

Self-employment project for docs

The government has undertaken a Tk 200-crore self-employment project for private practitioners, reports UNB.

Under the project an MBBS doctor will be provided with a soft-term loan of Tk one lakh.

The Prime Minister has allocated Tk 200 crore as grant from her relief and welfare fund for the five-year project. The loans will be disbursed through banks among 50 MBBS doctors every year.

Country's medical colleges produce some 1,300 doctors a year.

Thana level private practitioners will be given priority in the first phase of the project to encourage them to render medical services to the rural people.

The borrowers will have to submit their original certificates as security.

A 14-member committee headed by Health and Family Welfare Minister has been formed to run the project.

The taka one-lakh loan was determined on the basis of calculations of the expenses for purchasing medical equipment and opening a chamber.

The loan with 5 per cent interest is to be refunded within 5 to 7 years. There will be no penalty for failure to pay the instalments in the first two years.

The loan will be further expanded on the basis of the borrowers' performance in repaying the loans.

Bring Katabon Mosque under DU: AL MP

By Staff Correspondent

Mohiuddin Ahmed of the Awami League raised a demand in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday for bringing the control of the Katabon Mosque under the Dhaka University authorities.

The AL parliamentarian, elected from Bakerganj-4, in a call attention notice alleged that the Jamaat-Shibir armed terrorists were being organised at the mosque under the banner of the Masjid Samaj. He also blamed the Jamaat-Shibir activists for "planning an armed attack at the university" with a view to establishing their dominance at the country's highest seat of learning.

The AL legislator feared that untoward happenings might occur at the mosque at any moment and urged the Home Minister to take necessary action in this regard.

A number of Jamaat MPs stood and tried to draw the attention of the chair soon after Mohiuddin Ahmed finished his speech. However, the Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali allowed none to speak on the matter, as speaking on such motion was out of rules.

Recently, different student organisations demonstrated on the DU campus demanding transfer of the mosque's authority to the university administration.



Gao, the hijacker of a Chinese Northern Airlines MD-82 to Taiwan is crowded by reporters at the Taiwan Airport police station yesterday. —AFP photo

Chinese plane hijacker surrenders

TAIPEI, Dec 8: A Chinese businessman armed with a surgeon's knife hijacked a Chinese airliner to Taiwan Wednesday, police said. It was the eighth hijacking from China to Taiwan this year, reports AP.

The alleged hijacker surrendered and was arrested, and the MD-82 airliner, which landed safely with 129 passengers and eight crew members, was allowed to leave three hours later.

The crisis over hijackings between China and Taiwan was underscored by the disclosure that the aircraft already had been hijacked to Taiwan less than a month ago.

Defence Minister Sun Chen said Beijing scrambled four fighter jets in an attempt to stop the Northern Airlines domestic flight from diverting to Taiwan. It was the first time such action has been reported since the spate of hijackings began in April.

Sun told the legislature that the Chinese fighters, turned back after coming near to the midpoint that divides Chinese and Taiwanese airspace in the 110-mile wide Taiwan Straits.

Two Taiwanese Air force jets escorted the airliner to Taipei International Airport, where it landed safely at 2:40 pm (0640 GMT), authorities said.

Each side blames the other for the Taiwan-China region becoming the most hijack-prone in the world.

The Midnight File

Winnie elected ANC Women's League president

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 8: Winnie Mandela made a triumphant return to the top level of the African National Congress today when the ANC Women's League elected her as its president. A spokesman told Reuters that 70 per cent of delegates at the league's annual congress in the South African city of Durban voted for Winnie Mandela, the estrange wife of ANC President Nelson Mandela.

Kuwaiti govt seizes arms from civilians

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Kuwaiti authorities have seized thousands of weapons from civilians, including 31 surface-to-air missiles and anti-tank rockets, which were left behind by Iraqi troops in the Gulf War, the Kuwaiti Interior Minister said on Tuesday. Sheikh Ahmad H'Moud Al-Sabah told parliament the arms were seized by a special task force which began work in late 1992, after a deadline had expired for the voluntary surrender of weapons, reports AFP.

