

Janata Tower Case hearing Uttara Bank sanctioned Tk 8 cr to Ershad's wife

Hearing of a corruption case against deposed president Hossain Mohammad Ershad and his wife resumed yesterday in a special court when a prosecution witness said Uttara Bank gave Tk 3.5 crore loan to Janata Publishers Ltd of which Rawshan Ershad is chairman, reports UNB.

The building, construction of which was half done by Nirman International Ltd of K Z Islam. No 1 prosecution witness in the case K Z Islam earlier deposing in the court had said he received Tk 10 crore including Tk 6.5 crore in cash from Ershad for construction of the building.

Deposing in the court, prosecution witness No 3 A K M Esharul Fayez, Vice-President of Uttara Bank, said Rawshan Ara Begum applied for a loan of Tk 6 crore on January 8, 1990. The loan was sanctioned within 15 days and Tk 3.5 crore was already disbursed.

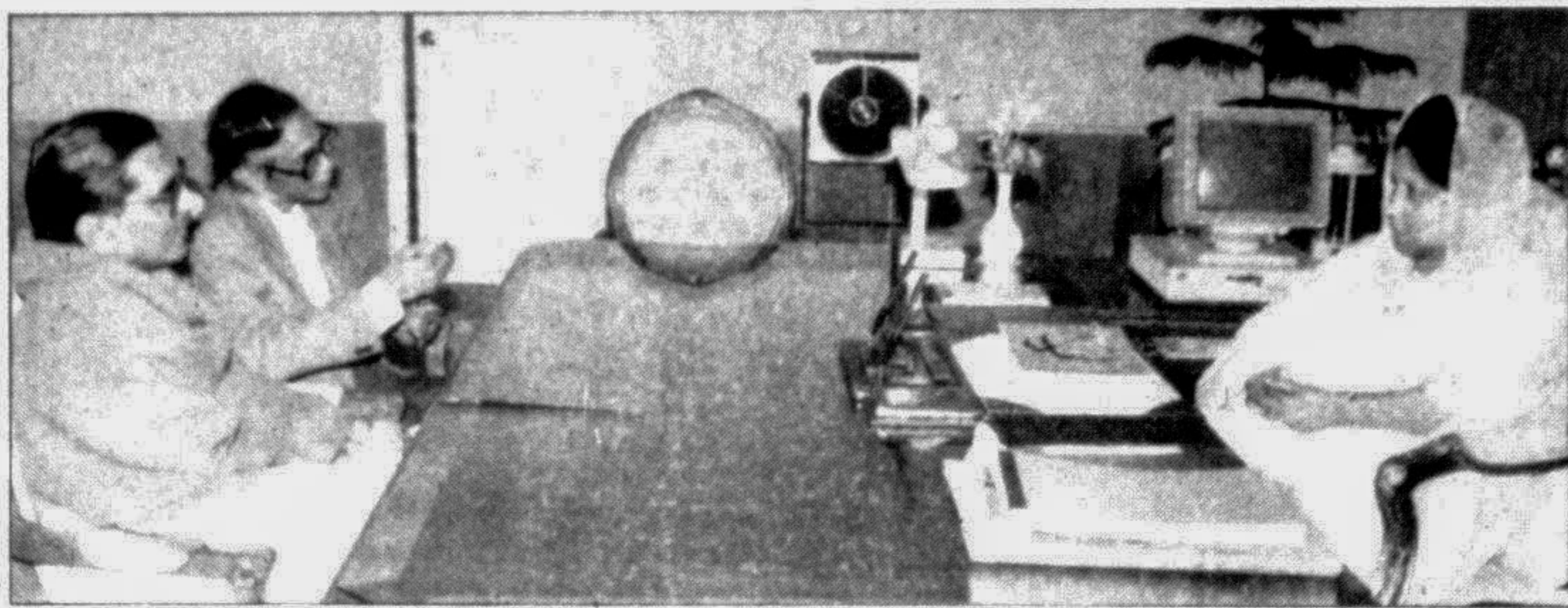
Sixtythree year old former president, Ershad, is already serving 13 years jail terms for keeping unauthorised fire arms and amassing wealth beyond known sources of his income. He is facing more than 3 dozen other cases.

