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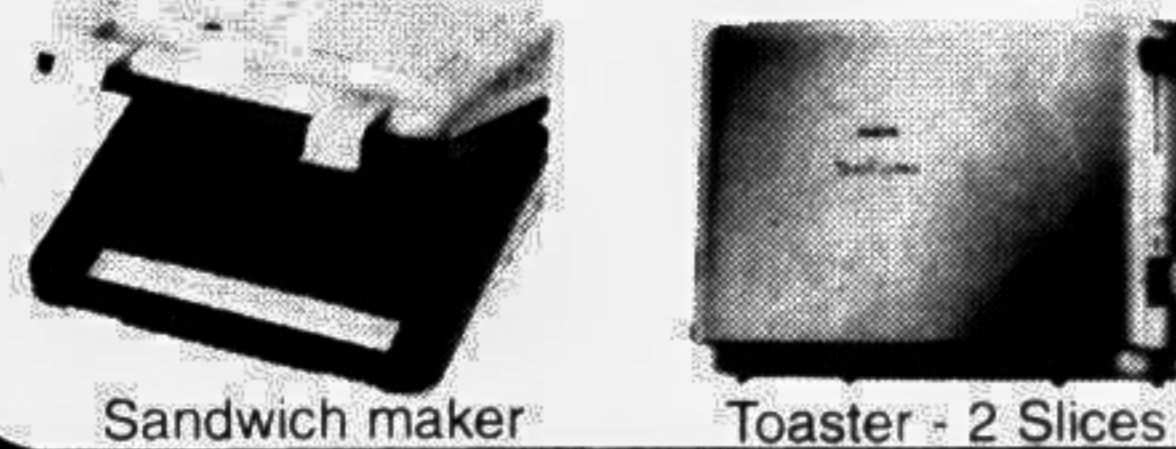


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PHILIPS

BGMEA to keep online vigil against 'quota forgery'

By Govinda Shil

BGMEA is introducing a computerised system by next month to monitor issuance of quota and exports under GSP facility.

The proposed automation will allow the foreign customs authorities and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in Dhaka and Chittagong to keep an online vigil on quota utilisation, BGMEA officials said.

The system will enable the users to monitor duty free entry of Bangladeshi garment products into the 15 European Union countries and exports to US and Canada.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) will implement the automation project at a cost of

Tk 50 lakh. A memorandum of understanding in this regard was signed recently between the BGMEA and AmCham last week.

A garment delegation led by Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury will visit USA to consult the US customs authorities for the online surveillance.

"The automation will help us maintain transparency and check fraudulent activities in quota distribution and its use," BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Quddus told The Daily Star yesterday.

The commerce ministry officials and the BGMEA are worried about excessive shipment of some 14,000 dozen coats and non-suit wear to the US market this year, a charge brought by the US authorities.

The matter came to light when the US customs authorities asked Bangladesh to stop shipment of these items because its quota had already been exhausted. After scrutiny, BGMEA authorities found that there had been no such excessive shipment from Bangladesh.

"We are suspecting that there might have been a human error from the US side. The US customs might have made double or triple entries of a single consignment," Quddus said.

"The shipment may also have been made by a third country in the name of Bangladesh," he said adding the garment delegation would also discuss the issue with the US customs officials so that Bangladesh could get back the quota for the 14,000 dozens.

Implement rehabilitation projects without delay: PM

A meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) in the city yesterday reviewed implementation of the 1997-98 ADP and the programmes on post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting. She asked the officials to take special effort for implementing post-flood rehabilitation projects.

After the meeting, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Jawadul Karim told newsmen that the Prime Minister was appraised of progress of projects and called for implementation of those without any delay.

Hasina particularly referred to post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes of different ministries, specially the agriculture rehabilitation and reconstruction of roads, bridges, schools and colleges and directed the officials to give topmost priority for their implementation.

She also directed the meeting to identify the problems of projects and solved those

quickly. "We must take appropriate steps in this regard."

The Prime Minister also directed the secretaries to visit the projects and monitor their implementation for expediting the work.

She suggested coordination meetings of different ministries and frequent inter-ministerial meetings for quick implementation of post-flood activities. She also asked the ministries to take appropriate measures for effective utilisation of external assistance.

She directed the authorities concerned to create massive opportunities for employment generation in the rural areas and referred to food for work, VGF and VGD programmes.

