

Bangladesh closer to getting Test status

By Sports Reporter

Bangladesh is just one step away from becoming the tenth Test-playing nation as the International Cricket Council (ICC) strongly recommended in favour of the South Asian aspirants.

The report of the three-member inspection team was discussed at length at the ICC Executive Committee meeting in Singapore yesterday where John Anderson of New Zealand categorically stated: "There should be no further discussion about the eligibility of Bangladesh's appeal. It should be approved automatically through proper channel."

The terse comment of the Kiwi executive was revealed to The Daily Star Sport late last night by Syed Ashraf Haq, the general secretary of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Ashraf, who is in Singapore along with BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, told over telephone from his hotel that the ICC inspectors

PSI to be effective from Feb 15

By Rafiq Hasan

Pre-shipment Inspection (PSI) will be compulsory for imports valued over 5,000 US dollars from February 15.

"We are fully prepared and determined to introduce the system from February 15", Chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) Abdul Mueed Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

"PSI will help increase government's revenue, streamline the import process, bring transparency, reduce corruption and prevent harassment of businessmen," he said.

The date for introducing the system was shifted several times since October last year due to lack of preparation and legal procedures, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria had declared in his budget speech in June last year that the government would introduce compulsory PSI system on import.

Since then, the NBR has been taking preparations. It had earlier decided to introduce PSI from October last year but the time was shifted to January this year.

"The system was not introduced earlier because we could not complete the preparations," Chowdhury said.

He said honest and genuine businessmen have been mandating the system for long because it would plug many loopholes in the Custom system and reduce their sufferings.

The PSI will also hasten release of goods from ports and reduce congestion as imports will be checked on 'random basis', which will save time, the NBR chairman said.

All Letters of Credit (L/Cs) to be opened on February 15 and after, which will be valued more than 5,000 US dollars, will come under the PSI system," said a senior official of NBR. PSI will be optional for imports valued up to 5,000 dollars.

Three internationally reputed foreign firms have been selected for the PSI and contracts have been signed with two of them. Contract with the rest will be signed on February 13, he said.

To introduce the system, countries from where Bangladesh imports goods have been divided into three blocks and each company will be responsible for one block.

Block A covering 47 countries including China, Hong Kong, France, UK, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden has been given to Intertek Testing Services (ITS). Block B covering 14 countries including India, Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Sri Lanka has been awarded to Inspectorate Griffith. Block C was covering 91 countries including USA, Korea, Japan Taiwan and Mid-



A sequence from the street drama 'Bibi Chhab' presented by Sarak at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

Street dramas, songs, recitation of poems at Shaheed Minar

By DU Correspondent

On the second day of its 12-day programme, the Sammilta Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) yesterday organised street dramas, recitation of poems, patriotic songs, choirs and dance numbers at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The theme of the programmes marking 'Amar Ekushey' this year was "Awaken the motherland with the strength of mother tongue".

The programmes started in the afternoon with mass songs. Koushik Hossain Taposh and Shahnewaj Khan Swapan rendered songs while members of Rajshahi Abruti Academy recited poems.

Padatik Nattya Sangsad and Sarak staged two separate street dramas and the team of Tamanna Rahman performed dances.

Activists of Udichi Shilpa Gositi will recite poems and two different groups — Rudra Mangal and Snkal will render songs today at the Shaheed Minar.

Japan against trade union activities at EPZs

Japan does not want Bangladesh allows trade union in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) at this moment, reports BSS.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Kazuyoshi Urabe stated this when he met EPZs Executive Chairman M AB Siddique at his office in the city yesterday.

Urabe expressed his satisfaction at the prevailing congenial atmosphere in two EPZs of the country — one in Dhaka and the other in Chittagong.

The Japanese envoy said it was possible for Bangladesh to attain the economic emancipation through undisturbed atmosphere in the industrial sector.

He underscored the need for political stability, adequate infrastructural facilities and efficient management for the development of the country's industrial sector.

