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Tk 12800 cr ADP for 1997-98 approved

A Tk 12,800 crore Annual Development Programme (ADP) has been approved for the coming 1997-98 fiscal year, reports UNB.

The National Economic Council (NEC) gave the approval to the new ADP in a meeting yesterday and also downsized the current one to Tk 11,700 crore.

The original ADP allocation for the current fiscal year was Tk 12,500 crore, which was later refixed at Tk 12,000 crore.

An official announcement said the size of the 1996-97 ADP was revised downward after detailed discussion in the meeting held with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair at the NEC building.

It said the council reviewed the implementation status of the current (1996-97) ADP and expressed satisfaction.

The prime minister asked all concerned to implement the projects under the ADP with desired pace and utmost sincerity.

Ministers and secretaries concerned attended the NEC meeting.

23 hospitals at thana level to be upgraded

By Naimul Haq

All 31-bed hospitals in the country will be upgraded to 50-bed hospitals in phases, said Dr Shahadat Hussain, Director, Planning, Health Directorate.

A project to upgrade twenty-three thana level 31-bed hospitals to 50-bed hospitals was submitted to the Health Ministry for approval recently.

The project involving an expenditure of Tk 46.27 crore will be completed within the fiscal 1997-98. Under the project, one-storey buildings will be converted to two-storied wherever necessary, more doctors appointed, medical equipment supplied and housing facilities provided for the staff of the hospitals.

Talking to The Daily Star, the Director said, eighty per cent work of all 64 on-going projects under the ministry is complete. The remaining work is expected to be completed soon.

Meanwhile, there is a plan to upgrade 250-bed medical college. See Page 12 Col 7

Indian truckers continue strike at Petrapole

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, June 3: The Benapole land port today wore a deserted look on the third day of the strike enforced by the Indian Truck Drivers' Association across the border at Petrapole.

According to sources, the local leaders, including the C&F Agents of Benapole and Central Trade Union leaders of India were having talks for a solution to the problem.

The Indian truck drivers went on strike from June 1, in protest against the arrest of one of their colleagues by Sharsha Police on May 27 last following a road accident which left a minor dead.

Inside Today

Article

Afghanistan — Never-ending War

Column: The Horizon This Week by Arshad-uz-Zaman Page 4

Focus

New practices for maintenance; and Income tax: Easing the assessment and appellate procedure Page 5

International

Ruling party retains majority in Canadian parliament Page 8

Business

Dried fruits, vegetables have great export potential, agri-business experts opine DSE index falls on lower volume Pages 6, 7

Urea price raised by Tk 1075 per ton

Urea price has been raised by Tk 1,075 per ton to reduce a huge subsidy from the exchequer, in an apparent response to advice from the donors and economists, reports UNB.

An announcement by Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) says the price of urea fertiliser has been refixed at Tk 4800 per ton from Tk 3725 with effect from yesterday.

Now a bag of urea of 50 kilogram will cost Tk 240, up from Tk 186.25 per bag, said the announcement of the BCIC, which runs the country's fertiliser factories.

It said the government took the decision to raise the urea price to cut subsidy, stop its smuggling to neighbouring countries and keep production

unhindered in the factories maintaining their economic balance.

Nevertheless, the government would have to bear a loss of Tk 700 per ton for the urea fertiliser produced by the BCIC-run six urea factories. Besides, subsidy will have to be given to imported urea.

During the current fiscal, BCIC is to bear Tk 495.27 crore as subsidy on urea fertiliser — Tk 210 crore for its own produced urea and Tk 285.27 crore for import.

If the urea price is not refixed in keeping with its international price, the BCIC said, the losses could run up to Tk 600 crore just to supply an estimated 25 lakh tons of urea during the next fiscal.

The government step fol-

lowed demands from the donors and the economists who were insisting that the authorities raise the urea price for the sake of macrostability.

During their mid-term briefing in Dhaka in February, the donors demanded that the government increase the prices of fertilizer and energy as a huge subsidy was affecting the overall macroeconomic balance.

The economists, in a pre-budget consultation last month with the finance minister, also suggested the government to raise the urea price and instead give subsidies on other inputs for the farm sector.

