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NEWS BRIEFS

Special envoy of Gaddafi in city

Secretary of Libyan General People's Congress (Speaker of Libyan Parliament) and special envoy of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, Abdul Razzaq Abu Baker El-Samsa, arrived in Dhaka Sunday night on three-day official visit. State Minister for Education Principal Md Eunus Khan received him at the Zia International Airport, reports BSS.

Police raid UZ Chairman house

Police raided the cantonment residence of Major (Rtd) Jasmuddin, chairman of defunct Gauria Upazila Parishad Sunday. Family sources told UNB that police raided the house at around 2-30 am and enquired about the whereabouts of Jasmuddin. Jasmuddin, Chief Coordinator of the Upazila Parishad, Chairman Samity, was not at his residence during the raid.

Dock workers' strike postponed

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Dec 1: The dock workers of Mongla Port postponed their proposed strike Monday till December 4. A meeting to resolve the dispute was continuing at the port chairman's office.

PM's directive to release funds

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday instructed the authorities to release necessary funds immediately for development of Chittagong City to complete the projects undertaken by the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC).

Middle East peace talks

Israel refuses to back down on its demand for delay

JERUSALEM, Dec 1: Israel snubbed the United States today and refused to back down on its demand for a delay in the Arab-Israeli bilateral talks scheduled to open Wednesday in Washington, reports AFP.

Clarifications that we obtained from the United States do not justify a change in our position, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told a meeting of his cabinet, reiterating Israel's demand for a five-day delay.

Yossi Ben-Aharon, director-general of the premier's office, was brutally forthright in attacking the United States over the issue of when and where the bilateral talks should take place.

"The way the Americans are handling it irritates and

revolts us because we see that the Arab parties with which we have to negotiate have the feeling the United States has been won over to their cause, both on substance and form."

"This disturbs us a lot", he said over Israeli radio.

Shamir, who was annoyed that Washington had convened the talks without consulting him beforehand, told the cabinet that Israel's absence Wednesday could draw media criticism but that this was of 'secondary importance.'

While the issue of a date for bilateral talks was only a matter of procedure, the Prime Minister said it could embolden Washington to also intervene on 'vital question' in the peace negotiations themselves.

Israel is determined not to allow the United States a free hand in settling the ground rules, analysts said, because it sees the Arab strategy as based on winning over Washington to pressure the Jewish state.

The Premier's spokesman said earlier that Israel had asked Washington to provide 'assurances on the bilateral character of the negotiations with our Arab neighbors and clarifications on the date of the discussions.'

'For the moment the US responses have not been sufficient to modify the position of the Israeli government,' spokesman Ehud Gol said.

Israeli Radio reported US officials as saying Washington believed 'all the questions

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Use of gas meters for domestic consumption made optional

By Inam Ahmed

The Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company has decided to withdraw the mandatory use of gas meters for domestic consumption.

The decision, taken last month and effective from the current month, leaves the consumers to choose between retaining meter system or reverting to flat billing system.

The decision follows widespread allegations of over-billing since meter system was introduced in Dhaka city in 1987.

Titas Gas sources told The Daily Star that customers favouring flat billing system would pay their arrears at rates as under that system and would not be required to pay the 'extra bill', if recorded in

meters.

Under the flat billing system, a domestic customer has now to pay Taka 115 for single burner and Taka 195 for double burner monthly whereas it is alleged that the amount is doubled or tripled in meter system for the same rate of consumption.

While installation of meters, domestic customers had been asked to continue paying bills at flat billing rate saying that payments would be adjusted after reading the meter.

1,20,000 domestic meters were imported from Poland at the cost of Taka ten crore under barrier system and installed in the city. Most of the meters would now be redundant because customers are generally found preferring flat billing system. Domestic customers in the city total about 3.40 lakh. It may be mentioned here that meters were installed only in Dhaka city.

The sources said most meters were of poor quality. The authority could not test the quality of the meters during delivery. As a result the faulty meters showed exorbitant reading for which the consumers suffered.

The sources said the authority did not even take measure to provide sufficient number of meter readers. Only 84 meter readers were employed but they too were not given sufficient logistic support.

FFs to guide nation again: PM



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurating the Freedom Fighters' Welfare Trust Hospital in the city yesterday.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday expressed the hope that freedom fighters will guide the nation towards progress and prosperity by showing discipline and patriotism, reports UNB.

The civilians once took up arms to free their motherland and now have the responsibility to run a number of industries, she said while inaugurating a modern hospital of the Freedom Fighters' Welfare Trust at Mirpur in the morning.

French government has provided all equipment and four sophisticated ambulances for the 100-bed hospital and a 30-bed mobile unit for the treatment of freedom fighters and people in general.

The nation expects discipline from the freedom fighters in all spheres, Begum Zia said, hoping for effective running of the 22 industrial and business units of the Trust run by the freedom fighters.