Ershad and his ailing wife were present in the court along with 15 co-accused. Ershad was brought to the court from nearby Central Jail under heavy guards. He was absolutely in good mood. Flanked by Rawshan and former minister M A Sattar on the dock, Ershad was seen smiling and talking with them and sometimes with his lawyers most of the time.

The fourth prosecution witness, Nasiruddin, manager of a branch of Uttara Bank, deposing in the court yesterday, identified the documents seized by the anti-corruption officials in connection with the case.

Replaying to a defence query, the prosecution witness said the bank sanctioned the loan for construction of building on 12 kathas of land at 49 Kawran Bazar. It is better known as Janata Tower. Case from the name of

The former First Lady fell sick and was allowed to leave for home before the court rose for the day. Khandokar Mahub Hossain who appeared on behalf of Ershad, Sharfuddin Khan Mukul on behalf of Rawshan Ershad and Khan Saffur Rahman on behalf of M A Sattar and three other Directors of Janata Publishers Ltd, briefly cross-examined the witness. Hearing will resume today.



Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. Party General Secretary Haider Akbar Khan Rono was also present. (Story on Page 1) — PID photo

Directive for smooth holding of Biswa Ijtema

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday directed all concerned ministries and agencies to provide all possible facilities and cooperation for, smooth holding of the Biswa Ijtema, reports BSS.

The three-day 28th Ijtema begins at Tongi on January 16. Begum Zia asked the Minister for Communications Oil Ahmed, Minister for Health Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia, State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof M A Mannan and Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Shahidul Huq Jamal, MP to extend necessary cooperation for smooth holding of the congregation. Biswa Ijtema is one of the biggest congregation which is attended by Muslims in lakhs from different countries including host country Bangladesh.

Silver worth Tk 16cr seized in Bakerganj

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Jan 10: Police has seized 182 maunds of silver worth about Taka 16 crore in Bakerganj and arrested one person in this connection. Police seized an engine boat at a ghat of the river Srimanta in Bakerganj in the morning and recovered the silver hidden in 217 packets.

The owner of the boat Abdus Sattar was detained at the Bakerganj police station, the Officer-in-Charge said. Acting on a tip, police cordoned off the boat Saturday and searched it early Sunday. Abdus Sattar informed police that one Khaleq of Patuakhali hired him to carry some gunny bags from Patuakhali to Bakerganj, but he was not aware of the fact that the bags were full of silver.

He was produced before the Thana Magistrate and taken on police remand for interrogation, police said. The disciplinary body prescribed a suspended expulsion for the two students while the Syndicate expelled them for one year each.

Vice Chancellor of the university has summoned a special meeting today to review Sunday's incident. Meanwhile, many residential students were seen leaving campus fearing further violence.

3 missing as boat capsizes in Jamuna

SIRAJGANG, Jan 10: Three people have been missing since Thursday when two overloaded boats capsized in the Jamuna at Jhunkal in Kazipur thana of the district during a storm, police said, reports UNB.

The two boats from Rangpur with about 500 maunds of rice were on way to Narayanjanj along with 10 people, including boatmen. Seven people were rescued but three others were still missing. The rice-laden boats also could not be salvaged yet.

US will veto UN move to condemn Israel

JERUSALEM, Jan 10: The US has assured Israel it will veto every attempt by the UN Security Council to condemn Israel for expelling 415 Palestinians to Lebanon from the occupied territories — Israel's ambassador to the US Zalman Shoval has told the national radio, reports Pool-Tanjug.

UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali has recently cautioned he will seek 'more energetic actions' from the Security Council if Israel fails to abide by Resolution 799 which demands the return of the expelled to their homes. The Lebanese government was quoted by the national radio on Saturday as saying it would call for an Arab summit to review the Middle East situation following the Israeli government's expulsion of Palestinians to Lebanon. Lebanese Foreign Minister Faiz Buez on Saturday invited his colleagues from Arab states to meet in Cairo tomorrow to ask the Security Council to demand Israel's bringing the deported back to the occupied territories.

Leadership with changed outlook seen vital for development

By Staff Correspondent S M Ali, Editor of The Daily Star in his address as chief guest stressed the need for alternative agenda to tackle the problems confronting the country.

There should be a think tank that would sit and work from time to time with statistics and substantial materials on problems, not with rhetoric, Ali said adding that the opposition has a greater opportunity and responsibility to come up with alternative ideas.