Hasina was happy to note that despite the severity of flood the government was able to maintain communication system, the railway played an admirable role in this regard. For this, price of essential commodities did not rise.

Prime Minister also called for improving the warning system of flood, cyclone and earthquake and suggested utilisation of modern technology for all these and also for the weather forecasting.

BNP: Agitation

From Page 1

sition demands including the release of arrested leaders. Other partners of the Seven Party Alliance have also announced similar programmes separately from their rallies in the capital yesterday.

City BNP convener Sadek Hossain Khoka MP announced the programme at a protest rally held at the party's city office at Nayabazar in the afternoon.

Addressing the rally Khoka said Awami League leaders involved in the issue must be brought to justice for fair trial of the Jail killing on November 3, 1975.

"We don't support any killing. We did not want the physical death of Sheikh Mujib," BNP leader said.

Khoka said the government, in the name of trial, is repressing and harassing its political opponents.

Demanding immediate release of the arrested leaders, the BNP leader warned that people would continue mass agitation until the Awami League regime is ousted.

The rally over a protest procession paraded the streets of North South Avenue, Gulistan areas and terminated at Purana Paltan crossing.

BNP unlikely

From Page 1

connection with the jail killings of November 3, 1975, filing of fresh cases against the party's front-ranking leaders and attacks on its workers at different places across the country, BNP started agitation programmes but limiting those to street rallies and processions.

The BNP policy planners are learnt to have planned to give a strong strength needed for an out-government movement, capitalising on the government's failure in post-flood management," a BNP standing committee member said, preferring anonymity.

BNP's on-going programmes, he said, aim at discrediting the government ahead of the elections of city corporations and municipalities, likely to be held early next year. "A good performance in the local government elections will contribute a lot to our planned agitation for dislodging the government," he commented.

The latest round of agitation programme, announced simultaneously by BNP and its allies yesterday, was a 14-day mass contact from Friday. This, party sources said, may follow similar programmes unless anything dramatic happens.

Meanwhile, BNP leadership is now hesitant to hold a public meeting it announced last week as it finds it difficult to organise such a programme in the post-flood period. The date for the planned meeting not fixed till last night.

5 killed in Gazipur road accident

From Page 1

GAZIPUR, Oct 7: At least five people, including a baby, were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway here today, reports UNB.

Police sources said a speeding truck rammed a Dhaka-bound passenger bus at Basan

Life term

From Page 1

gang from the residence of her brother-in-law Rafiqul Islam at about 11:30 pm on May 12, 1996.

Rafiqul Islam lodged the case with Kotwali thana the following day.

The victim had come to village Zamulla of Kotwali thana, Comilla, to visit her sister.

According to the FIR, the gang entered the house, removing the leaf fenced door, forcibly took the young woman away to a nearby vegetable garden, raped her and left her there.

Top bureaucrats

From Page 1

ment issued after its executive committee meeting yesterday with its president Manzurul Alam in the chair.

It also blamed the "aristocrats" of the bureaucracy for "red tapism" and "harassment" in disposal of files.

"The secretaries of ministries or the top civil servants control the ministries and departments under them. If there had been any discrepancy and nepotism in writing of annual confidential reports, these top bureaucrats are responsible," the statement said.

"These bureaucrats are occupying all the important positions of the Republic. After retirement most of them get their services extended on contract through manipulations."

The association also demanded "such top and incompetent bureaucrats who do not love the country" should be retired, and urged the government to promote the patriotic, pro-liberation freedom fighter officials to important posts.

The association also appealed to the authorities to consider the issue of "loyalty to the Independence and Sovereignty", merit, experience and honesty as the yardsticks of promotions and ensure transparency at all levels.

Stop executing 'secret plot,' release three leaders: Khaleda

From Page 1

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday advised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to stop executing a 'secret plot' and release the leaders arrested on charges of jail killing, reports UNB.

"It's a naked reflection of political vendetta to serve a secret desire of the government and protect itself from the people's wrath caused by its failure in facing the flood and its aftermath," she said in a statement.

The BNP chairperson issued the statement after three former ministers KM Obaidur Rahman, MP, Shah Moazzem Hossain and Nurul Islam Manzur were arrested in connection with the killing of four national leaders in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Begum Zia said the three opposition leaders, including BNP Standing Committee member Obaidur Rahman, were arrested under a "conspiracy" accusing them in Jail-Killing Case.

