

INSIDE TODAY

SOUTH ASIA Page 4

Mansoor Mamoont looks at people's expectations in India and Pakistan in *The Myth of Independence*. Navine Murshid's *Time for Action*, and AMM Shahabuddin's *It's Summit Time*

SPECIAL Page 7

Rehman Sobhan looks at the challenges before economists in Bangladesh

COMMENT Page 6

Hasnat Abdul Hye's *Devaluing Devaluation*; Third instalment of *Anatomy of a Coup: A Journey of a Quarter Century*, Mohammad Badrul Hsian's *The Other Side of Love*

FOCUS Page 10

Should Bangladesh export gas to India? If yes, why? If no, why? Ali Ahmed Ziauddin explains

Dial a number and get the latest news

By Staff Correspondent
The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo have signed an agreement with GrameenPhone Ltd to introduce news service on phone.

The GP mobile users would dial a number and get the latest news updates in English and Bangla round the clock. The innovative method to disseminate latest news will be the first time in the country.

Each caller will hear a two-minute news flash on latest national and international events.

The news items will be chosen and presented by The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo. GrameenPhone will provide the technical support.

Mahfuz Anam, Editor of The Daily Star, Motiur Rahman, Editor of Prothom Alo and Mehboob Chowdhury, Director Sales and Marketing of GrameenPhone signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Fahim Munaim, Managing Editor of The Daily Star and Intekhab Mahmud, DGM Marketing of GrameenPhone were also present on the occasion.

(Photo on Business page)

Price hike of oil, gas Opposition's countrywide demonstration on Sunday

By Staff Correspondent
The Central Liaison Committee of BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday announced countrywide demonstration on Sunday to protest price hike of gas and petroleum products.

The programme was announced at a meeting of the CLC held at 29 Minto Road with BNP vice chairman M Shamsul Islam, MP in the chair.

As part of the programme, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote will hold rallies and bring out processions in all cities, district and thana headquarters.

BNP will also hold a rally at Muktagang at 4 pm today to protest abnormal price hike of gas and petroleum products as

See page 11 col 2

Biman's business bad since '91

By Inam Ahmed

With foreign competition increasing since 1991, Biman Bangladesh Airlines' performance in terms of operational frequency, market share and growth of business have nosedived.

Biman's average growth of both domestic and international passengers recorded a negative one per cent in 1998-99 from 12.4 per cent growth in 1991-92, according to Biman sources.

Similarly, its cargo business was 5.8 per cent in the negative in 1998-99 from 12.5 per cent growth in 1991-92.

The slide is also observed in Biman's market share of passengers and cargo, which were 57.08 per cent and 60.45 per cent respectively in 1991. But as competition increased, its market share shrank to 40.92 per cent in passenger and 34.71 per cent in cargo in 1999.

Its frequency of operation has been on the decline with foreign carriers taking up the market share. During 1991-1999, Biman's frequency of operations increased by 2.5 per cent on an average and that of foreign airlines operating to Bangladesh by nine per cent. This has resulted in a 'capacity imbalance' between Bi-

man and foreign carriers, according to Biman sources. This 'capacity imbalance' is lopsided in favour of foreign carriers with increasing market share due to use of higher capacity aircraft.

Another bomb hoax for AI

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: An Air India aircraft was delayed by a bomb hoax at Delhi's international airport today in the wake of two similar incidents the day before, an airline spokesman said, reports AFP.

The aircraft was thoroughly checked by a bomb disposal squad and passengers were of-flooded following a call. Departure was delayed by about one-and-a-half hours.

"The incident happened around midnight. The plane had come in from Dubai to Delhi and was on its way to Bombay," Air India spokesman Jitendra Bhargava told AFP.

On Wednesday, an Air India flight from New York to Bombay was also delayed in Delhi after an unidentified caller phoned a private television station and said there was a bomb on board.

Biman's passenger growth from 1990-91 to 1998-99 was only three per cent. It had recorded 7.6 per cent and 5.9 per cent growth from 1972-73 to 1979-80 and from 1980-81 to 1989-90.

