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Shahabuddin to visit Turkey in Nov

By Staff Correspondent

President Shahabuddin Ahmed will travel to Turkey in the first week of November on a three-day state visit, officials said.

This would be his first trip abroad since his election as titular head nearly three years ago.

The foreign ministry is taking preparations for the visit at the invitation of Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, military secretary Major General A M Siraj said.

The details of the trip will be worked out by the Turkish government and the Bangladesh mission in Ankara, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

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Transshipment

FBCCI demands representation in expert body

Star Report

Leading businessmen of the country yesterday called upon the government to adopt a 'give and take policy' while expressing general support for transshipment.

They also demanded representation of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) in the expert committee on transshipment to protect their interest.

They said before signing any contract Bangladesh should ensure that it gets its due facilities as per agreement. They also stressed the need for increasing the number of duty free goods to India and that India should be persuaded to give transit facility to Nepal and Bhutan.

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Prayer Timings

| August 10 | | |
|-----------|-------|--------|
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4:10 | 4:15 |
| Johr | 12:50 | 1:25 |
| Asr | 5:00 | 5:10 |
| Maghrib | 6:55 | 7:00 |
| Esha | 7:55 | 8:15 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

Who looks after Buriganga?

By Morshed Ali Khan

Who is responsible for looking after the river Buriganga? The Inland Water Transport Authority (Iwta), Water Development Board (WDB) or the Ministry of Land?

Well, nobody seems to know this for sure. Officials of WDB, which has been entrusted with the task of building flood protection embankment along the river, said 'maintenance of the river' is the job of Iwta. One official even cited an instance that Iwta asked the WDB to show cause as to why they (WDB) were constructing a sluice gate at Fagla without their (Iwta) approval.

In response, we wrote back about the indiscriminate encroachment on the river and asked them to clear the way for building flood protection embankment. We never heard from them again," said a senior engineer of WDB requesting anonymity.

Chairman of Iwta MA Karim said the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka is the authority of the river. The river is

a khas property and the DC's office is responsible for looking after all such property.

Iwta has obtained a 30-year lease from the DC's office for Sadarghat launch terminal that included 500 yards on both

sides of the ghat, so the DC is the authority. For navigational purpose, Iwta 'maintained' the river by dredging, installing markers and signal lights. The chairman said.

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An Appeal, again

The Daily Star appeals to the Prime Minister and to the citizens of Dhaka to save the river - Buriganga - that gives the city its water, its environment and its very life. We urge all that we take the following steps:

1. The Prime Minister should form an inter-ministerial committee to evict all illegal occupants from the river banks, prepare and execute a renovation and rehabilitation plan that will turn the two sides of the river into environment friendly commercial and public space.
2. The citizens of Dhaka should form a high profile citizens' body that will include all stakeholders to advise and monitor the government's work. This body should also initiate citizens' voluntary initiative -- with full community participation -- to beautify and renovate the river banks.
3. The business community should form its own body to look into possible investment opportunities, both to beautify and utilize the commercial potentials of the river banks.

We think the mass media, especially the print media, can play a vital role in saving our dear Buriganga. Let's all take up, collectively, the issue of saving the mother river, by consistently focusing on the issue to force both the government and the citizens to take action.



Workers at a dry cell recycle factory near Islambagh in the city. Wastes fill up a large portion of the river. —Star photo

Murder at DB office: Charges against 4 framed

By Court Correspondent

The Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday framed charges against four accused in the Jalal Ahmed Shafi murder case.

Decomposed body of Shafi, an informer of DB, was recovered from a roof-top water tank of DB office at Minto Road on March 25 morning. The body identified six days after its recovery.

Four chargesheeted accused — Inspector Ziaul Ahsan, havildar Bilal Hossain, constable Abdur Rauf and canteen manager Anwar — were produced before the court at about 12 noon yesterday.

During the proceedings yesterday, the prosecution lawyers prayed before the court to frame charges against the four accused. The defence lawyers opposed the prosecution lawyers.

Rejecting the prayer of the defence lawyers for discharging the accused from the charges, the court framed charges against the four.

A bail petition was moved on behalf of havildar Bilal and constable Rauf yesterday. Judge Munira Mahfuz, however, did not pass any order yesterday regarding the bail petition. The court fixed September 14, 15 and 16 for deposition.



Senate confirms Osman Siddique as US ambassador

By Staff Correspondent

The US Senate has confirmed the appointment of a Bangladeshi-American, Osman Siddique, as the nation's Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji.

He will also act concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu.

For the first time in US history, Bangladesh born first generation immigrant Siddique will serve as ambassador of that country.

President Bill Clinton had earlier nominated Osman Siddique. The nomination was confirmed by the US Senate on August 5, according to Congressional Record made available to The Daily Star yesterday.

