

Rotten fish

FROM PAGE 1
series of reports published in The Daily Star. Later, the DCC also formed a mobile court to raid the restaurants in the city.

The DCC mobile court first raided the officers' canteen of the home ministry and found preserved rotten fish. It ordered the rotten fish to be thrown out and fined the canteen Tk 4,000.

Later, the court raided the two cooperative canteens at the secretariat employees and fined them Tk 7,000.

DCC Public Analyst Md Golam Sarwar said most of the canteens at the secretariat are situated beside the drain, giving flies easy access to the uncovered food items. "They also mix rotten food items with new ones," he said.

The court also fined the confectionery at the secretariat Tk 2,000 for preserving expired food items.

The court filed five cases against the...

Another mobile court led by Magistrate ABM Abdol Fattah raided eight fast food shops, restaurants and sweetmeat shops in Uttara and collected Tk 1,35,000 in fines.

"We found that the La Bamba authority has been producing all of their 'mouthwatering' food items in a car garage in Uttara," said Abdul Fattah.

The court fined La Bamba Tk 25,000 for not maintaining hygienic standards.

The court also fined Sea-Shell Chinese restaurant Tk 25,000, Khajana restaurant Tk 20,000 and VIP restaurant Tk 25,000, as the court found artificial colours and an unhygienic environment in their kitchens.

The court recovered arkonika and textile dye from Ali Baba sweetmeat shop and instantly fined it Tk 25,000.

The same court also fined some small confectionery and sweetmeat shops, including American Fast Chicken, Candy Slesh and Mr Baker, at the Rajlakshmi market in Uttara and fined them a total of Tk 10,000.

Another mobile court led by Magistrate Md Rokan Uddouhain raided two bakeries—New Alamin Bakery and Abdul Aziz Bakery—in Doyaganj area and found chemicals unsafe for health being used in their products. The court collected some samples of the chemicals.

As the owners of the bakeries were

Subal Das

FROM PAGE 16
film arena as a music director by giving directions in 'Akash Aar Mat' film. He worked as music director in nearly 300 films.

His body will be brought to Dhaka soon and be cremated in religious tradition, the sources said.

Bangladesh Sangeet Parishad Secretary General Ferdous Hossain Bhuiyan, Vice-President Sheikh Shadi Khan expressed their deep shock at the death of Subal Das.

Bid to deface Kahn's

FROM PAGE 1
its illegitimacy.

Construction of the fountain, almost halfway through until Monday, stopped and workers were seen removing the circular wall. The authorities ordered removal of the entire structure as soon as possible, workers said.

Iftekhar Alam of the DCC's Dhaka Beautification Cell said they had given the responsibility of the median at Manik Mia Avenue adjacent to the parliament complex to the City Bank, which is beautifying the area on behalf of the DCC using its own funds. "We never permitted the bank to build anything on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises," he added.

Engineering Consultant of the City Bank ANM Alangir said the fountain would greatly enhance the beauty of the area. "We have got written permission from the DCC to build the fountain on the footpath in front of the Sangsad Bhaban."

Sources at the Architecture Department of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works said it is a must to

Sudden slash in tariff

FROM PAGE 1
In announcing the decision, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in a press statement said the move has been taken to make prices of essentials such as rice, pulses, wheat, cooking oil and spices cheaper and at the same time to reduce production costs of industries, check inflation and make exports competitive.

The NBR sources said the items which enjoy special waiver on tariffs will also come under the reduction facility.

The NBR stated that although the highest tariff rates were reduced in the last few years, the lowest rate of 7.5 percent remained unchanged. As a result, the tax incidence of these industries on account of machinery and raw materials remained unchanged. This has put them in an adverse situation in the global competition, the NBR added.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman talking to journalists yesterday said although it was the government's commitment in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) programme to reduce tariff protection, he would not have been taken the decision right now but for taka losing its ground and oil prices hiking.

"As taka lost value, it has adversely affected raw materials and essentials prices," Saifur said.

Asked if the decision was taken to get the DSC funds, he said when the budget was passed, the DSC conditionalities were still there, but dollar was not as costly.

"The world is changing fast," he

not present during the drive, the court arrested the managers and sent them to jail for one month and also charged a fine of Tk 1,000 each.

