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I have no problem stepping down

Commerce minister tells JS as MPs blast him for failure to dismantle market syndicates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Coming under fire from Jatiya Party and Gonoforum MPs for failing to control prices of essentials, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday said he would quit if the prime minister gave the job to an opposition MP.

While castigating the minister in parliament, the opposition lawmakers even questioned if Munshi, a businessman, was involved in the syndicate manipulating the market.

Taking the floor on a cut motion, Gonoforum MP Mokabbir Khan called upon the commerce minister to quit. Of all the ministries, the Ministry of Commerce is performing the worst, he said.

“When you go to the market, you hear ... people call it a syndicate-friendly ministry.”

He said that many people say that the commerce minister is involved. “Why don’t you resign after all this?”

When the minister says that the price of a product will decrease, it increases the next day, Mokabbir claimed.

JP MP Shameem Haider Patwari then said prices of goods have decreased in the international market over the last few months but it is not reflected in the country.

“Inflation in Bangladesh was six percent and now it seems to be 10 percent. It is growing. Inflation is eating away the people’s income,” he said, adding that food and cosmetics are becoming smaller in portion because of this.

“The economy of Bangladesh is trapped in a vicious

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

The flow of the Bhadra has slowed considerably and it has become narrower in Chuknagar Bazar area of Khulna’s Dumuria upazila due to encroachment. Waste from homes and shops have turned the water filthy and stinky. The photo was taken on Saturday.

Claims of sexual abuse must be taken seriously

Visting UN under-secy-gen says about peacekeeping missions

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix has called for ending sexual harassment and discrimination in the peacekeeping operations, and taking steps to recruit more female peacekeepers.

“We must all take claims of sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse very seriously,” he said at the closing ceremony of the two-day UN Peacekeeping Ministerial preparatory meeting yesterday.

Bangladesh, Canada and Uruguay jointly organised the event ahead of the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial to be held in Ghana on December 5-6.

“We must create safe, enabling and responsive work environments,” Lacroix said, adding that leaders should play a very important role in shaping organisational culture and building a cohort of gender responsive leaders.

The UN official said it is important to ensure that women are deployed at all levels of the UN peacekeeping operations and there is a fair recruitment system and respectful environment.

A total of 1,63,887 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have so far participated in UN missions in 40 countries. Currently, Bangladesh is one of the leading troop contributors,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Jean-Pierre Lacroix

CATTLE MARKETS

High prices keep buyers away

Traders blame soaring fodder prices, higher transport cost for the hike

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With the Eid-ul-Azha just day after tomorrow, the sale of sacrificial animals was poor at the capital’s cattle markets until yesterday evening mainly due to high prices.

Sellers cited increased costs of raising livestock and transportation as the main reasons for the high prices.

Yesterday, the cattle markets didn’t see enough buyers despite having sufficient supply of sacrificial animals.

Traders, however, hoped that a large number of customers would visit the markets from today – the first day of the four-day Eid holiday.

“There are 28 flats in our building. The residents had bought 16 bulls around this time last year. But this year, the number is only two,” said Mohammad Ripon, caretaker of a building in the city’s Dhupkhola.

The majority of the building’s residents were waiting for the price

to fall and had decided to visit the markets on the day before Eid, he said.

Saidul Islam Shovon, a resident of Merul Badda, who went to Gabtoli cattle market yesterday after visiting three other markets in the last two days, said the price of bulls has gone up by 30 to 35 percent this year compared to last year.

“I want to buy a bull for a maximum Tk 1 lakh. I will visit more markets till the day before Eid if I don’t find one within my budget,” Shovon said.

Golam Mostafa, a trader from Nagarkanda in Pabna, said he brought nine bulls to the Gabtoli cattle market three days ago with their prices ranging from Tk 1.20 lakh to Tk 5 lakh, but none of them were sold yet.

“Even the customers are not asking for their prices.”

Although there was a demand for small and medium-sized bulls, Mostafa said there was hardly any demand for the large ones.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Petition filed with SC for restrictions on Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A petition was filed yesterday with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking its order of injunction restraining Jamaat-e-Islami from carrying out any political activities including meetings, public rallies and processions using its name or banner.

Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, secretary general of Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, and two other petitioners also requested the court to issue an injunction on Jamaat barring it from asserting itself as a legitimate political party until disposal of its (Jamaat) leave to appeal petition against a High Court verdict that on August 1, 2013 scrapped its registration with the Election Commission.

At the same time, the petitioners submitted a contempt of court petition with the SC against five

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Laser scanning helps find remains of ancient Mayan city

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Archaeologists have uncovered the remains of a previously unknown ancient Mayan city in the jungles of southern Mexico using aerial laser scanning technology.

The ancient city, which was found to include pyramid-like structures, stone columns, and several large buildings, was likely an important center over a thousand years ago, researchers from Mexico’s anthropology institute INAH said.

The city, named Ocomtun – meaning “stone column” in the Yucatec Maya language – may have been an important center of the Central Lowlands between 250 and 1000 AD.

A number of cylindrical columns found at the site were likely part of entrances to the upper rooms of buildings, researchers suspect.

The discovery was made partly thanks to airborne laser scanning by the University of Houston in the US.

The aerial scanning helped locate the site in the jungle in an area spanning about 1160 sqm of the jungle, scientists say.

Archaeologists could recognise numerous concentrations of pre-Hispanic structures from the LiDAR data.

ATTACKS BY IMRAN’S FOLLOWERS

Pakistan army sacks three senior officers

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan’s army has sacked three senior officers, including a lieutenant general, for failing to avert last month’s violent attacks on military assets by former prime minister Imran Khan’s supporters to protest his arrest, the army’s spokesperson said yesterday.

It was a rare announcement as the army usually doesn’t make public announcements on internal inquiries and their findings.

At least 102 people are currently being tried in military courts in relation to the violence, Major General Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry told a press conference in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

He gave no details regarding how many of them were civilians or military officials. He also declined to name the senior officers who had been fired.

Human rights groups have raised concerns over the military trials of civilians, which they say can’t ensure a fair defence. They have also been challenged in Pakistan’s Supreme Court.

In May, thousands of Khan’s supporters rampaged through military installations across the country and vandalised them, including an air base, several military garrisons, the house of a general and the army’s headquarters.



A locomotive coming out of Chattogram Port and a bus almost collide at Saltgola level crossing on Sunday. The level crossing has no gates to stop vehicles but it has gates for trains instead. Three people were killed at the level crossing on April 6 after a lorry collided with a train transporting oil.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Huge crowds swarm from Makkah for hajj climax

AFP, Mina

Hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims yesterday walked or rode buses to a giant tented city near Makkah for the climax of the annual hajj that Saudi officials say could break attendance records.

After performing the ritual circumambulation of the Kaaba, the giant black cube at Makkah’s Grand Mosque that Muslims pray towards each day, worshippers set off for Mina.

Pilgrims in robes and sandals, many carrying umbrellas against the beating sun, undertook the journey on foot or crowded onto hundreds of air-conditioned buses provided by Saudi authorities.

They will spend the night in white tents in Mina, which every year hosts the world’s largest encampment, before the hajj’s high-point today: prayers at Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is said to have delivered his final sermon.

“My dream has come true,” said Jamila Hammoudi, a 62-year-old Moroccan school teacher. “I will pray for everyone,” she told AFP after arriving in the tented city.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6