

Cold wave, heavy fog leave 800 birds dead

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 14 : Cold wave and heavy fog this morning left about 800 winter birds dead at Barakotra Char of river Jamuna in the Sadar upazila, reports UNB.

Thousands of winter birds flocking on the chars of the Jamuna are threatened by continued sweeping of cold wave.

The birds which perished today include Bali Haah, Sarak Gang Chai and storks.

River transportation came to a six-hour halt in the morning as heavy frost blanketed the Jamuna river here.

Launch services between Sirajganj and Bhuapur and the Bangladesh Railway ferry trip started at noon.

A Jamalpur report says, thick fog enveloping the river Jamuna near here forced several ferries to anchor in the mid stream keeping hundreds of passengers stranded early today.

MV Sher-e-Bangla on way to Bahadurabad ghat from Teestamukh ghat lost visibility and was forced to anchor at Kalasona in the mid Jamuna.

Besides, inter-district train Ekata was also delayed for six hours due to the fog.

In the other routes like Jagannathganj to Sirajganj ghat, ferry services were held up at submerged chars where they remained stranded for hours.

A Barguna report says, Cold wave sweeping across the country claimed one more life here last night raising the death toll to six in the district, official sources said.

Mariam Begum (50), died in village Pathkata of the Sadar upazila.

Four people died in the first week of this month while the other in the last week of December due to the unusual cold weather this season.

Yeltsin rejects call to resign

'A government isn't a pair of gloves'

MOSCOW, Jan 14 : President Boris Yeltsin on Tuesday rejected stinging criticism from a top lawmaker who called his cabinet unqualified and urged it to resign, reports AP.

"Any leader sometimes has his emotional outbursts," Yeltsin said before leaving on a tour of Bryansk. "A government is not a pair of gloves. It is easier to pass laws than to implement them."

"I will defend the government," the Tass news agency quoted him as saying.

In other developments Tuesday, the president of Kazakhstan decided to freeze the prices of bread and milk in response to "the mass discontent" in the former Soviet republic over the recent economic reforms.

Coal miners in Kazakhstan's Karaganda region went on strike to protest the recent sharp increase in prices, Moscow radio reported.

Pravda predicted that prices would continue to soar unless the government intervenes. "People go to shops, like to museums, to see new prices," it said. "But neither queues nor shortages have been eliminated."

Yeltsin freed prices on most goods to kick-start the wheezing economy and stimulate production. But the reforms have triggered scattered unrest and anger from consumers, and have not noticed.

Priyanka's 'no'

From Page 1 Col 3 her inability to accept any such elective position."

The Congress Party chairman of Uttar Pradesh state announced Monday that Miss Gandhi had been voted to the party's state governing committee.

The announcement was front-paged in Tuesday's newspapers before the chairman, Mahavir Prasad, issued a clarification that Miss Gandhi had not yet accepted the position to which she had been elected.

It appeared that her name was put up for nomination without her knowledge. She was elected unopposed by a district in the town of Agra.

Many Gandhi loyalists would like to see her assume the mantle of the political dynasty that governed India over three generations for 37 of its 44 years of independence.

Her father, who was prime minister for five years until 1969, was assassinated at an election rally in south India last May.

She also is the granddaughter of Indra Gandhi, who was prime minister for 17 years, and the great granddaughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, who became India's first post-independence prime minister in 1947.

Rumours have circulated about Miss Gandhi's political ambitions since she accompanied her father on the campaign trail in 1989.

She is a student at a college in New Delhi. He older brother, Rahul, attends Harvard University in the United States.

The Statesman newspaper reported Tuesday that some Congress activists were again lobbying for Gandhi's widow, Sonia, to seek the party's national presidency.

Mrs Gandhi, who was born in Italy, rejected the presidency when it was offered to her the day after her husband was killed.

The presidency is normally held by the prime minister when Congress is in power. But after Gandhi's murder, some party officials spoke of splitting the posts. Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao has not made his position clear.

ably increased the volume of goods on sale.

In one sign of Yeltsin's concern, his office announced that he would address the legislature Thursday on the economic and social fallout in Russia from the price liberalization, the Interfax news agency reported.

