

Russian business links

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fiscal Bangladesh and the Soviet Union signed the 19th trade protocol under the barter system. The protocol envisaged exchange of commodities worth about 19 million pounds sterling each way. The trade left a surplus of 4.4 million pounds sterling for Bangladesh, an amount Dhaka will deduct from 16.10 million pounds sterling it is expected to pay Moscow in the 1992 instalment as against its loan for Ghorasal power station project.

Bangladesh imports from Moscow mainly machinery and exports to it mainly jute and tea.

A senior official at the Russian trade mission in Dhaka told The Daily Star that trade between Bangladesh and Russia and the other unaligned republics will expand in future. But he pointed out that Dhaka needs to recognise the new republics the soonest to benefit from the opportunities available after formation of the commonwealth of independent states.

He said if Bangladesh delays the recognition it may fall behind the other developing nations who will obviously grab the opportunities.

Bangladesh's relations with the former Soviet Union started with a happy note mainly because of Moscow's strong support to the country's 1971 Liberation War. The two countries signed their first economic cooperation agreement in 1972. The relations cooled after the 1975 political change-over in Bangladesh and these virtually nosedived in late 1982 when ousted presi-

dent Hussain Muhammad Ershad expelled 14 Soviet diplomats on charge of meddling into local politics. The relations started picking up well into the eighties.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union came at a time when Dhaka and Moscow were close to forming a Joint Economic Commission. Officials, however, are hopeful that the commission would now be set up with Russia. They also expect direct trade with the other republics.

Bangladesh exporters are exploring the possibilities of selling readymade garments to Russia and other republics.

The business circles view that the trade link with the newly formed states, specially the Muslim populated ones in the Central Asia, would be a very flourishing one for Bangladesh. The export market for jute and other essential commodities which earlier was dominated by India, would be advantageous for Bangladesh, they hoped.

A Russian spokesman said that the currency for all the states would be rouble. He further said if any state would wish to introduce its own currency, it would be done in consultation with the other states.

Hartal in Madarganj

JAMALPUR, Dec 24: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed at Madarganj upazila today protesting closure of the local college and postponement of its student union election, reports UNB.



Parsa Shahid in title role of Tagore's Shyama at Shilpakala Academy auditorium yesterday. BAFA staged the dance drama. —Star photo

Oscar is climax of my career, says Satyajit

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: Ailing Indian film director Satyajit Ray says he may combine a medical trip to the United States with the Oscar ceremonies in March to personally accept the movie academy's Lifetime Achievement award, reports AP.

In an interview published Tuesday, Ray said he also hoped his doctor will allow him to start shooting his latest project before leaving for the United States.

Ray, 70, has had recurring heart problems since he had a heart attack in 1984 and has been treated in California, Press Trust said.

"I have to go for the medical check-up in early March. If it happens, I will combine the two trips," Ray told the news agency. Earlier reports suggested that he would skip the ceremony.

He said the Oscar was the climax of his career, "because it is the equivalent of the Nobel prize for a film maker and one cannot go beyond that."

Ray is the seventh winner of the special award. Previous recipients were Greta Garbo, Cary Grant, Charlie Chaplin, Jimmy Stewart, Akira Kurosawa and Sophia Loren.

Ray has 35 film credits, including documentaries, starting in 1955 with Pather Panchali, or Song of the Little Road, which was the first of a trilogy about a village boy named Apu.

Burmese troops

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that Myanmar's troops build-up along the border was not against Bangladesh. According to him the troops are being amassed possibly to wipe out the insurgency by the Rohingya Muslims of Arakan province on Myanmar's west coast.

The troops build-up has nothing to do with Bangladesh. It is apparently to tackle their internal insurgency," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Bangladesh still views that Saturday's attack was an isolated incident. However, Dhaka is taking no chance. Official sources in Dhaka and the border district of Cox's Bazar told The Daily Star that Bangladesh's border outposts along the area have been reinforced by army on Tuesday.

The also confirmed that Myanmar has scaled off the entry points at Teknaf, which is used by both Burmese and Bangladeshi citizens for visiting border areas of each other's country on short-time transit passes.

The tension along the border mounted as Bangladesh is trying to send an estimated 50,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees to their homes in Arakan. The Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), a group representing the Rohingya Muslims, says they have set up at least 12 camps along the border to wage a guerrilla war against Myanmar's military government.

Ctg action body calls hartal Dec 31

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 24: The Greater Chittagong Development Action Committee called a 8-hour hartal on December 31 to press home its 15-point charter of demands.

