

The exclusive address
at Gulshan
PROPERTY CROWN
2600 sq ft Luxury Apartment

THE NAME MOST TRUSTED
PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT LTD
PROPERTY HEIGHTS
12 RR MISSION ROAD
FAX 880-2-9559415PHONE
9563117 9563126 9559412-3

The Daily Star

MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE
WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF
ITALIAN CARRARA, PERLATO SICILIA,
BOTTICINO, INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,
MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE
OF DIFFERENT TYPES.

NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.
190, TEJGAON I/A, DHAKA.
TEL: 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM: 861985

SAARC FMs to meet in Male next month

South Asian Foreign Ministers will meet in Male, capital of the Maldives, in the last week of November to review progress as a follow up to the last SAARC summit, reports UNB.

President Maumun Abdul Gayoom of the Maldives, current chairman of the SAARC, will inaugurate the two-day meeting.

It will be preceded by meetings of the Programme Committee and the Standing Committee of the seven-nation association, official sources said yesterday.

In May, Male hosted the SAARC summit that adopted a declaration spelling out vital regional programmes including poverty alleviation, an integrated network for promotion of tourism and trade, protection of rights of children and women development.

The meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers will also discuss holding of its next summit in Colombo.

Formally launched in Dhaka in 1985, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has so far identified 13 areas of interaction.

The SAARC Ministers will also meet in Male October 15-16 to work out ways of facing environmental hazards.

Zillur urges BNP to shun politics of destruction

Awami League General Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday thanked the countrymen for not responding to the 'illogical' road-rail barricade programme of BNP, reports UNB.

"Conscious people of the country, by ignoring the opposition's countrywide 'illogical' road-rail barricade, have reposed their confidence in the existing stability, democracy, development and fair politics," he said in a statement.

The Awami League leader said that by enforcing the barricade programme and damaging vehicles without any reason, BNP has violated the people's fundamental rights to free movements on the roads.

Zillur said that creating ob-

Kaiser made envoy to ROK

The government has appointed Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser Bangladesh Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, reports BSS.

Kaiser is the Finance and Planning Secretary of Awami League. As a member of the Constituent Assembly, he took part in the framing of the Constitution of the country.

Kaiser did his MA in Political Science from Dhaka University in 1963. He participated in the Liberation War.

A businessman by occupation, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser set up several institutions in his native Chittagong district. He is member of several social clubs and athletic organisations.

Kaiser, now 57, is a member of the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The Daily Star
on the internet
<http://www.dailystarnews.com>

Inside Today Article

The Moral Dimension of Our Governance
Column: Perspectives by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz
Page 4

International

Zardari hopes Benazir will stand by him during ordeal

Israel, PA negotiators to resume talks today
Page 5

Business

RMG exports may fetch \$5b

DSE index continues to edge higher
Pages 6, 7

Supplement

One page supplement on 'World Habitat Day'
Page 8



BNP leaders and activists barricaded the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Shanir Akhra in the city as part of their rail-road barricade programme across the country yesterday.

200 injured, 100 arrested

Sporadic clashes mark countrywide barricade

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday enforced an eight-hour rail-road barricade programme across the country, amidst resistance from the police and the ruling Awami League activists.

The barricade programme beginning from 6:00 in the morning paralysed train and bus services and from the city and disrupted these in other areas.

Around 200 people were injured and about 100 arrested in sporadic clashes between activists of BNP and AL in different areas of the country.

BNP claimed that a party activist was shot dead in Bheramara, Kushtia during the barricade. The Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia, when contacted over phone rejected the claim saying that no political activist was killed yesterday.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Kushtia Malik Khashru said that one Golam Sarwar (40) died of heart failure in Bheramara, "which has nothing to do with politics."

In the city, clashes between BNP supporters and AL activists left at least 100 people injured and around 50 arrested. Police,

BNP announces 17-day agitation programme

By Staff Correspondent

BNP yesterday announced a 17-day fresh agitation programme including rallies, processions and demonstrations to press its various demands.

