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Taka dips to
its lowest
since 1975

Star Report
The Bangladesh Bank yesterday devalued taka by about six per cent, the highest since 1975, making the dollar costlier by Tk three.

With the new rate effective from Sunday, the official buying rate of dollar has been fixed at Tk 53.85 from the previous Tk 50.85 and selling rate at Tk 54.15 from Tk 51.15. The mid-rate will be Tk 54.

The last devaluation was made on November 30, 1999 when taka was made costlier by three per cent.

According to foreign exchange dealers, the market was anticipating a devaluation for the last few weeks, especially when Pakistan and India also devalued their currencies late last year.

"Every Thursday, there was panic in the market, and traders would take forward cover to hedge their currencies," said dealer of a foreign bank. "Incidentally, we had fewer requests for forward coverage this

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PM's remarks
Contempt petition
likely to be
filed with HC on
Sunday

By Special Correspondent
A group of pro-opposition lawyers has collected nearly 300 signatures of lawyers on a Vokalatnama for filing a contempt petition against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent remarks on the judiciary.

On behalf of the group, BNP leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed is preparing the draft of the petition which is likely to be filed with the High Court on Sunday, sources close to the group said.

But it was yet to be decided who would file the petition. The group is pressing the President of Supreme Court Bar Association, Barrister Mainul Hossain, to be the petitioner.

He has maintained so far that he would move the petition if it is backed by all irrespective of party affiliation.

SC Bar sources said the Executive Committee of the Association has already authorised its President and Secretary to file the contempt petition.

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Govt seeks to address weaknesses within

Special body to recommend measures to improve public prosecution, police probe

By Nazmul Ashraf

The government has initiated a move to address weaknesses within itself in the wake of ragging controversy over granting of bail to accused in sensational criminal cases.

But, its tension with the judiciary is yet to subside, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina continuing criticising the court for indiscriminate granting of bail to the criminals under trial.

Defending her position during a meeting with a delegation of Dhaka Reporters' Unity at her office, the prime minister said she is ready to appear before court to tell the hard reality.

On several occasions, the prime minister criticised courts,

the higher courts in particular, for granting bail to notorious criminals and said the practice is a major obstacle in the way of curbing crimes. The PM's remarks drew widespread reprobation from different quarters, including the lawyers.

In search of an effective mechanism to check the trend of setting notorious criminals at large on bail indiscriminately, the government has recently formed a three-member committee, a Law Ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday.

Headed by Additional Attorney General Mehsub Alam, the committee will look into the lapses on the part of the government, and suggest ways to

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PM stands firm on her views on judiciary

Remarks reflect people's sentiment, says Hasina

By Special Correspondent
Denying the allegation of contempt of court, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that what she told about the judiciary was for the interest of the people only, reports UNB.

"What I've said reflects the sentiment of the people. I've not said anything to undermine the court or the judiciary," she told a delegation of the Dhaka Reporters' Unity at her office.

The Prime Minister said: "I don't know where and how I've violated the Constitution or undermined the court. I am working for the people and despite all criticism I'll say whatever is necessary for protecting the interest of the people, for the welfare of the people."

Hasina said she is ready to face anything for safeguarding the interest of the people. "I will not hesitate, even if I have to face cases or criticism."

Pointing out the positive impact of her repeated comments on the process of grant-

ing bails of the criminals, she said a result is being shown. Police, administration and other related people are getting the chance to be corrected, flaws are being rectified.

"If the people can get some benefits from my efforts, I am happy," she said, vowing to continue her crusade for the welfare of the people. "I'll face all odds and obstacles for the interest of the people."

The 19-member delegation of the DRU, led by its president Anwarul Huq and general secretary Monwarul Islam, asked questions about the political and economic condition of the country, as well as the law and order and other current issues.

The Prime Minister said her government was trying heart and soul to solve the existing problems of the country and for restoring discipline in all sectors.

