

PACKAGES DOCUMENTS & FREIGHT WORLDWIDE



FedEx
Federal Express

The World on Time

For more information call-Dhaka : 9665114, 607657, 887771.
Chittagong : (031) 712127, Khulna : (041) 725008, N. Ganj : (671) 74336



BNP leader Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury addressing a discussion meeting at the Engineers' Institution in the city on the occasion of the party's 19th founding anniversary yesterday. — Star photo

Economy may break down within 2 months: Saifur

Former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday sounded a note of warning that the country's economy might break down within next two months if urgent measures are not taken, reports UNB.

"All foundations of the market economy have completely been destroyed in last 14 months. The economy is deteriorating rapidly. A breakdown is inevitable if the government is run with the present perception," he said.

Saifur Rahman, who was at the helm of the country's exchequer for a long time, was addressing a discussion meeting marking the 19th founding anniversary of BNP at the Engineers' Institute in the evening.

The former minister criticised the government for its failure in every sector of the economy which, he said, was showing signs of a potential catastrophe due to bad economic management.

Saifur observed that the economy has stagnated and the manufacturing sector has been paralysed as a result of the wrong measures taken by the government.

"When the banks, businessmen and everybody is saying that a liquidity crisis is persisting the finance minister is still claiming that there is no liquidity crisis. This perception is totally wrong and is leading the country towards destruction,"

Saifur observed that the economy has stagnated and the manufacturing sector has been paralysed as a result of the wrong measures taken by the government.

"When the banks, businessmen and everybody is saying that a liquidity crisis is persisting the finance minister is still claiming that there is no liquidity crisis. This perception is totally wrong and is leading the country towards destruction,"

Unique funeral for Diana

From Page 1

wood cemetery, 40 kms southwest of London, in accordance with Muslim tradition for swift funerals.

Prime Minister Tony Blair canceled engagements today as a mark of respect and remained at his country residence, Chequers.

He has urged the Diana funeral combine the grand state ceremonial with an opportunity for ordinary people to show their grief at her death.

"The status (of the funeral) is irrelevant," a palace spokeswoman said. "This is a unique funeral for a unique person."

Diana, daughter of the late Earl Spencer, will be interred at Althorp, her family's stately home, 100 kms northwest of London. Twenty generations of Spencers are buried at the

Sylhet: Rail, road links

From Page 1

BR official in Sylhet.

BR started a shuttle bus service between Sylhet and Srirangal to ease the sufferings of its passengers but the service has been closed for the last 7 days due to transport strike.

"BR charged Tk 30 for the trip but now microbuses charge up to Tk 150 per person and many passengers are forced to spend the night at Srirangal station," said Lala Mia who just arrived at Sylhet by a minibus.

At Shaistaganj, this correspondent saw long queues of vehicles on both sides of river Khawai as the pontoon could handle one file of traffic at a time. No heavy vehicle was allowed to ply on the bridge for 'technical reasons' which disrupted Sylhet's trade with the rest of the country.

"At night, as the bridge closes, many stranded passengers are subjected to extortion and theft because there is no electricity here," said an on-duty policeman at the bridge site.

Prices of essentials, especially vegetables, have shot up in Sylhet and other parts affected by the bad linkage. Hotel owners in Sylhet complained that their business had been severely affected due to disruption in communication system.

To make things worse, the transport owners associations in Sylhet, Habiganj and Maul-

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 and published by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091, Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net

Proposed body to probe alleged Alcatel bribing

By Staff Correspondent

Speaker Humayun Rashid Choudhury yesterday announced the names of four members of a proposed committee to probe the allegations of taking bribe from French company Alcatel while granting a contract for installing digital telephone lines during the BNP rule.

The committee members are: Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Telecommunications and Housing Minister Mohammad Nasim and Nurul Islam Nahid of Awami League and Fazle Rabbi of Jatiya Party.

"I'll announce the formation of the full committee and its terms of reference after getting the names of two members from the BNP," the Speaker said, adding that he wrote to Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Choudhury yesterday requesting him to name his party nominees.

Earlier on the day, Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah submitted a written proposal of a seven-member investigation committee headed by the Speaker.

Founding day

From Page 1

said the BNP has stood the test of time and proved that it has no alternative.

Recalling the contributions of Shaheed Zia, Prof Choudhury said Zia and his BNP restored multi-party democracy, established friendly relations with the Islamic world and consolidated the hard-earned national independence and sovereignty.

