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DCC back on demolition drive

By Staff Correspondent In a renewed move, a Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) team of magistrates and officials, aided by police, moved in with a huge earth remover yesterday and demolished dozens of illegal shops, structures, some unauthorised sign boards and booked site owners who encroached upon pavements with construction materials on the city's Satmasjid Road.

The team however spared huge across-the-road signboards erected by schools, private universities, community centres, clinics and hospitals. DCC officials said that its Revenue Department did not provide them with the list of those 'unauthorised boards'. They said they were not sure which ones were unauthorised.

As the news of the demolition team spread in the area many people were seen carrying their roadside shops and sheltering those into houses and lanes.

Dozens of shops encroaching upon pavements around the Abahani field were not touched. But the team instantly drew applause from onlookers when a huge unauthorised shed of a building was knocked down by the earth remover. The officials said they had warned the owner in writing several times.

At construction sites, the magistrates issued summons to the owners. A magistrate said the owner would have to appear before the City Corporation Court at Nagar Bhaban where the magistrates would penalise them. "We have tried to impose on-the-spot fines but it did not work. Now they will appear before us and we will penalise them as per law," said a magistrate. The DCC drive will continue for an indefinite period.



Workers of jute, textile and yarn mills brought out a procession in the city yesterday in support of their demands.

Jute, textile workers observe strike

By Staff Correspondent

Intensify anti-govt agitation: Khaleda

TANGAIL, Nov 24: BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia today asked her party members to inspire the people with the ideology of nationalist politics, reports UNB.

Speaking at a wayside meeting at the old bus stand in the town this evening on her way to Rangpur, she urged the BNP workers to reactivate the organisational activities and intensify the current anti-government agitation.

Begum Zia left the capital this afternoon on a five-day organisational tour of northern districts. BNP leaders Farida Hasan, Ahmed Nazir and Gayeswar Chandra Roy are accompanying her.

The BNP chief was accorded reception at Tongi, Kalikair and Shaipur. She reached Bogra at 9 pm and had a 45-minute halt at the circuit house.

Begum Zia will address a public meeting at Sayedpur Railway Maidan at 3 pm tomorrow.

State-owned textile, jute and yarn mill workers yesterday observed a 24-hour strike to press home their demands that include implementation of 60 per cent dearness allowance announced earlier in the wage commission.

The strike was jointly called by Jute Mill Workers-Employees Action Council, Bangladesh Yarn and Textile Mill Workers-Employees Federation and Bangladesh Textile Workers League.

Meanwhile, speakers at a rally in the city said a section of conspirators were responsible for destroying the traditional industry of textile and jute mills as per what they said "a prescription" of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

They urged the government not to be misled by those and sought for immediate implementation of their demands. The demands include withdrawal of privatisation move in five state-owned jute mills, handing over of nine yarn mills to its workers, payment of dues against wage board and appointment in all vacant posts.

The leaders also announced their next programmes of action including 48-hour strike in

Detective dogs to stay at a Tk 1.5cr kennel

By Staff Correspondent

Training of 40 the policemen who will utilise the recently imported detective dogs began yesterday.

Eight trainers from abroad are training the policemen, led by one ASP, at Baridhara in the city. Additional Inspector General of Police Fazul Haq told a press conference at the Police Headquarters.

Recently, five dogs and 20 puppies were brought from London for building up a dog squad. AIG Haq said that the five dogs, already trained up for "special assignments", would also have "lessons in local context".

Tk 56 lakh were spent to procure the dogs and the puppies. Taka 80 lakh more would be spent in three months for maintenance.

Besides, Tk 1.5 Crore have been estimated for setting up a kennel for the dogs and to provide those with breeding, medicare and other facilities, he said.

Asked about the huge expenditure for the project, Haq said, "It is a bit higher at the primary stage but it will fulfill the need of the police department. Both dogs and bitches have been procured for breeding and next time we will not need to buy dogs from abroad."

