

BUY NOW — PAY LATER

Whirlpool
HOME APPLIANCES
USA

Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited
Authorized distributor for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

The Daily Star

TOSHIBA AC

MADE IN JAPAN
The Perfect Combination of Style and Performance

RANGS GROUP

VOL. X NO. 158 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2000

Wishing the
BEST
for the
3rd Millennium

ASHAR 14, 1407 BS

RABIUL AWAL 25, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: TAKA 6.00

Bangabandhu murder

Hearing of death ref begins today

By Staff Correspondent

The hearing of death reference in the Bangabandhu murder case begins in the High Court today.

This is the only case in today's cause list for hearing and disposal in the criminal bench of the High Court Division of Supreme Court, comprising Justice M Ruhul Amin and Justice Khairul Haq.

Hearing of the Bangabandhu murder case was the last in the list of cases to be transacted by this criminal bench when it was constituted on April 24. This was 13th item in the cause list, which was sent for disposal.

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman constituted the bench after two benches felt embarrassed to hear the case.

Earlier, special public prosecutor, said page 11 col 5

Our next target is to win the World Cup: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said, after achieving the Test status, our next target is to win the World Cup, report agencies.

"Today is a day of celebration, a day of pride", she said referring to the International Cricket Council (ICC) decision at Lord's in London on Monday. Amidst repeated thumping of desks, the Prime Minister said, "Today, our feeling is like that of victory in the War of Liberation."

The Prime Minister said, with the recognition as a Test playing nation, "our responsibility has increased to a great extent... We'll have to consolidate it and strive hard to improve the quality of games to international standard and fetch home the World Cup trophy one day."

She, however, said it may see page 11 col 7

Dhaka celebrates Test status today

A mass gathering, organised by the National Sports Council (NSC) and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to celebrate Bangladesh's becoming the 10th Test playing nation, will take place at 4 pm today at Paltan Maidan in the city, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to attend the gathering as chief guest.

Hundreds of present and past cricketers, sports organisers, social and cultural activists see page 11 col 8

Inside Today

Article

Economic Sanctions Should Go

Column Connecting the Dots

By Dr A R Chowdhury

Page 4

Focus

Budget 2000-2001: Why aren't the public in the conversation? Page 5

Prayer Timings

June 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	1-00	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

June	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
28		6-50pm
29	5:14 am	

Rising Stars



Cook Your Instant Chicken The Rising Stars Way

This Thursday

Toxic industrial waste

City's ground water at risk of contamination

By Morshed Ali Khan

Dhaka city runs the risk of having highly contaminated ground water due to massive industrial pollution on the surface, experts said.

An expert at BUET's Institute of Flood Control and Drainage Research (IFCDR) warned that contamination of ground water due to tannery waste and other industrial pollutants would be one of the biggest problems the city would face in the near future.

"The way low-lying areas and rivers around the city are being polluted, ground water could become toxic and unsuitable for human consumption," said Prof Mozammel Hoque of IFCDR. In some areas near Hazaribagh tanneries, the quality of ground water has deteriorated rapidly in last ten years.

Prof Hoque said, their research showed that the level of ground water in some areas of the city was falling at a rate of up to 1.5 meters a year. In central Dhaka, even during 1998 floods, the ground water did not get charged at all, according to a survey carried out by BUET experts.

The rapid fall of ground water level due to over-extraction can cause land subsidence but the risk of contamination of ground water is much higher because of the soil condition, said the BUET expert.

"Our studies show that in Tejgaon and on the western side of Balu river, there were cases of minor land subsidence. But our concern is more about the possible contamination of the ground water," Hoque said.

According to an estimate by the Department of Environment, each day, more than 16,000 cubic meters of highly toxic waste from Hazaribagh tanneries first flow to low lying areas and then to Buriganga river. Another 3,500 cubic metres of toxic waste from Tejgaon industrial area pollute the land before falling in the rivers. As these toxic waste accumulate on vast stretches of lands, the ground water gets charged with contaminated water.