Osman Siddique of McLean, Virginia, is the first immigrant from the Sub-continent and also the first American Muslim to be appointed US ambassador. He is President and Chief

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Cabinet approves new draft law

Death maximum penalty for child, women repression

The Cabinet yesterday approved a new draft law providing capital punishment at the maximum for child and woman repression in a bid to rein in its perpetrators, says UNB.

"The Woman and Child Repression Control Act 1999" would replace "The Woman and Child Repression (Special Provision) Act 1995," according to the Cabinet decision.

The approval was given in weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers at the PM Office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

It was also learnt to have had discussion on ongoing anti-terrorism drives and slum eviction in the capital.

"The new law has been formulated to effectively prevent repression on children and women with stern punitive measures," an official announcement said.

It will be placed as a bill before the Jatiya Sangsad in its session set to begin on August 29.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru placed the draft, which is a rewritten version of an earlier bill brought before Parlia-

ment incorporating measures against terrorist activities.

Official sources said the bill proposed maximum punishment of death sentence along with pecuniary penalty for acid throwing, rapes and kidnappings.

Part of the proceeds from monetary fines will be awarded as financial compensation to the victims. The fines will be procured, if necessary, by confiscating movable and immovable property of a culprit.

Those who will supply acid will also be deemed as committing equal offence of inflicting

acid burns and be awarded similar punishment.

A clause of the strong-arm law stipulates that the offender will have to take the responsibilities of the child to be born following a rape. "The child will also be heir to the offender."

It proposes recording statement of a victim in camera.

The long arm of the law even reaches the custodian if a woman becomes victim of rape or repression while under custody of anyone or authority. The guilty custodian will be subject to punishment of 5-10

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Fresh agitation by JU students

'Expel all rapists and killers'

By JU Correspondent

The General Students Unity

at Jahangirnagar University yesterday launched a fresh agitation programme to press its six-point demand including expulsion of all the students responsible for rape, terrorism, killing and extortion on the campus.

The programme includes signature campaign in favour of the demands, photo exhibition on anti-rape and anti-terrorism movement, film exhibition, cultural function, open discussion, procession, rally and convention against repression including rape and sexual

harassment.

The programme was announced at a press conference at JU Journalists' Association office.

GSU started the new agitation programme with a signature-collection campaign.

Its demands include expulsion from the university and cancellation of certificates of all the rapists, their abettors and the killers, proper trial and exemplary punishment to them; filing of cases against the students and outsiders involved in terrorism, extortion and

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Arms transshipment can't be resisted once accord signed

By Staff Correspondent

Khaleda tells public rally

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia has alleged that India is conspiring to grab Bangladesh and the issue of transit is part of that conspiracy.

To fulfil India's design, she said, the ruling Awami League is helping that country by giving corridor to it on the pretext of providing transshipment facility.

Addressing a huge public meeting at Upashahar Primary School ground under Mirpur section-I yesterday, Khaleda, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, apprehended that India might transship arms, ammunition and troops if the transit agreement is signed.

Mirpur, Pallabi and Kafur thana units of BNP jointly organised the meeting as part of party's plan to hold meetings in all the eight constituencies in the capital. Yesterday's meeting

was first of her planned programmes.

She said: "It would not be possible to resist carrying of arms and troops if the agreement is once signed." "India will definitely send troops to occupy Bangladesh if we try to resist transshipment after signing of the agreement."

Referring to change in the names of Calcutta and West Bengal, she wondered the motive behind this change. Obviously there is an evil design behind change in the names, she said.

She expressed determination not to give corridor or transit to India and said the BNP with the help of all na-

tionalist forces and patriotic people of the country would resist the government's decision to provide transit to India.

She said India has already described Bangladesh's Prime Minister as Chief Minister.

Justifying her opposition against giving transit to India, the former prime minister said mills, factories and industries of the country have been closed down after they failed to compete with Indian goods. Now, the rest of the industries will close down if the transit agreement is signed.

Turning to the scenario in the country's educational institutions, she alleged that the government was patronising groups of both killers and rapists at Jahangirnagar University. The incidents of killing and rape are increasing day by day in the country due to the pa-

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BNP chief Khaleda Zia addresses a public meeting at Upashahar Primary School ground at Mirpur in the city. —Star photo

Two MPs' joining Cabinet EC readies for hearing

By Nurul Kabir

The Election Commission is likely to issue letters to BNP today asking it to substantiate claims that the two party MPs should lose their seats in Jatiya Sangsad.

Deputy opposition leader Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury and opposition chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain had written to the Speaker that the two MPs had violated Article 70 of the Constitution by joining Sheikh Hasina's cabinet.

