



Police arrested JP Secretary General Khaledur Rahman Tito from near JP central office in city yesterday.

— Star photo

JP Secy Gen arrested

From Page 1 Col 8

porters that the government was suppressing the JP workers and supporters for the past several months.

He alleged that a conspiracy was being hatched against JP and sealing of the office, was part of that conspiracy.

Tito criticised the other opposition political parties for not protesting the repressive activities of the government

3 newsmen sent to Rangpur jail

LALMONIRHAT, Dec 24: A magistrate court today rejected bail petitions and sent three journalists to Rangpur jail hajat when they surrendered to the court in connection with an anti-corruption case, reports UNB.

The journalists are editor of weekly Janjani Sultan Ahmed, correspondent of Radio Bangladesh and daily Sangbad Gokul Roy and correspondent of daily Dinkal Golam Mustafa.

BCL wins Badre Alam College union polls

From Our Correspondent
GAZIPUR, Dec 24: Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) won all 15 posts in the students union election of the Bhawal Badre Alam Government College today.

End of the world not in a billion years

LONDON, Dec 24: The end of the world is nowhere near night, according to research published today, reports Reuters.

A study by Ken Caldiera and James Kasting of Pennsylvania State University reported in the British Scientific Journal Nature said the planet had about a billion years left, 10 times more than forecast by other experts a decade ago.

"Our prediction ought to be encouraging to humans," Caldiera and Kasting wrote.

"We can breathe easy for about a billion more years," said Tyler Volk of the earth systems group at New York University in a companion article commenting on the research.

The same journal reprinted a forecast by scientists James Lovelock and Martin Whitfield 10 years ago that mankind would die out in 100 million years.

The latest study says the end will come when atmospheric carbon dioxide levels drop below the minimum level needed to support photosynthesis, the process by which plants generate food and liberate the oxygen required for human life.

The collapse of the biosphere may be a long way off, but future generations can expect a bumpy ride.

"We certainly have more immediate problems during the coming century in trying to prevent our own selves from ravaging the biosphere," Volk says.

Caldiera and Kasting's work raises issues that are hauntingly familiar: The role of carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas, a possible need for planetary engineering in maintaining the earth's habitability — or rather its comfort for humans — and fundamental questions about the ultimate persistence of life and the pace of evolution.

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Biswas, Khaleda Hasina greet Christians

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday said that the great example of self-sacrifice for the welfare and services to the mankind left behind by Jesus Christ would act as a source of inspiration for establishing peace and brotherhood in this trouble-torn world of today, reports BSS.

In a message expressing warm greetings and good wishes to the Christian community on the eve of Christmas, the President said the sacrifice of Jesus Christ would inspire mankind through the ages to work for the welfare of humanity and rise above all kinds of malice and jealousy.

The President said a democratic government has been established in the country for achieving the objectives of establishing rule of law and keeping the pace of development uninterrupted. The democratic system has to be established on firm footing for improving the living standard of the people, he added.

The President hoped that the nation would succeed in building a self-reliant country by ensuring participation of the people of all communities in the development activities.

In another message Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia also wished welfare, happiness and peace of the people and members of the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas Day.

The Prime Minister sincerely congratulated the members of the Christian Community and hoped that they would continue to play their constructive role in the welfare-oriented and nation building activities as they did in the past.

She said, tolerance, welfare of mankind and peace are the basic principles of all religions. People of all religions have been living in harmony in Bangladesh imbued with these principles from time immemorial, she recalled. She said, we have to devote to nation building activities upholding the tradition.

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has conveyed her warm greetings and good wishes to the Christian community.

In a message on the eve of Xmas Day, Sheikh Hasina 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 religions is welfare of the humanity.

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

Pope celebrates X-mas Eve Midnight Mass

VATICAN CITY, Dec 24: Pope John Paul II proclaimed joy for the birth of Christ as he celebrated Christmas Eve Midnight Mass but lamented the ill will that prevents peace on earth, reports AP.

"Tonight, the church looks to you, Jesus Christ, who are the mighty God and the prince of peace — and implores from you peace for all redeemed humanity, John Paul declared. "This peace is your name."

Pilgrims and tourists packed the basilica for the service that was broadcast to millions at home in 43 countries.

