Fuel prices

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), but this time the process was bypassed, said Syed Yusuf Hossain, chairman of BERC.

The government can increase the prices of petroleum products through an executive order. Public hearing is not mandatory, Yusuf added.

"The hearing process is too long. That's why sometimes the government increases the prices of the products through executive orders," Yusuf told The Daily Star yesterday.

market have recently

The decision will cut the

annual subsidy on petro-

leum products by Tk 3,500

crore to Tk 14,500 crore,

price hike will have a bad

impact on people's daily

spending, but there was no

has already met high offi-

cials of the communica-

tions ministry to take mea-

sures to increase bus fares

The government's bor-

rowing from the banking

system is increasing due to

high subsidy on petroleum

products, the officials said.

The government has

already borrowed Tk 5,000

crore from banks between

to import 70 lakh tonnes of

fuel this year, up from 54

lakh tonnes last year.

The government plans

Zaid Bakht, research

director of Bangladesh

Institute of Development

Studies, said the fuel price

hike was expected. "With-

out price adjustments,

there would have been

serious budgetary implica-

tions," he said, warning

Inflation rose to 11.29

percent in August from

10.96 percent in July due to

an increase in non-food

costs in the face of rising

fuel prices, transport fares,

clothing prices and house-

"It is definitely going to

have an impact on rising

inflation,'' Bakht said. He

warned that the fuel price

hike will increase produc-

tion costs in factories and

transport fares, piling pres-

He suggested that the

government take steps to

keep food prices stable

through increased market

intervention. ''The govern-

ment must increase its

market intervention

The government last

Prior to yesterday's

increased the prices of petro-

price hike, the government

was providing Tk 33.44

subsidy for per litre diesel,

Tk 32.49 for kerosene, Tk

8.02 for octane and Tk

12.96 for furnace oil, the

government said in a state-

Sikkim quake

Four rental power plants in

Tangail, Thakurgaon, Jessore

and Syedpur went off for

nearly 30 minutes on impact

of the quake, said Saiful Hasan

Chowdhury, director of public

relations department of the

Nearly 300 miners at

Baropukuria coal mine

remained trapped for about

20 minutes for power failure

caused by the quake. They

were rescued after power

supply was restored, reports

Prof Mehdi Ahmed Ansary

our Dinajpur correspondent.

said the capital did not face

any widespread damage as

the earthquake's epicentre

was far away and its hypo-

centre was 21 km below the

Many buildings would have

been damaged in the capital

and elsewhere if the tremor

had recorded a 7.5 magnitude

with a higher depth of its hypo-

said a 7.5 magnitude tremor

jolted the Mexico City in 1985

damaging all high-rises in the

city. The earthquake's epi-

centre was in the sea -- nearly

Mehdi said there are lands

that had been developed by

filling up wetlands. The build-

ings built there are highly

700 km off the city, he said.

vulnerable to earthquake.

Giving an example, Mehdi

centre, he said.

Power Development Board.

leum products on May 5.

capacity."

sure on commodity prices.

hold expenses.

about rising inflation.

July and August.

in line with the fuel prices.

Mesbahuddin said he

He, however, said the

said Mesbahuddin.

increased.

alternative.

Asked about the reason A one-member judicial behind the move, Energy probe body that submitted Secretary Mesbahuddin its report on September 8 Ahmed said the governfound that some officers of ment is counting a huge Savar Police Station were subsidy on imports of petroleum products as the "involved in the killings". prices on the international

FROM PAGE 1

quarters yesterday.

