

Bangladeshi peacekeepers get UN medal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi troops serving with the international peacekeeping force in Ivory Coast has been decorated with the United Nations' peacekeeping medal.

At present 2,728 Bangladeshi soldiers are serving in UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast, a country in West Africa. They have been on the current mission for over six months now.

General Marcel Fernand Amoussou, the Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in Ivory Coast (ONUCI) presided over a medal ceremony honouring the Bangladeshi contingent in Daloa, 380km away from capital city of Abidjan, on March 26.

Bangladesh's Brigadier General Mustafa Kamal Khan, the commander of UN operation in Sector West, expressed the contingent's pride in receiving the medal on the Independence Day of the country.

He also said that the contingent

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CITY CENTRE CRACKS
DCC finds no risk, but prefers to stay alert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) authorities yesterday said the cracks in the under-construction 37-storey City Centre at Motijheel do not pose any risk, but still they would stay alert.

The same day, they formed a five-member committee to probe what caused the structure to develop cracks, and decided the construction work would remain suspended till the committee comes up with a report.

Speaking at a press conference at Nagar Bhaban in the afternoon Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "In primary observation we found those cracks are not part of the main structure. We will take necessary measures regarding the high-rise on the basis of the inquiry report."

The probe body comprises two teachers from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

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Nam flats property of parliament; allotment can't be cancelled now
Says Speaker in a letter to CA

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar in a letter to the chief adviser yesterday said the 324 Nam flats are parliament's property and it is not possible now to cancel allotments to former lawmakers of the eighth parliament as asked by the housing and public works ministry.

The House Committee, responsible for accommodating parliamentarians, allotted the flats to MPs for staying until the results of the ninth parliamentary elections. Since the committee is not in place, it is not possible to cancel the allotment now, the Speaker said.

He made two suggestions to the

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Employees of offices located in 37-storey City Centre in Motijheel remove documents yesterday after the building developed large cracks Saturday.

TRUTH COMMISSION
No mercy scope if jailed for 2 years or more for graft

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHAMIM ASHRAF

unitary Disclosure Ordinance, 2008".

The commission may have up to six sub-commissions with its headquarters in Dhaka to cover the whole country.

In addition to having no provision to challenge the commission's orders, its members will also enjoy indemnity for any of their official activities, says the draft.

Besides, the commission will be independent, free from any political or other bias or interference, adds the draft prepared by the four-member expert committee of Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud,

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An eminent citizen can also be appointed to the commission, according to the draft of the "Vol-

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German parliamentary team stresses party reforms
Asks govt to lift or relax emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A visiting German parliamentary delegation yesterday said Berlin would not show any understanding and would exert political influence if the caretaker government in Bangladesh shows "unwillingness" to pass on power to an elected government.

Expressing its optimism that the general elections are going to be held by the end of this year, the six-member delegation stressed the need for internal democratic reforms of the political parties and asked the government to either relax or lift the state of emergency to pave the way for it.

ASHUGANJ POWER PLANT

2 units shut down after explosion
4 get burn injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Two units of Ashuganj Power Station were shut down yesterday after a fiery explosion severely burned four people including two engineers of the station.

The two engineers and two electrician of the station were conducting repair work when a breaker of Unit-5 exploded and caught fire at around 11:45am, said sources at the power station.

The injured -- Assistant Engineer Kamruzzaman, Assistant Engineer M. Rukan Mia, electrician Brindaban and Mohammad Salam -- have been sent to Dhaka in a critical condition.

Units 4 and 5 have been shut down following the incident and 450 MW of power is currently being generated at the station, said M. Ataur Rahman, managing director of the Ashuganj Power Station.

A three-member inquiry
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A Bangladesh Rifles' (BDR) fair price shop in Nawabganj in the capital sells rice to people standing in long queues yesterday as more and more people now depend on rice sold in the BDR shops at subsidised price.

INDIA'S DECISION TO RAISE EXPORT PRICE

Traders hoard rice, hike prices

STAR REPORT

In

the wake of India's hike the minimum export price for its rice, traders here have reportedly started hoarding the staple.

Retailers and wholesalers across the country already raised the price of Indian coarse varieties by Tk 70 to Tk 80 and fine rice by Tk 20 to Tk 50 per maund (37.32 kg) yesterday.

A section of traders is trying to create an artificial crisis by hoarding rice imported from India at Benapole, Sharsha, Baghara, Nawapara, Navaran and Jhikargacha areas, reports a correspondent from Benapole.

Retailers were selling coarse varieties at Tk 33 to Tk 40 per kg yesterday while they charged Tk 33 to Tk 36 a day back. Many traders and wholesalers were showing newspaper clippings to the customers.

Talking to The Daily Star, some traders said newspaper reports on the hike in price of Indian rice
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PROFITEERING

Jt forces warn retailers of stern action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces yesterday warned kitchen-market retailers in the city and its outskirts of stern actions for any profiteering.

The warning came at a meeting between the joint forces and traders at BDR headquarters at Pilkhana.

The joint forces said they would continue monitoring the prices of vegetables in the capital's wholesale and retail markets and take "exemplary" actions against the individuals found guilty of irregularities.

Presidents and general secretaries of kitchen market associations attended the meeting chaired by Col Abdul Halim, chief coordinator of Trade and Commerce Monitoring Cell, BDR.

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), who are now carrying out Operation Daal Bhat at subsidised prices, has been assigned by the
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Restructure agri system for food security
CA urges agriculturists

UNB, Gazipur

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhrudin Ahmed yesterday called for restructuring the country's agricultural system to increase the production of food grains for ensuring food security.

Referring to the recent trend in the world food production, he said it is clearly understood in the changed situation that the strategy to replenish food shortages through imports is risky.

Inaugurating a three-day 'Bari Technology Transfer Workshop 2008' organised by the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
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Purchase body okays import of Indian rice at \$430 a tonne

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory committee on purchase yesterday approved import of four lakh tonnes of non-basmati rice from India at Tk 29.67 per kilogram (kg) through government channel.

"We have approved import of rice at \$430 per tonne. The import price of each kg rice will be 43 cents," Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam told journalists after the purchase committee meeting at the cabinet division.

Food ministry Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman yesterday told The Daily Star that the rice will be imported by ships in 60 days after opening the letter of credits (L/Cs), adding that the contract in this
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