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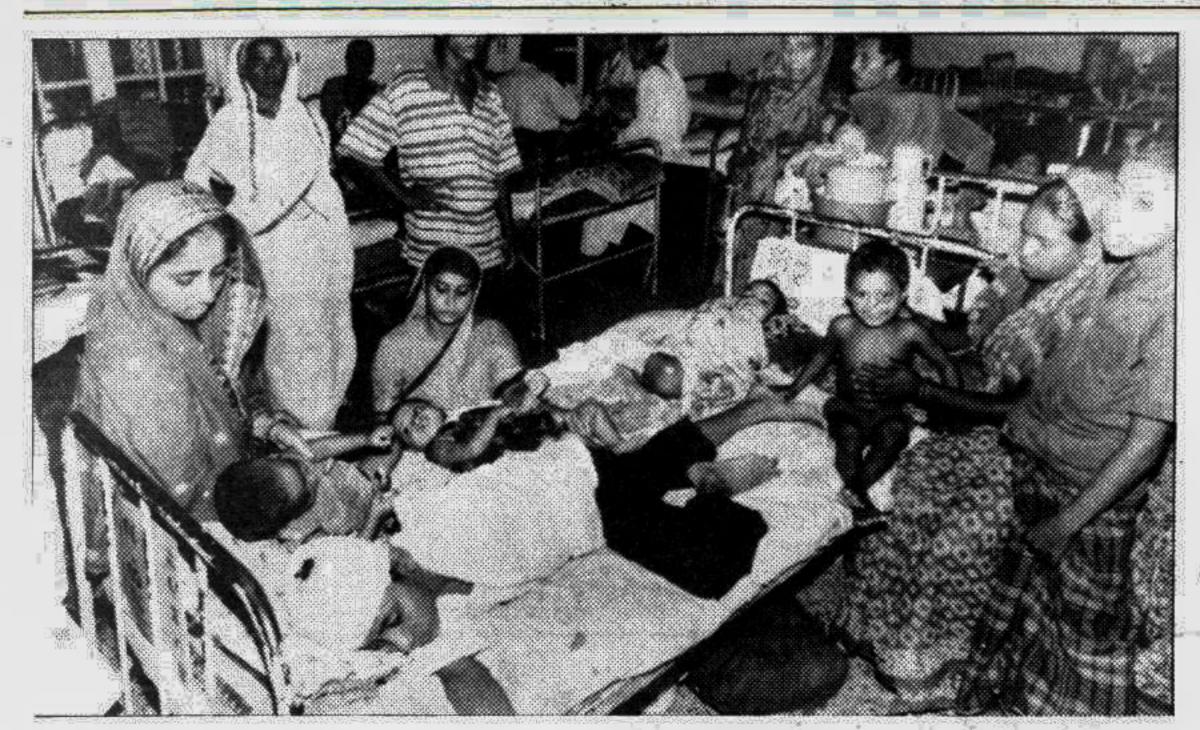
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So much for child-care!

Five children are seen sharing a single bed in the casualty ward at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday, speaking of the woeful conditions at the hospital. -Star photo:

Regulators override Janata Central bank torpedoes plan to hike Beximco loan limit

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has rejected a Janata Bank (JB) approval to increase the loans to Beximco Pharmaceuticals by Tk 17 crore, more than 40 per cent up from what it enjoys with the bank.

JB approved the increase of Beximco Pharma's loans from Tk 40 crore to Tk 57 crore last month and sought BB permission on April 24.