Commenting on the role of the intellectuals in this respect, he said "the politicians may make mistakes, but the intellectuals should not". Commenting on the political development of the country, Dr Zillur Rahman Khan said with the Anti-terrorism Act the government made unnecessary compromises with civil liberties in its effort to control law and order situation.

He said without the process of political democratization, the implementation of economic reforms may turn into a draconian solution lacking human consideration. "Bureaucratic foot dragging and widespread corruption have made the Bangladesh economy less viable in 1992", he said.

Dr Khan who is the Chairman of the Department of Political Science of the University of Wisconsin, USA, in his deliberation said Bangladesh's record in maintaining and building educational infrastructure in 1992 has been "less than satisfactory". The seminar was also addressed, among others, by Prof Dr Syed Anwar Hossain of History Department of the Dhaka University and Dr S M Mahfuzur Rahman of Finance Department of the same university.

It was presided over by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, Chairman of CDRB.



Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in city yesterday marking the homecoming day of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on January 10, 1972. — Star photo

Hasina: SAARC summit

From Page 1 Col 4 countries during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's India visit prompted Indian government to push the so called Bangladesh national into this country and Nizami-Advant meeting for the Babri Mosque demolition.

She did not elaborate. Hasina said that the 17 years of misrule had made the people feel the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was released January 7, 1972 from Pakistani jail and returned home via UK.

She said that BNP government gave the people nothing but terrorism and corpses referring to a recent newspaper picture in which a dog was seen eating a rotten body. She again blasted the anti-terrorism law saying, "It was enacted to hound the opposition party workers." The BNP and its student wing are out of the purview of the law, she alleged.

She also criticised the "Ershad-style costly helicopter tours" by the Prime Minister. Hasina also introduced AL candidate for Dhaka-11 by-election Kamal Majumder to the audience and asked the supporters to campaign for him.

Zillur Rahman said that the present government was distorting the history in a bid to suppress the role of Bangabandhu who dedicated his life for the country. "None knew Zia (Ziaur Rahman) before March 27 who was just one of the 11 sector commanders," Rahman said, adding that "without Mujib none could think of Bangladesh."

Mohammad Nasim said that the government had turned autocratic. He said that even though a section of killers had now started talking about the trial of Mujib's killers the government stood in the way of passage of the Indemnity (repeal) Bill.

Russia to buy

From Page 1 Col 8 Foreign Economic Relations, during its four-day stay in the country is likely to sign an accord with the authorities concerned on buying 60,000 metric tons of jute goods and 15,000 metric tons of raw jute, the official told The Daily Star.

The Russian team which also includes the President of V V Technoprompt Export, a buying house, is scheduled to meet the Jute Minister, high officials of the ministry, the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and the private sector entrepreneurs before signing the agreement, official sources said.

According to the sources, the trade delegates are coming in response to a Bangladesh trade team's visit to Russia. A Bangladesh delegation led by the Secretary of the Jute Ministry and comprising the entrepreneurs in the public and the private sectors earlier visited Russia to explore export markets for our jute and jute products.

The BJMC-run mills have produced 1,49,062 metric tons of jute goods during the first-half of the current fiscal year which is 21 per cent higher than that of the corresponding period of the previous year. BJMC sources said the continuation of this trend of production will enable the public sector jute mills to produce an additional 50,000 metric tons of jute goods over the previous year's.

Cut embassy staff by Feb, India asks Pakistan

NEW DELHI, Dec 10: India told Pakistan today to sharply reduce staff at the Pakistani High Commission (embassy) here by next month in apparent retaliation for a similar step ordered by Islamabad last month, reports AFP.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said New Delhi ordered the High Commission to slash the number of its employees from 150 to 110 in a month's time, and rejected Islamabad's request to use a complex in Bombay as its consulate.

The Foreign Ministry also turned down Islamabad's proposal that its consuls be allowed to issue travel visas to Muslims in the Indian cities of Hyderabad, Lucknow and Patna, PTI said.

There was no immediate confirmation of the report, and Pakistani diplomats were not available for comment. India's retaliation came almost a fortnight after Islamabad ordered New Delhi to reduce its consulate general staff in the Pakistani city of Karachi from 64 employees to 20.

