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Inside Today

Article

Economic policy-making in Bangladesh Page 4

Process and Institutions

by Nurul Islam Page 4

Focus

Violence against women continues; and Recalling Andre Malraux Page 5

International

Opponents using Imran to install Islamic regime, alleges deposed Pak PM Page 8

New Miss World pledges to work for ailing, handicapped Page 8

Business

DSE price index rises by 44 points Page 7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index 3368.03
Market capital Tk 23996.73 cr
Transactions in volume 396566
Transactions in value Tk 27.33 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 1555.38
Market capital Tk 18131.74 cr
Transactions in volume 87140
Transactions in value Tk 3.72 cr



Sanath Jayasuriya (L), one of the heroes in Sri Lanka's World Cup triumph, is welcomed by his national captain Arjuna Ranatunga (R) and the Mohammedan Sporting Club officials at the Zia International Airport on his arrival late last night. Ranatunga, who had arrived earlier in the day, will feature in Mohammedan's combination for today's Damal Smriti semifinal along with the lately arrived explosive opener. **Details on Page 10.**

Basu tells Calcutta press Permanent water agreement right now unlikely

By Monitoring Staff

Minister Sheikh Hasina, Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider will meet Jyoti Basu today in Calcutta to hold final discussion on the water sharing issue, BBC said.

The visit of Basu, whose party the CPI (M) is a component of the 13-party United Front coalition government of Prime Minister Deve Gowda, is considered crucial in finalising a water sharing agreement between Dhaka and New Delhi.

Earlier, senior ministers of the two governments on several occasions expressed their determination to arrive at a permanent water sharing agreement between the two countries before the onset of the next dry season.

The water sharing issue is due to figure prominently in Basu's official meetings which may also include subjects on land boundary demarcation, trade and other issues.

Queen Sophia praises Grameen role in poverty alleviation

Queen Sophia of Spain yesterday appreciated highly the role of Grameen Bank in eradicating poverty under the leadership of Prof Muhammad Yunus, reports BSS.

"I am very impressed to see how Grameen Bank is working to build up a sense of self-confidence among the poor people through its programmes," she said while speaking at the 19th Grameen (Bank) International Dialogue Programme at its headquarters in the city.

A total of 22 representatives of different world bodies and voluntary organisations from different countries took part in the dialogue.

The Queen noted with happiness that different countries being impressed by the success of the Grameen Bank, have adopted its model in their own countries.

She expressed her hope that the Grameen Bank model would be expanded further across the world to build a poverty-free society in different countries.

Speaking on the occasion Grameen Bank chief Prof Yunus said his organisation not only wants to help a poor man

See Page 12 Col 6

Body to suggest better management Govt to offload 25 pc share of Biman

The government has decided, in principle, to offload 25 per cent share of Biman, the national flag carrier, in the market soon to gear up its business, reports UNB.

The landmark decision came from the board meeting of the Biman held yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, which also decided to form a three-member committee to look into the affairs of the airlines.

The three-member committee, headed by Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, will suggest how Biman could achieve overall improvement in management and functioning, and minimise the loss in business.

Internal Resources Division Secretary Dr Sadaat Husain and Civil Aviation Secretary M Ismail Hossain are the other members of the committee which would submit its report before next meeting of the board.

Hasina, also the chairperson of the Board of Directors of Biman and minister-in-charge of the Civil Aviation Ministry, directed the National Board of Revenue to take strict measures immediately to check travel tax evasion.

The meeting at the International Conference Centre (ICC) in the city also expressed dismay at the non-payment of Biman fare to the tune of Tk 13 crore by the previous government.

Establishment of an outstation in Brussels was also approved in the meeting considering business prospect of the public sector organisation therein.

The Prime Minister gave directives to the Biman authority to take steps to improve efficiency to attract more passengers and curtail expenditure.

Expressing satisfaction over the profit of the national flag carrier, in various international routes, the board meeting was of the opinion that there were still ample scope to go further ahead.

The meeting also decided not to increase fare of Biman for the half-flights, whatsoever the justifiable cause may be, considering the interest of the pilgrims.

Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary, Finance Secretary, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Establishment Secretary, IRD Secretary, Home Secretary, Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary and Managing Director of Biman attended the meeting.

Gold smuggling case Ershad's bail prayer rejected

A court yesterday rejected the bail prayer of deposed President H M Ershad in a gold smuggling case in which he was implicated as an abettor, reports UNB.

On July 17 in 1990, David Anthony, a British national, and Bernard Rudigar, a German, arrived at Zia International Airport with 3000 tolas of gold worth Tk 2.4 crore without any valid document.

Cantonment police filed a case against the accused, and after trial, they were convicted and sentenced to various terms.

On August 31 in 1991, a supreme court rejected Ershad's bail prayer.

