

# Poor response to BTMC self-retirement scheme

By Inam Ahmed

The voluntary retirement programme of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) is yielding poor results as the workers and employees are opposed to the terms and conditions in it, concerned sources said.

The authorities had issued three circulars at different times informing the employees about the retirement scheme.

However, until now only about 300 employees and workers of BTMC have responded positively. Of the total applicants, about 250 are workers from different BTMC units, the rest from the administration, according to the sources.

In the retirement scheme offered by the Corporation, interested employees would be entitled to their gratuities, provident funds and accrued earned leave.

But the offer does not include any extra financial benefits as in the "golden handshake" programme.

The "golden handshake" programme was initiated by the government for retrenchment of excess workers of different sector corporations. Under this programme, a package of financial and other benefits was being offered to the intending employees. The golden handshake is now being executed in the railway, some other corporations are awaiting implementation of the programme.

Initially, the government had announced that Taka 30 crore had been earmarked for the retirement scheme of the BTMC. It was expected that 10 per cent of the total workforce of the Corporation would be brought under the programme. The BTMC now has about 45,000 workers and employees.

However, as the offer of the BTMC does not include the "golden handshake" facilities, the employees are reluctant to come forward. Moreover, those who had applied for retirement, are near their normal retirement age, sources said.

BTMC employees charged that the authorities had failed to ask the ministry for reimbursement of funds for the "golden handshake" programme for which the financial facilities could not be given.

# SDR 38116000 ADB loan for flood project

MANILA, Dec 28: A loan agreement for the secondary towns integrated flood protection project for an amount of SDR 38,116,000 was signed here recently between the government of Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the Philippines Mohammad Abu Hena and the ADB President Kimimasa Tarumizu signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides.

The project is aimed at establishing and upgrading facilities for flood protection, drainage and environmental improvements for the towns of Khulna, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Panchagarh, Habiganj and Moulvi Bazar. The specific works to be undertaken under the project will involve construction and upgrading of embankments, flood walls, regulator structures, construction and rehabilitation of drains and culverts, construction of latrines, provision of facilities for solid waste management and sum improvements.

The project will be executed by the Bangladesh Water Development Board under the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control and the Local Government Engineering Department under the Ministry of Local Government and Cooperatives.

The project is expected to be completed by December 31, 1997.

**2 killed as bus, truck collide**

MYMENSINGH, Dec 28: Two passengers were killed and 15 others injured when a minibus collided with a truck on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Boiral in Trisal thana today, reports UNB.

An unidentified man, aged about 35, died on the spot while another identified as Rafiqul Islam (37) succumbed to his wound shortly after being admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCCH).

Two of those injured were admitted to the hospital in critical condition where they died as: Abu Syed (18) and Modhusudhan (15). Others had first aid at hospitals at Trisal and Mymensingh.

Police said the Mymensingh-bound minibus collided head-on with the truck at around 6:00 am during heavy fog.

**Zainul's birthday today**

The 78th birth anniversary of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin will be celebrated today in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh Charu Shilpi Sangsad and Bulbul Latika Academy have taken up various programmes in this connection.

Day's programme will begin with placing of wreath at Shilpacharya's graveyard adjacent to the Dhaka University Mosque by these organisations.

Members of the Shilpakala Academy and Charu Shilpi Sangsad will also offer fatcha at his graveside in the morning.

The academy will also hold a discussion at its auditorium in the afternoon and accord a reception to elderly artists Junabul Islam, Syed Jahangir and Mustafa Monwar. Elderly painter Shafuddin Ahmed will attend the reception as the chief guest in which the artists would be awarded with 'Charu Shilpi Sangsad Award'.

Bulbul Academy will hold a discussion at its auditorium and organise a colourful rally from Wishehat to the National Press Club. The members of the academy will also go to the mazar of the Shilpacharya and offer fatcha there.

**Dhananjoy**

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Dhananjoy Bhattacharya had about 500 discs to his credit, which included modern Bengali songs, Nazrul songs and 'Shyamasangeet'.

The singer is survived by three sons, his wife having pre-deceased him in 1987.

Dhananjoy Bhattacharya, who also acted in five Bengali films, including 'Nababidhan', 'Paser Bar' and 'Ladies Seat', recorded his first disc in 1940 with the Bharat Pioneer Company.

The singer's second son Dipankar Bhattacharya said the artist slipped into coma on Friday after he suffered renal failure accompanied by acute diabetes complaints.

The Islamic panel in a resolution today said it would challenge in court New Delhi's decision to acquire the site adding that Rao was backing out of his pledge to rebuild the mosque by allowing Hindus to offer prayers there.

The committee also directed its branches in districts and thanas to carry out similar programmes.

