

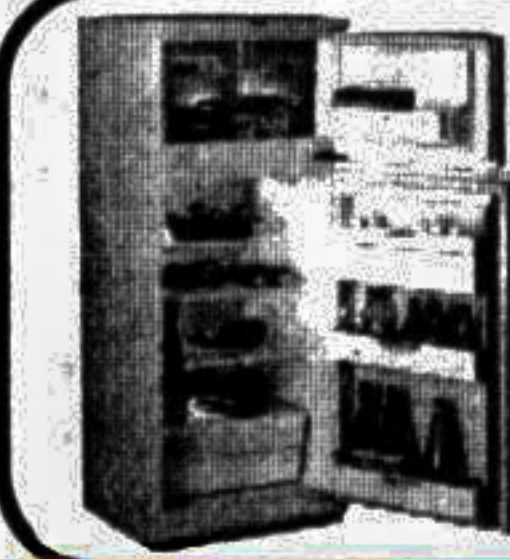


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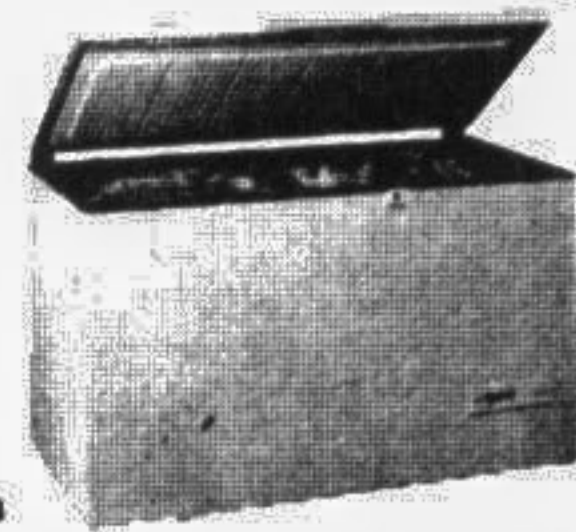
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'Privatisation process slow due to attitude of political parties'

Star Business Report

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday said that privatisation of loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) should be accelerated for overall development of the country. More than two hundred SOEs have been incurring losses of Tk 2500 crore annually. The government should no longer bear this, they said. Privatisation Board organised the seminar at a local hotel. A number of ministers, high officials, labour leaders, industry owners and chamber leaders took part in the discussion. Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed said the government is "determined" to privatise all loss-making SOEs and to give "due protection" to the workers.

He said that though there was a consensus on privatisation, the process could not be accelerated due to "contradictory policy" of major political parties.

"When they remain in power they try to privatise loss-making enterprises but while in opposition, they call strike protesting it," Tofael said.

This is one of the major reasons for slow progress in privatisation over the years, he said adding, this culture should be stopped immediately.

The concluding session of the seminar was also addressed

by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Party President Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and East West University Vice-Chancellor Mohammad Farashuddin. The session was chaired by S M Akram MP.

Two other sessions earlier were addressed by among others, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Privatisation Board chairman Kazi Zafarullah, Executive Chairman of Board of Investment Faruq Sobhan, MCCI President Laila Rahman Kabir, Journalist Abed Khan and Dr Momtazuddin Ahmed of Dhaka University's Economics Department.

Two key-note papers were presented by Tanbeer Akram, a teacher of Columbia University in New York and S M Zakaria, a member of Privatisation Board.

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam observed that government's dilly-dally policy was the main reason for failure in privatisation of the SOEs.

He regretted that though privatisation was an agreed policy of the government, it was not implemented due to lack of seriousness.

He observed that due to loan defaulting and mismanagement the private sector is not able to make adequate response to the privatisation process.

"If we had a dynamic private sector, the privatisation process would have been much faster," he said.

Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar urged the government not to neglect the cause of the labourers and workers while privatising any enterprise.

"We are not against privatisation but that should not be at the cost of labourers and workers," the labour leader told the seminar.

Yasmeen murder

From Page 1
On August 24, 1995 on way to her village home in Dinajpur district. It was reported in the GD that Yasmin died when she jumped from the police van after being picked up by patrol police from a bus station.

The murder had infuriated the people in the district against the police.

After inquiry, a fresh case of killing and violating Yasmin was filed and charge-sheet was submitted against all the accused.

The Deputy Attorney General was assisted by Monsurul Hoque Chowdhury and A Rouf.

PM: Delhi

From Page 1
bound frame for complete global nuclear disarmament during talks between the two prime ministers.

Diplomatic sources said that the two sides would review the entire spectrum of relations between the two countries covering trade, investment, tariff concessions, transit matters and cooperation in various fields like checking cross border terrorism and insurgency.

Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman told The Daily Star that the trip would provide the first opportunity for a bilateral meeting between the two prime ministers.

"It will essentially be a bilateral visit where the two leaders will get the opportunity to review and discuss the entire gamut of Indo-Bangladesh relations. The trip will also provide an opportunity for the two leaders to get acquainted on a one-to-one basis which would help in furthering bilateral cooperation," the foreign secretary said.

Discussions about making the forthcoming SAARC conference in Colombo effective will also figure at the official talks in Delhi, sources said.