Terming the freedom fighters as 'great sons' of the soil, Begum Zia said they had shown the way to the nation when it was under the oppression of colonial rule.

The struggle for freeing the motherland, and the sublime sacrifices of the freedom fighters will inspire the present generation.

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Mukhtar's death Shyamoli taken on remand

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested Mary Janet Shyamoli Sunday in connection with the unnatural death of Hafez Mokhtar Hossain and took her on five days remand for interrogation.

Shyamoli was with Hossain, a former Chairman of Narayanganj Sadar upazila, when he died Friday evening from a revolver shot in his car at Tejgaon. She was charged under Section 54 of criminal penal code.

Tejgaon thana police produced Shyamoli before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Sunday morning and was granted remand.

Earlier, Shyamoli told police that Hossain committed suicide with a revolver shot while the relatives of Hossain suspect that it was a case of murder.

Police said, they still did not receive the autopsy report of Hossain and the examination reports of his belongings in-

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Four TV relay stations to be set up in border districts

Television relay stations will be set up in four border districts to facilitate the viewers with distinct vision of BTV programme, reports UNB.

Official sources said the relay centres would be constructed in Patuakhali, Thakurgaon, Kushtia and Brahmanbaria, where people mostly enjoy Indian television (Doordarshan) programme for hazy reception of the national TV programmes.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) Sunday approved the Taka 12 crore project to be implemented by 1993.

The money includes a local component of 5 crore Taka while the rest 7 crore Taka will be provided from foreign grants.

At present, there are 10 television relay centres in the country.

Non-govt teachers to get pay-scale

The government has agreed in principle to implement the new pay-scale for the non-government teachers, reports BSS.

It was stated by Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar at a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Shikshak Samity Oikya Front in Dhaka Sunday.

The Education Minister said the government will implement the new scale for the non-government teachers gradually keeping in mind the resource constraints in consultation with the leaders of the front.

He informed them that the teachers of the non-government educational institutions at all levels will be given their due benefit.

Japan to apologize for bombing Pearl Harbor

TOKYO, Dec 1: The lower house of Parliament reportedly plans to adopt a resolution apologizing for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor 50 years ago, reports AP.

Kyodo News Service, quoting unidentified sources close to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, said lawmakers plan to adopt the resolution late next week to mark the 50th anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec 8, 1941.

Pourasabha chairman dismissed

By Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Dec 1: Shamsul Huda Khan ex-MP of Jatiya Party and Chairman, Mohehpur Pourasabha has been dismissed on corruption, misappropriation of funds and other charges. The post has been declared vacant according to a gazette notification signed by Badruzzaman, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of LGRD on November 10.

Nine commissioners of Mohehpur pourasabha had filed charges including bribe, corruption, nepotism and embezzlement of public money against Shamsul Huda.

He was found guilty of the charges on investigation by Deputy Commissioner, Jhenidah, deputed by the government. Shamsul Huda was dismissed under Section 10(A) of Pouro Ordinance 1977.

Babla arrested

By Staff Correspondent
Abu Hossain Babla, a former MP, along with a former Motiheel ward commissioner were arrested in a police raid from Gopibagh early Sunday morning.

Babla, a former MP belonging to the Jatiya Party and the general secretary of Jatiya Jobo Sanghati, and former Motiheel ward commissioner Mustafa were arrested from the Gopibagh residence of Babla during a joint raid conducted by the special branch of police and Motiheel thana, police sources said.

They were charged under Section 54 of the criminal penal code and were sent to central jail.

Jatiya Samity Party president Shah Md. Abu Zafar in a statement on Sunday condemned the arrests of the two JP leaders. He urged the government to release them immediately.

AL members in JS body on campus violence unhappy

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League representatives in the Parliamentary Special Committee on Campus Violence Sunday expressed total dissatisfaction over what they termed the insincerity of ruling party members in making the committee effective.

Three of the five AL members on the Committee, at a news conference, also accused the government of instigating terrorism instead of containing it.

Mohammad Nasim, Tofael Ahmed and Begum Matia Chowdhury addressed the conference at the Jatiya Press Club Sunday evening.

A unanimous decision to form the Parliamentary Special Committee was taken at the close of the second session of the Jatiya Sangsad (par-

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DU Syndicate, teachers to help nab terrorists

By DU Correspondent

A joint meeting of the Syndicate, Teachers' Association, Proctors and Provosts of the Dhaka University Sunday decided to extend necessary cooperation to the law enforcing agencies in rounding up the terrorists on campus.

Presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof Moniruzzaman Miah, the meeting also urged the law enforcing agencies to launch a fresh drive against armed terrorists.

It is impossible for the university authorities alone to tackle the situation, it observed.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) yesterday decided to go on a one-hour token strike from tomorrow to realise their de-

mands for effective steps against campus violence.

The Federation also decided to wear black badges during the token strike which would continue for three weeks.