He said Zia, the proclaimer of the country's independence, had held the helm of the state through the sepy-people uprising which foiled the conspiracy against the independence and sovereignty of the country four years after its birth.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said BNP believes in establishing the spirit of the Liberation War while the ruling Awami League plans to plunder the national wealth and leave out the country to its foreign masters.

"This Awami League which had forgiven the rajakars and there are still two rajakars in its present cabinet," he said.

AL-BNP meet

From Page 1

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury inviting them to the meeting and I hope they will attend it," the Speaker told newsmen while coming out of his office yesterday evening.

BNP remained absent from attending the current session of parliament till yesterday since it staged a walkout on Saturday day of the session on Saturday. Soon after the walkout, the BNP put forward a 14-point charter of demand and demanded effective steps for disposal of those.

The demands include withdrawal of enhanced fuel prices, release of the arrested partymen and withdrawal of cases against them, neutral role of the electronic media, fair prices for agricultural products, an end to the government's tendency to ignore national issues ignoring the parliament and immediate steps to end repression on women.

Signatories to the four-point accord signed between the two parties on 14 January this year to end a similar stand-off, has been requested to attend today's meeting, the speaker added.

In the January dialogue, mediated by the Speaker, Suranjit Sengupta, Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Mohammad Nasim, Mizanur Rahman Manu and Rahmat Ali represented the Treasury Bench while the BNP was represented by Prof Badruddoza Choudhury, Khandakar Delwar Hossain, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Saifur Rahman and M K Anwar.

Yasmin murder

From Page 1

Club. They, however, hailed the death sentence awarded to the policemen who were the main accused in the case.

They also demanded of the government to award departmental punishment to SP Abdul Motalab, Dr Mohsin Ali, OC Mahtab Uddin, SI Motiur Rahman, ASIS Swapan Chakravarty and Jahangir Alam and not to reinstate these persons in their jobs.

The Nari Samaj leaders claimed that the then DC, SP and other police officials in Dinajpur were active in damaging vital evidences of the incident and that the doctor who was responsible for medical test of Yasmin, also showed negligence in performing his duties.

They also demanded necessary amendments to the present system of law, investigation, and medical test.

Expressing concern at the "high rate" of violence against women and children, Nari Samaj leaders demanded that political parties issue statements about resisting repression on women.

Sultana Akhter Ruby read out a written statement while Sigma Huda, Farida Akhter, Shirin Akhter, Maleka Begum replied to questions from newsmen at the press conference.

Bill passed

From Page 1

Choudhury opposed introduction of the bill, arguing that it was violative of certain provisions of the Constitution. Referring to the Article 59 of the Constitution, the JP lawmaker said that the elected representatives of the people are supposed to run administrative units at all levels. "But the present bill sought the GP to be run by a 13 member body of which 12 are selected by the government — not elected by the people."

According to the bill, the government authorities concerned would enjoy the power to remove, under certain conditions, the members of the Gram Parishad.

It can be mentioned here that the proposed provision of the Local Government Commission, the LGC, headed by Awami League legislator Rahmat Ali, suggested the people of a particular Ward will 'elect or select' the GP members at an open meeting of the villagers.

The Local Government (Union Parishads) (Second Amendment) bill, 1997 — said a Union Parishad (UP) shall consist of a Chairman and 12 members. Three seats of members will be reserved for women.

The Chairman of the UP will be elected directly by the people. Nine Gram Parishad chairmen, elected directly by the voters of nine separate Wards, will automatically become the members of the Union Parishad.

Introduced in the House by voice vote, both the bills were sent to the Special Parliamentary Committee, headed by Rahmat Ali MP, for scrutiny. The Special body is scheduled to submit its report to the House today.

Siddhirganj gang rape: Bail prayers of 5 rejected

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 1: The court of the District and Sessions Judge has rejected the bail petitions moved on behalf of the five accused in the Siddhirganj rape case here today.

The court also turned down the appeal of the accused to reinvestigate the case.

Four sisters were gang raped on August 1 at the Sonarpura under Siddhirganj thana of the district. A case was filed accusing five persons under Section 6(3) of the Women and Children Repression Control Act 1995.

The accused persons are Aminul Islam, Mohammad Selim, Abdul Halim, Ali Akbar and Ahad Ali Sikdar.