On Monday, Russian Khasbulatov, speaker of the Russian legislature, urged Yeltsin's government to resign, calling it "virtually incapacitated."

In the harshest criticism yet of the reforms by a Russian official, Khasbulatov accused the Yeltsin government of implementing "uncontrolled, anarchic and runaway price increases, which are not allowed to happen anywhere else in the world."

"It is a good time now either for the president to replace the actually inoperative government, or else for the Supreme Soviet to do it in compliance with the Constitution," Khasbulatov was quoted as telling visiting Italian parliamentarians.

Khasbulatov was not calling for Yeltsin's resignation, but rather that of his cabinet, which is composed of free-market reformers.

Government officials went on the offensive later, saying they would not resign and labeling Khasbulatov's criticism "irresponsible" so soon after the economic reforms were launched Jan 2.

Raushan can't be granted bail : AG

The hearing of the two separate bail petitions by Begum Raushan Ershad ended Tuesday before a High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Anwarul Haq Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Abdul Karim, reports BSS.

Attorney General Aminul Haq submitted that Mrs Raushan Ershad could not be considered for bail, since she proclaimed herself as the 'first lady' of the country having the proclamation published in the gazette as law though it was not approved.

He said, by way of using the position of the 'first lady' she had a seat in an office in the President's Secretariat, appointed a number of officers and employees to work for her and virtually shared the power with the deposed president.

During the Ershad regime, the Attorney General said, she used power from her 'illegal' position to 'interfere' into the acts of the government and thereby indulged herself in corrupt practices and took opportunities to go abroad as the 'first lady' to attend conferences and seminars.

Aminul Haq further said that Begum Raushan Ershad on foreign trips to attend conferences and seminars had caused monetary loss to the government to the tune of Taka 1,38,37,297.40.

Earlier, the petitioner's counsel Serajul Haq submitted the arguments that the allegation in the FIR did not constitute any offence. There is also no chance for tampering with any investigation because she is critically ill.

Counsel Haq, therefore, said that bail can be allowed to a woman, if she is involved even in a murder case. One case had been filed against Begum Ershad for using the 'first lady' title without any lawful authority and another case on corruption charges.

The judgement is expected to be pronounced today (January 15).



World Bank Vice President Joseph Wood talking with the Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia at her residence yesterday. —PID photo

JS committee submits report DU remained closed for 222 days last year

An enquiry commission formed to recommend measures for ending campus terrorism has submitted its report which is now under consideration of the government, reports UNB on Tuesday.

State Minister for Education Principal Yunus Khan disclosed this in parliament today in reply to Independent member Nurul Islam Moni.

In reply to a supplementary from Nazibul Bashar Matzavandi of Awami League, Khan told the House that the Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University, Prof Alamgir Muhammad Sirajuddin, was removed legally on the basis of a probe report.

Earlier, an enquiry committee was formed to investigate into the matter of the university. It brought charges of inefficiency, ineptitude and bias against the former VC.

The Minister, however, admitted that the VC had been detained by the Islami Chhatra Shibir workers for 10 days since March 21 last year, and his office was kept under lock and key.

He further informed the

House that classes of Dhaka University, frequently troubled by student unrest, remained closed for 222 days, including long unscheduled closures of 107 days, last year.

In Chittagong University, the whole year was spoilt. It was closed for scheduled 136 days last year, but classes could not be held for the rest of the period because of campus violence.

Tea sale dull

CHITTAGONG, Jan 14: The weekly tea sale held here today was marked by dull trading as both export and internal buyers were less active, market sources said, reports BSS.

There were heavy withdrawals of different categories of teas from the sale.

Pakistan buyers continued to be subdued with some support from Iran. Poland operated only for the bold brokers.

A limited quantity of bold brokers on offer were absorbed at around last levels and occasionally easier while all others were a much easier market with considerable withdrawals.



Firemen and local residents trying to put out a fire at a couple of rubber-foam godowns at Mughaltully in the city yesterday afternoon. Damage was estimated at Taka 5 lakh. —Star photo

Sick tea estates

From Page 1 Col 3 terest and 100 per cent of penal interest by depositing five per cent of present overdue amount. They, however, will have to repay 25 per cent more by next two months and the rest of the dues by next one year.

