

BUY NOW PAY LATER

Whirlpool
HOME APPLIANCES USA
Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited
Authorized distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

The Daily Star

USA PROFESSIONAL
TRINITY COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY
MBA
Center for International Studies (CIS)
Call for Information : 8822729

VOL. X NO. 225 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2000

3rd Millennium

BHADRA 20, 1407 BS

JAMADUS SAANI 4, 1421 HIJRI

12 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Vested property to be returned to original owners

Cabinet forms committee to formulate draft law

The Cabinet yesterday decided in principle to return vested property to their original owners after long 35 years of state acquisition, reports UNB.

A regular meeting of the Cabinet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair took the major decision and formed a Cabinet Committee to formulate a draft law for restoration of ownership of the vested property.

Officials told UNB that the five-member committee is headed by Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru. It comprises State Ministers for Land, Rushed Mosharraf, Planning, Dr. Mahfuzur Alamgir, Primary Education, Satish Chandra Roy and Advocate Rahmat Ali MP.

A Bill on the proposed law may not be possible to be placed in parliament in its coming session, one source said. Parliament sits in its autumn session on September 6.

The government decision

will pave the way for the owners or their successors to re-possess more than six lakh acres of land listed as vested property, now occupied by either government or other people through leasing.

In 1965, the Pakistan government had declared the property of those who left the country as "enemy property". Four years later, the then government promulgated an ordinance to this effect.

Following the Indo-Pak war in 1965, a large number of people of Hindu community left the country for India. Some of them returned later while some were still living there permanently.

Later in 1974, the Bangladesh government amended the 1969 Enemy Property Ordinance into "Vested Property Act". This time, the landed property of Biharis who opted for Pakistan also got same status.

Despite demand for return of the assets, no government took

the onerous responsibility of handing over property worth billions of taka to their original owners.

BSS adds: Political leaders and representatives of the Hindu community in their instant reactions welcomed the government decision, saying laws like vested or enemy property acts were gross violation of human rights.

A recent study showed that as high as 10 lakh Bangladeshi Hindu families or 50 lakh members of the community were affected by the law. Chief of the study team and General Secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association Dr. Abul Barakat said 95 per cent of the Hindus, whose properties were confiscated, were staying in the country. Only five per cent Hindus left home for India during the 1965 war.

The main opposition party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is yet to announce its stand on the Vested Property

Act issue but several opposition lawmakers personally said the bad law should be scrapped.

Former speaker and BNP lawmaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, also a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Vested Property, praised the government decision to form a Cabinet committee to examine and draft a law on the return of the property but warned any decision in haste might spark disputes and complications.

He said mistakes were committed in enlisting properties as enemy or vested property, while in many other cases, properties were listed as enemy property which were earlier sold to Muslims by the original Hindu owners.

Hindu community leader and Awami League Working Committee member Advocate Shudhanshu Shekhar Halder hailed the government initiative, saying it responded to a long cherished demand of millions.

See page 11 col 6



It's been nearly a month since Loharpool, the steel structure connecting Sutrapur and Gandaria in the city, was dismantled. A new bridge was to be built near the old one, but it is still far from reality. Meantime, the hours lost everyday are legion, as school- and office-goers have to go round the broken bridge. — Star photo

PM to address UN Millennium Summit Sept 6

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address the United Nations Millennium Summit on September 6.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister will be the third speaker on the opening day of the three-day Summit, expected to be attended by 115 heads of state or government.

She will also deliver a speech at the Special Security Council Summit on September 7.

The Prime Minister left for New York late last night to attend the Millennium Summit at the head of a 50-strong delegation. The core entourage however, includes State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury. For-

See page 11 col 6

Gen Imam asked to retire

By Special Correspondent

Major General Inamuzzaman, Bir Bikram, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 11 Infantry Division based in Bogra, has been asked to go on retirement from September 6, sources at the Army Headquarters said yesterday.

The sources said General Imam, a valiant freedom fighter and a hero of Belonia battle, will complete 30 years of service on September 5. He had scope for another seven years of active service.

