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NEWS BRIEFS

JEC meet deferred

The proposed meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Economic Commission (JEC) has been further deferred from the first week to the last week of December. The meeting is now scheduled for December 26-28 in Dhaka, official sources said, reports UNB.

Khaleda shocked

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her deep shock at the death of mother of Emran Shahid Prince, a leader of the Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangkritik Sangstha. Emran's mother died of cardiac problem at the Holy Family Hospital, reports BSS.

ALEC meets today

An emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Awami League will be held at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and party chief Sheikh Hasina at 29, Minto Road here today at 11 am. Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, reports BSS.

Indian cattle seized

RAJSHAHI, Nov 19: Members of 20 Rifle Battalion seized Indian cattle and cattle skin worth Taka 14 lakh in two separate operations yesterday. A special squad of the BDR seized the cattle at Kashiadanga and also cattle skins from a Dhaka bound bus near Binodpur Bazar of the district, reports BSS.

PLA leader shot dead in Manipur

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The rebel leader of an outlawed separatist group fighting for the independence of the far-eastern Indian state of Manipur was killed in a gunbattle with police today, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP.

Confce on regional waters in city from Monday

By Sharier Khan

Water experts from Nepal, India and Bangladesh will try to set up an institutional framework to resolve the problems of regional water-sharing and utilising water resources in the forthcoming international conference on eastern Himalayan waters scheduled to begin in Dhaka Monday, sources said.

Convened by the Global Infrastructure Fund (GIF) Research Foundation of Japan and the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP), the two-day conference will be attended by 10 experts from Bangladesh, seven from Nepal, five from India and 13 Japan.

The conference, to be inaugurated by the States Minister for Water and Irrigation Mosharrar Hossain Shahjahan, would aim at agreeing on joint regional research projects on water and would also pin-point the details of problems like the Farakka issue.

Five government experts would be in the 10-member Bangladesh delegation. Chairman of the BUP Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, Prof Sajjad Rashid, Prof Ainun Nishat, former Chairman of Water Development Board Amjad Hossain Khan, Joint River Commission member M Altaf Ali and Coordinator of the Flood Action Plan (FAP) M H Siddiqui will also be in the Bangladesh delegation.

The Indian team would include former secretaries C D Thatte and Raj Gopal and noted journalist and water researcher George Verghese.

Officials of Nepal's Ministry of Water Resources Dr Bhatta, Dr Kamal Rijal, N K Lal and J C Pokharel will represent Nepal while the Japanese team would include GIF Managing Director Dr M Yamamoto, advisors H Shibusawa and E Noda and

Director T Ueki. BUP Chairman Kholiqzaman told The Daily Star last night, the conference was an evidence of goodwill and understanding between the professionals of the region which would hopefully bring in true action to resolve the water-related problems.

"Previously, the governments of these regions would not have had allowed professionals to sit in a forum to discuss such problems," he said. "Now this is allowed - which shows the goodwill of the governments of the three countries."

The conference will also discuss environment, inland water transport, natural disaster prevention and energy, and will present a draft report on some of these issues which can be dealt within the framework of a regional approach, he said.

"If the participants reach a

We want to make JS more effective: Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here yesterday that Parliament is the focal point of democratic politics.

"We would like the Sangsad to be more lively, stronger and effective for the solution to problems of the people and for accelerating the development efforts for progress of the nation," she told BSS in an exclusive interview.

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into session tomorrow. The Prime Minister upheld the very significant role of the Jatiya Sangsad in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people.

During the interview with the agency's Chief Editor D P Barua and Senior Correspondent Shahriar Shahid for nearly an hour, the Prime Minister

expressed her hope that the Sangsad would spend the entire time of the session discussing issues relating to the people's problems and national development programmes.

In reply to a question regarding her speech at a public meeting on November 7 at the Gullistan Democracy Square under the auspices of the BNP - and interpretation of the same by some political quarters, - Begum Khaleda Zia said that in that speech she had stressed the very important role of the Sangsad for democracy in a parliamentary system. She said there could be no scope for misunderstanding about her statement if the spirit of the speech is analysed in its entirety.

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Carrying of arms around JS banned

The Commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, has prohibited carrying all kinds of arms, explosives and other harmful materials, any kind of rally, procession and demonstration at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and its adjoining areas from the midnight today, reports BSS.

The police commissioner has issued this order for the smooth functioning of the 12th session of the fifth Jatiya Sangsad, which begins tomorrow.

The areas coming under the prohibition order are: From the old airport of the Myemensingh Road to the Bangla Motor crossing, from the western side of Bangla Motor Link Road to the fountain of the Sonargaon Road, from the eastern side of Panthapath to Farm Gate via

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Bills on separation of judiciary, Parliament sect may be placed

By S Y Bakht

Two long-pending bills seeking the separation of the judiciary from the administration and the setting up of an independent Parliament Secretariat are likely to be placed before the Jatiya Sangsad during the upcoming winter session, due to begin on Sunday next, according to official sources.