She also protested the arrest of JAGFA leader Shaful Alam Pradhan from a "peaceful" procession in the city.

There is a certain sense that the die is cast on this issue. But you know, there is time between now and then, and there is no

Clinton impeachment

From Page 1

point in giving up hope." White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said.

Meanwhile, AP said, Democrats rushed to counter Republican plans while still underscoring their disapproval of President Bill Clinton's affair.

The Republican-controlled House Judiciary Committee approved a sweeping impeachment inquiry in a party-line vote on Monday, after first brushing aside two Democratic alternatives.

Sectt employees demand full pay during last 6 months of LPR

By Staff Correspondent

The Secretariat Karmakarta o Karmachari Sanjukta Parishad met the additional finance secretary yesterday and urged him to consider their demands including payment of full EDI bonus from the current financial year.

Parishad leader Zafar Ahmed said they also reiterated their 15-point demand which include full pay during the last six months of LPR and uniform allowance.

Mosharraf

From Page 1

Deputy General Manager AHM Abdus Samad Khan and Deputy General Manager (PR) Md Yusuf Hossain.

Munirul Islam, a retired director (Finance) of BPC, is also likely to be implicated in the case, sources said.

Beximco defaults loan payments

From Page 1

chairman of Group again did not like the BB decisions and asked the IFIC Bank to "approach" the central bank for a "review".

On September 3, the IFIC Bank wrote again to BB "outlining the points raised by Beximco Group".

On September 9, the IFIC Board again discussed the issue. Syed Mohsen Ali, a director, chaired the Board meeting, as chairman A S F Rahman and vice chairman Salman Rahman, both holding same positions with Beximco, opted to stay out of the meeting.

This time, again, the IFIC Board decided to seek central bank approval for changes in repayment schedule, as desired by Beximco.

On September 10, the central bank told IFIC that there was "no scope" to make any changes to previously approved schedule unless Beximco started paying.

On September 16, IFIC again wrote to the central bank, which closed the chapter by saying "There is no scope to reconsider your proposal".



BNP brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding release of three leaders arrested in connection with the jail killing. — Star photo

Clinton impeachment

From Page 1

tion of Clinton that could eventually range far beyond his affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

With the Republican-controlled House certain to approve the investigation, the White House hoped to limit defections by nervous Democrats who feared Clinton's troubles could sink their chances in the November 3 midterm elections.

A strong Democratic vote for the investigation would weaken their arguments that the impeachment process was a partisan exercise by Republicans intent on bringing down Clinton.

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BB allows some changes: Beximco wants more

About three months later, on August 30, the central bank conveyed the "revised" terms and conditions of rescheduling of the loans and advances guaranteed by Beximco Group".

The most surprising de-

Munshiganj visited Businesses struggle to heal the flood wounds

By Rafiq Hasan back from Munshiganj

As many as 335 enterprises Munshiganj district were affected by the recent flood and the owners of those are now busy repairing the damaged motors, machines, and infrastructures.

The affected units are 250 rice mills, 60 ice and cold storage units and 25 knitting mills producing nylon yarn and fishing nets, according to sources.

"There was not a single enterprise in the district which was not affected by the flood water," said Jashim Uddin Ahmed, General Secretary of Munshiganj District Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

"Flood water remained stagnant for weeks together damaging machinery in most of the units. Infrastructures in some units were washed away," he said.

Most of the units are on the banks of Buriganga and Dhaleshwari rivers.

Many mills and factories became inoperative as their vital machinery and equipment got rusted. Spareparts will have to be imported to make those operational again, some mill owners said.

On the other hand, those who have started production in their mills, are facing financial problem as they exhausted this working capital and savings during the flood.

During a visit to Binodpur, Mokhtarpur, Mirkadim and Rukabi Bazar area the main industrial belt of the district, this correspondent saw many rice mills and knitting units were not in operation. According to mill owners, twenty per cent rice mills in the area will not be operational again because their machinery were damaged beyond repair.

"The whole area had gone under about four feet water which damaged the machinery and raw materials including stockpiled paddy which was ready for crushing," said Ali Kashem, owner of Binodpur Rice Mill at Binodpur.

The rice mill owners are rebuilding infrastructures and

pucca platforms in front of every rice mill where paddy is dried before crushing.