The BCIC, in its announcement, said a wide gap between the domestic and international prices of urea, particularly in

See Page 12 Col 1

EC steps to ensure fair by-polls in Manikganj

By Nazmul Ashraf

With the participation of all the three leading political parties confirmed officially, the Election Commission (EC) has started preparations for holding by-election in the Manikganj-3 Jatiya Sangsad constituency, scheduled for June 30.

The EC has taken some new moves in line with BNP's suggestions to make the by-election more transparent, according to official sources.

BNP had boycotted two by-elections in Thakurgaon and

Habiganj protesting alleged partisan role by the Chief Election Commissioner. However, the party has decided to contest the coming by-polls in Manikganj-3 for the sake of democracy and following EC's assurance of fairness.

The EC yesterday issued a circular to form an election monitoring cell with representatives of the parties contesting the by-polls and a law and order cell comprising police and BDR, officials said adding, they were also thinking of including army personnel in the law and order cell.

The monitoring cell will be formed after names of nominees of the contesting parties are available, they said.

Under the new arrangements, they said, the returning officer or his assistants will announce the results through loudspeaker as soon those are received from any polling centre. Besides, the results will also be displayed on a board.

However, the Deputy Commissioner and the Thana Nirbahi Officer will perform as the Returning Officer and the Assistant Returning Officer respectively. BNP's demand for vesting the responsibilities of the DO and the TNO on judicial officers in this regard could not be

See Page 12 Col 4

By-polls: BNP invites applications

BNP has urged its intending candidates for the by-election in Manikganj-3 constituency to collect nomination papers from the party central office in the city by Thursday, reports UNB.

The nomination seekers have been asked to submit the forms to the party office the same day. They would be interviewed the following day for final selection.

Nomination papers can be collected and submitted from 10 am to 9 pm everyday, said a press release.

'Zia architect of modern Bangladesh'

Shaheed Zia made the nation have a dream of self-reliance and realised it, speakers at a discussion said yesterday, reports UNB.

They said Shaheed Zia had consolidated the independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh when the nation had fallen into an abyss and the country was becoming a "vassal state" of another country.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, organised the discussion on "Production-oriented Education System: Politics of Shaheed Zia" on the occasion of 16th death anniversary of President Zia.

See Page 12 Col 4

JP rebel group convenes council June 30

The rebel group of the Jatiya Party has convened council on June 30 in Dhaka in the wake of inner-conflict and impending split of the former ruling party, reports UNB.

Party joint secretary general Shamim Al Mamun called the council session following a request by rebel leaders Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Shah Moazzem Hossain.

The two dissident leaders made the request to the joint secretary general as they realised "present party crisis cannot be resolved through discussion."

BNP protests police action inside Sectt

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has condemned and protested the Monday's police attack on the Secretariat employees agitating for changing the new office-timing and announcing new pay scales, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, he said that an abnormal situation was created because of the baton charge on employees by police in a bid to suppress their movement, even in the presence of the Prime Minister in the Secretariat.

Bhuiyan said the government has surprisingly announced the two-day weekly holiday and new office hours at a time when the employees were demonstrating to realise different demands, including announcement of new pay scales.

Mentioning that all quarters have sharply reacted and expressed resentment against the sudden announcement of the

See Page 12 Col 3

Vow to defy new office timing Sectt employees begin token work stoppage

By Staff Correspondent

The authorities have quietly begun talks with leaders of the agitating government employees in a bid to defuse the tension in the Secretariat over new office timing.

But the employees' leaders yesterday announced fresh actions, including work stoppage for an hour everyday until next week which will be followed by two-hour stoppage and rallies from the week after.

A senior minister held "exploratory talks" with the employees' leaders on Monday night which helped to calm the situation to some extent in the Secretariat yesterday, according to sources.

Police maintained a low profile yesterday and did not inter-

vene when the employees staged demonstrations and held a rally where their leaders vowed to continue to defy the new timing.

They announced the work stoppage every day until the authorities change the office timing and announce new pay scales.

Habibur Rahman and Shah Alam, President and Secretary General respectively of the Sachibalya Sanjukta Karmachari Parishad told the rally that they would continue one-hour work stoppage from 10 am every day until next Thursday.

If the authorities fail to accept our demands by Saturday, there will be two-hour work stoppage.