The court issued summons against the owners of the bakeries and ordered them to surrender to the court by August 23.

Meanwhile, the Jahangirnagar University (JU) correspondent reports: A mobile court yesterday fined Tk 10,000 to different shops and restaurants on the JU campus for supplying substandard food and keeping an unhygienic environment in their kitchens.

The mobile court led by Magistrate Zahid Hossain and accompanied by police raided 16 shops at Battola, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib (BSM) Hall and university main gate premises from 2:30pm to 4:00pm.

The court fined 10 shops at Battola and BSM Hall Tk 500 each, while it fined six shops at the university gate area different amounts. The court also threw out singaras and samosas from a restaurant at the university main gate.

During an investigation by the Daily Star, several packets of expired pasteurised dairy milk were found at a shop at the university gate No. 1, while most restaurants on the campus were found using soyabean oil already used once or twice.

Taking advantage of the reluctance of the university authorities in looking after the food standard, a group of shop owners and businessmen are making money by selling below-

standard food items, possibly causing various diseases, including jaundice, diarrhoea, typhoid and other water-borne contagious skin and abdominal diseases among the resident students.

A total of 1023 students were diagnosed with different diseases from June 20 to 25 and about 20 students contracted jaundice last month, medical sources said.

Although Acting Proctor Mafuhi Sattar announced a plan to form a body to regularly monitor different outlets on the university campus several months ago, the decision is yet to come into effect.

Japan quake

FROM PAGE 16
across four provinces.

"It's the strongest earthquake I've ever felt. I'm worried another big one will hit," said Eiji Kikuchi, who was inside a gas station and almost collapsed when the earth started shaking.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who is in the middle of a re-election battle, rushed back to his office where a crisis management centre was set up.

"It was a big earthquake. I would like our party to place top priority on earthquake measures," Koizumi was quoted by Jiji Press as telling a party official.

seek permission from their experts for any construction on the premises of the Sangsad Bhaban, considered an architectural marvel.

A top official at the Ministry of Housing and Public Works pointed out that the incident showed lack of coordination among different agencies of the government.

Earlier, a high court ruling had asked the government to retain the original nature and design of the parliament complex, which is accepted as an architectural icon worldwide. A proposal to declare it a world heritage is now under consideration.

An engineer at the PWD and in-

charge of the Sangsad Bhaban area said they had no idea who was constructing the fountain. "In case of even the slightest intervention in the original design, we are required to conduct meetings with architects, planners and engineers to get the work approved. But in this case, we have no knowledge of it," he said, requesting anonymity.

observed. "We are being trampled by the maneuvering of the major global players."

He ruled out the possibility of a surge in imports of finished products because of the tariff rate reduction because the items getting the tariff benefit are not imported in large amounts.

The finance minister said increasing exports and keeping essential prices under control are his main tasks now. "I am not worried about getting DSC funds," he added. "Even if we do not get the World Bank loan, our development programmes will not stop."

Asked how he would manage the budget as the tariff rate reduction will lead to revenue erosion, he said he has already instructed the NBR to catch the tax dodgers to make them pay more. He also hinted that more measures will be taken to increase tax collection.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), giving his comment on the step said such ad hoc measures will not help stabilise the market. He said transparent and comprehensive steps are needed to tackle the issues concerning exchange rate, inflation rate and interest rate.

He also noted that the step taken within a month of the budget not only goes against fiscal discipline, but will erode confidence in trade and industry. The finance minister's budgetary measures will also come under question, he added.

PRSP finalised

FROM PAGE 1
its report will now be placed with the government for adopting the strategy.

Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamaluddin Siddiqui, chairman of the committee, presided over the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Talking to the UNB, Siddiqui said the report will be formally handed over to the finance minister.

The final draft report will be placed with the National Economic Council (NEC) for the approval.

Prime accused

FROM PAGE 1
Action Battalion (Rab) on Sunday evening from a residential hotel in Chittagong, police said.

Avilash, son of Doyal Krishna Chakma of Hazachhari village under Naniarchar thana, was arrested after the Rab personnel were tipped off about his presence at Saikat Boarding in Lal Dighirpara area in Chittagong on Sunday. The Rab then handed him over to Naniarchar police on Monday.

