

## 24 out of 32 salt refineries shut in Khulna

24000 workers and employees lose jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Over 24,000 workers and employees have lost their jobs as 24 out of 32 salt refineries in Khulna have been closed down for being losing enterprises.

Eight others are just limping awaiting closure.

President of Khulna Salt Mill Owners' Association Sheikh Mahbubul Haq Peter said salt mills in Khulna have so long met at least 60 percent requirement of the country.

But severe fund crisis, indifferent attitude of the authorities concerned and banking problems

have forced the owners to close down their idiosyncratic industries in this region, he added.

Devastating floods in 1998 damaged raw materials of these salt mills, Mahbubul said, adding that the owners had to incur heavy financial losses as huge quantity of salt was smuggled into the country from India and Myanmar through unauthorised routes during the year 1998-99.

As a result, Khulna salt refineries became sick gradually and later were closed down due to lack of proper financial support from the government.

General Secretary of Khulna Salt

Mill Owners Association Shahidul Islam alleged that some state-owned banks were harassing mill owners making them loan defaulters.

As a result, many mill owners have gone into hiding, he added.

Shahidul alleged that bank authorities have also refused to comply with government decision to provide certain facilities to owners to keep salt refineries running.

DGM of Khulna Corporate Branch of Janata Bank Golam Faruque said he was determined to realise loans by legal means whatever the case may be.

## Dhaka welcomes US bill to remove tariff on LDC products

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has welcomed the introduction of the 'New Partnership for Development Act 2007' in US Congress aiming at reducing global extreme poverty through eliminating tariff on all products that originate in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

"We thank Congressman Jim McDermott for his initiative in introducing this long-awaited bill," said a press release issued by the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC yesterday.

Bangladesh believes that offering duty-free entry of products from the LDCs including apparel could create new opportunities for employment and thereby alleviating poverty and ensuring social progress in these countries, it said.

"We really appreciate the innovative provision of capacity building in the bill and hope that these provisions will go a long way to address the preparedness deficit of the LDCs," the release added.

For Bangladesh, the bill rekindles new ray of hope to millions of workers, mostly women, in the apparel industries to bring better livelihood in their personal life, as well as instilling greater stability and moderation in the society as a whole.

The government and the apparel industry in Bangladesh will remain actively engaged with the US Congress and other stakeholders for early passage of this bill.

Bangladesh hopes that the final version of the bill will be able to meet the aspiration of all stakeholders.

## International Eye Bank symposium begins today

A two-day symposium on International Eye Bank begins at Hotel Sheraton in the city today.

The symposium has been organised jointly by ORBIS International, Sandhani National Eye Donation Society, LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) of India and International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), says a press release.

President Iajuddin Ahmed will inaugurate the symposium.

AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, secretary to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, will attend the inaugural ceremony as special guest.

Dr GN Rao, chair of LV Prasad Eye Institute and president of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), will present a keynote paper on 'Corneal Transplantation Services in Bangladesh'.

Eye Bank experts from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, China, Iran and USA will deliver lectures and facilitate scientific discussions at the symposium.

Senior government officials, representatives from ORBIS's partner organisations, and senior ophthalmologists from the country will also attend the symposium.

There are about 100,000 corneal blind people in Bangladesh. Many of their sight could be regained through corneal transplant.

With this view ORBIS has supported Sandhani to strengthen its eye bank through a project titled 'Strengthening eye banking capacity of Sandhani National Eye Donation Society'.

This support has enabled Sandhani to establish an international standard eye bank with a highly competent managerial and technical team that could independently manage the eye bank.

During the last two years, corneal tissue collection of Sandhani has increased manifold, the release added.

## 23 vessels fined in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court fined 23 vessels Tk 2.95 lakh for not paying taxes regularly in the port city on Thursday.

The vessels reportedly refrained from paying mooring charges defying repeated reminders issued by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The court led by CPA Magistrate Muhammad Munir Chowdhury directed the owners and agents of the vessels to pay the pending taxes immediately. Otherwise the court would detain the vessels, he warned.

The fined vessels are MV Friendship, FV Al Habib, MT Dosh-1, FV Taposhi, FV Salsabil, FV Orion, FV Juberi, FV Satellite-1, MT Canal Bridge, MV AK Ilani, MV Bandhab, BB-1146, BB-1138, BB-1147, MV Lutif Rahman, MV Mayer Adesh-2, MV Manik Mian-1, MV Manik Mian-2, MV Niaz Sharmin, MV Rafis, MV Munmun Setu and MVM Mostafiz.

