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3rd Millennium

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Several open spaces in the Gulistan area have already been taken over by hawkers and vendors with the connivance of the DCC. Our story today deals with one of the remaining designated parking lots which is at present illegally occupied by temporary construction. The picture on left shows rows of tin-sheds where the proposed market is to be constructed. The space is meant to be a parking lot. The picture on the right shows how the approach to the parking lot has been deliberately narrowed so as to make it inaccessible. The land in question is one of the last spaces left to construct a parking lot, which can greatly ease the traffic chaos regularly choking the traffic in the area.

Speaker's APS makes 35 trips costing Tk 1cr

Star Report

An official of the Jatiya Sangsad, using "business passport", travelled abroad as many as 35 times as a member of the Speaker's entourage, costing the national exchequer about Tk one crore in the last four years.

"Such travel is unlawful as per existing laws", an official of the Parliament Secretariat said. Sirajul Islam Badsha, Assistant Personal Secretary (APS) to Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury travelled to 26 countries along with the Speaker.

Badsha was appointed on July 14, 1996. As per law, a government official has to obtain official passport after appointment. But Badsha did not procure his official passport since his appointment as APS to the Speaker with the rank of a First Class government official, the official said.

On expiry of his first passport (No 406513) issued from Sylhet, Badsha procured a fresh passport (No. 135462) issued from the Passport and Immigration office in Dhaka on September 16, 1997 in which he was identified as a businessman, sources said. Later, two duplicate copies of passport book No. 0-0078301 and 0-076397 were issued from Dhaka against his application.

Badsha enjoyed all official privileges during his trips as APS to the Speaker in the last four years, the sources said.

Badsha availed five foreign trips in the first four months of the current financial year (2000-2001), eight in fiscal 1999-2000, 11 in 98-99, six in 97-98 and five trips in fiscal 96-97, the sources said.

It was alleged that Badsha also did not submit to the Parliament Secretariat proper documents regarding his travel expenditures. Sometimes he gave note to the Delegation Department of the Jatiya Sangsad that his documents were "lost".

When contacted over telephone, Badsha told The Daily Star that he was a "political appointee" in the Parliament Secretariat and required no official passport. He said his passport will be converted into an official one after confirmation of his service, which is under process.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury has initiated a process to absorb several political appointees in the Parliament Secretariat, the sources claimed.

Announcement

HAVE A NICE DAY
The Star's Member
Important health tips are necessary for everyone. The Daily Star starts such a regular column styled as above in FOCUS page (Page 5) from tomorrow, Monday, December 4, 2000.

Inside Today

- Article**
- BNP's Stance Towards Minorities: Sincere Approach or Gimmick?**
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Impunity of law enforcing agencies Page 9

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7	4	5-02	5-14
8	5	5-03	5-14

Tk 50cr land leased out for only Tk 1.6cr

A minister, two secretaries involved in the deal

By Staff Correspondent

Bypassing official procedure, the Land Ministry recently leased out 1.5 bigha (about 20,000 square feet) of land officially designated for car parking behind Ramna Bhaban in Gulistan area for only Tk 1.62 crore to an association called Bangabandhu Baboshayee Samobaya Samity (BBS).

Armed BBS men then forced the Rajuk's Building Construction Committee at gunpoint to approve a six-storey building plan at the end of October. At least one top Rajuk official, also an influential Member, strongly and openly supported the BBS men. While the committee met at Rajuk office, armed men camped in the room of the official. They also held several meetings inside the Member's room.

A minister, two secretaries, son of a state minister and scores of influential men are involved in the deal. The Samity is learnt to have started selling hundreds of shops even before commencing construction of the complex. The entire deal would roughly involve about Tk 50

crore. Sources said the market price of the piece of land alone is around Tk 50 crore.

Sources said a section of the Land Ministry officials manipulated the official papers, removed documents from government archives and settled a lease deed for 60 years with the office of the ADC Revenue, which is under the district administrator's office. The deed to the land bears name of the Secretary of the Bangabandhu Baboshayee Samobaya Samity.

What is to be noticed here is the name of Bangabandhu, which is being used by unscrupulous businessmen and corrupt officials purely for the purpose of grabbing land in the city, especially prime areas.

Sources said the parking space belongs to the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Works Ministry. But in 1986, the Martial Law government of General Ershad handed the parking lot over to Dhaka City

Dhaka, Delhi may talk gas export at FS-level talks

By M Anwarul Haq

Bangladesh and India are expected to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations touching upon political, economic and security issues during the forthcoming foreign secretary level talks after one and a half years.

The talks to be held in Delhi on December 13 and 14 are seen by observers as very crucial in shaping the course of bilateral relations between the two countries in the immediate future.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary

Shafi Sami and his Indian counterpart Lalit Man Singh will hold the talks.