Party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, announced the new programme at a press briefing at the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament after BNP's eight-hour rail-road barricade across the country yesterday.

The major opposition party will organise rallies and processions at the unions, municipalities and cities from October 6 to 14 and at thanas on October 16 demanding among other things, fixation of minimum price of jute at Taka 500 a maund, fair price of agricultural products, reduction of

prices for agri-inputs, scrapping the Gram Parishad Bill and improvement of law and order.

From October 17 to 21, BNP will hold rallies and processions at thana level throughout the country to press some other demands.

Those include: making the Jatiya Sangsad effective and turning it the focal centre of all national activities, stopping "conspiracies" on the CHT and the alleged government move to give corridor to India, implementation of the Pay Commission recommendations, restructuring the Election Commission, introduction of voters' ID cards, stopping alleged attacks on street rallies, containing terrorism and extortion, withdrawal of the circular re-



Former ministers and BNP leaders Abdullah Al Noman and Abdul Matin Chowdhury were assaulted by anti-barricade activists at Saidabad in the city during BNP's rail-road barricade across the country yesterday.

Modern cab service for Dhaka city awaits approval

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi and Rafiq Hasan

Modern cabs, with meters and air-conditioners and linked to a wireless network, will hit the Dhaka streets next month, if the authorities give stamp of approval to recommendations by a committee.

An eight-member government committee has studied various aspects of the business that will involve immediate investments worth tens of crores of taka. In the next few years, it promises to be a multi-billion taka industry if what potential investors are saying has any substance.

So far, as many as 12 companies have shown interest, some of which are talking about plans of having thousands of cars on their fleet, and are ready to launch the services even by the end of this month.

They may be taking advantage of a significant duty waiver on cars imported for the purpose, but implementation of their plans will change the capital's unbearable traffic scene.

The authorities and the investors also look at the issue from another point. "Quality taxi service is vital for attracting tourists and foreign investment," says a government official, a view entrepreneurs also share.

As expected, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) will be the licensing authority and regulate such aspects as fares.

The government committee, chaired by a senior BRTA official, has finalised its report and is sending it to the communications ministry soon, sources said.

"We have studied issues involved and prepared a preliminary report to help the government in taking a decision," said Amanullah Chowdhury, BRTA director and head of the committee, formed late August.

Chowdhury wouldn't give details but said his committee discussed such issues as brand, model and colour of cars to be used as cabs.

The committee also took into account suggestions and recommendations from companies interested in the business.

"It may start from the next month if the government approves the recommendations," Chowdhury said.

A BRTA source said none of the companies had so far received licenses or route permit.

Fares, as proposed, look reasonable. Before the government raised fuel prices, one company had proposed a minimum Tk 18 for the first two kilometres and then eight taka a kilometre. For diesel-driven cars, the proposals still remain valid.

Only new cars up to 2000 cc will be allowed to operate as cabs, which brings into open the basic question about the economics of the business. Last week, the companies received a note from the communications ministry saying re-conditioned cars would not be allowed.

To get tax exemption, an importer will have to form a company with a paid-up capital of more than Tk 10 lakh, and the imported cars will have to be used for passenger services, according to the government rule.

An imported car to be used as cab will save some Tk 70,000 on duty for each Tk 100,000 of its price. Instead of a regular 42.5 per cent customs duty, an importer will pay only 7.5 per cent.

With new cars, will the companies be able to make it financially? Cheaper cars such as

Tk 200cr fund to be created for industrial financing

Amidst allegations by the businessmen that they are not getting long-term loans from banks, the government yesterday decided to create a Tk 200 crore special fund only for industrial financing.

The government will provide Tk 100 crore for the Industrial Development Fund while the Bangladesh Bank funnel a same amount into the exclusive fund in order to stimulate industrialisation.

The fund-raising decision was taken in a meeting on long-term industrial financing with the chief executives of foreign banks operating in Bangladesh in the conference room of the Finance Ministry.

