

**Special discount for Picnic party**

Just dial 01912256723 & get the products at your step

# The Daily Star

Home Theatre System HTS 3357

**PHILIPS** sense and simplicity

TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS 885336-9, 01712-686463

COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

Plus Star Campus

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 48

DHAKA SUNDAY MARCH 2, 2008

www.thedailystar.net

FALGUN 19, 1414 BS

SAFAR 23, 1429 HJRI

28 PAGES PLUS STAR CAMPUS PRICE: Tk 10.00

## High bank charges up product prices

REIAUL KARIM BYRON

Different commercial banks charge customers for 51 services on transaction which, according to Bangladesh Bank (BB), increases prices of both export products and local consumer items.

The commercial banks take 25 types of charges and commissions for import related transactions and 14 other types for export transactions. In addition to these, 12 types of fees are charged for local transactions.

Amid allegations of high and unnecessary service charges, the central bank has recently held a meeting with the owners and top

### BANK CHARGES

51 service charges  
Varying charges for same service  
Charge rates irrational

officials of the banks.

On instruction from the BB, the owners and high-ups have formed a committee, which is working out as to how the banks can reduce these charges.

The committee submits Monday its report to the central bank, which will discuss it with the owners and top officials soon.

The central bank data shows

charges for the same services vary in different banks, while foreign and private banks are taking high charges compared to that of the state-owned banks.

The BB report says the banks do business on their clients' deposits, but it has been found some banks take charges from the depositors in the name of operational charges. Even the clients are forced to give fees if they wish to close an account, the BB found.

State-owned banks take annual fees of Tk 50 to Tk 100 to operate current and savings accounts, whereas private banks take Tk 200 to Tk 1,000. On the other hand,

foreign commercial banks charge Tk 500 to Tk 1,000 for the job.

The state-owned banks provide locker services at Tk 900 to Tk 2,000 annually, private banks at Tk 1,500 to Tk 5,000 and foreign banks at Tk 1,500 to Tk 8,000.

The state-owned banks take 0.10 percent of the amount or minimum Tk 20 for issuance of Demand Drafts (DD) and Telephonic Transfer (TT). The private commercial banks charge 0.15 percent and foreign banks 0.30 percent on the amount or minimum Tk 300 for such services.

Besides, the banks take charges on pay orders, duplicate statements of accounts, standing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## 8 suspected militants held in Faridpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police arrested eight people for suspected links to militancy in a pre-dawn snoop on a house at Shankar Pasha village of Nagarkanda upazila Friday.

Hailing from different districts including Faridpur, the arrestees were holding a secret meeting at that time. In primary interrogation, they have denied any involvement with militant outfits.

Police produced them before a court yesterday, but did not make any remand prayer and the court sent the arrestees to jail.

The officials who took part in the raid said they suspect the eight are involved in a covert militant campaign, at least their activities, conduct and conversations suggest so.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Laxman with tears in his eyes searches for his son Ridoy and niece Jhumka on the Buriganga river using a rented boat. His wife and daughter died in Thursday's launch capsizing.

## Lower than last year's ADP performance irks Ecneec

STAR REPORT

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the performances of different ministries as only 25 percent of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) has been implemented in the first seven months of the current fiscal year.

The original ADP for fiscal year 2008 was worth Tk 26,500 crore while spending in July-January period was only Tk 6,698 crore. During this period in the previous fiscal year, Tk 8,024 crore or 31 percent of the ADP was spent.

After a meeting of the Ecneec presided over by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Planning Secretary Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury told journalists that secretaries of different ministries have been asked in the meeting to increase

ADP implementation rate.

"Fate of common people is linked with the implementation of development programmes and the chief adviser in the meeting asked all to take it seriously," he said.

He said tendering process of almost all development projects under different ministries have been completed and rest of the fiscal year would witness a speedy implementation of the ADP.

Sources said the meeting discussed ADP implementation performances of 10 major ministries, which share 81 percent of the total development budget.

Of the ministries, power division implemented only 21 percent of its allocation though there is acute power crisis in the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

cent, education 31 percent, water resources 13 percent, energy and telecommunication 8 percent of its allocation.

Finance Adviser and Ecneec alternative chairman Mirza Azizul Islam, advisers and senior officials concerned were present at the meeting.

The meeting also approved 12 projects involving Tk 2,524 crore, including Tk 1,088 crore in foreign aid, UNB reports.

Three of the projects to be implemented with foreign aid are Bakhraabad-Siddhirganj Gas Distribution Pipeline of Tk 685 crore, including Tk 429 crore in aid, National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP) of Tk 622 crore, including Tk 574 crore in aid, and Char Development Settlement Project of Tk 94 crore, including Tk 85 crore in aid.

## Jalil needs urgent kidney transplant Say doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil needs an immediate kidney transplant or be put on kidney dialysis, doctors said yesterday.