Well informed sources said although the foreign secretaries will meet on an open-ended agenda. Issues of opening up multi-modal transportation links including transshipment of Indian cargo through Bangladesh, particularly to its north-eastern states will figure prominently during the discussions. Delhi is also likely to ask Dhaka about its plans for export of natural gas.

Dhaka will raise the issue of early completion of land boundary demarcation as per the Mujib-Indira accord of 1974 and ask for taking effective measures to remove trade imbalance. It will insist that duty free access be given to 25 categories of items, an issue raised earlier.

The issues of smuggling, border trade, enhanced border security and insurgency will also come up for discussion.

The last foreign secretary level talks were held in June, 1998 in Dhaka. The Bangladesh side at the talks were led by the then foreign secretary Mustafizur Rahman and the Indian side by external affairs secretary K Raghunath.

The 1998 talks were the first foreign secretary level talks

Winter at the door

By Special Correspondent

The cool northwesterly winds are advancing, heralding the arrival of winter in the country.

The mercury dropped to 9.8 degree Celsius at Rangpur and Syedpur towns early yesterday.

The districts in Rajshahi division have also come under the spell of the cool wind. The temperature dropped to 12.8 C in Rajshahi city yesterday.

The winter will settle all over the country in a couple of days, the Meteorological Department said last night.

The minimum temperature in Dhaka may come down below 17 degree C today. It was 18.5 C yesterday morning.

In Dhaka city the people were caught off guard to protect themselves from the sudden arrival of cool air.

SEC probing financial fraud by IFIC men

By M Shamsur Rahman

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is probing a financial fraud by officials of a bank to siphon off crores of taka from investment certificates.

The SEC has assigned one of its senior officials to conduct the investigation upon an order by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka in September, requesting the regulatory body to launch an investigation into the fraud.

The CMM observed that since it is a financial fraud, a SEC official should investigate and file a detailed report, which should help police investigation. The CMM passed the order a day after granting bail to a IFIC bank official who was handed over to the police by the bank on charge of fraud.

Sources said some officials in IFIC Bank's Motijheel branch, who verify signatures of investors on Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) unit certificates, had been engaged in selling the certificates by forging signatures of investors.

The bank came to know of the scam when two of its clients complained that they had purchased

10,000 unit of ICB investment certificates in 1990 but did not receive dividends in the form of extra unit certificates under the cumulative investment plan.

They also complained that they had applied for the dividends in the form of additional unit certificates in the middle of 1995 but did not receive those till July 2000.

The bank later investigated the matter and found that the additional unit certificates and a large number of the original certificates had been sold by forging signatures.

The bank also examined other investors' accounts and found that an official was involved in selling huge number of ICB unit certificates by substantiating forged signatures.

Sources said the bank official had admitted his involvement in the act of forgery and returned Tk 1.5 lakh to the bank, which later handed him over to the police. The matter was brought before the court as the official sought bail.

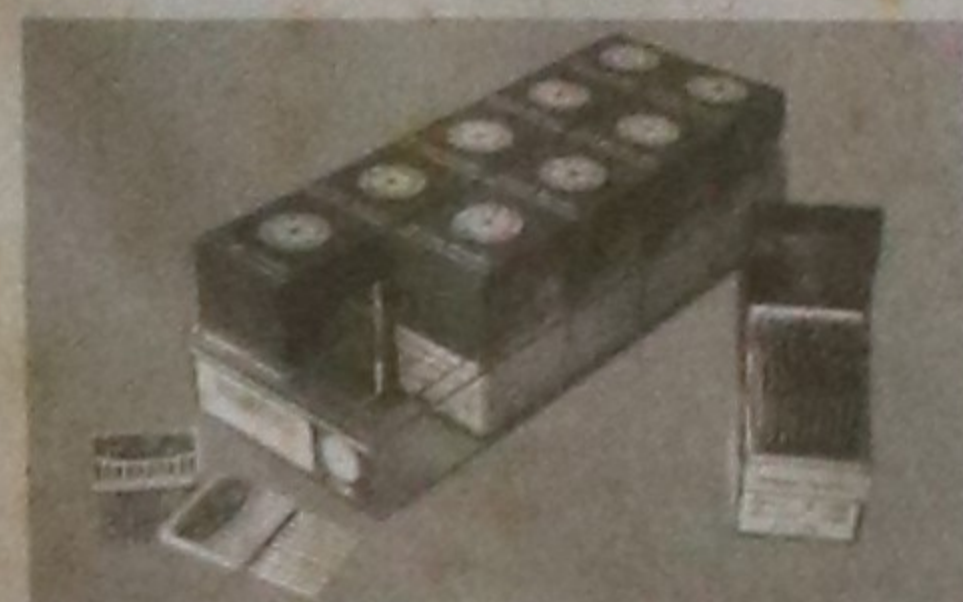
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TRADE MARK WARNING NOTICE

