



ENSURING EDUCATION

SM Zakir Hossain accentuates fundamental right to education

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RAJ OF 1ST CLASS CRICKET

Rajshahi, the 2010-11 National Cricket League champions, could be a blueprint of success for BCB

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ANOTHER ROYAL WEDDING

Bhutan's 31-year-old king to marry 20-year-old student Jetsun Pema

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Biman in severe cash crunch

Borrows Tk 20cr from bank to pay staff salaries

SHARIFUL ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines faces a severe financial crisis that compelled it to borrow Tk 20 crore from a local bank to pay salaries to its 2,600 staff in April.

The national carrier owes more than Tk 20 crore to Padma Oil while its London office is in debt of over Tk 49 crore to different airports and organisations, said Biman officials.

It also owes over Tk 125 crore to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, said Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Zakiul



Islam.

Biman has remained in the red for the last three and a half years after it had accumulated Tk 510 crore in cash reserves in February 2008.

The airline is now in a "near bankrupt situation," a top Biman official told The Daily Star, preferring anonymity.

Biman's earnings from ticket sales fell by more than Tk 100 crore between January 17 and April 30 this year. The drop in sales resulted mainly from a hike in airfares on international routes effected from January 17 without any market

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WHO ARE THEY??? The crew members of the cargo vessel alleged that the policemen on the smaller boat stopped them on the Dhaleshwari at Digreerchar to collect illegal toll. The Daily Star contacted three police stations in the area for their version on the allegation. Two of them said the area is not under their jurisdiction while the third said they do not do any patrols on boats. The photo was taken on May 8.

PM's adviser sees criminal link of Limon, his father

HR activists don't agree with his claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister's Defence Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique has defended the Rapid Action Battalion by terming college student Limon Hossain of Jhalakathi a criminal.

Both Limon, whose left leg was amputated after a Rab team shot him on March 23, and his father are members of a criminal gang, claimed Tarique

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 20

190 FAKE STAFF OF MUJIBNAGAR GOVT

JS body stops probe into 2 ministries' role

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A parliamentary body has decided not to move further with the issue of appointing 190 fake employees of Mujibnagar government as sub-registrars under the law ministry in 2009.

The parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry on Thursday backtracked from its decision to examine the role of public administration and law ministries as some "bigwigs" of the ministries were involved with the scam, sources in the committee claimed.

"The committee has limitations. So, we asked the law ministry to settle the matter by ensuring justice to all in a realistic way,"

Suranjit Sengupta, chief of the parliamentary committee, told The Daily Star yesterday without explaining the "limitations".

He also said if the beneficiaries of the scam are guilty then those who provided the benefit are also guilty.

Meanwhile, on condition of anonymity a member of the committee said, "The fate of the appointment issue is now uncertain."

Earlier, on a recommendation of the parliamentary watchdog, the law ministry formed a committee on June 19 last year to look into the matter.

The enquiry revealed massive anomalies in the process of appointing 190 employees of the Mujibnagar

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JS budget session starts tomorrow

BNP unlikely to join

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into budget session tomorrow amid uncertainty about BNP-led opposition lawmakers' return to the House.

Apart from passing the budget for the next fiscal year, this session is likely to witness a bill proposing some crucial changes to the constitution.

The main opposition BNP is likely to boycott this session as it stands against the constitutional amendment, sources in the BNP

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Mamata sworn in as W Bengal CM

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Mamata Banerjee was yesterday sworn in as the first woman chief minister of Indian eastern state of West Bengal, heading a 38-member Trinamool Congress-Congress coalition government.

It marked a historic change of guard in the state ending a 34-year unrelenting rule by CPI (M)-led Left Front.

West Bengal Governor MK Narayanan administered the oath to 55-year-old Mamata on the lawns of Raj Bhawan at 1:01pm.