"Biman is now suffering from operational deficiencies and financial constraints which are impediments to fleet modernisation to compete in the market," said high Biman official.

The debt and equity of Biman in 1996-97 financial year were Tk 7178.90 million and Tk 3534.86 million respectively, comprising a debt-equity ratio of 67:33, which should ideally be 60:40, the sources pointed out.

"But due to budgetary constraints, the government can not provide equity money to Biman and give financial support. So, it has decided to re-structure the organisation under equity-based strategic partnership with a reputed airline," the source said.

Biman is now facing tremendous competition in its international operation. The number of foreign carriers operating to Bangladesh was 14 in 1991, which rose to 18 in 1999.

SKS admits encroachment but refuses to move

By Staff Correspondent



Students and teachers of Department of Sociology of Dhaka University along with different organisations staged a demonstration in front of the Sena Kalyan Sangstha in the city yesterday, protesting the encroachment by the Sena Kalyan Sangstha upon the Buriganga river.

The Sena Kalyan Sangstha (SKS) has officially admitted encroaching upon 600 feet by 160 feet of foreshore and 97 feet by 160 feet of main channel of the river Buriganga at Postogola in city but has refused to retreat from the foreshore area, according to sources.

Admitting the massive encroachment, top SKS officials signed a report of a survey on Wednesday. The SKS and BIWTA, which is the custodian of the river, following series of reports published in The Daily Star conducted the survey.

The SKS filled about 2.15 acres of the river by dumping 2.5 million cubic feet of earth to build godown and berthing facilities. The reports also triggered a public outcry and more than 60 organisations, led by POROSH, launched a Save Buriganga movement.

Sources in the BIWTA said the SKS has agreed to remove the 97 feet by 160 feet encroachment from the main channel of the river on condition that the BIWTA carries out dredging on the riverbed for barges to anchor. But the SKS officials have so far refused to budge from the remaining 600

See page 11 col 7

SC Bar faces split over contempt case

By Special Correspondent

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) is facing a split following the filing of a contempt petition against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by its President as the rival group of lawyers has convened a requisition meeting of the SCBA, sources concerned said yesterday.

The contempt petition was filed on Wednesday by SCBA President Barrister Mainul Hossain.

The action has come under criticism from SCBA Secretary Shahidul Karim Siddique, who accused Mainul Hossain of violating the constitution of the association which, he claimed, authorises only him to deal with

legal matters. "But Hossain denied this saying that the Executive Committee (EC) of SCBA had authorised him to file the petition. The Secretary was 'relieved' of his task when he expressed his inability to file the petition, he added.

Against this background, Siddique has convened a requisition meeting of the SCBA on Sunday at 4-30 pm at its auditorium.

This followed a petition by 70 lawyers including Shawkat Ali Khan, ABM Bayezid, Abdul Kuddus, Abdul Baset Majumder, Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder, SCBA Vice-President Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed in

See page 11 col 3

Consequences for contempt of court

By Nazmul Ashraf

What can be the consequences for contempt of court? It is probably a question racing across the people's mind, especially after a petition was filed Wednesday, accusing the prime minister of that offence!

According to the Contempt of Courts Act of 1926, the maximum punishment for contempt of court is a jail term for six months and/or a fine of Tk 2,000 while the minimum penalty is to remain standing for a while.

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court is the authority to award such punishments for an act of contempt of itself or its subordinate courts. For the contempt of the Appellate

See page 11 col 5

JS session summoned on Sept 6

By Staff Correspondent

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday summoned the Jatiya Sangsad into session on September 6.

This will be the 19th session of the seventh parliament. The session will begin at 10 am.

The last budget session with 25 working days ended on July 9.

Chances of opposition's attending the coming session are slim.

Barring a token attendance in the last session to save their seats, the opposition lawmakers boycotted the last five consecutive sessions. A lawmaker loses his seat for 90 days' consecutive absence from parliamentary proceedings.