Earlier, police charge-sheeted the five accused after the investigation. The hearing of the case will start from September 14.

56 deported from Pak airport granted bail

By Court Correspondent

Fifty-six people who were deported by the Pakistani authorities from Karachi airport on Sunday on charges of travelling on forged passports, were granted bail yesterday.

They were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday. Immigration authorities at Zia International Airport handed them over to Cantonment thana on Sunday. They were detained under Section 54 of CrPC.

The Pakistani authorities had seized their travelling papers, they told police and allegedly confessed that their passports had been doctored by manpower agents.

Speaker invites

From Page 1

tional to maintain the democratic process.

The 90-minute BNP parliamentary meeting was addressed by 14 lawmakers, including Prof A Q M Badruddoza Choudhury, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandakar Delwar Hossain, Saifur Rahman, Sheikh Razzak Ali, Barrister Nazmul Huda, Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain and Amanullah Aman.

They mainly discussed the invitation of the Speaker and the overall political situation.

Five top BNP leaders, who negotiated with the ruling party in ending another deadlock in parliament on January 14, are expected to join the tomorrow's meeting.

Replying to a question, Delwar said "We did not boycott the parliament... we are refraining from participating in the activities in the House."

The BNP parliamentary party will meet again at 7.30 pm tomorrow (Tuesday).

Bangabandhu murder

From Page 1

that began at around 10:15 am and were adjourned at 4:15 pm, cross examination of Lt Col (ret'd) M A Hamid, PW-9, was also completed. The hearing will resume at 10:30 am today.

When the lawyers contended that he disposed of the bodies without considering the religious sentiment, Rab said, "It is not true. When told that he could have arranged proper burial of the bodies he said, 'no'."

In his deposition, Rab told the court that he woke up at about 6:15 am on August 15, 1975 hearing the screams of Maj Abu Bakr that Bangabandhu and his family members were killed.

"I then put on my uniform and went to the office, where I saw work was continuing as usual."

"At about noon, on the day of the incident, I went to the residence of Bangabandhu along with the adjutant of my battalion or the Subedar Major."

"I was halted by the forces deployed at the entry point of Rd No 32, then knowing my identity they allowed me to go."

"As I entered the residence of Bangabandhu, I saw a dead body lying in the reception room. I thought what I heard was not a rumour but true and that the massacre took place in the house. I did not go upstairs and from there immediately returned to my office."

"On August 16, at about 3:30 am, Station Commander of Dhaka Lt Col MA Hamid instructed me on phone to dispose of the bodies from the residences of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Abdur Rab Serniabat and Sheikh Moni."

"I then phoned my battalion office and ordered the troops, 30/35 jawans, to prepare for digging graves. I also ordered sending of two trucks with troops for collecting the bodies from Bangabandhu's residence."

"At about 4:30 am, I went to the battalion office and from there reached Banani graveyard at around 5:00 am along with troops in two trucks. We did not find anyone other than the chowkidar at the graveyard."

"Then I saw the trucks for collecting the bodies from the residences of Abdur Rab Serniabat and Sheikh Moni."

"Seven coffins, each carrying one body, arrived at the graveyard, which were disposed of with the same clothes. Digging of graves continued and after about an hour and a half, 11 more bodies came, which were also disposed of."

"We also offered 'doa' and 'darud' for them and did what we could."

Bangladesh-Nepal transit

From Page 1

Two separate check posts have been set up at Banglabandh, one by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for collecting custom and another by the Ministry of Home Affairs for giving permission for transportation of Nepalese goods.

UNB adds: Under the new arrangements, the Nepalese importers will use the Mongla-Banglabandh-Fulbari-Kakarbhita route for the transportation of their imports and exports, now about a million tons each year.

And the quantity is growing every year, creating heavy pressure on the Calcutta port where cargo handling remains a major problem and, for that, cost is much higher there.

As Shukla informed: "You have to wait three weeks for a berth in the Calcutta port. In case of the Calcutta-Nepal route, major portion of the goods, about 75 per cent, are in the Indian territory while for Bangladesh transit, more than half of the highways lies in the Nepal land."

"This will allow development of a healthy transportation sector and its ancillary services in Nepal, boosting its overall economy," the Nepalese minister told reporters after the opening.

As the transit opened here, a similar ceremony took place at Kakarbhita which Nepalese Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa and West Bengal Minister for Urban Development Ashok Bhattacharya were to attend.

