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Qualitative changes in politics a major challenge
Says Adviser Zillur
UNB, Dhaka

Education and Commerce adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman has said quality improvement of politics in the country is now a major challenge, but it is the only way to bring about overall qualitative change in society.

He made the remarks while speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session of the four-day "International Convention on Quality Control Circles (ICQCC)" at Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Bangladesh Society for Total Quality Management (BSTQM) has organised the 33rd conference of ICQCC. Some 500 foreign delegates

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Govt yet to stop sales of banned milk brands

Waiting for copy of HC order; one company preparing for legal battle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government did not take any measure as of yesterday to stop sales and display of eight brands of 'melamine-contaminated' powdered milk at shops as per a High Court (HC) order and most of these brands are still on the market.

An industries ministry official said the government did not take any step as it had not received any certified copy of the HC order that banned sales and display of those products until receipt of test results from laboratories at home and abroad.

Meanwhile, one of the companies that sells three of the popular powdered milk brands suspected to be contaminated with toxic melamine said it is preparing to fight a legal battle if it takes longer to get the test results.

Manzil Murshid, counsel of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), yesterday sent a notice to the inspector general of police (IGP) and the home secretary, saying they should take immediate steps to comply with the HC order as it was widely publicised by the media on the very day of passing.

The HC order came in response to a writ petition filed as a public interest litigation by the HRPB after laboratory tests at the Dhaka University chemistry department found toxic melamine in eight baby formula brands—Diploma, Red Cow, Dano, Yashili-1, Yashili-2, Sweet Baby-2, Nido Fortified Instant, and Anlene.

Confusions arose surrounding the test results as Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution

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2 Brac officials kidnapped in Afghanistan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Bangladeshi senior Brac officials working in Afghanistan were abducted in the Ghazni province Thursday afternoon.

The identities of the hostages could not be known. Sources, however, said the kidnappers demanded \$100,000 ransom for their release.

While talking to The Daily Star last night, head of Brac overseas programme Aminul Alam said a Brac team from the Afghan capital Kabul was sent to Ghazni after the incident. "We are waiting for details," he added.

Brac official Abdul Alim was shot dead in Afghanistan on September 13, 2007.

Another Brac official

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Recession alarm rings around the world

Global markets take new hammering amid slump in stocks

AFP, Paris

Giants of the auto, airline and technology industries ordered emergency action against the global financial crisis yesterday as shares took a new hammering amid mounting gloom.

Even a 1.5 million barrel a day production cut by Opec failed to stop oil prices falling amid fears of a deep global recession.

Grim news backing those fears came from around the world.

French auto giants PSA Peugeot-Citroen and Renault ordered huge production cuts,

while Japan's hi-tech giant Sony Corp. and Europe's biggest airline Air France-KLM issued a grim earnings and profits warnings.

In Britain, official figures confirmed the country is about to enter a recession while Turkey's central bank took action to strengthen bank liquidity and prop up the slumping currency.

The combined impact sent shares tumbling in both Asia and Europe after overnight falls in Wall Street.

Japan's Nikkei index plunged 9.60 percent, ending below the key 8,000-point level for the first time

in more than five years, and Hong Kong fell 8.3 percent.

French shares plummeted 10.62 percent in morning trade to their lowest point in over five years before rallying slightly while Frankfurt's DAX 30 index slumped 10.13 percent and London's FTSE 100 index by more than nine percent.

"The best word to describe what's going on right now is panic," said Credit Suisse strategist Saturo Ogasawara.

Technology giant Sony, a bellwether of corporate Japan, saw its

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Amar Desh lawyers contest version of Star counsels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four lawyers for the Amar Desh have protested a report headlined "The Daily Star lawyers refute allegation" run by this newspaper on October 16.

In that report, lawyers for The Daily Star termed 'false' and 'fabricated' the news stories run by Bangla dailies Amar Desh, Naya Diganta and Dinkal about their submissions in a Dhaka court in a defamation case filed by former energy adviser Mahmudur Rahman against The Daily Star.

In a rejoinder to the October 16 report, the Amar Desh lawyers said, "We were present at the court No-8 of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court during the hearing on charge framing in the case filed by Mahmudur Rahman (also ex-chairman of the Board of Investment) on October 13. We took part in the hearing on behalf Mahmudur Rahman and turned down arguments of the lawyers for The Daily Star."