A 30-metre (99-foot) Christmas tree from the Italian Alps and a nativity scene with life size figures decorated St Peter's Square in a tradition begun by Polish-born John Paul.

The Pope began his homily quoting Luke: "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

The Pope did not mention any specific conflicts in his homily, but participants in the service included Catholics from two of the world's leading trouble spots — Somalia and Croatia.

DUTA

From Page 1 Col 8

yesterday afternoon said that the postponed election would be rearranged as early as possible. No new date for the polls has been announced.

University Club sources said that the polls began on schedule at 10 am.

Three ballot boxes were arranged in three separate places.

Sources said that after a couple of minutes of polling, when about 15 votes were cast the errors in the ballot sheet were detected.

Soon after the election commission along with the panel leaders after a short meeting announced the postponement.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a peasants' rally in Chuadanga town football ground yesterday.

— PID photo

Stranded Pakistanis

From Page 1 Col 5

clearance done in the camps. Transit camps will however be set up later before the process of sending the rest of the 3000 families begins. The 2,38,000 refugees are sheltered in some 66 camps across the country.

Speaking on the process of return to and the rehabilitation in Pakistan, Nasim Khan, the Chief Patron of the SPGRS, said that the returnees would first be flown to the provincial capital Lahore from where they would be taken to different reception centres in Punjab.

The repatriated Pakistanis would be given monthly allowances and other facilities for 18 months on their return, Khan said. They would later be included in the voters' list of the Punjab province.

Khan met Wynn December 12 when the latter was in Dhaka accompanying Prime Minister Sharif.

With the announcement of repatriation, the would-be returnees began selling their property and other belongings. Many of them have already left their jobs.

"I have already left my job and sold off some of the household goods... I'm now waiting for a go-ahead," said Muhammad Islam, a security guard in the Adamjee Jute Mills.

AFP from Islamabad says: The first batch of 18,000 stranded Pakistanis known as Biharis are to be repatriated from Bangladesh within a few months, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Amir Hussain told the House Thursday.

Arrangements have already been made to provide housing facilities for some 3,000 families in Punjab province where the Biharis are to be settled, he said.

The minister said the exact date of their arrival would be fixed later as the construction work in Punjab's Mian Channu district is to be completed in a few months time.

He said the government had allocated 130 million rupees (more than five million dollars) with the help of the Jeddah based Rabita Alam-e-Islami (World Islamic Congress) for their resettlement.

The Urdu-speaking Bihari community migrated from the Indian state of Bihar after the partition of the subcontinent into independent Pakistan and India in 1947.

After the creation of Bangladesh in the former province of East Pakistan, the Biharis refused to become part of the new state. They have been stranded in camps in Dhaka since the country's independence in 1971.

PM: Peasants

From Page 1 Col 7

they wanted the anti-terrorism bill and they answered full-throated in the affirmative, raising their hands in support.

Begum Zia said the hopes and aspirations of the people for which the nation fought the liberation war are yet to be fulfilled.

"People have voted BNP to power because they believe that it is the only party which can solve their problems and fulfil their hopes, she said.

Presided over by General Secretary of the Krishak Dal Shamsuzzaman Duda, the rally was also addressed among other by its President Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman.

Local leaders Rafiqul Hasan Tripti, Ahmed Ali and Shahidul Islam also spoke on the occasion.

The Prime Minister during her day-long tour of Chuadanga also addressed a conference of peasant representatives of Khulna division at Sreemanta Town Hall in the morning.

Speaking on the occasion, Begum Zia called upon the representatives to go and work beside the farmers and motivate them for participating in the nation building activities.

She reminded that the past autocratic regime was responsible for the certificate cases against the farmers.

The Midnight File

US asks Pakistan to return 8 frigates

ISLAMABAD, Dec 24: The United States has asked Pakistan to return eight frigates and a supply vessel leased to Pakistan's navy, military officers said today. The request was made under the terms of the 1985 Pressler Amendment banning US military and economic aid to Pakistan if the President could not certify to Congress the country did not possess a nuclear weapon, said one officer who declined to be named, reports Reuters.

