

Petrobangla boss Osmani removed under 'pressure'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday removed Petrobangla chairman SR Osmani under pressure from a business lobby, sources said.

While Osmani was transferred to the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (Bscic), the government was yet to name his replacement last night.

The sources said energy secretary AMM Nasiruddin has been asked to hold Petrobangla's chair as an additional responsibility until a fresh appointment for the chairman is made.

Besides, Additional Secretary for Energy Ehsan-ul-Fattah has been transferred to the Planning Commission as acting member.

Due to the transfers, the energy ministry is running without any secretary or additional secretary at present.

The government also made Civil Aviation Secretary Iqbaluddin

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FRESH VOTERS' LIST PREPARATION

## Legality of unilateral move questioned

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The activities to prepare a fresh voter roll for the next parliamentary election have been questioned on legal grounds, as the decision to that effect had been taken unilaterally by the chief election commissioner (CEC).

CEC MA Aziz took the decision regarding the voter list on his own last August, ignoring the opinion of the other election commissioners.

Election Commissioners AK Mohammad Ali and M Munsef Ali, who are two of the three members of the election commission (EC), have already questioned the legality of the process of preparing the voter list. They have also been giving notes of dissent on every file regarding preparation of the voter list.

Legal experts have echoed the two election commissioners' view on the

process of roll preparation.

Referring to the constitutional provisions, they said if the number of election commissioners is more than one, there is no scope for the CEC to take a unilateral decision. The commission should take every decision through discussion among its members [commissioners].

The experts also said if anyone challenges the legality of the process of making the voter list, the commission will be faced with enormous difficulties.

Referring to the formation and functions of the EC, eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said it is not proper for the CEC to take a decision without consulting the other election commissioners.

"If the chief election commissioner

should make a decision on his own, then he must give the other election commissioners the opportunity to review the decision and if necessary to revise it. The legal validity of the decision may be questioned if the CEC does not discuss it with the other commissioners," noted Dr Kamal, one of the framers of the constitution.

On taking any decision, former CEC Abu Hena said, "It is preferable to take a unanimous decision on any issue. If it is not possible then the majority view should be considered as the decision agreed. There is no scope to decide anything unilaterally."

The CEC last August decided to prepare a fresh voter list, ignoring the opinion of the two other election commissioners - - - A K

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FRESH BOMB THREAT

High alert for all police stations in Rajshahi div

STAR REPORT

All police stations in Rajshahi division have been put on high alert after Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday threatened to launch another simultaneous bomb attack on police, reports our staff correspondent from Rajshahi.

In the letter sent to Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) commissioner and Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj police superintendents, the JMB asked for establishing Islam at every government and non-government office with immediate effect.

Otherwise, they will launch bomb attacks again at police stations across the country to force establishment of Islam, said the letter signed by JMB Chapainawabganj unit Secretary Maolana Hafiz Uddin Biswas.

"No forces can avert the attack, nor do any of them have the ability," said the letter, which used the

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ONION PRICE HITS Tk 50



PHOTO: STAR

The price of onion in the city markets shot up yesterday to Tk 45 to Tk 50 a kg from Tk 15-to-18 range before Ramadan. A domestic production shortfall and ruin of standing onion crops in heavy rains in India, setting off a cross-border supply shortage, are blamed for the price hike.

