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In fear for years
Human is synonymous to death for this pair of fishing cats. Ever since they were caught almost seven years back, cruelty is what they have received from the 'superior' species. In all these years, the two members of a rare species have not quite got used to human presence. In the claustrophobic cage at the Kamolganj Forest Office, each day is a nightmare, a nightmare that may never end.
—Photo: Rubaiyat Mansur

On a free ride

No-regulation deprives BTTB of huge sums from satellite phone users

By Mustak Hossain

The Bangladesh Telegraph & Telephone Board (BTTB) has long been deprived of a huge amount of revenue from the users of satellite telephones in the absence of a policy for use of satellite telephones in the country, informed sources said. Several persons and organisations have long been using the satellite-based telephones illegally depriving BTTB crores of Taka every year. The government is yet to finalise rules and regulations for the satellite-based telephone service in the country to help modernise tele-communication, a highly placed official of Post and Tele-Communication Ministry said on Sunday. Two ministries concerned with the state security, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Defence have reverted back the proposal of awarding licence to the satellite telephone providers to the Tele-Communication Ministry with comment to review the matters of state security, another

source in the Tele-communication Ministry said. "Now a days, state security is not on that much risk regarding tele-communication due to fast growth of internet as the mode of communication have developed in many ways," the source preferring anonymity said. "Notwithstanding the unfavourable situation, for the sake of maintaining parity with modern world the BTTB is still thinking of awarding licences to satellite phone providers and we will submit the proposal to the cabinet soon for endorsement," the source said. Many persons have already imported small and lighter satellite phone sets into the country by declaring them as mobile telephone sets, a source at the Zia International Airport said. Most of such satellite phone users have bought their sets and obtained registration mainly from Hong Kong and



Access denied
BNP high-ups address party activists after their procession towards the Election Commission was intercepted near Dhanmondi Road No. 27 in the city yesterday.
—Star photo: A K M Mohsin

Business continues bid to dispel political chaos

By Nazmul Ashraf

Top business bodies are now in close contacts with conflicting political parties to figure a way out of the politics of confrontation. As part of its move to prepare an action plan for all concerned to avoid the politics of hartial, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) is currently holding backstage parleys with the political leaders in the opposing camps. FBCCI sources said. The Federation also plans to involve different professional groups and civil society organisations in the process of evolving a mechanism to bring about political reforms for a healthy growth of economy. "Our primary goal is to help avoid harmful agitation like hartial while our ultimate objective is to bring about fundamental changes in the practice of democracy," said FBCCI chief Abdul Awal Mintoo. "Initially, we're consulting mid-ranking leaders of the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP to get their feedback on our move. Their

responses so far are encouraging," Mintoo said. He said they would also talk to the top brasses of the major parties including those of AL and BNP. The business community would also mobilise public opinion against the politics of shut-down that was not only harming the economy, but also causing untold sufferings to the people, Mintoo said. "To this end," he said, "we would like to bind all social forces together with a view to putting pressure on the mainstream political parties. No political party, be it in power or in the opposition, can simply ignore such a pressure." About the plan of action FBCCI is working out for the consideration of the political parties and other relevant quarters ahead of the October 3 planned hartial, he said, "We're not going to revolutionise the politics. We, the business community, strongly feel the need for a wide range of political reforms, especially the political programmes." The action plan was decided

on Tuesday at an FBCCI meeting which called upon both the government and the opposition to settle their disputes through negotiation for the sake of business and political stability. "The action plan will have a broad outline for political reforms accommodating opinions from all the relevant quarters." But he said the action plan may not be ready in the envisaged one week time. Criticising the political parties for contradictory stance on politics of hartial, bracing it while in opposition and blasting while in power, country's leading chamber body chief said: "Time has come for the civil society to rise against such irresponsible and opportunist politics. This kind of politics that ultimately helps none must end." "Our move aims not only to protect the interests of the business, but also those of all." According to political circle, both the government and the opposition who are readying for another bout of street battle ahead of the Upazila elections, were yet to take up the FBCCI move seriously.