Service of each dog will cost Tk 7,000 per month, he said. AIG Syed Bazul Karim was also present at the press conference.

PM informs Jatiya Sangsad Delhi asked to refrain from unilateral push-in

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina informed parliament yesterday Dhaka has categorically asked New Delhi not to make any unilateral bid to push anyone into Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"Any move to deport anyone on the plea of being Bangladeshi national will be unacceptable until one's identity is proved as Bangladeshi," she said in reply to a question from Zeenat Hossain of Jatiya Party.

The prime minister referred to the just-concluded Home Secretary-level meeting between the two countries in Dhaka and said the 'push-in' issue was discussed in detail, besides other border problems.

"We have told the Indian side to refrain from taking any unilateral moves," she said.

Hasina, however, said if a citizen is convicted of trespassing by a court in either country, then he or she would be deported to his or her native land only after determination of the nationality under the existing rules.

Detailing the unconventional deportation of Bengali-speaking people by the neighbouring country, the prime minister reminded that India launched the push-in operation in 1992. There had been no push-in from across the border

in 1996-97. However, there had been a few attempts during August this year.

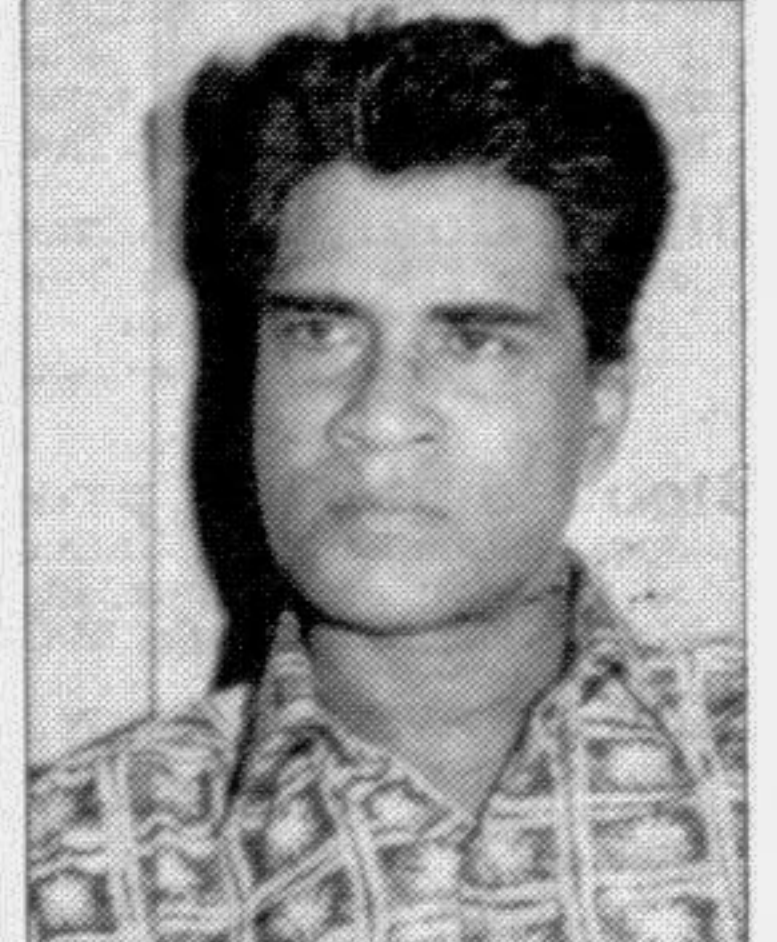
On August 25, the Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka was summoned to the Foreign Office and a request was made to stop such bids. It was also informed that such incidents are not desirable in the interest of existing friendly relations between the two next-door neighbours.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, during his visit to Durban in connection with the NAM summit, also raised the matter with the Indian prime minister and sought his personal intervention in the contentious issue.

Besides, the matter was also discussed in the BDR-BSF talks held in Dhaka last month. The Indian side was told that such incidents escalated tensions along the border.

