

The Daily Star

on Friday

Your 20-page
weekend
paper

VOL. X NO. 42 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA FRIDAY FEBRUARY 25, 2000

3rd Millennium

FALGOON 13, 1406 BS

ZILOAD 18, 1420 HIJRI

20 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE : TAKA 9.00

INSIDE TODAY

COMMENTS

Page 6

Pakistan was awarded posthumous honours for helping the United States enter China and Afghanistan. However, foreign policies of nations must be forward-looking and cannot depend upon history and forgotten goodwill, writes Arsedehir Cowasjee in *Blowback*

SOUTH ASIA

Page 7

M Abdul Hafiz looks at problems that plague Sri Lanka's Quest for Peace

PEOPLE

Pages 10

Mazharul Islam face to face with Navine Murshed Mamunur Rashid talks about his teenage life to A Maher



Gulshan Lake being devoured

Shady deal struck with developers behind Rajuk chairman's back

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk has allowed Shinepukur Holdings Ltd. to develop more than 12 acres of land in a fresh onslaught on Gulshan Lake, defying a High Court order and the prime minister's directive.

Sources said the chairman of Rajuk, the city development authorities, does not know of the 'mysterious deal' that was struck between the real estate developer and some officials of the Land Department of Rajuk.

The 'deal', which has 'surprised' Rajuk's high officials, has alerted the Works Ministry against a move to grab land through manipulation with the help of interested parties.

The Gulshan Lake area has frequently been the prime target of squatters and influential quarters. Military governments have indiscriminately filled up the lake and allotted residential plots to a select group of people.

Last year, Rajuk allotted more than 300 plots in the Gulshan Lake area, apparently with a project to fill up the lake

and hand over residential plots. The decision triggered public outcry and was cancelled after intervention by the prime minister.

Numerous other moves over the years were foisted only after the prime minister's intervention.

Similar moves are underway around Dhanmondi Lake. A vested quarter is hindering the government's efforts to protect the lake and are lobbying to turn some of it into residential plots.

The High Court directed Rajuk in 1998 to uphold the master plan and stop any sort of construction in the Gulshan Lake. Rajuk's plan also defies a prime minister's directive that bans filling up of any lake or low lying area in the city.

Shinepukur Holdings, a concern of the Beximco Group of Industries, is demarcating three-fourths of the lake near the Manarat International School with tree trunks.

The trunks are being piled close together so that landscap-

ing could be done immediately, said the workers on the spot to this correspondent. They also said officials of Rajuk's Land Department gave Shinepukur the permission to 'demarcate its own land'.

Shinepukur's Finance and Accounts Director O.K. Chowdhury denied that the company was demarcating the land. Rather, he said, Rajuk was demarcating its own land. "Rajuk wrote to us sometime this month to send a representative, for it was demarcating their area which is situated by our land," Chowdhury said. Asked whether they had land in the lake, Chowdhury replied that not all low-lying area is part of the lake. He said they had been buying land in the area for sometime.

Rajuk Chairman M Azizul Haque said he had just heard about the demarcation and asked his men to stop immediately.

"We are looking for the official who gave permission for the work and we will take de-

partmental action against him," said Haque.

"Gulshan Lake has to be saved, and we will take all necessary steps to do so."

Sources said Sanwar Hossain, deputy director of Rajuk's Land Department, gave the go-ahead to take over the land.

Belayet Hossain, Rajuk's member land, said Shinepukur Holding Ltd. submitted an application about 15 days ago asking Rajuk to mark the company's land in Gulshan, which is situated near Rajuk property. Hossain said he accepted the application with the comment "submit it" and sent it to the deputy director.

"We have no dispute with anyone over our land in that area, so the question of separating their land does not arise," said Hossain. "We are going to serve a show-cause notice on the official who took such a step and departmental action should follow."

Sanwar Hossain refused to comment on the matter.