The foreign banks will provide loans to industrial projects, mainly in the manufacturing sector, while the Industrial Fund channel the matching funds.

As 50 per cent of the total loans will be provided from the Fund, the total amount to be invested under the special scheme will be Tk 400 crore, official sources told UNB.

The meeting was also informed that the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) were reviewing different measures to provide long-term industrial credit in Bangladesh.

A separate company will be created later to manage a larger fund for industrial financing. Procedures of setting up the company are on and negotiations for funds from the International Finance Corporation and ADB will be completed shortly.

Recently, the business community alleged that the long-term loans for setting up industries became scarce for them and the liquidity shortage in the banks threatened the country's industrialisation process.

The government took up a special programme for industrial financing and decided in principle to float an industrial bond to raise at least Tk 500 crore to provide long-term industrial loans.

But the move reportedly bogged down after an advisory committee for the finance minister raised objection arguing that it would result in a liquidity crisis in banks as people would withdraw their deposits to buy the bond.

Later, the finance minister approached the foreign banks for channelling money into the industrial sector as they have surplus money in their hand because of good management and better services.

After detailed study, the foreign banks submitted a report to the finance minister recently, agreeing to provide industrial loans on certain conditions which were discussed in yesterday's meeting.

As per the decision, the foreign banks considered eligible will provide loans to the tune of at least 50 per cent of the project costs, while the rest 50 per cent will come from the Fund.

In the meeting, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria said investment potential in Bangladesh is very bright. He called upon the foreign banks to play a more prominent role for overall development of the

Khaleda condemns police action during barricade

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has thanked the countrymen for observing the nationwide road and rail barricade despite the "armed attack by the ruling party terrorists and propaganda by the government," reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition condemned the arrest and police repression during the barricade across the country and demanded release of all BNP leaders, including Ilias Ali and Kamruzzaman Ratan.

Begum Zia also condemned the armed attack on peaceful processions of BNP at different places and the "killing" of BNP activist Sarwar at Kushtia. She demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the killers.

The BNP chief expressed her sympathy for the party leaders and workers, including standing committee member Abdul

PCJSS congress to discuss peace accord Wednesday

By Shehab Ahmed with Nurul Alam

A special congress of the Parbatta Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) will be held in Agartala, capital of India's Tripura State, on Wednesday to take up the draft for an agreement to end the decades-old insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

According to reports, received from sources across the border, the congress is likely to ratify the draft, worked out during the sixth round of meeting between PCJSS team led by its Chairman Jyotindriya Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma and the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) in Dhaka last month.

If the congress approves the draft, an accord is set to be signed early next month, the sources said.

But the exact date and place of signing are yet to be determined. The PCJSS high command would communicate it once they settle down with the draft agreement.

PCJSS wants it to be signed and sealed in CHT on November 10, to coincide with the death anniversary of PCJSS founder Manabendra Narayan Larma.

The former MP and elder brother of Shantu Larma was gunned down by a renegade faction.

Some quarters out to create confusion: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has accused some quarters of creating anarchy out of nothing and urged them not to create confusion spreading tales of frustration among the people, reports UNB.

"The government is working with all its might for improving the living condition of the people and for solving all the problems of the nation," she told a conference of teachers at the Engineers' Institution in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh Teachers Association organised the conference on the occasion of World Teachers Day. Teachers from different parts of the country joined the conference.

Hasina said the government is very much aware of the problems of the teachers community and taking steps to upgrade their status.

Without improving the condition of teachers, standard of education cannot be elevated, she said, adding that the government has attached highest priority to education.

Sheikh Hasina said her government formed a commission to formulate a new education policy. "The Commission has placed its report to me and the government is working to implement the report to introduce a balanced and proper education system."

About the problems of the teachers, she said: "You will have to consider the overall economic condition of the country. If the economic condition improves, the government will not hesitate to ensure all facilities for the teachers."