Of them, eight were fishing vessels while 13 were cargo vessels and two oil tankers.



PHOTO: STAR

The holiday markets are yet to gear up following the Eid holidays. The picture was taken from Segunbagicha in the city yesterday.

## Voter listing in Sylhet begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The task of preparing voter list with photo and National Identity Card in Sylhet City Corporation will begin today.

Deputy Election Commissioner for Sylhet division Khondker Mizanur Rahman told the Daily Star there is a little change in the schedule that was prepared earlier.

He said, in the first phase under the new schedule, the registration of voters will be done in 15 out of 27 wards in the city.

In each of the ward, separate registration centres had been set up in this regard. The registration will run till November 8. Registration of voters at the rest 12 wards will be done on the second phase beginning from November 10 and would run till November 22. Preliminary works for the much-awaited voter listing in the city areas began on October 4.

At the first stage, the voter registration was done in 5 wards in the city. A total of 884 enumerators and 181 supervisors had been entrusted with the task after they were given a three-day training.

Election Commissioner Sohul Hossain at a view exchange meeting on September 6 informed about starting the works in Sylhet region.

Accordingly, on September 12 voter listing in the division began at the remote Tahripur upazila in Sunamganj district.

## Voter listing in Gazipur from today

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Voter listing with photographs and national identity (ID) cards will begin at Gazipur City Corporation today.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda will inaugurate the programme on the premises of Gazipur Shaheed Smriti High School as the chief guest.

The inaugural session will be presided over by Deputy Commissioner Syed Mizanur Rahman while Major General Mohammad Ashrafuddin will be present as special guest.

Gazipur District Election Officer Shah Alam said voter registration at Gazipur City Corporation began on October 7. Taking photograph of the voters will begin today. The voter listing will continue till November 9.

The CEC will also visit two registration centres in the city.

## Bapa concerned over filling of waterbody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) at a press release yesterday expressed grave concern over the filling of a large waterbody at Nikunja-1 residential area in the city.

Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and General Secretary Dr Mohammad Abdul Matin in a

statement said that filling of this lake is a clear violation of Wetland Protection Act.

It is also a detrimental step for overall environment and beauty of the city, they added.

They urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to stop filling of the waterbody in order to protect it immediately.

## US embassy closed tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

The American Embassy, including the Consular Section and the Public Affairs Section with the Archer K Blood American Centre Library and the Student Advising Centre will remain closed tomorrow on the occasion of Durga Puja, said a press release.