As a precondition to increasing loans, JB had asked Beximeo to adjust and regularise all its overdue loans with the bank. In addition, the group was also asked to adjust its Tk 9.05 crore overdue debenture

However, financial experts now question on what grounds the JB credit committee had agreed to this increase in loans. This was a sudden increase of loans by 42.5 per cent. The pertinent question is why Pharma suddenly needed this increase? Did its production and sales increase correspondingly to require such enhanced fund? If so, where have its profits gone? The profit itself could be ploughed back as working capi-

Moreover, Beximco Group

The Dhaka City Corporation

(DCC) has mysteriously spared

"some" illegal hoardings during

its current drive to remove

thousands of unauthorised

illegal hoardings are the ones

roads overhead. Hundreds of

Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani,

Uttara and many other parts of

tisers have dug the green shoul-

ders off the roads or the foot-

Sources in the DCC's Rev-

But other sources, unravel-

ling the mystery behind the ex-

clusion of these hoardings, said

Revenue Section was unoffi-

said that officials always de-

pend on the field-level workers

for the planning and these

In a recent case, this corre-

spondent reported to the Rev-

noted down the name and ad-

dise their own interest.

the sources

velopers and so on.

paths on both sides.

putting up the billboards.

hoardings.

two pieces.

moved away.

Most of these "privileged"

billboards from city streets.

has over Tk 195 crore loans with JB, most of which are now

Beximco Pharma has Tk 54.04 crore loan liabilities with JB of which its Tk 30 crore CC (cash credit) loan has crossed the limit and now stands at Tk 31.07 crore. Another loan of Tk 199.93 crore has been resched-

M/S Beximco Chemicals also enjoys Tk 15 crore cash credit limit with JB. But the company has also crossed the limit by Tk 58 lakh.

Beximco Engineering has crossed its loan limits of Tk 35 crore by Tk 4.40 crore. This loan has now become overdue and the company has applied for renewal of the loan.

Beximco Denims enjoys a Tk 21.5 crore CC loan limit with the bank, which has been crossed by Tk 76.76 lakh. In addition. Denims has another Tk 183.07 crore with JB of which Tk 21.89 lakh has become over-

On top of this, Beximco Ltd has a Tk 9.05 crore overdue debenture loan with the bank After the group applied for increase in loans, it promised in

Illegal boards stand on illegal bills

By Staff Correspondent

return to repay this amount in instalments. It has already deposited a post-dated cheque for Tk three crore with the bank. It promised to repay the rest of the money in three instalments in July, August and September.

According to BB's Central Information Bureau (CIB) report of April 18, 1999, Beximco Group's unclassified loan liabilities stand at Tk 812.83 crore while it has Tk 146.73 crore classified loans with different banks. This classified amount includes Tk 1.78 crore of substandard loans and Tk 144.95 crore bad loans. The group's total overdue liabilities stood at Tk 206.28 crore.

Experts also point out that when a company has several defaulted accounts and is in desperate need of money, the easy way out for it is to increase its loan limits with another bank Then the increased amount is used to repay its old debts. They say this might be the case with Beximco Group now.

While JB had extended its loan limits, the group has already failed to repay several instalments with IFIC Bank since December.

Children suffer at **DMCH**

By Naimul Haq

Acute shortage of beds has forced five children suffering from grievous burn injuries to share a single bed at the Casu-alty Ward - 33 at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Two-year old Rabbi, Sumaya, 3, Arif age, 7, Nipa Akhtar, 7, and Babul, 11, were seen sharing the same bed at the centre of the congested ward.

About 70 per cent of Nipa Akhtar's body bear burn in-juries. Babul's left and head were badly burnt in electric shock and Arif has become crippled due to severe burns in his legs. Sumaya and Arif suffer burn injuries in different parts of their bodies.

Parents and guardians, sick and tired of requesting the doctors concerned for allotting separate beds for the children quoted doctors as saying the hospital has 'no vacant bed' for the past one year.

"I am compelled to keep on standing most of the nights beside the 'shared bed' of my son," said Rabbi's mother Rebeca Be-

Most of the attendants of patients in the ward narrated similar sufferings to this correspondent.

A plastic surgeon at the hospital said, "There is a strict rule that a patient suffering from burn injury should be given separate bed. Movement of a burn patient in sleep or in rest could mean disastrous.

"Unfortunately, children suffering from burn injuries have no allotted beds at the hospital. They are accommodated in the Casualty Ward on 'mutual understanding' with the doctors concerned."

