

Over 3 million customers depend on **FedEx** everyday for timely and reliable delivery of their packages and freight to 211 countries worldwide. You will get the same level of world-class service here at **FedEx**.

Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.
Licenses of Federal Express Corporation, 95, Motijheel C.A. Dhaka-1000. E-mail: bnc@bangla.net Internet: www.fedex.com
For Customer Service details, please dial:
Dhaka (880-2) 9565114, 9684851, 9883927, 984213, 9130647, 9338931, 9345261, 9667462, 808803, 863896, 9010493
Chittagong (880-31) 712127, 724823, CEPZ 740108, Narayanganj (880-2) 9714338, Khulna (880-41) 7325008

Watch World Cup Cricket '99 live on **PHILIPS** Television.

Instalment facility available

Dhaka: 815307-10 Chittagong: 716353, 723578
Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215

Down to Earth

Consumers' plight continues unabated

By A S M Nurunnabi

The plight of consumers at present shows no signs of easing. The plight is compounded by four factors — lack of proper quality control of consumer items, the price differences for the same kinds of such items, the absence of the relevant authorities in enforcing power for price control and the widespread racketeering in adulteration practices covering the entire gamut of consumer articles.

The end result is that the entire body of consumers, leaving aside those sections which are easily vulnerable due to illiteracy and the associated simplicity of rural folks, find little credibility for the claims of purity made by the makers of consumer products.

Apart from the almost pervasive adulteration culture, a glaring aspect of the trade in consumer items is the phenomenon of their price differences. The common experience of consumers is that the same product with the same quality has different price tags from one shop to another in the same area, even if such shops are located side by side. Such price differences are often explained away by the sellers that their supplies were obtained at higher rates. There are, of course, some posh areas in the city where consumer items, particularly if they are imported, command a higher price even though the same products may be available at lesser important shopping outlets. Such higher prices in exclusive centres are quite normal in every big city of the world. In the light of this trend, higher prices for certain kinds of consumer items like garments, cosmetics, shoes, winter clothes, etc. prevail in elite shopping centres like New Elephant Road, and other posh shopping complex at Magh-bazar, Sonargaon Road, Gulshan and Banani which are frequented by the affluent classes of society.

Peoples in moderate income groups are flabbergasted by dif-

ferences in respect of the more common items of consumption which are found prevailing from one shop to another in the same area. As a result, many conscious consumers, before buying anything tend to spend some time and energy comparing prices of commodities which are intended to be purchased. But such verifying practices are not easy to follow when there are time constraints for customers and particularly during rush hours at times of big festivals.

Coupled with such price differences, consumers always suffer under the threat of rampant adulteration as not to above. It is quite well-known that even within the city, there are some notorious centres where adulteration practices are followed almost with impunity. In this context, many tales of the Zinzira area on the other side of Buriganga, where it is alleged, there is hardly any item of consumption which does not ensure quick financial gain through ingenious means of adulteration.

Such adulterated products, it is said, are mostly marketed in mofussil and outlying areas. Similarly, sub-standard drugs and medicines are marketed in profusion not only in urban areas but also outside them, so much so that it is well-nigh impossible for many to distinguish them from genuine ones. Sometimes concerned authorities launch drives against such spurious drugs and medicines and also other adulterated consumer articles.

But their effectiveness is largely undermined by the sheer magnitude of the problem and the persistent endeavours of the wicked elements of society to revert to their evil practices whenever the controlling authorities slaken their vigilance and preventive actions.

There is another aspect of the evil of profiteering when some mischievous quarters resort to it by hoarding of particu-

lar essential domestic items of consumption, such as onion, garlic, pulses, etc. whenever there is any prospect of short supply of these commodities, so that at a later stage they can reap a bonanza of profit by a substantial increase of prices when marketing them.

Besides the Drug Administration which looks after the quality of drugs and medicines, the Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute has the responsibility to ensure proper quality of many consumer commodities whose manufacturers approach the organisation for certification of quality of their products. It is, however, alleged that, in spite of some products bearing the BSTI label, the genuineness of their quality still remains in doubt.

It is therefore, open to question whether the consumer products carrying BSTI labels actually guarantee their good quality.

In this situation, the consumers, by and large, suffer from misgivings about proper quality of the products they buy even though such products carry the BSTI labels. This crisis of credibility has become a serious problem in our open market economy.

There is an organisation known as the Consumer Association of Bangladesh which is supposed to monitor the price trends of consumer goods. The organisation conducts, from time to time, surveys of price levels of different consumer items and give publicity to the results of such surveys.