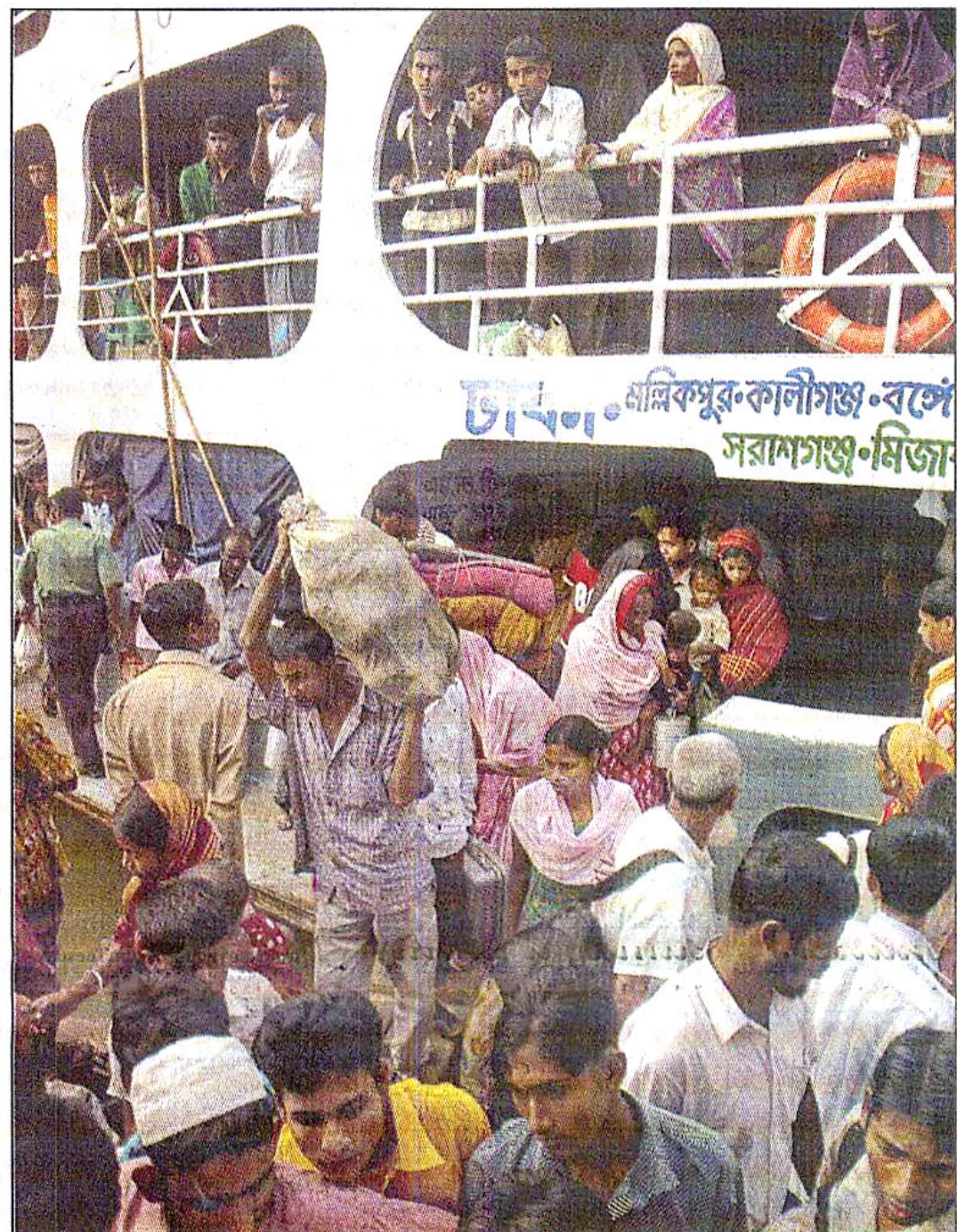
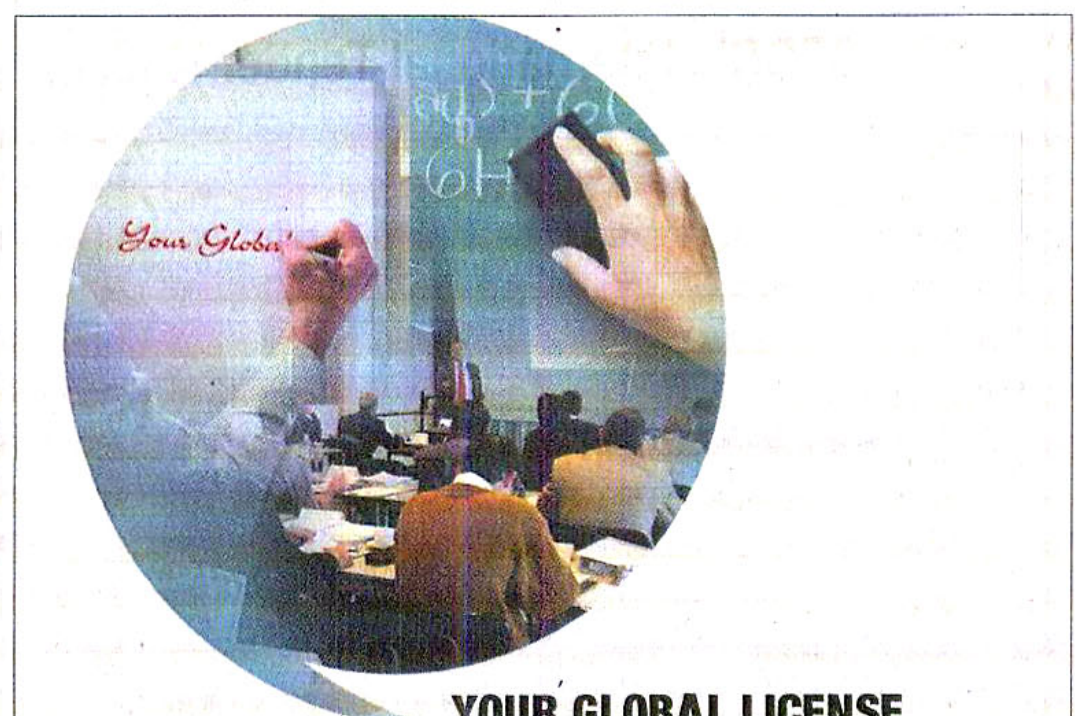


PHOTO: STAR

BACK IN TOWN: People who left Dhaka to celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr with their near and dear ones have started returning to the city after the Eid holidays. The picture was taken from Sadarghat Launch Terminal yesterday.



