

PRAN
Achiever of the best exporters' award for last 6 consecutive years

PHILIPS
Buy specific models of PHILIPS Colour TV
Get Discount on Philips DVD Player
50% Discount*

Customer Service Department: 8855366-8, 01712 665463

SSC exams deferred for SA Games

Start on Feb 11
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Secondary School Certificate examinations will begin on February 11 rather than February 1 to accommodate the upcoming South Asian Games in Bangladesh.

The decision to defer the exams was made during an emergency meeting at the secretariat yesterday.

Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman chaired the meeting and the chairmen of all the education boards were present.

Meeting sources said that the chairmen were asked to take all necessary steps to arrange for the change of date.

Detailed exam schedules are due to be advertised shortly.

The 10-day South Asian Games will begin on January 29 and will be held at 23 venues across the country, under the management of the Bangladesh Olympic Association.

The extra burden on traffic during this time may cause difficulties for students travelling to exam centres and the students would also be unable to watch the sporting action.

On January 3 Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid announced that the nationwide SSC exams would start from February 1.

About 12,02,864 students

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Faruque's men storm Proshika head office

Beat up staff
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of people backed by former Proshika chairman Qazi Faruque Ahmed ousted the anti-Faruque group from the head office of the non-government organisation and took control of the building in the early hours of today.

Some 20 to 25 people stormed the Proshika Bhavan at the city's Mirpur-6, beat 5 to 6 Proshika officials and ousted those who were inside, a witness told The Daily Star.

"The group entered the office building around 12:15am, beat up us severely, snatched mobile phones from some of our colleagues who kept vigil on the Proshika Bhavan," said Mohammad Alauddin, senior accounts coordinator of the organisation, who was inside

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

India will not take any step that would hurt Bangladesh due to Tipaimukh dam

MoU facilitates import of 250MW power from India

Agreement on cross-border terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking

Dhaka, Delhi sign 3 agreements

India announces \$1 billion credit for infrastructure development of Bangladesh as Hasina, Manmohan hold talks; 2 MoUs also inked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday announced a \$1-billion line of credit for infrastructure development in Bangladesh.

The announcement came during two-hour talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh at the Hyderabad House here.

After the talks in the evening, the two countries signed three agreements on fight against terrorism and organised crime, and mutual transfer of convicted prisoners.

They also signed two memorandums of understanding on cooperation in power sector and cultural exchange.

In response to concerns over proposed Tipaimukh dam, India assured Bangladesh that New Delhi will not take any step that may hurt Dhaka's interests.

It agreed to remove 47 items from its negative list to give Bangladeshi products duty-free access to its market.

The two sides decided to enhance connectivity. In efforts to that end, India will set up a 14-km metre gauge rail line between Akhaura and Agartala.

Besides, it announced it will give Bangladesh transit to Nepal and Bhutan, and export 250 megawatts of electricity from its central grid.

The discussions covered a wide range of bilateral issues that included terrorism, security, connectivity, trade and investment, and sharing of water and power resources.

Hasina and Manmohan noted that terrorism and extremism respect no boundaries and agreed on the need for enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

They reaffirmed commitment to solving all issues through discussions and decided to put in place a Comprehensive Framework for Cooperation in Development.

The line of credit, the highest financial assistance from India to any country, is meant for constructing railway bridges and lines and manufacturing rail coaches, a senior Indian foreign ministry official told reporters last night.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh wave during a ceremonial reception accorded to her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Hasina wants deal on Teesta water

Bangladesh must get guaranteed water flow of all common rivers, she tells banquet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina here yesterday called for treaties on sharing waters of the Teesta and other common rivers to ensure a guaranteed flow for Bangladesh every year.

Responding to a key demand from Bangladesh, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said India would allow duty-free access to more products from Bangladesh, and remove tariff and non-tariff barriers.

The two premiers were speaking at a banquet hosted by Singh in honour of Hasina at Hyderabad House in the Indian capital on the first day of her official visit to India.

Describing Singh's assurance as a "laudable start", Hasina said what is required now is activation of institutional mechanisms for removal of hindrances to promoting two-way trade and for settling disputes that might arise from differences on specific trade-related issues.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Cooperation in trade would lead to socio-economic development of the two countries, "thereby alleviating poverty which undermines peace," she said.

Hasina raised the issue of water sharing of common rivers and said, "A vital factor for economic development is normal flow of water. Bangladesh, an agricultural country, needs a guaranteed flow of water throughout the year".

"To ensure such a regular flow of the Ganges water, the two countries concluded the historic 30-year Ganges Water Treaty in 1996 which symbolised the true spirit of what our two countries can do," said Hasina.

"With the same spirit, we need to conclude treaties on water sharing of the river Teesta and other common rivers. On this very important issue, I request your support in arriving at mutual agreements," she added.

