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Khaleda to lead today's 'mini' road march

By Staff Correspondent
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will lead a one-day 'mini road march' from the capital to Bhairab today to intensify the current anti-government campaign and also to mobilise support against the government's decision to provide 'corridor' facility to India.

Khaleda, who is also the leader of the opposition in parliament, will start her 'march' at 10am from Jatrabari crossing and will pass through Narayanganj, Narsinghdi, and Bhairab in Kishoreganj district.

Although BNP and its three major alliance partners -- Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikyo Jote -- had simultaneously led two road marches during May 16-18 and July 25-27 to different destinations in the country, the main opposition this time is going for the march alone since the three have no simultaneous programme.

BNP is also scheduled to lead

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HSC exam results today

The results of HSC examinations 1999 under Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Boards will simultaneously be announced at 4 pm today, reports UNB.

The examinees have been asked to collect their results from their respective centres, according to an official hand-out.

It said the results would not be available at the education boards, education ministry or newspaper offices.

Some 5.65 lakh students appeared in the HSC examination this year under five education boards.

Of the total examinees, 1,66,000 appeared from Dhaka Board, 1,47,000 from Rajshahi, 1,20,000 from Jessore, 88,000 from Comilla and the best 44,000 from Chittagong Board.

Inside Today

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Tensions in Far East: Impact on Nuclear Proliferation

by Harun ur Rashid

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Striving for energy self-sufficiency; The monster lurking in drugs

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Prayer Timings

August 26

| | Azan | Jamaat |
|---------|-------|--------|
| Fajr | 4:10 | 4:15 |
| Johr | 12:50 | 1:25 |
| Asr | 4:45 | 5:00 |
| Maghrib | 6:40 | 6:45 |
| Esha | 8:00 | 8:30 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star and Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals Forum

Seminar on Employer-Employee Expectations in the New Millennium

In association with The British Council
The Daily Star and Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals Forum cordially invite you to attend the above Seminar to be held
Today Thursday, 26 August 1999
at The British Council Auditorium from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Representatives from following areas will speak/share their insights on the topic:
(i) corporate sector, (ii) NGO community, (iii) multi-national, (iv) GOB, and (v) joint venture company. Our target audience includes employer, existing & prospective employee from different sectors as well as fresh graduates.

If you are interested to attend the Seminar, please register immediately (which is free) by sending us your 1. Name 2. Organisation.
Please fax: 886061, e-mail: <rescir@citechco.net> or telephone: 885214, 9339521

We look forward to seeing you!

Slum dwellers at Agargaon told Get lost within seven days

By Staff Correspondent

Despite a High Court order not to evict slum dwellers without arrangement for their rehabilitation, Mohammadpur thana police have asked residents of BNP Bustee (slum) at Agargaon in the city to 'get lost' within seven days.

The announcement was blared through loudspeakers starting at 11pm on Tuesday and continuing till 1:30 am yesterday, slum residents said. The sprawling shantytown accommodates as many as 80,000 people over a large area designated for different government offices.

Mohammadpur thana officer-in-charge (OC) Mohammad Abdur Rashid said the eviction notice was announced through loudspeakers by his men after he received orders from DMP

Deputy Commissioner (West) Serajul Islam.

The OC, however, failed to produce any written order. Replying to a question, Rashid said it was not his job to find out what the High Court had ruled on Monday. "The High Court did not address any letter to the Mohammadpur OC."

Asked whether he had any idea of how many people would be evicted or if there was any rehabilitation plan for their resettlement, the OC replied in the negative.

