

Govt raises transport fare by 50pc

By Reaz Ahmad

The government yesterday raised bus and minibus fare by about 50 per cent against enhancement of fuel prices by 15 per cent on an average recently.

Bus fare now is 0.47 poisa and minibus fare 0.50 poisa per kilometre. Previously, the rates were 0.32 poisa and 0.35 poisa respectively.

The rates will be enhanced by another 0.15 poisa per kilometre next year.

On August 14, the government raised the prices of diesel and kerosene by 20 per cent from Tk. 13 to Tk. 15.50 per

litre and that of petrol by 9.5 per cent from Tk. 21 to Tk. 23 per litre. The price of octane was also raised by nine per cent from Tk. 23 to Tk. 25 per litre.

The new fare rates were announced after a two-hour meeting between the government and leaders of a pro-government transport owners association.

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju and State Minister for Communications Anisul Haq Chowdhury represented the government side. President of Bangladesh

Sarik Paribahan Samity and ruling party lawmaker Mdquib Hossain represented the transport owners association at the meeting held at the Secretariat.

Chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Azizul Haq, who heads an Expert Committee on Transport Fare, was also present.

In an instant reaction, a bus passenger said the enhancement is "too much" compared to an average 15 per cent rise in fuel prices.

Talking to The Daily Star last night the Communications

Minister said, "The rates have been raised on the basis of a recommendation of the Expert Committee."

Asked about probable public reaction to the huge enhancement, the minister said, "Passengers would now get relief from indiscriminate enhancement in fare as we have fixed a ceiling."

Manju said operators of inter-district luxury coaches would increase fare rates proportionately.

About 'premium' buses and

See page 11 col 8

Akhtaruzzaman attends JS session

By Staff Correspondent

BNP lawmaker Maj (retd) Akhtaruzzaman joined the Jatiya Sangsad sitting yesterday, defying the party decision to continue boycott of JS sessions.

The dissident BNP leader, who was suspended from the party last week, entered the House at 10:55 am and spoke there twice.

Legislators belonging to the main opposition party, BNP, have been boycotting Sangsad sessions since July last year. However, they attended its last session briefly to save their parliament membership.

Akhtaruzzaman told the House yesterday that he joined its sitting to highlight the problems of his constituency - Kotiadi and claimed that local unit of BNP and people of all the 10 unions in his constituency supported his return to parliament.

He noted that lawmakers

See page 11 col 7



BNP MP Akhtaruzzaman talks with an unidentified woman in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. Akhtaruzzaman returned to House yesterday defying his party's decision to continue boycott of Parliament session.

- AFP photo

OPEC to raise oil output

VIENNA, Austria, Sept 10: OPEC members agreed today to boost the group's official oil output by 800,000 barrels a day, two oil ministers in the petroleum producers cartel said, reports AP.

The decision, reached after four hours of informal talks in Vienna, came amid mounting international pressure on OPEC to pump more oil to stem surging fuel prices.

The new quota, which will be slightly higher than what many analysts had predicted, will start Oct 1. OPEC members

See page 11 col 3

SKOP's 48-hr rail-road barricade begins today

By Staff Correspondent
 Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) will enforce a 48-hour rail-road barricade programme from this morning demanding implementation of the agreement signed with the government.

The agreement includes announcement of minimum wages, cancellation of privatisation process, reopening of all closed mills and reinstatement of retrenched workers.

Leaders and activists of SKOP yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally in front of Sonali Bank Head Office at Motijheel. The rally was addressed, among others, by SKOP leader Nazrul Islam Khan, Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Noor Hossain and Harun-ur-Rashid.

Speakers at the rally criticised the government for not implementing the agreement signed with SKOP two years ago.

Proposed strike at garment units postponed

Bangladesh Garments Sramik Oikya Parishad has postponed its Monday's 24-hour strike in garment industries, reports UNB.

The strike was postponed after a meeting between the leaders of BGMEA and the Parishad at BGMEA office here yesterday.