3 killed, 9 hurt

DMCH. Police sent all the bodies to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

In another road accident, four members of a family were injured when a truck rammed their car at Gobindapur near Senpara bus stand in Narsingdi at about 11 am Wednesday.

The victims are Mohammed Kamrul Islam, 36, an Income Tax Magistrate of Dhaka, his wife Jahura Kamrul Moli, 28, his sister-in-law Sagar, 17 and their driver Mohammed Serajul Islam. They were going to Narsingdi accompanying the body of Kamrul's sister from their residence 111, Elephant Road, Dhaka.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver.

Five policemen were injured when a speeding truck collided head on with their van at Bhaver Char in Munshiganj at about 9 am yesterday.

The injured police constables are Mohammed Abd Hossain, 40, Mohammed Jasim Uddin, 32, Mohammed Jalaluddin, 36, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, 35 and a police habilder Mohammed Abdur Razzak, 50.

All of them were admitted to the DMCH.

Meanwhile, a vendor reportedly committed suicide at his residence at Agarghat in the city Wednesday morning.

The victim Liton, 20, who took pesticide was sent to the DMCH where he died.

ECNEC okays Tk 115 cr projects

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) at a meeting yesterday approved two projects at a cost of Tk 115 crore with a foreign exchange component of Tk 63 crore, reports BSS.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman presided over the meeting.

The projects are "modernisation and development of Chittagong Chemical Complex" to be undertaken by the Industries Ministry, and mechanisation of irrigation and agriculture in private sector.

The Chittagong Chemical Complex Development Project aims at increasing the production capacity of Costic Soda from 4500 to 7000 tons and Chlorine from 2500 to 4600 tons per year.

The mechanisation of irrigation and agriculture project aims at ensuring maximum and skilled utilisation of irrigation and agricultural equipment in the private sector.

The ECNEC meeting approved a project for the construction of an international standard swimming pool in Dhaka with a revised and reduced allocation of Tk 12 crore. Earlier proposed expenditure for the project was Tk 14 crore.

JS: Road accidents

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a driver for killing a man because of stiff opposition by the trade unions", Chowdhury said adding "The transport unions went on an indefinite strike to protest the proposal for such a law."

Even the unions forced us to keep the accident-related killings under bailable sections, he added.

The present law provides for only three years of imprisonment of a driver for killing by an accident.

Matin Chowdhury said if the opposition MPs promised they would not back the trade union leaders, then the government would enact tougher laws in order to contain road accidents.

The Home Minister said some 77,705 cases were lodged against faulty vehicles and fabricated licences in the Dhaka city alone during the last 10 months. A number of drivers and union leaders have been put behind bars and a fine of Tk one crore four lakh has been realised.

Earlier most of the opposition members suggested the formation of a parliamentary committee on the subject.

Citing some recent road accidents in which among others a medical student Romana Parveen and the wife of film artist Ilias Kanchan were killed, the members said it is the duty of the House to stop such untimely deaths.

Ruling Party MP Abdul Alim Mridha said he was himself a victim of a road accident and his left arm was still partially crippled.

The AL MP Prof Rafiqul Islam initiating the discussion on the matter said, the number of road accidents in Bangladesh is 40

times higher than that in any European country and more than double than what is in neighbouring India and Pakistan.

He said that in 1990, some 938 people died from road accidents as against 848 in 1991. More than 8,500 people were injured during the two years, he said quoting a report.

Shajahan Khan of AL pointed out 13 causes of road accidents.

Some of the MPs proposed the setting up of five training institutes in five divisions while some others said a person should have minimum educational qualification to get a driving licence.

Some MPs said, unauthorised bus terminals across the city should be closed and the use of speedometer made mandatory for every vehicle.

No resolution was adopted by the House after the discussion as the rules under which the matter was discussed does not permit taking any decision.

The other MPs who took part in the discussion are: AL MPs Abdul Awal Miah, Mizanur Rahman Manu, Abdus Shaheed, Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Tipu Sultan, AK M Jahangir, Mosharrar Hossain, Mattiya Chowdhury, Rahamat Ali and Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali, the ruling party's Mohammad Ali Zin-nah, Hamidullah Khan, Abdul Alim Mridha, Shajahan Omar, Mahbulul Alam Tara and State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman Patal, Jatiya Party's Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, Maksud Ibne Aziz Lama, and Fazle Rabbi, and Jamaat-e-Islami's Sheikh Anser Ali and Maulana Abdus Sobhan.