The six-member medical board set up yesterday to examine the ailing AL leader said that Jalil has multifarious health problems including a heart condition and warned that his health condition may deteriorate at any time.

Dr Motiur Rahman, head of the medical board set up at the LabAid cardiac hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday "we'll send a report recommending immediate start of dialysis to the jail authorities by tonight."

Meanwhile, Inspector General (Prisons) Brigadier General Zakir Hassan told The Daily Star yesterday Jalil does not want to be put on dialysis but wants a kidney trans-

plantation.

But doctors think the transplantation would be risky due to his multifarious health problems including a heart condition, the IG (Prisons) added.

He said that the medical board has already told him that they will recommend sending Jalil abroad for the transplant but the jail code does not permit sending prisoners abroad for treatment.

"Since it is an urgent issue I'll personally collect the report tonight and send it to the home ministry for the government's decision on the matter," the IG (Prisons) told The Daily Star.

Brig Gen Zakir Hassan meanwhile visited the ailing AL leader at the hospital yesterday. Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui accompanied him.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## WAR CRIMES Ex-CA raps govt for not holding trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief adviser justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman yesterday criticised the present caretaker government for not taking up the issue of holding trial for war crimes.

"They (the caretaker government) are saying that this is a temporary regime. So they can't take up the 'troublesome' matter," said the former chief justice while addressing the opening session of a conference titled 'International Conference on Genocide, Truth and Justice'.

Liberation War Museum organised the two-day-long conference at Brac Centre Inn in the capital as part of its campaign to encourage research, documentation and study of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh and link those with similar activities across the world

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## LAUNCH CAPSIZE Search continues as 5 still missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five people were still reported missing yesterday, three days after the launch capsized in the Buriganga. Relatives of the missing ones were searching for bodies, but could recover none since Friday morning.

Earlier, police said the number of missing passengers was 10, but they put it down to five yesterday. Laxman Das of Panchabati of Narayanganj searched throughout the day for bodies of his seven-year-old son Ridoy, and niece Jhumka, 19. He found bodies of his wife Kabita Rani and two-year-old daughter Puja early Friday. The four were returning home after visiting a relative's house at Keraniganj.

Fire Service and Civil Defence personnel, coastguards and local boatmen have so far recovered 39 bodies.

MV Sourav-1 sank in the river near Buriganga Bridge after being rammed from behind by a sand-laden cargo at 3:35pm Thursday. The double-decker started from Sadarghat launch terminal for Talola of Munshiganj with around 140 passengers.

Meanwhile, the five-member committee formed to probe the incident yesterday requested witnesses, rescuers and those who survived the disaster to come up and tell what they know. Headed by shipping ministry joint secretary MA Martin, the committee will be at Sada at launch terminal for taking statements from 11:00am today.

The government asked it to submit report within seven days on the causes of capsizing and recommendations to prevent repeats.

A member of the committee yesterday told The Daily Star that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## A day of many marks

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

If Day Two of the second Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday was a day of fulfilling individual desires then the wishes were granted in a most fascinating fashion.

South Africa captain Graeme and Neil McKenzie broke a 53-year-old record when they produced a marathon 415 runs for the first wicket, edging out the previous best of 413 by India's Pankaj Roy and Vinoo Mankad against New Zealand in Chennai way back in 1956.

McKenzie, back into the Test fold after a long time, stroked his first double hundred. Wily left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, playing his final Test match, got his desired two wickets after the tea break to become only the first Bangladeshi to have taken 100 wickets. Fiery South African fast bowler Dale Steyn, playing only his 20th Test, also completed his century with a three-wicket burst.

It was also an exceptional day of Test cricket that saw ten wickets fall after a wicketless first day.

However, the misery of the hosts has not changed a bit with another defeat staring in the face after South Africa declared on 583-7 and then reduced Bangladesh to 60-3 with Shahriar Nafees (7) and nightwatchman Abdur Razzak (8)

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



South Africa's Graeme Smith (L) and Neil McKenzie have a mid-pitch chat after setting the new world record of 415 runs for the first wicket on the second day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

## Series of important political events likely in March

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A series of significant events are scheduled to take place this month, which are likely to set the immediate political scenario of the country vis-à-vis the stalled ninth parliamentary election, which is supposed to be held by the year end.

The government is likely to decide soon on lifting or relaxing the state of emergency in city corporation areas where polls to the corporations are scheduled to be held in April, on nationwide lifting of the restrictions on 'indoor politics', and on fixing a timetable for holding dialogues with political parties, sources in the interim administration said.

The Election Commission (EC) is preparing to send its finalised electoral reform proposals to the government for making those into laws, and is getting ready to announce this month the schedules for holding polls to four city corporations.

