

White panel bags most posts in Duta polls

Blue gets general secretary

DU CORRESPONDENT

BNP and Jamaat-backed "White Panel" won Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) election yesterday, bagging the major posts including president, vice president, treasurer and joint secretary.

The White Panel bagged eight posts of 15-member executive committee for the year 2007, while pro-Awami League "Blue Panel", which won majority posts last year, bagged six posts including the one of general secretary.

Prof Sadrul Amin (576 votes) of SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

NUKE STANDOFF

Security Council to okay Iran sanctions

AFP, United Nations

The Security Council was expected to approve yesterday a slightly amended European draft resolution mandating nuclear-related UN sanctions against Iran, diplomats said.

French Ambassador to the United Nations Jean-Marc de La Sabliere told reporters the 15-nation Security Council had decided to meet at 11:00 am (1600

GMT) Saturday to vote on the draft put forward by European sponsors.

"We will take action tomorrow at 11:00 am," confirmed Friday Qatar's UN envoy Nasser Abdelaziz al-Nasser, who chairs the council this month.

He added the vote would follow last-minute consultations among council members.

A Western diplomat close to the talks, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the latest draft

would be endorsed overwhelmingly and possibly unanimously.

China's UN Ambassador Wang Guangya told reporters that he planned to consult with his government before the vote.

The vote will take place exactly two months after Britain, France and Germany first introduced a sanctions draft resolution following Iran's failure to comply with an August 31 council deadline to halt

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McGrath to retire after World Cup

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia fast bowler Glenn McGrath said on Saturday he would retire from all forms of cricket after next year's World Cup.

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13 jail officers harassed for steps against controversial acts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prisons authorities are reportedly harassing 13 jail officials who took legal steps against some of the authorities' controversial steps.

The authorities have initiated departmental proceedings and are lobbying with the home ministry for punishment of a senior jail superintendent. Moreover, departmental proceedings are underway against a jail superintendent basing on a letter from an anonymous sender that does not contain any specific allegation.

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lobbying again with the home ministry for sending 11 officials into forced retirement on the ground of corruption and irregularities after failing to do so during the immediate past government's regime, home ministry sources said.

The harassment began after 44 officials led by Senior Superintendent Sheikh Abdul Amik filed a writ petition challenging prison officers and staff recruitment rules, 2006 and the court issued a rule on September 6 why it should not be declared unconstitutional.

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4 killed in truck crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Four labourers died and 10 others were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Sarail upazila of the district yesterday.

Two of the dead were identified as Chand Mia, 45, and his brother SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing table for December 24 with columns for Azan and Jamaat times for Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, and Esha.

Abbas yet to know about shooting truth

Attacks media for spreading 'lies', threatens to sue Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas now attacks the press and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina for spreading 'lies' about the shooting at the house of Mirza family on December 18, that left his brother Khokon and sister-in-law Masuda bullet-hit.

Talking publicly about the incident for the first time yesterday at a press conference, Abbas, however, failed to reply the queries of the journalists and only blasted the media for publishing 'whatever they liked.' Five brothers of Masuda were also with him at the press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.

"I would file a libel suit against her [Hasina] if she fails to bring enough evidence to prove me guilty within the next three days," Abbas



Mirza Abbas at press briefing

said. On Thursday, Hasina raised questions about the police's reluctance to take actions against Abbas 'even after he shot his brother and sister-in-law at his own house.'

Abbas and his family denied the shooting at first and later gave several contradictory statements regarding the incident and the consequences.

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Laden's 'close aide' killed in airstrike

AFP, Kabul

US-led forces have killed a close associate of Osama bin Laden in an airstrike in southern Afghanistan in a major blow to the deadly Taliban-led insurgency, a military statement said yesterday.

Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Osmani's vehicle was struck in Helmand province near the Pakistan border after coalition forces received credible information about his hideout, the statement said.

"Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Osmani, a senior member of the Taliban's inner circle, was killed on December 19 in Helmand province," coalition forces spokesman Colonel Tom Collins said.

"Osmani was in the top ring of the Taliban leadership and he was also a close associate of Osama bin Laden and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar," he said.

"His death is a major achievement in the fight against extremists and their terrorist networks," Collins said.

The US has declared

Hekmatyar a wanted terrorist for helping lead remnants of the ousted Taliban regime in a deadly insurgency against foreign troops in Afghanistan that are working to stabilise the war-ravaged nation.

A key Taliban commander in charge of large sections of Afghanistan, Osmani was killed instantly in his vehicle in a deserted area of the province, along with two unidentified associates, the statement added.

One Afghan intelligence source said he was the commander of Taliban forces in southern Afghanistan. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the source said he was part of a 12-member leadership council of Taliban and ranked number four in the ousted militia force.

Collins did not rank Osmani in the Taliban leadership but said he was their chief of military operations in the provinces of Uruzgan, Nimroz, Kandahar, Farah, Herat and Helmand.

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