Such surveys are helpful so far as they serve as indicators of the price trends and its appraisals help to exercise some influence in curbing price rises of the various articles affecting consumer interests.

It is understood from sources that Ministry of Commerce has at present under active consideration a draft legislation for protecting the interests of the consumers of the country.

Basu calls on Hasina

Visiting West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu yesterday called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official Gonobhaban residence, reports UNB.

During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, political advisor to the Prime Minister Dr SA. Malek, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain, State Minister for Planning Dr Mo-hiuddin Khan Alamgir, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hassan Chowdhury and foreign secretary Shafi Sami were present.

Jyoti Basu was accompanied by Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Dev Mukharjee.

Later, Sheikh Hasina hosted a dinner in honour of the West Bengal Chief Minister at Gonobhaban. Ministers, senior Awami League leaders and elite attended the party.

5 killed as bus, truck collide in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, June 18: Five people were killed and 20 injured when a truck collided with a bus in Madhukhal Thana on Dhaka-Khulna highway today, reports UNB.

Police said bus driver and three passengers died on the spot as the Jessoro-bound bus from Boalmari was hit by the truck coming from opposition direction near Arkandi bridge at about 2 pm.

The injured were rushed to Madhukhal Thana Health Complex where a minor boy died. Five of them were later shifted to Faridpur Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Police seized both the vehicles.

Vajpayee

From Page 1

to discuss a number of substantive economic issues including port and transit facilities, resumption of train communication and geo-political matters of common concern during exclusive tete-tete with Sheikh Hasina at the Ganabhaban, highly placed sources said.

The Indian side is also likely to show interest in gas purchase through pipeline. Bangladesh side will insist on obtaining zero tariff facility on all its export items, the sources added.

The talks will be held this afternoon when Vajpayee calls on Hasina at the Ganabhaban. In order to bridge the yawning trade gap, which is in Delhi's favour, India is likely to insist on setting up of joint venture industries in Bangladesh with 'buy-back arrangements'. Earlier, Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami had told newsmen that the talks would be held with an open ended agenda and it would not be 'structured'.

Hasina and Vajpayee will jointly receive two Indian buses carrying nearly 80 passengers including journalists and officials, when the vehicles arrive in Dhaka from Calcutta at around 5:30 pm today.

West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, who arrived in the city by air yesterday morning from Calcutta, will also be present at the bus service inaugural ceremony. A previously scheduled meeting of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC), which is usually co-chaired by foreign ministers of the two countries, now stands cancelled because of pre-occupation of the Indian External Affairs Minister. The last JEC meeting was held in December 1997 in New Delhi.

Foreign ministry officials in Dhaka described the trip of Vajpayee, who is now caretaker prime minister, as 'a good will visit'. There will, therefore, be no official or formal talks but a 'tete-tete', an official said without elaborating.

The agreement on Dhaka-Calcutta bus service was signed on Thursday at the conference room of the Ministry of Communications. Earlier, trial bus run from Dhaka to Calcutta took place on April 6 and from Calcutta to Dhaka on April 8.

On his arrival, Vajpayee will be taken in a motorcade to state guest house Jamuna where he will be lodged. He will pay a courtesy call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed the afternoon. The President will host a luncheon in honour of the visiting dignitary.

Vajpayee will call on Hasina at 3:40 pm at the Ganabhaban where they will have a tete-tete. After the inauguration of bus service, Hasina will host a banquet for him at the refurbished Winter Garden hall of Dhaka Sheraton. A cultural programme will also be held later, participated by some renowned artists.

Tomorrow, the two premiers are likely to witness the signing of a MOU of cooperation between the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Vajpayee will lay wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar tomorrow morning and address a joint press conference before his departure.

The Indian premier is due to leave Dhaka tomorrow afternoon.



Dhaka City BNP brought out a procession yesterday protesting fiscal measures in the proposed budget for 1999-2000. — Star photo

Social awareness key to protect parks, greenery

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at an open discussion in the city yesterday stressed the need for more social awareness regarding environment and enactment of a law to protect common property like parks, lakes and greenery of the country.

They were speaking a discussion organised by 'Movement for saving 10 thousand trees of Osmani Udyan' at the English Institution. It was presided over by Prof. Sarajul Islam Chowdhury, convener of the movement.

Prof Chowdhury termed the Osmani Udyan as 'lung of the Dhaka city' and said it is the social responsibility of all to save the environment.

He reiterated his demand to save trees of the Udyan for the sake of next generation.

"If we do not come forward to save environment and can not save the greenery of the Udyan, we have to answer to our future generation regarding our responsibility," he said.

Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed of Dhaka University said time has come to strengthen green movement to save the trees of not only Osmani Udyan, but also environment and greenery of the country.

Poet Shamsur Rahman said, "We want to live a life without having any breathing problem as our life span has started to reduce day by day due to different kinds of pollution."

He said not a single tree of the Udyan will be allowed to be felled. He threatened to go for movement to save every single tree.

Architect Shamsul Wares said, "Dhaka city has been expanding in the name of development without any plan and there is not enough room to breathe."

Economist Anisur Rahman said a poor country like Bangladesh should not hold Non Alignment Movement

(NAM) summit.

Prof. Shadiul Amin said the population density is the highest in capital Dhaka as no pre-condition for infrastructure development had been set by the governments.

"There was no effort to save open space in accordance with the pre-condition of establishments," he said.

Dr. Atiq Rahman, Prof. Abdus Salam, Anu Mohammad and Syed Rejwana Hasan were among others who participated in the discussion while C.R. Abrar of Dhaka University conducted the discussion.

The movement will hold a grand rally on July 10 at the Osmani Udyan in protest against the government decision to cut 11,000 trees of the Udyan.

People from all stairs of the society have been requested to participate in the rally and to save the greenery of the capital.

Resist repression on cultural activists: Khaleda

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon all to resist aggression of alien culture and the government's repressive measure on cultural activists, reports UNB.

She made the call when a JSAS leader, who was freed from jail, met her along with a group of activists at 29 Minto Road, Salahuddin Bhuiyan Shishir, president of Dhaka University unit of JSAS, was released recently.

Khaleda said the present government has resorted to repression on cultural activists since it assumed power.

She said the government has detained her partymen without any cause and harassed them by filing false cases. Leaders and workers of many cultural organisations, including JSAS, cultural wing of BNP, fell victim to such harassment.

Besides, the former prime minister alleged that aggression by alien culture is going on in the country under the patronisation of the government.

Referring to the fresh taxes imposed on film in the proposed budget, she said Tk two lakh will have to be deposited as advance tax before making a new cinema.

"Such fresh taxes were imposed in a bid to hinder the development and progress of local film industry. Local film makers will face problems and alien films will intrude into the country," she observed.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Sadek Hossain Khoka and Rezakulow Chowdhury were present among others.

AL leader killed in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, June 18: A local Awami League leader was killed at village Shaikhkhan in Pakundia thana early today, reports UNB.

Police said unidentified assailants dragged Khandakar Omar Farooque Selim, 50, out of his house at 5 am and strangled him.

He was the vice president of thana unit of Awami League.

Police recovered his body from the bank of the river Singa at 10 am.

A case was filed with Pakundia thana in this connection.

Indian national held in Khulna

KHULNA, June 18: An Indian national was arrested from Rupsha area of the city today, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip off a joint team of DB police and Narcotics Control Department arrested Nasiruddin with 1 kg of hemp and Indian rupees 1600.

Nasir, hailed from Bayera village of Nadia district, was sent to jail *hajrat*.

He has been engaged in drug smuggling since long, police added.

7 chargesheeted

From Page 1

The government had termed the incident an act of sabotage and arrested four central leaders of BNP — Khondakar Mosharrar Hossain, Goyeswar Ray, Mirza Abbas and Abdul Mannan — for their alleged involvement in it.

They were however released following a High Court order, which termed the arrest illegal.

Vajpayee's visit 3000 security forces deployed

Special security measures have been taken ahead of the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who arrives here today, reports UNB.

Official sources said some three thousand police, armed police battalion and paramilitary BDR forces have been deployed to ensure a fool-proof security for the Indian premier, coming to inaugurate Dhaka-Calcutta bus service amid protest by some Islamic Groups.

Besides, other agencies will also be on their toes, the sources told UNB, adding that they had already been briefed about the special duties.

Sunil

From Page 1

"Those who are associating me with militants of the north-east are ignorant people and the allegation is laughable and baseless. It is poor intelligence and total mismanagement on the part of the authorities."

He said poet Javed Akhtar had accompanied Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee during his Lahore bus journey, but this time not a single poet was going to Bangladesh.

"After the treatment I got from them (the centre), now it is insulting for me to accept the offer," he said.

Writer Mahasweta Devi said her name was included after Gangopadhyay's was dropped from the list.

"It is unethical for me to replace Sunil. Insult to one author is insult to the whole writers' community. There must be solidarity within the writers. On this ground I rejected the offer," she said. Filmmaker Mrinal Sen said, "Sunil is committed to the cause of communal harmony. I felt outraged when I heard that his name was dropped from the passengers list."

