

Road accidents claim 406 in five months

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that 493 road accidents occurred in the country from June 1 to October 30, 1993, reports BSS.

Replying to a question by Azhar Rahman (AL), the Communications Minister said 406 persons were killed and 598 injured in the accidents.

He said the Communications Ministry had taken various steps to check accidents. Listing the measures taken by the government to check accidents, he said the Home Ministry had also been making efforts to check road accidents.

Replying to a supplementary question, the minister said the authority had taken up steps to detect fake driving licences. Besides, he said, his ministry had been making efforts to eradicate the root causes of accident by taking help from the Home Ministry, transport owners and workers.

Replying to a question by M Mizanur Rahman Manu (AL) the Communications Minister said there were 5674.50 acres of land belonging to Bangladesh Railway. Depending on certain circumstances, these lands are sold or given for use on licence, he added.

Govt to probe attempt on Mizan, JS told

Home Minister Abul Matin Chowdhury yesterday said in Parliament that the government would investigate Friday's alleged attempt on the life of Jatiya Party leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, MP, in Patuakhali, reports UNB.

Legal action will be taken against the persons involved in it after proper investigation, the Home Minister said responding to concerns expressed by Mantrul Islam Chowdhury and Advocate Fazle Rabbi of Jatiya Party.

Drawing the attention of the chair on a point of order, Advocate Fazle Rabbi said some unidentified youths equipped with bombs and firearms stormed the Patuakhali circuit house in an assassination attempt on Mizan Chowdhury after he had returned from a public meeting.

The Home Minister said identity of the attackers could not be known. Sometimes it is found that such incidents take place following intra-party feuds, he added.

He, however, said necessary legal measures would be taken against the culprits.

JP calls hartal in Khulna today

From Staff Correspondent. KHULNA, Nov 29: The Jatiya Party (JP) has called a half-day hartal in Khulna tomorrow protesting Sunday's police action on its procession.

The party brought out a torch procession in the city this evening in support of hartal.

Debate on Sylhet Divn

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prompted the Information Minister to give an explanation on the PM's comment.

Taking the floor, Nazmul Huda contradicted Samad Azad's statement saying that he accompanied the PM during her London tour and told the House that the PM accepted the memorandum submitted by the Sylhet people there. The Information Minister quoted the PM as having told them that there were many problems and constraints of resources in the country.

"She never told the expatriates that there was no legitimacy of their demand," Huda claimed.

At this stage a number of AL and Jatiya Party legislators stood up to seek the floor.

Getting the floor, Salahuddin Yusuf of AL wanted to know under which rule the Deputy Speaker had permitted the Information Minister to clarify a remark regarding the PM.

The Deputy Speaker replied that the minister had only explained the PM's speech and that he expected the PM would speak on the issue.

This failed to satisfy the agitated Opposition lawmakers.

Taking the floor again, Samad Azad also asked the Deputy Speaker under which rule the Information Minister replied on behalf of the Leader of the House. "I've drawn the attention of the PM but the Information Minister has become the 'state witness' for her," the Deputy Leader of the Opposition commented. He also expressed his anger as the chair did not allow any other opposition member to speak on the issue.

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The visiting Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China General Zhang Wannian called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. — PID photo

Inflation rate comes down to less than 2 pc

Governor of the Bangladesh Bank Khorshed Alam yesterday said the foreign exchange reserves of the country currently stand at around 2.35 billion US dollars and the inflation rate has come down to less than two per cent, which is much lower than those of the neighbouring countries, reports BSS.

Addressing the annual general meeting of the Council of the Institute of Bankers as its president here, Alam said the fiscal deficit has been content at a very low level while the current account deficit of the balance of payment had undergone considerable contraction.

"The current macro-monetary management of the country had never been so good and this has been acclaimed at both home and abroad," he said.

Alam urged the bankers to accept the challenge of modern banking which has undergone vast changes due to modern technologies and innovations.

He emphasised the need for ensuring necessary finance in the rural areas to increase agricultural production, and particularly to help alleviation of poverty.

Alam also called upon the bankers to take the opportunity of convertibility of the taka and overall liberalisation of the exchange and trade regimes to augment the banks' income in foreign exchange business.

SAARC

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Responding to another question, Reaz Rahman said, the progress of SAARC cannot be evaluated on a particular ground. "It is a constant effort at regional understanding, where the totality of the spirit of cooperation was more important than the specifics."