"During our investigation,

nobody said that the six

students killed and the other

injured were robbers. Nor did

we find any evidence to prove

departmental actions against

some personnel of Savar

Police Station for their negli-

gence to duty," Amir Uddin

'We recommended

Early hours on July 18, a mob at Bardeshi village at Aminbazar beat six boys, all school and college students, dead and another injured in police presence taking them for robbers, witnesses and the lone survivor said.

of Tejgaon College, Towhidur (CID), and Dhaka district Rahman Palash, Kamruzzaman Kanto and Ibrahim Khalil of Mirpur Bangla College; Shams Rahim Shamam of Maple

stopover at Dubai, it

board were hurt in the inci-

the Bangladesh Embassy in

Jordan to look into the matter

and are maintaining close

contact with the foreign

ministry," said a top Biman

bound passengers of Biman

Bangladesh Airlines have

been facing serious ordeals

since last Thursday due to

long delays in flight schedules.

had to delay flights for up to

40 hours since Thursday due

to technical glitches in two

DC10 aircraft, Biman officials

passengers bound for Jeddha

and Riyadh left Hazrat

Shahjalal International

Airport at around 2:00pm

see off his brother at the

airport told this correspon-

dent that his brother and

about 300 others were kept

waiting at the airport without

any food since Saturday

afternoon after receiving

scheduled to leave the air-

port at 2:30am on Sunday

with a similar number of

export of cattle," said EN

Rammohan, former director

general of Indian Border

the countries to sit together

to make cattle trade formal.

Rammohan urged both

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of

Dhaka University

inetrnational relations

department said if the cross-

border cattle trade is made

formal, both countries

would benefit from higher

major reason of border

killing, but not the only

Prof Veena Sikri, former

Indian high commissioner

to Bangladesh, said the

recently signed agreement

that has clearly demarcated

the border would help pre-

Guards of Bangladesh (BGB)

must have clear instructions

from their bosses on the

issue. "So far, they are not

Helaluddin Ahmed, director

of Saarc Chamber of

Commerce and Industry,

blamed fencing of border as

a major reason for a rise in

cross the border, the BSF

suspects and opens fire,"

Between January 1, 2000

and March 31, 2011 BSF

killed 907 unarmed

Bangladeshis, said Odhikar,

"If anybody wants to

Brig Gen (retd)

She said BSF and Border

reason," Ahmed also said.

"Cattle smuggling is a

revenue income.

vent the killing.

clearly instructed."

killings by BSF.

Helaluddin added.

Security Force (BSF).

"Another flight which was

immigration clearance.

A man who had come to

yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

After a 38-hour wait, 314

The national airline has

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia-

official wishing anonymity.

None of the passengers on

"We've already requested

departed for London.

FROM PAGE 1

dent.

Biman flight

Leaf International School, and Sitaf Jabi Munif of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology.

The next day, Abdul Malek, a sand trader of Aminbazar, filed a robbery case accusing the seven. On the same day, Savar police filed a murder case against 500 to 600 unnamed people

Strangely, the police case too branded the victims as robbers. The case did not even mention that they were students although the police officer who filed the case talked to their parents and relatives and collected details before filing the case.

As the role of Savar police came under question, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandker formed the four-member

The three other members are Masud Karim, special superintendent (SS) of Special Branch, Sheikh Rezaul Haider, SS of Criminal The dead are Tipu Sultan Investigation Department inganonymity. Additional Superintendent of Police Sheikh Rafigul

The 216-page report was

tial investigation, said Amir Uddin, the additional IGP.

"We've investigated the police role, not the crimes. The CID is investigating both the cases now," he added.

comment on whether any robbery took place in the area that night. A top official of the police

probe found that the robbery case filed by the sand trader was false. It was lodged to hide the

actual fact and save those who led the killing as well as the policemen who played a part in it, he added.

was submitted. "Not only those eight

The eight, however, told that the mob might attack

Little care for luggage

FROM PAGE 20 could not find it.

On April 26, Showkat lodged a complaint with Etihad authorities at the airport and made frantic efforts to get back the missing items throughout his stay in the country only to be further disappointed.

Frustrated, he left for Canada on May 6.

Contacted in mid-June, Executive (operation) Shambhu Nath Pal of Etihad's Dhaka office told The Daily Star they were yet to trace the lost bag.