Earlier, Gen Imam was confined for 16 days at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka although he was not ill and asked to seek retirement. He was called to Dhaka following an incident in Bogra on August 15 when he reprimanded a junior officer for flouting his orders, the sources pointed out.

See page 11 col 6

Inside Today

Article

Myth of BJP's 'Moderation'

Hindutva Thrust Continues

Pratul Bidwai writes from New Delhi

Supplementary Report of Hamoodur Rahman

Commission: Some Relevant Extracts

Tenth instalment

Page 4

Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 4	6:13 pm
Sept 5	5:41 am

Prayer Timings

September 4

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:05
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:20	6:25
Esia	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Stormy debate at JS body meeting

Army Chief refuses to hand over trial documents on Zia murder

By Inam Ahmed

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry witnessed another stormy debate yesterday as Chief of Army Staff Lt General Mustafaizur Rahman refused to give any information on the trail of those who had allegedly plotted the killing of president Ziaur Rahman.

Earlier, the defence ministry had agreed to give all documents of the trial to the sub-committee on defence ministry, but it did not do so.

The ministry said it may give the documents to the Standing Committee.

However, the sub-committee

AL has once again proved its incompetence: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday vowed to form a nationalist, democratic government after the ensuing general election and reintroduce the politics of production and development for the welfare of the nation.

"Let's take today the oath to free the country from the autocratic rule of Awami League and form a nationalist government to establish multi-party democracy and rule of law ensure security of the people," she said while addressing a brief rally prior to leading a procession at



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia (in the white jeep) leads a colourful procession in the city yesterday marking the 22nd founding anniversary of the party. — Star photo

A lifebuoy for potters & weavers

Success story of a micro-credit programme in Sirajganj

By Rezaul Karim, back from Sirajganj

Potters and weavers, who were facing an uncertain future only a year ago, can now profitably market their merchandise due to a micro-credit programme of UNDP in remote villages in Sirajganj district.

The programme encouraged them to produce items as per market demand.

Only recently, hundreds of weavers and potters were about to give up their traditional profession and switch over to new ones as their old fashioned

items failed to attract customers.

But under the UNDP programme, they were given training on new designs and diversification of products. As they started to supply new products in the market, an instant demand for those was observed.

Earlier we used to produce only earthen pitchers and cooking pots which have gradually vanished from our houses. Now we are producing items like

flower vases, ash trays, toys and other interior decoration items which have a good market," said Jognaya Rani Pal (45).

She said that even six months ago, it was very difficult for them to maintain their five-member family and serious hardship forced her husband and two sons to change the hereditary profession. But the training and small credit encouraged her.

Jognaya said that earlier

she could make 20 to 25 earthen cooking pots a day and earn a profit of Tk 35 at the maximum, but now she makes a minimum profit of Tk 60 per day by making flower vases and other decoration items.

The UNDP supported Community Empowerment for Poverty Alleviation (CEPA) programme in cooperation with Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) provided a month-long training

See page 12 col 2

Ershad files writ challenging cancellation of JS seat

By Staff Correspondent

Former president and Jatiya party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging a notification of the Parliament Secretariat cancelling his parliament membership following conviction in a corruption case.

A Vacation Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hamidul Huq and Justice S K Sinha will hear the writ on Tuesday.

Soon after the writ was filed at about 10:30 am, Attorney General Mahmudul Islam appeared before the court and prayed for two days' time. The complainant did not oppose.

Barrister Rafiqul Huq and

See page 11 col 5

Seema's death in Ctg jail: Case against 15

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 3: A case was filed today against 15 people including the then SP, jailor, jail supers, civil surgeon, and IOs in connection with the death of Seema Chowdhury more than 3 years ago in the Chittagong Jail.

Seema's brother Sajal Kanti Chowdhury, also president of the Banshkhali thana Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) filed the case with CMM's court here.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Atahar Ali directed the Kotwali thana OC to report the court within 7 days whether any other murder case was filed elsewhere in this connection.

The plaintiff in the case alleged that Seema was murdered.

See page 11 col 3

Govt to stay in power till July 13 next yr: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said last night that her government was trying to wipe out terrorism from the society but the efforts were being hindered as the opposition political parties patronised terrorism, reports BSS.