The coming session is expected to take up a number of pending bills including one on reserved JS seats for women. A bill on the reserved seats was placed in the last session. The bill was later sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law Ministry for scrutiny.

Dengue: 2 more die in city

By staff correspondent

Two unidentified persons died of dengue haemorrhagic fever yesterday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and BIRDEM, raising the toll from the disease to 31 in the city.

Control rooms at the hospitals could not give identities of the dead.

Meanwhile 47 more dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals in the city yesterday. Of them, 16 were admitted DMCH, two each to Mitford Hospital and Bangladesh Hospital and Bangladesh Medical College Hospital, three to Shishu Hospital, eight to BIRDEM, four to

Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital, five to Suhrawardi Hospital and one was admitted to Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital.

I'm least bothered about filing of case: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday firmly denied making any remark tantamount to contempt of court and accused opposition BNP of 'putting pressure' on courts by launching a signature campaign to file a contempt petition for this.

"A case has been filed against me. But I did not utter anything contemptuous. I am absolutely on the right track and did nothing violating the Constitution," the Prime Minister asserted while speaking at a discussion in the city's Paltan Maidan. Awami League organised the discussion meeting in

observance of the National Mourning Day.

President of Supreme Court Bar Association, Barrister Mainul Hossain, filed the contempt petition with the High Court on Wednesday.

"In fact, what they (BNP) are doing is contemptuous. The court will decide whether I passed contemptuous remarks. Why are they holding meetings after meetings at Minto Road (official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament) and terming it contempt of court?"

Referring to her remarks during an interview with BBC,

the Prime Minister and chief of ruling Awami League said, "I said nothing wrong. I will continue to say so if that brings any relief for the people seeking justice."

"I am least bothered about filing of any case against me so long I know I have done something for the benefit of my people."

Justifying, she said, after these remarks on the judiciary, disposal of cases will now be expedited for the benefit of the people. "No matter, for whose negligence -- the judiciary or the police administration -- it

See page 11 col 7

Save Buriganga Movement leader threatened

By Staff Correspondent

A leader of the Save Buriganga Movement was threatened over telephone by an anonymous caller prior to yesterday's sit-in demonstrations in front of Sena Kalyan Sangstha and BIWTA offices.

The caller warned Naser Khan, General Secretary of POROSH, "not to cross limits" or "face severe consequences". Naser got "the telephone call early in the morning, he said.

POROSH is among many organisations involved organising protest rallies and processions to save Buriganga river from encroachment and pollution.

Oil price hike Transportation cost to go up by 20 pc

By Staff Correspondent

The recent price hike of petrol and diesel will raise transportation cost by at least 20 per cent, which would ultimately push the prices of essential goods up, sources in the transport sector said.

The truck owners have already increased the fare immediately after the government decision to raise prices of diesel and petrol by Tk 2.50 and Tk 2 per litre, respectively.

The government fixed the prices of petrol and diesel at Tk 23 and Tk 15.50 per litre, respectively. Earlier, the prices were Tk 21 and 13 per litre.

