

The Daily Star

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VOL. X NO. 311 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2000

3rd Millennium

AGRAHAYAN 16, 1407 BS

RAMADAN 3, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE : TAKA 9.00

JS committee's directive to resume SEMP immediately

By Special Correspondent
The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) yesterday gave directive for immediate resumption of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP).
The MOEF had halted all activities under the SEMP in October, alleging irregularities and corruption.
The directive came at a meeting of the JS body, presided over by its Chairman Tabibur Rahman Sardar. The meeting also took note of the deteriorating relations between the MOEF and the UNDP over the SEMP, meeting sources said.
The UNDP had threatened to withdraw the remaining 22 million dollars grant from the 26 million dollar SEMP, launched in 1998. It was being implemented by 21 government, non-government and advocacy organisations.
The SEMP is the biggest ever UNDP programme in Bangladesh in the environment sector.
The JS body said the programme should be resumed.
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JS body will inspect garment factories flouting safety rules

BGMEA to provide list

A parliamentary sub-committee was formed yesterday to launch a probe into garment factories that are allegedly flouting safety regulations and suggest necessary reforms in outdated factory rules.
The committee will also identify the problems and flaws that lead to incidents of fire at garment factories.
The Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) would provide the committee with a list of names of factories where it had sent letters to warn them about the absence of safety measures.
The five-member sub-committee was formed at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and Employment Ministry held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (parliament building) yesterday. Two representatives of the BGMEA were also present in the meeting.

The meeting was held in the wake of a tragic incident of fire at a knitwear factory in Narsinghdi on November 25, in which 48 garment workers were killed.
Meeting sources told The Daily Star last night that the parliamentary committee members came down heavily on the garment factory owners for paying poor salary to the workers, poor safety arrangements and congested factory environment despite repeated appeals and demands by different quarters of the society.
Earlier, about 24 problems were identified in the garment industry, and the BGMEA was supposed to redress those gradually. But, a member of the JS committee said yesterday that only 10 per cent of the problems have so far been resolved.
However, BGMEA President Anisur Rahman
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Mayor wakes up to the stinky reality and acts... pleas from thousands of offices and business establishments at the Karwan Bazar appear to have fallen on the right ears. The Dhaka City Corporation's conservancy team was seen removing rubbish piled on the roads near the kitchen market yesterday. We thank the Mayor for his prompt action. However, we would like to suggest that a special team be formed to deal regularly and instantly with tonnes of garbage generated by the kitchen market. Not only the garbage, the major thoroughfares in the area are also encroached upon by illegal makeshift structures and used by bus and truck owners as temporary terminals. During daytime, these roads simply become unusable. The DCC should also address this problem. With the area growing in prestige, and more and more national and multinational companies moving in, the DCC should ensure cleaner and obstruction-free roads in the precinct. We really hope that the DCC would live up to the task.
-Star photo

Dhaka plans tough stand if errant envoy not recalled

Pak HC may be summoned again

Dhaka is seriously contemplating asking Islamabad to recall from Bangladesh its 'errant envoy', Deputy High Commissioner Irfan Raja.
Otherwise, he will be declared persona non grata under Article 9 (1961) of the Vienna Convention, leading to his expulsion, highly placed sources indicated yesterday.
The decision about the envoy, who violated all diplomatic niceties to make unwarranted remarks on Bangladesh's Independence War hurting the national pride, is expected to be taken today or tomorrow.
Pakistan's High Commissioner Iqbal Ahmed Khan is likely to be summoned to the Foreign Ministry again and told of Dhaka's decision.
Only a 'suitable gesture' and a 'favourable reply'

from Islamabad to Dhaka's protest note handed over to the High Commissioner on Tuesday could forestall Bangladesh government's decision, observers said.
Islamabad can move to repair the damage to relations between the two countries caused by the uncalculated comments by its envoy either by withdrawing him from Dhaka or at least calling him back 'for consultations', they noted.
Hectic consultations among senior officials were going on yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and also at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on what action to be taken against the 'errant diplomat'. But they were tight-lipped when approached for comments.
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A chaos called Karwan Bazar

More than 100 illegal installations in last one year

Total absence of governance has allowed hooligans and terrorists to install hundreds of trading centres along with political party offices in the Karwan Bazar area, occupying main roads, footpaths, public parks and parking lots.
More than 100 illegal installations have mushroomed in this prime commercial area during the last one year. In the very presence of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) officials and police, the gangs have completely taken over six main thoroughfares of Karwan Bazar installing trading centres overnight.
Pleas from hundreds of offices, including some of the top-ranking business houses of the country, to clean the area have fallen on deaf ears of the authorities, particularly the DCC, which is officially the custodian of the area.
Most recently the DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif came into the limelight when he allocated a park for building 51 shops. However, on November 27, the Prime Minister revoked the allotment and ordered the DCC to demolish all structures on the park. Since then, the city corporation has removed some shops and piles of rubbish.
The entire Karwan Bazar area, with the country's largest wholesale vegetable market, bears the testimony to lawlessness.
To make the situation even worse, DCC Zone-6 officials have secretly allowed some dozen inter-district bus services to set up their terminal in the area. To facilitate parking for the buses, the DCC officials are alleged to have removed mountains of rubbish from in front of the Janata Tower for a hefty fee.
Meanwhile, the bus owners discovered an empty, 'unclaimed plot' near holding numbers 71 and 73 on the northern side of Karwan Bazar and grabbed it for use as the terminal and parking area. DCC officials said they knew nothing of it.
Now it has designated a spot in the middle of another thoroughfare nearby to dump about 100 tonnes of rubbish, generated daily by the vegetable market.
Several plot owners of Karwan Bazar said that under the circumstances they could not rent out their premises to offices. They said they were being ruined, as they couldn't find tenants. They threatened to stop paying holding taxes to the DCC.
Feiz Ahmed, a plot owner, said that as commercial plots they were
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Schri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Nov	Schri	Iftar
3	30	4:59	5:14
4	Dec 1	5:00	5:14
5	Dec 2	5:00	5:14

EC didn't approve appointments of consultant & analyst, admits CEC

By Nazrul Islam

Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed admitted yesterday that the Election Commission did not approve the appointments of an international consultant and a system analyst to a Commission project.
The admission came at a time when the tussle on the question of authorities between the CEC and the three other Election Commissioners is at its peak. It started in August last when the CEC went for the appoint-

ments unilaterally.
"There was no approval from the Commission regarding the appointments, but all of them (Election Commissioners) knew of it," he told a group of journalists at his office yesterday following nearly one-and-a-half-hour meeting with his deputies on the recent developments in the Commission.
The meeting, however, failed to resolve the deadlock. In August last, the chief executive of the EC decided to bring Lionell J Wollner, a US national, as an international consultant and Mainul Haque, a system analyst, in the project aimed at strengthening the Election Commission. He made the appointments ignoring opinions from the other Commissioners.
The Election Commissioners,
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NBR move to settle Ershad's income tax return issue

Star Report

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has taken an initiative to settle the issue of income tax return filed by former president H M Ershad, a move seen by many as aimed at assessing his total assets.
Sources concerned said the main purpose of the NBR initiative is to ascertain whether the jailed Jatiya party chief has the ability to pay a fine Tk 5.5 crore.
Earlier, the Supreme Court had ruled that the former president
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NCTBB likely to cancel contract with 3 printers

By Staff Correspondent

The curriculum and textbook committee of the National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTBB) is likely to cancel the contract signed between the Board and Pustaka, Free Press and Suktara, three concerns of Beximco Group for printing of 8.12 crore textbooks, sources said.
The committee will sit at an emergency meeting today to decide on three concerns of
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