "There is a lack of clear criteria for evaluation of proposed expenditure programmes and implementation is weak."

It also found that some public spending programmes limit rather than facilitate the scope for private sector and NGOs.

After analysing sector-wise spending, the PER concluded that there is a need for "functional re-prioritisation with further reduction in manufacturing, financial enterprises and agricultural outlays on markets while focussing on areas with higher public goods content such as infrastructure, research and social sectors."

It was further felt that infrastructure investments should be on high-return areas and that an appropriate bal-

See Page 12 Col 3

JS obituary ref on Sharifuddin

By Staff Correspondent

This Jatiya Sangsad yesterday unanimously adopted an obituary reference expressing its deep grief and shock at the death of Sharifuddin Ahmed, an Awami League lawmaker, and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

"This Sangsad is expressing deep shock and sorrow, praying for the departed soul and expressing sincere sympathy for the members of the bereaved family," said a resolution adopted by the House.

The House observed one-minute silence to pay tributes to late legislator, who died on Tuesday night in the city.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury proposed the obituary reference and opened the floor to the legislators immediately after the House went into session at 4 pm.

Thirty-five members including Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Deputy Leader of the House Zillur Rahman, Deputy Leader of the Opposition

See Page 12 Col 4

Siraj Miah murder

Two customs personnel chargesheeted

By Staff Correspondent

The CID police has chargesheeted two customs personnel, Humayun Akhter and Edward Jacob, accusing them of killing Siraj Miah at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on May 9.

The chargesheet was submitted to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court here on Sunday, according to court sources yesterday.

They were chargesheeted under Section 302 of the Penal Code for murder, the sources added.

Thirty-five persons including some airport staff were also named as witnesses in the chargesheet. Six evidences collected by the police from the spot were also mentioned in the chargesheet. These include a boarding card of a KLM flight, Tk 4,327, a pair of shoes, a blood stained shirt and some pieces of broken glass, the sources added.

Siraj Miah, 35, a Bangladeshi from Sylhet, who had been living in Sunderland, Britain, arrived at the ZIA by a KLM flight at about 8 am on May 9. He was severely assaulted reportedly by some customs officials at the airport. He died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital later in the day, according to reports.

Second day of JCD-called strike at DMC

By Staff Correspondent

A strike called by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was observed for the second day yesterday at the Dhaka Medical College (DMC).

The JCD also called for a strike at the campus on August 5, the day the college reopened after an unscheduled closure of the institution for 25 days.

The college was closed since die following a clash between rival student activists of JCD and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on July 10 during the inaugural session of its golden jubilee programme.

During the day yesterday, the JCD organised processions and held rallies on the campus and demanded immediate implementation of its six point programme, announcement of date for elections to the Students Union and withdrawal of cases filed against them, according to a press release.

Poor judicial process Lack of proper education, accountability blamed

By Mizan Ali

Falling standard of public education and lack of adequate training, experience and accountability have adversely affected the standard of the judicial process in the country, observed Justice Naimuddin, acting Chairman of the Law Reforms Commission (LRC).

The LRC has been constituted to update the age-old laws of the country, modernise the system of management of courts, and recommend repeal or amendment to laws violating the fundamental rights of the people, said the acting chairman.

The LRC was formed through an executive decision gazetted on April 7, 1994. Sources said a bill in this regard is likely to be placed in the Jatiya Sangsad soon to make the commission a permanent statutory body.

The Commission has been mandated to examine the obsolete outdated, oppressive laws and recommend repeal or amendment to those to keep pace with the modern world.

It has also been empowered to recommend enactment of laws or amendment to the existing ones to encourage in-

vestment, attract foreign investment and to examine taxation and company laws.

To improve the management of courts, the Commission has been empowered to recommend measures for training of the judicial officers and advocates and also to find out the causes of delay in disposal of cases.

Justice Naimuddin, talking to The Daily Star, said a judicial training institute has already been established as an autonomous body with Justice Badruzzaman as its head.

Quoting a study on the causes of delay Naimuddin said "Actual judicial work is not performed for more than two hours a day on an average. There is also a lack of accountability and supervision at different levels."

A four-member committee with Justice A T M Afzal as chairman carried out a study titled "Report on the causes of delay in disposal of cases and recommendation for their elimination and better management of courts" in 1989.

The committee visiting various courts and scrutinising the dis-

See Page 12 col 8

18-month old dacoit!