She said that for curbing terrorism, her government has taken stringent action against

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Two killed in city

By Staff Correspondent

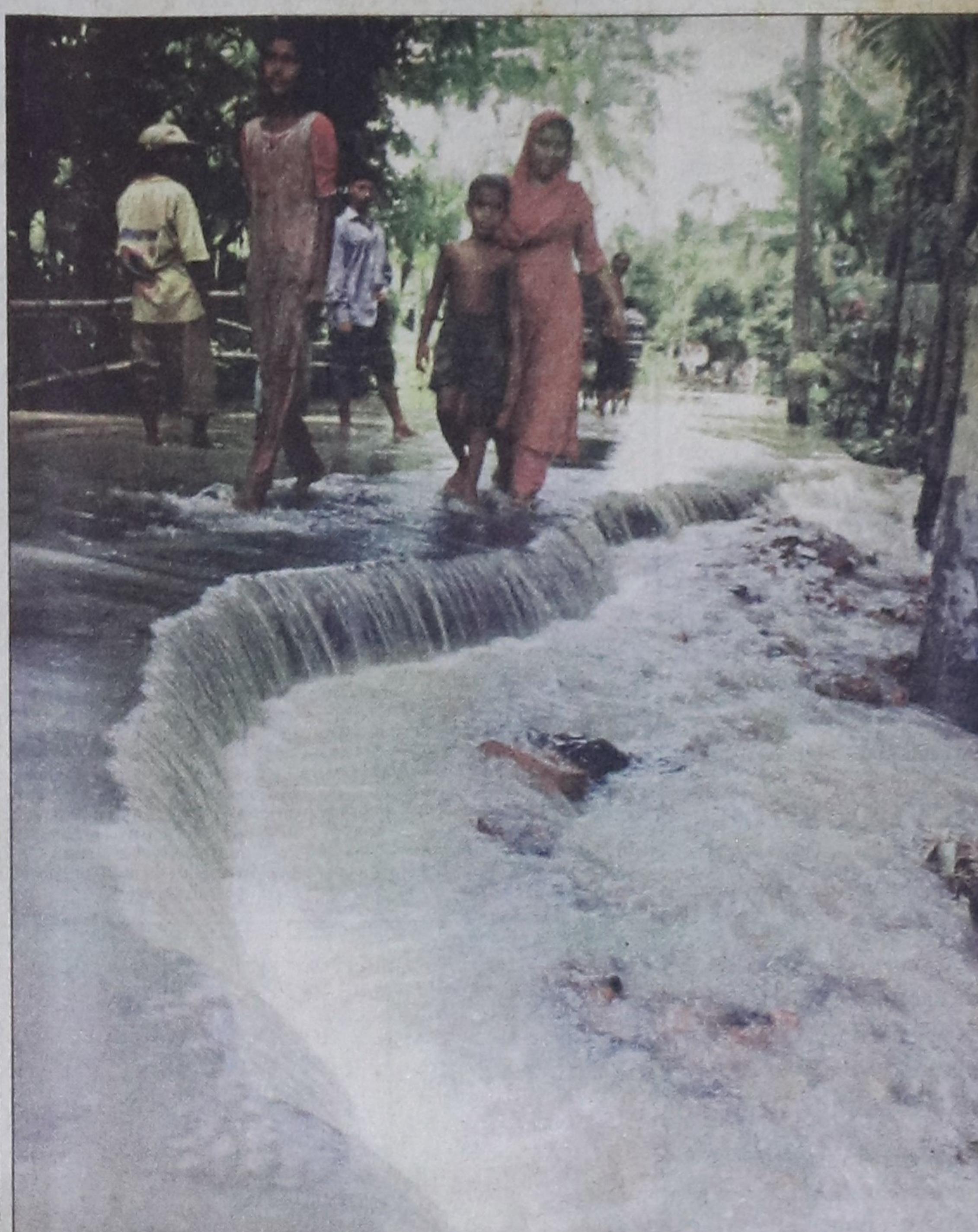
Two persons were killed in two incidents in the city yesterday.

A young man was gunned down and another bullet-hit in a clash between two rival groups at Matuail under Demra thana, police said.

The dead aged about 25 remained unidentified while the injured was identified as Shahjahan, 45, hospital sources said.

Demra police who lodged an FIR in connection with the incident said Shahjahan and his companion were local miscreants.

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Flash floods have wrought heavy damage to the Dhaka-Nawabganj and Dhaka-Dohar roads, disrupting road communications in these routes from yesterday. The three ferry ghats in the routes have gone under water.

—Star photo

Ensure equitable JS seats distribution

Activists urge politicians at dialogue on
Women in Parliament

By Staff Correspondent

Participants at a dialogue on Women in Parliament yesterday demanded discontinuation of indirect elections of women legislators to the Jatiya Sangsad, and equitable distribution of male and female representation in the parliament.

