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## JS body discusses Mig 29 deal

As a parliamentary committee yesterday scrutinised whether there were any irregularities in Mig-29 deals, it was apprised that the defence purchase was made through transparent process as per rule, reports UNB.

Opposition lawmakers had alleged bungling in the purchase of the Russian fighter jets for the Bangladesh Air Force.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry examined the deals in a meeting with its president Major General (Retd) KM Shafulah in the chair.

"The purchases have been done as per decision of the procurement committee clearly abiding by the defence policy and the prices were cheaper compared to any other countries," a government handout quoted the authorities to have said in the meeting.

Another purchase of military hardware of Indian vehi-

cles, which also raised controversies, was also discussed by the parliamentary body.

It was stated that Bangladesh Armed Forces had long been using the vehicles of a specific company. In 1995-96 fiscal, some vehicles of another company were bought. "Vehicles of other companies may also be procured if they can supply as per specifications of the armed forces."

The meeting was informed that feasibility of assembling vehicles locally for the armed forces was now under study.

Committee members Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah, Col (ret) Shawkat Ali, Mohammad Farooq Khan, Golam Mohammad Qader and Major (ret) Akhteruzzaman attended the meeting.

Acting secretary of the defence ministry, chiefs of the three services and other concerned high officials were present.

## Task Force to assess economic impact of transshipment

The government has formed a nine-member Task Force led by former adviser of caretaker government Syed Manzur Elahi to assess the economic impact of transshipment facility to India, reports UNB.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed announced this while addressing a meeting of the Chamber leaders with Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday.

Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman has been made adviser to the Task Force.

Representatives from line ministries, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) are the members of the task force.

It will assist the expert committee to assess the economic, trade, revenue and other benefits of the transshipment.



A Sammita Nari Samaj rally in the city yesterday demanding an end to repression on women and protesting eviction of slum dwellers. —Star photo

## Contempt case Hearing adjourned till today

The hearing of the contempt case against Shah Azizur Rahman MP of Sylhet, was adjourned till today by a High Court Division yesterday, reports BSS.

Following the contempt petition of the Supreme Court Bar Association, a High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque and Justice Mohammad Mozammel Hossain, on August 18, issued rule upon Shah Azizur Rahman, an MP of Awami League from Sylhet, to show cause why the contempt proceeding shall not be drawn against him for his statement scandalizing and lowering the image of the highest court of the country.

## HC directs GSS to pay salary, dues by Aug 26

The High Court yesterday directed Gao Sahajjya Sangstha (GSS), headed by KM Sobhan, a retired judge, to pay salary and outstanding dues of its 6,000 employees by August 26, reports UNB.

The order of the division bench comprising Justice Fazlul Karim and Justice Mohammad Ali Asgar came upon hearing an application seeking vacation of a stay order of the court.

Earlier, the Court on a writ petition had stayed operation of the order of suspension of chairman KM Sobhan, executive director F R Mahmud Hasan and the governing body of GSS, a non-government organization.

The director general of Social Services on June 15 had suspended them on grounds of mishandling and abusing huge foreign funds received by GSS, and not giving the accounts to the authorities. The DG also formed a caretaker body with three new persons to run GSS.

GSS used to receive funds from the Delegation of European Commission for the purpose of mass education and social mobilisation in Bangladesh.

Sobhan and Hasan challenged the suspension in a writ and secured the stay of operation of the order of DG, Social Services, for 10 weeks.

In its interim order yesterday the Court kept stand over the application for vacation of the stay order till August 26 when it will resume the hearing.

The Court further directed the counsel of the writ petitioners to file affidavit of compliance of the order for payment of salary of last five months to all the 6,000 employees of GSS.

## JS body on women's rights demanded

The Nari Pragati Sangha (NPS), a women's group, yesterday urged for a united stand against repression on women and violation of fundamental human rights.

The call was made at a rally held at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday afternoon on the occasion of "Women Repression Resistance Day".

The day is being observed by different women and cultural organisations to mark the killing of Yasmin, Yasmin was raped and murdered by police at Dinajpur on August 24, 1995. Police also gunned down seven persons who were agitating against the killing.

Addressing the rally the speakers demanded formation of a permanent parliamentary committee on women repression and women rights.

