

DIGITAL SIGN & Banner Maker
 Tel: 8815056, 9886481
ADVANCE AD
 ENDLESS POWER

The Daily Star

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES

PHILIPS
 Tk. 39,990/-
 29PT 3523 Flat TV
 Transcom Electronics Limited

REGD. NO. DA 781 • VOL. XIV No. 138 • DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 9, 2004 • www.thedailystar.net • JAISTHA 26, 1411 BS • RABI-US-SANI 19, 1425 HIJRI • 20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

Revenue ombudsman, new pay scale in Jan

More professionals to come under tax net

REJAUL KARIM BYRON
 The government is going to introduce the office of a revenue ombudsman in January next to protect taxpayers from harassment, besides announcing a new pay scale for its employees.
 The cash-strapped government has brought a number of new sectors under tax obligations in the country's biggest-ever budget for financial year (FY) 2004-05 to be tabled in parliament tomorrow by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman.
 Professionals, like lawyers and doctors, who so far have been left out of the tax-net, are going to join the ranks of the taxpayers from next year, sources said.
 The budget, on the other hand, includes several populist measures, like increasing pay of government employees, giving agricultural subsidies and introducing special pension schemes for retired people. The measures also include massive widening of social safety nets, under which the aged, meritorious students, girl children and disadvantaged segments of the society get various pension-like benefits.
 Besides, the government is hard pressed to form a special fund for the apparel-manufacturing sector to help it survive the impact of expiry of Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA), which will remove the quotas

Budget session begins today

AL may join later

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) kicks off its budget session today, with the main opposition, Awami League (AL), expected to join in after the country's biggest-ever budget of Tk 60,000 crore for financial year (FY) 2004-05 is tabled.
 Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman tomorrow places the budget which also includes the largest-ever Annual Development Programme (ADP) of Tk 22,000 crore. This will be Saifur's third budget as financial chief of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government since it came to office in 2001.
 The Business Advisory

Ctg scrap ship gas leak wrecks havoc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
 A morning toxic gas leak from a scrap ship made hundreds of people ill and forced many others out of their homes in Sitakunda in Chittagong on Monday.
 A ship-cutting contractor died apparently from the gas emission that exposed about 5,000 people to serious health risks as the colourless pungent gas was spotted spewing from the vessel, GAZ MED, in Jahanabad at about 11:00am.
 Witnesses said the gas cloud spread several kilometres along the coast and reached up to Dhaka-Chittagong Highway after one of the three liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) containers on the vessel was cut open.
 The Panama-flagged ship was beached on May 31 for dismantling at Foyjun Shipbreaking Yard.
 The yard is close to Silvia Shipbreaking Yard that invokes the memory of a poisonous gas emission that withered plants and exposed hundreds of people in 1km to serious health risks on September 15 last year.
 Villagers of Jahanabad and Kadam Rasul said many women and children threw up after inhaling the gas that filled the air. Chunnua Mia, 42, said his two children were in bed until yesterday after vomiting.
 Two other children Emran, 10, and Irshad, 3, complained of nausea. Nuru Mia, 52, said his family left home and returned only after rain apparently minimised the impact of toxicity.
 "It became difficult to stay home

22 undercover cop teams soon to watch opposition

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM
 The government will deploy 22 undercover law-enforcement teams in the capital from Saturday to keep an eye on the opposition and fight serious crime as well.
 The Police Headquarters yesterday summoned officials of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), Special Branch (SB), Detective Branch (DB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and laid down specific guidelines for their operations.
 The teams, which will each have six personnel, are officially said to have been formed to deal with serious crime. But sources close to the

Another trader abducted in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Gangsters from Kushtia on Monday night kidnapped a businessman in Jhenidah and demanded a ransom of Tk 20 lakh.
 The abducted was identified as Abu Daud, 36, son of Maher Ali of Kamarkhali in Harinakundu upazila of Jhenidah district. Sources said a gang of 10 armed men stormed the house of Daud at about 2:00am. They kept the family members confined to a room at gunpoint, picked the businessman on a motorcycle and left the scene.
 Sources said the kidnapers later phoned Daud's family and asked to pay Tk 20 lakh at village Monohordia under sadar upazila of Kushtia district for his release. They also threatened the family members not to seek any help from police.

