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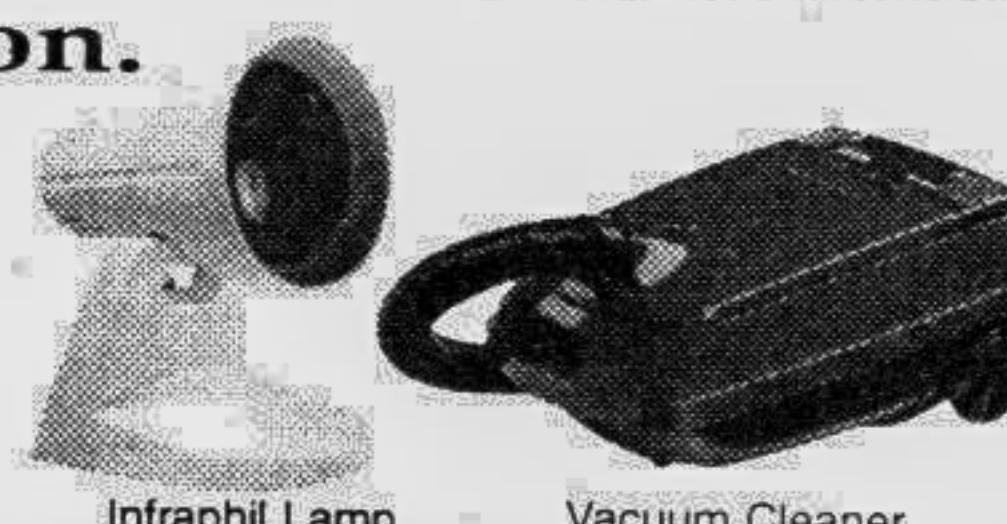
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Biman to raise domestic fare from October

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman is going to raise its fare in the domestic sector from October, next, even as it is losing its domestic and regional passengers to other airlines, both local and foreign. However, it managed steady growth in the international sectors, both passenger and freight. There was a hike in the freight service charges, officials said.

The justification for the domestic fare hike is to bring it at par with the rival private airlines who operate with fewer aircraft and lower overhead.

Foreign airlines took away 59 percent of outgoing passengers and brought 57 percent of the incoming, leaving Biman the rest. In absolute terms, however, there was a rise as the national airline ferried 662,555 passengers in 1996-97, 662,128 in 1997-98 and 659,271 in 1998-99, they told reporters yesterday at a briefing at Biman head office after a review of the national carrier's marketing, last week.

The Indian Airlines once known for its erratic schedules overtook Biman's profitable Dhaka-Calcutta regional service, taking away 10,000 passengers last year, operating wide body Airbus five days a week. Biman even failed to maintain its three flights a day by F-28's due to aircraft shortage and operating wide body aircraft infrequently.

Overall the national carrier turned out a 2.66 percent growth in revenues and is looking ahead to improve the situation from the winter beginning end October, when it hopes to press all three of its F-28's and add a fifth DC-10-30 to the three-engine vintage work force of the airline, having four such second hand aircraft.

It is also planning to add another Airbus to join its two medium haul Airbus fleet, Walailug Khandaker, director, marketing informed. The debate in domestic sector was attributed to a small fleet of four aircraft: Two F-28s and a similar number of ATPs. They have

been flying both on internal and regional routes.

The crash of a F-28 in Sylhet in December, 1997 and an inoperative ATR earlier in June that year, after it skidded off the runway while landing in Chittagong, took a heavy toll on the airline's passenger carrying capacity.

In 1996-97 Biman carried 497,339 passengers on the domestic routes which declined to 391,101 and 367,230 in 1998-99 fiscal year marking a shortfall of 112,000 passengers. The situation is likely to improve from October when the F-28 currently undergoing D-Check abroad rejoins the fleet.

But the disruption in schedules has helped the private airlines like GMG which has two 36 seat aircraft and Air Parabat having two 19-seat planes, the official said.