Presiding over a meeting of the working committee and advisory council of Awami League at Ganobhaban, the Prime Minister said murders had been carried out in a planned way to create law and order situation in society.

The AL Chief said the government would stay in power till July 13, 2001 and elections would be held under a caretaker government by October 14, 2001.

See page 11 col 3

Draft voter list: EC to probe some serious allegations

By Nazmul Ashraf

The Election Commission has gone for a special drive to probe some serious allegations it received from the political parties and individuals about the draft voter list.

Nevertheless, such claims, submitted on expiry of the specified time for registering objections and suggestions, would not be settled before the final voter list is published on October 26.

The EC drive is also taking into account alleged flaws in the draft list as published in newspapers or appeared before the EC itself.

Different political parties and individuals have so far submitted to the EC Secretariat

some 50 applications, mainly challenging rise or fall in the number of voters and alleging phoney voters.

The applicants include the ruling Awami League, opposition Jatiya Party, the lone minister from JSD, a mayor and two opposition MPs.

The EC formed probe bodies to look into the major allegations while its officials examined the minor ones. Reports on some of the investigations have already been submitted to the EC while other alleged flaws are still under investigation.

If needed, the authorities will further amend the voter list based on findings of the investigations, but only after

publication of the final list.

Dhaka District Election Officer Shah Alam is now looking into Awami League's complaint that phoney voters were registered at opposition leader Khaleda Zia's residence in Dhaka Cantonment.

The complaint said that 49 of the 83 voters enrolled in Khaleda's residence were fake.

Members of two probe bodies who had gone to Bhola have submitted their reports on Jatiya Party Secretary-General Nazim Rahman Manzur's complaint of abnormal rise in the number of voters in Salar thana. They also investigated BNP MP Major (ret'd.)

See page 11 col 4

HSC exam centre at Ctg Cantt College cancelled for 2 years

Mahmud & Russel are now studying abroad

By Mustak Hossain

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination centre at Chittagong Cantonment Public School and College has been cancelled for two years for its failure to hold HSC examinations in 1998 properly.

A letter from the Board to this effect will be sent to the institution today. Chittagong Board Chairman Prof. Ahmed Hossain told The Daily Star when contacted over telephone yesterday.

The action follows cancellation of results of two students of

the college who had secured the first and the 18th positions in HSC examinations in 1998 by fraudulent means in connivance with a teacher and some officials of the Board.

The results were cancelled Saturday as per a probe committee report submitted to the Board in March last year. The committee was headed by Prof. Ahmed Hossain, who was a teacher of Hail Mohsin College in Chittagong at that time.

Meanwhile, the two students — Ashikul Kabir Mahmud and Ruhul Haq — are now studying



Bashundhara City Development Co. Ltd. Signed a contract on 1st September 2000 with CORONA INTERNATIONAL (Representative of ABB, Germany and Dorman Smith Switchgear Ltd, England) for Supply Installation Testing and Commissioning of 33KV Sub-Station and Complete Electrical Systems for their Prestigious and Largest Shopping Mall under construction at Panthapath. Mr. Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, Chairman & Managing Director of Bashundhara Group and Mr. Mohammad Maksud, Managing Director, Corona International signed the contract on behalf of the respective companies. Mr. George A. Offerdal, Business Development Manager, Asia Pacific Region of ABB, Germany witnessed the contract. Mr. Sadat Sobhan Tanbir, 1st Vice Chairman, Mr. Shafiat Sobhan Sunvir, 2nd Vice Chairman, Mr. A. T. M. Jahangir, Director, Mr. M. A. Sattar, Executive Director Mr. Sharif Khan, Corporate Manager and Mr. Abdur Razzeque, Project Manager of Bashundhara Group, Mr. Pravidhya Abhigantaphand, Executive Vice President Arun Chaiseri Consulting Engineers Co. Ltd, Thailand Mr. Syedur Rahman, Director, Corona International and Mr. Mustapha Khalid & Md. Foyezullah of Vistaara Architects Ltd. were also present on the occasion.

Bersha Ad