

inside BUSINESS PAGE

Bangladesh set to lose 8.23pc quota in one apparel category

Bangladesh will lose 8.23 per cent of its quota in one apparel category for the next year in the US market for over shipment of the product beyond the limit in July this year.SEE PAGE 17



Bangladeshi company signs deal to make animation film

A local animation company recently entered into a US\$4.7 million contract with a Canadian firm to produce 26-episode cartoon film titled 'Mr Koko'.SEE PAGE 17

Inroads into vote banks

Projects taking up to 50 years to complete reflect political economy

STAR REPORT

Political and bureaucratic incentives rather than economic senses have played a major role in the government's rural infrastructure construction over the years, an analysis has shown. The analysis of 800 smaller road network components under a recent US\$1.7 billion umbrella Roads and Highways Department (RHD) project shows that annual budgetary allocations for these subprojects are so low that it would take almost half a century to complete the projects. At such progress rate, it is anybody's guess what would be the economic gains of such road net-

works, and yet they are being implemented for economic populism at the cost of taxpayers. Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud of Dhaka University has shown the analysis in his paper "State, Market and Institutional Transformation" presented at the MN Huda Memorial Lecture recently. The three umbrella projects were aimed at improving the so-called feeder roads and to some extent, rural roads proper. But annual allocations for the 800 subprojects under these schemes are about two to three per cent of their project cost. This implies that with such low levels of funding, it would take

about 30 to 50 years to complete them. At such a rate, only small segments of the roads will be completed every year and consequently, project benefits will be largely deferred far into the future, Dr Mahmud pointed out. And a more serious concern is that the choice of the roads has not been based on feasibility studies or on the basis of a prioritised investment plan! Interestingly, the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is responsible for developing rural infrastructure including rural roads and markets, and yet, the RHD's taking up the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Katabon Road, an important link between the Elephant Road and Nilkhet, has taken a dilapidated look with potholes. The roadside petshops constantly drain out refuse on the road worsening the situation.

Shaheed Minar rule Hasina's Sept 30 deadline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday set a September 30 deadline for the government to withdraw restrictions on rallies at the Central Shaheed Minar premises. Otherwise, she warned, thousands of people from across the country would crash the police barricade and free the Shaheed Minar. Hasina issued the ultimatum while addressing a reception at the Paltan Maidan in the city, which was accorded to the central committee leaders of the AL's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL). The BCL organised the reception marking the release from jail last week of its President Liakat Shikdar, General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu and Vice-president Rafiqul Islam Kotwal. Plainclothes policemen arrested the BCL leaders from outside the Dhanmondi residence of Sheikh Hasina seven months ago. Later, they were implicated in several cases. Several thousand BCL leaders and workers as well as activists and supporters of the AL and its front organisations attended the reception. The opposition leader castigated the BNP-Jamaat-e-Islami coalition

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Journalists' arrest slated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condemned the 'fundamentalists' threat on the cultural activists and organisations' regarding staging of a drama in Faridpur. They also condemned arrest of two district correspondents of two national dailies over the staging of the drama and demanded their immediate release. In a joint statement yesterday, leaders of Ekatattar Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee (committee for elimination of killers and collaborators of '71) and Muktiyuddher Smriti Shangrakkhan Kendro (centre for preservation of the memories of the liberation war) said some 'identified' fundamentalists of Faridpur were claiming that the drama, 'Kotha Krishnokali' belittles Islam. But their claim is baseless and mali-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

UN help sought to bring back jailed Bangladeshis

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has formally sought help from the International Organisation of Migrations (IOM) for repatriation of over 5,000 Bangladeshis in jails and deportation camps in 46 countries across the world. The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment last week wrote a letter to the local office of the UN body, requesting steps to bring them back. A list of detained Bangladeshis was also handed over to the IOM. As many as 5,156 Bangladeshis are detained in 46 countries - 2,860 in prison and 1,708 in detention centres and deportation camps, according to latest official figures. Of them, 2,311 are in Saudi Arabia alone. Six hundred and sixteen Bangladeshis are detained in Malaysia and 478 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Meanwhile, the high commission in New Delhi informed the expatriate welfare and overseas employment ministry that 138 Bangladeshis were in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

BSF lets go kidnapped fishermen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Almost 52 hours after the kidnapping of 27 fishermen by the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) brought back all the fishermen yesterday noon after negotiations. The commandant of Sonaikandi Company under 35 Battalion BDR received the fishermen from the commandant of Kahharpara Company BSF under the 62 Battalion at 12.30pm yesterday following a brief flag meeting, sources in Rajshahi BDR said. The BSF kidnapped the 27 fishermen at around 8.30am on September 24 as they were catching fishes in the river Padma near the zero line into the Bangladesh territory, about three kilometres southeast of the Sonaikandi BDR outpost. The BDR authorities also brought back all eight boats and fishing nets of the fishermen the BSF snatched. "We had to bend a little to bring the fishermen back as we had to say that it was an 'unintentional mistake' on the part of the fishermen instead of reiterating our charges of kidnapping against the BSF for the incident," said a senior BDR official while talking to The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Gas export won't solve forex crisis

Norwegian study says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Norwegian study has concluded that Bangladesh has sufficient gas resources to go for export and meet domestic demand, but said the country's current gas reserves will not even support domestic demand. Findings of the study, "Bangladesh Optimal Gas Utilisation Study", was jointly conducted by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate and the Hydrocarbon Unit of the Energy and Mineral Resources Division. The finds were released at a function in the city yesterday. The latest study was made public in a month of the release of two other national committee reports on gas resources. The study favours gas export to help reduce the net outflow of currency due to foreign debt repayments on investments along the gas chain. But it says, "Gas exports by themselves will not solve the country's future foreign

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Tribal gunfight kills 3 more in Rangamati

UNB, Rangamati

Gun battle between rival groups of tribal people left at least three killed and 15 injured at Sabekhong in Naniarchar upazila Wednesday afternoon. Delayed report reaching here said the clash was a sequel to Sunday's gun battle at Rangapanichhara in Longdu when five persons were killed. Informed sources said rival groups - one in favour of the CHT peace accord and the other opposing it - traded gunshots for about 90 minutes at Sabekhong, a remote village of Naniarchar. All the three killed belonged to the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) that opposed the peace accord. The injured belonged

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Mosharraf sued for illegal plot allotment

UNB, Chittagong

Former Housing and Public Works, and Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain has been sued by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) for illegally allotting a government land to a school. It was stated in the case that the government incurred financial loss of Tk five crore following the land allotment in January 2000 at the directive of Engineer Mosharraf Hossain for Due Point School. Shamsul Alam, a BAC inspector, filed the case with Khulshi Thana against the ex-minister and Awami League leader along with the then Chittagong DC Mohammad Hasan and member secretary of the school, Bakhtiar Noor Siddiqi. Some 1.86 bighas of land of Halishahar Housing Estate was allotted for the school.