Naniarchar police prayed for a 10-day remand before magistrate Muzammel Huque's court yesterday. However, the court set next Saturday for hearing on the remand appeal, sub inspector (SI) Monirul Islam from Kotwali thana of Rangamati told the Daily Star last night.

An accused in nine cases including abduction and extortion, Avilash had been absconding for quite a long time and police efforts to nab him failed over and over again. At last, police sought the Rab's assistance for capturing Avilash.

Two Britons and a Danish were abducted from Kalapahar area in Naniarchar on February 16, 2001 by terrorists allegedly belonging to the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), an indigenous platform who oppose the CHT peace deal. The foreigners were on a visit to oversee the progress of a road construction project funded by the Danish government.

After a month-long negotiation, the hostages were however set free on March 16, 2001 in a remote jungle in Kawkhali upazila under Rangamati district from where they were flown to Dhaka by an army helicopter.

A senior leader of UPDF as well as a member of the now-defunct Maorum, a secret publication of UPDF, Avilash had been eluding arrest for years.

Meanwhile, the Investigation Officer (IO) of the sensational abduction case was transferred from Naniarchar, slowing down the progress of the case.

"Only final report of the case was submitted and the charge sheet has not been completed yet. We are banking on Avilash for a lead to unearth the abduction case," said Monirul.

Khaleda warns

FROM PAGE 1
she chaired.

Stressing the importance of ensuring the best utilisation of the available resources, she said, "Our partners in these ventures are our friendly countries and donor organisations and we have to pay back the foreign loans. We have to keep these facts in mind."

She put emphasis on speedy implementation of all projects in the first phase of the current fiscal year. "Last year the ADP implementation was 90 percent. This time we should reach 100 percent," she told the meeting attended by ministers and secretaries.

The Enec approved eight development projects with an outlay of Tk 998 crore, including Tk 449 crore in project aid. The foreign aid in these projects is being provided by Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan and the World Bank.

PSC with Cairn

FROM PAGE 16
sqkm-area, Petrobangla officials said.

Under the new deal, Cairn will now conduct three exploration wells in the areas within next three years through an investment of \$50 million.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1
claims didn't commit".

Termining the report "false and fabricated", Nasir claimed that neither his wife nor he nor any of his relatives tortured the girl.

Had they tortured her, the police staff concerned would have definitely mentioned it or sent her for medical check-up when she was taken to the police station, he said.

On July 13, the alleged theft took place at his home, Nasir claimed, saying, "I was outside of our house that day from 10:00am to 11:00pm. My wife called me on my mobile and informed me about this and I advised her to keep Aklima at our home."

"I came home at midnight and asked her [Aklima] about this. She confessed that she took the bag and next morning I handed her over to the police."

Nasir said he went to Rayerbazar slum where Aklima's uncle lives and also talked to Aklima's mother and uncle over mobile phone.

Our reply

We stand by our report.

Our report was prepared after talking to Aklima in Dhaka Central Jail, police officials concerned and Aklima's relatives and Abdullah Nasir, who was quoted extensively.

The reporter also visited Aklima's uncle at Rayerbazar who denied receiving any call from Nasir.

After her release on bail from the Dhaka Central Jail, Aklima described her terrible experience at her employer's house to her lawyers, who came forward to help Aklima on humanitarian ground.

Move for 'opposition day'

FROM PAGE 1
they are allowed to counter ministers' statements," a meeting source said quoting Sircar.

Supporting the proposal, Jatiya Party lawmaker GM Quader said ministers will be careful to make any statements in the House if lawmakers are allowed to counter their statements.

The parliamentary body meanwhile agreed in principle to make the private members' day more effective to meet the need for opposition day, meeting sources said.

The UNDP-funded project — Strengthening the Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh — had made a number of proposals including introduction of opposition day. It proposed 10 such days a year to allow opposition lawmakers to discuss various issues. It also proposed holding a general discussion on various issues every 10 working days.

"It is a good proposal for allowing opposition lawmakers to discuss different burning issues in parliament. We supported introduction of opposition day but the ruling BNP opposed it," Awami League lawmaker and committee member

Promod Mankin told The Daily Star later.

