

TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 141

DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 6, 2008

www.thedailystar.net

JAISITHIA 23, 1415 BS

JAMADIUS SANI 1, 1429 HIRI

24 PAGES PLUS THE STAR PRICE: TK. 10.00

Mass transit in Dhaka mullied: CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the government is thinking about mass transit in the capital so that a large number of people can move at a time smoothly.

He said though implementation of such transport system will take a long time, the decision should be taken now. He mentioned some options of mass transit including underground train and human hauler.

The head of the caretaker government made the remarks while inaugurating the implementation work of Airport Road-Rokeya Sarani (Agargaon-Mirpur 10) link road on the western side of Tejgaon old airport.

The 2.6-kilometer-long and 53-foot-wide four-lane link road will connect the roads of east and west

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

RECORD Tk 30,000CR DEFICIT BUDGET ON THE CARDS Bank borrowing to go up by 83pc

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The overall deficit in the next fiscal year's budget will cross Tk 30,000 crore mainly due to expenditures in subsidies, safety net programmes and wage increases of government employees, says the draft estimate of the FY08-09 budget.

The draft also shows that revenue income in the next budget will increase about 21 percent compared to the revenue target of current fiscal year, but at the same time, the expenditure will rise by 25 percent on the whole.

To meet the deficit, the government plans to borrow Tk 14,000

crore from the banks. As a result, the estimated borrowing in the next fiscal year may rise by 83 percent compared to the total borrowing in FY07-08, which was targeted at Tk 7,253 crore.

The Finance Division is now busy putting finishing touches to the budget to be placed on June 9. "We are bringing some minor changes in budgetary allocations as new demands are coming from different ministries every day," said a senior finance ministry official, involved in the budget preparation.

He said that the total size of the budget will depend largely on price adjustment of petroleum products. "We have estimated the

budget size calculating 25-30 percent price increase of petroleum products in the next fiscal year," the official added.

According to the draft, expenditure in the next budget will be Tk 99,970 crore whereas it was Tk 79,614 crore in the current fiscal year.

The next budget will spend around 15 percent of its total expenditure in subsidies, Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam told the reporters at the Zia International Airport yesterday on his return from the annual conference of Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in Jeddah.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Medical boards formed for Hasina, Koko

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed two separate five-member medical boards for detained former premier and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP chairperson's youngest son Arafat Rahman Koko.

The boards formed by the health ministry examined Hasina at the special jail from 1:00pm to 2:00pm and Koko from 1:30pm to 2:30pm at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

There was also a move to form a board for detained former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, but the board was not finally formed yesterday and sources said it might be formed today or tomorrow.

Different sources said formation of the medical boards is the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



A fire in the engine ravaged this bus near Brac Centre Inn at Gulshan-1 in the capital yesterday morning. Five passengers were injured as they rushed to get down from the CNG-run bus.

IDB offers \$1.5b loan a year to import oil

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will have an access to Islamic Development Bank's fund for financing oil imports up to \$1.5 billion annually, while the bank will examine loans at a lower rate only for the portion to be provided from its own resources.

The IDB gave the broad hint during a bilateral discussion between Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam and high officials of the bank on the sidelines of the annual conference of the IDB's Board of Governors June 3-4 in Jeddah.

The Bangladesh delegation to the conference, led by the finance adviser, requested IDB to double its financing for oil imports to \$2 billion from existing \$1 billion annually as the country is struggling to meet the increased requirement from domestic sources.

"They (IDB) feel it difficult to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Hasina denied bail in Niko graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday rejected the bail prayer of former prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in the Niko graft case.

Judge Amar Kumar Roy of the Special Court-2 passed the order, and set June 10 for hearing on charge framing against Hasina and eight others in the case, following defence plea for extension of time.

In its order, the court said since Emergency Power Rules (EPR) are in force, there is no scope for entertaining such bail petitions as the EPR revoke the right to seek bail by an accused facing graft charges under the Corruption Prevention Act 1947.