The Midnight File

Western military allies' top-secret code book lost

TOKYO, Jan 10: A top-secret code book used by western military allies to identify friendly and enemy aircraft has been missing since 1988, Japan's Kyodo News Agency reported today. It quoted military analysts and observers as saying that the loss happened before the end of the cold war and could have had serious implications if the Soviet Union had obtained the codes, reports Reuter.

Croat Minister killed in detention

GENEVA, Jan 10: A Croat Minister in the Bosnia government, Josip Gogala, was killed in detention in Sarajevo on Thursday after he was arrested by Muslim paramilitary troops, Bosnian Prime Minister Mile Akmadzic said today, reports AFP.

Lebanon won't allow ICRC to evacuate 9 deportees

BEIRUT, Jan 10: Lebanon said today it refused to allow the International Red Cross to evacuate by helicopter nine Palestinians expelled by Israel from a south Lebanon no-man's land, reports Reuter.

Stranded Pakistanis

From Page 1 Col 5 Mostafizur Rahman, visiting Assistant Secretary General of the Mecca-based Rabitat Al-Alam Al-Islami, Amin Akeel Attas, Pakistan High Commissioner Anwar Kemal saw the refugees off at Zia.

The airlifting of the first batch mark the symbolic repatriation which follows an earlier agreement between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her Pakistan counterpart Mian Nawaz Sharif during her visit to Islamabad last year.

The repatriation of an estimated 2.38 lakh stranded Pakistanis is expected to be completed by the next two years, according to the Rabitat officials. The repatriation was suspended during the 1974 after 1.75 lakh stranded Pakistanis including those in the Pakistan defence forces were sent back home.

"This is the beginning of the repatriation and an end to the necessary arrangements for the return," Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman told the newsmen at the airport tarmac.

The minister hoped that all the Pakistan nationals would go back within the stipulated time. Rahman, however, did not rule out "unforeseen difficulties and adverse situation" which might postpone the return.

The repatriation of the first batch, scheduled to take place in December last year, was postponed by Pakistan because of flooding in the Punjab province and non-completion of construction of the houses for the repatriated Pakistanis.

The Rabita Assistant Secretary General said that the second batch would be repatriated by the next six months. It was an emotional home-going for the total 63 families in the first batch. The returnees looked excited and their faces beaming while many shed tears bidding farewell to their relatives who would follow them in course of time.

Earlier in the morning, the Pakistan citizens were brought from the Adamjeenagar and Mirpur refugee camps to a temporary transit camp within the airport compound. Under the canopied makeshift transit camp, the refugees had their farewell breakfast in Bangladesh and received travel documents from the Pakistan High Commission.

Elsewhere in the city, rioters torched a godown, a private institute, and several slum colonies where ragpickers and poor people live. In one neighbourhood, a four-story residential building was gutted in fire, but there were no casualties.

The arson was almost completely unchecked by Bombay's 28,000 policemen, assisted by about 3,800 paramilitary and army soldiers. When asked for an explanation, police officers said they were too busy trying to ascertain the extent of the damage.

Police fired at rioters in 11 places, injuring three people, Bapat said. There were eight incidents of firing at police, he said. Acting on a tip, police raided a house and shot and killed two rioters who were in the possession of half a truck load of acid and petrol bombs and meat cleavers, Bapat said. One of those killed was identified as Aziz Ibrahim Merchant, a notorious criminal, he said.

Twenty-one people were arrested across the city on charges of rioting, Bapat said. In Ahmedabad, capital of the neighbouring Gujarat state, three people were killed when police fired at a mob of rioters, Press Trust of India said.

Members of the public have been requested to cooperate with the inquiry committee. CHITTAGONG, Jan 10: The inquiry committee on Bandartila-Halishahar incident of January 2 and afterwards will receive written statements or record evidence from the interested persons from January 14 to 30 on all working days between 10 am to 5 pm at the local Zila Parishad Hall, reports BSS.

Rao's No From Page 1 Col 3 have continued to vitiate the atmosphere. The statement went on to say: "This naturally impacts negatively on prospects of the SAARC summit. It is felt that the political directions, which are needed at this stage to provide greater substance and content to the functioning of regional cooperation in South Asia, could not be achieved under the present circumstances."

