

Expats send \$3517.6m till May

Saifur tells Parliament

UNB, Dhaka

Expatriate Bangladeshis sent home 3517.60 million US dollar till May in the outgoing fiscal year.

including pulses, oilseeds, spices and corns, from July 1. He told Golam Mohammad Siraj (BNP-Bogra) that the government earned Tk 1018.73 crore as revenue from Benapole land port in 11 months till May of the current fiscal year (2004-05).

include pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and toiletries, luggage and fashion products, electronics products, CR Coil, cards and calendars, stationery products, silk cloth, handicraft products and herbal medicines.

SUJAN MURDER SC cancels bail of former BNP MP Dr Rawshan

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday cancelled a High Court order granting ad-interim bail to Dr Rawshan Alam, a former lawmaker of ruling BNP, who was convicted for life imprisonment in Shahjahan Hawladar Sujan murder case.



Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and Mujibul Haq of Belhassa Accom & Associates Ltd. sign an agreement on construction and maintenance of Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover at Nagar Bhaban in the city yesterday.

REPRESSION ON JOURNALISTS 'Make report public'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist leaders yesterday demanded immediate publication of the probe report on police atrocities on journalists at the National Press Club in the city on June 21, 1992.

Speaking at a discussion, they also expressed deep sorrow and anger at the failure of the government in making the report public.

The speakers demanded punishment to the persons responsible for the incident and compensation for the injured journalists.

JCD has no link with hijackers

Bhuiyan says in JS

UNB, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday rejected the allegations that three students of Dhaka College, arrested for hijacking, are members of Jatiyatatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

"They are no longer involved in JCD politics and had been expelled from JCD 2/3 years ago," he said in Parliament replying to Bangabir Kader Siddiqui's demand for the government reaction to the incident.

his concern over the mugging of Tk 12 lakh, allegedly by the JCD leaders, and requested the government to clarify its stand over the incident.

Siddiqui wondered how brilliant students of prestigious Dhaka College could end up as hijackers.

Haji agreement signed with Saudi Arabia

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia have signed bilateral Haji agreement 2006.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan signed the agreement with Saudi Haji Minister in Saudi Arabia, said a handout here yesterday.

3 schoolboys killed, 50 hurt as picnic bus skids off road

UNB, Joypurhat

Three schoolboys died and 50 others were injured when a picnic bus skidded off the Joypurhat-Hili highway and fell into a ditch at Nakargachhi in Panchbibi upazila early yesterday.

Survivors said the accident occurred at about 1:00am as the driver of the vehicle lost control over the steering, killing Sajjadul of class IX, Enamul of class VI and Shariful of class X on the spot and injuring 50 others.

Kalurghat Rail Bridge opens today

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Kalurghat Rail Bridge with road facilities will be opened for the movement of heavy vehicles on today while Shah Amanat Bridge on the Karnaphuli river will be reopened in January after renovation work.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) sources said Kalurghat Rail Bridge was going to be opened four months after the scheduled time. The renovation cost Tk 10 crore.

Additional Chief Engineer Anwar Ahmed of the Department of Roads and Highways said the ferry service, which was introduced to substitute for the bridge, will remain in operation till September.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Govt trying to divert course of investigation: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leaders yesterday accused the government of trying to divert the course of investigation into the August 21 grenade attack by cooking up a false probe report with an ulterior motive.

Blaming the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for the grenade attack, they said it is not possible to bring the real culprits to justice until the government is toppled.

AL programmes to celebrate founding anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League has drawn up an elaborate programme to celebrate its 56th founding anniversary tomorrow.

The programmes include placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban and at his mazar in Tungipara at about 7:00am on the day, says a party press release.

Awami League will bring out a procession from in front of the party's Bangabandhu Avenue central office at 3:00pm.

A discussion and cultural programme will be held at the Engineers Institute at about 3:00pm on Saturday.

Aids awareness campaign to be launched in Ctg today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

An awareness campaign against HIV and Aids styled as 'Express 2005 Chittagong' will be launched in the port city today.

Jointly organised by the Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programmes (BCCP) and the Square Group, the countrywide campaign aims at raising awareness about the deadly disease through dissemination of correct information about it.