"The ruling alliance lawmakers will lose interest in attending House sittings if opposition day is introduced. Only the opposition lawmakers will speak on the day, then why the alliance lawmakers will attend the sitting," Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain told the meeting opposing the proposal, sources said.

Finally, the committee decided to go for zero hour and formed a five-member subcommittee to work out steps to introduce the system. The time will be shared equally by the treasury bench and the opposition lawmakers.

Once the system is introduced, lawmakers will at least get some time to speak and it will also reduce allegations that opposition members are not allowed to speak, GM Quader said.

At present, lawmakers taking the floor in the name of point of order speak on different issues as they have little scope to raise any issue in parliament. They take the floor with permission from the speaker but the chair disallows most of the points of order.

ACC asked to revive

FROM PAGE 1
said. "The budget for 2005-06 fiscal year has allocated a fund for such expenditure of the ACC."

An ACC high official yesterday said, "In the past when we asked the government for its advice on this matter, we did not get response. If we were given the same directive earlier we could have made some progress with these cases by now."

The Cabinet Division had earlier took a different stance on incorporating the former Bac officials into the commission. It had asked the ACC to refrain from attaching them until they are screened and selected by the commission.

"Since the ACC was formed in November, we tried to move ahead with our tasks by temporarily attaching the Bac officials. But the government declared those officials as its reserved employees and said that before screening they cannot be attached to the ACC. This not only stalled the 5,050 cases, but all activities of the ACC," the official added.

However, ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan on May 7 wrote to the law ministry, asking who will conduct these cases — the govern-

ment or the commission. The ACC Act does not clearly vest this responsibility in the ACC.

On June 26, the law ministry suggested that the commission's prosecution unit would be able to deal with the cases. A month later, the Cabinet Division told the ACC that after the government approves an organogram for the ACC, it can form its prosecution unit which will conduct the cases.

Then the ACC told the Cabinet Division that since it linked conducting of these cases to the completion of the commission's organogram, the onus of carrying out the cases now lies with the government.

According to the ACC Act, the government is responsible for the ACC organogram and budget. As the government took no steps, the three-member ACC itself initiated the process of forming the draft organogram of over 1,000 staff and sent it to the establishment ministry in April for government approval.

But the ministry sent the draft back to the commission saying it is incomplete and suggested incorporation of the staff's job description in it.

Rab not ready

FROM PAGE 16
Jamaaluddin Ahmed Chowdhury.

To do that it needs a legal basis. Rab-7 commanding officer Lt Col Quazi Emdadul Haque told The Daily Star yesterday. "We cannot detain or interrogate them merely on the basis of a verbal confession. At least the confession has to be made under Section 164 for us to make such a move," he explained.

However, the Lt Col said they would not spare anyone, even if he be a mighty godfather, if he is implicated in a statement made under Section 164 of the CrPC.

The Rab-7 grilled Shahid, the prime suspect in the abduction case, remanded in its custody for five days by the trial court last Monday, for six hours since early morning yesterday but was rather light-lipped to the press about the outcome.

Officials of Rab-7 also denied journalists access to Shahid. He is being quizzed methodically and extensively to unearth clues and facts of Jamal's abduction.

"As per his preliminary statement, Jamal is dead. But we are not in a position now to believe or disown this statement. The truth will come out very soon during the remand," he told the press.

Though the court remanded Shahid for five days in Rab custody followed by five days in Criminal Investigation Department (CID) custody for interrogation, Lt Col Haque hinted that they might not hand over him to the CID when Rab's remand period expires next Saturday.

He said, "We wish to keep him for the entire 10-day remand period in our custody. And we would like to carry out interrogation during the second phase of remand in co-ordination with the CID."

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

The Rab-7 chief said their prime concern was to rescue Jamal alive and destroy the kidnapping syndicate "so that none would dare to repeat such a crime".

Pac terms

FROM PAGE 16
The Public Accounts Committee (Pac) of the Jatiya Sangsad, which had formed the subcommittee, at a meeting yesterday rejected the probe report. It described as 'incomplete' the report that says the disappearance incident had resulted in a loss of Tk 13.30 crore to public exchequer.