Earlier, the BEPZA executive Chairman briefed the envoy about the entire gamut and success of the EPZs. Siddique thanked the Japanese entrepreneurs for investment in the EPZs of Bangladesh and also hoped that Japan would come in a bigger way for mutual benefit of both the nations.

IJO to get a new lease of life

By Mustak Hossain

Members of the International Jute Organisation (IJO) agreed yesterday to renew the organisation's mandate after it expires in April.

"Members of the IJO have agreed to hold a meeting on March 27 in Geneva, Switzerland, to rejuvenate the organisation," said an official of the IJO yesterday.

The IJO, which was launched in 1984 under an international agreement on jute and jute products in Geneva, is scheduled to expire this April.

IJO is engaged in research, development and promotion of the 'golden fibre'.

The five-day Geneva rejuvenation meeting under the auspices of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would give IJO a fresh mandate to continue as a world body, the official said.

The possibility of IJO getting another lease of life seems brighter after India, the leading jute producer and exporter, returned to its fold in December last year, officials said.

India pulled out of IJO in 1998 after it failed to get its candidate appointed for the post of IJO chief executive.

Henri L. Jason, a French, was chosen for the post. Thailand, another major jute producing country, left the IJO last year due to the financial recession.

The official said the IJO receives one million US dollar in contributions from its members annually.

Presently there are three exporting member nations — Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Based in Dhaka, the IJO is also comprised of 21 consuming nations.

Foundation of Space Theatre laid

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her government is committed to turn the huge population into human resources by spreading modern science-based education, reports UNB.

A population taking interest in science and technology will contribute significantly to the socioeconomic development of the country, she said while laying the foundation stone of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Space Theatre at Bijoy Sarani in the capital yesterday.

She said this space theatre and planetarium will contribute to creating interest about science.

Science and Technology Ministry is constructing the space theatre near the Bijoy Sarani crossing, where people will see the planets and stars.

MCCT's 'no' to pay rise suggested by NWPC

By Staff Correspondent

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCT) has rejected the recommendations made by the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC), which suggested 68 per cent rise in wages of workers of public sector enterprises (PSEs), from Tk. 1540 to Tk. 2582.

The chamber leaders urged Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, whose ministry will ultimately have the task of implementing the recommendations, to "re-consider the suggestions as it will further impoverish the PSEs".

The request was placed to the minister yesterday when a chamber delegation led by its President Latifur Rahman discussed various issues relating to country's economy at his office. MCCT placed a 14-point recommendation to the minister.

"Such massive increases (in wages of workers) will be beyond the capacity of the public sector enterprises," Latifur Rahman said.

The NWPC recently submitted its report to the Ministry of Labour and reportedly suggested increase in basic salary of workers of PSEs by 63 per cent, from Tk. 950 to Tk. 1550.

The report of the commission also advocated increase of house rent allowance by 23 per cent (from Tk. 380 to Tk. 697), medical allowance by 33 per cent (from Tk. 150 to Tk. 200) and conveyance allowance by 83 per cent (from Tk. 60 to Tk. 110). Besides, the commission suggested Tk. 25 monthly washing allowance.

The MCCT delegation told the minister, "In fact, the recommendations amount to violation of the terms of reference which clearly stipulated that increase in wages should be recommended in conformity with the capacity of the PSEs."

They also told Tofail that the MCCT supported the idea of providing transit facility to India but in return, India should allow Bangladesh transit facility to Nepal and Bhutan. The chamber also suggested that the government defer the road transit because of acute congestion in the country's roads, and until proper roads are built. But it said that transit facilities

Work abstention by dockers at Ctg port

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 9: Work abstention by dock labourers hampered cargo handling in some vessels at Chittagong port today, port sources said.

Dock workers began work abstention in six vessels last night demanding withdrawal of suspension order against 19 dockers in four foodgrain loaded ships and booking of 12 workers in two biltum carrying ships, port sources said.

Port authorities suspended 19 workers on charge of assaulting a port doctor few months ago.

The dockers resumed their work in foodgrain vessels from 4 pm today after postponement of action against those workers, port sources said.