They criticised the role of religious fanatics and said the government has failed to take action against them. "We should take moves to root out the anti-liberation forces," one speaker said.

The NPS also put forward a set of demands which include ensuring accountability of police, prompt action against those who indulge in repression and rape, halt in eviction of prostitutes and slum dwellers without arranging the rehabilitation, judicial security system to stop women repression on the pretext of safe custody, judicial procedure against the religious fanatics and fair judicial re-investigation against the rapists of Shima Chowdhury, Tania and Moushumi.

Presided over by Rokeya Kabir, the rally was addressed, among others, by Ferdous Sultana, Ajay Roy of Sammita Samajik Andolan, Moutaz Begum, Binotamoy Dhamai of Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Aroma Datta and Nurul Islam of Bangladesh Trade Union and Sahida Begum.

Earlier, the NPS held a cultural programme at the Shaheed Minar premises.

## Khulna jute mill workers enforce hartal

KHULNA, Aug 24: Workers of three closed jute mills enforced a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city today demanding payment of arrears and reopening of the mills, reports UNB.

Sranik Sangram Samanay Parishad comprising workers and employees of Afil, Sonali and Ejaz Jute Mills called for the hartal.

During the hartal, the agitating workers blocked the rail and road at Fulbari gate area disrupting communication.

Shops, business establishments and educational institutions were closed and motor vehicles went off the road.

At a rally, the workers called for rail-and-road barricade again tomorrow.

## Attack on doctor BCL leader held in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Aug 24: Plainclothes police yesterday arrested a student leader from Kalibari Road in the town in connection with the attack on a doctor of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, reports UNB.

The arrested was identified as Shanto, former vice president of Mymensingh Polytechnic Institute and a Chhatra League leader.

Police said miscreants attacked Dr Shaiful Islam of MMCH recently while he was on duty.

Doctors of the hospital observed strike for three days protesting the attack and gave the authorities a seven-day ultimatum to arrest the miscreants.

## Kidnapped boy handed over to parents in Dubai

DUBAI, Aug 24: A 7-year-old Bangladeshi boy who was kidnapped to work as a camel jockey has been returned to his parents, a Bangladeshi diplomat said today, reports AP.

He was reunited with his family at the Bangladeshi consulate in Dubai on Sunday, said Bangladeshi Consul-General Abdul-Fadhil Mohammad Golam Hussein.

The boy was kidnapped by an associate of a Bangladeshi man who had lured the family to the Emirates with promises of work three months ago, Hussein said.

The boy's father, Moti Matabar, reported the abduction of his son, Saiful, to the consulate last week. The consulate tracked down the abductor, a man named Jahangir, and Saiful was retrieved from a camel-jockey training camp, the diplomat said.

Bangladeshi diplomats are interrogating Jahangir, said Hussein.

Camel races are immensely popular in the Gulf. Young boys — favoured as jockeys because they are light in weight — are strapped to the backs of camels.

The United Arab Emirates banned the use of young boys as camel jockeys in 1993. But the law appears to be frequently violated. Small boys are still seen riding the towering beasts in races broadcast on television.

Hussein said that about six underage Bangladeshi boys have been found working as camel jockeys so far this year. They have been repatriated.

## Squatters

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on Wednesday morning and then of the SC premises Wednesday night were not seen during the police operation.

A group of squatters complained that the leaders had collected Tk 5 to Tk 30 from them to register their names which continued until late Monday night.

The leaders allegedly promised them that the names were being enlisted to help their rehabilitation.

Speaking to a newspaper reporter by phone, Lutfar Rahman, president of the Samity, denied collecting money from the squatters. He however said about 4500 names had been recorded and that the list would be submitted to Prime Minister's Office for their rehabilitation. They have been in the meantime sent to different slums, he said.

A High Court Division Bench consisting of Justice Fazlul Karim and Justice Ali Asgar Khan on Monday afternoon directed Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, Home Secretary Shaifur Rahman, Inspector General of Police AYBI Siddiky and DMP Commissioner Shamsuddin Ahmed to clear the squatters from the SC premises and from in front of Dr Kamal's residence.