"It is a shame that such a resourceful personality was not part of the bus journey which would strengthen the friendship between the two countries. Without him, the whole purpose is defeated," he said.

Economist Anil Dutta, who is yet to get his visa for the trip, also strongly condemned the incident and said it was a wrong decision on the part of the authorities.

Zainul

From Page 1

tion of the 1943 famine in Bengal in ink and brush pulled 12500 pound sterling (Tk 9,62,500) while the *Boats*, masterfully done in watercolour, sold for 6000 pound sterling (Tk 4,62,000).

Sources at Sotheby's said while responding a telephone call that the Untitled Kibria did not draw collectors' interest.

Bill for resident status for Bangladeshis in US

Bangladesh Adjustment Act, a bill to give permanent resident status to Bangladeshis in USA, has been formulated and is now under scrutiny of sub-committee for Immigration of US House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee, reports BSS.

If the bill is enacted by the House of Representatives, the Bangladeshis, who have been living in the USA without valid status for an indefinite period beginning not later than July 1, 1989, will become permanent residents in the USA.

The bill, introduced in March, has proposed that a Bangladeshis shall have to demonstrate that he or she performed services or engaged in trade or businesses prior to specified date within the United States as a proof of commencement of his or her continuous stay in USA not later than July 1, 1989. This also has to be evident by records maintained by the Commissioner of the Social Security or supplied for any benefit under Immigration and Nationality Act by means of an application.

The bill also proposed that eligible Bangladeshis make such other demonstration of physical presence as the US Attorney General may provide for by regulation.

Congressman Benzamen Gilman formulated the bill after the American Bangladesh Friendship Society (ABFS) persuaded him.

Kazi Abu Taher, an expatriate Bangladeshis and publicity secretary of (ABFS) told BSS that the bill proposed that the Bangladeshis shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous physical presence by reason of an absence in the United States for any period in the aggregate not exceeding 180 days.

Taher is now in Bangladesh to make liaison with the quarters concerned to have them aware of the bill.

DD to telecast live bus service opening

NEW DELHI, June 18: Doodh Darshan will telecast live Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to Dhaka and inauguration of the Calcutta-Dhaka bus service tomorrow, reports PTI.

The telecast will be from 1630 hours to 1900 hours on the primary channel (DD-1), according to an official release here today.

مصروف فيصل
Faysal Bank
A way of life
Strive & win
World Cup

A view from the Gully

From Page 1

The Australia jinx. Cronje must have had his homework right as he put the Aussies in to bat after a restricted strong batting lineup within a reasonable limit. This definite advantage was frittered away by their top order batsmen as they not only handled Warner in an amateurish manner but helped set in panic in the dressing room and then made another mistake by allowing less time to their most dangerous and at the same time most innovative batsman Klusener. They were also unlucky when umpire David Shepherd, normally an astute judge, gave his controversial nod against Cronje that was of vital importance for both the teams.

The Aussies in their turn made a number of mistakes that almost took the match away from them.

It was a great day for the two South African fast bowlers Shawn Pollock and Alan Donald, bowling almost on their 'home track' struck early blows

and once again it was left to Steve Waugh and Michael Bevan to put the innings on the track. Almost half the Aussie side could not score against Pollock and Donald. At the end South Africans were happy with their performance with the ball.

It was a very modest total indeed to chase until Shane Warner appeared quite early in the innings and took three vital wickets with four deliveries. Gibbs fell to an absolute beauty. Kisten perished with a horrible shot and Cronje out to a controversial judgment. But Kallis, Rhodes and Pollock kept the Proteas hopes alive but Warner came back and sent Kallis home. It was the last straw on the camel's back. The flamboyant Klusener, man of the match in four previous games went berserk and almost took his team out of the woods. But that one run stood between victory and defeat. Australia made it to their fourth final on better result (victory over the same team in the Super Six match).

Star Summer Fashion '99

Summer is the longest season in Bangladesh. With the enervating heat and humidity what can you wear that is both comfortable as well as trendy? The Daily Star has the answer — Star Summer Fashion '99. This is an exciting catalogue of summer wear for both men and women adorned with gorgeous colour pictures and insight into what, according to our designers, are the current trends in the fashion world. This picture album will feature colour displays of outfits by leading and upcoming boutiques and stores. Look out for this MUST-HAVE, exclusive summer fashion shopping guide, coming out very soon.

Book your copy NOW!

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 866772-4, Commercial: 866771, Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: <http://www.dailystarnews.com> and Email address: dstar@bangla.net