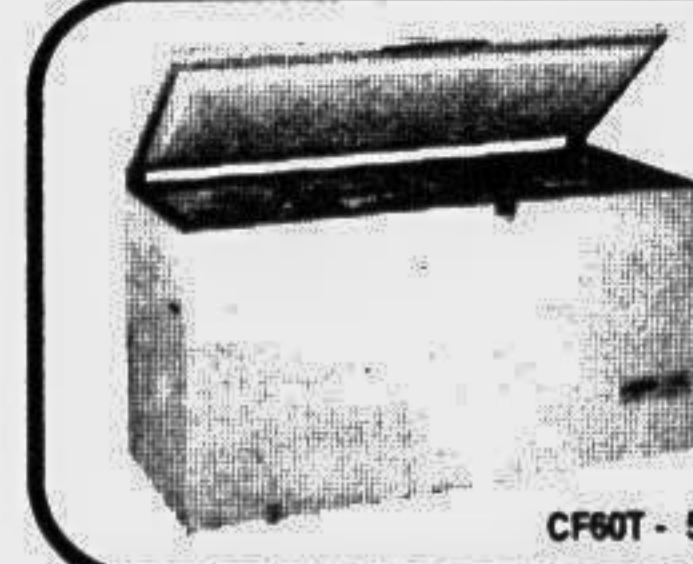
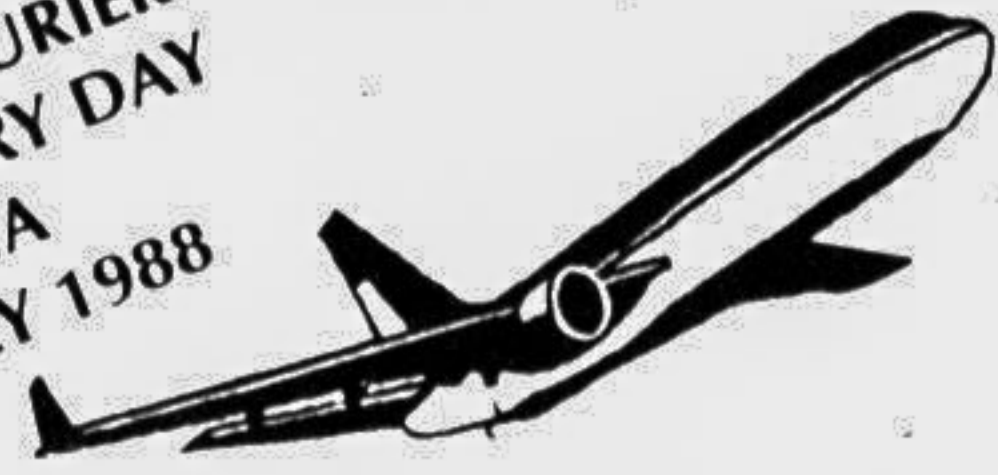


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JS discussion on budget begins

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Sangsad yesterday began general discussion on the proposed national budget for 1998-99 fiscal.

The main opposition BNP is yet to join the budget session which began on Wednesday.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria placed the budget in parliament on Thursday.

Five Treasury Bench members took part in yesterday's general discussion. They thanked the finance minister for presenting a pro-people budget. Ruling party MP Kamal Ahmed Majumder put forward some suggestions to improve the budget.

Majumder observed that the proposed budget would help reduce the gap between the rich and poor. But he suggested that the government should attach more importance to the development of the textile sector.

He thanked the finance minister for expanding the VAT net, but requested the minister to ensure that the tax given by the people go to the public exchequer.

Three women MPs — Jan-natul Ferdous, Tahura Ali, Kamrun Nahar Putul — appreciated the Finance Minister's proposals to simplify taxation and banking laws, give increased subsidy in the agricultural sector and to withdraw duties from computers.

Abdul Latif Mirza hailed the government of Sheikh Hasina

for its 'unique performances' in all sectors and criticised the BNP for various 'misdeeds'. Earlier, the House disposed off a call attention notice of Jatiya Party MP Rustam Ali Faraji demanding a separate education board for the Barisal Division.

Education Minister ASHK Sadeque told the House that the government would consider the demand in the light of the number of schools and colleges in the region. "The government does not finance the education boards. They are run by the fees they receive from the educational institutions concerned," the minister said. "We shall soon evaluate the feasibility of creating a separate board for Barisal Division."

Deputy Speaker Advocate Abdul Hamid who presided over yesterday's session adjourned the House at 5:00 pm to resume again 3 pm today.

Gold seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs authorities at the Zia International Airport yesterday recovered 330 tolas of gold bars and ornaments worth Tk 35,62,542.

Custom officials at ZIA recovered 33 gold bars from a passenger of a flight from Singapore.