Those who are even unable to pay the five per cent of overdues at present were suggested to be provided with a time limit of two years to repay the entire dues. But they will have to repay four per cent of their dues to apply for exemption of 40 per cent normal interest and 100 per cent penal interest.

The tea garden owners having only overdue production loans were suggested by the body to apply for exemption of 30 per cent normal interest and 100 per cent penal interest by depositing 10 per cent of the present overdue loan. They will, however, have to repay the entire loan by the next two years from the date of decision.

The body on tea garden submitted its recommendations on December 24, 1991. The body felt that special

consideration in respect of remission of interest to certain extent may be considered within the government policy framework to activate the tea estates. The Krishi Bank financing the tea estates may incur a loss of 3.49 crore in case of remission of interest to a certain extent. The body also identified a number of causes of the liabilities accruing from the tea estates.

The causes include lack of management capability of the estates, lack of interest of the borrowers to repay the bank loan, fluctuation of the market, non-availability of manufacturing facilities of some tea estates, natural calamities like storm, cyclone and heavy rains, lack of proper monitoring of the investment by the financing institutions, faulty cash flow account of the investment approved by the financing institutions and inadequate and untimely disbursement of loan in some cases due to non-submission of required documents by the management.

The number of sick tea estates is 59 out of the total 156.

'President's speech gives no direction'

Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad continued the debate on the motion of thanks on President's address for the second day yesterday.

In all, five Jatiya Sangsad members spoke on the presidential address yesterday. The members were M A Matin and Lutfunness Hossain of the ruling party, Abdul Awal Mia of Awami League, Paritosh Chakrabarti of Jatiya Party (JP) and Rishat Ali of Jamaat.

Abdul Awal Mia of Awami League (AL) criticised the President for his attempt at distorting the long history of country's liberation movement saying, "he has not properly mentioned the name of the political leaders who created the movement while he mentioned the names of those joining the liberation war under circumstantial compulsion."

He also blasted the presidential speech for its failure to give any direction to the nation to overcome innumerable problems.

M A Matin on the other hand, strongly defended the presidential speech. Quoting different parts of the address he said the President had touched every major problem of the country and put forward specific suggestions to overcome them.

He also criticised the Awami League members for staging walkout while the President was delivering his speech at the Sangsad.

He called upon the opposition members to refrain from criticising the government for the sake of criticism only.

The Jatiya Party member Paritosh Chakrabarti was very critical of the address of the President for not mentioning the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with due honour.

Rishat Ali of Jamaat-e-Islam spoke on the problems in his own constituency.

CU students call 4-hour strike tomorrow

CHITTAGONG, Jan 14 : General students of Chittagong University has called for a four-hour token strike from 10 am to 2 pm in front of the University Library on Thursday demanding normalcy in the campus.

Some 100 students in a signed press statement today (Tuesday) said if normalcy was not restored in the campus, they would announce further action programme at the end of the token strike.

They said the academic life of 12,000 students was now under serious threat due to non-stop strikes, violence and indefinite closure of the university.

In fact, the university has been facing a deadlock for more than a year over the demand of removal of Vice-Chancellor Prof Alamgir Muhammad Sirajuddin and now for his reinstatement, the statement alleged.

An indefinite strike at the university, enforced jointly by the All-Party Student Unity (APSU) and Chittagong University Central Students Union (CUCSU), is still on demanding the reinstatement of VC Prof Sirajuddin who has been relieved of the post recently.

The strikers during the last two days damaged at least eight buses near the University gate number one.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir CU unit President Hamidur Rahman Azad and Secretary Rezaul Karim in a statement today said that a section of students in the name of strike was harassing some general students and damaging buses on the campus.

They demanded of the government to take immediate initiative to restore congenial academic atmosphere.

Police raid

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were recovered from the other three halls.

According to a source, police could not enter the Zahurul Haq Hall initially as the students chased them. Police entered the hall after about two hours.

It was reported that after the raids on the halls a person wearing a shawl was seen firing three shots before the police in front of the Vice-Chancellor's house. Police then lobbed teargas shells, the source said.

