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Spiralling price of Gulshan land

By Morshed Ali Khan

The recent sale of a single commercial plot earned Rajuk more than what it did by allocating plots of the entire Gulshan Model Town in the early '60s, a top Rajuk official said.

Breaking all previous records of land price, Rajuk recently auctioned a commercial plot at Gulshan-II at Tk 42 lakh per katha (720 square feet). The plot, which was bought by an insurance company, measured one bigha (1440 square feet). This is probably the highest

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Star Magazine



This week's Cover Story of The Star Weekend Magazine is on "Bihongo" — a film about the lives of the physically disabled and their remarkable spirit of survival.

Inside Today

Article

A Report Card on Mr Kibria

by Hossain Zillur Rahman
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June	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
22		
23	5-12 am	6-49 pm

Prayer Timings

June 22		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	1-00	1-30
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Monetary expansion may seriously jeopardise macroeconomic stability

IMF warns while reviewing proposed budget

By Staff Correspondent

The IMF has said the recent acceleration in monetary expansion, generated principally by bank financing of the expanding fiscal deficit, if not contained, could 'seriously jeopardise' macroeconomic stability in Bangladesh.

Resident Representative of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) in Dhaka Ronald P. Hicks, in his reaction on the proposed budget for 2000-01, also stressed the need to cut down the monetary expansion both to protect price stability and foreign exchange reserves.

Mentioning that inflation remained 'subdued' because of bumper crop, slack industrial activity and artificially administered low prices, he said in a statement yesterday. "The risk remains that, as the effects of these factors wear off, a continued high rate of monetary expansion would give rise to increasing strains on foreign reserves, rising pressure on taka and accelerating inflation."

As the proposed budget also heavily relied on bank financing (Tk 35 billion) to meet the fiscal deficit, the statement

said, "Since many of the same factors that led to an overshooting of the deficit in 1999-00 may still be at play, there may again be an overshooting of the target for bank financing, further fuelling the already high rate of monetary expansion."

IMF suggested formulating a financial programme to clearly assess the constraints on private sector's access to bank credit to be created by the government's substantial recourse to bank credit projected for the next fiscal year.

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Where they opposed to oppose

By Staff Correspondent

In a departure from their usual practice of opposing each other on almost everything, the ruling and the opposition parties have unanimously recommended passage of a bill seeking changes in the law relating to a welfare trust for the teachers of government primary schools.

All members in the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry agreed yesterday on two changes in the Government Primary School Teachers' Welfare Trust Ordinance of 1985.

Education Minister ASHK Sadique introduced the bill in the House on June 6. The House later sent it to the parliamentary committee for scrutiny.

Chairman of the committee Nurul Islam Nahid brought the bill back to the House yesterday without suggesting any change, however.

Committee members at a meeting on June 18 endorsed the bill's contents and unanimously recommended that the

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JP won't back bill for women's reserved seats

Jatiya Party does not believe in reservation of parliament seats for women and so the question of returning to the House to support the bill on it does not arise, reports UNB.

The party stand was stated by JP secretary general Nazim Rahman Manjur at a press conference yesterday afternoon.

"Women are no more lagging behind, they are now in civil service, in police force and even become Prime Minister. Rather time has come to enact a law against repression on men," he said at the press conference at Kalabagan office.

The JP leader said they returned to parliament on Tuesday only to save the country.

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A river retaliates: Direct road link between Jamalpur and Sherpur has been suspended since June 2 thanks to unabated erosion by the old Brahmaputra. The reason has been put down to change of course of the river caused by closure of one of its channels last year, leaving the ferry ghat most vulnerable.

—Star photo by Mohammad Ali

PM's speech has damaged atmosphere further: BNP

Main opposition BNP still wants to return to parliament to perform their responsibility provided the government rectified the vitiated atmosphere, reports UNB.

"We still say (to the government) make parliament effective and bring congenial atmosphere in the House. We want to play our role in Sangsad," BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP told newsmen yesterday.

He was speaking at a press conference at 29 Minto Road a day after the opposition staged a walkout from the House after joining parliament on Tuesday after a long boycott.

The BNP leader said they

want to work for people in and outside parliament. But, he alleged, the government makes it sure that the opposition stays out.

"People looked enthusiastically to parliament — we also hoped that they (ruling party) would welcome us ... But she (indicating Prime Minister) further damaged the atmosphere with her speech," he said.

The prime minister uttered "irrelevant, untrue and indecent" words in her 45-minute speech in the House. It proves that they don't want the opposition in parliament, he added.

On the prime minister's allegation that opposition doesn't want constitution amendment

to extend term of women's reserved seats, Bhuiyan said the bill placed in the House was an old one.

The ruling party ignored the demand of women's rights organisations that the women be directly elected from all the districts for the 64 seats.

The government also did not talk either with the opposition leader or the deputy opposition leader about it or place the bill in the parliamentary standing committee, Bhuiyan alleged.

Replying to a question, he said they have sympathy for the demand of women's rights organisations and would consider it actively if they return to parliament.

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Drastic fall in hilsa catch

From Aroop Talukder

BARISAL, June 21: The catch of hilsa has fallen drastically this year. Thousands of fishermen, about 200 wholesale fish traders and 20 fish exporters of Barisal region are sitting almost idle as daily catch of the silvery fish has fallen to only 30-35 maunds.

They cited indiscriminate fishing of *jalka* (hilsa fry) over the last few years as the main reason for this fall. They also blamed a section of corrupt officials and law enforcing agency men for backing unscrupulous fishermen engaged in fishing *jalka* for monetary gains.

Yousuf Ali Shikder, General Secretary of Barisal Fish Wholesalers Association, told

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Jalka caught in Barisal

Star photo

Under trial prisoners increasing

Faster investigation, trial needed

By Mizan Ali

The number of under trial prisoners detained in jails in the country has increased in the last five years while that of convicts has decreased during the same period, according to official sources.

Under trial prisoners numbered 26,000 in 1995 and their number rose to 37,500 in 1999 but the number of convicts fell to 13,422 from 15,730 over this period.

There were 41,730 prisoners — under trial and convicts — in the jails in 1995 while the number rose to 50,922 in 1999.

Capacity of the 64 jails including nine central jails across the country increased to 23,942 from 21,257 during the period, the sources mentioned.

Asked why the number of under trial prisoners increased and that of the convicts decreased during the same period, one source seeking anonymity said, "The process of trial is not fast and that of investigation is also not quick enough. Unless the number of trial courts and investigating officers is increased, the situation cannot change."

During the Sixties, convicts numbered more than under trial prisoners but the situation turned reverse in the 70s. The ratio of convicts and under trial prisoners became 25:75 in the 70s, said officials of the Prisons Directorate.

The situation improved in the '80s and the ratio became 40:60. This happened due to 'speedy trial' in summary courts under martial law, they said.

In the '90s, the ratio again started changing in the opposite direction.

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