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Govt to open 19 new offices to issue MRP

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government will establish 19 new passport offices across the country to expedite issuance of machine readable passports (MRP). Meanwhile, Bangladesh will not be able to issue MRPs from April 1, the deadline set by all 187 member countries of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). It might take one more month for the government to start issuing the MRPs.

MRP Project Director Brig Gen Refayet Ullah said they will start distributing forms for MRPs among citizens on April 1. "Issuance of the new passports may take a month more to start, as several relevant

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

BTCL plagued with bribery, influence

Customers bribe linemen, clerks for phone connections; ministry's influence major hurdle, says TIB study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the BTCL customers have to pay an average of Tk 6,000 as bribe for telephone connection, revealed a report of Transparent International Bangladesh yesterday.

Under its research report titled "Lack of good governance in government's telecom sector and the way forward" TIB also identified telecom ministry's interference in BTCL as one of the major hurdles.

In the current nine-member board, BTCL has only three private sector representatives. TIB organised a roundtable on publication of its report at CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka. Dipu Roy and Shadhon Kumar Das, fellows (research and policy) of TIB conducted the survey.

The state-run BTTB (Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board) was transformed into a public limited company BTCL (Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited) in July 2008 with a view to providing better service.

According to the report, two-third of BTCL customers bribe linemen and clerks. Of BTCL's nine lakh customers, 18 percent obtained illegal connections, 28 percent bribed linemen while 21 percent linemen and clerks for faster connection.

About 71 percent respondents said they had to pay Tk 2,050 as bribe for transferring phone lines. Of them 64 percent had to pay the money

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Nahid warns against chaos in public universities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said government will not tolerate any kind of anarchy in the public universities.

"Those who create disorder and hamper peaceful environment in the universities in the guise of studentship will be resisted with iron hand," he said.

The minister was addressing a press conference after discussion with the vice chancellors of different public universities and chairman of University Grants Commission on improving

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

BNP covertly split over Delwar factor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Things are getting complicated in BNP as a number of influential leaders are trying to establish their dominance over the party taking advantage of Delwar's long absence.

Those leaders are trying to create such an environment in the party that Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain himself quits his post.

Pro-Delwar leaders, however, said Delwar is determined not to bow down to any pressure.

Party insiders said almost all the standing committee members and a number of central committee leaders are against Delwar while most of the leaders of BNP's associated bodies are with Delwar.

Chairperson Khaleda Zia expressed her deep resentment towards Delwar during her conversation with senior leaders but she told them to bear him no malice given his contribution during the rule of military-backed caretaker government.

Delwar has been absent from party activities for the last two months. Party's senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir is now spearheading the party activities.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Grassroots, think tanks differ on movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A difference of opinion has arisen between the pro-BNP intellectuals and the party's grassroots level over going into an all-out movement against the government soon.

The party think tank yesterday suggested that party men make preparations for an upsurge to oust the Awami League-led government, but the lower tier leaders are for completing the party's reorganising process first.

"There is no more time for this government. An all-out

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Some AL leaders abetting BCL wrongdoers

Alleges Obaidul Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Presidium Member Obaidul Quader alleges some of the party's rank and file are patronising Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in resorting to tender manipulation and unlawful activities across the country.

He demanded stern action against the BCL patrons after identifying them. He was speaking as the chief guest at a memorial meeting of 31st abduction day of BCL leader Mahfuz Babu at its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday.

Earlier, talking to The Daily Star the ruling party policymaker said all sections of AL leaders are behind BCL misdeeds.

"Those who did not get the opportunity of power, could not become lawmakers and failed to become ministers in some cases are patronising

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



This picture taken at Fatullah, Narayanganj shows unabated use of polythene even after it was banned years ago considering adverse impact on environment.

AL women MPs' dev role sparks debate in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid will mediate talks between the chief whips to resolve the row over letters assigning the ruling Awami League lawmakers from women's quota to oversee development activities in the opposition constituencies.

He came up with the proposal following a heated debate over the issue yesterday.

Chief whips of the treasury and opposition benches agreed to sit at the speaker's office, but the date was yet to be set.

In September last year, chief whip Abdus Shahid issued letters to 36 AL MPs elected to women's reserved seats, empowering them to administer development programmes in the constituencies belonging to opposition legislators.

Taking the floor on a point of order, Farroque yesterday read out a copy of the letter and questioned its legality.

He demanded that the letters be withdrawn immediately.

Senior BNP lawmaker Moudud Ahmed said by issuing the letters, the government has curtailed the opposition MPs' rights to represent their constituencies.