The slogan of this campaign is 'We will Know, Speak and Resist the HIV/Aids.'

The launching ceremony will begin at the auditorium of Engineers Institutions here at 5:00pm.

Professionals, students, health workers, young boys and girls, government officials, NGO representatives, religious leaders and social activists will share their views and place suggestions at the programme, said the organisers at a press conference yesterday.

the incident, said AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta at a rally in the city.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance carried out the grenade attack as it wants to cling to power forever by killing the AL president and other top leaders, he said.

Framing a fabricated charge sheet, the government wants to prove that Awami League itself is responsible for the grenade attack on its rally, said AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Quader.

Now the government is trying to make the charge sheet credible through Interpol, he added.

AL presidium member Amir

Hossain Amu called on the countrymen to unite in favour of the reforms in the caretaker government system and the election commission.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzaq, Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak, General Secretary Mirza Azam MP, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Abdul Latif, Haji Selim, advocate Sahara Khatun and Chhatra League leader Liaqat Shikder also spoke.

The Awami Jubo League organised the rally as part of its programme marking the 21st day of every month as 'black day' until the perpetrators of August 21 grenade attack are brought to book.

AL won't join polls without reforms in EC, CG: Jalil

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday said they would not join any elections without reforms in the Election Commission and the caretaker government system.

"Corruption have penetrated in every sphere of life. Politicisation and nepotism have ruined the three pillars of the state- executive, judiciary and legislature. Under this situation, no election could be fair," he said.

Jalil was speaking at a reception accorded to Sardar Amjad Hossain, a Jatiya Party leader who joined the AL last month, at Bhabaniganj in Bagmara upazila.

Local AL leader Nurul Islam Master chaired the function which was addressed by Khairuzzaman Liton and Tajul Islam Md Faruk.

Jalil said there is no alternative but to topple the alliance government for establishing a democratic and secular country.

"The government has destroyed

the country through politicisation at all levels. Members of the executive have now turned into political cadres," he added.

The AL leader termed the budget as 'electoral bribe' and said the government cheated countrymen through it.

"This budget has permitted an unjust allocation of Tk 365 crore for prime minister's office. The amount was only Tk 57 crore in last several years," he claimed.

Jalil said the BNP-Jamaat government has been provoking communalism by patronising militants like Bangla Bhai and Galib.

Earlier in the morning, thousands of AL leaders and workers welcomed Sardar Amjad at Rajshahi Airport as he flew here from Dhaka for the first time since his joining the party.

He addressed a number of roadside meetings on his way to Bagmara.

Amjad told the gatherings that he had joined the AL for strengthening the pro-liberation forces.

Niko again denies bribing Mosharraf

UNB, Dhaka

The chief executive of Calgary-based Niko Resources Ltd on Monday denied reports that his company bribed former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain of Bangladesh, where Niko is developing natural gas reserves.

Niko's President, CEO and Chairman Edward Sampson said a joint venture agreement with Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex) includes providing a sports utility vehicle to the company, according to a report by Canadian Press (CP) on line.

But Sampson said the Toyota Land Cruiser and all of its paperwork was in Bapex's name, not A.K.M. Mosharraf Hossain's, who resigned over the weekend.

"We really have no control whatsoever—once we've given the vehicle to Bapex - where the vehicle goes," Sampson said in an interview.

"We're following the letter of the joint operating agreement, as laid out by the government, signed by the government, and all we're doing is following the rules we signed."

Niko, which operates only in South Asia, has seen its share price increase by more than six times in the past three years with large energy discoveries in Bangladesh and India.

Its shares closed on Monday at \$61.40, down 10 cents a share. The company currently has a stock market value of \$2.35 billion with just 127 employees as of year end.

The company said Monday that it "got pulled into" a scandal arising from a series of media reports over the weekend that alleged Mosharraf received the car directly from Niko.

In January, Niko was blamed for a blowout and fire in the Chattak gas field, reportedly causing damage to at least 10 billion cubic feet of gas worth about \$2.5 million, according to a Dhaka newspaper report.

A government probe committee held the Niko Resources responsible for the blowout and recommended the government to realise the compensation from the company.