Prof Hoque said unless these sources of waste are capped and proper water retention ponds are set up, the ground water would only get more and more contaminated. See page 11 col 1

Shikkha Bhaban incident: BCL activists used a stolen car

By Staff Correspondent

The four BCL activists who stormed into the Shikkha Bhaban on Monday used a stolen car, police sources said.

Shafiqur Rahman, president of Mohsin Hall unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) had snatched the car from its driver at Dhamondi, owner of the car said. He added a case was registered the same day.

Abdul Matin, the owner, went to the Ramna police station along with Mustafizur Rahman, the investigation officer of Dhamondi police station, yesterday and identified the car, the sources said.

The vehicle had a fake number plate (Dhaka Metro Gha-12-4031) while the real number was Dhaka Metro Gha-12-0496, police said. Two other number plates were also recovered from the vehicle.

The owner said that influential ruling party men are trying to have the car released from the police station, an allegation see page 11 col 4



A Rajuk bulldozer yesterday demolishes a house that encroached upon public land along Gulshan lake in the city. — Star photo

Rajuk recovers 11 kathas of land along Gulshan Lake

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk recovered about 11 kathas of encroached public land along the Gulshan Lake on the first day of a month-long recovery drive yesterday.

Rajuk officials, two magistrates from Rajuk and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, two platoons of policemen and about 20 day labourers started the recovery drive at around 11 a.m. and dealt with five encroachments at road-26 and road-46.

About eight kathas of public land were recovered from plots 20a, 20b and 20c on road-26. Rajuk demolished a part of a three-storey house owned by Abdul Rahim at plot 20a.

It also recovered two kathas of public land from former Textile Ministry secretary Dr Shamsuzzaman Majumdar at plot 20b. However, Rajuk gave the owner of the house numbers see page 11 col 4

PDB in trouble as DESA defaults Tk 3000cr arrears

By Sharier Khan

The Power Development Board (PDB) is running into deep financial trouble as it has been unable to pay for gas, private power and debt service liability (DSL) for quite a while.

To make matters worse, it has been denied payment of huge bills owed by Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) and other power buyers.

The PDB now owes a staggering Tk 950 crore in outstanding bills to various authorities. It is under pressure from different gas purchase authorities, oil suppliers and private power companies to clear their dues in no time. The Energy Ministry is also asking it to pay Tk 250 crores as annual DSL.

But a PDB source said the Board now has only Tk 200 crore in the coffers.

The PDB at a meeting with the Energy Ministry last week expressed its inability to pay the bills unless the DESA pays Tk 3000 crores in arrears it owes PDB.

"Ironically, the portrayal of this grim picture did not draw enough attention of the ministry. At the same meeting, the ministry asked PDB to speed up payment of Tk 13 crores it owes the newly launched Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB)," the source said.

The ministry argued that Tk 13 crore was a small amount and the PDB should immediately arrange for the payment.

The PGCB, a brainchild of the Asian Development Bank, which would be gradually taking over the power transmission system from the PDB, started its operation last year.

The PDB accordingly began handing over its grids, starting with the Haripur grid system last year.

Although still maintained and supervised by the PDB staff working under the PGCB, the PDB has to pay a monthly wheeling charge of Tk 1.96 crores to PGCB for using the

grid. Thus, the PDB's dues with PGCB piled up to Tk 13 crores since last October. The PDB has been reluctant to go along with the concept of the PGCB all along, fearing it would put the Board into another financial mess.

The matters have remained far from being resolved or even studied by the government itself, which instructed the PDB to hand over two more power grid systems to the PGCB next month. Hasnabad and Tongi grids are vital for power supply to Dhaka.

The government instructed the PDB late last month to sign a power purchase agreement (PPA) with the Rural Power Company (RPC) of the Rural Electrification Board (REB). But the PDB refused. The RPC proposed that the PDB purchase its power at a rate higher than the PDB's own power generation cost.

