

BACK TO THE BARRACKS



An army man and a policeman embrace during the pullback of the troops from the Suhrawardy Udyan camp in the city yesterday upon a government order that came after nearly three months of the countrywide Operation Clean Heart by the joint forces.

PHOTO: STAR

Saber's bail order yet to reach jail

UNB, Mymensingh

Despite being granted bail by the High Court, Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury was not released from prison till yesterday evening.

Jail authorities said the bail order from Dhaka had not reached them yet. Saber's counsel hoped he would be set free today.

When the matter was pointed out, the High Court yesterday ordered dispatch of the release order to Mymensingh jail through special messenger.

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Mercury dips further in N-dists Two more cold waves after January 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mercury dipped further yesterday in northern districts raising the death toll and paralysing life in shivering cold, but the situation slightly improved in the capital.

The cold wave claimed 14 more lives in the country in the last two days till Friday, raising the unofficial toll to over 300, according to newspaper reports.

In the city, an unidentified floating woman aged about 45 died at Dhaka Medical Collage

Hospital. She was taken there after a cold attack, hospital sources said.

The lowest temperature recorded at Ishwardi yesterday was 5.1 degree Celsius, the lowest in the country so far this winter.

In the capital, it increased to 11 from Friday's 10.4. The sun was visible for a few minutes in the capital at noon yesterday.

Meteorologist Akram Hossain said the situation in the country will start improving today but another two cold waves are likely

this month after January 16.

The Meteorological Department forecast dense fog in northern districts and river basins for the next 24 hours and a medium cold wave in Chuadanga, Rajshahi, Madaripur, Tangail and Khulna districts.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reported six deaths. The victims are Moyzuddin, 82, Zarina, 70, Ayezuddin, 80, Kalu Mia, 60, Shajahan Ali, 65 and an identified

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HR body urges PM Repeal ordinance, ensure justice for the repressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Human Rights Watch (BHRW), a New York-based human rights organisation, has termed the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance discriminatory, anti-people and anti-constitutional, said a press release yesterday.

In a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and different ministries, the BHRW yesterday urged the government to immediately repeal the anti-democratic ordinance to ensure justice for the repressed

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India wants strategic South Asian Union

SAARC needs upgrading: Sinha

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has proposed creation of a South Asian Union (SAU), which will not only be an economic grouping but will also acquire a "political and strategic dimension".

"If Africa could think in terms of a union, if the Economic Community in Europe could become the European Union, if the ASEAN could make progress, if the countries in Latin America could make progress, there is no reason why we in South Asia cannot become a Union of South Asian states," Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said while inaugurating a seminar in New Delhi last evening.

Sinha made it clear that he was not suggesting an end to the South

Asia Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) but its upgrading in view of changed economic and political realities across the world.

However, he made no bones about his displeasure with the progress of the SAARC. Over the last 17 years, the body has not been able to move ahead on its main objective of economic cooperation, he said.

Sinha also told the seminar, organised by the Dhaka-based Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), that India was ready for a free trade agreement with other SAARC countries.

With Bangladesh, there are 2,672 goods for which India has given

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Petroleum traders threaten strike from Jan 23

UNB, Dhaka

Petroleum traders have threatened to go for an indefinite strike from January 23 unless the government meets their eight-point demand.

Dealers, distributors, agents and pump owners association yesterday reminded that the State Minister for Energy had earlier committed to meet their demands.

"We don't want anymore discussion. If the government does not implement the decisions taken in the October 7 meeting last year, we'll stop selling fuel from January 23," said M Nazmul Huq, chief spokesman of the association, at a press conference.

He said the government recognised the genuineness of their

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Left dead against alien hunting

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

Leftist parties of India are strictly against the central government's decision to implement the identity card system in West Bengal to find out people illegally living in the state.

At the same time, they expressed concern over exclusion of Bangladesh from the 'dual citizenship' policy announced by the centre.

On Thursday, the central government in Delhi announced dual citizenship for prominent Indians living abroad in certain countries.

The Trinamul Congress, along with the leftist parties, has protested the implementation of the dual citizenship policy.

Parliamentarian Krishna Bose said, "The government is consider-

ing this policy for people of Indian origin in the USA, Canada, Great Britain, Singapore and a few other countries. What is surprising is that the countries like Bangladesh and Burma (Myanmar) have been excluded.

"Many of us have our roots in these two countries. They should be included in the list."

However, the issue of identity cards has antagonised the leftist parties more than the announcement of dual citizenship.

The leftist parties think that it is just a step by the BJP to weaken the chances of their bright results in the forthcoming Panchayat polls.

Minister Kamal Guha of the Forward Bloc, from Cooch Behar,

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Mosquito menace Larvicide to be sprayed from air

UNB, Dhaka

The Environment Ministry has agreed in principle with the City Corporation proposal for aerial spray of larvicide by airplane and helicopter in the capital city and its outskirts to cope with the mosquito menace.