See page 11 col 6



A lake looted

In defiance of a High Court ruling and the prime minister's directive, encroachment of Gulshan Lake still continues. Developers plan to fill up the area marked with logs for housing projects.

Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

Pharma sector at risk

Proposed import regulations may open up floodgate for substandard drugs

By Inam Ahmed and Monjur Mahmud

The Drug Administration Authority (DAA) to ensure safety and efficacy of imported drugs has relaxed certain conditions which local pharmaceutical companies fear will flood the country with sub-standard products, especially from the neighbouring countries.

They say the new policy will make way for cheap, sub-standard products, ultimately killing the pharmaceutical companies.

The Drug Control Committee's technical committee recommended on February 22 that drugs included in the pharmacopoeia monograph could be imported by showing Free Sales Certificate from the country of origin and a developed country.

The certificate is the registration of a drug in a country.

It proposes a relaxation of the present requirement of having Free Sales Certificates for the drugs from two developed countries, one of which should preferably be USA or UK and from the country of origin.

Drug Control Committee set the criterion in 1995 by upgrading the previous import policy formulated in 1991. The 1991 policy required "Free Sales Certificate from the country of origin and a developed country."

According to industry sources, the proposed requirement now pushes the country back to pre-1991 period when drugs under pharmacopoeia could be imported with Free Sales Certificate from the country of origin and test report from the government analyst of Bangladesh.

"We had upgraded the import

policy to ensure better quality drugs for our patients," said chief executive of a top local pharmaceutical company. "But now it seems that when the rest of the world is opting for standard, we are looking the other way."

According to sources, the Drug Control Committee is expected to meet on Sunday to finalise the proposed policy.

"This will kill the prospects of the country's pharmaceutical industry," said the supremo of a multinational drug company. "If cheap, substandard products are dumped here, we will go out of business because we can not compromise with quality. For a single country (Bangladesh), we can not risk our global reputation. I fear foreign investments in the sector may be hit badly by this move."

See page 11 col 6

BTV programme

PM faces people today

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will appear in a BTV special programme tonight and reply to questions from the people.

Bangladesh Television (BTV) will air the programme, 'Deshabashi Mukhomukhi' from 8:30 pm to 10 pm.

A panel of experts would put questions to the Prime Minister in presence of an invited audience. She will also answer questions from the audience and viewers across the country.

People can put their questions to the Prime Minister over the following telephone numbers: 9353042-8, 8313333, 8318300 and Fax No: 9353041.

The panel of experts is likely to comprise journalists Mahfuz Anam, Rahat Khan and Abed Khan, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya and teacher

See page 11 col 5

JS body rejects AG's view

Debate over its jurisdiction ends

Star Report

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry yesterday rejected an observation by the Attorney General, saying that the AG had no jurisdiction to comment on the affairs of the JS body.

The Attorney General commented that the JS body had no authority to investigate or enquire a complaint lodged to its Chairman unless it is referred to him by the parliament. The eight-page comment of the AG was read out at a meeting of JS body by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria.

The JS body said that only the Speaker had the authority to comment on its activities, not the Attorney General.

The debate had started after the JS body's earlier suggestion to Sonali Bank regarding rescheduling loan of a defaulter. The JS body last month suggested Sonali Bank to approach the central bank to re-

consider its (central bank) earlier decision and approve rescheduling loan of a top defaulter, Fazlur Rahman.

At yesterday's meeting, Kibria said the JS body Committee has no jurisdiction to give such a suggestion in favour of a bank client.

Kibria also said that the JS body could not discuss problems of a particular bank client.

Kibria's comments came when a JS body member, Mustafa Kamal, said that he will participate in the discussion on the scheduled agenda but before that he should know about the powers of the Standing Committee since a question has already been raised.

Following Kibria's remark, members of the JS body said it was not addressing the problem of a particular borrower but discussing an alleged irregularity by the Bangladesh Bank.