"It's unconstitutional. It breaches the privileges and rights of the opposition lawmakers," he added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Over 72,000 buildings vulnerable to earthquake

JS told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 72,000 buildings countrywide including Dhaka Medical College Hospital and one building of Bangladesh Secretariat have been classified as earthquake-prone structures, the food and disaster management minister told the House yesterday.

While replying to lawmakers' queries, the minister Dr Abdur Razzak gave the information referring to a study jointly conducted by the housing and public works ministry and Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Schoolboy stabbed to death by students

Family not filing case fearing insecurity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A schoolboy, who was allegedly stabbed by students of another school over previous enmity on Monday, died in the early hours yesterday.

Shoumen Biswas Anik, 14, son of Babul Kanti Biswas of Patiya, was a class-nine student of Chittagong Collegiate School.

He was stabbed at Rahmatganj at around 5:30pm when he and his schoolmates were going to the Guide Coaching Centre there.

Victim's friends alleged they were beaten by a group of students from Chittagong Govt High School who study at the same coaching centre.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Shoumen Biswas

5 House bodies reconstituted

MK Alamgir new Pac chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House yesterday reconstituted its Public Accounts Committee (Pac) removing ruling Awami League lawmaker KH Rashiduzzaman from its helm, in an effort to make the committee functional after over a year of its formation.

AL lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir was made the chief of Pac, one of the most important committees of the House, moving him from the helm of Public Undertaking Committee (PUC). AL lawmaker ABM Golam Mostafa was made the chief of PUC.

Formed in February last

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

PRIVATE REAL ESTATE ACT Developers-turned-MPs stand in its way

Allege environmentalists, submit memo to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Real estate developers turned lawmakers have held back the passage of a proposed private real estate development act, said leading environmental and professional organisations at a press conference yesterday.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) and Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) jointly organised the conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Earlier in the morning, leaders of the four organisations submitted a memorandum to the prime minister demanding immediate passage of the Private Real Estate Development and Management Act 2009 to protect consumer interests and save wetlands around the capital.

Delay in placing the bill by the parliamentary standing committee on the housing ministry is creating scope for doing illegal activities by dishonest developers and investment in the illegal housing projects, said the memorandum.

The cabinet approved the proposed law last September and it has been lying with the committee for six months for scrutiny.

Nasrul Hamid Bipu, a ruling party lawmaker in the parliamentary committee, is himself a real estate developer and is contending in ensuing election of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab).

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Barapukuria miners go on strike again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Around 1,100 native miners of Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd (BCMCL) went on an indefinite strike from Monday midnight demanding increase in their wages.

Sources said coal production of the company came to a total halt yesterday due to the strike.

The Bangladeshi miners said they called the strike demanding implementation of the 2008 tripartite agreement signed among the miners, BCMCL and contracted company XMC.

They said the deal recommends salary increase of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

The Daily Star

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OnlinePoll

Do you support the cabinet decision of permanently canceling the Daylight Savings Time?

Yes (63.3%)
No (34.7%)
No Comments (2.0%)

Total votes: 539

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the government is on the right track towards holding war crime trial?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

March 24

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-55	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-16	6-20
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

DHAKA PHONE

দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ

মনের কথা যখন-তখন

ঢাকা টেলিফোন কোম্পানী লিঃ এর সন্মানিত গ্রাহক, ডিলার ও শুভানুধ্যায়ী গণের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আমাদের গ্রাহক সেবা গতকাল ২৩/০৩/২০১০ তারিখ সন্ধ্যা ৭:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে পুনরায় চালু হয়েছে এবং স্বাভাবিকভাবে সেবা প্রদান অব্যাহত আছে। উল্লেখ্য, অনিবার্য কারণে গত ১৫/০৩/২০১০ তারিখ রাত ০৯:৩০ ঘটিকা থেকে আমাদের গ্রাহক সেবা বন্ধ ছিল। অপ্রত্যাশিতভাবে গ্রাহক সেবা বন্ধ থাকার জন্য সৃষ্টি অসুবিধার কারণে আমরা আন্তরিক ভাবে দুঃখিত। নিরবচ্ছিন্ন গ্রাহক সেবা নিশ্চিত করাই আমাদের লক্ষ্য। গ্রাহক সেবা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন তথ্যের জন্য ঢাকা ফোনের কার্যকর কেয়ার সেন্টারে (ফোন-৯২৩) যোগাযোগ করার জন্য বিশেষ ভাবে অনুরোধ করা হ'ল।

কর্তৃপক্ষ

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