No gold on Day 5

From Hasan Masood

KATHMANDU, Sept 30: Bangladesh won one more silver and six bronzes on the fifth day of the 8th SAF Games here today. The day's lone silver came in the men's 200m breaststroke when Niaz Ali finished second behind India's Deepak Singh. Karar Samedul Islam was way ahead of his compatriot Niaz and Deepak till the 150 metres. But he had to settle for the bronze as the Indian and Niaz made a remarkable rally in the last lap and eventually finished with gold and silver respectively. Deepak took 2 minutes, 32.24 seconds while Niaz clocked 2 minutes, 34.65 seconds. On the other hand, Samedul recorded 2 minutes, 35.4 seconds. The other two bronzes were earned from women's 200m medley and 4x100 freestyle relay.

Sabura Khatun clinched the bronze in 200m individual medley finishing behind Indian gold-winner Richa Mishra and Natasha of Sri Lanka. Women's 4x100m freestyle relay team comprising Doly Akhter, Lipi Akhter, Kamala Khatun and Sabura Khatun got the other bronze from swimming. They finished behind India and Sri Lanka. Two Bangladeshi boxers—Tahazzel Hossain and Sheikh Alauddin—earned light heavy weight bronzes after they went down in the semifinals. Bangladesh have collected four bronzes in boxing so far. The day's other bronze came from the team event of men's shooting. The Bangladesh trio of Saiful Alam Rinky, Kamrul Islam and Badrul Alam finished third in the 50m short-bore free rifle event. India clinched the gold while

Tricky trading stalls potato import

By Reaz Ahmad

The government has stopped import of potato and cancelled all permits as some unscrupulous traders imported the item from India in the name of seed potato, evading tax allegedly in collusion with a section of customs officials. The decision was taken by the commerce ministry at a recent meeting, also attended by high officials of the agriculture ministry and the National Board of Revenue. Rate of duty is 37.5 per cent

on potato for consumption and only 2.5 per cent on seed potato. Sources said the unscrupulous traders, with import permits issued by the Plant Protection Wing, imported at least 2000 tonnes of potato for consumption from India in the name of seed potato and sold those in the market in the last couple of months. It was alleged that the customs authorities at Sonar Masjid border check post in Cha-

panawabganj were involved in it. The matter is being investigated, the sources said. Traditionally, seed potato is imported from Holland. Plant Protection Wing (PPW) officials also acknowledged import of 825 tonnes of potato illegally in collusion with customs authorities at Sonar Masjid, the sources said. But they said that the quantity imported illegally would not be 2000 tonnes. Of the 2000 tonnes, 825 tonnes were im-

ported as food item and another 550 tonnes as seed potato legally, the sources cited PPW officials as saying. The government has decided to probe the matter and prepare a list of genuine seed potato importers. The Commerce Ministry in cooperation with the Bangladesh Cold Storage Association will also investigate how much potato including seeds were imported over the last five years, the source said.

Singer Sheikh Ishtiaque dead

Eminent singer Sheikh Ishtiaque, who shot into prominence in the country's musical arena through his first audio-cassette 'Nandita' in 1985, died of a heart attack in the city yesterday. He was 40, reports BSS. He left behind his singer-wife Punam Priyam, only daughter Simon and a large number of relations, friends, admirers and fans to mourn his death. After namaj-e-janaza, he was laid to rest at the Jurain graveyard here last night, family sources said. See Page 11 Col 6