The former premier filed the bail petition on June 1.

The detained AL chief was taken to the special court at the Jatiya

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

TK 191CR MISAPPROPRIATION ACC frees Sohel, Salman from graft charge

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday submitted a final report (FRT) clearing Beximco Holdings Ltd Chairman Sohel F Rahman, vice chairman Salman F Rahman, former Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd managing director (MD) CM Koyes Sami and seven others of a case filed for misappropriating Tk 191.39 crore.

Meanwhile the corruption case against detained former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and his Nasima Akhter Kalpana was shifted yesterday to a special court at the Sangsad Bhaban premises for trial.

The same court transferred the case against detained former BNP lawmaker Mosaddak Ali Fala, filed for dodging Tk 2.75 crore in income

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Women stand in long queues at the BDR fair price outlet near Ramna Police Station in the capital yesterday as all BDR outlets will remain closed for four days and will increase rice prices by Tk 5 when they open Tuesday.

Rice to get pricey in BDR shops as govt subsidy ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BDR will sell coarse rice at an increased rate of Tk 30 per kg at all its fair price outlets in the capital from next Tuesday after the government's safety net programmes ended yesterday.

Rice was being sold at the subsidised price of Tk 25 per kg at all government outlets until yesterday.

Meanwhile, the BDR fair price shops in the city witnessed a surge of customers as word spread of the shops' closure for the next four days.

Col Mujibul Haq, BDR commander of Dhaka, told The Daily Star that the government, after a long period of subsidised sales, has stopped the subsidy to the BDR markets temporarily.

"We have decided to purchase rice from the markets now and sell it at an increased rate, at Tk 30 per kg.

BDR shops will remain shut till Monday for the necessary administrative and other works," he explained.

BDR shops sold 450 tonnes of coarse rice each day, six days a week, in their 75 outlets in Dhaka, benefiting around 1.5 lakh, people each day. Each person was allowed to buy three kg rice at a time.

BDR outlets at Zakir Hossain Road, Salimullah Road and Link Road at Mohammadpur, Indira Road in Farmgate, Agargaon in the city saw a huge rush of people.

Hundreds of people were seen waiting for hours together in the long queues at outlets in Zakir Hossain Road, Salimullah Road, Link Road and Indira Road. A good number of people also had to return empty handed after the rice stock ran out.

Though notices were seen displayed regarding the closure of shops for four days, there was no

mention of the increase in rice price from next Tuesday.

Mayna Bibi, 60, a resident of Peerer Bagh, Mirpur, came to the Indira road shop after queuing at the shop in Talola, Agargaon for two hours without getting any rice.

The elderly woman said she queues at the shops for her family members who work throughout the day.

Mayna Bibi, standing behind at least 200 women in the queue, with only 30 minutes to go before closure time wondered if she would get any rice from here either.

Rahima Begum, from Mohammadpur embankment slum, was able to buy rice at the Link Road BDR outlet after queuing for 4 hours. A visibly exhausted Rahima said, "I wasn't planning to come today but rushed when I heard about the closure of the shop."

BNP seeks unity in party, among parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday called for united movement of all political parties to salvage the country from the 'current deep crises', two days after his Awami League counterpart ruled out such a notion.

He said intra-party and inter-party unity is a must to restore democracy.

"A united movement is now the only way to overcome the existing crises," Delwar said while talking to reporters at his Nam flat in the capital.

On acting Awami League (AL)

General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam's remark that they would not go for any joint movement with the BNP and the Jamaat, Delwar said, "For God's sake, say yes to unity in the public interest."

"We want unity to ensure election as it is not possible for any party to overcome the current crises alone. If people vote for you (AL), you'll go to power and we'll sit on the opposition bench," he said.

Delwar said the government has arrested thousands of political activists, mostly belonging to the BNP and the Awami League, in the name of drive against terror acts.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

AL plans for both polls, agitation

HASAN AHMED TUSHER

The Awami League (AL) is planning to make all-out preparations for participating in the upcoming parliamentary elections and launching a movement to press home its six-point demand including release of party chief Sheikh Hasina.