Sailed from Kanda port of India, MV Hafina was coming to Chittagong, but disappeared on the way with 12,000 metric tons of rice causing a loss of Tk 13.30 crore in FY 1998-99, according to an audit objection report by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Pac at yesterday's meeting also asked the subcommittee to make a complete report within a month.

Meeting sources said Shamsul Alam Pramanik, a member of the subcommittee and also a ruling BNP lawmaker, blamed the inadequacy of the report on the committee head Manjur Qader. He said Qader had submitted the report much earlier in the face of negative attitude of the other members of the committee.

Qader trying to defend his decision said that secretary of the food ministry did not co-operate in the enquiry process.

The meeting sources said Qader's comments visibly annoyed the Pac Chairman Harun Al Rashid, who asked, "Why should a Member of Parliament seek help from a secretary and what sort of work he himself has done then?"

During the meeting, seven audit objections covering fiscal years 1995-98 and 2000-01 and involving Tk 6.01 crore under the shipping ministry were placed before the Pac.

Besides, the committee discussed an audit objection that says Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) has incurred a loss of Tk 4.06 crore because the officials concerned did not pay for oil import on time.

A probe committee formed by the shipping ministry in 2000 had blamed the BSC authorities, including its executive director (finance) and general manager (finance) for the loss. But the ministry has yet to take any action against them.

The shipping secretary could not tell the meeting why they have not taken any punitive actions against the persons responsible.

The Pac has asked the ministry to implement the recommendations of the probe committee.

Weekly holiday

FROM PAGE 1
moment," he said.

He also reminded the fact that the present government's tenure is coming to an end. The government must consider how much logical it will be on its part to take such a decision at this far end of its term, he said.

Many have opined that it is a very important issue and deserves an immediate decision, Saifur told the media, agreeing to the idea.

The BEF in a statement on Monday said the increasing global prices of petroleum pose a serious challenge to the country's economy. "The threat underlines the need for drastic measures. At the same time, the government along with the people in all strata of the society need to promote austerity measures," it said.

As the first step, the BEF suggested weekend holidays might be observed for two days in the government secretariat as well as in all government offices at the district levels except those connected with infrastructure and other services needed by trade and industry on a continuous basis.

Two-day weekly holiday exists in many countries across the world and, in fact, it was once practised in Bangladesh too, he said.

Six-working-days-a-week does not necessarily mean that everyone is working, Saifur observed. "Many come to the office, gossip, have tea and go back home," he said.

"Two-day weekly holiday will bring down the petrol cost and the officials can then go to their native villages and cultivate ginger and chilly or start poultry farm and become self-reliant," Saifur observed.

Besides, if urban people often visit the villages, the rural people will become more conscious through exchange of views, he opined.

4 outlaws killed

FROM PAGE 16
The Rab team retrieved one shutter gun and 20 bullets from the spot.

Police said Mujibur of Kalikapur village of Faridpur upazila in Pabna was accused in 20 different cases including nine for murder, while Panu of village Modi was accused in 19 cases including eight for murder.

In the Kushtia incident, the sadar police arrested GMF cadre Sujon Hossain from Lahinipara of Kushtia with a rifle on Sunday morning.

Based on information extracted from him, when a police team went to recover more firearms, the GMF operatives ambushed them at Nagar Mohammadpur of sadar upazila at about 4:00am. As the law enforcers fired back, a two-hour gun battle ensued.

At one stage, while attempting to escape from the police van, Sujon was caught in the line of firing and died on the spot, the police said.

According to police, Sujon, a deputy chief of the outfit, was accused in five murder cases.

In another incident, Rajbari police said they arrested GMF cadre Sajal of Manikhat of Pangspha upazila, accused in five murder cases, from Manikganj district on Sunday night.

Sajal was taken to Rajbari where during an interrogation he admitted to possessing firearms hidden at different places in Rajbari.

Upon his information, as a team of Pangspha police reached Mathurapur village to recover the hidden firearms at about 2:30am, the GMF cadres opened fire on them. The police also returned the fire, resulting in an hours-long gunfight.

Sajal received bullets in the "crossfire" while jumping off from the police van to escape. He died on the spot.

The police recovered a pistol and a shutter gun from the spot.