In the international sector the Gulf route continued to spin money. Revenues in the European routes were break-even, while the north American service was running at a loss. The Tokyo flight, as a segment of the Bangkok to Tokyo route has become break even. Services to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur are losing money as manpower recruitment in Malaysia abated. Carrying of cargo with Korean Air suffered a set back last year after the crash of a Korean Air MD-11 freighter which led to suspension of the service by the airline that mainly hauled garments to North America. Biman is currently negotiating with British Airways for the cargo service after botched talks with Saudia. Korean Air is however, likely to resume the service, the officials said.

On the reduction of aviation fuel price secretary, civil aviation said the matter is still being considered by the government which is examining the price in the regional airports. A delegation from the IATA recently was in Dhaka to discuss the issue which they said is one of the factor that is inhibiting the Bangladesh capital from becoming a regional aviation.

Speaker refers case

From Page 1

The Speaker's office went to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and appealed against the High Court verdict. The SC in a verdict on July 29 upheld the HC verdict and asked the Speaker to comply with the HC verdict in seven days from the receipt of the order.

The Speaker's office then moved a petition to a Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division for extending the time. On behalf of the Speaker, the Attorney General sought 15 days from the receipt of the copy of the judgement to comply with the SC order.

The Appellate Division outright rejected the prayer yesterday.

20 BAU students fall sick after breakfast

MYMENSINGH Aug 8: At least 20 students of Mymensingh Agricultural University fell sick after breakfast at a hall canteen today, reports UNB.

Campus sources said at least 20 students of Bangabandhu Hall fell sick after they went to classes. The hall canteen was inaugurated today.

Eight of the seriously ill students identified as Rafiqul Islam, Sudhangshu, Monir Hossain, Sadhon Guhu, Mabbubul Alam, Morshed, Mamunuzzaman and Harun were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Khulna BNP convening body

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 8: A new Convening Committee of Khulna District BNP has been formed with former whip of the Jatiya Sangsad and joint secretary of the party's central committee Ashraf Hossain as convenor and Advocate Shafiqul Alam as member secretary.

The 61-member new convening committee was announced by the secretary general of the party Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP.

The new committee has been asked to hold council session within next three months.

Meantime, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury and Khandaker Dewar Hossain prayed before the Appellate Division yesterday morning for drawing contempt proceedings against the Speaker on the ground that he failed to comply with the Supreme Court order in seven days from the receipt of the order.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed who appeared for the plaintiffs in the contempt case told The Daily Star yesterday evening, "It is good that the Speaker eventually complied with the court order. We are thinking whether to pursue the contempt case under the new circumstances."

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury told the BBC that he had never thought of disobeying the court order. "As the matter is related to the sovereignty of parliament and other constitutional issues, we wanted a copy of the text of the judgement so that we could take steps after examining it", the Speaker said. "The SC did not grant us time. Even then, showing respect to the Supreme Court, we sent the matter to the Election Commission."

Transport workers' leaders to sit with minister again today

Talks between Bangladesh Transport Workers' Federation leaders and the Communications Minister yesterday yielded no results, reports UNB.

The leaders of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation will meet Communications Minister Anwar Hossain at his ministry again at 4 pm today.

The Federation has completed its preparation to make the planned strike a success. It took out a transport procession in the city yesterday to muster support for the proposed strike to realise its 11-point demand.

Prior to the procession, Federation president Waziduddin Khan MP told a workers' rally at Mohakhali Bus Terminal that they would go for non-stop strike across the country from August 10 if their demands were not met.

Postmen in rural areas begin 10-day strike

Postal operations throughout the country came to a halt as thousands of postmen in rural areas went on a 10-day strike yesterday on their three-point demand, reports UNB.

Some 22,000 postal employees of about 10,000 sub and branch post offices in the rural areas went on strike at the call of Bangladesh Postal Employees Parishad (BPEP).

Their demands include bringing of non-postal divisional employees under the national pay scale, allotment of offices for BPEP in GPOs and reinstatement of BPEP secretary general Ashraf Alam in his service.

Meanwhile, the union at a meeting in the city yesterday hailed the postal employees for observing the countrywide strike and urged them to continue strike till August 17.