ARSENIC PROBLEM

US experts blame it on Farakka, Teesta barrages

UNB, Dhaka

Two US environment experts in an article blamed groundwater arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh on Farakka, Teesta and other dams and barrages.

Thomas E Bridge, professor of geology (emeritus) of Emporia State University, Kansas, USA and Meer T Husain, environmental geologist, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, in their article suggested that the natural groundwater flow that existed prior to 1975 should be restored by removing all dams and barrages that India constructed in the common rivers of Bangladesh and India.

"The removal of dams and barrages and the dredging of rivers will decrease the number of disasters in both Bangladesh and in the upstream region of India," accord-

ing to the article titled, "Groundwater arsenic poisoning and solution to the arsenic disaster in Bangladesh."

The experts, however, apprehended that the flushing of arsenic contaminants might take a long time but observed that the removal of dams and barrages affecting Bangladesh would provide plenty of water during the dry season for drinking, irrigation and industry.

"The river water should be filtered, treated, continually tested and delivered through a closed system to provide a safe water supply for the nation," the article said.

A comprehensive plan not only for water supplies but also associated waste disposal should be worked out for all of Bangladesh, the experts said, adding that individual units within the plan could be

developed on the basis of need and tied into the overall plan as it develops.

Other environmental problems such as waste disposal, flooding, water diversion projects, river control, wildlife protection, desertification, land subsidence, earthquake damage control and other environmental problems could be integrated and approached in the same way, they said.

According to them, lowering of the water table resulted in the exposure to air in the zone of aeration. This exposure resulted in the oxidation of arsenic minerals previously present below the water table in the Bengal sediments.

The arsenic oxides migrated to the groundwater and were reduced to the poisonous forms in the reducing environments below the water table, they said.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions during the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 37.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 25 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:49pm today and rises at 5:12am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Two brothers get life for killing minor boy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A court in Sylhet yesterday sentenced two brothers to life imprisonment for murdering a minor boy.

They are Nuruddin and his brother Maniruddin of village Dokharpur under Golapganj upazila.

District and Sessions Judge ANM Bashir Ullah passed the verdict.

The court also fined the convicts Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more imprisonment.

According to the prosecution, Nuruddin and Maniruddin killed Abdul Quadir, 10, a boy of the same village using local weapons on January 5, 1997.

They became annoyed with Quadir as he showed the police the way to their home on the previous day.

Repression on indigenous woman condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday condemned the repression on an indigenous woman by a union parishad (UP) member in Thakurgaon on June 16.

In a statement, the parishad demanded exemplary punishment to the culprit

who let loose a torture of 'medieval style' on the pregnant housewife of Sreekrishnapur village under sadar upazila.

The parishad also demanded security for the victim and her family members.

Sources said being unable to violate the woman, Abdul Zabbar brought false allegation against her and beat her severely after hanging her from a tree.

Later, a brother of the indigenous woman rescued her and admitted her to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

A case was filed against the UP member and two others.

Robbery in city house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted valuables worth at least Tk 2.5 lakh from a house at Uttar Badda in the city yesterday.

Police said a gang of eight robbers cut the grills and entered the first floor of the house of one Md Yunus at about 3:00am.

They held his two grandchildren lma, 2, and Hamim, 3, as hostage at gunpoint and tied all other members of the family.

The robbers then took the keys and looted 12 kilos of gold ornaments, Tk 70,000 in cash, three mobile handsets and other valuables, police added.

Five persons have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the robbery.

Tokyo meet on MDG in health begins

UNB, Dhaka

A high level meeting to discuss ways of achieving the target of the health related indicators of the millennium development goals (MDGs) in Asia-Pacific region began in Tokyo yesterday.

The two-day meeting, hosted by Japan in cooperation with Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Health Organisation (Who), is being participated by the Ministers for Health and Finance and representatives of the development partners from 24 countries of the region.

A three-member Bangladesh delegation, led by Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, is attending the meeting.

The meeting will make some recommendations to be placed at the G8 Glenaeles Summit scheduled for next month and also at the UN General Assembly in September.

Japanese official sources said Japan will emphasise increasing assistance to a successful human security related ODA project for achieving the health related MDGs.

In the "Okina Infectious Diseases Initiative" in 2000, Japan pledged 3 billion US dollar to