The court gave the directive while disposing off a petition moved by Dr Kamal Hossain on behalf of slum-dwellers who had been evicted from city slums earlier this month. The court observed that the slums could be removed but the eviction process should be implemented in phases under a master plan for rehabilitation respecting their right to life and living.

## Jayalalitha's sleight

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Kazhaghah, and Sonia Gandhi's Congress party even before the September-October election. Political journalists speculated that the apparent reason was a Congress announcement that if it came to power, it would not hinder trial in a slew of corruption cases against Jayalalitha.

Sonia had appeared to defend Jayalalitha in her first formal news conference just a week before, saying Vajpayee's party only accused the Tamil Nadu leader of being corrupt when she allied with Congress.

But Vajpayee said Saturday in a public rally in Madras, cap-

ital of Tamil Nadu, that his refusal to drop charges against Jayalalitha in the multibillion rupee scandals was one of the reasons why she withdrew her crucial legislative support and toppled the government.

Jayalalitha became Vajpayee's bane since he was sworn in as prime minister in March 1998 with the help of her 18 lawmakers. At times, it seemed Jayalalitha's machinations left Vajpayee little time or energy to run the country.

"Dealing with Jayalalitha was the most painful period of my lifelong political career," Vajpayee said at the weekend public rally.

But Jayalalitha remains a force to be dealt with, because of her fanatically strong support in Tamil Nadu, where she served five years as chief minister, the highest elected office in the state.

Building on her screen persona of a Hindu goddess, she initiated populist projects to build support among the poor. She championed women's rights, and ordered that at least one-third of all officeholders in her party be women.

She lives extravagantly, traveling with a huge entourage. But reports of her fantastic dinners and royal behaviour seem only to draw more admiration from her followers, many of whom are abjectly poor.

Several Congress party leaders openly oppose the alliance and were angered by Jayalalitha's apparent snub of Sonia Gandhi.

But Tamil Nadu's Congress party president tried to hold the line. Party rebels were using this as an opportunity, Tindivanam Ramamurthy told the Associated Press. He said Jayalalitha simply 'could not make the trip,' adding that her party is 'always late.'

Several telephone calls to the offices of Jayalalitha and her press spokesmen were not returned.

"No party can ally with Jayalalitha and pretend it can get away without paying the price. The New Indian Express, a mass circulation newspaper, said in an editorial today, "There will be few takers for the claim that such an alliance can free (one) from the obligations of an obnoxious kind."

## WB reduces lending plan

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velopment.

Earlier, briefing the meeting about the Bank's board discussion on the CAS review, Frederick Temple said although the Board rated Bangladesh as "Low Case" because of political situation that reduces absorptive capacity, but he defended it as "Base Case".

But, development in Bangladesh requires more comprehensive approach, he said.

Improvement of governance, economic management, flourishing the private sector and development in the financial sector should be looked very seriously, Temple added.

Referring to Bank's progress report-99 he said: "Macro-economic management remained reasonable in the face of severe flood-related exogenous shock. Progress on structural measures has been much more mixed... The mixed record on structural reforms suggests that the overall programme remains in the balance in macro-economic management, high-case performance in the social sector, and much lower performance in banking and public sector reforms."

About the World Bank's

lending plan for Bangladesh, the minister said it would reduce real investment. "Only one-third of the total lending will be real investment under the proposed plan."

Your contribution to increasing actual physical production will also decrease," he told Frederick.

Pressing the WB to come up with long-term industrial credit programme in Bangladesh, he said the existing commercial banks can't afford to finance long-term investment.

Agreeing with the WB about existence of a number of impediments towards development, he said that Bangladesh's real impediments towards private sector are shortage of power and bank financing.

The reform process did not address these real impediments, he said adding "Despite possibility of loss or misuse we have to have finance the industry, otherwise private sector development will not happen."

He also blamed high rate of interest for a slow private sector development.

Saying that increasing agriculture production as well as increasing industrial employment are basic needs of the country, he urged the Bank to

provide adequate fund to finance those needs.

Regarding Bank's complaints about lack of absorption of the credits offered, he said, "Utilisation is the responsibility of both sides—the donors and the recipient. But at the end, if you blame the recipient for lack of absorption and reduce lending on that basis than you are in a vicious circle, not us."