Both the bills were moved in the House way back in 1991. The Parliament Secretariat Bill, moved by a Treasury Bench member, is pending vetting by the Law Ministry, while the bill for separation of the judiciary, moved as a private member's bill by an Awami League member, is pending before a special parliamentary committee headed by the Law Minister.

Law Ministry sources said that the Parliament Secretariat Bill had recently been cleared by the ministry and was scheduled to be placed before the House in the upcoming session.

The parliamentary committee on the bill for separation of the judiciary met earlier this month to finalise its report, but the meeting was adjourned be-

cause of the absence of the Law Minister due to ill health.

However, a member of 11-member committee, requesting anonymity, said that the report had been finalised and another meeting of the committee was expected to be held soon. The report would then be placed before the House during the coming session.

"Although the report has been already finalised there was no consensus," he pointed out, adding: "But we will place it before the House as it is because we don't want to leave it with the committee any more."

The bill seeks to separate the judiciary from the executive branch of the government by amending the Constitution.

On the other hand, the bill to set up an independent Parliament Secretariat aims at ensuring the sovereignty of Parliament.

It seeks to establish a separate administrative body headed by the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad to deal with all parliamentary affairs. The bill provides for an executive body to run the affairs of Parliament, which will be accountable to the

Speaker, while he would be accountable to the House.

The bill, evolved through a consensus at the business advisory committee meeting, was moved in the House by a Treasury Bench member.

The bill was later approved by a special parliamentary committee and forwarded to the Law Ministry last year.

A separate private members' bill seeking to set up a Parliament Secretariat was also moved in the House by an opposition member last year. But it was kept on hold till the fate of the earlier bill was decided.

The Law Ministry source added that the Parliament Secretariat Bill had faced opposition from the Finance Ministry as it would involve a large sum of additional expenses to the exchequer. It was also opposed by the Works Ministry, which maintains all the infrastructure of Parliament.

However, three international organisations, including the Asia Foundation, have offered financial assistance to upgrade the operational infrastructure of the Jatiya Sangsad.



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina being received by party leaders on her return from an official visit to China at the Zia International Airport yesterday. Among others, party presidium member and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad, party general secretary Zillur Rahman and Abdul Jalil are also seen. - Star photo

Hasina for bigger Asian forum with China in it

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, at a press conference yesterday, said she has proposed to the CCP leaders for the formation of an organisation of the Asian countries for strengthening cooperation in the fields of economy, diplomacy, trade and culture. China can play the pioneering role in the formation of the proposed continental body, she felt.

Asked if it would be another association like the SAARC, she said, "The proposed body would be broad-based and it would by no means conflict with the present SAARC."

"SAARC is just working with the regional affairs," she said, and the proposed one would be "a bigger platform."

Dhaka can follow Beijing's economic policy: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh can follow the economic policy of China which has achieved its economic growth by pursuing a mixed policy of socialism and market economy.

"We have a lot to learn from the Chinese economy for increasing our gross domestic product (GDP)," the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament told journalists at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on her return from China.

Briefing newsmen at the VIP lounge, Hasina said economic issues dominated her talks with the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which invited her for 10-day official visit. Hasina's father Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman, visited China twice - in 1953 and 1957.

"My visit as AL leader after 40 years has ushered in a new horizon in the friendly relations between the CCP and the AL," she said. "Both the parties have some similarities," she added.

Explaining, she said both the parties led Liberation Wars of their respective countries. Besides, the two parties had adopted policies, most suitable for economic growth.

Like the CCP, the AL chief said, the AL also wants rapid economic growth in the country. To free the nation from foreign aid and put the country on an honourable economic status, "For attaining self-sufficiency, our country had enormous

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Boat collides with trawler

5 drowned, 50 missing in Karnaphuli

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 19: At least five people drowned and more than fifty others were reportedly missing when an overcrowded boat capsized this morning in the river Karnaphuli at Mooring No. 5.

Chittagong port officials and police said bodies of three persons including two women were recovered from the area immediately after the accidents.

The mishap occurred when the engine-boat bound for Kutubdia from the Muralghat here collided with a speeding fishing trawler. Two children, aged four and two, were rescued, but they later died at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, police said.

The boat was reportedly carrying about 100 people.

The Chittagong Port Authority and Bangladesh Navy launched a rescue operation and deployed some divers to trace the missing bodies.

Chittagong port also opened a control room to monitor the

rescue work and engaged its tugs and salvage vessels to retrieve the sunken boat.

"Our salvage team and Navy divers are carrying out the rescue. But due to strong current they are facing difficulties," said a control room official.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone, the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority, Aniamul Islam Chowdhury, who was also monitoring the rescue from the port control room, said: "We have located the sunken boat 40 feet below the water and we are now trying to salvage it because some bodies of the passengers might be trapped inside."

Till filing of this report at 9.30 pm, no more bodies were recovered.

But a senior police official said that most of the passengers either swam ashore or were rescued by other boats.

Meanwhile, the fishing trawler which hit the passenger boat is yet to be traced by police.



Tania's husband killed Nayan?