A colourful children's procession was brought out in the city yesterday on the occasion of National Primary Education Week '98. — Star photo

World Cup

From Page 1

Romania, creating chances galore, should have increased their lead when Moldovan got a head to a bouncing ball on the edge of the six-yard box, for once Mondragon was out of position but the 25-year-old Coventry striker watched in despair as the ball slide inches wide.

With defeat staring them in the face Colombia finally upped the pace with Adolfo Valencia coming on in the second half.

The 30-year-old striker quickly put an end to Stelea's vacation as he went after the equaliser.

In the space of 10 minutes he forced two solid save from the Romanian keeper.

In the 61st minute he went past two Romanians and slipped the ball to Freddy Rincon whose shot beat Stelea but went inches wide.

With time running out Asprilla swept back a cross for Valencia on the near post but the 30-year-old miss-timed his shot and Stelea was able to gather.

Nine minutes from time he forced Stelea to dive to his right and palm away a blistering shot.

The veteran Carlos Valderrama, who had been quiet for most of the game, suddenly burst into life in the final minutes but even his genius could not break the Romania defence.

Discussion on suppl budget continues

Discussion on the supplementary budget continued in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

The Treasury Bench members described the proposed budget for 1998-99 as a true guideline which would lead the nation towards gradual progress by implementing the commitments of the present government to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people.

Biren Sikder (AL-Magura) said the GDP growth rates of 5.9 per cent in 1996-97 and 5.6 per cent in 1997-98 achieved by the present government were the manifestation of its success in proper economic management in the country over the last two years.

Mrs Mahmuda Sawgat (women's seat 13) thanked Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria for presenting a realistic budget for the fiscal 1998-99 and said it would rid the nation of poverty and bring about a positive change in the industrial sector by dint of the present government's well-thought-out approaches.

Dr Rustam Ali Farazi (JP-Pirojpur) criticised the supplementary budget saying that the government had spent more than required money for the government servants.

"We want to know whether the government servants are the servants of the people of

Bangladesh," he asked the parliament and alleged that no file within the government offices can move without bribe.

Speaking on the scarcity of water and electricity, Dr Farazi said the authorities concerned always give a readymade reason of system loss when the nation is agitating for weather and electricity.

"This system loss is the result of theft and mismanagement," he said and added that the whole nation was now being taken as hostage in the hands of administration.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid adjourned the sitting of the Jatiya Sangsad at 4:45 pm yesterday to resume at 2 pm today.

BUET classes suspended for World Cup

Classes of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology will remain suspended from June 17 to July 13 in view of the World Cup soccer, reports UNB.

The university authorities yesterday took the decision following a demand by the students, official sources said.

For the last few days, the students were demonstrating on the campus demanding suspension of their classes so that they can enjoy the World Cup matches.

BSB employee falls from 7th floor, dies

By Staff Correspondent

An employee of Shilpa Bank died after falling from seventh floor of the 24-storey-building of the bank at Motijheel in the city yesterday.

Police identified the dead as Taslim Ahmed, 32, son of Abdul Malek.

After preliminary investigation, police said that Taslim, who was a typist, fell down from seventh floor of the building through a window at about 11:30 am. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to injuries.

An official of the bank said that Taslim had been suffering from mental depression for the last few years.

The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death case was filed with Motijheel thana in this connection.

Ctg mayor

From Page 1
decided to lay siege to Bidyut Bhaban at 10 am Wednesday.

Football Lovers' Council also called an 8-hour hartal in the city on Wednesday demanding uninterrupted power supply.

Court boycott

From Page 1
80 others and looting money and other valuables. The FIR was recorded today.

The DC when contacted today, said that lawyers of Khulna Bar did never pay heed to his fervent appeal for solving the problem of a passage between the collectorate building and the judges' court which involved security, secrecy and privacy. So, the passage had to be blocked, he said.

Hasina

From Page 1
ing was due to "absence of a needed political atmosphere". He had also told the media that seven years' delay caused accumulation of several problems.

"Regular meetings of the JRC were required for Bangladesh to formulate a long term water resources strategy," the minister had said adding that Dhaka had already taken up a massive scheme to build the Teesta Barrage.

Meanwhile, the government recently expressed satisfaction that this year, Bangladesh received the stipulated share of Ganges water during the lean season from January to May. Experts however attributed the flow of the stipulated quantum due to "favourable weather conditions" and adequate rainfall in the upper reaches of the Ganges.

BNP demands

From Page 1

The meeting protested what it said the ill motive of the government and demanded immediate withdrawal of the false cases against the BNP Chairperson.

"The people from the beginning had rejected the government's attempt to tarnish the image of Begum Zia," the statement said.

Presided over by BNP vice-president Tariqul Islam, the joint meeting was attended by party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, members of the standing committee, office bearers and members of the national executive committee, and central presidents and general secretaries of the front organisations.

BNP: JS session

From Page 1

BNPPP meeting concentrated on the long march.

Till yesterday, party lawmakers continued discussing various aspects of the long march, including its success and the ruling party's obstruction to it, and gave suggestions as to how to utilise the success of the programme for an out-governments agitation.

They also spoke for launching a vigorous anti-government movement simultaneously on the streets and inside parliament.

The BNP legislators felt that the Speaker's initiative for a fresh dialogue between the government and the BNP would not help resolve the party's grievances due to lack of sincerity of the government, sources said.

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