JS winter session

From page 1 Col 4

Parliament in the face of a crisis during the session.

The Deputy Leader, however, did not elaborate the issue.

Maulana Abdus Sobhan of the Jamaat-e-Islami said, the House could not take up many important issues for discussion due to the short duration of the session. The Jamaat leader, however, expressed his satisfaction over discussion on two issues — one on the country's labour problems and the other on the ways and means of checking road mishaps.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, in his brief speech, told Parliament members, it was not unlikely that the House would face different crises in a parliamentary democracy.

"What is important is resolve the crises in time" the Speaker said adding the legislators had eventually resolved all the crises that surfaced during the winter session.

The Speaker thanked all MPs, including the leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

But, Suranjit Sengupta (GP) was seen repeatedly trying to speak followed alongwith by several other opposition members including Tofail Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Sudhansu Shekhar Halder and Matia Chowdhury.

The Speaker said as Suranjit Sen Gupta was a signatory to the report as a member of the special committee, he could not allow him to speak.

The repeated requests from the chair apparently fell on deaf ears. Turning to Tofail Ahmed, the Speaker said: "Do you want the mike by force? You are doing like this every day."

Order in the House was restored when Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad requested the chair to allow the opposition members to express their views on the subject.

After several opposition members took part in the debate LGRD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder said if the special committee faces any crisis in determining the terms of reference, it is the responsibility of the committee to resolve the same.

He wanted to know under what Rules of Procedure the discussion had taken place on the report. He urged the chair to expunge from the proceedings the observation made by Suranjit Sen Gupta (GP) that corruption with documentary evidence had been proved.

Suranjit Sen Gupta who is a signatory of the report, charged the government that it did not give media coverage of the activities of the Parliamentary Special Committee although the activities of 39 other committees were being given television and radio coverage. He said the government was deliberately trying to hide its corruption which had been proved with documentary evidence.

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Noisy debate in JS

From page 1 Col 5

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Magistrate stabbed in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A senior assistant magistrate of Chittagong Sadar was stabbed by a group of miscreants at Urdu Road in the city Wednesday morning.

The victim, A K M Nasir Uddin Mahmud, 38, who received stab injuries in his right arm was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The victim alleged that he was going to Sadarghat by a rickshaw to go to his village Kachua, in Chandpur from 37/3 Engineering University Staff Quarters.

When he reached Urdu Road, a group of miscreants waylaid him and demanded money.

When he refused the miscreants stabbed him and snatched Taka ten thousand from him.

21 passport brokers taken in police remand

By Staff Correspondent

Twenty one alleged passport brokers were remanded to the Ramna police custody for interrogation yesterday.

Police in a raid in the Dhaka Regional Passport Office Tuesday arrested 32 people reportedly for working as passport brokers. The police-raid was made on a directive from the Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

All 32 people were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dhaka yesterday and 21 of them were returned to the police custody for two days for interrogation, said police.

Govt college teachers call off programme

The leaders of Bangladesh Government College Professors' Association and Bangladesh Government College Lecturers' Association have withdrawn their programme of indefinite strike scheduled from December 21 following a fruitful discussion with Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar at a meeting here yesterday, reports BSS.

The meeting took notes of different demands of the associations and held discussion on those.

Gunman opens fire on train in NY: 4 killed

NEW YORK, Dec 8: Four people were killed and 12 others injured Tuesday evening when a lone gunman opened fire indiscriminately on a crowded commuter train leaving New York City, police officials told local television, reports Reuter.

A spokesman at one of three area hospitals told television, five people had been brought in for treatment, four of them with critical wounds. The spokesman said more injured were expected.

Witnesses described scenes of pandemonium as passengers burst from the train's front cars to escape the gunman.

Everybody was running through the cars, saying, "Somebody's got a gun, somebody's got a gun," one woman told a television interviewer.

"The shots just kept going off. He wouldn't stop shooting, he wouldn't stop shooting," she said.