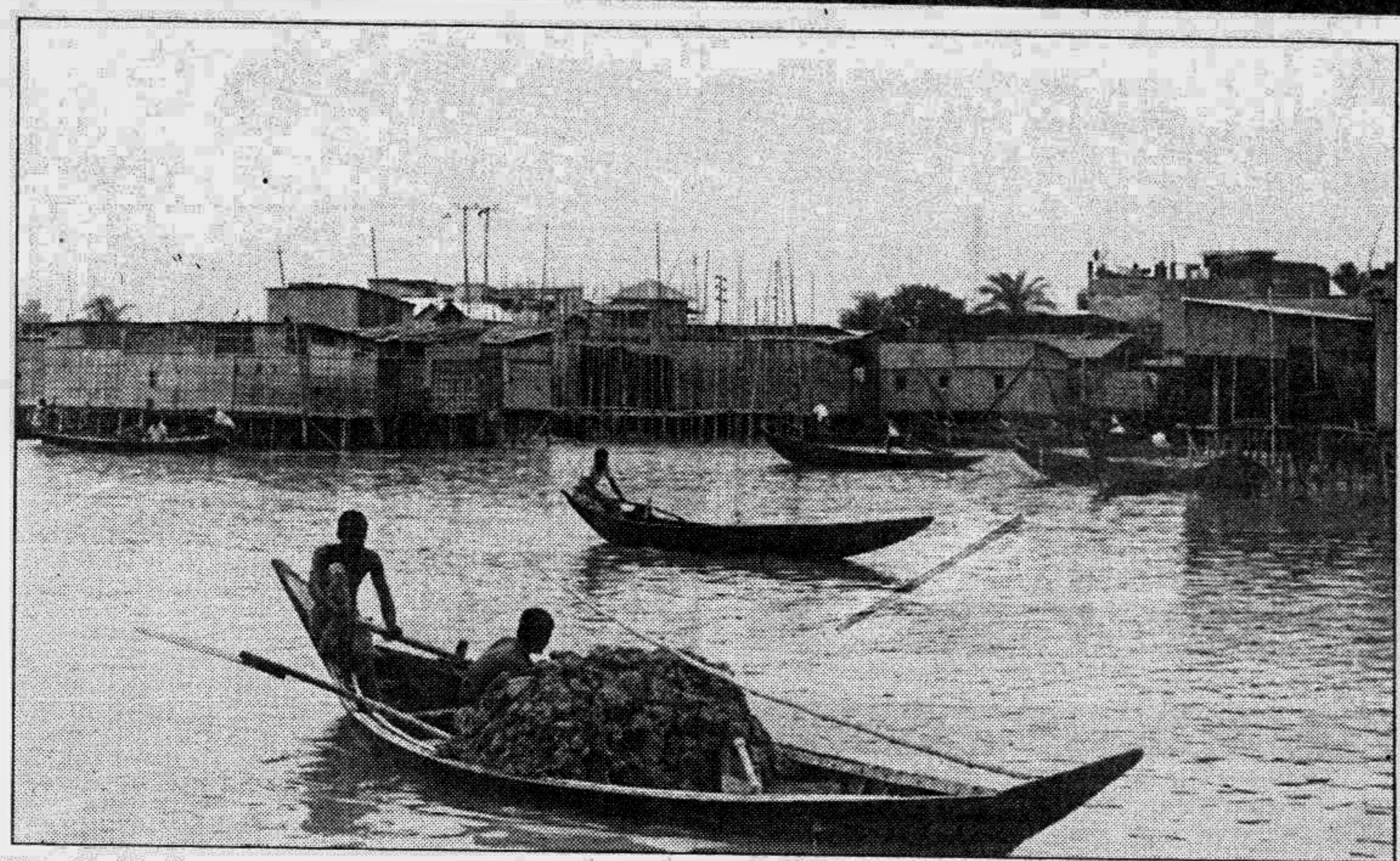
Dr Kamal Hossain, who is advocating against the current government move to evict city slum dwellers without their rehabilitation, told The Daily Star that the police announcement in Agargaon area was a clear case of contempt of court.

"According to our Constitution, the authorities are bound to respect the judgement of the High Court," he said. Dr Kamal added that in its judgement on Monday the High Court clearly indicated that no eviction of slum dwellers can be carried out without arrangement for rehabilitation and recognising their right to living.

The police announcement immediately cast a shadow of uncertainty and alarm among hundreds of families at the slum, most of whom are renting their abodes from men who always keep a safe distance.

Meanwhile, men, women and children in the slum are getting ready to resist any move to evict them without any rehabilitation programme. They

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Save the Buriganga

Kamrangirchar: Hundreds of illegal structures have created plots popped up from the river. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Bangladesh-Nepal trade India proposes shorter transshipment route

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: India has proposed a shorter and faster route through its territory to facilitate trade between Bangladesh and Nepal.

The proposal, according to official sources here, will come up for discussion among experts of the three countries when they meet 'very soon'.

The sources could not give out the venue and date of the meeting which is expected to finalise transshipment facilities for Bangladesh and Nepal through India.

India had suggested at a meeting of Economic and Social Council for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) in May this year that Bangladesh and Nepal use Raxaul-Patna-Sitarampur-Cuttack route to Gede, Darshana, Khulna and Chittagong because it is shorter and quicker.

New Delhi had also pointed out at that meeting that the transshipment route passing through Raxaul, Katihar and Singab in India to Rohanpur in Bangladesh, as preferred by Bangladesh and Nepal, was congested with domestic traffic,

the sources said.