See Page 12 Col 7

BNP programme to launch agitation

By Nazmul Ashraf

Some central leaders of the party have already started their programmes. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star last night.

Begum Zia is due to leave for Saudi Arabia on November 27 and stay there for about two weeks for treatment.

Meanwhile, a move is underway to recast the party's National Standing Committee and the National Executive Committee as well as the units at the grassroots level to re-vamping the party, another top BNP leader said. However he hastened to add that changes would be effected after the party chief returns from Saudi Arabia.

Changes in the party's Standing Committee and the Executive Committee would be made to induct in the two top bodies some leaders who joined the party before the June 12 general elections in the change, several front-ranking leaders and former ministers who were "time and again blamed for the party's debacle in the June polls" are likely to be dropped from key positions of the party, the BNP leader said.

To inject fresh rigour at the party, another top BNP leader said.

Killing of tigers Both Zoo people, outsiders involved: DB

Detectives, who visited the Dhaka Zoo at Mirpur in the city yesterday, believe that the killing of four Royal Bengal tigers was a sabotage committed by a vested group, reports UNB.

"People both inside and outside the Zoo were involved in the killings and we are hopeful to identify them," said a top official of the Detective Branch.

Police said a four-member DB team, led by Assistant Deputy Commissioner Nuruz-zaman, spent the whole day at the zoo yesterday.

During the visit, they interrogated a number of senior and field level officials of the country's national Zoo.

DB sources said a total of 16 suspects are being investigated.

See Page 12 Col 6

NEWS BRIEFS

CEC leaves for Ghana today

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mohammad Abu Hena will leave Dhaka today for London en route to Ghana to attend a briefing on elections there. Abu Hena is one of the observers for the coming presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana, a PID handout said. Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku will brief the observers, reports BSS.

City BNP meets tomorrow

An emergency meeting of Dhaka city BNP will be held at 6 pm tomorrow at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition, said a press release yesterday, reports UNB.

Biman's flight to Barisal resumes

BARISAL, Nov 24: Biman Bangladesh Airlines resumed its once-a-week service in Dhaka-Barisal-Dhaka route this afternoon. A 70-seater ATP flight took off at 2:25 pm today from Rahmatpur Airport of Barisal with 32 passengers aboard, official sources said. Earlier, the flight arrived here with 35 passengers from Dhaka.

Fugitive arrested

FENI, Nov 24: Police today arrested one of the six accused who fled the court here Saturday after conviction in a smuggling case. Kamaluddin, 23, was nabbed at village Parshuram in Parshuram thana of the district early in the morning, police said. The six, who were given 5-7 years' imprisonment by a sub-judge court on Sunday, managed to escape from the court rooms, reports UNB.

Woman held with phensidyl

From RU Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Nov 24: A woman was arrested with 150 bottles of phensidyl from Meherchandi area of Rajshahi University yesterday. She was identified as Safura Begum, 50. A case was filed with Motihar thana.

Decomposed body of woman recovered

A decomposed body of an unidentified woman was recovered by the Savar police from a bush near Public Administration Training Centre (PATC) in Savar yesterday afternoon. She was about 45, reports BSS.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for forensic report.

Commentary

PM's bold move: Now for the next

by Mahfuz Anam

In a bold and unusual move Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina invited President Shahabuddin Ahmed to independently probe the allegations of the opposition BNP, especially those relating to police harassment of BNP workers. The move is bold because if there is any truth in the allegations, certainly it will come out in such a probe, especially when a man like the former chief justice will be conducting it. The move is also laudable because the opposition did not ask for it. The PM proposed it on her own volition. All that the BNP wanted was for the President to mediate a solution so that it could return to the parliament.

In their meeting with the editors of national dailies BNP leaders repeatedly reiterated their willingness to return to the parliament if the government did the following three things: Stop repression on its workers; allow full television coverage of parliament proceedings and take steps to improve the overall political climate. This was the same message that the BNP leaders conveyed to the President.

As we see it the PM's suggestion can be taken to be an appropriate response to the main concern of BNP regarding harassment of their party workers.

This leads us to the second demand of the BNP which deals with TV coverage of the Jatiya Sangsad proceedings. We think that BNP is right in this demand, and this paper has already said so editorially. Frankly BNP is now getting a taste of the very medicine that it administered to the AL when the latter was in opposition. This newspaper along with others, and this writer, among many others, repeatedly pleaded with the former Prime Minister about giving due coverage to the opposition on TV and Radio's daily news programmes. Absolutely nothing came of it. The situation became so bad that opposition parties ended up not allowing the BTV to cover their activities fearing that it will do so in a distorted and partisan manner.

BNP is now virtually in the same situation. We are not yet aware if it has stopped allowing BTV to cover BNP altogether, but definitely it does not trust BTV at all. The government's offer to Begum Zia to participate in "Sabinaya Jiggasha" remains unanswered.