The demands include official declaration of Chittagong as the commercial capital of the country, establishment of a separate education board for Chittagong, modernization of Chittagong Airport along with other development works.

Favourite fishes

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blamed the affected fish or water for gastric disorder and other sickness.

The ulcerative disease was reported from Chandpur district in February '88 and almost the whole country was affected in a period of a few months.

With the outbreak of the disease the open water pisciculture programme throughout the country also faced a serious setback.

There are many reports on the isolation of enterococci bacteria from infected and non-infected fish in different countries and there are also reports on the isolation of drug resistant, haemolytic bacteria from the aquatic environments and infected fish," the study noted.

Another study conducted by the Fisheries Technology Department of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh stated that Hilsa fishes were being contaminated during post-harvest period through a variety of surfaces including container and market floor.

Moreover, unhygienic handling, transportation and marketing may also contribute to the total bacterial load in fish which is particularly responsible for early spoilage," the study pointed out.

The study report prepared by M Enamul Haq, M Nazrul Islam and S C Chatterjee held that a better quality of iced and salted Hilsa could be produced by improving traditional techniques of marketing.

Hilsa is generally preserved in ice for a short period during marketing. Traditional salting preservations are also being done in many parts of the country.

But Hilsa being a fatty fish deteriorates rapidly during icing and salting.

The study reported that the skin surface of the market Hilsa contained less bacteria than the gills and intestines.

The salted fish becomes contaminated with a variety of halophilic bacteria when solar salt is used. In traditional practice salted fish are stored in bamboo-made baskets at normal temperature, which favours the growth of many halotolerant microorganisms. Moreover, multiplication of bacteria are favoured during the wet stack stage in salting resulting in the reduction of shelf life of the products.

"Gross contamination could be avoided by general cleaning and sanitation of boats, landing decks, containers and use of ice of good bacteriological quality," the study pointed out. Hilsa is one of the most common and favourite fish not only to our people but also in this subcontinent. In Bangladesh Hilsa (Hilsa hilsa) is the largest single important fishery comprising about 24% of the yearly catch.

The Midnight File

Indian film festival from Jan 10

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: About 150 feature films, including 120 from abroad, will be screened in different sections at the 23rd international film festival of India, 1992, to be held in Bangalore from January 10. Noted Kannada film actor, Dr Raj Kumar, will be the chief guest at a function marking the inauguration of the 11-day festival. Twenty-one Indian feature films will be screened in the Indian panorama section along with 16 non-feature films. Some Indian features will also be screened in the mainstream section, reports PTI.

Army rounded up 28 ULFA militants

GUWAHATI, Dec 24: The body of a Congress (I) worker was recovered and a trader kidnapped as the army rounded up 28 suspected ULFA militants from different parts of Assam during the past 24 hours. The body of a 62-year-old Congress (I) worker kidnapped by the ULFA from Borkhate village on Thursday, was found with injury marks by the police near Khagarpur Bazar in Bongaigaon district yesterday. Some persons have been rounded up for interrogation, an official spokesman said, reports PTI.

Waiting for US recognition

WASHINGTON, Dec 24: The Soviet Union's embassy in Washington will change its name and fly the flag of the Russian republic as soon as the United States formally recognises the independent state, a Soviet official said today. "The embassy can do it (make the change) only after the United States recognises the Russian republic," the official, who spoke on the condition he not be identified, said, reports Reuter.

PM: Local goods

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the need for setting up small scale industries for creating job opportunities and providing vocational training to youths to help them stand on their own feet.

The Prime Minister said "people's welfare is our supreme consideration. We will remain above all narrowness when people's welfare is in question."

The Prime Minister said the foreign agencies assisting the country in its development efforts had expressed their confidence in the present government and extended the hands of cooperation to it.

Begum Zia said the march of the nation on the road to progress now largely depended on the patriotic forces. She called upon all to play their due role to hold the next Union Parishad elections in a free and fair atmosphere and to elect patriotic candidates.

Earlier, Begum Zia inaugurated the excavation of Srikhata Bukshula canal at Kaliganj upazila of the district.

Addressing a large gathering, she called upon all to put in their voluntary labour to excavate the canal which would provide irrigation facilities to two thousand acres.

Begum Zia also called upon the students to join in the canal digging programme during their holidays. She also called upon the women community to join in such development activities.

The Prime Minister said a transformer would be provided to the locality under rural electrification programme to reach power to the areas.

Farida Rahman, MP, Begum Shekha Mahmud, MP, and Md Shahjahan Mia, Whip, also spoke.

The canal would be 22 km long creating an opportunity to produce 4480 metric tons of additional crops.

