



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks at a conference of Council of Interfaith Harmony at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Last Hajj flight arrives

UNB, Dhaka

Biman Bangladesh Airlines brought the last batch of Hajj pilgrims back to home early yesterday.

Biman sources said some 206 Hajjis arrived at Zia International Airport by a Biman flight of BG-480 at about 3:40am.

High Biman officials were present at the airport to receive them.

B Chowdhury leaves for Delhi

UNB, Dhaka

Bikalpo Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury left Dhaka for New Delhi yesterday to attend an international conference on tuberculosis and lung disease.

Politician-cum-doctor B Chowdhury will speak at the two-day conference, organised by International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD) in the Indian capital on February 16-17.

BTTB issues demand notes in large scale in Ctg

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

Bangladesh Telegraph & Telephone Board (BTTB) in Chittagong started issuing demand notes in an unusual large-scale with a view to filling up the revenue deficit of the previous fiscal, sources here said yesterday.

In the last two days, they distributed approximately 2500 demand notes to the aspirant subscribers under its new extension project before completion of cable installation work and without going for field report, sources added.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia formally inaugurated the Tk 368 crore project on December 20 last year that would enable over 83,000 subscribers under eleven exchanges with fresh telephone connections, in addition to existing 80,000 subscribers.

The BTTB is installing cable line at different exchange areas, which is expected to be completed by May this year, sources said.

But before completion of installation work, the BTTB authorities

began distribution of demand notes to its new applicants two days ago without going for any Field Report (FR), which was a prerequisite in the past before issuing any demand note.

Sources said the BTTB Chittagong region made revenue profit of Tk 165 crore against its target Tk 200 crore in the last fiscal year ending June, 2005, and to make the huge deficit up in new fiscal, they opted for issuing demand notes to such a massive scale.

Authorities are expecting to realise at least Tk 20 crore from new applicants against the demand notes, they said.

The authorities here however tagged a condition with each of the demand note saying the connection would be given depending on the availability of cable. It means the aspirant subscribers have little chance to get new connection in at least next four to five months despite depositing money against demand note.

"We're surprised to receive the demand note prior to the FR and the

condition the authorities impose on us is more frustrating. And we are still in doubt whether we would get new connections in short time," said some applicants seeking anonymity.

Korean Telecom was implementing the 35-million US dollar extension project financed by Export Import Bank of Korea on behalf of the project investor Korean Economy Development Fund and the project tenure expires in October this year, sources said.

Under this project, 23,000 subscribers of Nandankanan Exchange, 22,000 of Agrabad, 10,000 of Muradpur, 7,000 of Bayezid Bostami, 5,000 of Sagarika, 4,000 of Kalurghat, 250 of Chittagong University, and 3,000 each of Pahartali, Guptakhal and Silimpur Exchanges will get new connections.

Guptakhal in Patenga and Silimpur in Fouzderhat are two new exchanges installed recently under the new extension project, sources said.

Kader Siddiqui urged to renounce 'Bangabir' title

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sylhet Division Development Council yesterday called on lawmaker and freedom fighter Kader Siddiqui to renounce the title 'Bangabir', saying that General MAG Osmani is the only person to have this title.

Gen Osmani, the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces during the War of Liberation, was honoured with this title at Narayanganj in 1973, they said.

They also threatened to launch a tougher movement against Kader Siddiqui if he does not stop using the title.

They were speaking at a discussion marking the 22nd death anniversary of Bangabir General Osmani at the Liberation War Museum in the city. The Sylhet Division Development Council organised the event.

The speakers also called for observing the birth and death anniversaries of Gen Osmani with state honour.

Speaking as the chief guest, Privatisation Board Chairman Inam Ahmed Chowdhury said Osmani was a democratic person and that is why he resigned from the cabinet and parliament protesting the formation of 'Bakshal' or the one-party rule.

JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu, Council leaders Atiqur Rahman Atiq, Weysur Rahman Chowdhury, Nazmul Islam Lucky and Md Sirajul Islam and Habiganj Association President Dr CM Delwar Rana also spoke.