But they (dockers) continued

Maolana Azhar Masud held

By Staff Correspondent

Maolana Azhar Masud Azhar, a militant leader was arrested two days ago by the Pakistani authorities following his declaration to form a new group for fighting against the Indian rule in Kashmir, according to the BBC.

Maolana Azhar hit headlines in December last year when the hijackers of an Indian plane demanded his release from an Indian jail.

One shot dead, two bullet-hit during 'raid' by DB men

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was shot dead and his elder brother and niece were bullet-hit during a 'raid' by Detective Branch police in a house at Shyampur in the city early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Ahmed Hossain Sumon, 23, a resident of Karimullah Bag under Shyampur thana.

The bullet-hit persons are Shamim Hossain, brother of Sumon and Tull, 10, their niece. The injured have been admitted to the Dhaka Medical College hospital in critical conditions.

DB police claimed that the victim died in a shootout with some local gangsters but the family blamed DB police for the killing.

DC DB Abdul Hannan Khan told The Daily Star yesterday evening that acting on a tip-off, the DB men 'raided' the house to nab one Asif, a notorious criminal, wanted in over 20 cases.

But Asif could not be arrested. The house that was raided was not Asif's, but Sumon's family sheltered him, Hannan claimed.

One Kamal Ahmed, an alleged member of Asif's gang was arrested and two revolvers were recovered, Hannan said. Police also arrested Mozammel, another brother of Sumon, but released him later.

Hannan said that Sumon was an FIR-listed accused.

"Police opened fire in self-defence," he said. Sub-inspector Nurul Islam was also injured in the shootout, he said.

Kulsuma Begum, mother of Sumon, at a press conference at the office of Dhaka Reporter Unity (DRU) yesterday claimed that her son was killed by plainclothesmen who identified themselves as DB police.

The unidentified persons stormed into the house at about

101-member APAC Dhaka city unit finalised

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday finalised a draft of 101-member Dhaka city unit of All-Party Action Council (APAC). The committee is expected to be declared tomorrow.

Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, who is the convener of city BNP, has been made convener of the committee, sources said.

Initially, the city unit leaders of BNP, Jatiya party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote had decided to form a 151-member committee with three joint convenors.

But central leaders of the parties have advised them to form the committee as per the guidelines set by the Central Liaison Committee. Following the instruction, the city unit leaders have agreed to form a 101-member committee headed by a convener.

A Jamaat leader representing in the city Liaison Committee told The Daily Star that they would finalise the composition of the APAC in its today's meeting.

A city BNP leader said 50 per cent of the members in the committee will be taken from BNP while the rest from JP, Jamaat, IOJ and some other smaller parties.

Feb 13 joint mass rally programme unchanged

By Staff Correspondent

The difference between BNP and Jatiya Party over the arrangement of hunger strike by opposition MPs in the city on Tuesday has been resolved following talks among the top leaders.

The combined public rally and mass procession programme by the four opposition parties on February 13 will go on schedule.

The liaison committee will sit today at 29 Minto Road to work out preparation for the combined programme and the next course of action.

Sources said though Khaleda Zia and HM Ershad did not have talks over Tuesday's issue, leaders of both the parties were convinced that the commotion was a "silly misunderstanding" created by a section of leaders and activists.

BNP sources said the party had hung portraits of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia and hoisted its flag at the dais since Jatiya Party MPs were not sure about their participation until Monday night and Jamaat-e-Islami opted to stay out of the fasting programme citing religious grounds.

A JP presidium member said last night Ershad and other leaders were fully aware of the

JS body unhappy over performance of 7 govt bodies

A meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the progress of activities of seven government organisations, reports UNB.

The organisations are Gas Transmission & Distribution Company, DESA, Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation, Petro-Bangla PDB, RAJUK and National Curriculum & Text Book Board.

Chaired by Emran Ahmad asked the government to inject dynamism in overall activities of the meeting these organisations to make their services available to the commonman and ensure transparency and accountability.