The rejoinder, signed by Belal

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



A child holds a powdered milk can and a placard demanding children be protected from melamine. Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan and Green Voice arranged the human chain programme at TSC intersection in the capital yesterday.

Ban on political activities may be relaxed early Nov

No clear signal on allowing Hasina, Khaleda to contest polls

HASAN AHMED TUSHER and RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Despite repeated calls from BNP and Awami League (AL), the government has yet to clear stance on polls participation of Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, and pledge to lift the state of emergency before the December 18 election.

At the latest round of talks with the parties, the caretaker administration led by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed said that early next month it would relax the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) clauses that ban political activities.

The move is to allow political parties to start preparing for the upcoming polls at full throttle, said sources in both the parties that attended the second round talks with the government Thursday.

About the prospect of AL President Sheikh Hasina and BNP

Chairperson Khaleda Zia being allowed to compete in the election, the government cited legal complexities surrounding the issue, and said it would do its best.

It however said it accepts the two ladies continuing to lead their parties that alternately ruled the country since restoration of democracy in 1990, added the sources.

Following the dialogue, AL and BNP got even louder in their calls for the government to make sure Hasina and Khaleda could stand in the polls.

"We told the government that our party won't take part in the election without Hasina. She has to be allowed to run in the polls as a free person. The government in reply said they would take necessary steps to meet our demands," AL presidium member Abdur Razzak told The Daily Star yesterday.

BNP Joint Secretary General Selima Rahman, who attended the talks with the government, said, "If we decide to go to the polls, we will do so under the leadership of Khaleda Zia."

Talking to The Daily Star, she said though the government appeared somewhat positive about their demands, it did not say anything specific.

BNP leaders claimed they did not raise the issue of Khaleda's participation in the election as, they believe, she has no legal bar to taking part in the polls.

On the other hand, AL leaders told the government that Hasina must not be barred from the election since she has no conviction by any court yet.

"The government did not oppose our logic," AL presidium

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Talking polls and beyond

Polls under emergency might lead to puppet govt

Says Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

Without explaining which list, he said this government claims itself non-political, and if it is true then why it will provide this list.

Hannan Shah, who was a vocal leader of the party when almost under house arrest following promulgation of the state of emergency, alleged that the people have suffered a lot due to lack of knowledge of the main force behind this government and its whimsical decisions, and the government's attempts to implement so many policies at a time.

He said the government has totally lost public support and confidence in it. Inexperience of the government and the force

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Find details of the interview on page 11

Weather concern for second Test against NZ

SPORTS REPORTER

The second and the final Test of the Brac Bank Series between Bangladesh and New Zealand starts today with more concern on weather conditions rather than the prospects of the match.

New Zealand go into the Dhaka Test with a 1-0 lead following a spectacular fightback in Chittagong but had to postpone practice due to overcast condition and drizzles throughout yesterday.

The home team, however, trained at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur which will be the venue of the match.

And Mirpur Stadium's reputation due to an enviable drainage system is giving hopes to the two teams that even if it rains—moderate or heavy showers—for three days during the Test match according to available weather forecast,

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Red tape major barrier to regulatory reform

60pc recommendations of RRC could not be implemented, says Dr Akbar Ali

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Sixty percent of the recommendations by the Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) could not be implemented due to lack of cooperation from different government bodies, especially the environment ministry, Board of Investment (BoI) and Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, RRC chief Akbar Ali Khan said.

"It's not that the delay in implementation is caused only at bureaucratic level. Sometimes it occurs beyond that," said the former cabinet secretary in an interview with The Daily Star.

The former adviser stresses the need of major reforms in BoI, the country's one-stop service centre for investment, saying the policymakers there need to change their mindset "which is still aligned towards regulating, not promoting business".

Identifying the complex system of getting a company registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms as the "number one obstacle" to doing business, he said he would remind the officials concerned about the recommendations in two to three weeks.

"If they don't agree, I'll report the matter to the chief adviser," a visibly annoyed RRC chairman

said.

The 17-member RRC was formed on October 30 last year with one-year tenure to overhaul outdated administrative rules and regulations with specific focus on removing bottlenecks for investment, commerce and trade.

The commission on October 21 received a letter from the Chief Adviser's Office which says its tenure has been extended by two years.