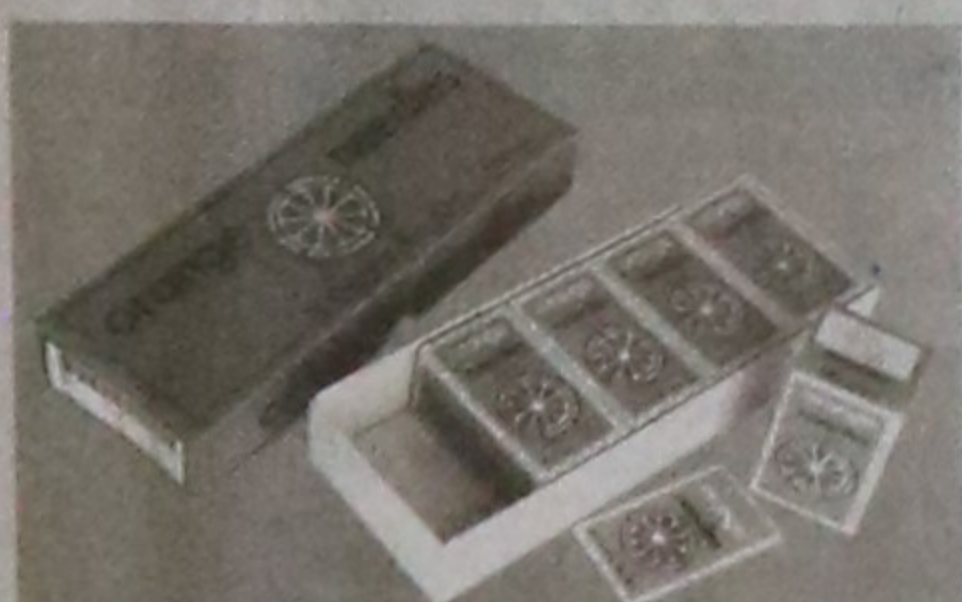
It is hereby informed to all whole sellers and consumers that my client **PACIFIC ASSOCIATES LIMITED**, City Heart (6th floor), Naya Paltan, V.I.P. Road, Dhaka, have been marketing 'ORANGE NEEDLE' packing in plastic box instead of paper box through it's only whole seller A. Satter Engineering Works of 11, Chittya Ranjan Avenue, Sadarghat, Dhaka- 1000 and his nominated retail sellers.

Recently it is observed that some dishonest businessmen are marketing fake/forged 'ORANGE NEEDLE' which is causing financial damages, and hampering goodwill of my client. In such situation, it is hereby strongly warned to such dishonest businessmen to restrain themselves from marketing fake 'ORANGE NEEDLE' within 7 (seven) days from publishing this notice, businessmen as per laws of Bangladesh. It should be noted here that a few genuine orange needle in paper box which was imported earlier can be found to M/S. A. Satter Engineering Works and his nominated retail sellers.

The wrapper of the original plastic box of 'ORANGE NEEDLE' and fake paper box 'ORANGE NEEDLE' are given below for kind information of all concerned.



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PACIFIC ASSOCIATES LIMITED.
Md. Khorshedur Rahman
Advocate
Lee Khan & Associates
City Heart, 67, Naya Paltan,
Dhaka- 1000, Bangladesh.

Cinema hall employee murdered BNP activist shot dead in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Dec 2: A BNP activist was shot dead during a clash with the ruling party activists at village Char Chandia in Sonagazi thana of the district last night.

The victim was identified as Joyal Abedin, 35, son of Badluazzaman of Char Chandia.

According to a latenight UNB report, miscreants kidnapped Shyamal Kumar Das, son of Aswini Kumar Das of Sahadepur this (Saturday) morning from Taki Road in the town.

He was tortured and later left unconscious near Daudpur Bridge, local people said.

He was rushed to Feni General Hospital where he died in the evening. Feni police station could not give details of the murder till 8:30 pm. His body was still lying in Feni hospital morgue.

An employee of Surat Mahal Cinema Hall on the Trunk Road, Shyamal lived in the stronghold of Awami League and was attacked in an area controlled by opposition BNP.

The killing occurred in less than 24 hours after BNP activist Joyal

See page 11 col 6

'Double murder has link with Khilgaon killing'

By Staff Correspondent

The double murder in the city's East Rampura recently was a sequel to rivalry between two gangs following the killing of a gang leader of Gopibagh area at Khilgaon in August, sources concerned said.

Decomposed bodies of the two young men were recovered Friday night from a third floor flat at a house at East Rampura. None came to Khilgaon thana or to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue, where the bodies were kept till last night after autopsy, to claim the bodies, police said.

Earlier on August 29, decomposed bodies of Asif, a drug trader and gang leader of Gopibagh area and two other criminals were recovered from a flat at Khilgaon.

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