The prime minister told the house that the authorities had geared up BDR patrol along the frontier as special alert against Indian push-in bids.

She also said that public awareness in the frontier areas had been built up and special measures taken involving locals, their representatives, Ansar-VDP and the administration against push-in.



Footballer Nannu seriously ill

Sports Reporter Former ace national footballer Monowar Hossain, popularly known as Nannu, is suffering from cancer.

The elegant defender of the 70s and early 80s will be flown to the Indian city of Madras on November 27 for an operation.

One of the finest footballers of the country, Nannu started his career in 1968 and since then he never looked behind. His luminous career spanned over a decade, Nannu, first donned the national jersey in 1973. He was a pivotal figure during the meteoric rise of Abahani Krira Chakra in the 70s. For his outstanding contribution to soccer, Nannu was honoured with the national Sports Award in 1997.

We have only implemented BNP govt's decision

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in Parliament yesterday that the decision to enhance gas price was taken by the previous BNP government, reports UNB.

"The BNP government had committed to donors, the World Bank and the IMF to increase the gas price and they took the decision on it. After assuming power, we were compelled to implement that decision," she said replying to Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu (BNP-Natore) during the PM's question time.

Hasina, however, said the domestic gas price would not vary with rise or fall in prices in the international market since Bangladesh does not import gas.

The present hike of gas price was due to various reasons, she said but did not elaborate.

In reply to Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain (Kaikobad) (JP-Comilla), the Prime Minister said the government has no plan at the moment to set up export-oriented petrochemical industry in Comilla.

She, however, said the government would give all cooperation to private investment in different sectors, including sugar and fertiliser.

Bill placed

From Page 1 Speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate, who was presiding the House sent the proposal to the standing committee for Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

The House earlier disposed of three call attention notices on setting up of an agriculture college at Jhenidah by Mashur Rahman (BNP), a new railway track from Bhuapur to Tarakandi on the eastside of the Bangabandhu Bridge by Tahura Ali (AL) and seeking provision of office and necessary personal staff for members of parliament in their respective constituencies by Ziaul Huq Zia (BNP-Lakshipur).

The House was adjourned till 4 pm today.

Cyclone

From Page 1 that they found two more bodies of deer being swept by the strong current of the river Pasur.

Samad Howlader and Nazmul Sardar of Koira thana handed over two bodies of deer to forest officials on Monday noon. They found two more bodies being swept away by current on Kobadak river after the gale.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Atiqul Azam said he was waiting for full reports from his officers in the forests who are assessing the damage.

But the storm has uprooted thousands of trees and blown away more than 2,000 huts of fishermen rendering thousands of them homeless, the DFO said. He said the storm also destroyed all the temporary lodging of fishermen at Dublarchar and six barracks at four places in the forests. Ten country boats and a trawler were also swept away by strong tides.

At least 20,000 people of the Sundarbans, Debhata, Kaliganj, Ashashuni and Shyamnagar have been left homeless and standing crops at 30,000 acres of land damaged. Officials said that huge amounts of aman rice and winter vegetables were also damaged at Koira thana by the tidal surge.

3 more trains to run under pvt management

Communications Minister Anwar Hussain yesterday said that the present government had decided to allow operational management of a few train under private sector, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Mohammad Fazul Azim (BNP), the minister said Padma Express, Balaka Express and Karnaphuli Express are now being run under private management in Santahar-Lalmoinirhat, Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Chittagong routes respectively.

The minister also said Nakhshikhana Express, Mahananda Express and Titas Express are now under process to be allowed to run under private management in Khulna-Goalandia Khulna-Chapainawabganj and Dhaka-Brahmanbaria routes respectively.

Tk 7246cr loss in agri sector due to flood

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that the agriculture sector had suffered a loss worth Tk 7,245.58 crore due to the century's worst flood this year, reports BSS.

The loss of crops alone was worth Tk 3,674.08 crore, she said while replying to a question from Jatiya Party lawmaker Dr Rustom Ali Farazi.

