

NCC BANK
Brokerage House
now at Rajshahi
reach us @ 044 59 357 124
www.nccbank.com.bd

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Star FORUM

TRANSTEC
DVD Player
TDVD - 0701
TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

REGD. NO. DA 781 • VOL. XVIII No. 109 • DHAKA MONDAY MAY 5, 2008 • www.thedailystar.net • BAISHAKH 22, 1415 BS • RABIUS SANI 28, 1429 HIJRI • 28 PAGES PLUS STAR FORUM PRICE: Tk 10.00

BTTB to be made public limited co Cabinet okays ordinance

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday finally approved the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 to remake the state-owned BTTB into a public limited company.

In its weekly meeting, with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair, the council also approved a proposal for signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which would help protect the interests of about 89 lakh disabled people in Bangladesh.

Earlier, Bangladesh signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Big budget planned to cast safety net wide

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The size of the next fiscal year's budget may cross Tk 100,000 crore as the government is planning expenditure increases in different sectors to reduce public sufferings caused by price spiral of food and other commodities.

Sources say the finance ministry has already drafted a preliminary estimate of Tk 100,800 crore for the FY 08-09 with an increase of about Tk 21,186 crore compared to the current fiscal year budget.

The current budget is of Tk 79,614 crore, which excludes Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) liabilities of Tk 7,523 crore. "That means the next fiscal spending may increase by 27 percent compared to the current

budget," says a source.

The sources say the size of the next budget is going to increase due mainly to additional payments against planned salary hikes of government employees and non-government schoolteachers, interest payments, increased subsidies and safety net programmes for the poor.

The revenue budget would be expanded to Tk 75,800 crore in the next fiscal from the current Tk 53,114 crore, the sources add.

The current fiscal budget allocated Tk 4,760 crore for procurement of 23 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat from local and international markets, though the target could not be achieved.

The sources say the government is going to set a target to procure 34

lakh tonnes of rice and wheat from local and international market in the coming fiscal.

"Fifteen lakh tonnes of rice will be procured during the current Boro season and it will require Tk 4,200 crore," says a source.

He adds that gross expenditure in food budget would be doubled as the government is increasing the target procurement and prices of food grains are also higher.

The current fiscal has allocated Tk 16,670 crore for subsidies, salaries of non-government schoolteachers, and pension and gratuity of government employees, which will be increased to Tk 25,170 crore.

"The government is considering price adjustment of petroleum products to reduce losses, but even

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Reforms done to make election free from money, muscle power

CA tells new US envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the caretaker government has carried out reforms to create a level playing field and rid the election of the influence of money, muscle and the misuse of power.

He reaffirmed that the government is committed to holding a free, fair, neutral and credible election.

The chief adviser (CA) made the remarks when newly appointed US Ambassador in Dhaka James F Moriarty made a courtesy call on him at the CA's office.

The issue of holding dialogue with political parties was also

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Hasina firm to run in upcoming poll

But doubts fair polls; says her presence for dialogue with govt not a must

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former premier and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her resolve to take part in the upcoming parliamentary election as a recent signature campaign of her party has proved that people are beside her.

Hasina said the electoral reform dialogue with the government could be held in her absence. "My presence during the dialogue is not a major issue," she told her lawyers after the hearing on charge framing in the MiG-29 graft case was adjourned until May 11.

Referring to the recounting of votes in the election of Supreme

Court Bar Association (SCBA), she, however, expressed doubts that a transparent and neutral general election would be held, Hasina's counsel told the press.

The court dealing with the MiG-29 graft case against Hasina and six others adjourned the hearing for the third time as former army chief Mustafizur Rahman, another accused in the case, was absent because of illness.

"In just 10 days, 25 lakh people in the capital have signed for my release. It proves that people are with me. So, I will definitely take part in the general election," a defence counsel quoted Hasina as saying.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

HASINA'S RELEASE AL stages limited scale hunger strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will observe a token hunger strike programme in the capital today demanding unconditional release of detained party chief Sheikh Hasina and sending her to the US for treatment.

The programme, however, will be observed on a limited scale as the party got permission from the authorities to stage the hunger strike only at its central and Dhanmondi offices.

The programme will begin at 10:00am and end at 4:00pm.

The AL Presidium, the highest policymaking body of the party, took the decision on Saturday night.

Earlier on April 30, Dhaka

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

PROTEST AGAINST CLOSURE OF JETTY 2 launches set ablaze at Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two launches were set ablaze and six others looted on the Buriganga yesterday as thousands of shop owners and workers at South Keraniganj demonstrated against the closure of a jetty near Sadarghat launch terminal.

Attacks from the protesters left at least 40 people including three cops and 30 launch staffers injured. A good number of vessels were vandalised during the demonstrations.