Inside Today

Article

UN Millennium Summit: Growing Challenges

World Leaders Should Strive to Find Answers

Column: The Horizon This Week

By Arshad-uz Zaman

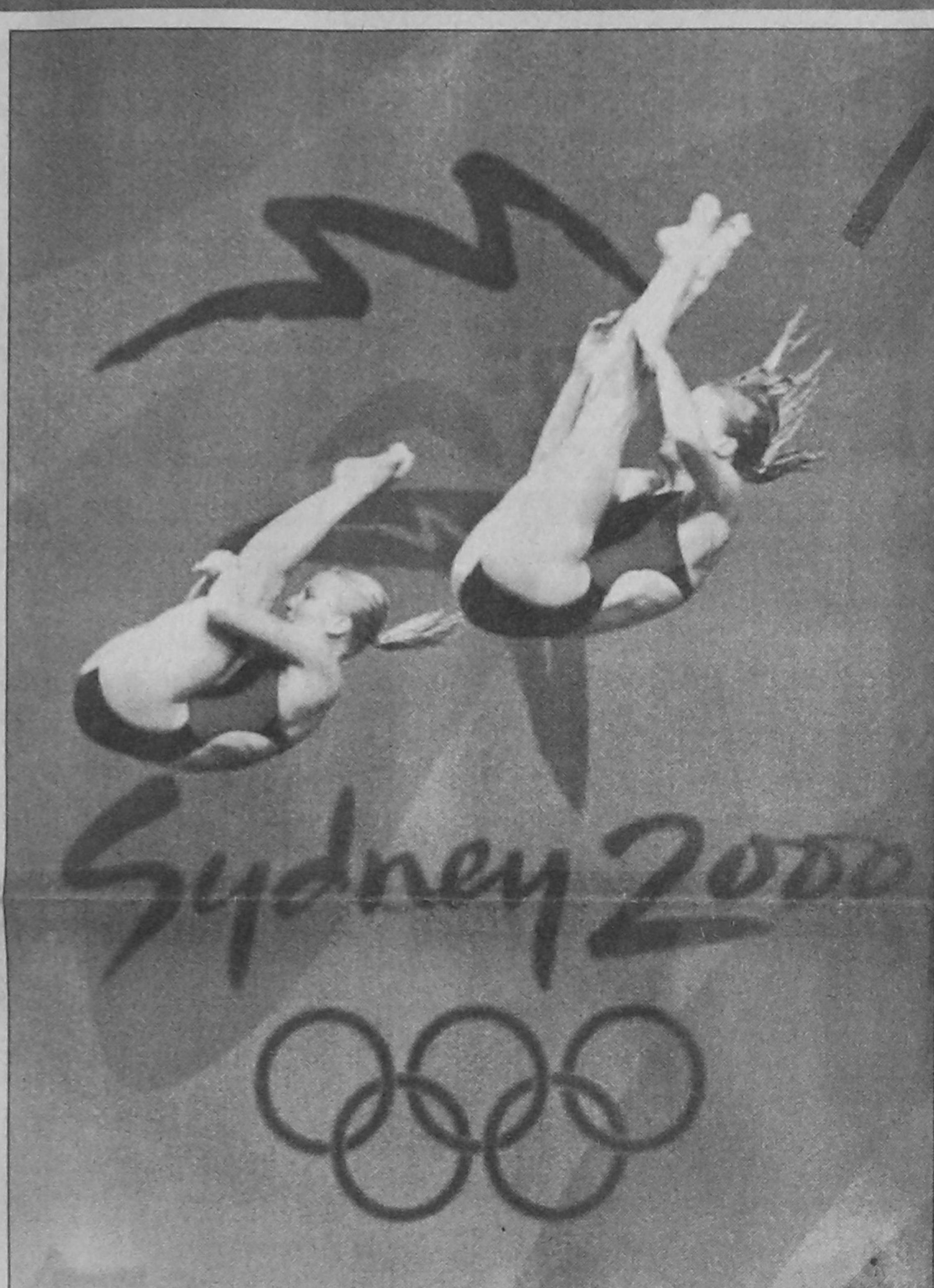
Page 4

Business

BB director's support to loan defaulter in FBCCI polls raises row

DSE, CSE price quotations

Pages 6 & 7



United States synchronised diving team Jenny Keim (L) and Laura Wilkinson perform on the 10m platform during training at the Sydney International Aquatics Centre yesterday in preparation for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. The Games begin September 15. - AFP photo

Koreas to march as unified team at Olympic opening

SYDNEY, Sept 10: North and South Korea will march as one team at the Olympic opening ceremony on Friday in one of the most powerful symbols yet of the deepening approach between them, reports AFP.