The December 6 demolition of a centuries-old mosque at the temple town of Ayodhya had sparked off violent protests across India as well as the subcontinent. Two days later, the summit scheduled for December 12-13 had been put off as Rao expressed his inability to attend, preferring to stay back at home to face the toughest test of his 17-month-old government. In the wake of renewed Hindu-Muslim riots in some major cities across India this week, Rao again said that he would not be able to come, leading to the postponement for the second time in a month. The Indian Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs decided late Friday night that Prime Minister should be in the country to deal with the politically volatile situation, and the decision was conveyed to the Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi immediately. Until the decision was made known to Bangladesh authorities, host officials had been planning changes in the summit ceremonies to facilitate Rao to return home as early as possible.

JU: Gunshots, blasts

From Page 1 Col 7 The JCD activists terming this as a 'conspiracy', brought out processions on the campus late Saturday night. They chanted slogans against the Syndicate members and fired gunshots and blasted crackers.

In a protest rally held at the Central Cafeteria Sunday morning the JCD activists also called for an indefinite strike demanding withdrawal of punishment to two JCD leaders.

Mohammad Moazzem Hossain, Organising Secretary of JCD JU unit and S M Abu Yousuf, Assistant General Secretary of Al Beruni Hall were expelled by the Syndicate for their indecorous behaviour with a hall provost a couple of months back.

Two cabinet ministers had to intervene to break the stalemate when JCD activists held the Syndicate members as hostages. Following the meeting at the Central Cafeteria, the furious students went to the Statistics Department and broke windowpanes. The rally then ransacked the Chemistry Department.

Syndicate member Dr Imamuddin's room came under attack afterwards. "Angry students threw a chair at Dr Imamuddin," witnesses said. The rally then moved on to the Arts Faculty and Life Science Institute at about 11 am and damaged some window panes there.

At least 20 rounds of gunshots were fired and several crackers were exploded at that time in front of the Arts Faculty premises. Two tyres were set ablaze in front of the Vice Chancellor's office after the Vice Chancellor had a heated exchange of words with the JCD leaders, sources added.

Both the students and teachers sat at separate meetings to decide future action programmes. In a press release issued by the President of the Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association (JUTA) Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman expressed the teachers' resentment at the armed terrorism by a group of students.

The press release alleged that hoodlums in the guise of students were involved in locking the Syndicate members for 16 "unfed" hours, threatening a provost and snatching and tearing off question papers and answer scripts earlier. If this kind of violence occurs despite the anti-terrorism law then the teachers would not be able to continue their duties, the press release added.

Vice President of the Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association Masud Hasan Talukder in a press release held some Syndicate members responsible for yesterday's occurrence. Termining the punitive measure against two JCD members as violation of 76 Ordinance he demanded withdrawal of the penalties.

Meanwhile, two Deans of the university challenged the legal validity of the punitive measure taken by the Syndicate. The disciplinary body prescribed a suspended expulsion for the two students while the Syndicate expelled them for one year each.

Vice Chancellor of the university has summoned a special meeting today to review Sunday's incident. Meanwhile, many residential students were seen leaving campus fearing further violence.

Shibir activist manhandled on JU campus By JU Correspondent An activist of the Islamic Chhatra Shibir was manhandled at the dairy farm gate of the Jahangirnagar University campus Sunday.

Mohammad Kamal, a second year student of the Department of Geography was assaulted by the members of the MuktiJodha Chhatra Command. Students of Jahangirnagar University banned the politics of Jamaat-e-Islami since the killing of a student leader in August '89.

Kamal and 13 others were barred from entering the campus for their alleged involvement in a conspiracy to initiate fundamentalist politics on the campus, sources said.

Govt college teachers' token strike Jan 14

Government college teachers will observe a token strike on January 14 in protest against the attack on Prof Mohammad Hanif, Principal of BM College in Barisal, during the college student union election, reports UNB.

Classes and examinations, including annual and test exams and admission test, will come under the strike in all government colleges and similar institutions across the country, says a press release. The BCS General Education Association has called the day-long strike.

Bhatia

From Page 1 Col 5 Asked about Pakistan's position that SAARC Charter be changed to discuss the bilateral issues, Bhatia said the SAARC did not consider it proper to discuss bilateral matters. It was up to the SAARC members to decide on this, he said.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh K Raghunath was, among others, present at the airport to receive the Indian minister.

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