It was also reported that police arrested two persons from the Zahurul Haq Hall and Jagannath Hall. They were released after a few hours.

Sources said that the students of Zahurul Haq Hall and Jagannath Hall brought out processions inside the halls while police were present there.

The Midnight File

Japanese PM apologizes to Korean women

TOKYO, Jan 14 : Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, ahead of his trip to Seoul, apologized today for the Japanese army's role in forcing Korean women to serve Japanese soldiers as prostitutes during World War II. On Monday, the Japanese government made its first formal apologies on the issue after military documents linked the former Imperial army to the recruitment and management of "comfort girls", mostly Koreans but including some Japanese and Taiwanese, reports AFP.

UN peace observers in Yugoslavia

BELGRADE, Jan 14 : The first United Nations peace observers arrived in war-torn Yugoslavia today to oversee a fragile cease fire which went into effect early this month. The truce, brokered by UN special envoy Cyrus Vance, is the key element in a plan to bring 10,000 UN troops to Yugoslavia — the first UN force ever deployed in Europe, reports Reuter.

Baghdad admits having uranium programme

MANAMA, Jan 14 : Iraq has acknowledged for the first time that it built a large uranium-enrichment programme suitable for production of nuclear bombs, a senior UN inspector said Tuesday, reports UNB.

Seen from the Gallery

From Page 1 Col 4 Speaker trying to stop them. The Speaker, by the authority vested in him, ventures to control the business of the House. It's not a pleasant task though.

The Speaker can be jittery, as was the case yesterday, and quite often has to be bitter tongued. He warned the Awami League MP Mirza Golam Azam against 'shouting' and asked him to apologise for what he demonstrated.

The insistence by Jatiya Party MP Manirul Haq Chowdhury for permission to speak also received a fatal blow from the Speaker. He even warned the agitated MP.

The Speaker was trying to educate some of the MPs reminding them practices of parliamentary democracy and asked for maintaining order.

As members from both the Treasury Bench and the Opposition were trying to make their voices heard, the Speaker had to switch off the microphone. For a few minutes he also kept quiet and expressed his regret by saying that 'one should allow an individual to speak and should listen to him'. That is the beauty of democracy, the Speaker said.

But it was not clear whether the members were in a mood to enjoy the 'beauty of democracy'.

A lot of time was lost as the Speaker had to intervene to discipline the members and remind them of the Rules of Procedure. In a calm but firm voice the Speaker narrated how an MP can create an embarrassing situation for the members. He was decent enough not to mention the name of the MP but most of the members got the message.

Salam Talukder, Secretary General of the ruling party and the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, was caught napping when asked by the Speaker to comment on a comment made by independent member Nurul Islam Moni.

Mr Talukder was talking to his cabinet colleague OI

Ahmed and was oblivious of what was going on. When the Speaker asked him to issue a statement he was in a fix what to say. To escape the embarrassment he asked for a notice from the member concerned. This was not to the satisfaction of Mr Moni but it was too late. Without microphone he was trying to convince that it was not a point of order nor a subject seeking statement from the minister. In a state of despair he gave in and the Speaker allowed Mr Awal of Awami League to speak.

Mustafiz

From Page 1 Col 4

looting the arms. The government also asked for adequate compensation for the victims and return of the arms and ammunition.

The situation deteriorated as Myanmar massed troops along the 176-mile border with Bangladesh.

The two neighbouring countries held two flag meetings in a bid to defuse the tension. Bangladesh is now awaiting response from Myanmar to the proposal for the third flag meeting on January 16.

Another aspect of the uneasy situation is the continuous influx of the Rohingya Muslims from Arakan province of Burma into Bangladesh.

According to the official count, about 25 thousand Burmese Muslims have taken refuge in the eastern districts of Bandarban and Cox's Bazar in last three months.

The unofficial figure of the Burmese Muslims who crossed into Bangladesh will be over 50 thousand.

The Arakanese Muslims continued to flee their homeland to escape political and social persecution being inflicted on them.

The situation has created another chapter of the violation of human rights in the history of mankind.

The government is trying to resolve the issues bilaterally in a peaceful mean.

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