Stripped of his Bangladesh citizenship for staying outside the country for a long period, Golam Azam returned to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport in 1978. The Jamaat declared him its Ameer publicly for the first time December 29 last year.

The Jamaat action caused widespread reaction among the pro-liberation forces. The Nirmul Committee, with pro-liberation political parties and personalities, was formed in January this year with press for trial of Golam Azam and his 71 associates for war offences and resist the rise of the anti-liberation forces in the country. The Nirmul Body, later expanded in the form of Muktioddher Chetona Basti-



A 'Poush Mela' organised by Maitree Social Welfare Association at Faridabad High School ground on the occasion of its 12th founding anniversary yesterday. — Star photo

# Science centre

From Page 1 Col 7

Bangladesh. These include environment and natural disaster protection, population control and bio-technological research, computer software development, human resources development and research in material science, which would include development of the natural products like jute and also semi-conductors and other solid-state technologies.

At least 15 senior scientists, both local and foreign, would be working in each of these five areas, with a number of junior scientists working under them, he said. The total workforce at the centre would be around 150.

All the scientists would be under five-year contracts and the centre would have five directors, one of whom would become the director general on a rotating basis.

With the government agreeing to provide land, building and local staff for the centre, he said. "We expect 80 per cent of the expenditure to come as donations from friendly countries and that all research would be done through international con-

tract." He added that the United Nations International Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the World Bank are likely to finance the centre's projects.

Prof Rahman noted that the Italian Ambassador in Dhaka during a recent meeting assured us of strong support to make the centre a success.

A contract research worth 50,000 US dollars would be initiated shortly with the local universities, he said.

The 20 countries selected to be sponsored as networks of centres include Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Egypt.

A Bangladeshi, Prof Rahman is currently teaching at the University of Trieste and has worked with Prof Salam for the last three years in the centre at Trieste.

Dr A M Choudhury, director of the Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation, Amir Husain Khan, chief scientific officer of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Khalilur Rahman, Professor of Bio-Chemistry, Dhaka University, who is currently working at the Trieste centre, were also present at the press briefing.

# Somali warlords appeal to end factional strife

MOGADISHU, Dec 28: Rival Somali warlords Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Mohamed Farah Aidid embraced one another before thousands of their countrymen here today and appealed for an end to the country's brutal factional strife, reports AFP.

Shortly afterwards the battered Somali capital was reunited, as workmen cleared away physical barriers that had kept certain districts and key access roads inaccessible during fighting that erupted November 17, 1991.

The two leaders, the heads of rival wings of the United Somali Congress, addressed a public rally to demonstrate their commitment to a US brokered peace accord reached at the weekend.

Hand in hand before a crowd outside the parliament building, they called for unity in a nation that had descended into bloody anarchy, leaving tens of thousands of Somalis to die of disease and starvation in the past two years.

They had earlier begun a march along the city's so-called Green Line, a hellish free-fire zone between north Mogadishu, controlled by fighters loyal to Ali Mahdi and the south of capital controlled by Aidid partisans.

In the virtual absence of mass communication in Mogadishu, a peace march and demonstration along the Green Line was judged the most effective way of informing the population of the weekend accord and of the two leaders' willingness to work for its implementation.

As the demonstration got underway, US marines — members of a United Nations-mandated international force to restore order in Somalia — were patrolling the streets of north Mogadishu for the first time since their landing here December 9.

# Hatred Day

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structed all its city units to assemble before the Press Club carrying effigies of 'war criminal' Golam Azam to burn. Central leaders of the Nirmul Committee will address the rally.

The committee also directed its branches in districts and thanas to carry out similar programmes.

Stripped of his Bangladesh citizenship for staying outside the country for a long period, Golam Azam returned to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport in 1978. The Jamaat declared him its Ameer publicly for the first time December 29 last year.

The Jamaat action caused widespread reaction among the pro-liberation forces. The Nirmul Committee, with pro-liberation political parties and personalities, was formed in January this year with press for trial of Golam Azam and his 71 associates for war offences and resist the rise of the anti-liberation forces in the country. The Nirmul Body, later expanded in the form of Muktioddher Chetona Basti-

bayan O Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannaya Committee with representatives from different political parties and socio-cultural and student organisations and it arranged Azam's public trial in the city March 26 the same year.

The government arrested the Jamaat leader under the Foreigners Act two days before the scheduled public trial. Since then, he has been in the central jail of Dhaka.

Meanwhile, different political parties, socio-cultural and student bodies and noted intellectuals have supported 'Hatred Day' programmes and urged upon the people of all walks of life to make them a success.