An inter-ministerial meeting at the Environment Ministry took the decision allowing WHO-approved Ultra Low Volume Concentration (ULVC) insecticides for aerial spray over the city to check the growing menace of mosquito.

But the spraying will have to be conducted keeping in mind that less hazards are caused to various friendly insects, including bees and butterfly, as well as public health.

Chaired by Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj, the meeting at the conference room of the ministry also decided that wide publicity through radio, television and newspapers must be conducted before the start of spraying.

The meeting cautioned the general public that during such aerial spray, pregnant women and children must remain indoors while food and drinking water is properly covered.

The need for massive public awareness was underscored at the meeting for the ultimate success of the anti-mosquito drive.

Apart from aerial spray, comprehensive measures to destroy mosquito larva from water-bodies and drains will be taken and people of all strata will be encouraged to take part in the drive.

PM warns police

Work dutifully or face legal action

UNB, Dhaka

Hoping that the police would ensure security of public life and property working hard with utmost sincerity, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday warned of legal actions if anyone neglected duty.

"You will have to overcome the crisis of confidence. It is not ours or yours or anybody else's desire that the image of police is damaged for a handful of police personnel," she said at the Police Week 2003 function.

Thirty-seven police officers and personnel were decorated with gallantry awards Bangladesh Police Padak 2002 and President Police Padak 2002 as well as President Police Padak for outstanding service.

Among them, only Dinesh Kumar Biswas, ASI, was awarded posthumously the Bangladesh Police Padak for his courageous role in nabbing and containing notorious criminals that cost him his life.

Twenty policemen were awarded President Police Padak for their valiance shown in arresting terrors and robbers and recovering illegal firearms while 16 others given President Police Padak for rendering extraordinary service in maintaining law and order and resisting subversive acts.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia gave away the medals to the recipients. A family member of Dinesh Kumar Biswas received the posthumous award on behalf of the ASI killed in the line of duty. In handing over the awards, she said: "I promise, do good jobs and you will get the reward."

Taking salute from the annual police parade at Rajarbag Police Ground on the occasion, the prime minister noted that people had lost their confidence in police following various allegations raised against them in the past, including corruption, neglect of duty and patronisation of criminals.

"Already you have succeeded largely in restoring the confidence. I advise you to carry out your duties more carefully," she told the rank and file of the police force.

She reminded them that success in their duties not only bears reputation of the country but the country's development is also inseparably linked with it.

People will not invest, foreign investors will not invest if peace and discipline doesn't prevail in the country, said the PM, whose government had called out army in October last year to help improve deteriorating law-and-order situation.

Listing her alliance government's multifaceted steps in development and modernisation of the police, Khaleda informed the function that Rapid Action Team (RAT) had been raised with special training imparted to skilled young members of the police force so they could successfully tackle illegal arms-holders, terrors, extortionists and hardened criminals.

The objective is to ensure peace and sense of relief in public life, she told her audience about the special police corps that will soon go into operation as the army troops are now being called back to the barracks.

Road accident in city kills cop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One police constable was killed and five others injured in a road accident at Badda Biswa Road crossing in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Nasiruddin, 25, while another constable Shafiqul Islam, 26, was critically injured.

The accident occurred at about 5:00am as the four constables were on their way to Rajarbagh police line from Ultra on a requisitioned microbus.

Nasiruddin was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH)

where the attending doctors declared him dead.

The remaining injured were Kamruzzaman, 28, Wahid, 27, a

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Bomb attack on police van in Khulna: 21 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Twenty-one people have so far been arrested for hurling bombs on police van at PTI crossing here Friday evening.

Three constables and a rickshaw driver were injured in the attack. The arrested include three listed criminals while others are reportedly unruly elements as learnt from Khulna thana police.

The motive behind the bomb attack could not be revealed by police till filing of this report yesterday evening.

Police also recovered two hand bombs from near the residence of Dr Abdul Malek of Khulna Police Hospital, yesterday morning.

According to OC Shafiqul Azam, criminals of 'Adaria Bahini' are

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Gulshan Society wants Rajuk to stop construction at Road No. 121

UNB, Dhaka

Residents of Gulshan have demanded of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkhya (Rajuk) to stop the latest construction work undertaken by Rajuk at Road No.121 adjacent to Gulshan Lake.

Under the banner of Gulshan Society, they met Rajuk architects and engineers at the site yesterday and expressed their concern over the "unwanted construction" work.

The residents also demanded that there must be consultation with the local community with a view to arriving at a consensus on evolving a widely acceptable solution.

Gulshan Society in a press release said the construction work

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PHOTO: STAR

A police official checks a pickup damaged in a bomb attack that left three policemen and a rickshaw-puller injured in the Khulna city Friday evening.