· Bogra BCL From Page 1

No sooner had the sun set than the shops in the vicinity put their shufters down amidst disconcerting news of the aggrieved activists on a rampage. Shops were being looted and one Sabed's residence was set ablaze. Sabed's belong to one group of the local BCL unit. Arsonists could not be identified and no arrested was made when the report was filed late last

According to police and eyewitnesses. Samar was repeatedly stabbed by miscreants at Hakir Morh, Sultangangpara. He succumbed to injuries after being admitted to Mohammad Ali Hospital. As Farhad went to the hospital to see the body, he came under attack and was repeatedly stabbed. He died on the operating table.

Police suspect that Samar was killed due to an internecine conflict within the party while his supporters avenged his death by killing Farhad.

Police was deployed in all key points in the town and also at the hospital area to contain violence. Residents in Bogra feared further flare-up.

Barely five months back tracting support of tens of thouanother round of internal consands to opposition movement. flict led to the killing of Masum, the then secretary of the Bogra town unit of BCL. Police have not been able to arrest anyone in this connection.

Beyond

From Page 1 far. It is important that the upper order quickly get into the habit of getting some runs on the board before the opponents get to sniff at the tail. For the time being.

Wasim Akram, with his phenomenal talent and not so inconsiderable knowledge of English conditions and the small awkward shaped grounds, has bailed out the errant batsmen of his side. Against more penetrating bowling and experienced sides, the odds might just even out.

One had to sympathise with the Scots. Theirs is a team of weekend cricketers, not meant to be jaywalking in the fast lane of the hurly-burly world of international cricket. They were out of their depth. Although they tried gamely to stop the bleeding when the Pakistanis decided to end the nonsense of pushing and prodding and getting on with the show, the sheer ferocity of the counter attack left them mesmerised. This wasn't the usual walk in the

The Pakistan bowling was incisive, business like and very matter of fact. The quickest bowler in the world was out for blood. It was an unequal strug-gle between bat and ball and the Scots who had fought many a bloody battle in the past, knew in their "bravehearts" that this one was not going their way. But the Scots have shown they are triers to the core. The world has not heard the last of them.

Ah, the best laid plans of mice and men. This competition is likely to bring out of the gardless.

Waiting for waterlogging

The city's western part is exposed to a serious crisis

By Morshed Ali Khan

A vast area in the western part of the city is increasingly becoming vulnerable to serious waterlogging as the government has failed to ensure the setting up of a planned retention point at Kallyanpur, according to WASA sources.

The 275-acre area earmarked for the planned retention point is rapidly being earth-filled by private develop-ers. If it is not stopped, the sources warn, the Tk 40 crore Kallyanpur pump house will be-come inoperative with no water to pump out from inside the flood protection embankment.

With the earth-filling and construction work on the planned retention point going on, rain water in a large area of the city will flow in other directions resulting in instant waterlogging. The excess water

will also put pressure on the storm sewerage network and may even result in a 'series of cracks and bursts'. WASA engi-

The pump house was set up to keep the western part of the city within the flood protection em-bankment free from waterlog-

Since 1995, the Tk 136 crore project proposal for the reten-tion point has been lying with at the Planning Commission for ECNEC approval. After the pre-ECNEC approval in March last year, 'some officials' of the Planning Commission have 'mysteriously and illegally' held up the scheme ignoring even the Prime Minister's announcement in 1996 to set up the retention point, the sources pointed out.

The Planning Commission

first asked WASA to reduce the size of the retention point which it did, an official said. Recently it asked WASA to obtain permission from Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) which owns about 110 acres of land at the site.

"The more the project is being delayed, the more buildings are coming up at the site. Acquisition of land from the private owners should begin immediately, otherwise it would be too late," he said.

Of the 275 acres of land for the planned retention point, 110 acres belong to BADC, 24 acres are khas land and 141 acres are privately owned.

"When we first planned the retention point, we desperately sought Rajuk's help for enactment of a law to protect the low

lying areas of the city, but it did not pay any heed to our request. Then we decided that we would take up a project and save the vital area," said a top WASA official. He, however, added that Rajuk was now trying to convince the government about the necessity of such a law.

