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PRICE HIKE Govt to carry out study to find reasons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would assign research organisations for conducting studies to look into the causes behind soaring prices of essentials and possible steps to rein them in.

"The policies to keep the prices within commoners' capacity will be decided on the findings of the studies," Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam told a meeting with the members of the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) on the coming budget at the Secretariat.

It was assumed that extortion was one of the main reasons for spiralling prices, but since there is no such situation at present, the government wants to know the reason as to why the prices of essentials are still on the rise, he said.

The finance adviser, however, SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Govt won't pursue hoarding cases

Decides to go soft on accused businessmen to rein back spiraling prices of essentials

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The caretaker government has decided not to pursue the cases against hoarders in a desperate attempt to rein back the spiralling prices of essentials.

It will now give 'final report' on all the cases filed against businessmen accused of hoarding huge quantities of rotten wheat and rice, sources said. Final report terminates a case.

Law Adviser Mainul Hossain however said yesterday the government will provide the accused businessmen all facilities within the legal framework for their bail in

the cases against them.

Talking to newsmen after a meeting on law and order chaired by him, Manul said, "There is no denying the fact that the government is going through a crisis -- price of essentials has increased. It is a matter of concern."

The adviser also said the price hike is a sabotage by certain quarters intended to trouble the government.

He mentioned that the government is trying in many ways to assist those businessmen who will import goods. Instructions will be given to the commerce ministry to ensure required facilities for them,

headed.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed on Sunday directed the authorities to open the sealed godowns across the country so that the stored quality food grains can be sold in the market. Keeping commodities in sealed godowns would not bring any benefit, he noted.

The joint forces launched an all out drive against businessmen hoarding or selling rotten wheat and rice soon after the caretaker government took over on January 12. They raided and sealed off many warehouses across the SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

CA formally invited to 14th Saarc Summit

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday received a letter of invitation from Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to join the 14th Saarc Summit to be held in New Delhi early next month.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty called on the chief adviser at his office and handed over the letter.

The CA informed the envoy about his decision to join the summit and said he was looking forward to meeting Manmohan Singh and other Saarc leaders there.

Besides, the CA said he will inaugurate the Saarc car rally at Cox's Bazar on Thursday and is expected to join other leaders of the forum on April 3 in New Delhi where the car rally will conclude.

Referring to the recently held director general-level BDR-BSF meeting in New Delhi, the CA said both countries should move SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines plane sits in the tarmac at Dubai airport after being forced to abort its takeoff for Dhaka as it encountered a problem yesterday. The accident prompted closure of the region's busiest airport for about 8 hours.

Tarique Rahman sent to jail

Denied division in jail; investigators not satisfied with disclosures on stashed money in his foreign bank accounts

STAR REPORT

Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP Tarique Rahman will have to sleep on cold hard concrete in Dhaka Central Jail just like other general inmates as he was denied division facilities after a Dhaka court had sent him there last night.

"We did not provide division facilities to Tarique as he does not qualify under any category to get the facilities," Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star last night.

Tarique was kept in a cell with other general inmates until midnight, jail sources said.

Jail doctors were supposed to take a look at him later in the night to treat his headache and pain in the waist.

If the doctors would suggest admitting him to the jail hospital he would be admitted there, the DIG said.

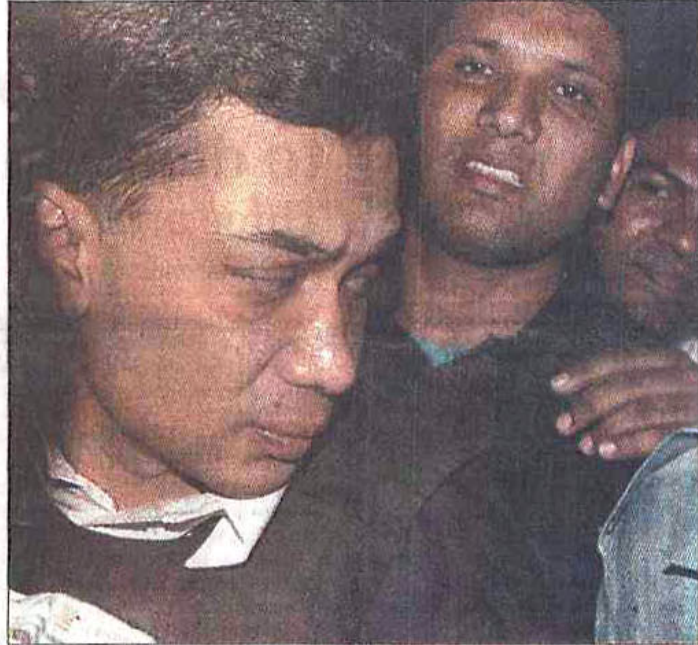
According to the jail code, government officials who fall under

