

WRIT PETITION ON IGP
HC bench feels
embarrassed
to continue
hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday said it was embarrassed to continue hearing on the writ petition filed against the holding of office by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahidul Haque after he was found guilty of contempt of court.

The bench comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice AFM Abdur Rahman referred the matter to Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain. Shahidul's counsel Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed yesterday pleaded with the court for time. He said, "I need time to consult with my client and since he may not return in next two days, I ask the court to fix the date for the next hearing on January 2 after the High Court vacation ends."

Refusing Mahbubuddin's plea, the court asked him to continue the hearing.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Big-time investment to come from France

French minister names energy, pharmaceuticals, water treatment, infrastructure as choice sectors



Francois Loos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting French Foreign Trade Minister Francois Loos yesterday said French businesses plan to invest soon in the country's energy, pharmaceuticals, water treatment and infrastructure development.

A French business delegation that had visited Bangladesh recently expressed its satisfaction about the investment climate here and the French businesspeople are looking forward to investing in the country, Loos told the press at a joint briefing with Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan.

Referring to the cement giant Lafarge's \$250 million investment,

the largest by any foreign company in Bangladesh, he said this investment is just the beginning of large-scale French investment here, leading to other sectors of current French interest.

Loos identified oil refineries, gas, water treatment plants, public and private infrastructure development as the most appealing sectors to French investors, and said, "A lot more is to be done."

"Lafarge's confidence in the law and order here serves as an example for other [French] companies interested in Bangladesh," he remarked.

Another French company, TOTAL Gaz, has also invested

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Tk 30cr rehab plan launched for jobless SOE staff

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday launched a Tk 30-crore rehabilitation programme for the voluntarily retired and sacked employees of different state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated the programme, under which 15,000 jobless workers will be trained in different trades and provided with loans so that they can earn a living.

"I hope the programme will play a great role in poverty reduction," said the prime minister addressing the launching ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

The labour and employment ministry has undertaken the venture styled 'Training and Loan Distribution Programme for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

Officials delete opinions after court bashing

SC asks for names behind the distortion of its draft rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawyer for the government officials facing contempt charges for distorting the Supreme Court (SC) orders concerning the independence of the judiciary told the court yesterday that the officials had revoked on Saturday the controversial resolution they had adopted at an inter-ministerial meeting on November 1.

The resolution had suggested changes in the Supreme Court's proposed new draft rules regarding the service of judicial officers, which the court had considered necessary to ensure independence of the judiciary.

It was this resolution that had

been the subject of the contempt proceedings against the government officials.

Advocate TH Khan, the counsel for the seven officials, told the court that immediately after it had rebuked the officials on Saturday, seven of the nine officials from the establishment and finance ministries held a meeting and decided that their resolution of November 1 stood cancelled.

He also told the court that the rules, without the contentious resolution, had now been sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for the president's approval.

'DIVULGENCE' The court yesterday however was

not satisfied and asked the bureaucrats to inform it of the names of those responsible for ordering that such a resolution should be passed on November 1 in the first place.

The full court of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain directed TH Khan to submit the names through an affidavit tomorrow.

The nine government officials appeared in person at court and sought an unconditional apology. During the hearing, they were made to stand in the dock.

In a new development, the court also asked the counsel for the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Newspapers not for suppressing facts

Argues counsel at contempt hearing against Prothom Alo, Bhorer Kagoj; next hearing on Jan 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counsels for the two daily newspapers facing contempt charges for running reports on an additional High Court judge's alleged result tampering yesterday said the press had rightly done its duty to 'disinfect' the judiciary by bringing the incident to light.

"Newspapers are not for suppressing facts, they work like sunlight that disinfect everything," Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel for the Daily Prothom Alo, said in his submission during the hearing of the case.

"While carrying out its duty to inform people, the newspaper carried the report for the public good and all facts are there to support it," he argued on the second day of the hearing of the contempt

charges against editors, publishers and reporters of the Prothom Alo and Bhorer Kagoj yesterday.