The Foreign Secretary said that there were presently 13 technical committees of the SAARC and two conventions have already been reached, one on narcotics and the other on control of terrorism. He said that consensus on a food reserve for the SAARC countries have been reached but the actual measures were yet to be implemented in this regard.

Responding to another question, Reaz Rahman said Bangladesh had created an enabling atmosphere for the return of the 'Chakma refugees' and was awaiting New Delhi's efforts for an early outcome.

Saifur

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Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam, Chairman of the United Insurance Company and BIA Chairman M Moidul Islam and Vice Chairman Nurul Islam also spoke at the reception arranged by the Bangladesh Insurance Association (BIA) at a local hotel last night.

The Finance Minister said the government is also planning to circulate some treasury bills so that the insurance companies can invest profitably.

"The development of economy depends on flourishing the insurance industry. For that you have to invest profitably. Although treasury bills of Tk 1200 crore were withdrawn in last five months we are considering to circulate some bills to facilitate investment," he said.

Responding to a demand for establishing a reinsurance company in the country, the minister called upon the insurance companies to conduct a study on the possibility of such a company.

It meet at DU

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ing terrorists or armed hoodlums would try to get rid of those elements and that none would object to disciplinary action of the university authorities against the troublemakers.

It condemned the killing of Jinnatul Islam Jinnah on November 1 and Alok Kanti Pal on November 22 on the DU and BUET campuses respectively and demanded immediate inquiry into the murders to find out and punish the culprits.

BSB asked to simplify disbursement procedure

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman paid a surprise visit to the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) head office yesterday and expressed dissatisfaction over the long and cumbersome disbursement procedure of the bank, reports UNB.

He directed the industrial bank authorities to further simplify and streamline the whole procedure.

The Finance Minister examined pending files, loan applications lying in different sections of the bank and talked to some entrepreneurs present there for seeking credit.

The BSB authorities informed the Minister that loans amounting to Tk 21 crore had so far been disbursed since July this year against the target of Tk 125 crore fixed for the current fiscal. Only Tk 5 crore has been recovered against the re-

14 insurance companies

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The proposed amendments to the Insurance Rules also include guidelines for issuing licences to life insurance agents and providing certificates to employers of life insurance agents.

In a written representation to the Ministry of Commerce, the Bangladesh Insurance Association expressed its 'deep concern' about the proposed amendments of the Insurance Rules.

"The circular (proposing the amendments) came to us as a surprise, for we have thought that we shall be consulted in the formulation process of the new rules," the Association said in its recent letter to the Ministry.

The Association opposed the specified minimum qualification requirement for life insurance agents, at least a Secondary School Certificate or equivalent, as it would prove 'disastrous' to the growth of the life insurance industry and would also reduce the employment opportunities for the under-privileged section of the population.

It also opposed the suggested increase in licence fees for life insurance agents from Tk 10 to Tk 100 and argued against the stipulation requiring seven years of past experience for employers of life insurance agents to obtain certificates from the controller of insurance.

3 CPI (M) activists killed in Tripura

AGARTALA, Nov 29: Three CPI (M) activists were killed, another one was seriously injured in two different incidents in north Tripura district, according to police sources here today, reports PTI.

Police said, a group of insurgents of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) with heavy arms raided the houses of three (CPI-M) activists at village Rangacherra, under Belonia Sub-division of south Tripura district on Saturday night and kidnapped them at gun-point and added, later shot them in a nearby lonely place after tying their hands. Two persons were killed on the spot, and one suffered serious injury.

Iranian plane hijacker surrenders

NICOSIA, Nov 29: An unidentified Iranian hijacked a government aircraft on a domestic flight in Iran with 38 people aboard Monday, then surrendered hours after the plane landed in southern Iraq, news reports said, reports AP.

The Iraqi news agency said the male hijacker surrendered at 3:45 pm (1245 GMT), six hours after the twin-prop Fokker Friendship F-27 owned by Iran's Oil Ministry landed in Basra.

It did not say whether or not the hijacker was armed, or if any of the passengers were hurt in the ordeal. INA also did not say what the hijacker's demands were, except that he requested asylum in Iraq or any other country.

Farakka

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of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies said through the Himalayan Drainage Ecosystem meeting three years back at Kottiya, Mankiganj, and the World Coast Conference in Holland and the recent environmental meet at Nepal, it was revealed that all the development efforts in the country will face adverse impact in the next 20 to 30 years due to the external factors like Farakka.