ATD project funding

From page 1 Col 7

served that the contractors should be selected by a competitive bidding process instead of being selected by the USAID. He questioned the huge size of the TA component of the project and sought a reduction. He asked if the eight year project period for technology transfer could be reduced; and, among other points, he also questioned the amount of counterpart fund to be paid by the government.

In his reply, the Agriculture Secretary agreed that the project does not qualify as an investment project. But he pointed out that the Planning Commission, without raising any questions, included it as an investment project after the Agriculture Ministry prepared a PCP following a request by ERD in March last. If needed, he said in the letter, a Technical Assistance Project Proposal (TAPP) can be prepared in place of the earlier investment project proposal.

However, the Agriculture secretary sought a decision on a number of points, including the fact that whether the project assistance would be accepted if it is directly administered by the TA contractors and whether the deposited counterpart fund would be allowed to be used for the credit programme under the project, so that there remains no other obstacles in approving the TAPP.

He also suggested that a decision or opinion of the ECNEC could also be sought regarding the matter.

The Agriculture Secretary noted that if the TA component of the project is reduced then the commodity assistance component may also be reduced in proportion.

Regarding the direct selection of the contractors by the USAID, the secretary as a precedent, pointed out that consultants were also selected directly for the financial sector reform project being implemented by Bangladesh Bank.

He also cited and ERD guideline, relating to the appointment of TA contractor's is-

sued in May 1992, which said: "However, during stipulation of the contract, if there is any difference in respect of any provision of these guidelines, the procedures of the development partner shall take precedence."

"Thus, it is not logical to consider the issue of selecting the TA contractor as a hindrance to approving the project. Here, the decision has to be taken whether the direct selection of the contractor would be acceptable or not. It may be noted that the USAID had earlier informed all concerned about their contracting procedures", the Agriculture secretary's letter addressed to his Planning Division counterpart said.

He also pointed out that the private importers under the project would deposit the counterpart fund through the banks and said the TA contractor would only import the transports and computer equipment to be used under the project.

The Agriculture Secretary, in his letter, also noted that the question of providing government subsidy for the commodity to be imported under the project does not arise as all imports would be covered under the commodity assistance grant.

As it is not possible to change and transfer technology for developing, extending and marketing policies overnight, he added, that is why the project term has been fixed at eight years.

The project would be administered by an inter-ministerial steering committee headed by the Agriculture Secretary and would be reviewed by the committee on a quarterly basis, he said.

The ATD project is timely and its aims and objectives are consistent with the government's Fourth Five Year Plan. If the project is implemented it would bring about a favourable multiplier effect in the country's economy, create additional employment, and the competitiveness of the agri industries would increase both in the domestic and international markets, the Agriculture Secretary said supporting the project.

Bangladeshi held in Bali with heroin

JAKARTA, Dec 8: Customs officials in the resort island of Bali arrested a Bangladeshi national today for allegedly trying to smuggle in 3.3 kilograms (7.26 pounds) of heroin, the Antara news agency said here, reports AFP.

Antara quoted a customs official at the Ngurah Rai Airport, Lirungan, as saying that the man, identified as Abul Kalam, 27, was nabbed shortly after arriving at the airport from Bangkok aboard a Thai international plane.

Abul Kalam was quoted as saying he was just a courier who was supposed to return to Bangkok after delivering the drugs in Bali.

Local govt

From page 1 Col 5

The Treasury Bench members are Maj Gen (Retd) M Majid-ul-Haq, Agriculture Minister, Barrister Nazmul Huda, Information Minister, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Works Minister, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Education Minister, Abdur Mannan, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Barrister Aminul Haque, State Minister for Establishment and Dr Moin Khan, State Minister for Planning.

The Opposition members of the committee are Tofail Ahmed, Prof Rafiqul Islam and AKM Jahangir Hussain of the Awami League, Barrister Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party, Sheikh Anwar Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Suranjit Sengupta of the Ganatantri Party and Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers' Party.

While proposing the committee, the LGRD Minister told the House that the committee would consider amendments brought to the Local Government (Zila Parishad) Ordinance, 1988, formulate the composition and functions of the local government body and recommend other necessary steps. However, he did not mention any time-frame for the committee to submit its report.

