

Private airlines take off, aim higher

4 new airlines to make most of Biman failure, growing demand

RASHIDUL HASAN and SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Aviation industry marks a boom with the launch of three private airlines in last eight months and another set to start commercial flights next month, thanks to a steadily growing demand for air transport.

Private airline operators say the industry is growing by 7.5 to 8 percent every year, adding, the market size of passengers is worth around Tk 3,500 crore.

"The aviation industry wit-



nessed a 7.6 percent growth globally last year and it was also the same in Bangladesh," said Captain Tasbirul Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman and managing director of United Airways (BD) Ltd, which started operation in July 2007.

Apart from United Airways, Best Air made its debut in mid-January

and Aviana Airways, with the brand name Royal Bangal, in late January, both on domestic routes so far.

Earlier, GMG Airlines was the only private airline operating on domestic routes along with national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd.

Anmole Albair Airlines Ltd,

another local private airline, under the brand name of A2 Air is set to operate international passenger flights from Bangladesh in March this year. Initially, it will operate flights to the Middle East and Far Eastern countries.

"We have already completed all

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

HASINA CASE VERDICT Hearing on govt appeal adjourned till Feb 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned till February 25 the hearing on the government's leave to appeal against the High Court judgment that quashed the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case filed against former premier Sheikh Hasina.

Following a time prayer submitted by Hasina's counsel, the Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin rescheduled the hearing.

The government yesterday morning filed the leave to appeal against the High Court's landmark judgment delivered on February 6 that also declared bringing of the case under Emergency Power Rules illegal.

Within an hour of delivery of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Pak opposition scores convincing win

Musharraf allies concede defeat

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's allies conceded defeat yesterday after elections, leaving the party of slain former premier Benazir Bhutto and other opponents headed for a crushing win.

The political survival of Musharraf, a key ally in the US-led "war on terror", was placed in serious doubt as unofficial results on state television showed a rout of the Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q), the ruling party.

"Musharraf has said he would quit when people tell him. People have now given their verdict," two-time

prime minister Nawaz Sharif said.

But a spokesman for Musharraf on Tuesday dismissed calls for the former general to quit after his allies conceded defeat in crucial parliamentary elections.

"They are way off in their demands," presidential spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi told AFP when asked about the calls made by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and a leading opposition lawyer.

"This is not the election for president. President Musharraf is already elected for five years," Qureshi said.

Celebratory gunfire erupted in

several cities as results trickled in from Monday's parliamentary elections, seen as completing the country's transition to democracy after eight years of military rule by Musharraf.

"We accept the verdict of the nation," said Tariq Azeem, a spokesman for the PML-Q, which backed Musharraf throughout the last parliament. "We officially concede defeat."

Meanwhile, the widow of slain former prime minister Benazir Bhutto said she had no interest in working with Musharraf's backers, but said he would try to form a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

EC to allow parties to spend more on polls

Proposal says financial transparencies a must

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to raise the ceiling of polls expenditures of political parties contesting parliamentary election with stringent conditions attached to ensure financial transparency of the parties.

A registered political party, if it fields over 200 candidates, can spend Tk 3 crore for election purposes. If the number of candidates is in between 100 to 200, it can spend Tk 2 crore and Tk 1 crore if the number of candidates is below

100, says the EC's revised proposals regarding polls expenditures.

But expenditures of candidates fielded by a party will be added with that of the party for election purposes from the date of announcement of election schedule to polling day.

The existing ceiling of a party's polls expenditures is Tk 1.50 crore, Tk 1 crore and Tk 75 lakh respectively. But the provisions made in 2001 were not enforced in the eighth parliamentary election in 2001.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

BIRD FLU SCARE Fish, beef, mutton on high demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demand for fish, beef and mutton has shot up in the past week as consumers panicked by the spread of bird flu across the country are looking for alternatives to poultry and eggs.

The rising demands have apparently driven the prices of fish, beef and mutton upward, said retailers and restaurant owners.

"People are panicked. Many are including vegetables, beef and mutton in their meals in place of chicken and eggs," said Khandker Ruhul Amin, president of

Bangladesh Hotel & Restaurant Owners' Association.

"Our suppliers are charging higher prices for beef and mutton due to the increase in demand," he said adding that suppliers are now charging an additional Tk 20 for each kilogram of beef or mutton.

The price of fish has also gone up, said Ruhul, also owner of Khandker Restaurant, adding that the overall sale of chicken at restaurants has fallen by over 50 percent.

However, people should not be panicked as much because no germ can survive in poultry or eggs

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



A heavily armed Pakistani tribal group protesting general election results bring out a procession yesterday in Bhaghari tribal area close to Afghan border.

Hasina agrees to receive treatment in country

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina has finally agreed to receive treatment in the country and is likely to be taken to a city hospital in a day or two.

The former prime minister prefers Square Hospital for treatment and check-ups, while the jail authorities suggest she should undergo treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said, "Taking her to a hospital is a serious matter. If

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

A Decade of Trust and Partnership

Standard Chartered, TATA, HSBC, grameenphone, KFC, sanofi aventis, BRAC BANK, Motorola, BERGER, Pizza Hut, TULLOW, NOKIA, RECKITT BENCKISER, WARID TELECOM, Citycell, KFC, HOMEBOUND, Incepta, WESTIN, YKK, SIEMENS, CEMEX, aamra, THAI, Emirates, NUVISTA PHARMA LIMITED, COATS, NOVARTIS, SUMMIT, The Daily Star, MetroNet, Shahjalal Islami Bank, RAHIMAFROOZ, Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited, MAERSK LINE, Mobil, gsk, GlaxoSmithKline, PRIDE, Huawei, BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO, PRIDE

10 years

keeping you safe