She said the flood had caused a loss worth Tk 309.34 crore to livestock sector, Tk 357.75 crore to fisheries, Tk 110.27 crore to forest resources and Tk 24.15 crore to food godowns.

The prime minister said the government had taken short-term, middle-term and long-term rehabilitation programmes for overcoming the crises through providing soft loans, and agricultural inputs and other facilities to the farmers.

PSC

From Page 1 mained firm on the environmental claim.

Earlier this month, senior Occidental officials from USA came to Dhaka and met the environment minister. They told the minister that Occidental would compensate for the environmental damages but it needed a proper assessment.

It was then decided that a fresh assessment of the environmental damages would be done jointly by both Occidental and the government.

The clearance from the prime minister followed agreement on all the unresolved issues.

"As the extended PSC would be effective in retrospect from 11 January, 1997, Occidental was under tremendous pressure to get it done anyway," commented a source.

The company is also operating in block 14 under a separate PSC.

Gas cylinder blast kills 2 at Kurigram

KURIGRAM, Nov 24: A five-month-old baby and her teenage sister were killed in a fire touched off by a gas cylinder blast in the town's Hossain Khan area today, reports APB.

Manju, 35, the mother of the two victims, was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital with severe burn injury.

Witnesses said the incident occurred when Manju, wife of one Duda Mia, a locksmith who also deals in cylinder gas, was filling a cylinder which suddenly exploded, setting fire to the house.

Dolina, the little girl, was sleeping and Dulal, a student of class VIII, was also at home at the time.

The girls were burnt to death before fire brigade could reach the scene, witnesses said.

Three killed in Manikganj bus plunge

MANIKGANJ, Nov 24: Three people were killed and 46 others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Saturia thana today, reports UNB.

Two of the dead were identified as Muhammad Suruj Ali, 21, helper of a bus driver, and Abdul Karim, 65, of Madaripur district. The third victim, aged about 50, could not be identified.

Police said the accident occurred when a Madaripur-bound bus fell into a ditch near Golara bus stand this noon.

Spl drive against outlawed extremists ordered

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam yesterday instructed the police to launch a special drive immediately for arresting the outlawed extremists and terrorists in south and south-western districts of the country, reports BSS.

The instruction came at a high-level meeting held in the conference room of the Home Ministry with Home Minister Rafiqul Islam in the chair.

Home Secretary Safiur Rahman, Inspector General of Police (IGP) AYBI Siddiqui and high officials of the ministry attended the meeting.

The Home Minister instructed the IGP for launching a

President visits ailing Sharfuddin

President Shahabuddin Ahmed visited the ailing educationist Dr Abdullah Al Muti Sharfuddin at BIRDEM hospital yesterday, reports UNB.

The President talked to the attending doctors and members of Dr Sharfuddin's family about his treatment, said an official handout.

City BNP's protest march today

By Staff Correspondent Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Dhaka city unit will bring out a procession from its Nawab Yusuf Market office today at 3:00 pm protesting price hike of essentials gas and electricity.

Death of 6 not caused by saline infection, JS told

The death of six people at the Rangpur Medical College Hospital was not caused by saline infection, Health Minister Salah Uddin Yusuf told Parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

"All of them died of various diseases, not for saline infection, on November 20 and 21," he said quoting the report of the three-member enquiry committee which made a quick investigation.

Making a statement under Rule 300, the Health Minister said saline of the same batch was supplied to five more hospitals, including the Bangabandhu Medical University (BG) Hospital. So far, no report of infection from those saline came from anywhere.

He also refuted the reports of injecting date-expired saline, saying there is no scope of storing any date-expired saline when the production capacity of Institute of Public Health is already inadequate to cater to the need.

PM: No-hartal

From Page 1 back their franchise. Is there any justification of calling hartal without any issue? Hasina questioned.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh used to be dismissed as a country of natural disaster, flood, drought and cyclone. But after assuming power her government made frantic efforts to redeem the country's positive image abroad.