See Page 12 Col 1

Legislative drafting wing under Law Ministry okayed

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has approved the creation of a separate legislative drafting wing under the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, reports UNB.

The approval came in the wake of the increased workload of the ministry regarding draft formulation and scrutiny of laws, by-laws, ordinances, rules and regulations of the government.

The pressure in this regard increased in recent months due to tremendous development programmes and important international agreements regarding increased foreign investment, said an official handout yesterday.

The proposed wing, to be headed by an additional secretary will also give legal opinion and do necessary vetting in connection with all agreements with foreign countries and international agencies.

Almost all countries in the world has separate ministry or division to look after drafting and vetting work of the government, the handout said.

Schoolgirl raped, murdered: Angry villagers clash, set houses afire

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, June 3: At least a dozen people were injured, six houses set on fire and several others ransacked in clashes between two groups of villagers in Char Goadi under Sonargaon thana late last night.

The clashes started following alleged poisoning to death of a schoolgirl by her neighbour, Afzal, after her refusal to marry him last week, police said.

According to police, Afzal Haq Sudhir kidnapped Raw-

See Page 12 Col 3

2 get life term for murder

By Court Correspondent

Two persons were sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a trader in Lalbagh in the city in 1992.

First Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka, Shahidul Huq found Khurshed Alam alias Picchi Rocket and Motiur Rahman alias Rocket guilty of murdering Panua. They were also fined Tk 5,000, in default to serve another one year's rigorous imprisonment.

Six witnesses were examined in the case including the brother of the deceased, Javed Hossain.

4 given life-term for killing school student in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, June 3: Five persons have been sentenced to life imprisonment for killing a school student in Sylhet.

Two others were acquitted in a judgement announced today.

Khurshed Alam Raju, son of Momin Miah of village Menikola of Sylhet Sadar thana, along with 4 of his friends, was going to the Sylhet railway station on August 17 of 1993. They found some people engaged in gambling and asked

See Page 12 Col 5

Gold bars worth Tk 12.17 lakh seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

A customs surveillance team at Zia International Airport (ZIA) recovered gold bars worth about Tk 12.17 lakh from a passenger yesterday morning.

According to sources of the airport, the customs officials searching the baggage of the passenger found 25 gold bars, weighing 10 tolas each. He arrived at the airport from Jeddah by a Bangladesh Biman flight at about 9:30 am.

Customs Inspector Mizanur Rahman challenged the passenger, aged about 45, when he was crossing the green channel saying he had nothing to declare.

Later, scanning the baggage, the customs men confirmed the existence of the gold bars.

The passenger has handed over to police. A case was filed with Cantonment thana.

Alleged snatcher beaten to death in city

An unidentified young man was beaten to death at Waizghat in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said local people caught the unknown youth aged about 30 suspecting him to be a snatcher at about 8:30 am and beat him up.

He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at about 10:30 am.



Garments workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding two-day weekly holiday. — Star photo

BGMEA for holiday on Sunday

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has welcomed the 9 am-5 pm office timing but demanded weekly holiday only on Sunday, reports UNB.

The executive committee of BGMEA at a meeting yesterday with its President MG Quddus unanimously expressed the view that the declaration of a two-day weekly holiday in a least developed country like Bangladesh will be nothing but suicidal.

The BGMEA said the weekly holiday on Sunday would be more practical and logical for maintaining contact with the outside world and increasing production to expand the export trade, said a press release.

Saturday's DU exams to be held on schedule

Master's degree and other course final examinations of the traditional system under the Dhaka University scheduled for Saturday will be held as per schedule, reports UNB.

The date of the examinations will not be changed until further notice, although it will be observed as weekly holiday, said a DU press release yesterday.

12 terrorists arrested in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, June 3: Police arrested 12 members of an organised gang of terrorists including their leader, Zakir Khan, here today.

Zakir Khan, a local leader of the BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and his accomplices were napped when they were moving suspiciously near the number one railgate with three cars and several motorbikes. The special police squad also arrested the drivers of the cars and detained all the vehicles. However, some of the activists managed to escape.

Zakir and many of his accomplices were wanted in a number of cases involving

See Page 12 Col 3

Prisons to maintain photos of inmates

By Staff Correspondent

The Ministry of Home Affairs has asked the Directorate of Prisons to take photographs of all inmates of prisons across the country, according to official sources.