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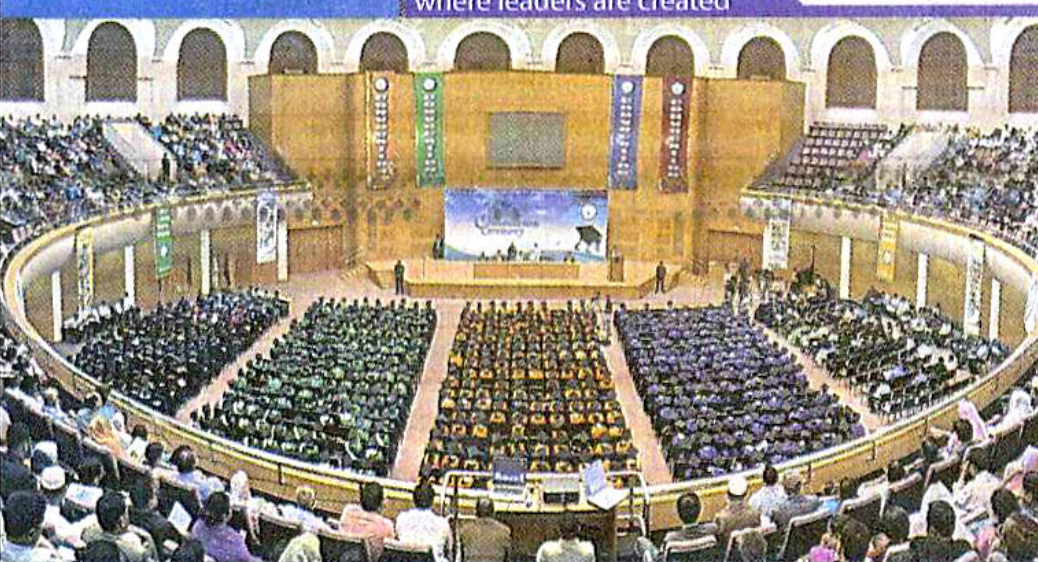
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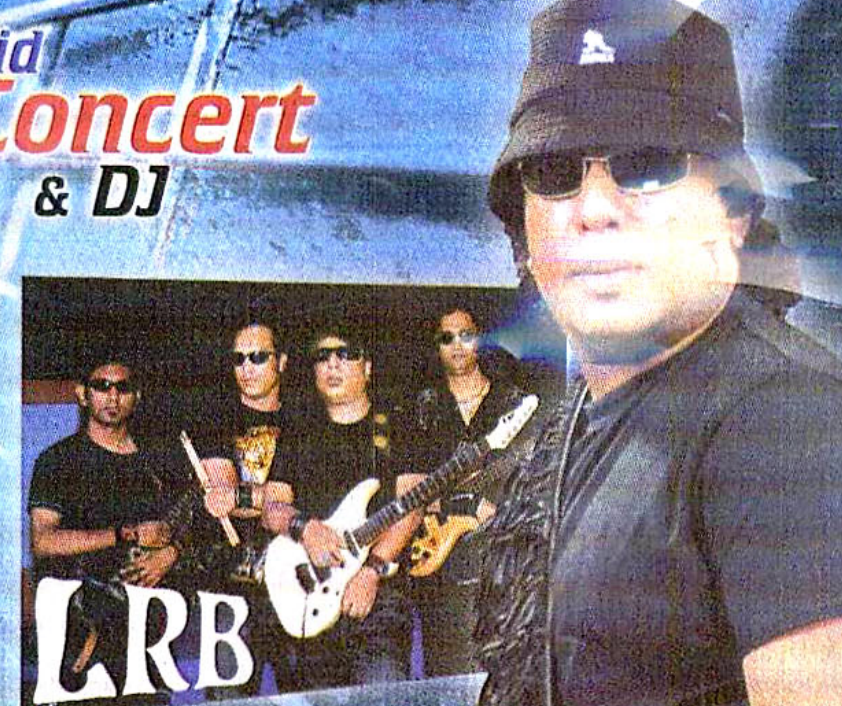
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