A fleet of four trucks carrying Nepalese commodities was due to arrive later in the day at the Banglabandh customs point, through its opposite checkpoint at Fulbari in India, to mark the inauguration of the transit route.

Tofail Ahmed said that the transit was given to Nepal in line with the spirit of the SAPTA.

The Bangladesh minister regretted the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could not attain its desired goal in absence of "necessary trust and confidence" among its seven members.

"But we have to realise the fact that time has been over to develop alone," he said. "The idea of sub-regional, regional and global coordination has been proved most effective means of rapid economic growth."

Bangladesh will benefit from higher utilisation of its port facilities and new jobs to be created in the service sector. "This will create a win-win business atmosphere in both the countries."

The Nepalese Commerce Minister agreed with his counterpart. He said the two countries would be able to offer various agricultural and industrial products following the easy access to each other.

Bangladesh exported goods worth 8.31 million dollars to Nepal and imported products valued at 7.58 million dollars from the Himalayan country in 1995-96 fiscal year.

When Tofail Ahmed was asked whether the transit to Nepal is designed to create a political ground to allow transit to India sometime later, he categorically denied. "There is no politics here, the transit to Nepal was given for achieving economic cooperation," he said.

The issue of transit was not discussed with India, the commerce minister told the reporters.

Later, the Nepalese Commerce Minister left for his country through the transit route.



L'ORÉAL PARIS

ELSEVE Hair care day after day

TRANSCOM DISTRIBUTION CO. LTD.

Future of textile & RMG sectors Short & long term policies needed to retain competitive edge

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh's burgeoning textile industry needs a shot in the arm to better prepare it for the uncharted waters in the world market after 2005 when tariff barriers and quota systems are abolished.

This was the consensus at a roundtable discussion at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) premises, in the city yesterday.

The participants stressed the need for both short term and long term policies and strategies to cope with the 'new world trade order' honing the competitive edge of the textile sector, of whose sub-sector — readymade garments (RMG) — accounts for 60 per cent of the country's exports.

Moderated by Prof Rehman Sobhan, Executive Chairman of the CPD, the Roundtable was participated by textile and RMG manufacturers, officials, business leaders, bankers and academics.

They noted that the private sector should take initiative, with government support, to bring the 'sunset' textile industries from Europe and USA as well as from Japan and Korea to Bangladesh.

There could be a joint-venture involving the state-owned enterprises of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) to revamp its ailing units. The risks could be shared in a tripartite arrangement with the foreign investors shifting their production base to these ready for use industries, even stripping their idle mills, the discussants asserted.

Besides, they suggested providing bank support to the textile sector to expand their capacity and provide incentive and support to handloom operators in the rural areas to protect them from uneven competition from imports.

The participants noted that the textile sector should be freed from the recent increase in taxes and duties, threatening to blunt its competitive edge and having bearings on RMG export.

The RMG units are increasingly using locally produced fabrics, they pointed out and these need support to survive against heavily subsidised imports in their country of origin, particularly India.

Ways and means should be found out to keep the RMG sector going ahead, which over the years has found footing in the world market, starting from a scratch when even packaging materials had to be imported in the late seventies, they said. It survived the test of time and ploughed back profits to linkage industries. They also expressed confidence that it would be able to survive in 2005.

Earlier in his opening remarks, Prof Rehman Sobhan thanked the participants for joining the Roundtable to scrutinise the weaknesses and strength and future of the vital sector.

He said efforts must be made to examine the possibility of RMG sector retaining its competitive edge after 2005. He called for examining the pros and cons of the situation — balancing and modernising of the existing capacity, technical feasibility, financial implications, entrepreneurial capacity, role of BTMC and the government, marketing and developing skills etc.

The discussants included Syed Manzoor Elahi, Chairman Apex Tannery and President Bangladesh Employers Association; Prof Muzaffar Ahmed of IBA, DU; MA Quasem, President Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry; K Z Islam of Nirman International; Mahbubur Rahman, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank; Sohail Rahman of Beximco; Muhammad Nurul Qader, MD, Dosh Garments; Khaled Shams, DMD, Grameen Bank; Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya of BIDS; Dr Nasreen Khandaker of DU and KM Ejazul Huq, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles.

