

Procession in support of ban on 2-stroke 3-wheelers tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

A procession will be brought out from Paltan Maidan on August 20 in support of the government's ban on the plying of air polluter two-stroke three-wheeler vehicles in the capital from September 1.

Environment and Forest Minister Shajahan Siraj, who is also chairman of the inter-ministerial coordination committee to enforce the ban on two-stroke three-wheeler vehicles in the city, called upon people of all walks of life including students to join this anti-pollution massive procession with colourful banners, festoons and posters at 10am on August 20 at Paltan Maidan.

Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Mayor of Dhaka and Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadek Hossain Khoka, State Minister for Overseas Employment Qamrul Islam, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman, State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar, State Minister for Communications Salauddin Ahmed, and members of parliament will in the procession.

As a run-up to the ban, the coordination committee will also organise ward-wise processions, rallies and meetings under the supervision of local MPs up to September 1 to help enforce the ban.

BUET statement says Few student plotting to mark campus environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) in a statement Saturday said a few students were plotting to mar the congenial campus atmosphere after it reopened.

The BUET authorities expelled four students in different terms for their alleged involvement in the killing of Sabequn Nahar Sony, a BUET student, on June 8 in a shoot-out between two groups of toll collectors on the campus. Another one was expelled for his 'audacious behaviour' after the killing, the statement said.

The authorities also suspended 15 other students in different terms for ransacking university properties and their involvement in clashes before and after the killing for political purposes.

Of them, six students were expelled from their residential halls, said the statement signed by BUET Registrar Mohammad Shahjahan.

The arrest and trial of Sony's killers are beyond BUET's jurisdiction, the statement said.

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Boatman shot dead on Karnaphuli

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A boatman was shot dead and six others were injured in an attack on their boat by a gang of miscreants on the river Karnaphuli at Boalkhali at midnight on Saturday.

The dead was identified as Nurul Alam, 35, of Sarafbhatta in Rangunia upazila.

He died on the spot. Sources said the sand-loaded boat came under attack at around 12.30am in Nazirchar area.

The injured persons, identified as Faruk, Shah Alam, Musa, Mohammad Ullah, Ali Ahsan and Bachchu Mia, were admitted to Boalkhali Health Complex.

Table with 3 columns: Sun Rises, Sun Sets, and August 19 (Aug 19, Aug 20).

Prayer Timings August 19 table with 3 columns: Azan, Jamaat, and times for Fajr, Zahr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.

Source: Islamic Foundation

Hasina's street cry from Aug 24

Protest against rising crimes, 'misrule'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced a countrywide street agitation on August 24 to protest rising crimes, persecution of opposition activists, delay in execution of Bangabandhu's killers, price hike of essentials and "misrule" by the coalition government.

"Should the government obstruct our planned protests in any way, we'll be compelled to go for a hartal," the leader of the opposition in parliament told a public meeting at the Paltan Maidan in the capital.

The president of the main opposition Awami League also asked people to unite against mounting repression

by the four-party government.

"Enforce hartal wherever you face obstruction either by police or the ruling BNP cadres. Once you stand united, they wouldn't dare continue with repression on the opposition political leaders and activists in particular and the people in general."

Hasina warned the government that "people are already fed up with the alliance government and want to get rid of them. The time is not far away when they would rise and topple this tyrant government."

She referred to the sharp rise in incidence of murder and repression and asked the government to bring the

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Ferry master accuses AL lawmakers of theft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 'master' of a state-run ferry has filed a case accusing three Awami League lawmakers and the political secretary to Sheikh Hasina for "stealing 12 glass plates worth Tk 2,000 from the ferry".

The accused include Sheikh Hasina's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, AL lawmakers Ahsanullah Master, Fazle Kabir Chowdhury and Liton Chowdhury and party leaders Mukul Bose and Abdur Rahman.

The case was filed with Shibabai police station in Manikganj on Saturday.

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PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of yesterday's public meeting of the main opposition Awami League at the city's Paltan Maidan where Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina announced street agitation on August 24.