However, Showkat's case is not a stray incident.

On an average, 120 arriving passengers have to leave the airport without luggage every day, airport sources said. Cases of missing luggage

shoot up three to four times in the peak season between November and February, they added.

An airport official, preferring anonymity, said over will switch to automation 3,600 luggage of incoming but it will take time. travellers went missing in

June alone.

In June alone, the national flag carrier Biman lost 950 bags, Saudi Airlines 700, Indian Express 500, Pakistan International Airways 200 and Gulf Airways 250 luggage that month.

Several high officials of Shahjalal airport, preferring anonymity, said the authorities almost take no step to check luggage missing.

The department that handles fliers' luggage has 200 employees while the requirement is over 300. And, they do the work manu-In 2010, they added, the

airport authorities planned

to introduce automated

Baggage Reconciliation As part of the scheme, the authorities need eight machines which have yet to

be procured. Contacted, a director of the airport said the airport

Air Transport Association rules airlines are bound to pay up when they lose or damage passengers' lug-

city

gage, sources said. The airport hardly helps passengers get the compensation, and as a result, the

carriers get away with it. Besides, bags and cases often fall from the carts and the carousels, or their tags are often torn off, sources said.

Mohammad Monir Hossain of Dhanmondi said he landed at the airport at 1:20pm on July 1 by a Turkish Airlines flight and while receiving his luggage he found his 55 inches TV set worth over Tk 2 lakh dam-

He said he had informed the carrier about the matter but it gave him no satisfactory answer.

Meanwhile, Showkat Alam Khan's mother passed away last month. He returned to the country a few days before her death and left again after the funeral, but Etihad Airways has yet to As per the International trace his missing luggage.

Khulna

FROM PAGE 20

dormitories by 6:00pm yesterday.

"I had no other option but to go for this tough decision in order to save the college and the hospital from deadlock due to the unruly activities of a group of troublemakers, who are creating unrest and panic among patients,' said Kazi Hamid Asgar, acting principal of KMC.

Protesting the closure, a faction of Swachip besieged his office, confining him till 2:30pm, witnesses said.

Police later rescued Hamid, also the superintendent of KMCH, and escorted him to his house.

Four platoons of police were deployed in and outside the hospital and the college. Last week's unrest ensued

when two groups of the Swachip scuffled over selection of the chief guest at a function for installing an endoscopy machine at gastroenterology department of KMCH. On Thursday, doctors

loyal to Sheikh Baharul Alam, president of Swachip's Khulna unit, assaulted Hamid. Hamid alleged that

Baharul's men assaulted him

as he opposed inviting

Baharul as the chief guest of the function. Students backed by the faction also staged a sit-in

programme on the campus on Saturday demanding Hamid's removal.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20

"Chairperson Khaleda Zia will deliver an important speech at the rally and declare the next course of anti-government action," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, acting secretary general of BNP, said at a press conference at its central office in the capital.

No senior members of the party were present at the briefing.

Fakhrul said Khaleda Zia at the rally is likely to declare programmes like road marches and demonstrations.

Khaleda Zia, also the leader of the opposition in the House, is expected to lead road marches towards seven divisional headquarters from early next month,

party sources say. She might also visit at least 19 districts to attend more than a hundred public meetings in an attempt to drum up support for the BNP-led anti-government

movement. Since the 2008 electoral debacle, the September 27 rally will be BNP's first mass gathering where leaders of the four-party alliance and

like-minded parties will deliver speeches. Urging all to attend the rally, Fakhrul said the fall of the Awami League government has now become

essential and that is why BNP wants a fresh election under a caretaker system.

Responding to a question, Fakhrul said the party had already sought permission from the authorities

concerned to stage the rally at the venue around 2:00pm. "If permission is not

granted, the venue of the rally will be shifted to the party's central office," he said, alleging the government hinders democratic practices by obstructing the meetings of the opposition in public places.