Sonali Bank

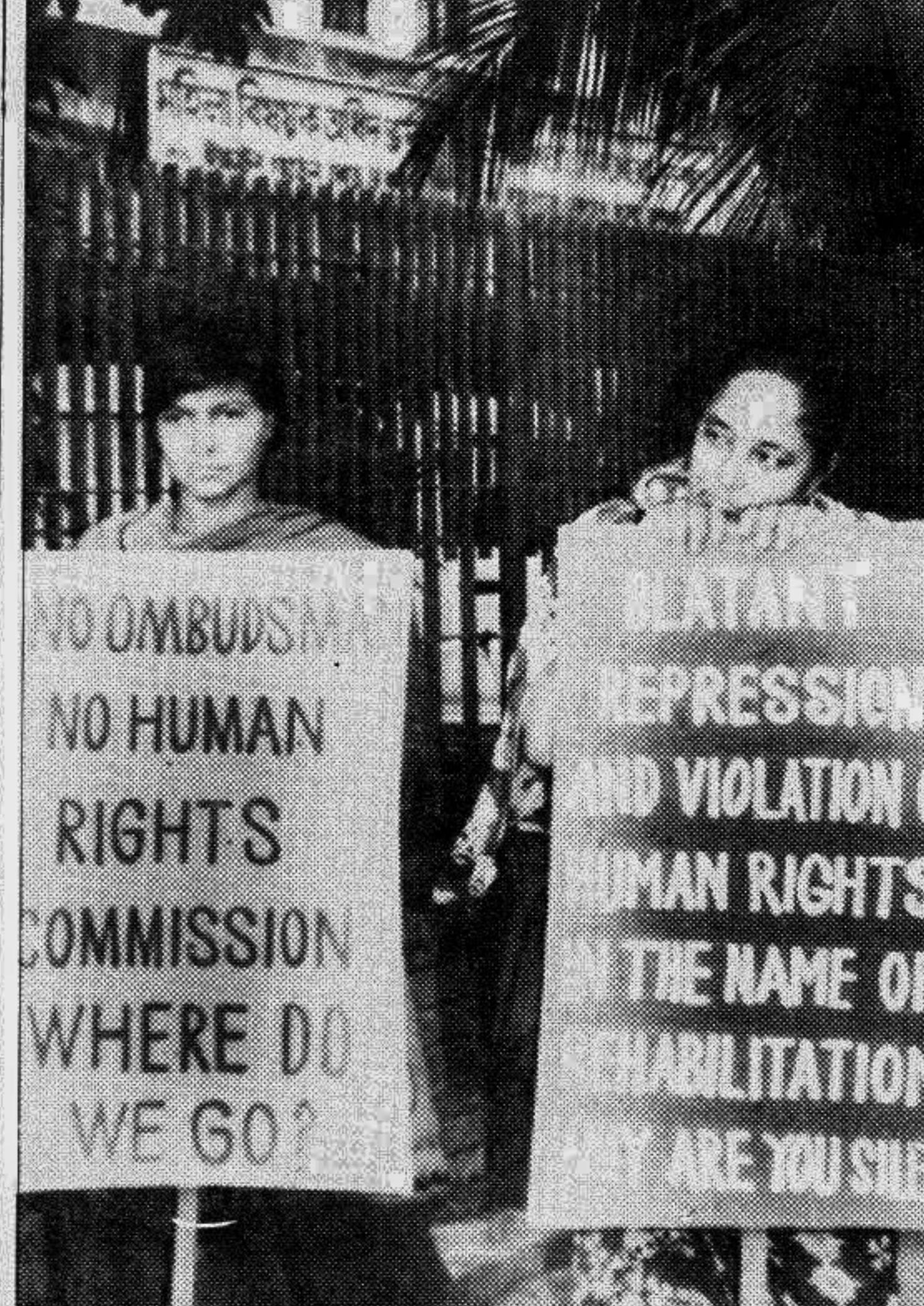
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permission.

The MD, however, flatly rejected the suggestion on the plea that SB is not a subsidiary of the central bank.

The directors then said unless the issue is referred to Bangladesh Bank they would register their note of dissent.