On India's security concern, Hasina said, "Bangladesh will not allow its territory to be

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

India for rail link with Akhaura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India will offer to construct the rail link between Akhaura and Agartala, capital of north eastern Indian state of Tripura, when Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee meets visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina here today.

The Indian railway ministry has prepared a detailed plan for the 14km metre gauge rail line between Akhaura and Agartala which can be part of India's aid to Bangladesh, ministry sources said.

The proposed Akhaura-Agartala rail link will provide faster and hassle-free connectivity between Kolkata and Agartala, as at present there is already a passenger service between Kolkata and Dhaka.

If the Akhaura-Agartala line comes through and if Bangladesh agrees to provide

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Duty-free access to India widens

47 more Bangladeshi products dropped from negative list

STAR REPORT

India dropped 47 more items from its negative list giving Bangladeshi goods duty-free access to the Indian market, a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday.

India had earlier removed 56 items from the negative list, said the official wishing anonymity.

Meanwhile, Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee hinted that India might lift tariff and non-tariff barriers from many Bangladeshi goods for their entry to Indian market, reports our correspondent from New Delhi.

"We want many...many products from Bangladesh to enter Indian market without any duty," Mukherjee told journalists after holding a half-an-hour long meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Indian capital.

He made the remark in reply to a question from a Bangladeshi journalist about tariff and non-tariff barriers to import from Bangladesh to India.

The two neighbouring countries have a yawning trade gap. Dhaka has been asking India to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers to Bangladeshi goods to narrow the gap.

"This is a historic visit by Hasina to India as we understand their concerns and they understand ours," Mukherjee said.

He said it is a "happy coincidence" that Awami League has

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Production hampered in 30 RMG units

40 hurt in worker cop clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Production in around 30 garment factories in Ashulia halted after several thousand angry workers clashed with police for realising their three-point demand yesterday.

Clashes left at least 40 workers injured while the agitating workers put barricades on Dhaka-Tangail highway at Zamgorah around 9:00am causing a severe traffic jam for over one hour.

Witnesses said the authorities of 30 factories at Zamgorah and Narsinghapur shut down their factories fearing severe labour unrest when over 5,000 workers of Envoy Group and around 1,200 of neighbouring Design Jeans launched an agitation demanding conveyance, lunch bills and encashment of casual leaves.

Workers of three factories of Envoy Group -- Envoy Fashion, Envoy Design and Manta Apparels -- owned by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association president Abdus Salam Murshedi, started agitation in front of the factories around 8:00am and Design Jeans workers also joined them.

Agitating workers told reporters that over the last few

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

CHANGES IN CRPC Bill seeks to stop journalist harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill was placed in parliament yesterday for dropping the provision from the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1989 that allows courts to issue arrest warrants against editors, publishers, reporters or writers in defamation cases.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed placed the bill, according to which, courts will issue summons instead of arrest warrants in such cases.

"It will help put an end to harassment of journalists, editors, writers and publishers," the law minister said in justification of bringing the amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1989.

The bill was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Vehicles moving onto Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue from Shahbagh crossing in the capital yesterday are seen violating the three-lane system.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU LALAM

No respite from traffic mess

Congestion continues on poor enforcement of law, reckless driving

KAILASH SARKAR and MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

The government moves to give the city dwellers a respite from tailbacks went in vain due to poor enforcement of traffic rules, partial implementation of plans and reckless driving.

Traffic policemen have again started controlling vehicular movement manually ignoring the automated system at most intersections. On the other hand, the authorities did not install the required number of automated signals at over 600 points.

Almost all the busy roads and areas remain jam-packed with hundreds of stranded vehicles due to reluctance of the traffic men in taking action against lane violators, illegal parking and obstruction of vehicular movement.

Besides, the month-long special drive that was launched on December 8 resulted in nothing but allegedly a huge amount of illegal income for some unscrupulous policemen.

Sources in Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) say during last one month they collected over Tk 20 lakh in fine, filed 24,563 cases, seized 562 vehicles and 935 driving licences, and arrested 146 drivers.

The sources add as the police officials get 40 percent of the amount collected in fine, they are more interested in filing cases and collecting fine than improving the situation.

Besides, in some cases they also receive bribe instead of filing cases, depriving the government of the revenue.

The overall traffic situation marked slight improvement last month following introduction of lane system on major roads in the capital from December 8 and installation of light signals, phasing out manual control from November 22.

But over the last few days it was seen that reckless driving continued everywhere on the city roads, while drivers collected and dropped passengers at will.

The city dwellers observed poor enforcement of traffic rules and absence of traffic monitoring teams' activities, which led to horrific traffic gridlock.

During a visit to different intersections yesterday it was found that drivers were not maintaining lanes, while traffic personnel were controlling traffic movement manually.

In Moghbazar intersection it was seen no

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1