Chauffeur

From Page 1

A spokeswoman at the Ritz Hotel where Diana and millionaire boyfriend Dodi Fayed had dined before they died in Sunday's crash told The Associated Press the driver was Henri Paul, the hotel's No. 2 security man.

Contrary to earlier media reports, the spokeswoman said that Paul was an experienced driver who received special security training by Mercedes-Benz at a center in Germany. She said he also had experience handling armoured vehicles like the armoured-plated Mercedes sedan he was driving.

Paul, 41, a former French Air Force pilot from Lorient, France, was not Fayed's regular driver, who had left earlier in another vehicle as a decoy to throw photographers off the trail.

The statement also indicated that at least some of the seven photographers currently detained would be placed under formal investigation. They did not specify the grounds, but suggested it could be because they did not extend help to the victims of the crash.

PW-9 says

From Page 1

book.

Quoting the then Army Chief Major General Shafiqullah, the witness said he also wrote in his book Shafiqullah was informed about movement of tanks and artillery in the city by army intelligence Chief Col Salahuddin on August 15, 1975 at 5:15 am.

The then DGFI chief, Brig Rauf, was also informed about movement of tanks and forces between 2:30 am and 3 am. Hamid admitted in court, saying that the statement was of Rauf.

Being asked, quoting the book, by the defence counsel, Hamid said that day (August 15) Khaled Mosharrar also directed supply of ammunition from Joydevpur for empty tanks.

The witness, however, said the Commander of 46 Brigade was responsible for the troop movement in Dhaka and the 1st Bengal Lancers were directly under the command of Commander-in-Chief and controlled by CGS Brig Khaled Mosharrar.

Admitting his writings, Hamid said Khaled Mosharrar was conducting operation and providing cooperation (to others) in keeping Rakkhi Bahini and others calm.

Col Hamid also admitted that Khaled Mosharrar asked the Air Force to fly jet fighters over Rakkhi Bahini camp at Savar for show of force.

At the same time, he also asked Major Ansar Ali (now Major General) and Captain Munir to observe movement of Rakkhi Bahini by Flying Club aircraft.

Asad clinches

From Page 1

event. Their compatriots on the distaff side — Rehana Zaman of Ansars and Nibedita Das of Biman finished 14th and 15th respectively out of 25 competitors in 19-km event.

The 13-member Bangladesh team which included five natants took part in the day-long meet involving participants from 72 countries.

PM: Trade, investment

From Page 1

eign Affairs Abul Hasan Choudhury, Principal Secretary Dr S A Samad, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, Chief of Protocol A K M Farooq, Director General of South East Asia desk in the Foreign Ministry Muhammad Faruk and Press Secretary Jawadul Karim.

The Prime Minister will leave for Jakarta on the morning of September 4 by a commercial flight of Bangladesh Biman.

President Suharto of Indonesia will receive the Bangladesh Prime Minister at the Mardeka Palace where a ceremonial reception will be accorded. Later she will attend a state banquet hosted by the President.

The Prime Minister will stay at the Mardeka Palace during the visit.

On September 5 Hasina and Suharto will hold official talks on bilateral, regional and international issues.

Sheikh Hasina will address the members of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry the same day.

The Prime Minister and her entourage will fly to Manila from Jakarta on September 8.

She will be received by President Fidel Ramos at the Malacanang Palace. The two leaders will hold official talks the same day. During the talks an important agenda of discussion would be about promotion and welfare of manpower exported by both the countries. There would also be follow-up discussions between the two leaders based on President Ramos's visit to Dhaka earlier this year.

Besides, discussions on bolstering trade and commerce between the two countries will also be held.

Hasina is also due to meet the Philippine business community and attend a reception hosted by the Bangladesh community in the Philippines.

The Prime Minister will return to Dhaka on September 10.

Gold price

From Page 1

gold market 'contradicts' economic rules. Although prices of US dollar were high, it did not correspond to the gold market. Generally people become interested to hold gold when dollar becomes costlier. In this case, consumer behaved in an unusual way in Bangladesh. Currently one dollar is sold at Tk 47 in the kerb market and at about Tk 45 in different banks.

Renowned economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, when contacted, said gold is not considered a means of exchange nowadays. "It is like other commodities. Its price depends on demand and supply," he said.

He also said dollar became stronger against many major currencies for which people are interested to hold more dollars rather than gold.

ALPP meets today

The adjourned meeting of Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) will be held at Sargisd Bhaban at 3 pm today, reports UNB.