The launch operators kept their vessels away from the spot and suspended services for nine hours protesting the ransacking and torching of vessels. The services resumed at 8:45pm.

Badizzaman Badal, acting chairman of Bangladesh

Abhyantarin Nou-chalchal Jatri Paribahan Sangstha, told The Daily Star last night, "As the BIWTA assured us of meeting our demand for security and keeping the jetty closed, we resumed launch services."

Hundreds of passengers were stranded for hours following the suspension of launch services.

However, during a meeting earlier in the afternoon between BIWTA officials, deputy commissioner of Dhaka, joint forces and business leaders it was decided that one of the pontoons blocking the Simpson Road Masjid Ghat jetty would be removed immediately while a permanent terminal for boats would be set up at a convenient place within the next 30 days.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Traders and labourers of Keraniganj torch two launches yesterday, protesting the closure of a gudharaghat, a jetty for small boats on the Buriganga.

CHITTAGONG PORT Auction flaws led to Tk 80cr food spoilage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Imported perishable foods worth over a staggering Tk 80 crore were spoiled or exceeded expiration date for consumption in the last fourteen months due to inefficient auctioning mechanism of unclaimed containers at Chittagong Port.

The huge quantity of food items had to be disposed of at a time when a huge segment of the populace is trying to cope with galloping food prices.

Last year in February, 1,268 truckloads of expired imported foods worth more than Tk 70 crore were destroyed by a taskforce. Another Tk 10 crore worth of inedible food were destroyed recently, said sources in the taskforce.

A large number of containers remain unclaimed inside the port

as a section of unscrupulous importers leave their containers inside the port unclaimed deliberately, said sources.

These importers prefer to leave their containers in the port as warehouse charges outside the port are more than the fines imposed by the port authorities for not collecting the containers after the permissible free period is over, the sources added saying that the unclaimed goods also help the importers create an artificial crisis in the market.

According to existing rules of the port, if a container is unclaimed for over 30 days, perishable items in it have to be auctioned off to make room inside the port. The customs authorities are to put the items in the container on auction after the port authorities hand

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Emergency was not declared as per constitution

Alleges Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khandaker Delwar Hossain, BNP secretary general appointed by chairperson, yesterday questioned the legitimacy of the government and said the state of emergency was not promulgated as per the constitution.

He said the president cannot issue a proclamation of emergency without a prior counter signature of the prime minister.

"But the state of emergency was promulgated [on January 11, 2007] in absence of a prime minister and parliament. Even the chief adviser, had not yet taken oath," he added.

Citing constitutional provisions, Delwar said the validity of the emergency expires automatically 120 days after the promulgation.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Congratulations

Heart felt congratulations to Mr. Syed A. K. Anwaruzzaman, Managing Director of SM Knitwears Limited for achieving the award of "Best workers' friendly Knitwear Industry for 2008" selected by the Ministry of Labour and Employment

Mr. Syed A. K. Anwaruzzaman, Managing Director of SM Knitwears Ltd. receiving the crest from Mr. Anwarul Iqbal, Honorable Adviser of Ministry of Labour and Employment

With Thanks
All Officers, Staff & Workers of SM Group

Biman flight escapes major accident at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Biman Airbus went onto the grassland beside the tarmac at Zia International Airport last evening after the pilot reportedly lost control of the aircraft when it was entering the taxiway from the runway.

The 153 passengers and crew onboard flight BG-118 escaped injuries. The flight from Sylhet landed around 6:45pm but failed to reach the terminal.

Soon after the incident,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Another cyclone likely in Bay this month

BSS, Dhaka

At least one cyclonic storm may develop from the depressions in the Bay of Bengal this month, the met office said yesterday in its long-range forecast for May.

It also said that the northern and central regions of the country may experience five to six moderate to severe nor'westers or thunderstorms. Elsewhere, four to five mild to moderate nor'westers and thunderstorms are likely, it added.

The forecast was issued after a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Congratulations!

Mr. Md. Anwarul Iqbal, honourable Adviser for Labour & Employment Ministry, Care-taker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is presenting the Trophy to Syed A. K. Anwaruzzaman, Managing Director, SM Knitwears Limited

Heart-felt felicitations and sincere appreciation to
S M Knitwears Limited
On being awarded as one of the best 10 labour-friendly compliant factories of BKMEA

We are proud of being associated with
S M Group

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited
YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER

from USD **699** UK return

For our most attractive prices, book now at ba.com or call 8802 881511 (Dhaka) / 0821 715333 (Sylhet).

BRITISH AIRWAYS
Terms and conditions apply. Fares exclusive of taxes and surcharges.