Bangladesh Kalyan Party has agreed to attend the BNP's rally aiming to strengthen the movement for restoration of caretaker government system.

Party chairman Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim gave his consent last night during a meeting down on politicians immedi-

with Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office. BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam

Alamgir and Kalyan Party Secretary General Abdul Malek Chowdhury were present in the meeting. "Inshallah, we will attend

the rally. As a freedom fighter I will always stand beside the people. I think caretaker government system is urgent for continuation of healthy democratic prac-

tices," Ibrahim told The Daily Star last night. BNP chairperson's media

wing member Shairul Kabir Khan said the meeting discussed the country's latest political situation and as per the discussion, Kalyan Party leaders and workers will attend the September 27 rally.

Victims were not robbers

Inspector General of Police Amir Uddin, who headed the probe body, told a press briefing at the police head-

of Bardeshi village.

committee on July 21.

prepared following an impar-

passengers will be delayed

for around 40 hours," said a

Biman official wishing ano-

The official said the

schedule chaos began after

one aircraft was grounded for

engine problems and the

other for leakage in its

hydraulic systems. He said

that necessary repairs have

been completed on both

aircraft. One flight left this

morning while the other

flight is scheduled to depart

Star, a number of Biman

officials remarked that

Biman aircraft become

grounded whenever they are

about to normalise flight

schedules. They suspect that

a vested group within the

national airlines may have a

hand behind it to realise

some personal gains. It was

suggested that authorities

should mount an investiga-

tion in the engineering sec-

tion to stop such practices if

19 destinations across the

globe with a fleet of 11 air-

craft, nine of which fly on

engine DC-10-30 and a

Boeing 737 are now

grounded. Another domestic

aircraft, a Fokker F-28, is also

out of operation due to

a human rights body. The

number of killing is around

Centre for Alternatives,

Dhaka and Jamia Millia

Islamia University, New

Delhi co-organised the

seminar to analyse bilateral

issues after the prime minis-

terial summit conference

The seminar discussed a

held here on September 6-7.

wide range of issues includ-

ing diplomacy, trade, tech-

nology, investment, regional

dimension, environment,

energy, water, connectivity,

security and media in six

sessions. Resource persons

both from Bangladesh and

India took part in the discus-

seminar, a book will be pub-

lished in Ekushey Book Fair

2012 jontly by Bangladesh

Analysts said all the dis-

About not signing the

puted matters could be

Teesta water share deal

during Manmohan Singh's

Dhaka visit, Veena Sikri said

the treaty will come only

after all sides are satisfied.

"It's a temporary disap-

diplomat hailed the basin

approach taken into

account for the first time by

both countries in sharing

water of the common rivers.

said foreign policy of a coun-

try should be formulated on

national consensus.

Replying to a query, she

But the former top Indian

solved in a friendly way.

and India.

pointment."

On the outcomes of the

Of the nine aircraft, a triple

international routes.

technical glitches.

20 so far in 2011.

Biman operates flights to

there are any.

While talking to The Daily

tomorrow evening.

nymity.

HQ told The Daily Star the

He, however, declined to

Eight policemen of Savar Police Station were closed on September 11, three days after the judicial probe report

policemen who were present on the spot, many other policemen of Savar Police Station were involved in covering up the incident," said the police official seek-

the probe committee that they did not take any steps to save the students fearing them, he added.

Military leaders meet to salvage **US-Pakistan ties**

AFP, Washington

The top US and Pakistani military leaders met in Spain to discuss ways to shore up strained ties after a US raid that killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and a spike in violence in Afghanistan, a Pentagon spokesman said.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mike Mullen and his Pakistani counterpart General Ashfaq Kayani sat down for more than two hours of talks late Friday on the sidelines of a Nato conference in Seville, Mullen's spokesman Captain John Kirby told AFP Saturday.