Police trying to trace Shikdar's income sources

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 30: Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) are now trying to dig out the sources of Ershad Shikdar's illegal income since 1982. According to sources in railway and KMP, Ershad and his associates were involved in pilferage of fuel from railway wagons and foodgrains from ships and barges at Skid Ghat where he had started life as a 'handing worker' on daily wages basis. Ershad hijacked two barges loaded with cement, imported from China in 1987 by a renowned businessman who is still afraid of lodging a com-

plaint with police "until I see him hanged to death." The businessman said on condition of anonymity that the entire cement was used for construction of Ershad's house, 'Swarnakamal' at Sonadanga residential area. Apart from such incidents, Ershad did never allow any importer or exporter to load or unload goods without offering him money. None dared to resist his criminal acts in the Skid Ghat area where he created a reign of terror till August 10, the day before he was arrested. Ershad was also involved in

drug trafficking, gold smuggling and arms trade which enabled him to earn immense wealth under the shelter of political parties and a section of police and administration, said a top official of KMP. DC (South) Mazharul Huq told this correspondent today that a special team has been assigned to find out all bank accounts of Ershad in Khulna city and elsewhere in the country. Investigation is going on. Most of the accounts are in the names of his first wife and mother-in-law, the DC said. But there has so far been no

Police assault JU boys to free VC, Syndicate members

By JU and DU Correspondents.

A number of students of Jahangirnagar University were injured when police used batons and fired tear gas shells to free the Vice-Chancellor, Syndicate members and university officials from confinement by students inside the administrative building on the campus at 5 am yesterday. The students earlier laid a 'siege' to the administrative building where the Syndicate went into an emergency meeting on Wednesday to discuss the situation arising out of students' agitation against enhanced admission fees. Falling to settle the dispute with students, the Syndicate closed the university sine die and ordered the students to vacate their halls by 10 am yesterday. VC Prof Alauddin Ahmed, Syndicate members and senior teachers came out of the administrative building when police dispersed the students who laid the siege. Later, several hundred JU students who were forced to leave the dormitories moved to

Dhaka University campus. All the left leaning student organisations of DU and students of JU brought out separate processions, held rallies and announced a series of programmes in protest against yesterday's police attack on agitating JU students, the authorities' 'rigid stand' regarding enhanced fees and closure of JU for an indefinite period. However, pro-Awami League BCL and BNP-backed JCD kept aloof from any activities in support of the JU students' cause. The smaller student bodies denounced the JU authorities' decision. According to a JU press release issued from its public relations office yesterday, police rescued the VC, Pro-VC, Treasurer, Syndicate members, deans, provosts, departmental heads and senior teachers when a section of unruly students tried to prevent them from moving out of the administrative building at around five in the morning. But JU students claimed that

police lobbed more than 15 rounds of tear gas shells and charged batons to disperse students agitating under the banner of Fee Hike Resistance Committee, leaving at least 30 injured. Different student bodies and groups and general students separately announced on DU campus a series of programmes that include laying siege to the Shikha Bhaban on October 4, token hunger strike on October 7, memorandum to the Education Minister on October 9, formation of 'human chain' on October 9. India test-fires missile 'Akash' NEW DELHI, Sept 30: India today successfully test-fired a surface-to-air missile off the coast of the eastern state of Orissa, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says Reuters. The news agency quoted defence sources as saying that the 'Akash' missile was fired at Chandipur-on-Sea, off the Bay of Bengal coast. PTI said the missile, with a range of 25 kms (15 miles), can carry a payload of 55 kg. It hit a pilotless training aircraft with the desired accuracy, PTI said. India is also putting the surface-to-air missile Trishul through trials.

One held in Ctg with forged certificates

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Sept 30: Police recovered 520 fake certificates and mark sheets of HSC and SSC Examinations and arrested one person in the early hours today. Police suspect the arrested Md Abdul Mabud, 28, is a member of a gang involved in certificate forgery for a long time. The fake certificates and mark sheets of different education boards were recovered from Abdul Bhaban of Mia Khan Nagar Mill area under Chandgaon thana. Besides, a number of equipment, including computers, printers, and seals used in making forged copies were recovered from the house. Abdul confessed to the police that he has been doing this since 1993. According to Chittagong Education Board sources, 323 certificate forgery cases have been detected so far.

