

Mobile courts realise Tk 10.35 lakh in fine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty mobile courts led by magistrates fined about Tk 10.35 lakh for keeping sub-standard and unsafe foods in restaurants and shops, and irregularities in transport services in different areas of the capital yesterday.

Besides, the courts filed 391 cases against persons and organisations on charge of selling adulterated food, violating traffic rules and realising extra fares and overloading in buses and launches.

The mobile courts also took actions against unfit vehicles, illegal parking and encroachment of footpaths in the city.

Thirty-five mobile courts, including five stand-by ones, will continue their vigorous drive in the city throughout the Ramadan.

Sergeant, 5 others sued for extortion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

An extortion case was filed against six people, including a traffic sergeant, with a Dhaka court yesterday.

Mohammad Jahangir Alam, a rickshaw-trader of Swadhinata Sarani, North Badda, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Sergeant Mohammad Nuruzzaman, his source Abdur Rob and four other unidentified persons.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullahel Baqui directed the deputy commissioner of Detective Branch to investigate and take necessary action against the accused.

In his complaint, Jahangir Alam said Bashar, a rickshaw-puller, leased a rickshaw from his garage at about 6:00am on September 3. The sergeant stopped the rickshaw at Mouchak crossing and demanded Tk3,000 as toll from Bashar although the latter showed all valid documents.

The rickshaw-puller refused to pay the toll and the sergeant became angry and beat him mercilessly.

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Niko barely averts 'third blowout'

Relief well likely to be done safely in a week

SHARIER KHAN

As Canadian company Niko's drilling of the relief well at the twice blown out Tengratila gas field reached a critical stage on Tuesday, its Bangladeshi partner, Bapex, at the last moment detected serious lapses in Niko's preparations for the final phase that could lead the gas field to a third explosion.

With Bapex's intervention, it is now expected that the relief well will be completed safely within a week, sources said.

Niko was scheduled to complete this well by October 1.

During a visit to the Tengratila field in Chhatak, the Bapex managing director (MD) was irked to see that Niko did

not have adequate preparations for the final phase of drilling the relief well.

Of these, Niko did not have adequate 'barite', a chemical used for killing the well. "Niko had only 200 tonnes of barite," said one source.

The MD pointed this out and said Bapex can provide additional resources on an emergency basis but Niko officials and experts were initially reluctant to take the help.

However, by midnight Tuesday, Niko contacted both Unocal and Bapex. Bapex yesterday started sending 800 tonnes of barite from its stock in Chittagong and Unocal another 200 tonnes from its Moulvibazar field.

"Despite two rounds of blowouts due

India reopens consulate in Karachi next year

AFP, Karachi

India will reopen its consulate in Pakistan's largest city Karachi by January 2006 after a gap of nearly 12 years, as part of an ongoing peace process, the Indian foreign minister said Wednesday.

Visiting Minister Natwar Singh told reporters in the volatile southern city that he had asked the consul to finish the renovation of India House by December 31.

"We will be giving visas from January and the Pakistani consulate in Mumbai will also be functioning by that time," added Singh, who was in Pakistan for peace talks and returned home yesterday.

The consulates in Karachi and the southern Indian city of Mumbai were shut in 1994 amid a series of disputes including claims by then Pakistani premier Benazir Bhutto

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CTG ARMS HAUL

No hearing for absence of witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Hearing of the sensational Chittagong arms case was not held on the scheduled date yesterday reportedly due to the absence of the witnesses.

The court of Judge KM Anwar Hossain fixed November 14 as the next date for hearing on the case filed under Arms Act in connection with the 10 truck-load of arms and

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70 injured in Gaibandha train mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

At least 70 passengers were injured, 15 of them critically, when a speeding train rammed the rear compartment of a stationary mail train at Mohimaganj Railway station on Tuesday night.

Railway sources said Santahar-bound Padmaragh Express was delayed on the first track of the

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| Prayer Timing | | |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|
| October 6 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-45 | 5-20 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 4-15 | 4-30 |
| Maghrib | 5-53 | 5-56 |
| Esha | 7-30 | 8-00 |
| Source: Islamic Foundation | | |

Talks with Tata slow down on rigid stance on gas supply issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Negotiations over gas between the government and the Tata Group are advancing slowly with both sides showing a rigid stance on the sensitive issue.

The Indian industrial giant, on the fourth day of discussion with Petrobangla officials, yesterday demanded the government's guarantee of issuing no new connections if Bangladesh faces a shortage of gas in the future.

Tata officials also proposed to form a joint committee to monitor gas production by setting a threshold level. The group demands that once

reserve reaches the threshold level, their industrial units should get gas on a priority basis by stopping supply to other consumers.

The government, however, told Tata Group representatives such a guarantee cannot be made as it seems unrealistic.

The Indian conglomerate Tata also demanded certification of the entire gas reserve before signing deals with the government.

The government is also declining the demand as gas reserve certification is an expensive project and not mandatory as per existing laws.

Tata demands 25 years of uninterrupted gas supply to its steel industry

and another 20 years to its fertilizer industry, while the government proposes an assurance of 20 years for both.

The group is also demanding 1.5 trillion cubic feet of gas for 30 years for its three projects, while the government is still negotiating a much lower supply.

Meanwhile, another Tata Group team yesterday met energy ministry adviser and Board of Investment Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman.

After the meeting Rahman said the negotiations are progressing well and both sides are satisfied over the advancement. Tata representatives at the meeting informed him about the progress of the negotiations, he added.

Three share chemistry Nobel prize

AFP, Stockholm

Yves Chauvin of France and Americans Robert H. Grubbs and Richard R. Schrock on Wednesday won the Nobel Prize for a breakthrough in carbon chemistry that opens the way to smarter drugs and environmentally-friendlier plastics.

In its citation for the 2005 award for chemistry, the Nobel jury declared "fantastic opportunities" had resulted from the trio's work, in pharmaceuticals and so-called green chemistry.

"Imagination will soon be the only limit" to what kind of molecules can be built in the future, the jury said.

The trio, who have a third of the prize each, broke new ground in a process called metathesis.

The term, whose meaning is "changing places," entails using a catalyst to break the bonds of carbon-based molecules and then rearrange them to form new compounds.

Carbon is the most versatile

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Govt microcredit scheme in limbo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recovery of Tk 133.12 crore given as microcredit from public funds and the fate of around 1,900 officials and employees have become uncertain due to government indecision about the continuity of a project that expired in June this year.

The project, named rural poverty alleviation project under the

Bangladesh Rural Development Board, was launched in 1993.

Sources said the project covered 123 upazilas in 22 districts and directly benefited about 10 lakh poor people.

The micro credit programme under the project was very successful, with a 97 per cent recovery rate.

The Executive Committee of the

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When poverty makes the difference

Parents push their children to camel jockeying

PORIMOL PALMA

Acute poverty and family crises create the context for human trafficking, pushing parents to give their children to unscrupulous brokers, who traffic the children

for the camel jockey trade in the Middle East.

In depth interviews with the parents of children who have recently returned from the United

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| Sehri-Iftar | | | |
|-------------|-----|-------|-------|
| Ramadan | Oct | Sehri | Iftar |
| 1 | 6 | | 5-44 |
| 2 | 7 | 4-33 | 5-43 |