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Plus Rising Stars



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GOVT'S 1 YEAR IN OFFICE Ministries busy drafting stories of 'success'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All the ministries are busy drafting their success stories as part of a move to publish a special supplement highlighting their achievements in last one year.

Press Information Department (PID), the government's press wing, asked the ministries to send it their inputs over the issue today.

However, PID officials said any specific decision is yet to be taken over giving comprehensive account of the achievements by the caretaker government.

"Since we used to do this earlier

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Masterpieces left on tarmac for 3 hours

Shipping agent booked those as general cargo; Guimet mulls int'l arbitration over govt's request to cancel exhibition

PINAKI ROY

Homebound, the shipping agent hired by France, had declared the 145 artefacts awaiting shipment to Paris as 'general cargo', leading to the crates being left unattended for three hours on the tarmac and the theft of two Vishnu statues.

Meanwhile, the government has sent a letter to the French embassy in Dhaka communicating its deci-

sion not to send the remaining artefacts.

It regretted that it could not continue with dispatch of the age-old objects that were to be on display at the Guimet Museum in the French capital as part of a bilateral agreement.

A huge public outcry over the developments had been the major consideration when making the decision, it added.

Following the Bangladesh government's request to cancel the exhibition planned for January, the Guimet museum authorities have been considering taking the matter to international arbitration, BBC Bangla Service reported yesterday morning.

The agreement signed between France and Bangladesh says, "The Borrower ensures the security of

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Banks asked to freeze accounts of Jalil, family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday asked all the banks concerned to freeze the accounts of Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil and his family members.

The Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) of the NBR issued a letter asking the banks to freeze the accounts of Jalil and five of his family members and provide it with all necessary information within 10 days.

The banks were asked to provide information about individual or joint current and savings accounts,

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Voice for trial of war criminals gets louder

Move on to get the process started by March 26

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Pro-liberation war political, professional, and other social forces are gearing up to intensify the ongoing movement to force the interim government to begin the process of putting war criminals on trial by March 26, Independence Day.

To that end a process is on in full swing for bringing all pro-liberation war forces to a common platform, in an effort to get enough

wind in the sail of the movement early next year, as around 70 political, professional, and other social organisations already extended their support for it.

They also promised to continue the movement, launched by the forum of sector commanders in liberation war, until the trials are ensured.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday former air-vice-marshal AK Khandaker, also deputy chief of the liberation war forces, said their

target is to realise the demand by March next year. "We will continue the movement if the government does not begin the trials of war criminals by that time," he said.

Political parties intending to contest in the next parliamentary election, except Jamaat and a few others known as anti-liberation forces, also announced that they will include the issue of putting war criminals on trial in their election manifestos promising to try them if

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Hasina doubts fate of polls, democracy

UNB, Dhaka

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, now detained and facing an extortion case, has expressed doubt about the fate of election and democracy in the country.

Hasina, who appeared before the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday morning, made her observations during consultations with her counsel after the court hour.

"There may be an election in name only. As a result, a government may be formed. But what is

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Court hears Hasina charges more Dec 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed December 31 for further hearing on charge framing against former premier and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina and two others in the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case filed by Azam J Chowdhury.

The Dhaka Sessions Judge's Court sat after around 15 days of legal wrangling in the higher court over its functioning under special arrangements at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex.

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Unique step to cash in on NRB talents

Maiden conference
begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first-ever non-resident Bangladeshi (NRB) conference kicks off at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel today aiming to bring together Bangladeshi scholars, professionals and investors residing across the globe.

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed is the chief guest of the three-day conference.

He will also attend the closing

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Poor continue to lose purchasing capacity

They see very little rise in income
last fiscal, says BB report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The income level of the population living below the poverty line has increased at a lower rate in last fiscal year resulting in their lower purchasing power, which is also affected by higher cost of living, says a central bank report.

The Bangladesh Bank Annual Report 2006-07, released yesterday, also said the general wage rate has increased by only 4.5 percent in FY07, compared to 9.8 percent in FY06.

"Increases in wage rates in manufacturing, agricultural, fisheries and construction sectors stayed below the rates of consumer price inflation of 7.2 percent in FY07," the Bangladesh Bank report observed.

Production losses due to natural calamities have added to the inflationary pressures and the average inflation rate may be in the range of 8.1 to 8.5 percent in FY08, the reports says.

As per the official data of 2005, nearly 40 percent of Bangladesh's 140 million people are living below the poverty line.

Referring to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data, the central bank report said that the wages in manufacturing sector has been increased at a rate of 4.3 percent in FY07, which was 10.7 percent in FY06.

The picture was similar in agriculture sector, which employs most of the country's workforce, with an increase of 4.44 percent in the wage

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RUPALI BANK PURCHASE Saudi prince silent as time ticks away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Mohammad did not respond to the Privatisation Commission's notice for him to deposit by yesterday the entire amount agreed on for buying Rupali Bank.

The commission would soon sit to decide the next course of action, said sources.

Contacted, its Chairman M Abu Solaiman Chowdhury and other high officials, however, declined to comment on the matter while Finance and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam said he does not know anything about the developments in this regard.

The notice was served on December 10 asking Bandar Bin Mohammad, Abdul Rahman Al Saud to deposit \$458 million within

December 26 as per the rules on takeover of the state-owned bank.

It read, "The Privatisation Commission will take a unilateral decision to discontinue the sale process if the prince fails to deposit the entire amount within the deadline."

Lately, it emerged that the Saudi Arabian prince has offered an amount much lower than what he had agreed to pay for the state's 93 percent stake in the bank. His new offer is just \$185 million.

The latest proposition came in a letter to army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed, saying Bandar Bin Mohammad wants to take over the bank shortly under a sales/purchase agreement and make the payment before the end of December.

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WE DEEPLY MOURN

The members of the Board of Directors, all executives and employees of Pubali Bank Limited are deeply shocked at the sad demise of Dr. Naimur Rahman, Former Director of the then Eastern Mercantile Bank Limited, now Pubali Bank Limited. May Allah the Almighty bless his departed soul with eternal peace.

We always remember the invaluable services rendered by him in the growth of the bank established by the Bengali Entrepreneurs in 1959.

We express our heart-felt condolence to the bereaved family and pray to the Almighty Allah to give strength to his family members to bear this irreparable loss.




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A light so bright it fills the world
It holds the night in sway...

Watch this space tomorrow



**Remembering
Aaron H. Chowdhury**

Since you left us on December 27, 2002 and went into eternal sleep, our lives have yet to recover from the shocking blow. Our hearts ache in emptiness and silent tears roll in prayer. The pain eclipses every ray of joy yet your memory always shines in our hearts. In this perpetual darkness we pray you remain an innocent glow in eternity.

Dida & Dadu Bhai
Anita & Samson Chowdhury
Parents: Bula & Tapan Chowdhury and
all members of the family