"It will cost around Tk 70 thousand to rebuild the damaged platform," said Maqbul Ahmed of Akota Rice Mill at Berodpur. He is trying to start the rice mill again but he will have to replace the damaged motor with a new one.

Besides about 400 sacks of paddy kept in the factory godown were also totally damaged," Maqbul said.

Ali Kashem of Binodpur Rice Mill started his rice mill on Monday but is facing financial crisis.

The mill could not be started earlier due to lack of day labourers.

Most of the day labourers are from Barisal and Patuakhali districts. "Most of them went home during the flood and are yet to come back and join work," he said. Kashem is now crushing paddy brought by customers. His own business remained stopped due to lack of capital. Other rice mills nearby have similar stories.

Talking to this correspondent, day labourers Alamgir and Abdul Mannan, both from Patuakhali, said that they came back after a long break of two months. "What could I do staying here when the factory was submerged by flood water," Mannan said.

A number of Cold Storage units in Mokterpur and Mirkadim also face a similar situation. Huge quantities of potatoes in those units were damaged.

According to Bangladesh Cold Storage Association, a total of 70 cold storage units in Munshiganj, Narayanganj and Comilla districts were affected by the recent flood. The total loss of those cold storage units may be Tk 300 crore," said an official of the association.

Flood Water entered the machine rooms of Kadom Rasul Cold Storage and Riverview Cold Storage on the bank of river Dhaleshwari as their boundary walls collapsed due to

heavy current during the flood. "The machine was closed for about two weeks," said Mohammad Ali, a director of Kadom Rasul Cold Storage. "As a result, 60 per cent of the potato kept in the storage have been affected," he said.

Afsar Uddin Ahmed of Sea Line fishing net industry told this correspondent that 90 per cent of machinery were affected by the flood water. "Twelve knitting machines out of the total 105 were damaged totally and the rest are affected partially," he said.

Bir Bahadur takes over as chairman of CHT Dev Board

RANGAMATI, Oct 7: Bir Bahadur MP took over as the Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board here today, reports UNB.

He was nominated by the government to head the board as a people's representative as per the CHT peace accord.

The CHT Development Board, set up in 1976, was earlier run by government officials.

Woman shot during clash between BCL factions

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 7: A woman was bullet-hit in front of Chittagong Polytechnic Institute at Nasirabad during an exchange of fire between two rival factions of Chhatra League today, police said.

Saleha Begum, 25, was admitted to Chittagong Medical Hospital with bullet wounds in her leg.

Police said, exchange of fire took place over the issue of 'domination on the campus'. At one stage, local people backed by a section of students caught three activists engaged in the firing and handed them over to police.

Defence praises Bangabandhu to bail out Taheruddin

A defence counsel in the Bangabandhu murder case yesterday eulogized former President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as an institution and a great leader of the contemporary history, reports UNB.

"Bangabandhu is not a mere name but an institution. He gave birth to this country. But the prosecution failed to establish Bangabandhu to his image and glory. Rather, he was belittled to his countrymen by the prosecution," said Sharfuddin Mukul, the counsel for accused Taheruddin Thakur.

The defence counsel contended that Bangabandhu was himself the party and the government. The mystery of the murder of Bangabandhu was not unfurled.

Recalling the background of the incident, Mukul said the Mujib government had got the threat of armed struggle from Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) at that time. Bangabandhu himself used to say that he

would be killed like Alernde of Chile and the bullet is chasing him. They will not allow him to complete his task.

Portraying Taheruddin Thakur as the political child of Bangabandhu, the counsel said, Bangabandhu loved Thakur like his child. A journalist of the daily Ittefaq, Thakur was picked up and elevated by Bangabandhu to the council of ministers. "But now Thakur is numb and speechless."

The counsel said he would by no means suggest that any sort of enmity or hostility brewed up between Bangabandhu and

Thakur.

Referring to the prosecution, he said Thakur was charged with conspiracy, correcting the announcement of Maj Dalim and drafting radio speech of Khandaker Mustaq Ahmed.

And that Mushtaq informed Thakur on August 14 afternoon about his meeting with Ziaur Rahman who was said to have told Mushtaq that his boys (army officers) had become restless to topple the government.

The counsel contended that Thakur never had talks with Ziaur Rahman. If there was any

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