The EC would also send letters to the MPs, Mohammad Alauddin and Hasibur Rahman Swapan, to defend their positions that their joining the Cabinet was a violation of the Constitution.

Both the parties would get

seven days time, from the date of receipt of the letters, to reply.

The decisions were made at a meeting of the three-member Election Commission yesterday. EC Additional Secretary Aziz Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night.

The EC received a letter from Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury on the disputed matter on Sunday.

The Speaker said that he was still convinced that the BNP lawmakers by joining the government did not violate Article 70 that bars floor-crossing. EC sources said.

The Speaker also said that he referred the issue to the EC as he was directed by the Supreme Court.

Biggest garments unit at DEPZ gutted

A foreign apparel factory at Dhaka Export Processing Zone burned down in a devastating fire, gutting products and property worth crores of taka, reports UNB.

Fire service officials said the 8,800 square-metre four-storey building of Ring Shine Textiles Ltd, a Taiwan-based firm's sweater factory, went up in flames in the blaze that broke out Sunday night and lasted till yesterday noon.

The Tk 550-crore investment project which is the biggest among 14 other projects in DEPZ was left ruined in the fire," said a senior official of the factory.

The flames originated from the ground floor of the building at 10.10pm Sunday. It soon en-

gulfed upstairs burning machinery, chemicals and raw materials, and office equipment and furniture.

The Fire Control Room in the city said 11 units from five stations, including two from the DEPZ at Savar, rushed to scene and extinguished the fire after 14 hours to 12.15pm yesterday.

ABM Montazuddin Ahmed, Station Officer of DEPZ Fire and Civil Defence Department, told UNB that a security guard informed the station, situated beside the factory, about the fire at 10.10pm.

Two firefighting units from DEPZ immediately dashed to the spot and tried to douse the fire. But their efforts proved fu-

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Ministry for contract to Marubeni

Meghnaghat power plant

By Sharier Khan

The Energy Ministry is going to place a proposal before the Cabinet Purchase Committee next week for setting up of the Second Phase Project of Meghnaghat Power Plant on the basis of "unsolicited negotiations".

But the first phase of the project is lacking government's attention.

Despite reservations expressed by energy experts, the proposal suggests that Japanese company Marubeni should be awarded the contract for the second phase of the project, which would be set up as per the

financial and technical configurations of the First Phase Project.

Marubeni was the second lowest bidder for the First Phase Project while US company AES was the lowest bidder.

After a delay of nearly two years, the Power Development Board earlier this month signed agreements with AES for setting up the 450 MW First Phase

Project. The deal fixed the power tariff at only 2.79 US cents (average for 22 years) which is about half the PDB power tariff.

Marubeni had long been pursuing the Second Phase Project, saying that it agreed on a tariff of 2.79 cents, offered by AES in the first phase bidding.

In its proposal, the Energy Ministry noted that the demand for power in the country in 2005

would rise to 4600 MW and so the government must go for new power projects.

It further said that since there was shortage of funds for setting up power projects in the public sector, the government must seek private investment.

Since Marubeni was the second lowest bidder for the First Phase Project and it is interested for Second Phase Project, the government may sign agreements with it for the (Second Phase) project in the light of the First Phase Project, the proposal said.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue
Dhaka

Notice

Sub: Collection of Foreign Travel Tax for Travels by Air.

This is for information of all concerned that the government has introduced the system of collection of foreign travel tax in case of air travel from Bangladesh by passengers holding Bangladeshi passports through air tickets at the time of issuance of tickets by the airlines/travel agents instead of the existing system of collection of the tax through the banks for all travels with effect from the 1st September, 1999 Vide SRO No 197-Law/99 dated, the 6th July, 1999. Those who have already purchased tickets for travels on or after the 1st September, 1999 are required to pay the tax either at the time of reconfirming the tickets or at the check-in counter of the airports. All concerned are requested to take necessary action in this regard. For further information, the undersigned may be contacted personally or on telephone.

Md Abul Kashem

DFP-16896/3/8
G-1463Second Secretary (Taxes-18)
Phone: 838101-8/334.

JOIN OUR MEETING TODAY TO MAKE DHAKA BEAUTIFUL

There was a time when Dhaka city was identified with the riverside beauty of the Buriganga — along the entire Sadarghat-Ahsan Manzil stretch. Today we want to restore that beauty — both for the public and for business. The Daily Star and Chetana (a group of socially committed architects) have prepared alternative plans to beautify the famous and historic part of Dhaka.

Date: Today, 10th August.

Venue : British Council Auditorium

Time : 5pm

PLEASE COME AND HELP US TO MAKE

DHAKA BEAUTIFUL