Under an accord brokered by International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan-Antonio Samaranch, athletes from the two countries -- who remain technically at war -- will march behind a flag representing the entire Korean peninsula.

The IOC is very pleased to announce an agreement has been reached between the national Olympic committees of South Korea and the (Democratic) People's Republic of North Korea, Samaranch said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency said that both Koreas would be represented by around 180 athletes wearing

identical uniforms.

It will be the first time the two states, bitter enemies since the peninsula was divided into the communist north and capitalist south at the end of the 1950-53 Korean war, have marched together at an Olympics.

"They will march here as a unified team," added the IOC chief.

South Korean IOC member Kim Un-Young said that it was a significant contribution to inter-Korean reconciliation.

Kim confirmed that the flag they will carry shows all the

See page 11 col 6

members.

"This is a very important gesture showing to all the world the will of the two Koreas," said Samaranch, adding that there had been meetings over the past two or three days and it had been decided that there would be one flag, but two athletes carrying it.

"They will march here as a unified team," added the IOC chief.

South Korean IOC member Kim Un-Young said that it was a significant contribution to inter-Korean reconciliation.

Kim confirmed that the flag they will carry shows all the

See page 11 col 7



Jatiya Party (Ershad) leader Jahangir Mohammad Adel (middle) appeared before the High Court yesterday to seek bail. Adel is facing sedition charge for hoisting Pakistan's national flag atop his residence on August 14.

- Star photo

Adel decides to stay within SC bldg

By Staff Correspondent

Jahangir Mohammad Adel who is facing a sedition charge said yesterday he would spend the night at the Supreme Court building as his bail prayer could not be heard by the High Court for time constraint.

Police remained deployed around the Supreme Court building and in front of the chamber of Adel's lawyer on its premises.

Adel, his two sons, some of their relatives and two junior lawyers were staying at the chamber of his lawyer Khondker Mahbub Hossain, one of his sons told this correspondent at 10:30 last night.

"My client will remain in the High Court till the petition is accepted or rejected," said Hossain adding that his client had already surrendered before the

See page 11 col 6

UK may change work permit rules in certain sectors

By Special Correspondent

British Home Secretary Jack Straw has said Britain is considering change in immigration rules to enable skilled people of different categories work in his country.

"We announced fresh rules for entrepreneurs. Previously people investing one million pounds could get work permits. Now new policies have been initiated for set jobs", he told a press conference before leaving Dhaka yesterday at the end of a two-day visit to Bangladesh. British High Commissioner David Carter was also present at the press conference held the High Commission.

Straw said his colleague Barbara Roach would initiate debate on change in work permit rules in certain sectors to allow skilled people work in

gas reserves before thinking of exporting it.

She told Straw that BNP won't object to any move to export gas only if the present and future domestic demand is taken care of and if it proves to be profitable to the nation.

Moreover, gas-based industries need to be set up in the country before considering the export option.

The opposition leader also said that the previous BNP gov-

ernment

See page 11 col 3



Jack Straw

Britain. Immigrants including an estimated 300,000 from Bangladesh have contributed a lot to Britain, he pointed out.

But he said that his country would continue tough policies regarding illegal immigrants from different corners of the world, who try to get into Britain through deception.

"Every time a Bangladeshi tries that it makes difficult for others", he said. However, the rate of granting of visit visa by the British High Commission in Dhaka is quite good, some 75 per cent of the applications are approved on an average. Granting of other categories of visa like that for reunion of families are also satisfactory, he added.

The Home Secretary further said that the previous BNP gov-

ernment