Graft, high freight cost bar FDI

Speakers at Japan Bangladesh Business Forum point out
STAR REPORT
 Corruption, high freight charge and handling cost of sea and air cargo, exorbitant inland haulage charge and lengthy L/C procedure, thefts at airports and frequent hartals are barring Bangladesh from getting more foreign direct investment (FDI).
 Speakers at the Japan Bangladesh Business Forum 2004 yesterday pointed out the barriers to FDI inflow and stressed immediate removal of the irritants if Dhaka is to see more investment, particularly from Japan, and its trade gap with Tokyo narrow.
 The discussion, co-organised by Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro) and Japan Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI) and held at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, marked the launch of first-ever Japan Trade Show in Dhaka today.
 The discussants however said Bangladesh's garment sector can benefit more than China in the quota-free regime after 2004, as it has good business ties with buyers of the European Union (EU) and the US markets.
 Dhaka can also exploit the

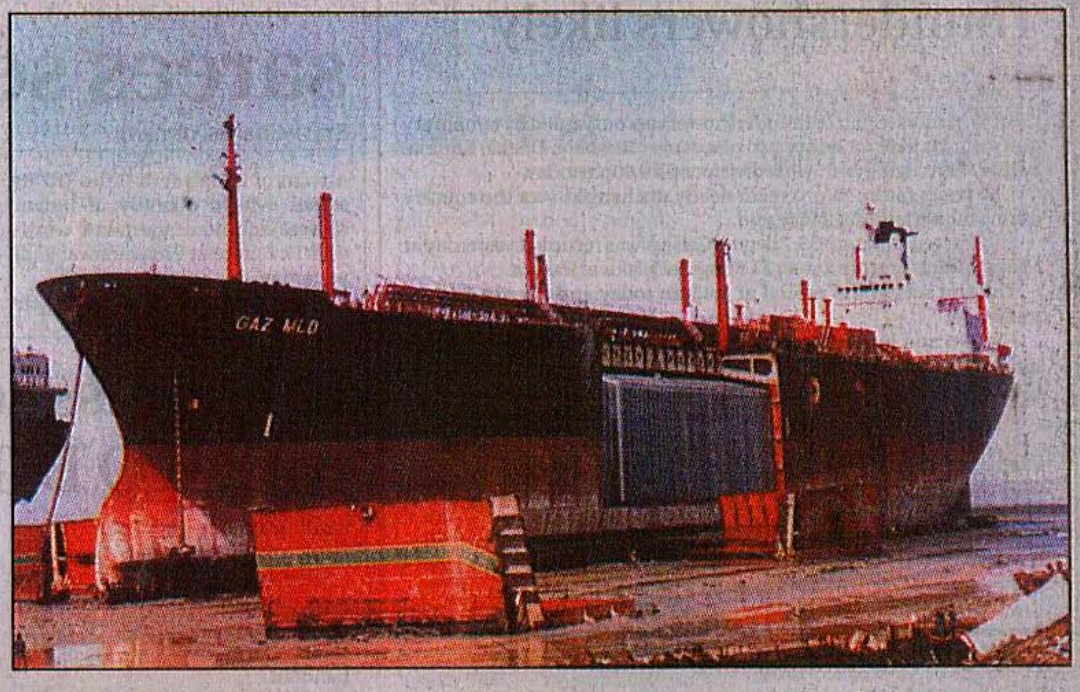


PHOTO: STAR
 Toxic gas spews out of the scrap ship GAZ MED to spread several kilometres along the coast after a part of the vessel was cut open at Foyjun Shipbreaking Yard at Jahanabad on Monday.

