

# The Daily Star

## on Friday

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DHAKA FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2000



### Unheeded PM's directive

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently ordered demolition of these makeshift shops, encroaching upon a park near the Karwan Bazar kitchen market, and restoration of the open space for public use. DCC is yet to act. — Star photo

## Health assembly castigates WTO

Delegates denounce conversion of health into a mere commodity

By Staff Correspondent

After the World Bank, it was the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) turn to come under fire on the fourth day of the five-day People's Health Assembly 2000 on the outskirts of the city in Nayarhat, Savar yesterday, with the delegates denouncing the conversion of health into a mere commodity.

More than 3,000 delegates from the six continents assembled for the people's movement against globalisation and liberalisation policies that affect the health of the poor.

Mike Rowson of MedAct, the United Kingdom, criticised the way serious public health issues were being decided by trade bodies like the WTO. "The WTO do not have any defined policy on public healthcare and treated health as part of any other 'service industry'."

The dispute settlement body in the WTO operates behind closed doors and is comprised of trade administrators and lawyers," he added, pointing to the undemocratic way in which the concerns of a majority of people were being ignored.

Speaking on "Health for All," a delegate from South America said, "We have entered the twenty-first century and are still a long way from 'Health for All'. If our current global short-sighted exploitation of people and environment continues, we would soon be well on the road to 'Health for No One'."

### Highlights of draft PHA Charter

By Staff Correspondent

The idea of holding the People's Health Assembly (PHA) 2000 has been discussed for more than a decade. In 1998, a number of organisations initiated the process of the PHA.

A worldwide network was set up and conceptual papers for the PHA were drafted by members. The present draft charter is

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### Money suits galore 57,435 cases lie pending with Artha Rin Adalat

Star Report

The Artha Rin Adalat (Money Loan Court) is burdened with money suits. The number of pending cases stood at 57,435 as on September 30 this year.

These cases involve Tk 8709.21 crore, according to a Bangladesh Bank report presented at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry yesterday.

The number increased by about 3000 in one year. It was 54,633 on September 30 last year and 57,274 in June this year.

The four nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) filed 33,655 cases till September 30 this year to realise Tk 4268.16 crore, according to the report.

Till September 30 this year, 25,308 cases were disposed of, against which Tk 895.90 crore was realised. Of this, NCBs' share was Tk 365.51 crore involving 15,140 cases.

The number of resolved cases was 20,059 a year ago.

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### Three killed in road mishaps Dolly, Rabi roughed up for running over minor boy

By Staff Correspondent

Three people including an 8-year old boy were killed in separate road accidents in the city yesterday.

Rokky, 8, a student of class three of Alatunessa High School at Middle Badda was crushed to death when a private car ran him over while he was playing in front of his house at about 4pm yesterday.

Local people set the car on fire

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## Overhauling of 3 Ashuganj units six years overdue

By Razir Rahman

Overhauling of the three major units of the Ashuganj power plant is more than six years overdue, which could very well lead to 'total collapse' of the steam-powered generators.

According to sources, although scheduled for overhaul every six years, the three units have been running non-stop for 12 years.

Further delay will not only increase overhauling expenditure but also heighten the risk of a complete shutdown, fear officials.

The total generating capacity of Ashuganj power plant is 724 megawatt (MW). Three major components of the plant are the third, fourth and fifth steam-powered units, each with a generation capacity of 150 MW. Besides, the plant accommodates two 64MW gas turbine units and a combined cycle power plant (CCPP) comprising two 56MW gas turbine units and a 34MW steam unit.

The third, fourth and fifth units of Ashuganj started generating power on commercial basis in 1986, 1987 and 1988 respectively. Power Development Board (PDB) officials said that the three were among the country's best. With the exception of a couple of months, the three units have always reached its peak generation capacity of 150 MW, they added.

Power units are due for overhauling after running for around 50 thousand generation hours which is equivalent to six years. But all the three units in question have already run more than one lakh generation hours.

A PDB official preferring anonymity said some power units of the country remains shut everyday due to maintenance or technical problems and some of the old units are not able to reach their peak production capacity.

During overhauling, power units are shut down for several months. This in the case of units like Ashuganj 3, 4 and 5 might cause severe shortage in power distribution across the country. This was one reason given by the official for not overhauling the units.

Another high-ranking PDB official pointed out that scarcity of fund as well as unacceptable preconditions of donors were to blame.

He, however, said that the third unit at Ashuganj could be overhauled by next year provided the government approved a contract with a Japanese company. The Japanese government has already allocated 15.5 million dollars for the unit. Of the total overhauling cost, 18 million dollars will be paid in foreign currency and Tk 3 crore in local currency.

## INSIDE TODAY

### COMMENT

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The truth is, bureaucrats have always loved to be politicised, whether in service or out of service and it did not (and does not) matter by which party they are being appointed. It is predatory expediency, pure and simple. Over the years, the bureaucrats have invented various ways of ingratiating themselves with the politicians, writes **Hasnat Abdul Hye** in *Politicisation of Bureaucracy*.

**Mohammad Badrul Ahsan's Why is Pakistan Procrastinating the Apology?**

### FOCUS

*Better Governance: Propelling Citizen's Participation*  
by **Syed Maslui Hasan**  
Have a Nice Day by **Dr Rabiu Murshed**

### AGENDA FOR URBAN CONCERN

Full text of deliberations on *Waste Management in Dhaka City: Towards a Solution* at The Daily Star-Bangladesh Scouts workshop

### ENVIRONMENT

Acid rain blights our woodlands  
by **Md. Asadullah Khan**

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## Violence mars opening of EU enlargement summit

20 policemen hurt in clashes with anti-globalisation activists

NICE, France, Dec 7: Thousands of protesters rampaged through the streets of this French Riviera playground Thursday, smashing, looting, hurling stones at police and torching banks as EU leaders gathered for a milestone enlargement summit, reports AFP.

The EU heads of state and government were facing what promised to be their most difficult summit in years, aimed at reforming EU decision-making to accommodate 13 countries destined to join the club over the next decade.

They were also, at the opening session, to proclaim a Charter of Fundamental Rights, setting down the basic civil, social, political and human rights for the union's 375 million citizens.

But demonstration organisers, protesting against globalisation and capitalism, said the charter did not go far enough in protecting the rights of the union's less-advantaged.

Police sources said at least 20 policemen were injured, one seriously, as they clashed with protesters swinging baseball bats and iron bars.

Other agenda items at this summit include European defence, maritime safety in the wake of recent oil and chemical spills, and food safety amidst the burgeoning scare over mad cow disease.

But the overriding worry of the summit remains the thorny and intractable problem of institutional reform.

A panel of officials, experts and wisemen -- the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) -- has been wrestling with the problem for a year and virtually nowhere.

The sticking point is that the 15, having accepted the idea of an historic expansion into the former Soviet bloc and the Mediterranean, are now going to have to relinquish some of their national sovereignty in EU voting.

And many of them, protective of sensitive national interests such as taxation, social security and farm subsidies, are balking at the idea of giving up their veto on the EU Council of Ministers.

The institutional reforms that will be on the table fall into three basic categories: extension of qualified majority voting (QMV) to areas now

requiring unanimity, re-weighting the votes on the council, and re-sizing the European Commission, the EU's executive arm.

Some of the areas proposed for QMV are non-contentious. But others, like taxation, internal and judicial affairs, immigration and asylum and, for the smaller agrarian countries, farm subsidies, cut to the quick of national sovereignty. And some countries are flatly refusing to relinquish absolute control over them.

The leaders also need to look at re-weighting votes on the council, currently ranging from 10 each for the four largest members to two for tiny Luxembourg.

They also need to resize the commission, on which the five largest members now have two commissioners each, and the other 10, one each, for a total of 20.

Presuming incoming members will want at least one commissioner, the size of the commission would quickly become unwieldy. The five largest are conditionally willing to give up one of their commissioners.

But as a quid pro quo they want more votes on the council to counter the possibility of "coalitions" of smaller countries against them.

If a deal is struck on these issues, Nice will be added to the list of cities that have given their names to the treaties on which European integration is built.

On the summit's opening day, however, tear gas was so heavy in the air that some waited into the ventilation system of a conference room where the EU leaders were holding a pre-summit meeting with their counterparts from the 13 candidate countries.

Photographers in the room for the start of the meeting said presiding French President Jacques Chirac appeared to rear his head back in surprise at the gas, and sneezed, while French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's eyes were clearly reddened.