NON-PUBLICATION OF GAZETTE

SSKOP leaders concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmochari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) yesterday expressed resentment and concern, as the government is yet to publish the gazette notification regarding 40 percent dearness allowance for the journalists, employees and press workers of the newspapers and news agencies, which was declared in October last year.

In a written statement, leaders said newspaper owners and SSKOP leaders in a joint meeting of wage board agreed to give 40 percent dearness allowance to the newspaper staffs.

But the government has been dillydallying to publish the gazette notification, which is unexpected and violation of wage board laws, it added.

The government was forced to form a wage board in July last year after a long struggle of SSKOP. But the Board is not functioning well, as the government is not releasing enough funds for the board, the statement reads.

The SSKOP leaders said if the government fails to publish the gazette notification regarding dearness allowance by February, all staffs of newspapers and news agencies will observe token abstention from work from 11:00am to 2:00pm.

The SSKOP will announce further agitation programmes from a rally in front of the National Press Club at 11.00 am on the same day.

SHARING OF WATER WITH INDIA Govt trying to strike permanent accord

Minister tells JS

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Water Resources Advocate Gautam Chakrabarty yesterday told the House that the government is making all-out efforts to enter into a long-term permanent agreement with India in phases to solve the problem created due to unilateral withdrawal of waters from the upstream.

"We are trying to solve the problem of sharing waters of the common rivers of Bangladesh and India maintaining the diplomatic norms," he said replying to a supplementary in the Jatiya Sangsad.

He said, "we want to continue the on-going discussion to solve the water issue. But, if needed, we may go to the international court to raise

the issue for the sake of the national interest."

Replying to a question from Jatiya Party lawmaker Shah M Solaiman Alam, he told the House that the discussion has been continuing to share the waters of the 54 common rivers after formation of the India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission (JRC).

Responding to a question from treasury bench member SA Khaleque, Gautam said the government has a plan for dredging the Turag river to protect its navigability.

He, however, said a project involving nearly Tk 610 crore has been taken to ensure navigability of the Turag, the New Dhaleshwari, the Puling, the Buriganga and Tongi Khal, and protect environment there.

JU admission results to be published today

JU CORRESPONDENT

The results of admission test for first year honours degrees under Jahangirnagar

University (JU) will be published today.

The results will be available in national dailies, on departmental and administrative building notice boards. It will also be available on the JU official website at www.juniv.edu.

The viva-voce examination for the successful students will be held from February 22 to 25 according to merit list while admission will begin on March 1.

The classes of the freshers are scheduled to begin from April 6.



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at a gathering at Zero Point in the city during hartal hours yesterday.



A reception was accorded to 125 MBA graduates of Dhaka Study Centre of Victoria University (VU) at Dhaka Sheraton hotel recently.

Reception to 125 MBA graduates

A reception was accorded to 125 MBA graduates of Dhaka Study Centre of Victoria University (VU) at Dhaka Sheraton hotel on February 12, says a press release.

Australian Deputy High Commissioner Richard Rodgers in his speech as chief guest at the reception said international engagement has been an important aspect of Australian education and training for many decades.

He said Victoria University has established itself as a first rate educational institute in Australia with progressive management, realistic vision for the future and strategic collaborations. It has international linkages across the entire range of its activities, including at Dhaka Study Centre in Bangladesh, he said. The University is serving the world now with as many as 100 overseas partners, he added.

Prof Colin Clark, Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law, Afzal Husain Chowdhury, chairman of AHC and Company Ltd, Robert Sims, Associate Dean, Faculty of Business and Law and Professor Golam Mohammed Chowdhury, director MBA Programme, Bangladesh also spoke.

1329 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 1,329 people on various charges from different parts of the country in last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive the law enforcers also recovered three Light Guns, five rifles, one revolver, three shutter guns, two pistols, a pipe gun, and 58 bullets, says a police headquarters press release.