Presided by Prof Enamul Haque Khan, President of FBUTA, the meeting was held at the Dhaka University Club.

The meeting urged the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) to join this programme withdrawing its on-going strike.

DUTA is likely to hold a meeting on the matter today at the Dhaka University Club.

Meanwhile, according to a reliable source the teachers of Dhaka University are divided into two groups over the question of resumption of classes.

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Rajuk begins demolition programme

By Staff Correspondent

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (RAJUK) started its five-day token demolition programme Sunday, bulldozing at least 25 'unauthorised' shops in the Dhanmondi residential area.

The programme was announced earlier.

The RAJUK authorities bulldozed the shops along the roads No 9 and 15 and some along the Satmashjid Road.

UNB adds: Police allegedly beat a TV camera crew while filming demolition of 'unauthorised structures' at Satmashjid Road by a squad of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (RAJUK).

Witnesses said, police physically assaulted the camera crew and snatched his camera before sending back the TV team.

Reliable sources told UNB that the TV cameramen have decided to refrain from covering RAJUK programme if disciplinary action is not taken against the police officer responsible for alleged misbehaviour.

Transport strike partial, peaceful

By Staff Correspondent

The first day of the countrywide indefinite strike by transport workers was observed Sunday. Barring some stray incidents the partial strike was peaceful.

Six buses were damaged at noon between Kanchpur and Tarabo square on the Dhaka-Narsingdi Road during the strike.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation (BRTWF) which called the strike, alleged that some hired men of the Purbanchalhya Malik Oikya Parishad (combined southern owners council) attacked and damaged the buses.

The 'mastans' also snatched appointment letters from the drivers and tore them on the spot, the source alleged.

The Parishad comprising owners from Narsingdi, Narayanganj and Meghna routes, according to the Workers Federation source, were adamant on not issuing any appointment letters. None of the office bearers of the Parishad was available for comment.

During the strike bus communication with the

northern Rangpur district was suspended because of non-issuance of the appointment letters while it was hampered in some other northern districts and Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Jessore district.

Transport services in Tangail, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Netrakona and Gazipur, linked to the capital by the Mahakkhal terminal, were normal as most of the owners in these routes had issued appointment letters to the workers.

Services were almost normal in the southern districts except Jessore, Federation sources said.

In the capital the inter-city bus, minibus and coaster services were as usual.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation called the strike to press home its one-point demand of issuance of appointment letters to some 500,000 workers for job security. Buses, minibuses, coasters, trucks and tank lorries came under the strike.

The Executive President of the BRTWF Manjurul Ahsan

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Housing problem hits Bangladeshis in London

From Mostafa Kamal Majumder

LONDON, Dec 1: Aziz, 25, lives in a one bedroom flat provided by the Tower Hamlets Borough Council in London. Her husband works in a tailoring shop. They have five children. Due to scarcity of space their eight-year-old eldest son, a junior level student, finds it difficult to do his home tasks.

But Aziz's family is among the fortunate 2000 or so who have homes to live in. About 70 per cent of the ethnic Bangladeshis living in the United Kingdom do not have

homes. Five thousand out of an estimated 40,000 families now in UK are homeless, it is gathered.

Informed sources have it that out of an estimated 200,000 ethnic Bangladeshis in the UK only about 10,000 live in houses of their own. About one hundred thousand live in flats provided by Borough Councils and over one hundred thousand are on the waiting lists of local councils.

In UK, a welfare state, it is the responsibility of local councils to extend housing facilities.

Bangladeshis now on the waiting lists live either with their employers — caterers — or relatives. They become homeless when they lose their jobs and with those their temporary shelters.

Sources say housing problem in the UK is acute not only for ethnic Bangladeshis but also for the British common man, and in recent years this has forced many families to move out of London.

But what has led to this situation? Father Martin who hails from the Tower Hamlets

area of London and is learning Bangla to be able to communicate with ethnic Bangladeshis better, lists three factors as responsible: 1) selling out of council houses to tenants by the government, 2) liberal freezing of the programme of new houses by local councils, and 3) preference of some Bangladeshis to have large families.

The conservative government, now in its 12th year in power, as part of its privatisation drive, chose to sell out

council houses to tenants, allowing as much as one-third discount. This enabled many people including Bangladeshis depending on public sector housing to own houses. But drastically reduced the number of council houses to be allotted to new applicants. Steps were not taken subsequently to increase the number of council houses.

Ethnic Bangladeshis in UK are specially disadvantaged, because among the Asians they were late in choosing to live in Britain with their families.

They started coming in significant numbers only since the early sixties. At that time only males used to come in search of a livelihood. Vacations were spent by them in Bangladesh making it impossible for them to qualify for public sector houses. The British Housing Act provides that one qualifies for public sector housing only after five years of continuous stay. To score points required for the qualification, most Bangladeshis had to start counting the duration of their stay each time they returned.