The decision, taken at a recent meeting in the home ministry, follows troubles created by inmates in some jails in the last few months. The meeting was attended by high officials of the Directorate of Prisons and the police.

The Dhaka Central Jail authorities have already started taking photos of inmates and other prisons across the country will start it soon, the sources said.

Photographs will be preserved along with case records of the prisoners.

There are provisions under the Police Rules and the Jail Code for taking photographs of hardcore criminals in jails. But this was very often ignored, the sources said.

In July last year, 13 prisoners escaped from the Dhaka Central Jail and it was very difficult for police to trace them out because they had no photographs, the sources said.

Keeping of photographs in jails will also help the authorities identify offenders who allegedly change names when arrested more than once, they said. They mentioned the case of Sheema Chowdhury in Chittagong in February last year.

Sheema, who was allegedly raped by the police, was kept in the safe custody of the Chittagong District Jail. When she was taken to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, doctors there declared her dead.

Police and the Chittagong District Jail authorities had claimed that Sheema was arrested more than once earlier but she changed her name. It would have been easy for the jail authorities to identify Sheema if they had her photograph, the sources said.

30 hurt as JCD, police clash at Chandanaish

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 3: At least 30 people were injured in a pitched battle between police and supporters of JCD and BNP this afternoon at Chandanaish thana-area, 30 miles off the city.

The injured were rushed to the local health complex and private clinics.

The trouble began after the arrest of a JCD leader of Chandanaish unit, Md Monsur, by local police from West Elahabad village at around 3:30 pm today. Police said Monsur was arrested on charges of terrorism and other criminal acts.

Immediately after the arrest, the supporters of JCD and BNP put up barricades on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road at Khanchan Nagar point to voice their protests, police said.

When police attempted to remove the barricade, the agitators opened fire on police, who lobbed tear gas shells and started baton charge to disperse the protesters.

As the situation became tense, police reinforcements from surrounding thanas were ordered by the district police authorities to move to Chandanaish.

Corruption case against ex-JP MP

RAJBARI, June 3: A former Zilla Parishad chairman has been sued for his alleged misappropriation of Tk 16 lakh, reports UNB.

District anti-corruption officer S M Mafidul Islam today filed two cases against Munsif Abdul Latif, also a former Jatiya Party MP, with the district judge court.

In one case, it was alleged that Latif embezzled over Tk 5.17 lakh overrating a land

See Page 12 Col 7

City schools, hospitals face acute noise pollution

By Staff Correspondent

Noise pollution in and around the city's educational institutions and hospitals is posing a serious health hazard, according to a recent Department of Environment (DOE) survey.

The level of noise in 20 sensitive locations surveyed by the department, was measured at between 67.19 and 75.35 decibel on average, almost double the permissible level of 45 decibel, the DOE report said.

The DOE surveyed 14 educational institutions and six major hospitals between March 9 and April 7 where the maximum noise level should be 45 decibel. The highest level of this pollution was found outside Vikarunnessa Noon Girls' School where the Oscilloscope read 84 decibel. Inside, the me-

ter read 72 decibel.

The report identified traffic, industries and human activities as the main causes behind noise pollution in the city. It said the pollution could cause temporary and permanent mental and physical problems to human body. It could lead to high blood pressure, headaches, indigestion, peptic ulcer and insomnia. If exposed to too much of noise over a long period, a person may suffer hearing loss and his work ability may decrease. The DOE report also said pregnant women and children were more vulnerable to noise pollution.

Among the six major hospitals of the city, inside the BIRDEM noise pollution was found to be upto 75.5 decibel — the highest among all. While inside

PG Hospital the noise meter registered 74.5 decibel, Dhaka Medical College Hospital's interior had a noise level of 73 decibel.

The interior of Shaheed Sahravady Hospital was the quietest among all the six hospitals with a maximum reading of 54 decibel. Outside PG Hospital was found to be the noisiest with 82 decibel.

The DOE chose the schools and hospitals to survey the level of noise pollution as these locations have been classified as sensitive where it is necessary to assure quietness. The report blamed vehicular noise, particularly horns, unplanned construction of markets and commercial areas and motor workshops, for the pollution in

See Page 12 Col 8