The country's leading women's rights activists as well as women representatives from 64

districts urged political leaders to increase number of seats reserved for women in the parliament and make provision for direct elections to these.

Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA). The Daily Star and the Centre for Alternatives jointly organised the day-long dialogue at the LGED Bhavan.

Politicians from three major parties - Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party - promised to convey the views expressed at the dialogue to their respective party chiefs and initiate discussion on the issues raised at party forum.

AL presidium member and Industries Minister Tofail

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Bangladesh Business Award launched
The Daily Star, DHL sign contract

By Staff Correspondent

The Daily Star and DHL Worldwide Express have signed a contract on August 9 to introduce the 'Bangladesh Business Awards' for annual recognition of both individual and organisational excellence.

Under the programme, three awards - Businessman of the Year, Enterprise of the Year and Businesswoman of the Year - will be awarded each year to top performing entrepreneurs and business houses.

Editor of The Daily Star Manifuz Anam and Country Manager of DHL Worldwide Express Desmond Quiah signed the agreement formally announcing the launch of the prestigious award for the country's business community.

DHL offers similar awards in collaboration with the most prestigious newspapers of Hong Kong, Singapore and UAE.

In Singapore, where DHL Asia Pacific and Middle East region office is located, the business awards is a major annual event keenly followed by the corporate world. DHL has tied up with The Business Times of Singapore there.

The Daily Star has undertaken the initiative out of its commitment to promote excellence in the private sector and recognise the best entrepreneurial talent of the country. The special award for women is an expression of The Daily Star's belief that given the opportunity, our women have both the talent and resources to play a major role in the development of business in Bangladesh.

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Flood situation worsens: 2 drown

Flood situation in the country deteriorated yesterday with further swelling of some rivers, reports UNB.

Two boys drowned in Manikganj while several lakh people remained marooned in different districts.

The died were identified as Robin, 4, son of Abbas Ali of Uttar Seora in Manikganj town and five-year-old grandson of Chandni Miah of Dighulai village in the district.

The Padma and the Jamuna receded by 3 cm at Aricha and Goalundo points but the flood-hit areas in Singair and Saturia upazilas were submerged further.

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59 more dengue patients hospitalised

By Staff Correspondent

Fifty-nine people with dengue fever were admitted to different public and private hospitals in the city yesterday.

Sources said Dhaka Medical College Hospital admitted 22 patients, while Mitford Hospital

receded by four yesterday.

—

Dhaka Shishu Hospital reported admitting three fresh cases, BIRDEM four and Subrawardi Hospital two. The Government Employees' Hospital in Fulbaria said it admitted two such patients yesterday.

The Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital reported admitting seven dengue patients while Bangladesh Medical College Hospital six.

Unocal terms investment climate 'not friendly'

By Staff Correspondent

Business environment in Bangladesh is not "friendly" for foreign investors and the country is actually sending "false signals" to investors, — especially those in the energy sector, a top official of US oil company Unocal said yesterday.

Besides, the main house at 6 Shaheed Moinul Road compound, there are staff quarter, barrack for security forces and separate houses.

All those staying in the compound during registration of voter have enlisted their names on their own.

Khaleda had no personal desire or direction to enroll them as voters with her residential address.

None of them are fake voter, asserted Bhuiyan. The number of voters enrolled in the previous list was higher than the present, one, he added.

Business environment in Bangladesh is not "friendly" for foreign investors and the country is actually sending "false signals" to investors, — especially those in the energy sector, a top official of US oil company Unocal said yesterday.

Right now, Bangladesh's gas market is saturated with supply. This will continue beyond 2005", he said.

Expressing his worries about finding an "appropriate market" for Bibiyana gas, he said, "The Production Sharing Contract (PSC) gives us provi-

tion for gas export in the form of Liquified Natural Gas (LNG). But for ensuring profit from LNG, we must ensure the unit price of gas at not more than 60 cents. This is not the case here and this will not be profitable for Bangladesh."

Promoting the idea of pipeline export of gas to India, he said the PSC provided an option that if LNG export turned non-viable, the parties concerned would discuss means to ensure a viable gas market.

He noted that even if the government allows Unocal today to

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This is the age to be
watching guys.
Not your weight.

LOW ON CALORIES.



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