NY via Moscow

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mained unsold which are expected to be filled up soon," the official said.

Bitan is offering a two-way ticket at 1260 US dollars, while a one-way ticket will cost 720 US dollars.

Despite initial good response Bitan experts predicted that the route will be a losing concern for the first six months.

But recovery would start gradually after introduction of two flights weekly, they said.

Asian Art Biennale concludes today

By Staff Correspondent

The month-long Sixth Asian Art Biennale organised by the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy concludes here today.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated the exhibition on November 2.

Twenty-seven countries of the continent participated in the exhibition. The countries are Bahrain, Bhutan, Nepal, China, India, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Thailand, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Russian Federation and Bangladesh.

Some 684 works of 354 artists were displayed at the exhibition.

Hasina visits houses of 3 BAF officers

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited the houses of the three Bangladesh Air Force officers who were killed on Saturday when two training aircraft crashed at Jessore, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina visited the houses of Squadron Leader Shamsul Islam, Flight Lieutenant Sayeed and Pilot Officer Rahman and conveyed her deep condolence to the bereaved families. She spent some time there and consoled them.

J R D Tata dead

BOMBAY, Nov 29: J R D Tata, a pioneer of Indian industry and aviation who headed one of India's economic power-houses for more than half a century, died in Switzerland Monday, his company announced. He was 89, reports AP.

A spokesman for the Tata group of companies said Tata died at Geneva's Cantonal Teaching Hospital. The cause of death was not released, but he had been suffering from kidney infection and fever for several weeks. He had been in Geneva for two months.

A confidante of prime ministers, Tata was one of the most influential figures of India, though he stayed away from active politics.

Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao said India had lost one of its most illustrious sons. Since 1926, he headed an empire built by his father that made everything from hand soap to trucks and ran India's leading luxury hotel chain.

Specification should also be made as to the rotation of term in office of the directors from public shareholders and the position of shareholders who have bought shares from the sponsors should also be spelt out, the Association said.

Presently there are 16 general and three life insurance companies operating in the country. In addition, there is a foreign-owned life insurance company and two government-owned insurance companies.

The minimum paid-up capital for life insurance companies is Tk three crore and that for general insurance companies is Tk six crore. Of the total amount 50 per cent is the sponsors' portion of the equity while the remainder is to be floated for public subscription within three years of registration.

FBUTA asks govt not to amend Varsity Ord '73

By DU Correspondent

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) yesterday urged the government not to amend the university ordinance, 1973, through the parliamentary standing committee on education.

The federation at a meeting, presided over by its president Professor Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman, alleged that the government was taking steps to amend the University Ordinance, 1973, through the parliamentary standing committee on education.

It felt that the amendment would undermine the democratic rights of the teachers and destroy the academic atmosphere in the universities.

The amendment would also strengthen government's grip on universities, the federation observed.

JU probe body submits report

The one-member commission comprising Justice Abdul Matin Chowdhury, formed on October 1, to probe into the July 29 incident at the Jahangirnagar University, yesterday submitted its report to Home Minister Abul Matin Chowdhury at his Secretariat office, a commission press Release said here last night, reports BSS.

The letter does not answer the vital question raised by the correspondent about the absence of any track record in aviation business and the source from which such a phenomenal sum would come.

It states that the name of the credit company mentioned in our report — World Capital Development Group is incorrect but the initial bid offer was supported by this company in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Our report has essentially raised questions regarding the source of funds of this company to be arranged by this young Bangladeshi entrepreneur whose company was established in New York a little over one year back on August 18, 1992 with a start up capital of US 1,00,000 dollars only and which till now has dealt in commodities like wheat and soyabean oil, etc. In fact the company was officially incorporated on that date but started its commercial operation on January 25 of this year, according to the New York Corporate and Business Registration office.

Also the name of the Credit Company mentioned in the report is World Capital Development Group Inc; is incorrect because finance is being provided by another company — and it is to the credit of Mr Fazlul Haque that as a young Bangladeshi entrepreneur he has succeeded to convincing a finance company of international standing to loan to Biman a staggering sum of US\$ 200 million, on terms, which according to our local

The Midnight File

62 people die of AIDS in Iran

TEHRAN, Nov 29: An Iranian health official announced that 62 people in Islamic Iran have died of AIDS and about 5,000 people are infected with the HIV-virus. Hussein Malekzadeh, Deputy Health Minister, was quoted by today's English daily Tehran Times as saying that 269 people in the country have been tested positive for HIV-virus so far, reports Xinhua.

