

Labour leaders not opposed to privatisation

GAZIPUR, June 29: Union leaders of state-owned industries (SOEs) in Tongi today said they were not opposed to privatisation as desired by the government, reports UNB.

"What we want is due compensation on retrenchment from job and alternative job opportunity," said a labour leader at a meeting with Privatisation Board.

The meeting was arranged jointly by the Privatisation Board and the Department for International Development of British Government to ascertain if workers stood in the way of privatisation.

SOEs have been incurring around Tk 2,500 crore annually.

A group of bureaucrats at the top of SOEs enjoying power and perks are also often blamed for delaying the process of privatisation in collusion with a vested group of labour leaders.

Presiding over the meeting, Privatisation Board Chairman Kazi Zafar Ullah said the government is bound by its pledges to sell out SOEs in phases as part of the reforms programme.

He assured the labour leaders that workers retrenched would be rehabilitated through the Safety Net project of the government. He said industries given to the private management would absorb the efficient workers.

City AL EC meet tomorrow

A meeting of the executive council of Dhaka City Awami League will be held at the party office at 6.30 pm on July 1, reports BSS.

General Secretary of the city Awami League and State Minister for Shipping Mofajal Hossain Chowdhury (Bir Bikram) has requested all office-bearers and members of the executive council to attend the meeting on time, a press release said.

BFUJ, DUJ for immediate reopening of APB

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday demanded reopening of the Associated Press of Bangladesh (APB) news agency in 48 hours, payment of all arrears and withdrawing transfer order of its four journalists, reports BSS.

A joint meeting of the BFUJ and DUJ held in the APB office warned that unless the office was opened for the journalists and employees, and withdrawal of transfer order of four journalists and payment of four months of arrears salary are carried out, a countrywide campaign would be launched against the management.

The meeting also condemned reported "harassment" of journalists in other media run by the BEXIMCO group saying the "repression on journalists will not yield good results in future as it did not in the past."

BFUJ secretary general Akhtar Ahmed Khan, DUJ president Altaf Mahmud, general secretary Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, BFUJ vice president GM Yakub, senior journalist Sheikh Rakibuddin, journalist leader Gulshan Ara, Shamim Siddiqui, KBM Wallur Rahman Mirza and Nazrul Islam Mithu, among others, spoke at the meeting, chaired by unit chief Nesar Ahmed.

Poets Foundation Sultana Nahar nominated representative

Poet, researcher and columnist Sultana Nahar has been nominated Bangladesh representative of the "Poets Foundation". Based in India, the foundation has centres around the world, says a press release.

Sultana Nahar has a number of publications in poetry both in English and Bengali. She received Golden Poet Award from USA and her poems in English have been included in the "Great Poems of Western World" and in "Anthology of Love Poems of South Asia" published by Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. She is also a lawyer in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

Interested poets are invited to join the foundation at 2/G, Shanoli, Road No. 1, Dhaka-1207. Telephone Numbers - 831517, 816405.

Daisy second among girls

Tahmina Akhter Daisy, a student of Bindubashini Girls' High School, Tangail, obtained 6th position on the combined merit list of Science Group under Dhaka board in this year's SSC examinations. She also became second among girls, says a press release.

Daisy, who got 936 marks with letters in 9 subjects, aspires to become a computer engineer in future.

She is the daughter of Dr Md Shah Ali Mian, heart specialist.

India should help implement SAFTA decisions : FBCCI

India should be requested to complete all formalities to give effect to the implementation of the decisions of 3rd Round of SAFTA negotiations, reports UNB.

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo raised the point at a briefing meeting with Mostafa Faruque Mohammad, Bangladesh High Commissioner designate to India, at the Federation yesterday.

Welcoming the official, the Federation of Bangladeshi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) also raised some other points, which included:

1) Request the Indian side to remove all non-tariff and para-tariff barriers.

2) Indian side is to be requested to remove all bureaucratic and procedural obstacles.

3) India should consider set-

ting up of joint ventures in areas like chemical fertilizer, composite textile, industrial chemicals and leather products, luggage, toys, sports goods, machinery tools and spares, cement, paper and pulp, computer software and information technology, jewellery and diamond cutting and polishing, sericulture and silk industry, frozen food, hotel and tourism complex, agro-based industry and artificial flower making.

4) India should allow Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to set up business offices and service organisations at important centres with a view to promoting trade and investment.

5) India should improve the infrastructure facilities on their side of the border to facilitate entry of Bangladeshi products.

6) Harmonisation and sim-

plification of customs by India. Multiple visa should be made available to businessmen to facilitate travel to India.

Representatives of different Chambers and Associations were present in the meeting. They said the new High Commissioner to India should try to promote products of Bangladesh, explore expansion of market, convince the Indian side to remove all trade barriers.

The business leaders assured the newly appointed High Commissioner of all cooperation for promoting trade and investment.

The High Commissioner said that he had received very useful information from FBCCI, which would help him in carrying out his responsibilities in New Delhi.



Bangladesh Chhatra League brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the remarks of BNP leader Badruddoza Chowdhury.

—Star photo

JS body for making banking sector more dynamic

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry at a meeting yesterday emphasised the need for making the banking sector more dynamic for facing the challenges of the 21st century, reports UNB.

Presided over by Committee President Prof Ali Ashraf, the meeting also discussed overall economic situation of the country, said a press release of the Parliament Secretariat.

The meeting was informed that careful steps in collecting classified and default loans have yielded positive results, and that the government had given permission to set up nine new banks in private sector, four of which have already started functioning.

Committee members Sayed Masud Reza and Amrit Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury attended the meeting.