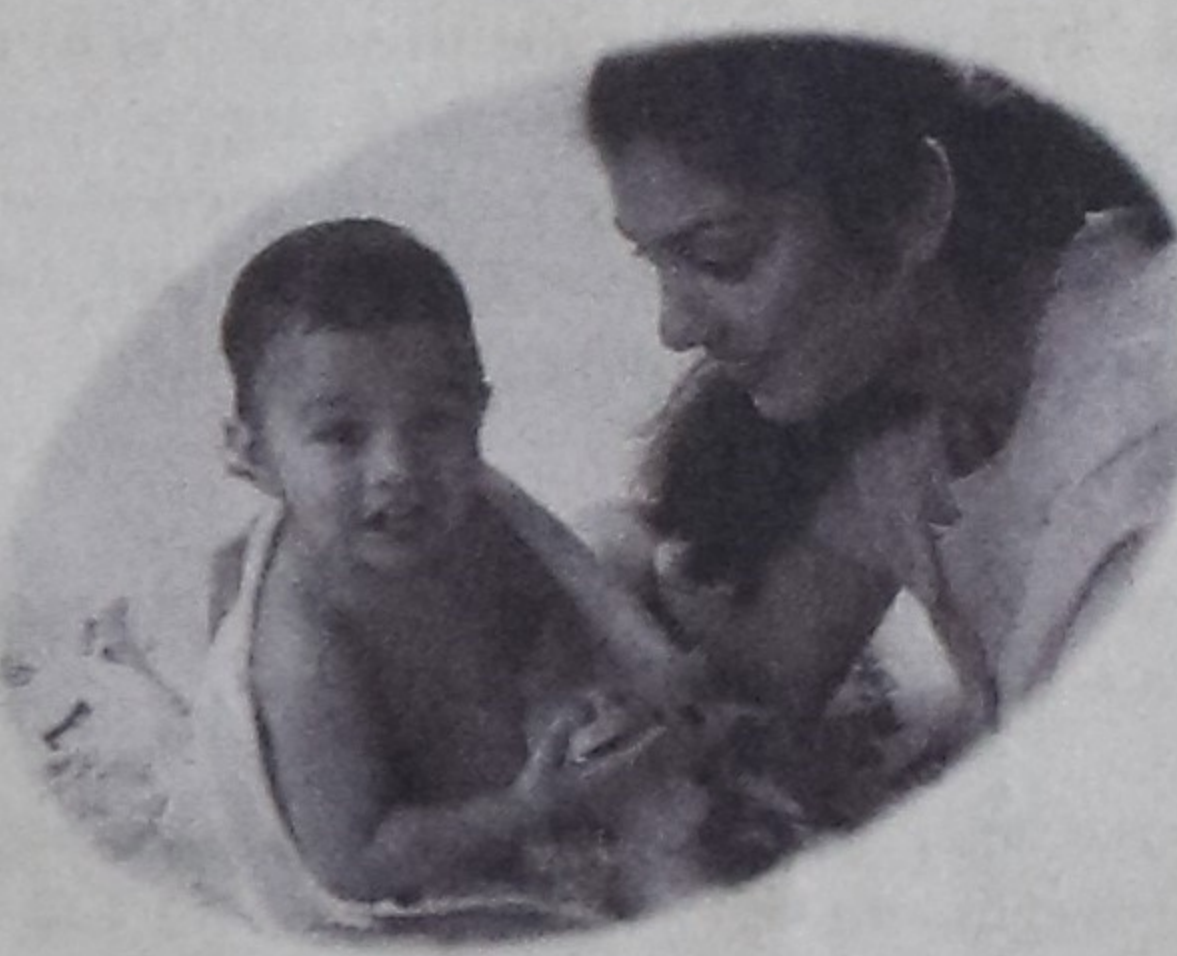
The truck owners are charging at least 20 per cent more the fare following the decision, said Rustom Ali Khan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Truck Malik Samity (owners' association).

Different socio-political organisations have protested the government's decision to increase the price of petroleum products and gas and urged it to withdraw the decision.

Acting President of Gono Forum Advocate Zahurul Islam and General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmad Manik in a statement yesterday said that the re-

See page 11 col 8

Your decision today ... Will protect your child



As a parent, there are a lot of decisions you make for your child - decisions that shape their future. Which is why your decision to protect your child against hepatitis B virus is crucial.

Hepatitis B virus is 100 times more infectious than AIDS. Hepatitis B virus may attack your child anytime. World Health Organisation recommends vaccination against hepatitis B virus for all children.



Provide your child the protection against hepatitis B virus.

Consult your doctor for a hepatitis B vaccination.

Engerix-B
World's largest selling Hepatitis B vaccine
Available in over 175 countries

SB
SmithKline Beecham
Global Leaders in Vaccines

For further information please contact:
SKF
ESKAYEF BANGLADESH LTD.
52, Motiheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Tel: 9681770, 9550610



Excessive drinking can result in zero weight gain and loads of fun.

Not to mention zero guilt.

LOW ON CALORIES.



1.1