

Ban on student politics planned

STAR REPORT

The government plans a blanket moratorium on student politics at all government and private colleges to stop campus violence and restore congenial academic atmosphere.

Education Minister Osman Farruk yesterday said the proposed move is being discussed at the highest level of the government. The ban on campus politics at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has encouraged the government to go for such a blanket moratorium.

Farruk said the ban would be first imposed on government and private colleges and later on different universities through discussion.

"The policymakers are discussing the matter to frame the modalities in this regard," the minister told the Channel I television in an interview.

"We want the educational institutions themselves to impose moratorium as BUET did," Farruk said.

After coming to power in October, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia made a radical announcement at the parliament that her party, the BNP, would not hesitate to impose a moratorium on student politics to stop campus violence.

An expert committee on education reform last week recommended keeping educational institutions totally free from politics. The committee said involvement of teachers and students in politics should be declared 'illegal'.

The report also suggested some amendments to the University Act of 1973 which ensures autonomy for public universities.

The 51-member committee led by former vice-chancellor Dr MA Bari, and comprising vice-chancellors of all public universities recommended

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Gray areas in new Ctg port order

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

The decision to declare essential services of the Chittagong port may not benefit the country's shipping -- unless the huge number of private workers there are also compelled to abide by the rules and regulations.

Port users, officials, employees and workers yesterday felt the government did not clarify whether the 20,000 private workers involved in 18 to 20 different levels of activities at the port would come under the purview of essential service rules.

A senior official of the Chittagong port on condition of anonymity said, private workers who include truck labours, merchant workers, dockers and the C&F workers, were not covered by the declaration. "It will be difficult to reign in the private workers. This will be effective for

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Free-float rate if forex reserves soar to \$2b

Saifur sets mid-November target

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to free-float the exchange rate by mid-November provided the foreign exchange reserves cross US\$ 2 billion by then.

This will mean that there will be no central bank indicative rates for buying and selling of dollar. The banks will fix the rates on a demand-supply basis.

"Free-floating of the foreign exchange rate is very risky, but we have to do it. If everything goes well, all control on exchange rate will go by mid-November," Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said yesterday.

The country's current foreign exchange reserve is still fragile at

\$1.6 billion. The reserves have to be above \$2 billion before the control is withdrawn, Saifur told a workshop.

The finance minister inaugurated a daylong workshop on 'Treasury Products and Services' organised by the Citibank, NA as chief guest at the Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday.

Saifur criticised the immediate past government for what he said leaving the financial sector in a mess.

"They signed agreements for supplier's credit one after another and flagged off some big deals like that of the MiG-29s and frigate that have burdened the country financially. Such purchases have no productive purpose," he said.

The finance minister said the government is facing difficulties in opening exchange houses in some countries.

Citing an example, he said the exchange house in Italy was closed down due to problems created by some money launders. After coming to power, the present government took initiatives to reopen the house from next Monday.

"Besides, steps have been taken to open exchange houses in the USA, South Korea and some other important places to increase remittance inflow. This would help me

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DCC wakes up to fix pockmarked city roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) starts a massive road repair work for the next six nights beginning tomorrow in the city as most of the roads have become unfit for use.

Some 200 DCC staff led by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka will start the temporary repair on every night from July 25 to 30.

The DCC mayor disclosed the plans at a press conference at the Nagar Bhaban yesterday. He said priority has been attached to four specific roads, namely Malibagh-Mouchak road, Hatkhola road and Khilgaon-to-Syedabad road and Green Road as conditions of these roads have for long been the worst.

Besides, repairs would also take

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PHOTO: STAR

Potholes on the road from Tejgaon to the Gulshan Shooting Club have narrowed down the thoroughfare almost to half leading to frequent traffic congestion. The situation is the same with many other roads as well.

Two killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of the Nagar Unnayan Directorate and a painter were murdered in the city yesterday.

A gang of four shot Saiful Islam alias Badal Hawlader, 28, the employee of the Nagar Unnayan Directorate, in front of his east Rampura residence at 11:30pm Monday. He died in the early hours of yesterday.

The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Badal's brother Rafiqul Islam said the killing might have taken

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More innings ignominy

Curtains on Colombo Test in 3 days

HASAN MASOOD from Colombo

Bangladesh lost yet another Test match inside three days when hosts Sri Lanka handed them an innings and 196 run defeat in the first of the two Test series at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

The visitors, facing a daunting task of scoring 380 runs to make Sri Lanka bat again, were bundled out for 184 with Muttaiah Muralitharan taking his second five-wicket haul in the match.

The Bangladesh innings folded

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CRICKET

Students stall JCD bid to oust DU hall provost

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

General students of Shamsunnahar Hall of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday foiled an attempt by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) to oust the incumbent hall provost Prof. Sultana Shafi before expiry of her tenure.

Resident students said a group of activists belonging to the hall unit of the JCD locked the office room of the provost in presence of some house tutors at around 11:00am. Provost Prof. Sultana Shafi was not present at her office at that time.

As the news broke, several hundreds of students came out of their rooms and rushed to the hall gate. They got furious seeing the office room of the provost locked and started demonstrating inside the hall. At one stage they broke the lock.

They chased the JCD activists and the house tutors out of the hall and locked the main entrance to the hall to resist their reentry.

The agitated students brought out a procession in the hall chanting various slogans against the undemocratic move to oust the hall provost. Later, they came out of the hall with festoons and placards, and paraded the campus streets.

The procession of the angry students went to the office of vice

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