Rangamati taxi drivers go on strike

RANGAMATI, June 29: At least 10 people were injured in a clash between Taxi drivers and a group of workers in the town today, reports UNB.

Communication in the town was disrupted for more than five hours. Taxi drivers association claimed that their drivers were the victims in the clash and announced a taxi strike for an indefinite period. It demanded adequate punishment to the offenders.

Taxi is the main mode of transport in the hilly roads of the town.

JIJA to boycott VC's programmes

By JU Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University Journalists' Association (JIJA) yesterday decided to boycott the programmes of Vice Chancellor of the university for his "non-cooperation with journalists and for issuing order prohibiting journalists to attend the Senate session" held yesterday, says a JIJA press release.

The journalists also boycotted the annual senate session as they were not invited to cover the session on the ground of "sanctity." Journalists of the university are generally invited to cover the annual senate session of the university.

Earlier, the administration communicated to the JIJA that "sanctity of the senate session would be damaged" if journalists were allowed to attend it.

Arju's death condoled

A condolence meeting at the death of renowned cultural activist and Programme Secretary of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGT) ASM Arju Rahman was held at the Mohila Samity Auditorium yesterday, reports BSS.

President of Sammitila Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) Ramendu Majumder chaired the meeting, jointly organised by the BGT and SSJ.

Among others, leading celebrities of country's cultural arena and cultural organisers Ali Zaker, Sara Zaker, Asaduzzaman Noor, Gulam Quddus, SM Solayman, Deb Prasad Debnath, Liakat Ali Luki, SM Mohshin, Hasan Arif, Tarig Anam Khan addressed the meeting.

They paid rich tribute to late Arju and said, at his death, the nation has lost a dedicated activist of the cultural movement.

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Seminar on Budget '99 at NSU

Call for reducing wastage of natural resources

Speakers at a seminar on Budget '99 yesterday called for evolving means to stop wastage of national resources instead of imposing new taxes to bolster economic development, reports BSS.

Organised by North-South University (NSU) on its campus, the seminar was addressed by Pro-Vice Chancellor of the NSU Prof Hafiz GA Siddiqui, Director of MBA programme Prof Shamsul Huq and Chairman of Economics Department Dr Salauddin Ahmed.

Prof Siddiqui emphasized the need for streamlining the tax administration by making it free from corruption to achieve the target of revenue collection. Otherwise, he said, revenue income of the government would continue to suffer set back.

Appreciating the reduction of import duty on some industrial raw materials, tools and



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy accorded a reception to folk singer Nurunnehar on Monday. Nurunnehar, who started her career back in 1944 with the All India Radio, was awarded a crest and Tk 10,000 in cash for her contribution in the field. Photo journalist Monowar Ahmed is her son.

What's on today....

Dialogue: A public dialogue on "Public Interest and the Judiciary: Towards the next Millennium" will be held. Organiser: Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals Forum (YEP forum). British Council and The Daily Star. Venue: British Council Auditorium. Time: 5.00pm.

Film show: Two films, *The Elephant* and *The Bicycle and Close-up*, will be screened as part of the 13th founding anniversary programmes of Zahir Raihan Film Society. Venue: Goethe Institute, House No. 10, Rd No. 9, Dhamrai R/A. Time: 5.00 pm and 7.00 pm respectively.

Seminar: A seminar will be held on "Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah and Contemporary Journalism". Organiser: Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah Smriti Sangsad. Venue: VIP lounge, Jatiya Press Club. Time: 4.30 pm.

Film show: *Le Colonel Chabert* by Yves Angelo will be screened. Organiser: Chalachitrom Film Society in association with Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 6.00 pm.

Weather

Rise in day temp likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Barisal, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at few places over Dhaka and Khulna divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy falls is also likely at one or two places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions during the period. Met Office said adding that slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country.

The country's highest temperature 33.1 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and the lowest 23.0 degrees at Cox's Bazar.

The sun sets in the city today at 6:50 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:14 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.0	26.6	85	90
Chittagong	31.0	25.5	88	95
Rajshahi	31.0	26.2	92	90
Khulna	32.5	25.0	82	77

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town Temperature in Celsius Humidity in percentage

Dhaka Max 32.0 Min 26.6 Morning 85 Evening 90

Chittagong Max 31.0 Min 25.5 Morning 88 Evening 95

Rajshahi Max 31.0 Min 26.2 Morning 92 Evening 90

Khulna Max 32.5 Min 25.0 Morning 82 Evening 77

US businessmen

From Page 1
Business Council for International Understanding in New York.

A number of leading US investors and businessmen attended the luncheon. They included Carter Booth, Managing Director of Chase Manhattan Bank Josep Hillings, Vice President and General Manager of Enron Corporation, Sheikh Anwar Hossain, President, Metalink Marine Corporation, Peter Howell, Group Marketing Executive of the Asia Pacific Region of the Citigroup, Charles Pierce, Vice President, UNOCOL Bangladesh and Ambassador Frank Wisner of American International Group.

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The High Commissioner said that he had received very useful information from FBCCI, which would help him in carrying out his responsibilities in New Delhi.

The minister drew their attention to the growth potential in the Asian region in the coming years and highlighted the unique business opportunities that Bangladesh offers to US companies. He mentioned in particular, the huge reserve of gas in Bangladesh, which could be utilised for building power plants and other gas based industries.

In this connection, he also stressed his satisfaction over the growing interest of the US companies to explore the business potential in the country.

He assured them that the government of Bangladesh would further expand the incentive regimes for foreign investors.

Earlier the minister attended a discussion at the Steven's Institute of Technology, New Jersey where he was briefed about a new inexpensive method to treat the arsenic contamination problem in Bangladesh.

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