serial No 1 to 18 on the government's warrant of precedence are entitled to get division facilities. Besides, Ekushey Award winners, holders of gallantry awards Bir Uttam, Bir Bikram and Bir Protik, commercially important persons, (CIPs) and general secretaries of political parties with representatives in the parliament may get division facilities in jail.

Tarique was produced before the court on completion of his four-day remand in connection with an extortion case.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case petitioned the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court to confine Tarique to jail until the investigation is completed. He also mentioned in a forwarding report that Tarique had divulged important information which are being verified.

Defense lawyers submitted two petitions to Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan seeking division facilities for Tarique SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



STAR PHOTO

Tarique being taken to the CMM court in the capital yesterday after a remand.

Ex-MP Lobi shown held in land grabbing case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained former BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi was shown arrested yesterday in the case filed with Gulshan Police Station on Sunday for illegally taking possession of a land in August 2003.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon passed the order following a petition from an investigation officer (IO) to show him arrested in the case.

Zakaria Khan Jula of Gulshan filed the case against Lobi, his wife Khoshnud Asgar Lobi and their two accomplices.

KAMAL MAJUMDER CASE
Another Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of detained former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder in connection with a case filed for setting fire to a power supply station at Pallabi in the capital on September 28 last year.

Earlier on February 27, Kamal Majumder was shown arrested in the case following a petition SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Biman shuts Dubai airport for 8 hours

14 hurt as wheel failure occurs during takeoff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka-bound Bangladesh Biman airliner suffered a wheel failure during takeoff, forcing Dubai International Airport, the busiest in the Middle East, to suspend its operations for about eight hours yesterday.

No severe injury was reported in the accident involving the BG 006 flight on London-Dubai-Dhaka route. Some 14 of its 236 passengers and crew received mere cuts and bruises while being evacuated, Biman sources said.

The airport resumed its normal flight operations at 4:30pm (Bangladesh time).

A Biman Bangladesh official told The Daily Star that they were working to arrange for an alternative flight to bring the stranded passengers back home last night.

The expensive Airbus of the national flag carrier was bought in 1996. SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Two committees have been formed to investigate the cause of the accident and to assess losses. A team led by Chief of Flight Safety Captain Ismail was already off to Dubai last night.

Biman officials said primary information suggests that mechanical glitches were responsible for the takeoff mishap that occurred at about 8:30am (Bangladesh time).

"The aeroplane was taxiing down the runway but just before lifting off, the pilot found the nose wheel malfunctioning," a Biman official told The Daily Star last night.

The passengers and crew were quickly evacuated and those with minor injuries were taken to a hospital, the officials said.

With 218 passengers aboard, the flight was to reach Dhaka at 12:45pm.

The insurance companies--Messrs AON in London and Messrs SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Baira executive body dissolved, administrator appointed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government finally dissolved the executive committee of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) and appointed an administrator to conduct its day-to-day activities.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Maksudur SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Two more luxury autos seized

One from Falu's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces yesterday confiscated a luxurious Porsche sports utility vehicle (SUV) from detained former BNP lawmaker Mosaddak Ali Falu's DOHS residence in the capital.

The retail price of the SUV in the US currently starts at \$43,000 to \$93,000. SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

ICC WORLD CUP 07

WC gets rolling with WI-Pak opener today

REUTERS, Jamaica

After a colourful but low-key ceremony officially opened the ninth ICC Cricket World Cup, the tournament proper gets underway with hosts West Indies and Pakistan, two of the most inconsistent sides in international cricket, facing in the first match at the Sabina Park today.