Biman to switch over to Boeing-777s

DC-10-30s too costly, says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Biman Bangladesh Airlines opts for a switchover to new-generation aircraft Boeing 777, replacing all DC-10-30 airplanes

The overhauling plan came after the maintenance cost of the DC-10-30 airplanes increased due to non-availability of spare parts.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin at a press conference yesterday

disclosed that the Board of Directors decided on procurement of Boeing 777 after a meticulous examination.

Sources said Biman reached a near-breaking point, as it earned Tk 1,816 crore and spent Tk 1,836 crore in the 2001-2002 fiscal.

Nasir Uddin, however, claimed that Biman already became a profitable airline, as it carried more than 1.5 million passengers during the just-concluded fiscal, making a

record.

Still, there is some deficit because Biman had to pay overdue bills that the previous government kept unpaid, the minister said, addressing the press conference at the Biman headquarters.

The overdue bills were reduced to around Tk 400 crore from more than Tk 500 crore after he took office, he said.

Biman owed the Bangladesh

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Cabinet sans agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet will not hold its regular weekly meeting today as there is no agenda for discussion.

Sources said the cabinet has been suffering from acute shortage of agenda for more than two weeks.

They said even the last two meetings of the Cabinet dealt with some minor issues and no major decision was taken in the previous two meetings.

Cabinet sources said a stagnant situation is prevailing in almost all the ministries, and the administration is not functioning properly ever since the news of cabinet reshuffling was circulated about a month back.

They said conflicts between the minister and the state minister in a

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Cabinet body for upazila

Report to be submitted soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet sub-committee on the upazila system will submit its report soon.

The committee, which already held about half a dozen meetings, failed to reach a consensus on introduction of the upazila system, as Communications Minister Nazmul Huda strongly opposed it, fearing that it would create conflicts between MPs and upazila chairmen.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told reporters that the committee would meet again to finalise the report and submit it to the cabinet in one month and a half.

The minister revealed this after a meeting with a delegation of the Local Governance Support Group (LGS) at his secretariat office yesterday. The delegation led by Prof. Muhammad Yunus put forward several rec

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Titas overhaul by Sept 1

UNB, Dhaka

Expressing deep resentment over non-implementation of various directives, the State Minister for Energy yesterday asked the Titas Gas authorities for a total restructuring of the organisation by September 1.

At a review meeting on Titas Gas performances at the ministry, AKM Mosharrar Hossain also directed its officials to go for easy gas connection programme from next month.

To restore skill in Titas Gas management, he asked for transfer of all employees known as relatives of union leaders. Petrobangla chairman informed the minister that the transfer process would continue.

Mosharrar also asked the Titas Gas authorities to make the company "really service-oriented" by

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PHOTO: STAR

BNP gunfight leaves 15 hurt at N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 15 people were injured in a gunfight between two factions of BNP in Masdar area in the town yesterday afternoon.

The clash was a sequel to an old rivalry between Shahidullah group of West Masdar and Irra group of Masdar Gudarghat over drug trade in the area, sources said.

The two groups exchanged at least 100 bullets and exploded a number of crackers during the clash that lasted one hour and a half.

The two groups used hand-made gun, shotgun, pistol and revolver in the gunfight.

The injured include Rahim, Solaiman, Bipul, Pocha Mia, Liton, and pedestrian Jamal.

Local people alleged that they called Fatullah thana police several time over telephone but they came after the clash was over.

No case was lodged and none was arrested.

Death in custody Four Satkhira jail officials sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Five people including four officials and an inmate of the district jail were accused yesterday in a case of murder of an under-trial prisoner on August 10.

The case was filed with a court in Satkhira by Monzila Khatun, daughter of prisoner Meser Ali, accusing jail super Rabul Hussain, deputy jailer Kamrul Huda, zamadar Yusuf, pharmacist Badar-uz-Zaman and convict prisoner Shahidul Islam of beating her father to death.