The meeting also asked the organisations to submit report immediately what steps they have taken to implement the recommendations made by the

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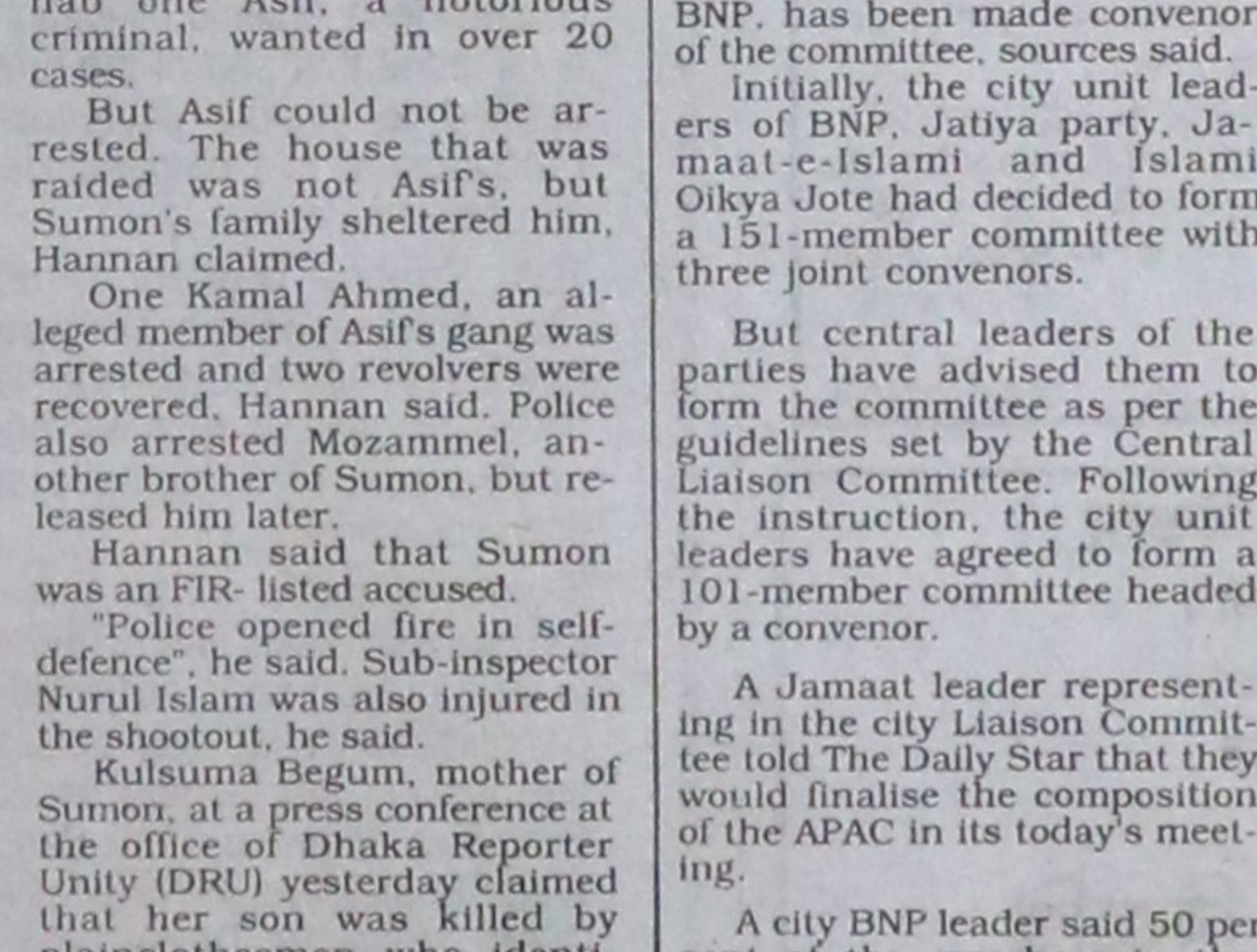
Prayer Timings
February 10

Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
5:45	5:45	6:15
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:55	5:58
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Father of Sumon (inset) is wailing after hearing the news of his son's death.



The unauthorised shops built in front of Police Control Room at Shabbagh in the city.