But when pointed out that the required 10 per cent down payment was not made by Fazlur Rahman, the Committee members said that the meeting was not informed about it. It asked the central bank what action it took against the SB client.

Talking to The Daily Star after the meeting, Chairman of the JS body Prof. Ali Ashraf said that the body had consulted officials at the JS Secretariat regarding the matter. They told him that the JS body had 'ample jurisdiction to supervise the activities of the ministry and the minister concerned', Ashraf said.

On the Attorney General's comment, he said, "If that is true, then what about our meetings during the last few years? We held 41 meetings so far and only in one or two cases, there were issues which were referred to us by the parliament."

After the meeting, Kibria told newsmen, "It seems that the Attorney General's view was not accepted by the Committee. The Standing Committee will work according to Rules of Procedure of the Parliament and I will co-operate with the Committee."

Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Chowdhury said the job of the Committee is to ensure transparency and accountability.

"If the Finance Minister had any question about the jurisdiction of the JS body, he could have consulted the Speaker. But the Attorney General does not have the jurisdiction to comment on the affairs of the JS body," Khosru said.

Former finance minister and a member of the present Standing Committee M Saifur Rahman said, as per the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure.

See page 11 col 3

PSA will be a curse for AL: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Senior BNP leaders said yesterday that the "black and repressive" Public Safety Act would not help the ruling Awami League continue in power, rather it would turn out to be a "curse" for it.

The AL government has introduced the PSA with the ulterior motive of bringing to power and coming to power again in the next general election by putting opposition leaders and activists in jail using the "repressive" law, they alleged.

Addressing a public rally at Muktangan in the city, the BNP leaders said that in the past, Awami League could not prevent its fall by introducing the "black" Special Powers Act (SPA) and similarly the "anti-people" PSA could not keep it in power now.

City BNP organised the rally as part of a countrywide "Demonstration Day" to press home the Opposition demands for release of all their activists, repeal of the PSA and immediate resignation of the government. Convener of City BNP Sadek Hossain Khoka MP presided.

The three other component parties of the BNP-led alliance - Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote-Jagga, Democratic League, FNP and NDA also held separate rallies and brought out processions in the city and elsewhere in the country to press the demands.

The BNP leaders said introduction of the PSA has further isolated the AL government from the people, paving the way for 'nationalist and patriotic' forces to go to power.

BNP Standing Committee

See page 11 col 6

Our new numbers

19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215
Phones : 812 4944, 812 4955
& 812 4966
Fax: 812 5155



A city chokes

The thick black blanket of smog over the capital city only speaks of our failure to put a tab on air pollution.

Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

Electoral roll set to roll

Election Commission hopes to complete list by October this year

By Nurul Kabir

The Election Commission will start fieldwork for preparing a fresh national electoral roll in the last week of next month and complete the job by October this year, highly placed EC sources said.

"More than three lakh of our enumerators would visit every household in the country to prepare a fresh electoral roll," EC Secretary Abdullah Harun Pasha told The Daily Star on Thursday. "Besides, more than 81 thousand supervisors would cross-check the voters' information collected by the enumerators."

Every voter has to fill up a

prescribed form to provide information like name, father's/mother's/husband's name, profession, date of birth, permanent address, present address, educational qualification and ID card number, if there is any.

"One having his or her name on the voter list would be eligible to cast vote even if he/she does not have ID card. But he/she would not be allowed to vote if his or her name is not there on the voter list, even if he/she has an ID card," said the secretary. "So it's very important for every eligible voter to have his or her name on the

electoral roll."

A total of 3,25,000 enumerators would be engaged to get the prescribed forms filled up by the voters while every enumerator would cover 200 to 300 voters. Besides, 81,500 supervisors would be there to cross-check the information gathered by the enumerators.

Teachers of primary schools, madrassahs and employees of government and autonomous bodies would work as enumerators and supervisors. In addition, 6,100 Assistant Registration Officers, one in each union in the rural areas

See page 11 col 7

Power plant plight

Discord among AES, PDB, CWHEC and McDonald leaves 450 MW Meghnaghat project in limbo

By Sharier Khan

The 450 MW Meghnaghat Power Plant project is in a limbo for nearly three months due to total non-cooperation among the main contractor AES, Power Development Board (PDB), the land site developer and the consultant.

The project is almost in a state of stagnation since early December when, after several months' delay, the site developer - CWHEC - invited PDB and AES to test and receive the 100 hectare land for the project.

After tests, AES refused to receive the land on the ground that it was not developed as per the agreement and would be unsafe for installation of heavy machinery. CWHEC however claimed that the land was developed as per the agreement.

There has been little effort by PDB to solve the crisis.

As the stagnation was taking a serious turn, PDB asked the site developer and the consultant - Mott McDonald - to participate in a joint site survey with AES and PDB. At a meeting on February 10, all the parties agreed to undertake the joint survey.

But on February 13, the land developer surprised all by declining to participate in the joint survey. "Since we have no contractual relationship with AES, we are of the opinion that it would not serve any purpose in CWHEC being present during the survey. This should be your responsibility," the Chinese firm told PDB in a letter.

On the same day, the consultant also regretted to PDB that it would not participate in the survey as its representative left Dhaka on the 10th of that

month on medical ground. Both CWHEC and Mott McDonald are represented by the same Bangladeshi company owned by a former minister in the present government, sources said.

"Clearly, Meghnaghat land development project is being delayed due to conflict of interest. The project consultant is backing the project's contractor," a source claimed, questioning the neutrality of Mott McDonald. "Besides, their agent is politically very strong who is doing everything to keep the project going as per his terms."

It was alleged that by doing a poor job, CWHEC "saved" at least Tk 18 crore for itself from the Tk 141 crore land development project. It was also alleged that the site was not properly

See page 11 col 7

Sonali Bank sues 2 enterprises of Rahman Group

Star Report

Sonali Bank (SB) yesterday filed two separate cases against two enterprises of Rahman Group with the First Sub-Judge and Artha Rin Adalat for realising Tk. 73 crore from two defaulter companies.

The companies against which the cases were filed are Messrs JC Hosyery Garments (Pvt) Ltd and Messrs Rahman Spinning Mills Ltd.

The court issued summons upon the defendants to reply within seven days as to why the bank would not realise the money by selling the mortgaged property against the loan.

Barrister Abdullah-Al-Mamun and Advocate Golam Sarwar Moni moved the case on behalf of SB against the defaulter companies.

According to sources, SB will file two more cases against the group on Sunday. In total SB will file 11 cases against the group for Tk. 145 crore arrears.

See page 11 col 3

AIMS First Guaranteed Mutual Fund
under private initiative in Bangladesh
makes its debut

look for the prospectus

Tomorrow Saturday February 26, 2000 on
The Financial Express and day after
tomorrow Sunday February 27, 2000 on
Prothom Alo and The Bangladesh Observer



Embezzlement! Inheritance!! or Lottery !!!

capital market is not a place to become overnight rich like that
step here with a healthy and informed investment intention

Subscription starts : March 5, 2000

Subscription closes : March 16, 2000

- Sponsors:
- IPDC of Bangladesh Ltd
 - IDLC of Bangladesh Ltd
 - Southeast Bank Ltd
 - Pangaea Partners (BD) Ltd
 - Sandhani Life Insurance Company Ltd
 - Uttara Finance and Investments Ltd
 - Sandhani Credit Co-operative Society Ltd
 - Bangladesh Industrial Finance Co. Ltd

Trustee : Bangladesh General Insurance Company (BGIC) Ltd

Custodian : Standard Chartered Bank

Fund Manager : Asset & Investment Management Services of Bangladesh Ltd

Chandrasaha Svastu Tower (5th floor), 69/1 Panthopath, Dhaka 1205