"They agreed that the relationship between our two countries remained vital to the region and that both sides had taken positive steps to improve that relationship over the past few months," Kirby said.

"They also discussed the state of military-to-military cooperation and pledged to continue to find ways to make it better."

It was the first meeting between the pair since the May 2 nighttime military raid in which US Navy Seals, without first notifying Islamabad, killed the al-Qaeda leader in the compound in Abbottabad where

he had been hiding. As relations worsened in the aftermath of the raid, Washington announced that Legal cattle trade it could cut some of the \$2.7 billion in military aid it sends to Pakistan.

Islamabad, for its part, ordered as many as 200 US military trainers out of the country in the aftermath of

the operation. US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has expressed frustration that Islamabad has so far failed to crack down on Haqqani network militants that Washington suspects attacked the US embassy and Nato headquarters in Kabul on

September 13-14. The was launched by militants firing rocketpropelled grenades at the heavily fortified embassy. At least a half dozen rocketpropelled grenades landed inside the compound, killing 15 people dead.

Ship-breaking

FROM PAGE 20 Fortune Ship-Breaking Yard.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 5:00am, said Jahid Iqbal, director of the shipbreaking yard.

With this, eight people have so far died in five separate accidents in four shipbreaking yards this year. Four workers were killed

at Mak Corporation Ship-Breaking Yard on January 18, one at Mahin Enterprise Ship-Breaking Yard on March 15, one at Fortune Ship-Breaking Yard on September 17 and one at Peninsula Super Ship Yard on August 20.

from the patients living within three kilometres of the centre and Tk 10 from those living beyond. After checkup, patients get the required medicine from the centre

whether they can afford it or

For checkup, he charges Tk 5

Every day, around 100 outpatients get treatment and

medicine for diabetes, tuberculosis (TB), fever, cough, burn injuries, stomach problems and complications related to pregnancy, among others.

Those needing long-time treatment are admitted to the 35-bed centre that has diabetes, TB, diarrhoea, burn and mother and child units. The admission fee for an inpatient is Tk 100, and that's all they will ever have to pay no matter how long they have to stay at the centre. Everything else involving treatment, medicine and food are provided at free of cost, locals and officials of the centre said.

In addition, Dr Baker, locally known as Daktar Bhai, has trained up 89 young boys and girls as health assistants and paramedics who visit the neighbouring villages to give treatment to the sick people, ers and newborns.

Set up on a four-acre land at Kailakuri village under Madhupur upazila, Kailakuri Health Care Centre has two special programmes -- one for diabetes patients and the other for mother and chil-

Some 1,100 diabetic patients receive treatment under the diabetes programme that covers four upazilas of Tangail, Jamalpur and Mymensingh districts. The mother and child programme covers 17 villages around the centre.

Asked why he has chosen Bangladesh to realise his dream, Baker said the people here are "really good" and they do not get healthcare due to poverty. "I've chosen this country in order to give them a

"All patients are required to pay a little. It is because they

little health support."

Doctor for the poor

are then aware of their rights as patients. But none is turned away because they are too poor to pay," said the 70-yearold, who chose to remain single so he has "no bond" that would pull him back from fully devoting his life to the Born into a noble family in

1941, Baker obtained his MBBS degree from Otego Medical College at Dunedin in New Zealand in 1965. Subsequently, he joined a government medical team and served in war-ravaged

and took several courses on child health. He came to Bangladesh in 1979. However, he heard about the sufferings of the Bangladeshi people in the hands of the Pakistani forces during the Liberation War in

Vietnam till 1975. He then

went to Australia and England

1971 when he was in Vietnam. First, he joined a Christian mission hospital in Meherpur. After two years, he moved to Kumudini Hospital in Mirzapur where he worked for eight months.