Focus on CBA in PDB Politicisation of TUs blamed for incurring loss

By Sharier Khan

Some officials of the Power Development Board (PDB) are gradually becoming unhealthy due to management's conflicts with different unions, sources in the unions and officials claim.

Besides, a large section of the 24,000 employees of PDB are feeling uncertain about the future of the organisation as the government is gradually privatising different components of the PDB.

There is already an on-going movement for realisation of their 11-point demand which includes withdrawal of a government decision for privatisation of the power distribution services of its employees and therefore they launched movement against it.

They also point fingers at the management saying it has failed to run the organisation in a dynamic way. They alleged that the management had created disparity in the organisation and dissatisfaction among the employees by favouring certain political lobbies in promotions and transfers of officials and employees.

Leaders of the BNP-dominated Central Bargaining Agent (CBA) of the PDB alleged that the management was favouring the Awami League backed trade union.

Leaders of the BNP-dominated Central Bargaining Agent (CBA) of the PDB alleged that the management was favouring the Awami League backed trade union.

World Habitat Day today

World Habitat Day will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the globe today highlighting the need for building planned homes for all to ensure suitable and safe human abode, reports UNB.

This year's theme of the day is 'Future Cities'.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the eve of the Day.

In his message, President called for building every city as modern, hygienic and suitable for living in the coming century. He stressed timely planning and its practical implementation to achieve the goal.

He hoped that the city planners, architects, engineers and researchers of the country will provide necessary guidance in this regard to the nation.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message called upon private entrepreneurs to cooperate with the government in implementing its pro-people initiatives for building essential physical and social infrastructures.

She said the government had already undertaken various steps to build essential infrastructures, including measures for supplying pure drinking water, drainage of sewerage, building educational institutions, playgrounds, parks and gar-

4 die of diarrhoea in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 5: Four people, including two minors, died of diarrhoea in Sadar and Karimganj thanas of the district in past 24 hours, unofficial sources said today.

The dead were identified as Montasuddin 50, and Sholma 2, of village Padtha Kathalia in Sadar thana, and Jarina 1, and Jaharana Khatun 50, of village Gujadia in Karimganj thana.

Officials, however, said that two people died of the disease in last seven days while 295 people were attacked by it in the district. The unofficial figure of the attacked is 500.

Civil Surgeon attributed the spread of the disease to lack of pure drinking water and absence of sanitary latrines.

He said 173 medical teams are working in the district to combat the disease.

Customs officials' token work stoppage from tomorrow

Customs officials will wear black badges today protesting "illegal" suspension of three inspectors and "irregular" transfer of a female officer, reports UNB.

The officials under Dhaka Customs House will also observe a one-hour token work stoppage from 9 am to 10 am tomorrow in protest against extraneous interference in customs officials' activities.

Earlier, the Dhaka-Rajshahi Customs, Excise and VAT Executive Officers Association had given the authorities until yesterday to meet their demands.

The token abstention will continue till October 15 with increase of one hour every day.

However, Zia International Airport and export-examination will be exempted from the work stoppage from October 8 to 15, said a release, issued by the association General Secretary M Abdur Rahman.

Protesting the authorities' decisions, the association has also called for a day-long strike for October 16.

Gujral, Sharif to meet in Edinburgh this month

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and his Pakistani counterpart Nawab Sharif have agreed to meet again later this month in Edinburgh, UK, where they will be attending the Commonwealth conference of the heads of governments, the local press said today, reports Xinhua.

This was disclosed by Gujral yesterday while he was talking to reporters on board his special plane. Gujral left here yesterday for a three-nation African tour.

Gujral also said that he and Sharif will have another meeting in November in Dhaka where the Prime Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are assembling for a South Asia economic summit called by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Erratum

The Daily Star reporting on the BATEXPO '97 closing ceremony published Sunday inadvertently quoted BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia as announcing exemption of export-oriented industries from half-day holidays. In fact, she had said, "... I announce, for the time being, on behalf of my party that the export-oriented garments industries will be outside the purview of any half-day holiday." The mistake is regretted.