Severe traffic congestion at 3 ferry ghats

ARICHA, June 17: The severe traffic congestion at Aricha, Daulatdia, Natakholia ferry ghats remained unchanged for the second day today, reports UNB.

About 8,000 vehicles were waiting at the ghats to cross the rivers — Padma and Jamuna. The ferry services were disrupted following sharp rise in water levels of the rivers.

Witnesses said the situation has worsened further as six ferries are out of order.

PM

From Page 1

the concern of students, guardians and teachers about the on-going HSC examinations.

"This morning I had talks with the Education Minister. Considering the miseries of the examinees, the schedule for tomorrow's (Thursday) examination has been changed", the Prime Minister informed the House.

Referring to the recent 'long march' by the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina said, "had we not signed the CHT peace accord, it would not have been possible for them (Opposition) to go for a 'long drive' with a caravan of hundreds of vehicles spending crores of Taka." In the past, when there was no peace accord, they could never go for a long drive to CHT, be it a movement programme, a picnic or a pleasure trip," she said.

No progress

From Page 1

exercise as on two earlier occasions — On January 14 last year and again on March 2 this year.

The January dialogue resulted in a four-point accord while the later was signed to effectively implement the previous one.

A ruling party Whip, Mizanur Rahman Manu, told The Daily Star last night that a Speaker-mediated dialogue might be arranged after the inauguration of Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge on June 23 as the government's key-negotiator. Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim is now busy for that.

Talking to The Daily Star, Opposition Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain also preferred a Speaker-mediated dialogue to ventilate their grievances about the agreement.

Indo-Pak talks

From Page 1

to be made public this week, Inderfurth said.

However, he said, "The sanctions will stay in place for a very long time. There will be a requirement for concrete steps" before Congress will even consider lifting them.

At the same time, Inderfurth stressed that the United States considers both Pakistan and India friendly, responsible nations and wants to engage both of them in reducing tensions on the subcontinent.

To this purpose, Inderfurth said, the US is looking for India and Pakistan to take the following steps:

- refrain from weaponizing their nuclear capability or deploying the ballistic missiles each is working on;
 - halt the production of fissile material;
 - participate in the Geneva negotiations on a Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty;
 - sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay;
 - make a formal pledge not to share the nuclear technology they have acquired with other nations; and
 - agree on a solid framework to deal with their mutual differences, including Kashmir.
- Inderfurth said the Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott had a "good meeting" with a special Indian envoy on June 12 and that the US is hoping to have similar in-depth discussions with the Pakistan soon.
- Inderfurth also said that President Clinton would like to be able to visit South Asia in the fall, as had been planned, but that the Administration would have to evaluate how much progress Pakistan and India have made before deciding.

JS proceedings

Live broadcast stopped due to objections by Opposition: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that the government had to stop live broadcast of Sangsad proceedings following "continued objections by the Opposition and an agreement reached with it."

"We're willing to revive the system but the four-point accord (signed between the government and the opposition BNP) is blocking the way," she said, responding to two Jatiya Party lawmakers' demand for revival of live coverage by the Radio and TV.

Hasina recalled that it was her government which introduced live broadcast of the whole proceedings by the Radio and the question-answer session by the TV, which also put on air highlights of the day's business of the House.

The Prime Minister said, "We'll revive the earlier system of Radio-TV broadcast provided the opposition drops its earlier condition for selective broadcast as envisaged in the accord."

Khaleda

From Page 1

are feeling insecure due to deterioration of law and order."

The former Prime Minister said Bangladesh became a monopoly market of Indian goods as the government destroyed country's agriculture and industries in the interest of a neighbouring country.

The CHT accord and the related laws are not only against country's independence, sovereignty and integrity but also ultra vires of the Constitution, permanent step has been taken to hand over one-tenth land of the country to a tribal-terrorist group.

She said the inefficient government has failed to run the country and administration has come to a standstill due to politicisation and interference from top levels.

The opposition leader said people's sufferings reached the peak due to continued price-hike of essentials and scarcity of power, gas and water.

She said that education system has also been destroyed following terrorism, leakage of question papers and adoption of unfair means.

Begum Zia said the government did not take any step to solve the people's problems, rather they have engaged themselves in corruption.

Teenage maid

From Page 1

Rahman took Dulee to the hospital yesterday morning. The fatally injured maid died within about two hours of admission at the burn unit of the hospital.

The nature of burn and cut injuries in Dulee's hands, legs, chest and back made police suspicious that she was suffering from those for quite sometime.

Police said there were fresh cut marks on her body which led them to suspect that she was tortured yesterday morning also. Besides, there were also marks of injury caused due to pouring of hot water, police said.

