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BAC MEETING
BNP says no to all AL demands for discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday rejected all the demands placed by the main opposition Awami League (AL) for holding discussion in parliament on various burning issues like serial bomb blasts, price hike of essentials, mass arrest and the Kansat carnage.

A meeting of the treasury bench-dominated Business Advisory Committee (BAC) witnessed heated debate between the ruling and opposition members with both sides stick to their position on putting the issues in the agenda.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who

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Mercury goes up at JS over power crisis

Lawmakers from all parties grill power minister for failure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both the ruling alliance and opposition members in parliament yesterday poured out their anger over shortage of power, which, they said, has been severely hampering irrigation across the country.

Lawmakers from either side of the aisle grilled State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood about the crisis during a question-answer session. They demanded

an uninterrupted supply of electricity especially in the season of cultivation.

They said they have been subjected to immense pressure from the constituencies for power, as the supply is less than half against the demand. They also spoke about farmers demonstrating in many areas against the energy crunch.

"Let's see how many hands are raised for power," Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui said, add-

ing that his constituency too has been hit by the crisis.

The speaker's remark came when almost all members, except the ministers, raised hands to seek from the chair an opportunity to describe the power situation in their constituencies.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, also in charge of the power ministry, was not in the House when the lawmakers were clamouring for

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UN calls for Guantanamo closure

AFP, Geneva

The United States must shut down its detention centre at Guantanamo Bay "without further delay", a UN human rights report published Thursday said, urging Washington to try or release more than 500 terrorism suspects held at its naval base on Cuba.

In their report, five independent experts who act as monitors for the UN Human Rights Commission said: "The United States government should close the Guantanamo Bay detention facilities without further delay."

The 54-page report also said that the United States "should either expeditiously bring all Guantanamo Bay detainees to

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BB goes soft on loan defaulters before polls

Experts find it contrary to tight monetary policy, suspect pressure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the general elections and contrary to its much-professed contractionary monetary policy, the central bank yesterday removed the bar on loan defaulters who have rescheduled their loans from getting fresh credit.

According to a circular of Bangladesh Bank (BB) issued on January 13, 2003, the borrowers who had rescheduled bank loans

were not allowed to get any fresh loan within one year of the rescheduling or until full repayment of the rescheduled amounts.

Yesterday's BB circular cancelled that bar and paved the way for them to get fresh bank loans subject to a few petty conditions like repaying 7.5 to 15 percent of the rescheduled loans.

"The defaulting borrower who has availed interest waiver must settle at least 15% of the compro-

mise amount (excluding the down payment on rescheduling as per present guideline) to avail any further credit facility from any bank," prescribed the new BB policy.

The condition is even easier for exporters. The policy reads, "Export borrower may be granted further credit facility (after being identified as not a wilful defaulter), if required," by paying back 7.5

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PHOTO: STAR

Addicts taking drugs in broad daylight in front of the Rajuk Bhaban in Motijheel, covering themselves with ripped cloths.



Shoddy rehab centres feeding on addiction

Hundreds of clinics without licence, expertise or facilities cheat guardians

PINAKI ROY

With drug addiction spreading like wildfire in the society, its 'treatment' too has proved a money-spinning venture to many.

In recent years, the country has

witnessed a mushroom growth of substandard drug addiction 'treatment clinics' and 'rehabilitation centres', numbering a few hundreds and running without any government licence, regulation or

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McKinnon pins hope on caretaker system

C'wealth secy-general meets PM, Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating the caretaker system in Bangladesh, Commonwealth Secretary General Donald C McKinnon expressed his confidence that this interim arrangement will also bring success in the future polls as in the past.

His remarks came when he made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

The visiting C'wealth secretary general observed that the caretaker government system in Bangladesh had worked "very well" in the last three general elections.

He thanked the prime minister, as the caretaker provision was incorporated in the constitution during her tenure.