India pointed to the 'technical and operational constraints' with regard to the Raxaul-Rohanpur route and asserted that the other route well meets the requirement of Nepal and Bangladesh and the transshipment time taken is 'shorter', said the sources.

India, however, made it clear that it would certainly consider the route proposed by Bangladesh and Nepal, they said.

The previous meeting of the group of experts from India, Bangladesh and Nepal on the transshipment issue was held in Dhaka in July this year.

During Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to Dhaka in July, marking the launch of the Dhaka-Cuttack bus service, both the countries had agreed on the use of multi-modal transport links between them which would promote movement of traffic.

The coming meeting of the group of experts would also discuss technical aspects of border trade and other related subjects.

CFTC withdraws congestion surcharge for a month

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 25: Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), a Singapore based organisation of feeder vessel operators, postponed the decision to impose congestion surcharge on container cargo at Chittagong port for one month. Port sources said.

CFTC took the decision at a meeting in Singapore today and conveyed it to the Chittagong Port Authority through a fax message, sources said.

According to the message, CFTC extended the deadline till September 23 saying it would observe the congestion situation at Chittagong Port during the period and withdraw the surcharge if there is improvement. Port sources said.

Earlier, CFTC imposed 33 per cent surcharge on all container cargo at the port from August 23 sparking off anger among the port users.

The extra charge rates were fixed at US 100 dollar for 20-foot and US 200 dollar for 40-foot containers.

Chittagong Port Authority.

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'FCBs making profits, doing little for the economy'

By Inam Ahmed

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry has critically reviewed the operations of foreign commercial banks (FCBs) and said despite every scope, they did not scale down their interest rates on loans.

The committee at a meeting yesterday also observed that the FCBs enjoy various facilities from the central bank and depositors but do not reciprocate the same to the borrowers.

The meeting was held to review the position of the FCBs. Other than the standing committee members, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr M Farashuddin and chief executives of all foreign banks were present at the meeting.

According to sources concerned, former finance minister M Saifur Rahman told the meeting that the local banks, specially nationalised ones, are burdened with huge non-performing loans. As a result, their cost of funds is also high.

However, the foreign banks are free from the malaise and could easily cut their interest rates, he noted.

Saifur pointed out that the central bank had freed interest rate to create competition among the banks so that borrowers are benefited. But in reality, the rate did not come down and the FCBs failed to live up to the expectations.

Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury, MP and President of Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), told the meeting that the foreign banks get some special benefits like 50 per cent refinancing of their investments in industrial projects by the Bangladesh Bank at a rate of eight per cent only. Even then they do not go for long term industrial financing.

FCBs make huge profits but they do not go for venture capital by setting aside some funds," Amir Khashru said. They should have some commitment to the economy, he said, adding that although many of the FCBs have sufficient experience of supporting the capital market in other countries, they remain aloof in Bangladesh.

Others pointed out that FCBs get deposits from NGOs, foreign missions and multinationals.

"They do not face competition in collecting deposits and also offer lower deposit rates. So their lending rates should also be lower," said a committee member.

Another raised the point that FCBs can operate here with a minimum paid up capital, which is not possible in any other country.

The FCBs should play a greater role in industrial credit. Besides trade financing, they should also come up for term lending, said another member of the committee.

Dr M Farashuddin presented a report on the status of the FCBs.

According to the report, the 13 FCBs accounted for 36 per cent of the total profit made by 43 commercial banks in the country in 1998.

Of the Tk 711.40 crore profit by all banks, the FCBs' share was Tk 256.10 crore.

The report mentioned that FCBs do not invest at all in agriculture and small and cottage industries sectors.

EC to hear BNP MPs first on Aug 30

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission will initially hear the contending parties in the controversial floor-crossing case on August 30 with a view to fixing a date for starting the legal hearing on the case.

Election Commissioner Moshataque Ahmed Chowdhury will hear the parties at his office at 11:30 a.m., said additional secretary of the EC secretariat Aziz Ahmed Chowdhury. "The date for legal hearing of the case would be fixed after the initial hearing of parties concerned on August 30."

The decisions were taken yesterday at a meeting of the three-member Commission with Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena in the chair.

The two BNP lawmakers, Dr Mohammad Alauddin and Habibur Rahman Swapna, went against their party decision to join the cabinet of Sheikh Hasina in February last year.