Serbian President demands suspension of UN sanctions

GENEVA, Nov 29: Accusing the West of killing Serbian children with its edicts, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic on Monday demanded the immediate suspension of UN sanctions in exchange for peace in Bosnia. The comments came as the European Community launched a new bid to avert a winter catastrophe in Bosnia by hosting a peace conference. The new EC plan proposes to ease UN trade sanctions if Serbia can persuade Bosnian Serbs to relinquish another 3 to 4 per cent of their territorial gains, reports AP.

Double-murder case 13 sentenced to 60 yrs' imprisonment each

Thirteen youngmen were yesterday sentenced to 60 years in jail each in a double-murder case. The rigorous imprisonment for the two murders shall run concurrently, reports UNB.

Court also find them Tk 5000 each or, in default to suffer another 1 year's RI.

The convicts are Shaidul Islam alias Bijoy, 28, Bidyut Chandra Dey alias Bidyut, 27, Abdus Salam, 29, Palash Chandra Basak alias Palash, 30, Swapan Kumar Sarker alias Swapan, 25, Ilyas, 26, Shambunath Chakrabarty, 24, Naru, 28, Tippon, 29, Arun Kanti Ghosh alias Batu, 27, Mahmudul Islam alias Ratan, Abdus Salam, 26, and Habibur Rahman alias Habib, 29.

The first eight among them were tried in absentia.

Prosecution case in short is that on May 7, 1991 the accused attacked Khaled alias Khaleque, 26, at the Wari Mahila Samity Primary School

field at 8:30 pm and fired at him with a cut rifle. He died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

About half an hour later, they attacked Munir, 23, at 44, Nabendra Basak Lane and fired on him with a revolver. Munir started groaning in a pool of blood on the ground. Later, he was taken to Mitford Hospital where the doctor declared him dead.

Both the murders were committed out of enmity.

A case, better known as Sutrapur double-murder case, was registered with the Sutrapur police.

During the trial of the case, the court examined 24 witnesses, and after hearing both sides, Additional District and Sessions Judge Jinat Ara found them guilty and gave the verdict.

PP Abdur Razzaque Khan conducted the prosecution case.

Woman jailed for women trafficking

A special tribunal yesterday convicted and sentenced a lady to 14 years of jail for trafficking in women, reports BSS.

M Zafar Ahmed Mina, Fifth Additional District Judge, Dhaka, convicted Afroza Begum alias Feroza Khanum after finding her guilty under the Special Powers Act and also of the Section Five of the Cruxity to Women Act.

The judge sentenced her to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Taka 5000 in default to suffer another six months of rigorous imprisonment.

Afroza Begum, in her early forties, is the mother of film actress Rina Khan court sources said.

The prosecution story says that Afroza Begum used to maintain a mini-brothel at her Senpara residence under Mirpur Police Station and sent the hapless women to hotels in the city.

Concorde states its case

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relates to the funding aspects, and which has been raised in our article is reproduced below along with our correspondent's reply.

M/s Concorde Multitrade Inc in its letter states:

"Financially, Concorde is the only bidder, conforming to the tender terms, i.e. a fixed price for the aircraft, with a fixed interest of 6% for a period of 10 years; and according to our bankers in the present money market, these terms are considered excellent. The others have offered lease terms, partial lease and sale and complicated formulae with LIBOR PLUS, rates of interest. It is common knowledge that LIBOR rates can fluctuate almost from week to week and in that case it would be almost impossible to accurately forecast what Biman would ultimately have to pay!"

"Some doubt has been cast about Concorde's capability to mobilise the desired funds and your reporter expressed grave doubts about the bidder's financial arrangement. Surely one would not expect Biman to jump into this deal with its eyes closed — but logically, this is NOT Biman's problem; but that of Lufthansa — who will be paid in cash for the 2 aircraft before delivery to Biman; and Biman is required to pay the instalments for repayment of the loan after the planes are handed over. Also, before the deal is closed and contract signed, Lufthansa, the Credit Company and Biman would surely examine the relevant papers and documents."