Venus, Sun union elates skygazers

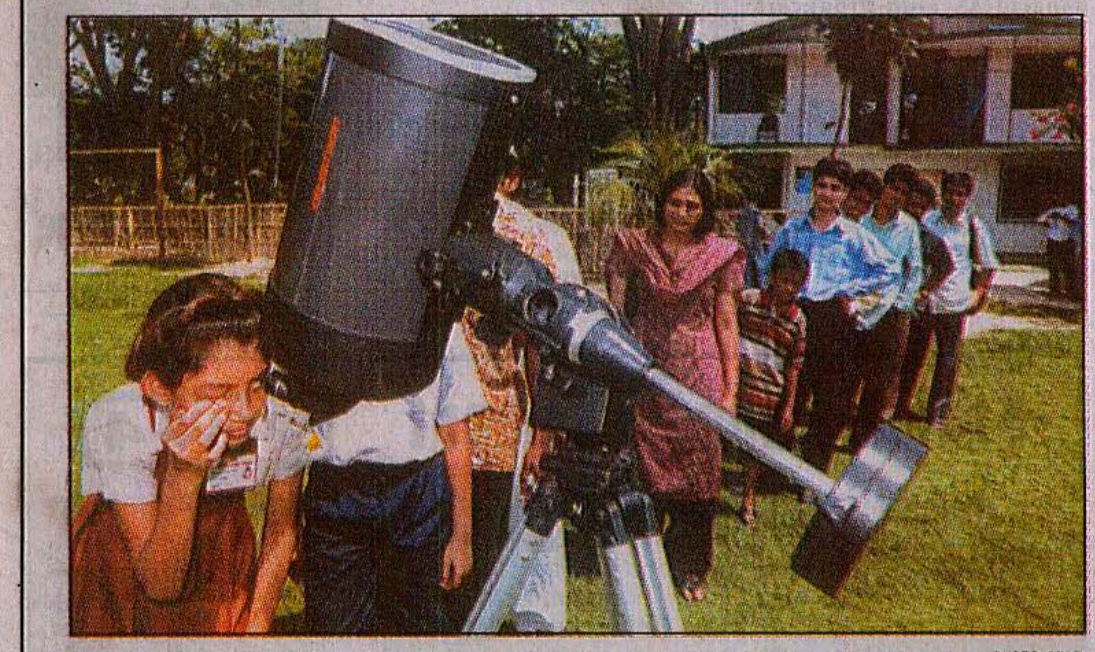


PHOTO: STAR
 Stargazers queue up at Kalabagan playground to witness a rare Venus transit across the Sun yesterday. Bangladesh Astronomical Society organised the display through telescope for enthusiasts.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Hundreds of space enthusiasts, many of them schoolchildren, in Dhaka watched a rare astronomical spectacle yesterday, the planet Venus crossing the sun's face.
 They flocked to the Kalabagan Kriya Chakra playground and National Science and Technology Museum as the planet moved like a small black disc in front of the sun for six hours from 11:15am--an event that came after 122 years.
 "It (Venus) looks like a small black spot," said Avi Rahman, a student of Udayan School who came to see the Venus transit through Celestron 8-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope in the Kalabagan playground, organised by Bangladesh Astronomical Association.
 "I am excited. I am very lucky to watch the scene," Avi said of the event that unleashed a frenzy

Trauma at traumatology department

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Doctors' negligence to their duty multiplies the sufferings of several hundred outdoor patients at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor), aggrieved patients alleged.
 A large number of men, women and children with various bone injuries, crowding the narrow corridor at the outdoor wing on Monday, were seen groaning in pain and anxiously waiting for doctors to come. Most of them came at around 7:00am to avoid the rush of traffic.
 But the early arrival of patients, many of them from far off places outside Dhaka, only added to their woes as doctors did not turn up on time, which officially is 8:00am.

LAUNCH DISASTERS Ministry acts against ship surveyors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The Ministry of Shipping yesterday took action against two key officials of the Department of Shipping in the wake of last month's deadly launch disasters in the Meghna river.
 The ministry made Chief Engineer and Ship Surveyor Motiur Rahman officer on special duty

Standard Chartered
 We believe seeing is believing
 Donate to Collection for Free Cataract Surgery fund.
 Your small change can change the way a person sees the world.

Lara solace for Tigers

RABEED IMAM, from Kingston
 West Indies captain Brian Lara made a significant appearance at a shell-shocked Bangladesh dressing room right after the second Test was over at the Sabina Park on Monday.
 The presence of the world's best batsman at that moment of gloom was very comforting for the Tigers who had just lost the Test by an innings and 99 runs and had squandered their last seven wickets for 22 runs in 11 overs of madness.
 Lara's words also lifted their spirit.
 "He was very appreciative at the way Bangladesh had fought for most part of the series. He thought we were the more disciplined of the two sides and if we continued in the same vein, a Test win was not too far away," said team manager Faruque Ahmed.

Beware! Elephants crossing to take a bath at 10am and 2pm.
 In May, this back street can be a shortcut. In September, it can be a flood.
 When the schools are closed this road opens.
 At 7pm, this street closes for outdoor dining.
 No road signs. No water for 300 miles. No landmarks. No worries.

No one knows Asia Pacific like we do.
 Here's your chance to get to know Asia Pacific better too.
 With more people in more places you can always count on our in-depth knowledge to deliver on time, every time, without wasting time. From now till 31st July every DHL Express shipment sent within Asia Pacific gives you a chance of winning a pair of return flights to any Asia Pacific destination of your choice. And there are 50 pairs of tickets to be won! So why wait? Visit www.winflights.dhl.com for full details.

Deutsche Post World Net
 MAIL EXPRESS LOGISTICS FINANCE
WE MOVE THE WORLD **DHL**