Khaleda said Bangladesh will welcome if the Commonwealth sends election observers during

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Govt bans toxic ship's entering Bangladesh

STAR REPORT

The government has decided not to allow the asbestos-lined ocean liner SS Norway to enter Bangladesh territory in the wake of newspaper reports and protests by environmentalists.

Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday told reporters they have issued a ban on the ship's entering Bangladesh territory.

"Based on the available information, we've decided to ban the

ship from entering our waters," the minister told the reporters emerging out of a closed-door meeting at his ministry auditorium.

Asked about the ship's taking a new name -- Blue Lady -- he said it would not be allowed to enter Bangladesh territory even if it changed name.

The central bank and the customs authorities would be instructed not to issue an import order for the ship, he added.

The ministry as a precaution measure will also direct the

coastguards not to let the ship move to Bangladesh. On the other hand, officials of the ministry are working to collect more information about the ship.

The government decision came after a Bangladeshi scrap merchant, Lokman Hossain, said he had bought the 11-storey SS Norway at over \$12 million and is waiting to make the payment.

"Everything is settled, but I could not pay the amount due to the dollar crisis in the local

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Dollar price hits new high

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The price-curve of US dollar continued its sharp rise yesterday hitting Tk 70.49 in case of import, posting a hike of Tk 0.34 in one day and Tk 0.54 over the last week.

The import price of the greenback was Tk 70.15 Wednesday and Tk 69.95 on February 9.

In the inter-bank foreign exchange market the peak price of dollar was Tk 67.50 yesterday, rising by Tk 0.20 from the previous day's price.

The forex market is witnessing a massive supply shortfall of dollar, for which the central bank blames a poor liability and asset management by some new-generation

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'POLITICAL LINK' SC rejects judge Chunnu's plea for stay on HC's no-work order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday rejected Dhaka Divisional Special Judge Rezaul Karim Khan Chunnu's petition for a stay of the High Court's (HC) injunction restraining him from discharging judicial functions for two weeks.

On hearing, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division disposed of the petition, asking him to face the HC.

Chunnu, who was served with the injunction for alleged involvement in political activities despite

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Railway cancels 16 train services as it lacks fund to buy diesel

STUFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday cancelled 16 train services through different routes in the eastern zone for indefinite period as it faces an acute fund crisis to buy high-priced diesel for its locomotives.

BR officials said the move would not affect services seriously as the unprofitable and insignificant routes have been cancelled.

The 16 train routes that have

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

From 19th February 2006, applications will be accepted as per the following timings set by the High Commission of India, Dhaka

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION :

- From 08.00 AM to 12.00 PM : Medical and tourist categories.
- From 12.00 PM to 1.00 PM : Foreigners, Group, Student, Business, Conference, Training, Research, Govt. Officials, Artist, Journalist etc.

ESSENTIAL PAPERS / DOCUMENTS :

- Endorsement of US\$ 150 from a BANK (Not from any moneychangers/exchange co.) or Original Bank Statement for last 3 months.
- Proof of residence (Electricity bill / Telephone bill / Water bill etc).
- Photocopy of passport.
- For other documents required for different categories of Visa, please refer to the information sheet (1st page) of the application form.
- All Documents / Papers Should be submitted in 2 sets - One original and One photocopy. The original will be returned back after verification.
- Please affix recent photographs on applications (not old photo).

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO BAG OR LARGE SIZE PACKET IS ALLOWED INSIDE.

- INCOMPLETE VISA APPLICATION FORMS ARE LIABLE TO BE REJECTED BY THE HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA, DHAKA. APPLICANTS MUST MENTION DETAILED INFORMATION LIKE TELEPHONE NUMBER, MOBILE NUMBER, FULL RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, NAMES OF REFERENCE, HOTEL TELEPHONE NO IN INDIA ETC.

PASSPORT DELIVERY :

- From 03.00 PM to 03.30 PM : Back dated and old Passports (Those who did not receive on due date for some reason)
- From 04.00 PM to 06.00 PM : Current dated Passports as mentioned on the delivery receipt.

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