He urged the Bank to come up with funding for water related huge projects and for improving road communication system.

According to the WB plan, the objectives set for the next fiscal year are to improve governance and economic management, promote private and financial sector development, improve energy and infrastructure to support accelerated private sector-led growth, accelerate human development and accelerate agriculture and rural development.

Among others present at the meeting were Planning Secretary Abdul Hamid Chowdhury, Planning Commission members Dr Shah Md Farid and Dr Lutfur Rahman, Statistics Division Secretary Mamunur Rashid and Acting Secretary IMED AKM Mostafizur Rahman.

## Dr Kamal asks slum dwellers to unite

By Staff Correspondent

Gano Forum President Dr. Kamal Hossain yesterday called upon the slum dwellers to be united to establish their fundamental human rights.

"Remember you are not begging from anybody. The country's constitution has given you the right to reside in the city. You have the right to reside in government land", Dr. Kamal Hossain said at a slum dwellers' rally at Paltan Maidan in the city.

He said lands in the capital are neither anybody's paternal property nor meant for use by a few thousand affluent people.

Dr. Kamal recalled the glorious contribution of slum dwellers in the movement during 1969-1970 and in the Liberation War and said, "Do not forget that you have earned freedom, not to be evicted from your dwellings."

He said slum dwellers have been contributing to the development of the city as well as the country.

"All are equal in the eyes of law. We fought the war and earned independence to establish fundamental rights of people, not to evict our brothers and sisters (slum dwellers) by bulldozing their shanties," he said.

He termed the High Court verdict a victory of the people. Dr. Hossain said eviction of slum dwellers without notice and rehabilitation plan was against the constitution and law of the land. He criticised the

## Neon signs DCC's electrical section now handling the affair

By Staff Correspondent

The electrical section of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has authorised setting up of several neon signs on city road islands and roundabouts ignoring the proper authority -- the DCC's Revenue Department, according to sources concerned.

The neon signs set up on different islands and roundabouts in the city have already drawn criticism from people of different walks of life. They said the signs have not only destroyed green spaces but also created a nuisance on the roads.

Officials of the electrical section said that the mayor assuming that the advertisers would maintain the islands approved the decision. They said it was a pilot project for a period of one year. It has expired long ago.

"We have written to the advertisers to remove the neon signs from the islands but they are ignoring our notice," alleged an official of the electrical section.

The engineering section has so far authorised about seven such signs on different islands including the Noor Hossain Square, the roundabout in front of Matssha Bhaban, Teigaon roundabout, Elephant Road and Baridhara.

Sources concerned said the worst decision was to authorise the sign on the Noor Hossain Square or Zero Point of the city. They said it was not clear how the revenue was collected from those advertisers. For one square feet of neon sign advertisement, the DCC rate has been fixed at Tk 22.

"The project did not work mainly because the advertisers could not switch on the signs due to the on-going energy crisis," the official said.

When asked why the revenue section was not given the responsibility, a DCC source quoted the mayor saying, "they (the revenue department) have already made a mess of the city hoardings."

## Khaleda

From page 1

Buriganga river and capturing lands at Kamrangirchar, she added.

Most of the newspapers had published a photo of an armed terrorist chasing opposition activists during a hartal in the city. He is yet to be arrested despite assurances by two home ministers, she said.

The BNP Chairperson reiterated her allegation that the government was conspiring to curb the independence of judiciary and freedom of press to re-introduced one-party BKSAL system.

As parts of that conspiracy, the Jatiya Sangsad has already been made ineffective and the Opposition is not being allowed to speak on important national issues, she claimed.

Presided over by Abul Hasanat, the public meeting was addressed by, among others, Mir Shawkat Ali, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Kurshid Jahan Haq, Shahjahan Siraj, Mirza Abbas, Abdus Salam, Rabeya Siraj and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

## GMG denies report

By Special Correspondent

The GMG Airlines yesterday refuted a Daily Star report that it had defaulted in making payments to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

But our report, published on August 11, had quoted Civil Aviation sources as saying that the GMG was yet to clear all its outstanding dues, totalling at least Tk 60 lakh.