"The respondents' actions have not been motivated by any malice or any intention to bring the authority and administration of the law into disrespect or disregard, rather they made an endeavour to assist the judiciary in purging it of unwanted elements," he said.

The report made public some information that deserves to be investigated and the High Court should also launch a probe in its own interest, Dr Kamal observed.

Additional Judge of the High Court Justice Faisal Mahmud Faizee's father Mohammed Faiz filed the contempt petition on November 8.

The respondents -- Publisher of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

TOO TOUGH FOR TINY TOTS



Guardians, left, of kids sitting the admission test to Class I at Viharunisa Noon School in the capital yesterday wait anxiously in an enclosure on the campus, while a child breaks into sobs in an examination room unable to cope up with the stress.



PHOTO: STAR

Tender violations turn bidders away from Biman

M ABDUR RAHIM

International aircraft makers and aviation equipment suppliers are increasingly turning their back on Biman Bangladesh Airlines, as it cancels procurement tenders at will and frequently violates globally accepted practices in the tender process.

Tenders are postponed or cancelled if the commission which bidders offer senior Biman managers is not to their liking. The highest offer of commission, not the lowest or highest quotation, determines who wins a tender, according to sources.

The commission issue has surfaced once again recently when Biman moved to revive an international tender cancelled last year.

Sources said Biman recently asked the previous participants in the ATR 72-500 or Dash 8-Q400 procurement tender to redeposit 'earnest'

money.

A source alleged that Biman suddenly revived the tender as the high-ups have settled the commission issue with Bombardier Aerospace, the manufacturer of Dash series planes. The Biman board at its meeting on December 12 is going to approve a \$67 million tender for purchase of three brand new Dash 8-Q400 -- \$20 million more than the ATR offer -- and trade-in of Biman's five old aircraft.

As the practice goes rampant, the national flag-carrier is fast losing its international credibility. Biman found no bidder against a recent tender for purchase of three Airbus 320 or Boeing 737 planes. Biman attached a condition that age of the mid-range planes should not exceed 10 years.

Given the fact that such planes are widely available in world market,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

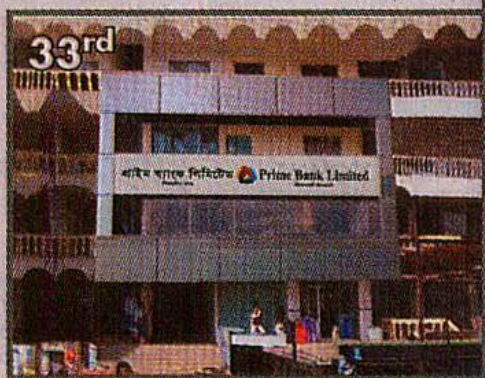
Opening this month...



Shyamoli Branch

2/6, Sir Syed Road, Mohammedpur (Mirpur Road), Dhaka

20th December 2004



Shimrail Branch

Hazi A Rahman Super Market & Shopping Tower Chittagong Road Chowrasta, Siddirganj, Narayanganj

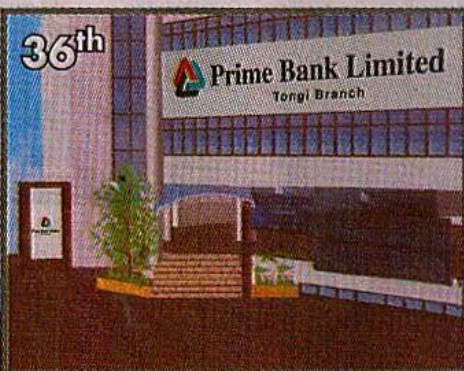
15th December 2004



Fatickchari Branch

Bibirhat, Fatickchari, Chittagong

23rd December 2004



Tongi Branch

Sena Kalyan Commercial Complex Plot # 9, Block # F, Tongi, Gazipur

26th December 2004

Prime Bank is going to open four new branches this month at Shimrail, Shyamoli, Fatickchari & Tongi to further expand its delivery channels and offer more choice to the customers. Conveniently located and equipped with modern banking facilities these new branches can cater to all your banking needs.

Come and visit us, experience the difference...



Prime Bank Limited
a bank with a difference