Begum Zia also addressed a meeting of the district level officers of Lalmonirhat at the district circuit house. She reviewed the progress of different projects including BSIC industrial estate, and water development projects.

She reviewed the situation in various sectors including health, education, food, communication and population control.

Arms surrender

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terminated to curb such activities and it is felt that before taking any strong action these elements should be provided with an opportunity to come back to normal life.

With that end in view those persons who are in possession of unauthorised arms in the districts of Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jessore, Magura, Jhenidah, Narail, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Barisal, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur and Narsingdi are hereby asked to surrender with their arms and ammunition to the nearest police station during the period between December 25 and January 8. No action under the normal Arms Act will be taken against those who will surrender during the period.

If cases are pending against those who will surrender with the concerned or other police stations, their cases will be treated with sympathy under the existing laws of the country. The government will also consider with sympathy, to take effective steps for the rehabilitation of those persons so that they could lead a normal life with the mainstream of society.

The government is determined to take all-out and stern measures against those elements who would not surrender within the stipulated time.

Ctg Port

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The dock workers at Tuesday's meeting assured the stevedores' association that they would be punctual in their duties.

The stevedores' association is the recruiting agent of some 10,000 dock workers of the port.

Truck drivers in Chittagong started an indefinite strike from December 16, demanding appointment letters.

The strike has been causing damages to exports. The Garment Manufacturer and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) alleged that the garments sector alone was losing Taka 20 crore everyday because of the strike.

Christmas today

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will put up special programmes on the occasion.

President Abdur Rahman Bhasa opened the Christmas celebrations by cutting a Christmas cake when a delegation of Bangladesh Christian Association called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday morning.

Delegations of Bangladesh Christian Association and Dhaka Pastors Fellowship also met Begum Zia to greet her at her Sugandha office yesterday.

The delegation presented the Prime Minister with Christmas cakes as a token of goodwill.

PM's message

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia Tuesday called upon the people to perform their historic responsibility, irrespective of religion, caste, creed and opinion, to make Bangladesh a democratic country and a society with rule of law.

In a message on the eve of the Christmas Day, the Prime Minister said the effort of the present government was to build a democratic country with full respect to rule of law.

Three killed

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Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue.

Yunus, 17, a sweet-vender, died on the spot when a newspaper carrying bus (Comilla-6851) skidded off the Dhaka-Aricha highway near Karnapara, Savar, in the early hours yesterday.

The bus failed its control and fell into the roadside ditch. The victim was in the bus. None other was hurt in the accident. The body was sent to DMCH.

Abu Bakar, 10, a pedestrian, was killed under the wheels of a speedy truck at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday afternoon.

Fatally injured Abu Bakar was immediately admitted to DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries after a while. The body was sent to the hospital morgue.

5000 armed processionist gherao UZ headquarters

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ Dec 24: About 5000 peoples armed with ramdao, lathi, spears and pipe guns brought out a procession at Nandail upazila headquarters Monday to press home the demand for withdrawal of a murder case against AB Siddique, chairman of Moazzempur Union Parishad.

Moazzempur Union is about 10 Kilometres away from the upazila headquarters.

The processionists gheraoed the Upazila Parishad office for sometimes and later staged demonstration in front of the police station.

At one stage they started pelting stones on Ithana Bhawan. The police then chased the processionists and arrested three of them one with loaded pipe gun. The arrested persons are: Berek, Hannan and Ahmed. Police also recovered one ramdao, a dagger and 12 spears from the places of demonstration.

She said it was also need of the hour that all should play their due role in materialising this programme.

Begum Zia said the Christmas Day commemorates the holy birth of Jesus Christ. She conveyed her congratulations to the Christian community in Bangladesh and lauded the role of the community for contributing their mite to national progress.

The Prime Minister said the message of Hazrat Isah (A) was fraternity, friendship, fellow feelings, service and peace. This message is eternal and accepted widely, she added.

Begum Zia also pointed out that fraternity and tolerance are the traditional heritage of Bangladesh and hoped that the celebrations of the X-Mas Day would further enrich this heritage.

Hasina

UNB adds: Awami League President and Opposition Leader in Parliament Sheikh Hasina Tuesday conveyed her greetings to the Christian community on the occasion.

In a message on the eve of Christmas, she said Awami League believes in equal rights, privileges and status of all classes of people irrespective of faith, creed and colour as the essence of all religion is welfare of humanity.

Hasina recalled the sublime sacrifices made by people of all religions during the 1971 Liberation War. "Bangladesh emerged as a secular state through the victory of the independence war, burying all communal sentiments."