GMG's Sales and Marketing Manager Fazole Rabbi Chowdhury in a statement said, since inception, the airline has been giving "highest priority" to payment of dues to CAAB, which is approximately Tk 1.5 to 1.7 million a month.

## NSU clarifies

The North South University Foundation in a statement yesterday said that following a petition for leave of appeal, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court stayed a High Court order regarding appointment of Moslehuddin as Vice-chancellor of the university.

A Daily Star report on August 15 had said that the HC had declared appointment of Moslehuddin as VC of NSU illegal.

**Chittagong Port Authority Notice**

**Detention, Arrest & Flight of Ships from the Chittagong Port Area: Clarification of the Chittagong Port Authority**

In a section of the national dailies, reports have been published recently on detention, arrest and flight of ships from the Chittagong Port Area. It has created misconception in the public mind about the functions of the Chittagong Port Authority. The Chittagong Port Authority is not directly responsible for such incidents. It is, therefore, clarified for general information as follows:

- 1. Prolonged Stay of Ships at the Chittagong Port Area:**  
The ships arriving at the Chittagong Port are usually engaged in handling of import-export cargo. In loading and discharging of cargo 7/8 different public/private agencies are involved. At times, there may be complications and disputes as to the individual responsibilities/liabilities and obligations within the interested agencies. In resolving such disputes and complications amongst the parties concerned if the process is prolonged, that is, if the parties concerned fail to reach an agreement within a reasonable time, the stay of the involved ship is inordinately delayed. Eventually, the quality of carried goods deteriorates and in some cases, the cargo loses its commercial value. In such a situation, the Chittagong Port Authority has hardly any role to play. As and when a local agent of a ship requests the Chittagong Port Authority for allotting any berth for a ship ready in all respects, only then the Authority can allot a berth (for the particular ship). In case of any objection or any dispute or non-observance of any formality, a ship is not considered ready in all respects for having a berth and the local shipping agent finding no justification, does not usually offer the ship for allocation of any berth. If the ship's stay is prolonged within the port area due to such complications, the Port Authority is held responsible unwarrantedly.
- 2. Arrest of Ships:**  
The Chittagong Port Authority is not empowered to arrest any ship by law. Any aggrieved party can file a suit with the honourable court if there is any dispute regarding freight, short supply or shortage of goods, quality of goods, damage or loss of commercial value of goods or for any other reasons. The honourable court may pass an order, where deemed fit, to arrest a ship.
- 3. Flight of Ships:**  
If a ship's stay is abnormally delayed at the outer anchorage, it is likely to create complications amongst the various parties, such as, ship owners, importers, charterers, local agents and crew of the ship. In such situations, a ship may flee away from the outer anchorage of the Chittagong Port, although it is unlawful, illegal and against the provision of International Maritime Law. Since a ship flees from the outer anchorage and not from the inner harbour, so the Port Authority can not exercise any direct control over the ship and can hardly do anything to stop such flight.

The causes of prolonged stay, detention as well as arrest and flight of ships are in fact, beyond any control of the Chittagong Port Authority. Despite all these, the Chittagong Port Authority takes all out efforts to avoid such untoward occurrences.

**Secretary**  
Chittagong Port Authority

GD-753

## Girl gangraped in Magura

MAGURA, Aug 24: A teenaged girl was gangraped by a group of youngsters at village Govindapur in Sreepur here this afternoon, reports UNB.

The victim, aged about 16 was going to her relative's house in the same village at 2 pm. Seven or eight gangsters on way took her forcibly to a nearby bush and violated her. Later, the villagers rescued her in a bad shape.

She was admitted to Sadar hospital in a critical condition.

## 7 injured while making bombs in city slum

By Staff Correspondent

At least seven people were injured while they were making bombs at Tulatala slum in the city's Agargaon area yesterday afternoon, police said.

The injured were identified as Yuqub Ali, 19, Manik Miah, 18, Rontu Miah, 15, Mohammed Milan, 24, Hazrat Ali, 22, Himmat Ali, 23 and Benu Akhter, 25.

Of the injured Yuqub, Manik and Rontu were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a critical condition and Milan was rushed to the Orthopaedic Hospital.

Police took Hazrat, Himmat and Benu to Mohammedpur thana after first aid. A case was filed with the thana.