Party leaders said they are preparing themselves for both because the AL chief may direct them any time to go for either the polls or the movement.

Hasina had instructed the party to take part in the election so that

the non-elected caretaker government cannot stay in power for long.

At an extended meeting of the party on May 26 in Dhaka, however, the grassroots and national level leaders unanimously suggested boycotting the election in case Hasina is not released. They also asked the party leadership to announce tough agitation programmes to realise their demands.

On May 28, the AL Central Working Committee decided to announce programmes including a mass signature campaign and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

AL rejects BNP call for united movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) last night categorically rejected BNP's call for a united movement to overcome the existing political crisis.

The decision was made at a meeting of the AL presidium, the highest policy-making body of the party, which also stated that the caretaker government has no authority to review the constitution.

"There will never be unity between Awami League and its like-minded parties and those who are responsible for 1/11 and the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Voter list likely to be ready in Sept

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The new national voter list is likely to be ready in September, a month ahead of the schedule, as the printing process of the list has recently been expedited.

However, possibility of the parliamentary poll being held before the announced timeframe of the third week of December is slim, even if the voter list is ready earlier than the schedule, since both the government and the Election Commission (EC) are now

preparing to hold upazila elections before the general election, sources in the government administration said.

Earlier, the chief election commissioner however said the EC preferred to hold the upazila elections and the parliamentary election simultaneously, with the commission looking into the feasibility of the idea.

If everything goes smoothly according to the plan, the entire voter list with photographs might

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Denial of people's right to bail challenged in HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed yesterday with the High Court (HC), challenging the legality of some provisions of Emergency Powers Ordinance (EPO) 2007 and Emergency Power Rules (EPR) 2007 that deny people's right to bail in cases filed under these provisions and rules.

Former caretaker government adviser and Ain o Salish Kendra Executive Director Sultana Kamal, Daily New Age Editor Nurul Kabir and Dhaka University Assistant Professor Sheikh Hafizur Rahman

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH Forest gobbler Gani, Zabiullah jailed

Their wives also handed prison term

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday sentenced detained former chief conservator of forest (CCF) Osman Gani to 12 years' imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

Meanwhile, former environment secretary Ismail Zabiullah was sentenced to 13 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a similar corruption case.

OSMAN GANI Judge AKM Arifur Rahman of the Special Court-10 handed down three years' imprisonment to Osman Gani's fugitive wife Mohsenara Gani for aiding and abetting her husband in accumulating and protecting illegal wealth.

The court also fined Osman Tk 10 lakh. In default, he will have to serve jail term for one more year.

Mohsenara was fined Tk 1,00,000, and in default she will have to remain in jail for another six months.

The special court on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises also ordered the authorities to confiscate wealth worth Tk 1.80 crore of

Osman, and Tk 2.80 crore and 270 tolas of gold ornaments of his wife.

The former forest chief was awarded 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally, and three years' for hiding information about his wealth in the statement he submitted to the ACC. The sentences will run concurrently.

As Mohsenara is absconding, her sentences will come into effect from the day of her arrest or surrender.

ACC Deputy Director Golam Shahrir Chowdhury filed the case with Uttara Police Station on July 26 last year.

In the case, Osman and his wife were accused of concealing wealth worth around Tk 4.30 crore.

In the wealth statement submitted to the ACC, the couple showed assets worth Tk 3,70,15,000. But the ACC later found more assets worth around Tk 4.30 crore.

The court framed charges against them on December 13 last year.

Joint forces arrested Osman at his Uttara house in the capital on May 29 last year and seized Tk 1 crore in cash that he had hidden in the house.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Instant news from AKTEL

For LATEST NEWS, just type **news** and SMS to **2324** or call 2324 and get news wherever you are!

To register for BREAKING NEWS, type **6** and send to **2324**. For details call 123 or visit bdnews24.com. Standard charges & conditions apply.

Best Rate | Best Network |