The has a total of six planned retention points. Of these only one -- at Goran Chadbari (behind Botanical Garden)

--has been approved. It would cover an area of 600 acres and land acquisition process by the Water Development Board has already started. About the other five in the eastern part of the city, official said the matter would only be finalised after the flood protection embankment is completed.

EU prefers cash-for-work

Food aid may change its form

By Staff Correspondent cient food in markets but main

In a major shift in its food security strategy, the European Commission (EC) plans to substitute its food aid by cash allowing the beneficiaries to enjoy more options. "EC intends to gradually

shift towards the provision of cash as a substitution for food aid, thus putting greater emphasis on Cash-for-Work programmes rather than Food-for-Work," Paul Webber of Food Security and Food Aid Unit of EC said yesterday prior to his de-parture from Dhaka.

Webber led a 10-day mission to prepare a new EC Food Security Strategy for Bangladesh'. The mission, assisted by the Food Security Unit of EC Delegation in Dhaka, held consultations with the government and other parties concerned. Explaining the new strategy

at a press conference at EC Dhaka office. Webber said the strategy was designed to enhance financial capacity of beneficiaries. "There is suffiproblem lies with poor purchasing capacity of a large number of people in Bangladesh." Webber told newsmen that

the new EC food security strategy, expected to be adopted by the EC headquarters in Brussels in July, would cover the period 1999-2002. During this period EC would channel up to 90 million euro equivalent to over Tk Last year, EC provided

Bangladesh with 26 million euro or Tk 130 crore as regular food aid plus an additional 32 million euro or Tk 160 crore as emergency response to 1998 flood. Since independence, Bangladesh has received EC food aid worth Tk 1650 crore. According to EC estimates,

transfer of wheat as food aid to Bangladesh cost Tk 12 per kilogram whereas in real terms the grain is worth Tk seven or

So. Webber said, providing cash as aid would give more they would have more options to buy food with that money or use the money in various other capacities. When the question of leak-

value to the beneficiaries and

age and systems loss in food aid distribution arose, both Webber and Romer agreed that cash rather than food aid would do better in ensuring food security for over 30 million people - one fourth of the country's population who now do not have enough food to eat. They hoped that cash aid would also restrict level of leakage.

Romer further added that food aid is well justified in an emergency situation while in normal situation cash flow to rural poor would derive good re-

Webber stressed on economic growth and social stability for early achievement of food security in Bangladesh and hoped that staff strength in Dhaka office of EC's Food Security Unit would be enhanced.

Alternative to hartal

From Page 1 tact campaign instead of hartal that paralyses the country and

badly affects the economy. "Right at the moment, we are talking about similar programmes to mobilise people's support to our issues," added the

leader during the march. A close aide of Khaleda Zia said that while the march was on, party's senior leaders told the party chief that the programme had undoubtedly enhanced the party's image, at-

Another senior leader. talking to this correspondent at Dinajpur Tuesday morning prior to leaving for Panchagarh, said Khaleda Zia and all other policy-makers and leaders of the party were unanimous to take up more march programmes either by road, or

He said the BNP would soon announce road marches from Dhaka to Khulna and Dhaka to Sylhet, train march from Dhaka to Chittagong and

train or launch.

launch march from Dhaka to Barisal

"We want to sustain the support and spontaneity shown by

the people during the Dhaka-Panchagarh road march. We think it will become easier to launch the one-point movement against the government if we can carry out three or four more marches from the capital to different parts of the country," said a Standing Committee member.

A number of people at different rallies during the march said they were also against har-

BNP secretary-general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star on the last day of the march that the mass support to his party clearly proved that people had expressed their noconfidence in the Awami League government.

"We hope that people will continue to support BNP as we are fighting for the welfare of the masses," he added.