Other participants milled around, hesitant to remain, and the start of the session appeared chaotic as the journalists were ushered out.

Although the summit was billed for three days, many EU sources here were saying extension into a fourth day, Sunday, was virtually inevitable.

## PM for cut in drip-feed foreign aid, grant

German entrepreneurs invited for joint venture investment in Bangladesh

HAMBURG, Dec 7: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said Bangladesh needs economic partnership and investment to reduce dependence on drip feed of foreign aid and grants, reports UNB.

"Our people now wish to make strides in economic and commercial sector through development and careful utilisation of available resources ... she told a seminar on Bangladesh organised by Asia-Pacific Business Association and Asia-Pacific Committee of German Businessmen (APA) at Hamburg Chamber of Commerce Building.

Hasina, currently on a 3-nation European tour to woo foreign investors, admitted that development in various sectors was possible because of aid and grants received from donor community. However, she said, "Bangladesh has no desire to continue

with dependence on foreign aid and grants."

The Prime Minister said her government is mindful of the prospect of natural gas reserve in Bangladesh and has taken prudent measures in formulating the policy on development of energy sector.

The recent gas finds have given the people of Bangladesh a hope for future, Hasina said, adding it is, therefore, imperative that this natural resource be explored and utilised in a manner that will benefit the people of the country most.

She said Bangladesh wants to build a sound and viable relation with the developed and developing world. Enhanced economic stability will create a politically stable environment within the country, Hasina told the conference.

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## Biman regains lost ground, barely International market share rises to 48pc

By Special Correspondent

With the addition of two aircraft to its fleet stabilising schedules, Bangladesh Biman regained two per cent of its share in the international market during the last financial year and the first quarter of the current fiscal, a Biman official said.

"We have regained two per cent of the market share of passengers flying to destinations abroad from Dhaka. It is 48 per cent now. We have also recorded two per cent growth in the domestic sector," Mahmudur Rahman, director, marketing and sales, said.

The increase in passengers is in the Gulf-UK routes. Biman's share of cargo rose in the European and North American routes, mainly due to export of readymade garments, he added.

Biman added to its fleet a DC-10-30 and an Airbus A310 last year on 'dry lease' for three years. Another DC-10 was added to the fleet last week. An Airbus is expected to be added next week. With these, the number of DC-10s and Airbuses will be six and four respectively, he said.

This will further improve maintenance of flight schedules and pro-

vide for proper checking as flying hours of DC-10 will come down to an average of 10 hours a day from 12.5 and those of Airbus to 8.5 hours from 11.5 hours.

The question now is to maintain the growth. We need to be more competitive and should not feel complacent," Rahman said.

The growth is due to improvement in maintenance of flight schedules, an aggressive marketing drive, close monitoring of targets, freedom to outstation managers to explore their regional markets, participation in global distribution system like ABACUS and utilisation of fifth freedom rights, he said.

Introduction of three London-Dubai-Sylhet flights a week has raised the number of passengers. Even the market share on the New York route has also increased following opening of off-line offices in Los Angeles and Toronto. Billing and settlement plan in Los Angeles will also spur the growth, Rahman noted.

Procurement of four new generation wide-body aircraft like Boeing

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Hygienic indeed!

A *Sehri* factory at Islambagh in the old town is in full swing ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr. Dried on the side of a swamp, the food product is exposed to pollution. — Star photo by Anisur Rahman

## Nizami takes over as Jamaat Ameer

By Staff Correspondent

Motur Rahman Nizami took over yesterday as Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh, succeeding Prof. Ghulam Azam who stood down as chief of the right-wing political party on health grounds.

Nizami, former secretary-general, was sworn in at an installation ceremony held at the Jamaat central office at Maghbazar in the city. Jamaat's Chief Election Commissioner Prof. Nazir Ahmed administered the oath-taking ceremony at Al Falah auditorium at 3 p.m.

Nizami has been elected for a three-year term till 2003.

Earlier, Majlis-e-Sura, the party's highest policy-making body, elected a three-member panel on October 21 for nomination of the new party chief. The panel nominated Nizami for the post of Ameer on November 19.

The new secretary-general of the party, however, is yet to be nominated.

Party sources told The Daily

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BRAC Dairy & Food Project

Dec 8	Sun Rises	Sun Sets</
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