Meser Ali was arrested from his village Shuvankarkathi in Tala upazila on July 25 in connection with an abduction case.

Pharmacist Badar-uz-Zaman and deputy jailer Kamrul Huda were sacked from service on Friday following reports published in national dailies about the death of Meser Ali.

Erratum

Yesterday's report -- "Rajuk 'revives' project to fill up canal" on the back page of The Daily Star -- should have been headlined "DCC 'revives' project to fill up canal". We regret the error.

SAARC FMs meet in Nepal on Aug 21-22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign ministers of the SAARC countries meet for two days in the Nepalese capital from August 21 to review the regional forum's progress and chart out its future course of action.

Enhancement of regional economic cooperation, more thrust on poverty alleviation programmes, fight against trafficking in women and children, and emphasis on child welfare are expected to dominate the agenda of the two-day meeting.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan is due to leave the capital a day earlier to represent the country

at the meeting, to be inaugurated by Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

The meeting of the council of ministers will follow a meeting of the SAARC Standing Committee, scheduled for August 19 and 20. Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury left for Kathmandu yesterday to attend the standing committee meeting.

The council of ministers is the most influential body after the Summit that reviews activities of the organisation and guides its future course of action.

The council of ministers will also make a mid-term review of the declarations of the 11th SAARC

Summit in Kathmandu.

The SAARC secretary-general's report on follow-up actions on different aspects including poverty alleviation and the report of the recent meet on environment in Bhutan will also be discussed.

The council of ministers will also consider the progress made on two conventions signed earlier on prevention of and combat against trafficking in women and children and on promotion of child welfare. Bangladesh is the first country to have ratified both the conventions.

The council of ministers is also likely to endorse the date of the 12th SAARC Summit slated for April 14 to 16 in Islamabad.

People foil bid to stock bad wheat at Barisal

UNB, Barisal

Stocking of 300 metric tons of unwholesome wheat in Mehendiganj LSD was abandoned Saturday in the wake of protest by angry people.

One hundred sacks of wheat already stocked in the government godown in Mehendiganj were brought out on instruction of local MP Shah Abul Hossain, also State Minister for Finance and Planning.

Sources said 300 tons of wheat sent from Khulna CSD (Central Storage Depot) was found mixed with dust and unfit for human consumption.

Following allegation of upazila food officials, DC formed a 3-member committee that found the wheat "unfit for human consumption".

Ward commissioner seeks fortune out of choked canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-backed commissioner of Ward No. 46 secretly took charge of a project to fill up a natural canal and build a truck terminal in Mohammadpur with an intention to make a fortune out of the whole project, alleged local people.

Abu Sayed Bepari, the BNP-backed commissioner, and his men took up the project, manipulating various Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and ministerial channels, under the cover of a 'children's park'. This he did despite the fact that the DCC has a large truck terminal hardly 3 km away at Amin Bazaar.

Local people said more than 2,000 trucks would be accommodated once the project is complete at the 10-acre site. Each truck would have to pay around Tk 50 everyday to use the facility.

"Every day the people involved would be earning more than one lakh taka from the project which is being implemented at the cost of a natural canal," said a local shop-keeper. He added that some police officials of the Mohammadpur Police Station are also involved in the project next to the martyred intellectual monument in

Mohammadpur.

The Tk 2 crore-project to fill up the Haikkar Khal was approved by former mayor Mohammad Hanif, defying the existing law of the land. Local people also alleged that the same gang in connivance with government officials has embarked on grabbing valuable public properties in the area.

"This is happening in broad daylight in the area and we just have to watch it happen without any action against the plunderers," said another resident.

Saturday night long, and during the daytime yesterday, dredgers were used to unload earth into the Haikkar Khal from barges. Haikkar Khal is connected to the Turag river in the northwest through Mohammadpur.

The authorities are yet to take any action to stop this renewed attack on the city's eco-system.

The local residents said that until and unless the authorities, particularly Mayor Mohammad Sadeq take initiative, the canal cannot be saved. They said eventually the same

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