Since the joining, the BNP has been accusing them of crossing floor which, according to the party, is tantamount to

violation of Article 70 of the state's Constitution. The BNP has, therefore, been demanding that the MPs seats in parliament be declared vacant under the dictates of the article concerned.

But the MPs concerned have been contending that their conduct does not violate the Constitution, an argument shared by Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury.

However, the controversy went to the Election Commission on August 8 after the Supreme Court had ordered the Speaker to refer the matter to the Commission for a verdict.

The EC asked the contending parties on August 10 to defend their positions in black and white in a week from the date of receipt of the letters. Replying to the EC on August 17, the last date of one-week deadline, the BNP reiterated its original position. It argued that the MPs should lose their seats in parliament from the day they had joined the AL government.

But State minister Moham-

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Kader Siddiqui to resign from parliament by September 4

TANGAIL, Aug 25: Dissident Awami League leader Kader Siddiqui MP today said he would resign from Parliament by September 4 'to teach the government a lesson', reports UNB.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina dubbed me mad... that means my voters are mad... this is why I have decided to quit Parliament," said Siddiqui, suspended from the ruling party for 'breaking party discipline'.

Addressing a public rally in Basail court premises this afternoon, he warned that days of this government were numbered.

Presided over by freedom fighter Nurul Islam, the meeting was also addressed by Tangail Pourasava Chairman Jamilur Rahman Miron.

"Had I not protested the killing of Bangabandhu, many Awami League leaders would have been in graves today," Kader Siddiqui said.

Exchanging views with lawyers at the district bar earlier in the day, he reiterated his decision to quit Parliament and set September 4 as the deadline.

Replying to questions from a number of lawyers, mostly from opposition BNP and Jatiya Party, he said he was determined to resign by the stipulated time.

Entrepreneur pays the terror toll

Star Report

An entrepreneur who controls a third of the country's edible oil market has complained that a local group of political touts has created a reign of terror threatening his businesses based in Rugganj, Narayanganj.

Fazlur Rahman — the proud producer of Teer marka oil and other edibles — says the latest incident in which five of his employees were seriously assaulted by an armed gang yesterday will force him to close the factories if there is no immediate government intervention.

At around 9am, a group of 20-25 people led by Altaf Hossain and Habibur Rahman allegedly stormed Tk 150 crore City Vegetable Oil Mills and three other adjacent factories at Uttar Rupashi, Rugganj, some 20 kilometres off Narayanganj town. They damaged equipment, disconnected phone lines, took away some valuables and beat up the factory's

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A dozen more industrial estates by next 5 yrs

By Rafiq Hasan

At least 12 more industrial estates will be set up in the country at a cost of more than Tk 420 crore during the next five years.

Industries ministry sources said the main objectives of establishing the estates are to meet the growing demand from entrepreneurs for industrial plots and accelerate the pace of industrialisation of the country.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) will set up the estates.

The sources said four of the 12 will be 'special industrial zones' as per directives by the parliamentary standing committee on industries ministry. These are a Garments Pally at Savar, a special industrial park in Sirajganj, an industrial es-

tate at Dhamrai and an extension project of Hosiery industrial estates at Narayanganj — all to be completed by 2004.

The BSCIC prepared separate project concept papers for each of the four special estates and submitted to the industries ministry for approval. Work on the projects will start after approval by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC). The eight other projects have already been approved.

According to the PCP, a special industrial park involving an expenditure of about Tk 200 crore will be established at Soyadabad in Sirajganj near the Bangabandhu Bridge for setting up of export oriented industries by local and foreign entrepreneurs. The park will

cover 400 acres of land and will have 1170 plots for setting up 538 industrial units.

The industrial park will generate employment opportunities for about 54,000 people.

Sources concerned said three categories of plots will be developed in the park — big ones of 20,000 square feet each and medium and small ones of 10,000 square feet each.

"The park will be different from traditional BSCIC industrial estates and existing industrial areas like Export Processing Zones (EPZ) it will have all kinds of facilities including banking, insurance, police camp, fire service and special power station which other BSCIC estates lack," said a high

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE

| DAYS | FLT# | CITY / ETD | CITY / ETA | ACFT |
|----------|------|------------|------------|------|
| MON | 196 | KUL / 2210 | DAC / 2359 | 74 D |
| WED, FRI | 196 | KUL / 2210 | DAC / 2359 | A330 |
| TUE | 197 | KUL / 0130 | DAC / 2359 | 74 D |
| THU, SAT | 197 | KUL / 0115 | DAC / 2359 | A330 |

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