

Reshuffle didn't solve Petrobangla manpower crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite a few transfers and postings made by the caretaker government, Petrobangla continues to be dogged by manpower crisis at its top and mid levels.

Earlier this month, the government transferred, promoted and appointed Mokbul-e-Elahi and Mukhtar Ali to fill vacancies at director's level in Petrobangla. Both these officials were deprived of due promotions despite their

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Leaked papers halt JU exams

JU CORRESPONDENT

Admission exams to Jahangirnagar University (JU) Economics department were postponed yesterday amid allegations of corruption and cheating after it emerged that question papers were being sold to students in advance.

The university authorities pulled the plug on the exams, scheduled to be held in two shifts starting from 9:30am yesterday, when it was confirmed that the question papers being circulated were copies of those to be sat.

Students said the photocopied papers were being sold to

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Indian police file charges alleging Pakistan ties to Mumbai blasts

AFP, Mumbai

Police in India filed charges yesterday against 28 suspects over the Mumbai train blasts in July that killed 185 people, and alleged the attacks were linked to Pakistan's spy agency and militant groups.

In thousands of pages of evidence handed over to a special

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Foreign aid shrinks 53pc in 3 months

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Foreign aid dropped by a staggering 53 percent in the first three months of the current fiscal year due to donor concern over pre-election political instability and slow implementation of foreign-funded development projects.

Bangladesh Bank statistics show that during July-September in the current fiscal year, aid inflow was \$129.26 million as against \$273.84 million during the corresponding period in the previous fiscal year.

Aid figures dropped every month from July to September this fiscal

year compared to those in the corresponding months of last fiscal year.

In July this year, aid inflow was \$41 million, showing a sharp fall from \$87 million in July last year.

In August, \$55.77 million was received as foreign aid compared to \$76.82 million in August last year.

The amount of foreign aid was \$32.44 million in September this year while the figure was as high as \$110.87 million in the corresponding month last year.

In addition to the fall in gross foreign aid by 53 percent, net foreign aid has dropped by 80 percent.

Although \$129 million aid was received in the first quarter of this fiscal year, the government had to repay \$94.07 million of previous aid, leaving a net amount of \$35.19 million. The net foreign aid in the corresponding period of last fiscal year was \$179.64 million.

Planning ministry sources said the immediate past government's concentration on domestic-funded projects to boost its profile before the upcoming elections effectively sidelined donor-funded projects under the Annual

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

10 killed in road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people died and 52 others were injured in road accidents in Faridpur and Chittagong districts yesterday.

Of them, seven died in Faridpur and three in Chittagong.

Our Faridpur correspondent reported that the accident occurred near Shaildia bus stand under Banga upazila when a Barisal bound passenger bus from Dhaka collided head on with a Dhaka bound timber-laden truck from Barisal at around 5:30am, killing seven bus passengers on the spot and injuring 50 others.

The dead are Farhad, 35, Farid Fakir, 30, Sayed, 40, Mofazzal, 25, Salam, 45, Hannan, 35, and Motiuzzaman, 36.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

US panel to recommend Iraq troop withdrawal

AFP, Washington

An independent bipartisan commission will call on President George W Bush to order a measured withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, media reported yesterday amid mounting frustration at violence in the country.

As Bush met Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in Jordan, debate raged in the United States over whether the conflict should be called a civil war and the Pentagon

ordered more troops into Baghdad.

The 10-member Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by former secretary of state James Baker, said it would reveal its much-awaited findings on December 6.

But the New York Times reported that the panel agreed to recommend withdrawing 15 US combat brigades in Iraq -- the bulk of the US fighting presence -- but leaving 70,000 or more American trainers, logistics experts and members of a rapid reaction force.

The United States currently provides the vast majority of the 160,000-strong multinational force in Iraq.

The group did not say where the troops would go, and did not present a withdrawal timetable, which Bush has opposed. But it made clear that the US military commitment should not be open-ended.

The panel could be a major chance for Bush to overhaul his policy as Iraq slips towards chaos

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Another day of 14-party sit-in

Upcoming blockade would be tougher, warn leaders at rallies

STAR REPORT

Bangabhaban and its adjoining areas remained cut off from the rest of the city for several hours yesterday as a huge number of security personnel sealed off all thoroughfares around Bangabhaban during a sit-in by the activists of 14-party

coalition and some other political parties.

Awami League-led 14-party alliance, Liberal Democratic Party-led Jatiya Oikyo Front and some Islamic political parties staged the sit-in simultaneously for the second time this week to press home their demands for cancellation of polls

schedule, correction of voter list, 'meaningful' reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) and resignation of the chief adviser.

The four-hour sit-in starting from 10:00am however passed off peacefully with leaders calling upon their activists, who rallied

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

BNP men attack intending LDP men; 20 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

At least 20 intending Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) activists were critically injured when their convoy came under Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) attack at Gulpecha under Gopalpur upazila in Tangail district yesterday morning.

About 500 BNP leaders and activists defected from Sharishabari BNP were on their way to Dhaka on 12 buses to formally join LDP. Three buses were vandalised during the attack.

The injured were admitted to Sharishabari Upazila Health Complex.

LDP leader Maj (Retd) Anowarul Kabir Talukder blamed Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, senior vice-president of JCD central unit and Abdus Salam Pintu, former deputy minister for education, for the attack.

FACTORY FIRE Goods worth Tk 5cr gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Goods worth about Tk 5 crore were gutted in a fire at a sweater factory at Konabari yesterday.

According to the authorities, the fire originated inside the storeroom of Swan Sweater Ltd at about 12:00 noon and soon engulfed the whole area.

The fire damaged 30,000 pieces of sweaters waiting for shipment, machines, cottons and cartons packed with raw materials, factory officials said.

The firefighters of Gazipur, Savar, Kurmitola, EPZ and Tongi fire brigade units extinguished the

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

EC commissioner Mudabbir had close ties with BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Newly appointed Election Commission Commissioner Mudabbir Hossain Chowdhury had been maintaining ties with BNP publicly after his retirement from the government job.

Only a few days back, on November 19, his meeting with the BNP chairperson at Hawa Bhaban was on the news of the electronic media.

A month after his retirement in 2003, BNP's youth front Juba Dal from Mudabbir's home upazila Ajmiriganj accorded him a reception.

Soon after retiring, Mudabbir launched a public relations campaign in hope of winning the BNP-led alliance's ticket to the Habiganj 2 (Baniachang and Ajmiriganj upazilas) constituency.

He even boasted that the central leaders of BNP gave him the green signal to run for the next parliament.

Mudabbir attended a number of BNP programmes in Habiganj

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6



Top: Election Commissioner Mudabbir Hossain Chowdhury, marked by a circle, is seen distributing relief next to the then state minister for housing and public works Alamgir Kabir of BNP on July 24, 2004. Bottom: Mudabbir, circled second from right, at a meeting at Habiganj on October 12, 2004. On his left is BNP leader MA Kaiyum, the prime accused of former finance minister SAMS Kibria murder case.



Bangladesh's ton-maker Shahriar Nafees smashes the ball through point during the first ODI against Zimbabwe at Birsreshtha Matiar Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

Prayer Timing

December 1

| | Azan | |
|---------|-------|------|
| Fajr | 5-15 | 5-50 |
| Juma | 12-30 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 3-45 | 4-00 |
| Maghrib | 5-19 | 5-22 |
| Esha | 7-00 | 7-30 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