The Trinamool chief chose the time as auspicious. Clad in her trademark white cotton saree, she took oath

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Mamata Banerjee

58,000 Yaba tablets seized

STAR REPORT

Ukhia police seized 40,000 Yaba tablets with a street value of at least Tk 2 crore from a car on Teknaf-Cox's Bazar highway Thursday night.

Meanwhile, Rapid Action Battalion seized 18,000 Yaba tablets from a drug dealer in Uttara in the capital.

Chitra Dhar Tripura, assistant superintendent of police (Ukhia Circle), said he along with a police team was laying in wait by the highway around 9:00pm following a tip off, our correspondent in Cox's Bazar reports.

Sensing trouble, the

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PHOTO: AFP

Fire engulfs a boat in the port of Tripoli after Nato-led aircraft hit eight vessels of Gaddafi's navy in the early hours yesterday. Story on page 6.

Govt to go tough on errant bus operators

No govt monitoring yesterday; Bigger drive soon to punish those charging extra

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

The government within a couple of days will launch a bigger drive to implement the new bus and CNG-three-wheeler fares in the capital.

The move comes after passengers were unabatedly being subjected to over charging for their travels in the city.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) would provide a chart of fares to transport vehicle owners before the drive is launched.

"We are preparing a comprehensive bus fare list of all routes in the capital as well as inter-district routes. Hopefully we

will be able to hand over the fare charts to the bus owners and their associations Sunday," BRTA Director Tapon Kumar Sarker told The Daily Star.

He said there are more than 100 routes in the capital. The owners would be urged to put on display the fare charts in every bus and at bus stops so that people can know the fares, he said.

The BRTA would also monitor the inter-district bus fares, he said.

Quoting the BRTA Chairman Aiyub Rahman, the director said after handing over the fare charts, they would seek five to seven magistrates from the Dhaka

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Gas compressors in limbo

Petrobangla stalls 6-year-old compressor bid to push Russia in the deal; govt may fail to improve gas distribution system in its tenure

SHARIER KHAN

The third tender for installing gas compressors under an Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan is once again facing uncertainty as the authorities are refraining from okaying the bidder selection since February apparently to weigh an alternative deal with Russia.

Sources said by shelving the bidder selection at its matured stage, Petrobangla is pursuing a government-to-government deal

with Russia to award it the job of installing two compressors in Ashuganj and Elenga.

The third tender for this project was floated in August last year with \$110 ADB funding. The project's consultant evaluated technical bids of three companies and found just one company -- Hyundai of Korea -- qualified for the job. The consultant report was submitted in February but till now it was not placed before the board of the Gas Transmission Company

Ltd (GTCL) that is spearheading the project. The chairman of this board is also the chairman of Petrobangla.

Back in May 2009, the then Petrobangla chairman cancelled the second tender for three compressors by going against the opinion of the project consultant, and he led the government to award US oil company Chevron the deal for installing one such compressor on the gas pipeline system owned by the GTCL. Interestingly, Korean

company Hyundai had also won that tender.

If the contract was awarded back then, all the three compressors would have been nearly ready to improve drastically the country's unreliable gas transmission system.

Sources said ever since Hyundai emerged as the lowest bidder in the third tender, the authorities started going slow with the project. Instead, Petrobangla,

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DHAKA CITY BNP FIASCO Worried Khaleda enquires from UK

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

A rather worried BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has enquired from the UK whether any one of her party opposed the recently declared convening committee of the organisation's Dhaka city unit, and asked her party leaders to inform her if any one tries to create any problem centring the new committee led by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, said party insiders.

Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, acting secretary general of the party, said yesterday that the chairperson talked to him several times over the phone on some organisational issues.

The Dhaka city unit has been the party's most crisis riddled unit, due to a factional feud between loyalists of

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BNP's long march likely next month

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP is planning to organise a long march as part of its proposed countrywide anti-government agitation, which may be announced after the chairperson's return from the US at the end of this month.

The programme may be held next month.

Chairperson Khaleda Zia herself will lead the long march protesting against bringing changes to the

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