The special parliamentary committee was formed to accommodate the opposition views on the concept of the local government body following Tuesday's hour-long negotiation between the leading members of both the benches.

Dialogue on polythene

From page 1 Col 8

He said the present government is committed to do everything for the industrialisation of the country and it cannot do anything that may discourage the people from investing. The decision regarding polythene bags was taken for the greater interest of the people, he added.

The Minister appreciated the proposal made by the DCCI President ATM Wazullah for recycling the abandoned polythene bags, but said the discipline and consciousness needed to do so is absent in the country.

He, however, called upon the entrepreneurs to diversify their products and manufacture alternative items from polythene.

ATM Wazullah in his address of welcome said the business community neither have any dispute with the efforts to save the country's environment nor are they opposed to increase use of jute bags in the country. What surprised the business community is that the government took the decision without any consultation with the producers and the chambers and giving very little time for the manufacturers to change their business, he said.

Moreover, the DCCI believes, that the banning of polythene bags would serve none of the purposes. Instead, the decision would ruin a healthy domestic industry that provided livelihood to about 10 lakh people, he pointed out.

"Manufacturing of polythene shopping bags is a government-approved profit-making industry in Bangladesh that employs thousands of people as owners, workers, distributors, recyclers and hawkers. Our producers invested money, time and toll in the industry that has already succeeded in providing cost-efficient and consumer-accepted services to millions of people throughout the country," the DCCI president said and added the decision contradicts the government's commitment to private sector-led economic growth.

Besides, this ban has made the fate of bank loans of millions of Taka uncertain as most of the machinery and other accessories installed for production of such shopping bags may not be usable for production of alternative goods as suggested by the government, Wazullah said.

Senior vice president of the DCCI Syed Jamaluddin Haider was also present at the inaugural session of the seminar. The Director of the DCCI presented the keynote paper at the working session while journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Dr Abdul Gafur of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), CAF Dowla and AM Mubashshar of the DCCI took part in the discussion.

Rokeya

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Secretary of the Ministry Muhammad Enarful Huq will preside over the meeting.

Bangla Academy will hold a discussion at its premises at 4 pm on the day. Professor Md Maniruzaman will be in 'the chair'.

Naregrantha Prabartana has organised a cultural programme entitled "Lakh Nare Sabak Hai Ektu Naree Dakay" at the Planning and Development Academy at 5 pm.

President's message

BSS adds: President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday paid rich tributes to the memory of the pioneer of Muslim women awakening in this part of the sub-continent, Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, on the occasion of 'Rokeya Day' reports BSS.

The President in a message on the eve of the day said that the women community of today had been getting the benefits of the leading role played by Begum Rokeya for freeing the women-folk from superstitions and spreading education among them.

PM's message

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called for putting in united efforts to implement her government's programmes taken for development and spread of education among the women to realise the dreams of Begum Rokeya, the pioneer of Muslim women awakening.

In a message on the eve of the Rokeya Day, the Prime Minister said, Begum Rokeya had played the leading role in freeing the backward and neglected woman community from the social confinement and superstition through spreading the light of education among them.

Begum Zia said the present democratic government had taken specific steps for the spreading of women education and their development and welfare. "We want to create opportunities for women to ensure their equal participation in all sectors of national life along with male," she said.

Clinton: NAFTA

From page 1 Col 6

Mexico. It creates the world's largest and richest trading bloc, covering 360 million people.

Clinton's enthusiastic audience at a government auditorium included members of Congress, governors, mayors, business leaders and other supporters of the three-nation trade pact. A handful of union members who broke with labour opposition to NAFTA were among the invited guests.

The president also welcomed representatives from Canada and Mexico, calling them "partners in the future that we are trying to make together."

Defence cut

From page 1 Col 4

high-consumption and reduction of energy consumption.

The conferences which discussed 'democracy and development' and 'population, poverty and life style' issued a statement titled 'The Dhaka Statement' to strengthen the base of democracy and recommended changes to the selected chapters of the annotated outline of the final document of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The recommendation would be presented to the United Nations 'Cairo Conference' to be held next September.

The parliamentarians who came to these conferences in Dhaka — share a common goal, Maganga said, "we want to create a world of hopes."