Bush-Yeltsin summit on January 2, 3

MOSCOW, Dec 24: Russian President Boris Yeltsin will meet US President George Bush for a summit in the Black Sea resort of Sochi on January 2 and 3, Interfax News Agency said. The Agency, quoting highly reliable sources, said they would aim to sign a START 2 agreement — a concrete step towards reducing strategic arms. Yeltsin's press office said it could not officially confirm the Interfax report, says Reuters.

Bush pardons Weinberger

WASHINGTON, Dec 24: President George Bush has pardoned former Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger and others charged in the Iran-Contra scandal, a White House spokesman said today, reports Reuters.

Defeated forces of '71 behind communal violence: Kamal

Dr. Kamal Hossain, convenor of the Democratic Forum said, the defeated forces of 1971 were responsible for the incidents of communalism in Bangladesh following the demolition of the historic Babri Mosque and said that forces had been trying to be rehabilitated in the society and conspiring against democracy, reports BSS.

He said the peace-loving people of this country had not responded to the provocations of that defeated forces but resisted the attempts of disrupting communal harmony in the country.

Dr. Kamal was addressing as the chief guest a discussion meeting organised by Tuhi Smriti Sangsad yesterday in observance of the Victory Day near Silverdel School at Wari.

Presided over by Chowdhury Mahbubur Rahman the meeting was also addressed, among others, by Democratic Forum Leader

Barrister Amirul Islam and Mustafa Mohsin Montu. Chairman of his faction of Awami Juba League.

Dr. Kamal, also an internationally reputed lawyer, urged the people to maintain Bangladesh's reputation as a non-communal country by resisting the designs of those quarters which were out to disrupt communal harmony, create division among the people, destabilise the country and destroy democratic process.

He called upon the quarters to be respectful to the democratic norms and value and to work together for creating an atmosphere where the Hindus, Muslims, Christian and Buddhists could live peacefully.

He also underlined the need for reviving the unity through which we got our independence for materialising the expectations and aspirations of Independence War and the 1990 mass movement.

Dawn-to-dusk hartal observed at Biswanath

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 24: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed at Biswanath today to press for several local demands.

The demands among other include immediate repair work of Biswanath-Jagannathpur road, Rashidpur-Biswanath-Rampasha-Lamakazi Road, nationalisation of Biswanath College and supply of natural gas in Biswanath thana area.

The day-long hartal was called by Chhatra Gano-Unnayan Parishad.

All educational institutions were closed during the hartal. All types of vehicles were off the streets. Government and private offices were closed while transactions in banks were totally stopped.

However, there was no report of any untoward incident. Several meetings were held at the thana headquarters.

2850 evicted

From Page 1 Col 5

The sources said that DCC had earlier urged these shopowners several times to give up their illegal possession on footpath and plots in the market on which a criminal circle was said to have been thriving, but the shop owners ignored the call.

As a result, the Mayor of DCC Mirza Abbas MP yesterday ordered such drastic measures.

Prior to this operation, a detailed plan had been chalked out considering the problems that might threaten the eviction operation in one of the city's biggest market—Kawran Bazar.

Since a number of criminals thrive on collecting tolls from these illegal shops, the DCC sources said, it had taken all precautionary measures to avoid any resistance from 'toll collectors' against the evictions.

DCC officials said, as part of the precautionary measures, the police had earlier arrested 13 such 'toll collectors' from the area.

"This criminal circle take an everyday toll of about Taka 2000 from each of the 150 big wholesale shops," said a DCC official, "they also take no less than Taka 100 per footpath shops, selling cloth Taka 15 to 30 per small footpath shops," the officials added, "they even take Taka 2 for each goods carrying rickshaw-vans."

The plan of the operation was divided into three phases, sources informed, they were planning and arresting criminals, secondly, the eviction operation and finally the permanent measures which the DCC officials did not disclose.

Two killed in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Two persons including a teenage girl were killed and one injured in separate incidents in city yesterday.

Abul Khaer, 25, was killed and Abdur Razzak, 28 injured when a speeding truck dashed a tempo Thursday at Uttara.

Khaer died on the spot. They were in the tempo when the truck hit it in front of Rajmori Market at Uttara. The truck fled after the accident.

Sabina Akhtar, 15, committed suicide Thursday noon at Mirpur Section 11, Block A. She hanged herself from the ceiling of her room at 1 pm.