The council of advisers is likely to discuss the issues at any of its three meetings to be held within a week, prior to chief adviser's departure for Senegal on March 10,

sources said.

Under the circumstances, political analysts believe, if the government allows resumption of political activities countrywide, the move will largely clear the uncertainty regarding holding of the parliamentary poll according to the electoral roadmap announced by the EC.

The chief adviser at a meeting with the EC on February 4 assured the commission of taking necessary steps to lift the restrictions on 'indoor politics' countrywide and of creating an atmosphere for holding polls to city corporations according to the requirements placed by the EC.

The EC set the end of March as the deadline for lifting the restrictions on 'indoor politics' countrywide, and early March as the deadline for deciding on whether the state of emergency will be relaxed or lifted for holding the polls to local governments.

In response to EC's demands, the caretaker government is going to decide this month whether to relax or lift the state of emergency in city corporation areas where

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

## Political leaders want nat'l poll before city corporation election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the government for planning to hold city corporation and municipality elections ahead of the general polls, political leaders yesterday said election to parliament should get priority because it is a constitutional obligation.

Invoking the examples of past army rule in Bangladesh and Pakistan, they said all non-elected governments typically speak of strengthening the local government bodies because of political intention.

The Election Commission has recently said they will announce the schedule for election to a few city corporations and municipalities this month.

The politicians were speaking at a roundtable on "The proposed local government commission ordinance and supplementary proposal", organised by Governance Coalition at Cirdap auditorium in the city. Prof Salauddin M Aminuzzaman of public administration department at Dhaka University moderated the discussion.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## TENDER FOR BIBIYANA, SIRAJGANJ POWER PLANTS Summit's exit raises question on fairness

SHARIER KHAN

The Power Cell's move to disqualify Summit Industrial and Mercantile Corporation from the Bibiyana 450 megawatt (MW) and the Sirajganj 450MW power project tenders has shrunk competition and raised serious questions about fairness of the tendering process.

The Power Cell, under the power ministry, in a letter informed Summit of its disqualification to participate in the Sirajganj power project in January 10 without giving any explicit reason. On February 14, the cell in another letter disqualified Summit in the Bibiyana project citing reasons that Summit thought were wrong and unjust.

A top source of the cell told The Daily Star yesterday that the cell will hold a meeting with Summit representatives to clarify why Summit was disqualified.

"Summit appealed to the cell to review its exclusion and give a decision by February 28. So we are inviting Summit to better explain the issue," said the source.

Summit's disqualification has surprised all power industry operators, as it had gained a stable reputation in the power sector for nearly

10 years. Plus, the arbitrary exclusion of Summit has severely narrowed down competition in the two large-scale power projects.

The Bibiyana tender will now have only three competitors and Sirajganj just two. "This could mean the cell may not get the best offers," said an industry operator.

Presently operating the 100MW Khulna barge-mount plant and several small power plants, Summit was previously about to be awarded with the 450MW Sirajganj power project in 2004. Summit had also finalised finances from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). However, the then prime minister Khaleda Zia had cancelled awarding the project without citing any official reason. Unofficially, she did so because the chief of summit was considered close to her political rival, sources said.

Last year, Summit chief Aziz Khan was told to file an extortion case against Awami League chief and ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina for allegedly unfairly awarding his company with the Khulna barge-mount power project in 1998. Aziz Khan did not file the case. The Anti-corruption

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## India visit successful Says Moeen on return

UNB, Dhaka

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed returned home last night ending his week-long tour of India, which he termed successful.

Talking to reporters during his visit to Shantiniketan in Kolkata at the fag end of his India tour, Gen Moeen hoped that the planned Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train service would start soon on completion of the tasks concerning the security matters.

"It will be good for all if the train service between India and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Dream burnt in acid

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Young bride Nila's dreams have been shattered the night her husband poured down acid on her, burning her face, hands and other parts of the body.

The barbaric act has landed the critically injured 18-year-old girl in a hospital bed of Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) with no hope of taking the Secondary School Certificate examinations due next month.

Nila cannot think of any explainable reason why the man who tied the knots with her a year ago would even do such an act that would put her life in danger.

Her parents arranged the marriage with Akbar Hossain, 30, a Saudi Arabia expatriate back then.

"It wasn't for dowry and we didn't even quarrel with each other. I know he is a short-tempered man. He got

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Nila



Imran Rahman

(Died February 1963 - 28th February, 2008)

## Doa Mahfil

The Managing Director & CEO of BRAC Bank, Mr. Imran Rahman, passed away on February 28 '08 (Inna Lillah...). We pray for the departed soul. Today, a Doa Mahfil will be held after Asar Prayer (4:45p.m) at Azad Masjid, Gulshan Avenue. All relatives, friends, colleagues and well wishers of the deceased are requested to attend.

Sincerely,

BRAC BANK