NAM Summit preparation still

From page 1
eign visitors are due to attend the Summit in various capacities. They would include several dozens heads of state or government, foreign ministers and representatives of international media. The size of each delegation would vary, but on an average, each team is expected to comprise 10 to 40 members. Besides a large number of security personnel, are due to be in Dhaka for the scheduled Summit. The Daily Star could not identify any significant progress in matters of the preparations except assurances by all quarters that "everything would be in place" for the Dhaka NAM Summit. The NAM Summit is held every four years, by the first week of September. The September schedule help in making the NAM leaders prepare for attending the session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) which, as a standing practice, begins on the third Tuesday of September. The holding of NAM Summit in early September also enables member states to place any relevant resolution in the following session of the UN General Assembly. It is therefore, imperative that the NAM Summit will have to be held in the first or at least by the second week of September, 2001. Officials concerned told The Daily Star that a national committee headed by the Prime Minister and several sub-committees have already been formed. The main committee

has met once, while some of the sub-committees have had more than one meeting. Foreign Ministry officials emphasized that what was most important for the Dhaka Summit was to finish the structural preparations first. The diplomatic, protocol, security and documentation aspects of the Summit including setting up of a Coordination Cell could be taken up later. The Dhaka Summit, they said, was being based on 'seen only' assessment of the Durban Summit where some 4,500 delegates participated. Expansion of the existing airport facilities are also required as several leaders use private aircraft for which sufficient apron and parking space is necessary at the Zia International airport. Besides, ZIA has to have arrangements to receive flights bringing in around 50 heads of state or government and nearly 70 other members of delegations who would be arriving by special flights or by non-scheduled ones. It is most likely that helicopters would be required for transferring VIPs and a highly developed security and surveillance system has to be ensured. Disciplining Dhaka's notoriously chaotic traffic, which is expected to worsen in the next two years would be yet another nagging problem which the NAM organisers will have to address immediately. Easily accessible routes will have to be selected from morning to night for all NAM participants to help them commute between their respective hotels and the NAM Conference Centre.

The international media and participating officials besides being provided with a multi-media transmission facility centre will also have to be given shuttle bus or limousine services for commuting between their place of residence, conference centre and accommodation venues. Meantime, hotel development and completion of the proposed Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in time, i.e. within the next 23 months is of crucial importance. China's 24 million US dollars, soft loan aided BICC, a proposed two storied complex with a floor space of 20,000 square feet, including a plenary hall having a seating capacity of 1500 delegates is expected to be the main Centre of the next NAM Summit. It may be recalled that the plaque of the Centre was laid jointly by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and visiting Chairman of the National People's Congress of China Li Peng at the sprawling lawns of Osmany Udyan on April 11 this year. Chinese engineers and technicians are expected to complete the centre. Ground breaking work on the proposed complex is expected to begin next month. At a meeting on Sept 19 of the Sub-Committee on Accommodation headed by Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, it was decided that the government would construct 600 apartments and flats to accommodate NAM guests in various areas of the city.

The meeting also decided to expand the capacity of the Sonarganghota by another 250 rooms and Hotel Sheraton by 150 rooms at their own costs. Construction of a new 5-star hotel on the lands of Fairlie House is expected to begin in November. Dhaka has presently a first-class hotel room capacity of totalling 1200 and it is envisaged that some 1000 more hotel rooms will be added. A great deal of thought is also being given to private guest houses which will also be used for accommodation purposes and several entrepreneurs will be encouraged to build or convert their luxurious houses for temporary accommodation purposes. However, many developers expressed doubts if the building projects would be completed in time. Given the current rate of 'progress of projects' to be constructed, the chances of having high-class accommodation for 4000 plus guests is, to say the least, "discouraging," said a ranking official. "The government must act on a war-footing if Bangladesh hopes to host NAM in style. It would give Bangladesh tremendous prestige and act as a window for enhancing our international profile," said another official. Although NAM is losing some relevance, in the unipolar world, it is still an organisation of significance. Observers say it is the biggest forum of the developing countries. Some say NAM could be termed "Third World Limited."

Prayer Timings

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:00
Dhuhr	12:15	1:30
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	5:55	6:00
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation