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Bangabazar men to stage sit-in today in front of Nagar Bhaban

By Staff Correspondent
Leaders of four market associations of Bangabazar in the city will stage a sit-in today in front of the Nagar Bhaban demanding return of one of the markets occupied by armed elements about 25 months ago.

Protesting the 'forcible occupation', traders at Bangabazar brought out a procession and announced the sit-in programme from a rally near the Jatiya Press Club yesterday evening.

Leaders of the associations blamed Mayor Mohammad Hanif for his 'failure' to help the 'dispossessed owners' of shops at Ideal Hawker's market get back the shops.

The cluster of four markets - Gulistan Hawker's Market, Mahanagar Hawker's Market, Bangabazar Hawker's Market and 'Ideal Hawker's Market' - known as Bangabazar, is one of the biggest wholesale and retail

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Transport strike on: 16 buses damaged, 7 held in Bogra

By Staff Correspondent
The second day of non-stop transport strike across the country passed off peacefully yesterday barring an incident in Bogra town.

Our Sirajgan Correspondent reports: At least 16 buses were damaged by the striking transport workers in Bogra town at around 10 am yesterday.

Police arrested seven transport leaders and workers, including Truck Sramik Union secretary Mintoo Khan from Bogra Bus Terminal.

Protecting the arrest, transport workers put up a barricade on road. Police later removed the barricade.

Sources said the strike enforcers are a bit frustrated as the government side did not show any interest to discuss their demands. They also criticised the Home Minister for his comments against the transport workers.

Sources in transport sector said road communications between the capital and Chittagong region was almost normal while it was hampered in southern and northern regions as the operators suspended luxury bus services in long routes.

Road Transport Workers' Federation enforced the strike

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Sinking vessel threatens Sangu gas pipeline

which is now under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty Division of the High Court.

The port authority, however, overruled the possibility of the vessel moving closer to the pipeline, saying it is unlikely that the vessel would move from its present position.

But the Sangu field authority was not convinced with the observation and has made further appeal for measures to remove the vessel from its present position before the onset of monsoon.

About 25 per cent of Bangladesh's current gas production is being produced at Chittagong Gas Processing Plant.

The CPA admitted that it did neither have the logistics and expertise, nor the court's permission to salvage the vessel.

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PM asks BCL to avoid terrorist activities

By Staff Correspondent
The duty of Chhatra League workers is to keep the educational institutions functional and not to make those non-functional," the ruling Awami League chief said, directing the students to 'suspend all political activities' three months before their examinations.

"You must attend classes regularly and abide by the advice of your teachers and guardians. No agitation to stop or shift examinations and attempts to force closure of any educational institution will be tolerated," she told a huge gathering of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) workers at a reception accorded to her in the city yesterday.

While warning against violent activities on the campuses, the Prime Minister promised speedy steps to resolve any problem there.

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No policy yet to free V-SAT from BTTB monopoly

By Mustak Hossain
The Ministry of Post and Telecommunication is still to take a policy decision on freeing V-SAT from the 'monopoly' of Bangladesh telegraph and telephone Board (BTTB).

There is indecision on preparing a plan for reduction of licence fees on V-SAT and awarding new licence for its users to ensure cheaper and speedy Internet service, sources in the ministry said.

"The ministry is yet to work out plans for providing facilities to new prospective satellite subscribers and terminating old contracts with the existing V-SAT service providers," one source said.

There is a thinking that if BTTB which is the licencing authority terminates the existing contracts with V-SAT service providers, it might face law-suits by the operators.

Under a new agreement, the government is to award V-SAT licence for 500 US dollars and a

service provider however said, a new company cannot do business because it is required to obtain no objection certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Home and customs clearance for bringing 'restricted equipment' in the country.

He claimed that the ministries concerned failed to make a "foolproof plan" because service providers were not invited to send their representatives to a meeting in this connection.

An inter-ministerial meeting in February decided that

BTTB would no longer have monopoly control on V-SAT and any Internet Service Provider (ISP) would be free to negotiate with any company for V-SAT facilities on their own terms.

BTTB has contracts with eight V-SAT companies and ISP had to subscribe at high rates for services from these firms.

Earlier, the government used to charge 8,000 dollars per month for V-SAT use and only seven selected companies were allowed to provide V-SAT service.

BTTB would keep 1,000 dollars a month for 64 KBPS half circuit V-SAT service, 2,000 dollars for 120 KBPS and with Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria to reach a consensus on appointing a CEC.

The Sylhet unit of BNP reacted promptly and issued a statement against Nazir Rahman for his remarks.

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The poor have little scope for free treatment at hospitals

By Naimul Haq
The poor have apparently little scope for medical treatment, at least in big city hospitals including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH).

The incredibly small number of designated free beds for the poor in the city hospitals only demonstrate the lack of sincerity of the government.

It was with a view to helping the destitute that the Prime Minister had given Tk 5 crore last year to the hospital. But in reality, the poor virtually do not get the 'free treatment' they are supposed to.

During a recent day-long investigation regarding free beds in different wards in (BSMMUH), the poor patients complained to this correspondent that they had to buy all sorts of drugs and even common vitamins.

At the hematology department twelve-year-old Shanto Hasina, in bed 16, stares in the ceiling unaware of what is happening around her. Sitting by her is her parents. The forehead

"We expected my daughter will get free treatment but except for the bed nothing is free. Even the four units of blood Hasina needed were bought from outside," said Tota Mia.

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