The RRC has so far identified 202 laws to study the rules and regulations under those and sent 49 recommendations to the government from its nine meetings.

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MURDER OF LAWYER Cops find past criminal records of the killer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Amin, 32, who killed and beheaded lawyer Nasrin Akhter Tuli Thursday at Segunbagicha, was sent to prison two years before for raping a child in Segunbagicha and stealing in Saudi Arabia.

He had been torturing his wife Yasmin and Tuli protested the abuse which made him angry. He had also made advances to Tuli.

Locals and police sources said Amin had violated a seven-year-old and he was sent to prison for this. After his release in 2002, he went to Saudi Arabia where he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for stealing.

They also said Yasmin sought Tuli's help as Amin tortured her.

Rezaul Karim, officer-in-charge (OC) of Shahbagh Police Station,

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Untested Chinese milk found on market

False BSTI seal; no mention of country of origin

PORIMOL PALMA

Amid worldwide panic among consumers about toxic melamine in powdered milk, an uncertified brand of undeclared Chinese milk powder has been found being sold on the market in the capital.

The importer of the Chinese powdered milk, Lalmai Food Products Ltd, neither secured safety clearance from Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) before marketing, nor did it mention the product's country of origin on the packet, flouting Bangladesh Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance 2007.

The company even printed the BSTI logo on the packet giving the product an appearance of having

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This "brand" of powdered milk does not mention that it is from China and has fake BSTI seal on it.

Police foil rallies against sculptures

More protests against removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday prevented three Islamist outfits from holding their scheduled anti-sculpture rallies near Zia International Airport and Baitul Mukarram mosque in the capital.

The activists of the outfits failed to take to the streets and stage demonstrations as a large number of police and intelligence personnel were deployed in those places preventing them from coming out of mosques after Juma prayers.

However, the activists at the mosques chanted slogans against installation of sculptures at roundabouts and demanded installation of Hajj Minars at intersections of the city where there are statues.

Biman Bandar Gol Chattar Murti Pratirodh Committee, a committee

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Police stand guard in front of the hajj camp near Zia International Airport yesterday to prevent activists of an Islamist group from demonstrating to press home their demand for a Hajj Minar at Airport intersection.

Transport strike on Ctg-Cox's Bazar road called off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The indefinite transport strike on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway has been called off following a fruitful meeting between the district administration and the bus owners and workers yesterday evening.

The district administration and other concerned assured Chittagong Bus Malik-Sramik Okya Parishad of fulfilling their demands in the meeting that ended at 9:00pm.

Several thousand tourists got stuck at Cox's Bazar due to the strike that enforced by the Okya Parishad since Thursday morning protesting attacks on buses by the students. They also put forward four-point demand, sources said.

The demands include trial of Thursday's attacks on buses in front

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Rice, edible oil prices fall, hilsa dearer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Average quality rice varieties like pariza and BR-28 (lata) were selling for Tk 34-37 a kg yesterday against Tk 35-38 last week.

Prices of fine rice like miniket and nazirshil remained stable in retail market.

A rice trader at Mohammadpur Agriculture Market said wholesale price of coarse rice decreased by Tk 100-170 per maund (37.32 kg) over the last one week as supply rose.

Onion sold at Tk 18-32 per kg in retail yesterday, falling by Tk 2-5 a kg over a week and green chilli sold for Tk 60-80 per kg against Tk 80-100 two days ago. Potato price was Tk 13-16 per kg yesterday against Tk 15-18 a few days ago.

Price of battery chicken has gone down by Tk 10-15 per kg from that of last week. It sold between Tk 100-110 a kg yesterday.

Moreover, price of edible oil (non brand) has decreased by Tk 2 to Tk 10 per litre compared to last

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Paban freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Akhter Hamid Paban, son of BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, was released yesterday on bail in a case for violation of Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

Paban was re-arrested at Abuzar Gifari College at Malibagh on charge of violating the EPR soon after his release from Dhaka Central Jail on August 30.

Contacted, Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique said he was released at 6:30pm.

Earlier on March 31, a Dhaka court sentenced Paban and four accomplices to 17 years' imprisonment each for possessing illegal arms and ammunition.

Five more cases against him on charges of carjacking and illegal earning, and three on extortion charges are under trial at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.