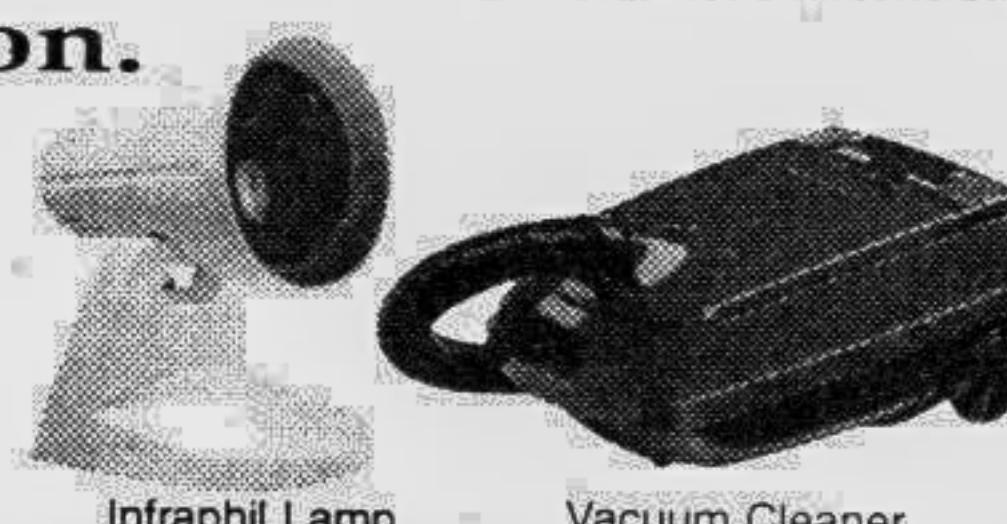
Later it was decided that Rahman Group's case would be referred to a lawyer for suggestion.



Inhuman saga
Evicted sex workers stage demonstration in front of the Directorate for Women Affairs yesterday. — Star photo

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Panamanian ship crew on strike at Ctg Port

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Aug 8: A Panamanian vessel could not leave Chittagong Port yesterday due to strike by its 22 Chinese crew who were demanding arrear wages, port official said.

The vessel MV Youngly, owned by a Vietnamese Company, was sold to a New York based firm at about seven lakh dollars, harbour master Kamru Islam said.

The vessel carrying clinkers from Indonesia for a private cement factory here arrived at the port about one and a half months ago.

The crew went on strike yesterday demanding their outstanding wages just before the ship's departure from Chittagong port after unloading its cargo.

The sudden strike by the crew not only made the voyage of the ship uncertain, but also kept our port jetty hostage" harbour master said.

"Now it has become a problem for us as we can not allow another clinker carrying foreign vessel to enter the same jetty for unloading cargo," he added.

The harbour master summoned the captain and ship's local agent for holding a meet.

Mystery shrouds death of maid in city

Mystery shrouded the death of a maid in the city's Paribagh area yesterday, police said, reports BSS.

Rokhsana Islam, owner of the house, informed Ramma police by telephone that her maid Nasima, 12, committed suicide by jumping from the rooftop of her Paribagh residence at about 5 am, police said.

But she could not give details about the alleged suicide.

Ramma police recovered the body from behind the house and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Nasima, a native from Mymensingh, had been working in the house for several months.

Rokhsana's husband Ahsazur Islam is now living abroad, police said.

Police suspects that the maid was murdered before being thrown from the rooftop of a three-storey building. She had wounds and fracture in her body what indicated torture, they added.

Another teenage maid, who was allegedly raped and thrown from the rooftop of a Dhammandi house recently, is now struggling for life at the Orthopaedic Hospital.

The investigation will begin today and the report is expected to be submitted to the health minister by Thursday.

Kosovo

From Page 1

Additional DIG Walur Rahman on August 5 that the policemen from Bangladesh in Kosovo were being asked to appear in fresh tests and attempts were being made on different pretexts to send them back home."

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Forty-nine policemen including senior officials left Dhaka on July 27 to join peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

Both the officials of the Foreign Ministry and the Home Ministry decided to remain tight lipped about the reported return and said they have to wait till they hear from the Bangladesh mission in New York.

SHIFTING OF OFFICE

This is information for all concerned that the office of **Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project** BAMWSP has been shifted as follows :

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