We strongly believe that this needs to be changed, and it should and can be, without any further waste of time. We think that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina should order the information ministry to grant operational autonomy to the BTV

See Page 12 Col 3



Police at the house in the city's Gobinda Dutta Lane after eviction of the inmates yesterday.

Eviction from 'requisitioned' house

By Staff Correspondent

Residents of a "requisitioned" house at 16, Gobinda Dutta Lane at Sutrapur in the city were evicted and possession of the house was handed over to another man on behalf of the State Minister for Works and Housing yesterday, according to witnesses.

Sutrapur thana police, in presence of magistrate Mostafa Ferdous, evicted the inmate, Salahuddin, from the house and handed over its possession to one Shamsul Alam Khan Ripon on behalf of State Minister Afsaruddin Ahmed Khan.

During the eviction, press photographers were prevented from taking snaps. Some of their films were seized and were threatened and abused.

Salahuddin, talking to this correspondent, claimed that the house was 'requisitioned' in his

See Page 12 Col 8

Plan to raise status of AG, law officers

By Reaz Ahmad

The government is considering raising the status of public law officers matching their responsibilities, said official sources.

The issue of upgradation of the status of law officers and use of flag in Attorney General's vehicle is being examined by the Cabinet Division, following a report by the Attorney General to the Prime Minister, the sources said.

There are as many as 31 law officers now including the Attorney General, who is the Chief Law Officer of the Republic. The 31 law officers include two Additional Attorneys General, 11 Deputy Attorneys General and 17 Assistant Attorneys General. One Assistant Attorney General resigned a couple of weeks back on personal ground, said the sources.

The suggestion for raising the status of public law officers was made in a report to the Prime Minister by the Attorney General on September 16. It was sent to the Cabinet Division from the Prime Minister's office for scrutiny last month.

The necessity of upgradation of their status arose following to separate the judiciary from the executives and Nurunnabi Commission's recommendation for setting up an independent Supreme Court Secretariat.

The report said that there were "some anomalies" in the present Warrant of Precedence. In the present Warrant of Precedence, which came into effect on September 20 in 1986, positions of Attorney-General and Additional Attorneys-General

See Page 12 Col 7

Asthma: Treatment facilities poor, drugs expensive

By Morshed Ali Khan

Most of the patients suffering from asthma and chronic bronchitis are deprived of proper treatment due to exorbitant prices of drugs and lack of treatment facilities in the country, according to a number of doctors and patients.

Medicines, particularly of inhaler therapy for asthma patients, are mainly imported by two multinational companies. Many pharmacies in the capital either sell those at exorbitant prices or do not keep any stock at all.

"As in any other year, the drug shops have chosen this peak season to hike the prices of inhalers," said Dr Ali Hossain, a chest physician at the Chest Diseases Institute and Hospital (CDIH) at Mahakhali in the city.

Sources in the two multinational companies said that they had plenty of medicines in their stocks. The crisis was artificial and it was created to earn extra profit in this season. Massive hoarding by a section of businessmen was responsible for the crisis, they pointed out.

"We have plenty of medicines in the stock. The artificial crisis is created by a section of business houses who take the advantage of the peak season and manipulate the market," said one source.

A leading pharmacist in the capital alleged that drug superintendents of the Directorate of Drug Administration did nothing to check the problem. They are just playing the role of observers while so many people are being cheated," he also alleged that many pharmaceutical companies were surviving on 'blackmailing' of the pharmacies. "When I order for several inhalers, they compel us to buy other low-selling medicines before giving us one or two inhalers."

When contacted, Director of Drug Administration Prof Chowdhury Mahmood Hasan said The Daily Star. "With four drug superintendents in the capital, our department is understaffed, but we are aware of the problem and I can assure that we will take stern action against the culprits." He added that he had received complaints regarding 'blackmailing' by pharmaceutical companies

See Page 12 Col 4

Couple arrested for 'torturing' teenage maid

By DMC Correspondent

A couple was arrested allegedly for torturing their teenage maid at their house in Taherbagh area under Sutrapur thana in the city on Saturday.

The arrested, identified as Md Siddique and his wife Sultana Begum, were charged under the law relating to repression on women and children, police said.

Police earlier rescued the injured maid Maksudah alias Tuni, 14, who hails from Gopalganj, and took her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

See Page 12 Col 8

JCD-Shibir clash in Rajshahi: 10 injured

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Nov 24: At least ten persons were injured in a clash between the BNP-backed Jatiyatadab Chhatra Dal (JCD) and pro-Jamaat Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) at Shah Makhдум College in the city this morning.

Of the injured, two were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

The clash began when the JCD and Shibir activists brought out processions on the college campus in the morning. A Shibir activist was beaten up and both the groups chased each other. Several cocktails were blasted and gunshots fired during the clash.

Meanwhile, Bualia police recovered a country-made pistol and a dagger.