# Federation leaders claim 12 textile mills shut, 30 face closure

By Staff Correspondent

Twelve government textile mills have ceased operation due to lack of cotton supply while another 30 mills are awaiting same fate, according to Bangladesh Suta-Bastrakal Sramik Karmochari Federation.

The federation in a press conference held at Tophkhana Monday said while these 42 units require about 1 lakh 60 thousand bales of cotton annually, which is entirely imported, the Bangladesh Textiles Mills Corporation (BTMC) — the importing authority can supply only 2500 bales.

The press conference addressed by General Secretary of the federation Iqbal Majumder, was attended among others by Badrul Alam Khan (President), Abul Mansur, Samsuddin Ahmed, Md Hiron Mia, Samsuddin Pradhan, A Rahman, Sahidul Islam and others.

The federation demanded immediate action by the government to keep the mills running.

They also called on the authority to meet the federation's six point charter of demands and demanded implementation of the wage board awards.

The federation said, condition of 42 government mills and about 40 private mills is at stake due to the government's policy, rampant smuggling of yarn and clothes, unrealistic taxation, large scale import of cotton clothes, and high interest of bank loans.

The federation said that the government in July had bilaterally agreed to meet the federation's six-point charter of demands, but now by-passing the agreement was taking moves to hand over 10 mills to the private sector.

The leaders of the federation alleged that the Textile Ministry was responsible for the total mess in the textiles sector.

They said, the ministry in Police nabs JCD leader from RU campus

RAJSHAHI, Dec 28: Police in a pre-dawn swoop arrested a top leader of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) from Rajshahi University campus today, reports UNB.

Babul Akhter Bablu, Vice President of JCD's Rajshahi University unit and VP of Madar Box Hall, was arrested under Anti-Terrorism Law and was sent to the jail here.

Campus sources said Bablu leads a JCD faction that clashed several times with the rival faction. The RUCSU election was postponed early this month due to factional feuds between JCD in which Bablu played the main role, it was alleged.

Protesting the arrest, supporters of his faction barricaded the road today causing disruption in communication between Rajshahi and other districts.

**Sylhet Fertilizer Factory resumes production**

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 28: Production in the Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory at Fenchuganj resumed at 9 pm Sunday after being shut for 19 hours.

The stoppage in the factory's production was caused by the failure of electricity as two generators went out of order at the same time at 2 am Sunday.

**Bus workers in Khulna continue strike**

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 28: Bus workers including those of long-route coach services continued their strike today to protest yesterday's incident.

Meanwhile, one of the 10 injured in yesterday's clash Aminul Islam (35) died tonight at the Khulna General Hospital here.

At least eight buses were damaged yesterday during a clash between two rival groups of the workers of Khulna Motor Transport Workers Union over possession of a union office.

A faction of the workers union continued their hunger strike for the third consecutive day today in protest against forcibly taking over of its office by the rival organisation.

A tripartite meeting between the leaders of the unions, district administration officials and police was continuing here tonight to resolve the issue.

Asked if troops at the last Lebanese checkpoint before no-man's land would therefore stop him visiting the deportees, the Prime Minister added: "I don't think he will go if he does not have our authority and we won't give him our authority."

Hariri said the same applied to Bernard Kouchner, French Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, and a French medical team who were expected to arrive in Beirut to visit the deportees.

Meanwhile, Israeli border police blocked a convoy of Israeli Arab leaders from carrying food and medicine today to Palestinian deportees.

The para-military border police closed a border fence at Rosh Hanikra Checkpoint at Israel's northern border and stood in the road to block the convoy from entering South Lebanon.

About 100 Israeli Arabs, including parliament members, Islamic leaders and local council heads, left their cars with food parcels on their shoulders but were prevented from crossing the border by foot.

AFP adds: The Israeli army wrongly expelled seven Palestinians to Southern Lebanon and is trying to find ways of bringing them back, military sources said today.

The seven, from the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank, included a 16-year-old arrested for painting Palestinian slogans on a wall in his village.

# Cabinet okays 3 draft bills

The cabinet approved the draft of the bills relating to the amendment of Dhaka City Corporation Ordinance-1983 Local Government (Zila Parishad) Act-1988 and Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance-1983, reports UNB.

The approval was given at the regular weekly meeting of the cabinet held at Bangabhan yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The proposed amendment to the relevant laws have been made in line with the decisions taken by the government after considering the report of the commission set up to review the local government structure.

The cabinet also was apprised of a report of the official visit of the Information Minister in Bahrain last month at the invitation of the Information Minister of that country.

**Pakistanis**

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ter Thursday triggered frustration among the refugees.

According to the Bangladesh government officials, the authorities here are prepared to send the 50 families off by December 31 and they are awaiting a response from the Pakistan government.