See page 11 col 5

SQ Chowdhury challenges Speaker about signing attendance

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad, suddenly turned lively yesterday, briefly though, as it witnessed a debate on the Speaker's recent ruling defining attendance of a parliament member.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid was generous enough to allow the debate for what he said facilitating the lone BNP lawmaker, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, to speak.

Nevertheless, he reminded the House that there was no scope to debate a decision of the Speaker.

Known for his good sense of humour, Hamid passed remarks triggering laughter during the unscheduled debate that lasted for about half an hour.

Besides Chowdhury, Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, PM's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Suranjit Sengupta, Fisheries and Livestock Minis-

See page 12 col 2

IFC sues textile unit for failing to repay loan

By M Shamsur Rahman

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank's lending agency for the private sector, has sued a local textile company for failing to repay loans.

IFC gave a loan of 45,00,000 US dollars to Dynamic Textile Industries Ltd. (DITL) for a project that includes setting up of a cotton and polyester fabrics plant at Valuka in Mymensingh and production of coarse yarn from cotton, cotton/synthetic blends and 100 synthetic fibres, mainly polyester.

As per the investment agreement signed on October 25, 1991, the loan was given in two categories - A loan amounting to 25,00,000 dollars and 'B' loan amounting to 20,00,000 dollars.

But the company failed to pay regular instalments. The fourth instalment was due on March 15, 1997, which the company failed to pay in full, IFC sources said.

Since then, IFC has been pursuing the company, its guarantors and additional guarantors for repayment of the loan.

"But they all pleaded for time and assured repayment but failed," one source said.

He said IFC served a 'loan acceleration notice' on December 12, 1998 but the company continued to default.

IFC then served another 'demand under guarantee' notice to the guarantors on December 7, 1999, under which the guarantors were supposed to make payment by December 12, 1999. "But no measure has been taken to fulfil their obligations," the source said.

The total outstanding loan with interest stood at 37,91,037.49 US dollars as on December 31, 1999, he said.

IFC later filed a case with the Second Artha Rin Adalat in March this year to realise an amount of 37,91,037 US dollars which is equivalent to Tk 19,03,85,902.75.

Stating all the facts, IFC in its petition said, "The money payable by the company under investment agreement on October 25, 1991 are also now due from five others as guarantors under the guarantee agreement and also due from five others as additional guarantors under the additional guarantee agreement signed on October 25, 1999."

See page 11 col 7

Power situation deteriorates further

By Staff Correspondent

The country's power situation further deteriorated as 15 power generating units, including three major plants remained shut yesterday.

Ghorashal-3 unit which suspended generating power in the early hours of yesterday, restored production in the afternoon.

Suffering of the people in the capital and its adjacent areas continued as the amount of load shedding remained nearly 200 MW for the last two days.

PDB yesterday generated 2432 MW of power against the countrywide requirement of 2675 MW. The amount of countrywide power shortage was above 250 MW, sources in PDB said.

PDB control room claimed last night that the projected amount of countrywide load shedding was about 218 MW. See page 11 col 7

Jail Killing Case Hearing on charge framing July 6

By Court Correspondent

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed July 6 for hearing on charge-framing in the Jail Killing Case.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the proceedings of the case after hearing on charge-framing against 16 accused, including KM Obaidur Rahman, MP.

Eight of the accused — Taheruddin Thakur, Shah Moazzem Hossain, KM Obaidur Rahman, Nurul Islam Monzoor, Lt. Col (Discharged) Syed Farrookur Rahman, Lt. Col (Retd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Major (Retd) Bazul Huda and Major (Retd) Khairuzzaman are now detained at the Dhaka Central Jail. They were produced in the court during the hearing.

Four national leaders — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, A H M Quamruzzaman and Captain Mansur Ali — were brutally killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Then DIG (Prison) Abdul Awal filed the Jail Killing Case on November 4, 1975 under Section 302/34 of the Penal Code.