Sub-Inspector Abdus Samad of Motijheel thana filed a case under Section 304 of the penal code in connection with the incident.

HSC exams

From Page 1

interest of the people.

Country's newspapers, guardians and teachers, associations also requested the opposition parties to cancel their programme in view of the HSC examinations.

The Press Note said the civil society is totally disappointed for giving no attention to the anxieties of the examinees and nation's greater interest.

In view of the situation, the Education Ministry directed the Education Boards to shift the examinations for the safety of the examinees.

Hartal today

From Page 1

had announced the hartal programme at a public meeting at Khagachhari on June 10 which marked conclusion of the 'long march'.

BNP brought out torch processions in the city and other parts of the country yesterday evening to drum up support for the hartal.

Meanwhile, Begum Zia in a statement last night called upon the people to observe the hartal.

UNB adds: Some anti-hartal processions were also brought out in different parts of the city yesterday.

The law enforcing agencies have taken tight security measures to maintain law and order in the city during the hartal hours.

Over 4,000 police and BDR personnel will be deployed in the city.

Eight deputy commissioners, seven additional commissioners and 23 assistant commissioners of Dhaka Metropolitan Police will lead the police.

Besides, nine platoons of BDR will patrol different trouble spots and guard important installations in the capital.

Forgery detected

From Page 1

the land. The stamp papers for all these will have been purchased on the same date. The SB local office could not show any record to the BB team that these wills had been registered or will be registered.

Director Jahanara Begum mentioned that she owned a land in Mirpur from her father Dr Abdul Wadud through a will. But it was found that the will carries the signature of one [illegible] as the donor instead of Dr Abdul Wadud.

In the loan application, a certificate signed by an agriculturist was attached which said there was no cold storage in Tangail, Mymensingh, Jamalpur or Sherpur districts. But the BB team found that one cold storage, financed by SB Tangail district and another one, also financed by the SB, is under implementation. The BB team said the certificate, therefore, seems to be false.

It was also found that the property valuation report of the directors hardly reflected any independent observation of the bank inspectors. The inspectors did not verify whether the sponsors of the project actually owned the property.

"If verified, a lot of serious irregularities/information would have come to light about the wills and other issues," the BB report said.

The credit report of the bank said that documents were sent to SB lawyers for legal opinion about the ownership of the project land. However, SB local office could not show the BB team any record to support this statement.

The local office in a letter on June 7, 1998, had said that verbal discussions took place with the bank appointed lawyer about the ownership of land. This contradicts the information of the credit report.

The BB also said that the officials concerned of SB local office and head office had recommended.

Train accident

From Page 1

cations in the route, snapped following the accident, was restored at 10:30 am today.

Bangladesh Railway sources said during the disruption, some passenger trains plied through Mymensingh.

Communication Minister Anwar Hossain today visited the spot.

The railway authorities have directed a departmental investigation into the accident. Railway police is also conducting an investigation.

Dhaka Divisional Manager Rafiquzzaman said the drivers of both the trains and the guard of the mail train have been put under suspension for their negligence of duty.

commended the loan without verifying the "false and inconsistent information."

When the BB team wanted to know why the project documents were not meticulously examined as is required, one official concerned verbally told the team that the MD of the project is the son of the law secretary, the report said.

Meanwhile, after the forgery was unearthed, the MD of the project asked for return of all documents submitted with the loan application before the loan was sanctioned.

The Daily Star contacted, the MD, Sajjad Amin, for his comment on the BB report. He said he was not aware of the irregularities when he came to know about it, he decided not to take the loan. He also said he had decided this even before the widow, Latifa Akhtar, filed a land dispute case.

Magurchhara

From Page 1

asked the affected persons and organisations to contact Occidental for settling their compensation claims. But some of the claims are yet to be settled, sources said.

When contacted yesterday, officials of Occidental could not specifically mention how many of the compensation claims were still to be settled.

The PSC signed with Occidental in January, 1995, stipulated a three-year initial period for developing one well in each block every year.

Failure to fulfil contractual obligation vis-a-vis work programme within the stipulated period has given grounds for renegotiating the contract before it is extended, local expert noted.

Occidental sources, however, claim that there is no justification for cancellation of the contract for those two blocks.

They expressed their optimism about renewal of the contract and said that they were looking for a 'suitable location' for drilling another exploratory well.

Local experts also raised questions as to how the company was carrying out its activities six months after the expiry of its contract.

Officials of Moulvibazar district administration said the company has 'initially selected' Kalachhara area as the possible spot for drilling another exploratory well.

Sources said that the company was now waiting for permission from Petrobangla and the Department of Environment to start its work.

They, however, added it would start drilling the new exploration well as soon as the compensation claims were settled and necessary permission was obtained.

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