He is now only four years old but accused in a dacoity case filed in Tejgaon police station in the city about two and half years back, reports UNB.

Maksudul Islam Masud alias Khokon surrendered to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court yesterday to the surprise of officials and others present in the courtroom.

The court granted him bail against a surety of Tk 1,000 given by the minor boy's father, Ali Hossain, of Haimchar thana in Chandpur district.

All Hossain told newsmen that they came to know about the case when Officer-in-Charge of Haimchar police went to his house to confiscate his property on a court order, saying Masud is an absconder.

The OC informed Ali Hossain that his son is an accused in a case (No 59(3) 94, Article 143/447/446/320/380/427/0 of CrPc) filed in Tejgaon thana in Dhaka.

But the OC and other policemen watching a little boy as an accused returned without any confiscation. They also advised Ali Hossain to bring his son to CMM Court to seek bail.

One Rafiqul Islam of 20/1, New Eskaton is the plaintiff of the case.

BNP MP's son surrenders arms

NARSINGDI, Aug 7: Son of an opposition MP surrendered two firearms to the Deputy Commissioner in presence of his father here today to avail of the general amnesty declared by the government, reports UNB.

Officials said Sabbir Ahmed, son of BNP MP Shamsuddin Ahmed and also a vice-president of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Narsingdi University College Unit, handed over the arms and some ammunition to DC Rafiqul Islam Mia at about 2.30 pm.

The surrendered arms and ammunition are — one 22 bore foreign-made revolver, one sawed off rifle, toy pistol and eight bullets.

Shamsuddin Ahmed was present during the arm hand-over on the first day of the four day ultimatum issued by the government for surrender of illegal arms.

The government, on Tuesday issued the four day ultimatum effective from 6 am yesterday in its bid to free the country from illegal arms and terrorism.

Newly appointed govt college teachers asked to join by Aug 14

By Staff Correspondent

The teachers appointed on the basis of the 16th BCS Education (Special) examination have been asked to join their place of posting by August 14.

The government order regarding posting will have to be collected from the Directorate of Education producing the admit card, with the photograph affixed to it, issued by the Public Service Commission, an official handout said yesterday.

Meanwhile, a large numbers of the newly appointed teachers expressed resentment over postings.

Talking to The Daily Star, an authoritative source at the Ministry of Education said, many of them have been lobbying for getting postings in and around Dhaka.

"In government service, all are required to serve wherever their services are needed," said an official adding the postings of the 1,252 teachers were made by a committee headed by an additional secretary.

US Cong okays bill extending GSP

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) giving trade benefits to designated developing countries has been reauthorised by the US Congress with some changes and for a short term, reports UNB quoting USIS in Dhaka.

A provision reauthorising GSP retroactively to July 31, 1995, and through May 31, 1997, was buried deep in the bill increasing the US minimum wage that Congress passed August 2 just before its summer recess. President Clinton is expected to sign the bill.

A US trade official said he has not yet calculated which countries would immediately become ineligible for GSP treatment because of the definition change.

The bill also changes one of the restrictions on GSP called competitive need limits. Imports of a particular good from a particular country no longer qualify for GSP treatment in a given year if they exceed a cer-

tain annually adjusted value level. In 1995 that level was \$122 million, the bill passed by Congress reduces the level in 1996 to \$75 million and raises the level \$5 million in 1997.

The bill would still prohibit GSP treatment for a number of goods including most textile and apparel products, watches, footwear, handbags, luggage, flat goods, work gloves as well as some electronic, steel and glass imports that pose competition problems for US industry.

One change in the law would benefit the least-developed countries. Except for the excluded goods mentioned above, any good from those countries could be designated by the president as eligible for GSP treatment if the US International Trade Commission (USITC) determines that the imports would not injure US industry.

eligible developing countries. The value of GSP duty-free imports in 1994 was about \$ 19,000 million.

Congress has changed the standard for graduating countries from GSP eligibility: Under the expired law, countries were ineligible if their per-capita gross national product (GNP) exceeded \$11,800 in 1994. Under the bill just passed, which uses the World Bank definition of a high-income country, the maximum 1994 GNP level would have been \$8,600.

The trade official said he has not yet calculated which countries would immediately become ineligible for GSP treatment because of the definition change.

The bill also changes one of the restrictions on GSP called competitive need limits. Imports of a particular good from a particular country no longer qualify for GSP treatment in a given year if they exceed a cer-