The CID took up the case on September 10, 1996 and submitted a charge-sheet accusing 23 people after two years of investigation.

Among them, 19 were charged in the Bangabandhu case. See page 11 col 8

Severe financial crisis KMCH to ask 150 patients to leave hospital

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, June 27: BTB has cut off telephone connection of Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) on Sunday for non-payment of outstanding bills. The PDB has also threatened to cut off electricity lines for the same reason.

Meanwhile, the KMCH has decided not to keep more than 250 patients in the hospital as enlisted contractors are irregular in supplying foodstuff saying that they haven't been paid the outstanding bills.

A KMCH source said there are 400 patients in the hospital. They do not get diet as prescribed by physicians because the contractors do not supply it as per terms and conditions. So the authorities have decided to ask 150 patients to leave the hospital immediately, the source added.

KMCH even can not buy one-third of the life-saving drugs and meet other bare necessities required for treatment due to severe financial crisis, sources said.

The Ministry of Health has stopped funds for buying food for the patients since January. The KMCH has asked the ministry several times to funds in this regard.

The total amount of outstanding bills the hospital owes contractors stands at Tk 13 lakh until April.

The contractors did not supply food on June 16, 17 and 18 to press home their demand for full payment of the dues. As a result, patients had to buy food from outside the hospital.

The patients said they are half-fed as diets were not served. See page 11 col 6

SQ Chy's speech: Opposition MPs unhappy

By Staff Correspondent

Delivery of a speech by BNP MP Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday in violation of an Opposition decision created serious resentments among lawmakers belonging to the three opposition parties.

Members of the BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami MPs led by Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia joined the parliament session on June 20 after about one year's boycott, apparently to register their presence as they were on the verge of losing their seats because of 90 days' consecutive absence.

But 14 opposition MPs including Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury did not attend the session along with them.

The three parties had decided that none except Khaleda Zia would speak in Parliament. But Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury, who alone attend the session yesterday, took part in a stormy debate.

A top BNP leader said on condition anonymity that see page 11 col 8

Pak envoy terms Chief Whip's claim false

By Staff Correspondent

The Pakistan High Commission here yesterday said the reported allegation made by the Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah, against an agency of Pakistan is without foundation, reports BSS.

The Mission in a press release said, "The allegation is not only without foundation but also incompatible with the existing friendly and fraternal relations between the two countries."

Pakistan's foreign policy remains consistent with the universally recognised principles and norms of inter-state conduct, which include the establishment of relations on the basis of sovereign equality, mutuality of interest and non-interference in internal affairs," the press release said.

Abul Hasanat Abdullah disclosed in the Jatiya Sangsad on Saturday that Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan had offered him money when he was negotiating the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace process.

Imported plants flood national tree fair

By Reaz Ahmad



Green passion: An eight-year old bonsai of "ficus banjamima" tree from Japan with a price tag of Tk 350,000 attracted most visitors at the National Tree Fair in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Hundreds of visitors flock everyday to the National Parade Ground where a vast array of plants, saplings and orchids catch eyes.

The two-week National Tree Fair ends on June 30.

The Department of Forest can claim credit for organising such a big fair but abundance of imported plants there hurt many who expected it to be mainly a show of indigenous plants.

Nursery owners at the stalls would be happy to provide you cactus plants and saplings of mango, pineapple and 'Washington Apple' trees from India; orchids, ornamental plants, sweet-sour mango and olive from Thailand, malta and pear from Pakistan, palm and sweet pepper from Singapore, coconut from Malaysia, 'ficus banjamima' from Japan date saplings from the Philippines and so on.

Rajesh Chakma, sitting at the fair information centre next to the entrance, is an assistant conservator of forests. He told The Daily Star that as many as 70 stalls have been opened from where people can buy saplings of fruit trees and see page 11 col 7