Foreign investors have been offered attractive incentives for investing in Bangladesh, she said, adding all should work towards maintaining a conducive atmosphere for investment and industrialisation.

The Prime Minister advised the opposition to renounce policies of hartal and raise their demands, if any, in parliament for a solution.

She said the opposition could put any question to her in Parliament, particularly during PM's question time every Tuesday. "But, unfortunately, opposition leaders usually remain absent from the House," she added.

Bonds to be sold to Bangladeshi expatriates for \$200m fund: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told parliament yesterday that the government had taken an initiative to mobilise a 200 million US dollar fund by selling bonds in foreign currency to expatriate Bangladeshis for investment in the industrial sector, reports UNB.

Responding to a question from Gazi Mohammad Shajahan (BNP) during PM's question hour, she said the government is considering a proposal to constitute a company of non-banking institution to operate the proposed fund.

Rice price

From Page 1 limit of rice for trucks on the pretext of dilapidated road condition, thus pushing carrying costs up, the traders added.

Many wholesalers at Mohammadpur Krishi Market told The Daily Star yesterday that new aman rice was pouring into markets till last week despite shortfall in production triggered by prolonged deluge.

"But recent cyclone played havoc on paddy fields in the southern part of the country while some big millers are hoarding rice in the North," said a trader at Krishi Market.

Raju of Thakurgaon Rice Agency at Krishi Market sees no immediate redress to the rising rice price unless the government goes for OMS. His fellow salesman from another shop believes only a good boro prospect could bring down the price.

However, another trader feared that weather might play foul with an otherwise bright prospect for boro as well as other rabi crops including wheat.

Dalia Islam, a resident in the city's Kantarua area who went to buy an 85 kg sack of minicart variety rice at Krishi Market yesterday, said: It cost me Tk 1635 today whereas for the same quantity I had paid Tk 1580 last month.

According to yesterday's price index, coarse aman was selling at Tk 570 per maund, some Tk 20 up from its previous rate two weeks back; Swarna variety at Tk 620 instead of Tk 580, fine pagon at Tk 680 which was Tk 650, ratna (Indian imported variety) at Tk 580 from Tk 540 and Mompalish (Indian variety) at Tk 620 from the previous price of Tk 590.

Polls in 4 Indian states today

From Page 1 degree of chill has crept into ties between BJP and some of its allies in recent months on a host of issues, including price rise and inability to work out seat-sharing in the tomorrow's assembly polls.

The BJP, at the receiving end of an opposition onslaught sought to deflect attention by raking up a number of issues from the past including imposition of emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975 and Bofors gun deal controversy during Rajiv Gandhi's Prime Ministership.

Most opinion polls have predicted a defeat for the BJP in Delhi and Rajasthan and put Congress holding an edge in Madhya Pradesh.

But Prime Minister Vajpayee seemed untroubled by the opinion polls saying they are "old" and maintained his party has "improved tremendously" in Rajasthan and "recovered" in Delhi. He also told reporters yesterday that in the event of worst possible results for the BJP in the assembly polls there would be no threat to his gov-

ernment as Congress would not be able to muster the required number to form an alternative government.

Barring the killing of a candidate of Samata Party, an ally of BJP in Delhi, the electioneering for the assembly polls has been peaceful.

A splash of tinsel town glamour was given to the electioneering by both Congress and BJP with actors and actresses like Rajesh Khanna, Sunil Dutt, Sharughan Sinha, Vinod Khanna, Mahima Chaudhury, Prajya Bhatt and Aditya Pandhori taking part.

In Madhya Pradesh, where four and half crore voters will choose representatives to 320 member assembly, it is a do-or-die battle for Congress Chief Minister Digvijay Singh - who has declared that he would not seek any public office for next ten years if Congress his party lost at the hustings.

More than two crore voters will cast ballots to elect the 200-member assembly in Rajasthan where BJP leader and

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