The communal politics, she said, was revived after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib in 1975 destroying the values of the war.

The Awami League leader, in her message, also called for taking a renewed vow to establish an exploitation-free social order based on peace and equality.

Waiter beaten to death

By Staff Correspondent

Kanchan, 22, a waiter, was allegedly beaten to death at Dhanmondi in the city Tuesday morning.

Kanchan, a waiter of Khairat restaurant at Dhanmondi, was allegedly accused of stealing money from the restaurant cash box and severely beaten by the hotel owner.

Fatally injured Kanchan was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors on duty declared him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue, our DMCH correspondent reports.

No case was filed with Dhanmondi police till filing of this report last night.

Dhanmondi police said that they were informed of the killing but could not give any detail as, what they said, two of their officers went to the spot and had not come back till 11:30 pm.

Gun-runner

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after went abroad and import on each trip parts of arms and supplied those after assembling.

Police said that Salim, one of the accused of Basunia murder case of Dhaka University, is also an owner of a shoe shop on the Elephant Road.

Labour productivity

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private mills increased by 0.56 tonnes per man per year during the same period.

The primary reason for the low labour productivity, the report points out, is related to the existence of large excess employment in the sector.

Very high 'over-manning' particularly in the public sector came under sharp scrutiny in the WB draft report. It points out that the jute mills function essentially as employment centres and that BJMC's employment practices emanate from social and political pressures.

The total employment in the industry, the document adds, is estimated at 157,318 in FY91, of which 65 per cent is in the private sector and about 85 per cent of the employees in both sectors are classified as 'workers' and the rest as 'officers and staff'. Of the workers, 75 per cent are permanent and the rest are temporary (badli) or casual workers.

However, the report notes, it is difficult to establish the precise number of employees because of the discrepancies present in the mill records. "It is alleged that actual employment is lower than what the records show in both the public and private sectors because the employment records are deliberately inflated to divert funds," the document adds.

According to the report, the main causes of over-manning in the industry include operating the machinery and equipment inefficiently.

Efficiency of the operated looms (output per loom) in Bangladesh is about 70 to 80 per cent of the efficiency achieved in India, the document points out, despite the fact that the mills are considerably older in India.

In the public sector, looms are operated at about 50, 80 and 60 per cent of the achievable efficiency target set by BJMC for hessian, sacking and CBC respectively, the report notes.

The worker/loom ratio, which is used as the main employment indicator in the jute mills, is also very high in Bangladesh compared to that of other countries and international norms, the report adds. The worker/loom ratio in BJMC mills are, on average, about 45 per cent higher than the ratios achieved in India.

Furthermore, hiring more temporary workers than necessary to replace absentee

permanent workers also contributes to low productivity.

In FY91, the report says, the public mills did not reduce the number of temporary workers to a level warranted by a sharp fall in exports. This resulted in an excess temporary hiring of about 10,000 workers leading to a dramatic increase in unit labour cost and financial losses in that year.

Other reasons of over-manning and consequent low productivity in the industry cited in the report includes setting of employment targets on the basis of installed capacity and keeping a large number of officers, clerical staff and other personnel not directly involved in production.

Part of the excess employment in the public sector is "open" consisting of workers assigned to redundant machines, the report notes, and the number of such workers is estimated at 11,090 by BJMC. The rest is 'disguised' in low labour productivity," the report adds.

In the private sector, the document points out, excess employment is manifested mainly in low labour productivity and because of strong and militant trade unionism supported by political interests, the private mills are pressured to adopt the productivity norms established for the public sector.

JAGPA condemns

Burmese raid

Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) at a rally in Dhaka Tuesday condemned the recent attacks, killing and loot by the Burmese troops inside Bangladesh territory, reports UNB.

Addressing the rally at Kaptan Bazar square in the afternoon, JAGPA President Shaiful Alam Proddhan said Bangladesh had become the victim of aggression and conspiracy due to "weak foreign policy of the government."

The government has failed to raise any effective protest and resistance against the torture on Burmese Rohingya Muslims who were forced to cross the border into Bangladesh by hundreds, he said.

The rally was also addressed Prof Rehana Proddhan, Anisur Rahman and Asadur Rahman Asad.

JAGPA also brought out a torch procession after the rally, which paraded main streets of the city.



Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting Burmese attack on the border. —Star photo

Notice

In addition to the existing Telephone Numbers of "The Daily Star", 3 (three) more PABX lines have been installed.

The 3 (three) new PABX

Telephone Numbers are : 24 50 61
24 50 62
24 50 63

—Management

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