Until yesterday, there was no positive word from Islamabad, said the official speaking on condition of anonymity.

"But it is still possible to honour the deadline... all it will require is only one special flight and that can be arranged by Pakistan," the official said.

On Wynn's visit, the official said, there was no confirmation yet but "the invitation is there if he wants to come."

Nasim Khan, the leader of the refugees, claimed that a prominent journalist in Pakistan had given him intimations Sunday that Wynn was coming Wednesday (December 30).

He said that he had spoken to Majid Nizami, the Editor of Nawaz Waqat and a member of the Citizens Committee formed to greet the returnees, by phone Sunday.

Meanwhile, the stranded Pakistanis have planned what Nasim Khan described "very colourful and meaningful" procession today to press home their demand for early repatriation.

"Everybody will have something on his or her back," Khan emphasised his words — "colourful and meaningful."

**Saifur**

From Page 1 Col 7

habits of business-as-usual and to gear up their activities to the demand of present government's reforms programmes and policies.

He instructed the banks to establish promotional units which would closely maintain liaison with Board of Investment (BOI) to identify prospective areas of investment guide and advise entrepreneurs in taking up projects in industry, agriculture and agro-based sectors. They have been also advised to give special attention to development of livestock, dairy, fishery, poultry and small scale industrial investment, which will help generate employment and boost economy. Banks have been advised to take up crash programme of identifying investment opportunities for disbursement of investible funds.

The meeting after threadbare discussion recognised that one of the primary causes of low investment in the country is the high cost of borrowing and lack of adequate promotional activity on the part of financial institutions. The meeting underscored the need for effectively rectifying the existing impediments.

It was decided that performance evaluation of bank managers and other personnel should be based upon the quality and quantum of investment they achieved.

# The Midnight File

## US to use force if Serbs cross lines in Y'slavia

GENEVA, Dec 28: US President Bush has warned Serbian leaders that the United States will use military force if Serbs cross any of several lines in former Yugoslavia, according to a letter seen Monday by The Associated Press. Bush's letter to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Gen. Zvezda Pantic, Yugoslavia's military chief of staff, was sent last week, after the Dec. 20 Yugoslav elections, said a source close to the Yugoslav government. Serbia has been widely blamed for the war in former Yugoslavia, reports UNB.

## UK may change law for Charles' remarriage

LONDON, Dec 28: British Prime Minister John Major is ready to ask parliament to change the law so that Prince Charles could re-marry in the Church of England if he divorced his estranged wife Princess Diana. The Daily Express said today. The newspaper said Major was in sympathy with Queen Elizabeth's desire to scrap an ancient act which prevents the Archbishop of Canterbury, spiritual head of the Church of England, from issuing a marriage license to any members of the royal family in such circumstances, reports Reuter.

## Lebanon won't allow UN envoy to visit deportees

BEIRUT, Dec 28: Lebanon said today it would refuse a UN envoy permission to visit Palestinian deportees trapped in South Lebanon's no-man's land through government-held territory, reports Reuter.

Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri told Reuters UN envoy James Wonnah, expected to arrive in Beirut from Israel on Tuesday, could only visit the deportees through Israeli lines in South Lebanon.

Asked if the Lebanese government would allow Wonnah, a UN Assistant-Secretary General, to visit the deportees through its territory, Hariri said: "He has to go through Israeli territory."

Asked if troops at the last Lebanese checkpoint before no-man's land would therefore stop him visiting the deportees, the Prime Minister added: "I don't think he will go if he does not have our authority and we won't give him our authority."

Hariri said the same applied to Bernard Kouchner, French Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, and a French medical team who were expected to arrive in Beirut to visit the deportees.

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## Hasina

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lated "infamous" Golam Azam-politics of religion and banished the spirit and values of the War of Liberation.

Hasina alleged the killers of '71 and '75 assembled on a single platform and have been showing audacity destroying the achievements of the 1971 great war.

The ruling BNP has been driving the country towards confrontation by giving shelter to Jamaat-Shibir-Freedom Party-Jubo Committee, the AL leader said and called for building united resistance by all pro-liberation forces against the ill motive of the government.

## Leather exports fetch Tk 500 cr

Commerce Minister M K Anwar yesterday said that Bangladesh had earned about Taka 550 crore last year from leather and goods exports which was only Taka 22 crore in 1974-75 year, reports BSS.

He said during last five months (July-November '92) the country earned about Taka 250 crore from exports of leather and leather goods.

He was addressing the sixth annual general meeting of Bangladesh Shoe Merchants Association as chief guest in city.

He said that he had spoken to Majid Nizami, the Editor of Nawaz Waqat and a member of the Citizens Committee formed to greet the returnees, by phone Sunday.

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