Another senior leader said that party leaders and workers had become demoralised following boycott of the recentlyheld municipal elections, but this road march would certainly rejuvenate them. Shahidul Islam, a local

businessman at Panchagarh, told The Daily Star that Khaleda Zia would not need to go there before the next parliamentary polls. "This campaign is enough for the party's win in two par-

liamentary constituencies in this district," he added. Meanwhile, UNB adds: oppo-

sition's road march evoked interest in foreign diplomats as they watched it closely and wished it should be an effective alternative campaign against the government's failure. Some ambassadors, espe-

cially from the European countries, phoned senior BNP lead-ers including Khaleda Zia's advisory council members to know the over-all impact of the three-day road march.

A team from the US Embassy also accompanied the march to have first-hand impression of the opposition programme.

Secretariat tense over police intervention in workers' rally

By Special Correspondent

Tension prevailed at the Secretariat yesterday morning as a section of employees defied police attempts to prevent their rally held before they submitted a memorandum to the Establishment Secretary. The memorandum pressing for their 15point demand that includes change in office hours, promotions and removal of discrepancies in pay.

At least ten platoons of police were deployed at the Secretariat since morning. Restrictions were imposed on visitors. None were permitted to enter the seat of the government without a pass or ID.

Press photographers also faced police trying to prevent their entry or taking pictures of the demonstrations, which took place in the wake of a clash between rival groups of As the group led by Nurul

Alam and Abdul Khaleque staged their rally near the 20 storied building they were surrounded by the police in riot gears who tried to stop their march towards the Establishment division.

Later they were allowed to submit the memorandum. Employee leaders Nurul Alam and Abdul Kahleque set a new deadline. June 5 for acceptance of their demands. Earlier they had announced if their demands were not accepted by May 20, they would announce a new action programme.

Pawar

From Page 1

"It is the people's prerogative to decide who is their prime minister. This constitutional scheme has been operating for the last 50 years in India. There is no discrimination in the Indian constitution.'

Congress officials insisted there was massive support for expelling Sharad Pawar, Purno Sangma and Tariq Anwar. whose remarks led to Sonia announcing her resignation as party president on Monday.

Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said the expulsions would not dim the party's electoral prospects.



Parasite on promenade

These self-proclaimed soldiers of Bangabandhu have made the walkway beneath the Fulbaria foot-over near Gulistan in the city their kingdom and the street-side vendors the subjects, who allegedly pay 20 taka per day for 'trouble-free' life. This is one of many examples of how the name of the great leader is used for criminal activities by the so-called supporters of the ruling party. -Star photo: AKM Mohsin



dress of the offender and said action would be taken. But nearly six months have gone by

Pakistan's predictable win were in danger of being dis-From Page 1 missed for the lowest World Cup

> against England at Old Trafford in 1979. The Scots, who prepared for Akhtar by facing net bowlers

As Akram struck again to make it 19 for five, Scotland

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He then trapped lain Philip

leg-before with a toe-crushing yorker and had skipper George Salmond caught behind by Moin Khan with a ball that

from 18 yards, were spared that embarrassment by their Yorkshire professional Gavin Hamilton, who made 76 before

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he was last out. Hamilton put on 59 for the sixth wicket with Brinkley (22) score ever - 45 by Canada

> for 92. The Pakistani top order, which slipped to 135 for six against the West Indies, once

Pakistan to safety with 77 not out while Moin chipped in with 47 off 41 balls.



Haunting hoardings A crackdown was launched recently but these hoardings

and the hoarding is still there. escaped the inspectors' attention. -Star photo

> and 61 for the seventh with Alec Davies (19). Earlier, Yousuf Youhanna and Moin Khan helped Pakistan survive a shaky start by compiling a run-a-ball stand of 103 for the sixth wicket after half the side had been removed

again revealed its frailty against Scotland's ordinary bowling attack. Youhanna, however, took

undergrowth every devious strategy devised in cricket and more. While Australia and New Zealand struggled against each other elsewhere, Pakistan's upward mobility was short and swift. The Scots were sadder but more than a bit wiser. After the luck of the Irish propel Bangladesh a step closer to the top, they would do well to take the Scottish intentions in the World Cup with a sizeable hunk of salt. Result of this match, re-