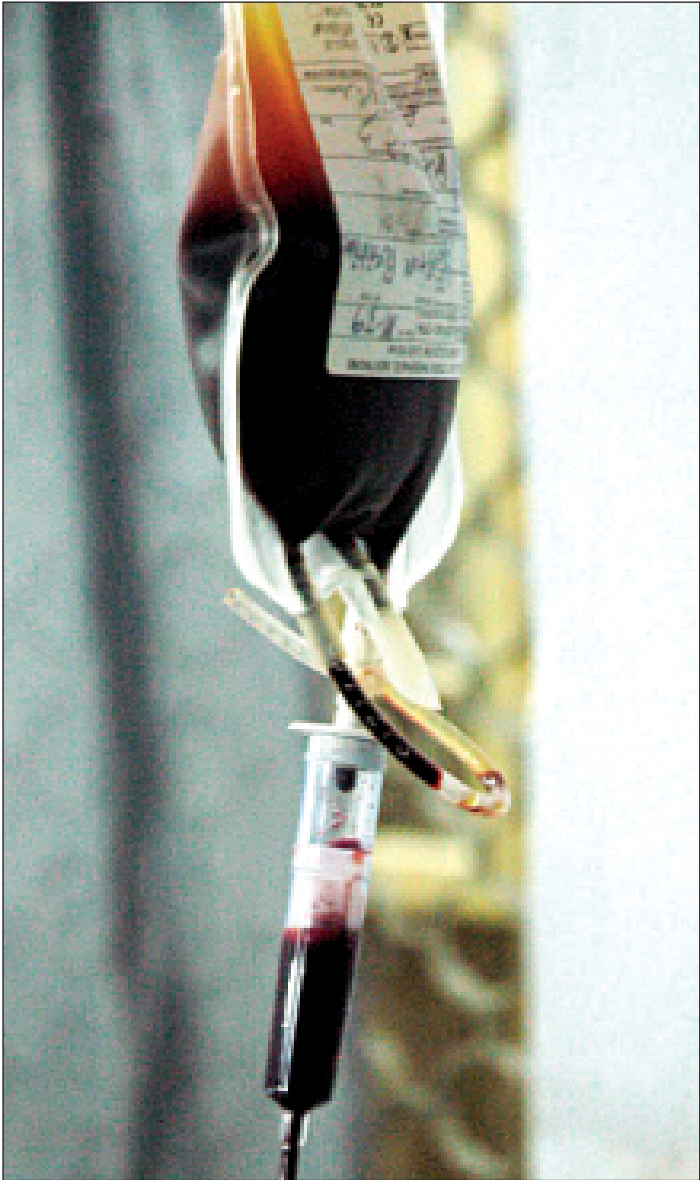


PHOTO: STAR

A bag of blood bought from a professional donor, carrying the risk of containing germs of contagious diseases, being given to a patient at the DMCH yesterday.

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Blood gets scarce in Ramadan

*Fear of ruining fast scares off safe donors*

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Septuagenarian Rabeya Khatun of Ward 23 at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) was scheduled to undergo a surgery on her nose last Saturday. As her daughter, Syeda Taslima Begum, is a senior staff nurse at the hospital, Rabeya had not much to worry about. But, trouble blew in from a direction Taslima expected the least. She tried all the sources she knew but could not arrange the three bags of 'O' positive blood the doctors had asked for the operation.

'O' positive is a common blood group. But during Ramadan blood of even the most common group becomes scarce. As most Muslims are fasting, they are not willing at all to donating blood, which they mistakenly believe will ruin the fast.

What compounded Taslima's predicament was her reluctance to buying blood from the professional donors. It was because a recent survey found that the blood sold by professional donors often carry germs of various contagious diseases including AIDS, syphilis, hepatitis B and C, malaria etc.

According to the study, Sandhani, Red Crescent, and various voluntary organisations and individuals considered to be safe sources of blood usually meet 83 percent of the total demand for blood used for medical treatment.

Eid ticket scalping fans out to launches, trains

SURANJIT DEBNATH

Scalpers and influential persons affiliated with the ruling party had already captured most of the advance tickets of the inter-district launches and trains for the days preceding the Eid-ul-Fitr although sale of advance tickets started only yesterday.

A large number of advance tickets for the cabins of launches and for the first class and chair coaches of trains have been booked by the ruling party ministers, legislators, leaders and its

activists, while the rest of the comparatively good tickets have already been grabbed by the scalpers, said ticket counter staffs at the train stations and launch terminals.

Thousands of people eager to join their families away from the capital for Eid are now at the mercy of the scalpers who will sell the tickets for three to four times more than the real fare right before the Eid Day.

LAUNCH TERMINAL

A large number of people were found disgruntled and angry

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Grafts hurting FDI Says new EU envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed European Union Ambassador to Dhaka Dr Stefan Frowein has described corruption in Bangladesh as dangerous for development and cautioned that it may hamper the flow of foreign direct investment.

"[Corruption is] certainly dangerous and not a good thing for the reputation of a country placed at the bottom of the list for the fifth consecutive time," he told reporters at a function at the Sheraton Hotel yesterday evening.

"Foreign direct investment is very much hampered by corruption...The investment desperately

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EU Ambassador Dr Stefan Frowein

Huda blames passengers for extra bus fares

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda yesterday pinned the blame on the passengers for paying extra bus fares instead of taking actions against the bus operators.

"You are provoking the bus operators by giving higher fares than the rates in the charts," Huda said at a press function at Dhaka Reporter Unity (DRU).

The minister suggested filing

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Indo-Bangla home secy-level talks begin tomorrow

*Security, cross-border crimes top agenda*

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Security issues, cross-border crimes and infiltration will be on top of the agenda at the home secretary-level talks between India and Bangladesh beginning here tomorrow.

A ten-member delegation of senior Bangladeshi officials led by Home Secretary Sarfaraj Hossain will arrive here today to take part in the two-day talks with the Indian

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Vegetables dearer on crops damage by rain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of vegetables in the city markets rose sharply in the last three days due to a supply shortage as intermittent rains recently damaged standing vegetable crops in different parts of the country.

Taking advantage of the supply situation, both wholesale traders and retailers raised the prices at will.

The price spiral of vegetables added to the sufferings of the common people as exorbitant prices of essentials during the month of Ramadan already hit them hard.

Green chilli marked the highest price rise, selling at as high as Tk 80 a kg in the retail markets yesterday. Its price in the wholesale markets went up to Tk 250 per five kg from Tk 80 a week ago.

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