By Staff Correspondent

Film actress Tania Rahman has reportedly told police on the first day of a three-day remand for questioning that she was a witness to the killing of her male servant Alamgir Hossain Nayan.

According to unconfirmed sources, Tania was said to have confessed that her husband had murdered Nayan over a financial dispute.

Mohammadpur police, investigating the mysterious death of Nayan 22, however, refused to disclose details for the sake of a proper investigation.

Nayan was found dead in

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Major reshuffle in Pak admn

ISLAMABAD, Nov 19: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto replaced the country's civilian intelligence chief and ordered large scale transfers in the top bureaucracy, an official statement here said today, reports AFP.

In the first major administrative reshuffle since she was voted to power last month, her government also fired top officials who worked under the previous caretaker government of Moeen Qureshi.

These included retired civil and military servants, and similar changes in the provincial civil and police departments were also ordered.

A notable casualty was ex-Colonel Ikramullah, who served as Press Secretary to Qureshi, the 63-year old former World Bank executive who was appointed in July as Prime Minister for three months to oversee the October elections.

Along with Ikramullah, at

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Ctg Fertiliser to have new Tk 100-cr plant

From Farid Ahmed

CHITTAGONG, Nov 19: The Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) plans to install a di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) plant at its Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL) factory at Rangadia with a capacity to produce 500 metric tons (MT) of multinutrient fertiliser daily.

According to an official source, the BCIC's move to go for the CUFL's second product was intended to utilise the factory's excess ammonia.

The proposed DAP plant, which is yet to be approved by the government, will cost about Tk 100 crore for its installation. The BCIC/CUFL will be able to invest the total amount from its own resources, according to the source.

The CUFL produces 1700 MT of urea a day, leaving 30 MT of ammonia excess without any additional cost. The CUFL uses

980 MT ammonia per day for urea production.

Experts said that 112 MT of ammonia would be needed to produce 500 MT of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) daily. The additional 82 MT ammonia can be procured either through purchases from the nearby KAFCO, or through capacity increase of the ammonia plant in the CUFL, the experts added.

Earlier the CUFL tried to sell the excess ammonia in cylinders in the local market. But since the country's ammonia market is very limited, the CUFL stored the ammonia, officials said.

Experts said that because the DAP plant would be established as the second production stream of the CUFL, most of its technical requirements would possibly be provided from the CUFL's existing facilities.

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Rangamati death toll now 15

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 19: With the recovery of another body, the death toll in Wednesday's violence at Naniarchar of Rangamati hill district rose to 15 today, official sources said.

Among the dead, 14 were identified as tribals, including a woman, while the other was a non-tribal. But a search for more bodies is still on in the Naniarchar lake and adjoining jungles, officials said.

Section 144, clamped on Thursday morning in Naniarchar area, is still in force while police have stepped up petrol in Rangamati district in apprehension of fresh violence.

The Rangamati College was closed *stue die* as a precautionary measure.

The authorities have also tightened security in Khagrachari district.

However, no other incidents have been reported today.

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Sweden keen to broaden cooperation

The Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Human Rights Issues, Alf Svensson, yesterday said that his country was eager to broaden bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh.

Talking to BSS at the Zia International Airport on his arrival here on a five-day visit, Svensson said that Sweden was keen on widening cooperation with Bangladesh to help solve some of the problems facing it.

The Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman received him at the airport, present among others, was the ambassador of Sweden Bjorn Setrby.

The Swedish Minister, who is heading a six member delegation, said he would visit some of the projects in Bangladesh in which his country was assisting as development partners.

His delegation included his wife, Sonja Svensson, his political adviser, Ivar Lundgren, Information Officer, Ms Lotta Bygqvist, Deputy Assistant Under Secretary, Svante Kallander and First Secretary, Kaj Reinius.

Svensson arrived here after visiting China and Thailand.

Rotten wheat dumped in Sunderbans

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 19: Three hundred and seven metric tons of rotten wheat dumped in the Sunderbans is causing serious environmental hazards for the flora and fauna in the area.

The imported wheat, which was unloaded at Mongla port, was declared unfit for human consumption and ordered to be destroyed.

According to the Food Department, a Greek flag carrier, the M V Tasarhas-P, carrying about 3,36,000 metric tons of wheat given by the EC as aid, anchored at Mongla on October 30. At the time of unloading, a large quantity of wheat was found rotten.

After a high-level investigation, about 307 metric tons were declared unfit for human consumption. The wheat was dumped in the Sunderbans only a few kilometres from the Mongla port.

Forest Department officials said this was done without their knowledge.

3 cops suspended

10 hurt in clash over toll collection

MANIKGANJ, Nov 19: A clash between transport workers and toll collectors at Tara Bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway this morning left 10 people injured, including one in serious condition, reports UNB.

District police authorities put three police personnel, including a Nayek, at Tara temporary police camp under suspension for their alleged involvement in the incident.

Seriously injured Straj, 35, driver of Khaleque Paribahan, was admitted at the Pangu Hospital in Dhaka. Others were given first aid.

Police said the clash occurred at 8.20 am when the helper of Dinajpur-bound Khaleque Paribahan gave Tk 10

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