Bangladesh Television will telecast the match live from 8:30pm Bangladesh time.

Former West Indian great Garfield Sobers formally declared the competition open early Monday Bangladesh time.

Nine independent states from the West Indies will host 51 games involving 16 teams, including defending champions Australia.

The competition will last for 47 days leading up to the final on April 28 at the Kensington Oval in Barbados.

Over 2,000 singers, dancers and performers, including several of

the Caribbean's top reggae and dancehall performers, participated in the opening at the new stadium close to Montego Bay on the northern coast of Jamaica.

Surprisingly only just over half of the Trelawny Stadium was opened to spectators with one of the stands, behind the stage, left empty but those inside enjoyed a celebration of Caribbean culture.

Against a red, gold and green backdrop, reggae singers Jimmy SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: AFP

Performers dance during the gala opening ceremony of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 at Trelawny in Jamaica Sunday night.

ACC set to sue 9 political bigwigs

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Anti-Corruption Commission is all set to file cases against nine more top corruption suspects including Awami League (AL) leader Mohammad Nasim and BNP stalwarts Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Nazmul Huda.

These suspects, who have already been arrested, also include BNP leaders former state minister for power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, Ali Asgar Lobi, Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, AL leaders AHM Mostafa Kamal alias Lotus Kamal and Pankaj Debanath and T&T CBA leader Firoze Mia, according to a highly placed source.

"We are ready with files of seven-eight persons. Cases will be filed against them as soon as we approve those. This can happen within a couple of days," ACC Commissioner Abul Hassan Manzoor Mannan told newsmen

yesterday.

Besides, the ACC has made significant progress in gathering information on arrestee BNP leaders Mosaddak Ali Falu, Manjurul Ahsan Munshi and Naser Rahman. It is yet to complete the files to be used for filing cases against them.

Many of these persons will face multiple graft cases. "But initially, we will start with inconsistencies between their wealth and their known sources of income," said a senior official.

"Wealth statements submitted by them reveal that they have tried to hide lots of information. For instance, Ali Asgar Lobi has seven houses in Dhaka and 11 cars including two BMWs," the official pointed out.

Lobi is the owner of the controversial Hawa Bhaban.

"Prior to his arrest, Lobi had SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Sonadia or Kutubdia ideal for deep seaport

Finds Japanese firm

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Sonadia or Kutubdia points would be two financially and technically viable locations for establishing a deep-sea port in the country -- said a consultation firm in its primary assessment report yesterday.

The Japanese firm, Pacific Consultant International, in a brief presentation yesterday said both the points have almost similar advantage and disadvantage in establishing the much talked about deep-sea port, a high official at the Ministry of Shipping said yesterday.

day.

However, the firm rejected the idea of building the port at 'Akram Point', 60 km far from Khulna, as the location was financially and environmentally non-viable due to the need to develop a long road link through the Sundarbans.

Nobuaki Nagaya and KM Ahmed, executives of Pacific Consultant, made their presentation at the shipping ministry conference room before Shipping Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin and Secretary Sheikh Enayeturrahman.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

NEED A TICKET TO THE CRICKET WORLD CUP?

GO & GET IT ...

The Daily Star ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 Special is already out. The 48-page handy guide is full of stats and prospects of the 16 participating teams, profiles of the top players, analysis of the teams, comments, cartoon and a pull-out match schedule. So, if you want to play it with power, then

POWERPLAY

Tuesday 12 March 2007 TK 50

Group Stage

Match 41
Bangladesh v Bangladesh
Bangladesh's first ever
Tested A League
Series, a World Cup
Start of play 8:30 am
Admission only 10
TK 100 - Power Play Stand
Box 100 - Tk 3,444

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Gyankesh, Sobhanbagh
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Nandan, Road 27 (old),
House 37,
Etcetera, Road 27, Plot
270/6,
News-stand, Road 3,
News-stands, New Market,
Shahbagh

Pathak Samabesh, Aziz Super
Market,
News Corner, Biponi Bitan,
Jonaki, Dhaka Sheraton
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