The reason for her suicide could not be known. Her body has been sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

'Hindu, Buddha Christian body misleading people'

A nine-member delegation of pastors led by Michael Subashamoya Das and another 15-member team of Bangladesh Christian Association led by its President Louis A Costa together called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her secretariat here yesterday evening, reports BSS.

During the meeting Albert P. Costa, President of the City Committee of Bangladesh Christian Association, was critical of the role of Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad. He said, the parishad has been isolating the members of the minority communities from the mainstream. He said those who were involved in the Oikya Parishad were misleading the people.

They greeted the Prime Minister on the eve of holy Christmas. She also greeted them.

During the meeting the Prime Minister called for collective efforts irrespective of religious beliefs for nation building activities.

She said, "We are all Bangladeshis and our common objective should be alleviation of poverty." She further said during the War of Independence the entire nation fought unitedly irrespective of caste and creed.

Wishing happiness and peace of the members of the Christian community she urged them to participate in various programmes including tree plantation, EPI and canal digging.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina speaking at a public meeting at Manikganj yesterday.

— Star photo

Matin

From Page 1 Col 8

proper, impartial and judicial execution of both the laws.

The Home Minister was addressing the law and order session of the two-day conference of the Deputy Commissioners at the conference room of the cabinet in the Secretariat here.

The conference was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Law Aminul Haque, State Minister for Establishment M Nurul Huda, Cabinet Secretary M Ayubur Rahman, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister K M Rabhani and secretaries of home, establishment and law ministries.

Deputy Commissioners of the 64 districts and divisional commissioners attended the meeting.

Emphasising the need for holding regular meeting of the district law and order committee, police-magistracy and judicial conference, he asked them to evaluate the proper execution of law and effective judicial practices in criminal proceedings.

The Minister instructed them to visit and supervise police stations, magistrate courts and jails regularly.

He stressed ensuring transparency and accountability in every tiers of administration.

Dwelling on smuggling Chowdhury asked them to take stern actions to curb against the smugglers smuggling which is eating into the vitals of the national economy.

Communal violence 'PTI report motivated, baseless'

A Foreign Office spokesman termed as "motivated, misleading and baseless" a PTI news item claiming "widespread damage" was caused due to communal violence in Bangladesh following the demolition of the historic Babri Mosque in India, reports BSS.

When his attention was drawn to the news item the spokesman said despite such provocations the people and the government remained steadfast in their firm resolve to maintain communal peace and harmony in the country at all costs in accordance with Bangladesh's long established practice and ethos and its tradition of tolerance enjoined by Islam.

He underlined that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, from the very outset following the Babri Mosque incident in India specifically and repeatedly urged the people to maintain peace and communal harmony in the country at all costs.

The law enforcing agencies were deployed all over the country and they were put on maximum alert to contain any act of communal violence, he said.

Besides, he said, the political leaders and members of parliament were active in organising peace rallies and made efforts to maintain peace, calm and restrain throughout the country.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 7

lence, opposition parties had constituted committees all over the country in a bid to maintain peace and good relations among different religious sects, the Awami League President said.

Assuming power on "false commitment" to the electorates, the opposition leader said, BNP could neither give peace nor security to the people in the last two years.

Presided over by former MP Mafizul Islam Kamal of Awami League, the all-party meeting was also addressed by Abdul Mannan, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Hasanul Haq Inu, AFM Mahabul Haq, Abdus Samad, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Maulana Ahmedur Rahman Azmi, Golam Mohiuddin and Iqbal Hossain.

Earlier, Hasina addressed wayside gatherings at Ghor, Banajuree, Garpara, Dasora and Betlia, badly affected by recent troubles.

At Gheor, supporters of Awami League and JSD shouted slogans and counter-slogans when Hasina reached there around 12:15 pm. This led to a brief scuffle, injuring Mainuddin Babul of Devendra Govt College.

Christmas

From Page 1 Col 8

Meanwhile, a special Christmas High Mass will be offered at National Major Seminary, Catholic Mission Banani. The Christmas High Mass has been arranged by Cyril Palmer, an employee of American Embassy (LGP) for the welfare of all at 9 am today.