Verdict in Jainal Murder Case likely this month

By Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 9: Argument in the Jainal murder case continued for the second day today.

It will end tomorrow, said a source at the Special Court which is trying the case filed against Ershad Shikdar and his accomplices.

Verdict in this murder case is expected by the third week of this month, the source said.

Ershad Shikdar has been detained in Khulna district jail while five other accused in this murder case were shifted to Jessore central jail for security reason.

According to a source in KMP, accomplices of Shikdar arrested in connection with all the murder cases were conspiring in connivance with some outlaws to create unrest in the jail.

The source further said that they were planning to murder Nour-e-Alam with the help of Shikdar's armed cadres who are still at large. Nour-e-Alam has become government approver in Jainal and Khalid murder cases.

রাজধানী উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ
রাজউক ভবন, ঢাকা

সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, রাজউকের আওতাধীন এলাকায় সকল প্রকার নির্মাণ কার্যের জন্য ইবিবিসি এন্ট ১৯৫২ (পর্বত বর্জ্যসংক্রান্ত) এর সংশ্লিষ্ট ধারা মোতাবেক রাজউক থেকে নির্মাণ কার্যের পূর্ব অনুমোদন গ্রহণ করতে হয়। সম্প্রতি লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে, টঙ্গী-আতলিয়া-ইপিজেড পথ সংযোগ সড়কের উভয় পাশে ও টঙ্গী-আতলিয়া-ইপিজেড পথ সংযোগ সড়কের উভয় পাশে আইডেট হাউজিং সোসাইটি এবং ব্যক্তিগত উদ্যোগে অনুমোদিতভাবে বিভিন্ন প্রকার নির্মাণ কার্য ও মাটি কাটার কাজ চলছে, যা ইমারত নির্মাণ আইনের পরিপন্থী। উল্লিখিত এলাকাসমূহ (তুরাগ নদীর অববাহিকা তথা নীচ অঞ্চল) ঢাকা মহাপরিকল্পনায় ফ্লাড স্টো জোন ও সাব-ফ্লাড স্টো হিসাবে চিহ্নিত রয়েছে। মহাপরিকল্পনায় এ সকল এলাকা পানি নিষ্কাশন, নৌ-চলাচল, উন্নত ও বিদ্যমান এলাকা এবং কৃষি-মৎস্য ব্যবহারের জন্য সংরক্ষিত করার সুশাসিত রয়েছে।

সম্প্রতি টঙ্গী-আতলিয়া-ইপিজেড সংযোগ সড়কের ২য় হতে ১৩তম কিঃমিঃ পর্যন্ত উভয় পাশে স্বাকৃতিক সৌন্দর্য ও পরিবেশ রক্ষার লক্ষ্যে এলাকাদিতে সমন্বিত উন্নয়ন ধরনের প্রণয়নের জন্য সরকার সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেছে। সরকারী সিদ্ধান্ত অনুযায়ী উক্ত সড়কের দুই পাশে আধা-মাইলের মধ্যে কোন প্রকার খেরবাড়ি, হাট-বাজার, ইন্ডেস্ট্রি, পেট্রোল পাম্প ইত্যাদি আবাসিক বা বাণিজ্যিক স্থাপনা নির্মাণ করা হতে বিরত থাকতে সর্বসাধারণকে অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

চেয়ারম্যান
ডিঃএফপি-২৭৯৮-৮/২
জি-২৪৪
রাজধানী উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ

Under the signboard: DMP is your friend

By Shehab Ahmed

A market has just emerged in front of the Police Control Room at Shabbagh in the city.

Construction of the new market, an extension of the three storied flower market, had been going on for some time under the signboard, Dhaka Metropolitan Police is your friend.

When contacted, DCC officials preferring anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday that the extension was raised illegally without their permission.

The DCC had leased the three storied market to flower sellers during Ershad regime. It was built by appropriating a portion of the Suburwardy Udyan and violating Rajuk's Master Plan for the city, sources said.

Similarly, another flower market is under construction near the entrance of the Dhaka Club on the other side of the Maulana Bhashani Avenue.