He then joined a clinic run by the Church of Bangladesh especially the pregnant moth- at Thanarbaid of Madhupur doctor, but Mariko Innu, an realised that he needed to learn Bangla if he really wanted to understand his patients, many of them indigenous people. In a year, he learned to communicate in Bangla from Jalchhatra Christian Mission in Madhupur. Dr Baker now

speaks fluent Bangla. Immediately after joining the Church of Bangladesh clinic, he opened a small healthcare centre at Kailakuri as the number of patients was growing at the clinic.

Finally, in 1996, he set up the Kailakuri Health Care

Sholakuri union Chairman Yakub Ali said that before the centre was set up, locals had to go to Madhupur, which is 20 km from the village, for treat-

the muddy, hilly road was very long and tortuous. Yakub added that nobody in that village died without

ment. The journey through

medical care since the opening of the centre. On an average, the annual cost of the centre inclusive of medical equipment, medi-

centre. Last year, the outlay was Tk 1.25 crore, according to its financial statement obtained by The Daily Star. Of the sum, 85 percent came from donation and four percent from

Asked where the donation comes from, Amin said, "Our Daktar Bhai collects the money from private donors including his friends and wellwishers in New Zealand, the US and the UK."

service, Baker said, "Man can do everything if he has dedication. And dedication comes from faith."

once a year for visa extension and to collect money for the centre. He is the only qualified

often visits the corrugated tinroofed earthen centre to help However, the man who has been treating patients for

nearly 50 years is now himself under treatment. In the last four months, he underwent two operations, said Md Nekbor, one of his assistants. Still, the Daktar Bhai goes to the centre every day if he can. But how long? Sitting in his mud-built one-room home just behind the centre,

he told this correspondent that he now waits for a successor. "Many students get MBBS degree in the country every year. I'm waiting for one of them to come and take the responsibility to provide treatment to the poor in the area."

DGFI blacklisted

agency did not want to see the politicians get nominations from the parties primarily because they were "tainted by corruption.

144 "blacklisted" were not revealed in the cables, dated 27 October, 2008.

patch, the embassy got the names. "Included in the list, a copy of which the Embassy obtained, were several relatives of Sheikh Hasina who have been among her strongest political supporters."

slate of candidates. running for Parliament."

supporters then believed their party had no chance of winning in December, 2008 polls. Also, some argued that the polls.

cancellation of elections as a tions to as little as 30 percent means to ensure the particiof those named. pation of leaders accused in A cable noted, internally, graft cases, according to the former "reformist" elements of BNP worried about their During an army-led crack-

the "negative list" of candidates to be barred from the Some BNP supporters feared that by excluding those politicians, and given the tenuous standing within the party of the reformist faction, the BNP might have difficulty

future as the BNP leadership

was deciding its response to

Moreover, in several key areas, including Sylhet, Chittagong, and Dhaka, BNP's local party structures had suffered serious divisions between reformists and loyal-

As a result, some BNP

ately after the slapping of state of emergency, a large number of politicians from all the political parties, chiefly AI and BNP, were arrested. Corruption cases, mainly on charge of amassing wealth beyond known income, were

party should seek a delay or

filed against them and many were handed down punishment by special trial court that acted upon special power rules. The then caretaker government moved to keep off the

convicted and the detained from the December 29 parliamentary elections. As some "big shots" failed to get nominations, their close relatives contested from their constituencies and some won in the

FROM PAGE 1 party chief Hasina would The military intelligence accede to denying nomina-

However, identities of the

in putting forward a credible It quoted AL's the then acting general secretary Syed

cine, patients' food and staff salary is around Tk 1 crore, said Noor Amin Ratan, an administrative assistant at the

patients' contribution.

Talking about his lifelong

He goes to New Zealand

upazila in 1983 but soon MBBS physician from Japan

But according to one dis-

Ashraful Islam as saying "One early sign of Sheikh Hasina's degree of commitment to weeding out at least some corruption-tainted political cronies will be the Awami League's list of nominees

Ashraf, however, said DGFI did not demand AL refrain from nominating everyone on the list; instead, he predicted