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NEWS BRIEFS

New executives of BCS (Edn) Assoc

A new central executive committee of the BCS General Education Association has been formed with Vice-Principal of the Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Gulshan Ara, as its President and Siddiqur Rahman of the Eden University College as Secretary General. ABM Siddiqur Rahman of the Alia Madrassa, Sabir Ahmed of the Gazetteer and Zaman Khan of the Dhaka College were elected Vice-President, Joint Secretary General and Treasurer respectively at the biennial national conference of the association here yesterday, reports UNB.

Body recovered

By DMCH Correspondent
 Police recovered body of one Mohammad Babul, 30, from an abandoned house at Kawran Bazar in the city yesterday. In another incident, a young man was injured when two groups of muscle men clashed at Khilgaon Bagicha area in the city yesterday morning. The victim Ripon, 15, received bullet injuries in his abdomen and was admitted to the DMCH.

Benazir in Turkey

ANKARA, Dec 10: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived in Ankara today on an official visit to Turkey, reports Reuter.
 Prime Minister Tansu Ciller welcomed Bhutto at Ankara Airport with a warm handshake and an embrace. Their husbands, Asif Ali Zardari and Ozer Ciller, posed with their wives for photographs.
 Turkish firms have already won contracts worth 800 million US dollars to build highways in Pakistan.

Draft law against monopolies alarms business circles

By Inam Ahmed

A new law on monopolies, restrictive and unfair trade practices, the draft of which has been readied by the Commerce Ministry, has alarmed the entrepreneurs — both foreign and local — who fear this would be a serious obstacle to the country's industrial development.

The proposed law aims at curbing monopolistic industrial and business expansion, but business circles view this would instead create a restrictive atmosphere for industrialisation.

Under the law, any business house that produces, supplies or imports more than 30 per cent of any item would be labelled as a monopolistic enterprise. If any inter-connected enterprise, under agreement, acts together and produces or supplies more than 50 per cent of the market share, it would also be termed a monopolistic undertaking.

The proposed law stipulates that any business undertaking

likely to fall under the monopolistic category cannot go for further expansion of business. Under its 'restrictive trade practices' clause, marketing strategies like below-cost pricing or fixing prices to eliminate other competitors would be banned. Moreover, the enterprises would be deprived of the power to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.

Normal trade practices like limiting, restricting or withholding outputs or supply of any goods or making the supply of any goods dependent upon the purchase of other goods from the supplier would also be curbed under the law.

The new law also aims at putting restrictions on 'reduction sales' for more than 21 days in a year or ten days at a stretch.

The 'unfair trade practices' clause would also restrict some aspects of loan agreements. The

draft says, in any loan agreement where the lender has the option to designate the currency of repayment, each time the repayment of the principal and the interest is made will fall under unfair trade practices.

It would also restrict the lender from unilaterally requesting repayment before the arrival of the imputable to the borrower.

The law also seeks to impose 12 restrictions on joint venture agreements.

It would restrict the purchase of raw materials or other products from the foreign investor or persons designated by him and also curb some aspects of export and marketing procedures of joint venture enterprises.

It would also prevent agreement conditions between joint venture partners deemed 'unreasonably disadvantageous to the domestic investor.'

Mahbub Jamil, president of

the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while commenting on the proposed law, said this would halt the flow of foreign investments into the country.

'The law would be contrary to the country's current industrial policy and would jeopardize the on going financial sector reform,' he said.

'An ideal remedy against monopoly is to foster free and open competition in a free market economy,' he maintained.

Malcolm Fry, Managing Director of the Bangladesh Tobacco Co. Ltd (BTC) said the law would not be suitable for Bangladesh's economy at this very moment.

'A foreign investor would think twice before coming to this country if the law were passed,' the BTC chief executive said. 'The BTC had a plan for big investment for 1994. Now I am asking myself — would I go

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Toxic fertiliser Importer, supplier both made liable

By S Y Bakht

In a belated attempt to stop the import of fertiliser containing toxic substances, the government recently inserted two new safety clauses in the shipping documents and also made both the supplier and the importer liable for bringing in any such consignment into the country.

The Government Notification, aiming at stopping the import of fertiliser containing 'toxic wastes or contents', was issued in the form of a circular by the Agriculture Ministry on November 23 last.

The circular comes after the government was caught totally unawares when 3150 tonnes of zinc oxy-sulphate fertiliser, containing toxic industrial wastes, were imported from the United States early last year.

More than 1000 tonnes of fertiliser were sold around the country before the government decided to stop further distribution, after tests on samples

revealed that the consignment was mixed with hazardous industrial wastes and contained high levels of cadmium and lead.

As a safety measure, the government circular now stipulates that the importers provide two additional documents along with the shipping document of all fertiliser consignment entering the country.

The importers are required to furnish a list of the contents of the fertiliser certified by the manufacturer and a pre-shipment inspection certificate by an internationally recognised company.

If the shipping documents, along with the above two new documents, are found to be 'satisfactory', the circular said, then the fertiliser consignment would be allowed to be released from the ship without requiring a post-landing inspection by the customs officials.

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BNP believes in politics of production: Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said her party's programmes and policies are aimed at people's welfare, increased production and service to the nation, reports UNB.

'The BNP believes in the politics of production and this is why we are now thinking of export instead of import,' she said asking the party activists to work for improving the condition of the people and bringing about overall development of the country.

The Prime Minister was addressing newcomers to her party and newly elected office-bearers of different college student unions of Natore district, who met her at Sugandha last night.

More than 1,500 leaders and workers of opposition Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat and Communist Party joined the BNP expressing allegiance to the leadership of Begum Zia and the 19-point programme of the BNP.

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Professionals go on leave today

By Staff Correspondent

The members of the Prokrichi and 26 BCS cadres will go on a mass leave for three days from today as part of their movement to press home their 17-point charter of demands.

The leaders of the Prokrichi said, their programme would go ahead as per schedule and all the units have been directed to observe the programme.

The members of Prokrichi, a platform of the country's professionals, have also planned to sign their resignation letters en masse on December 15.

Their demands include appointment of professionals to the function-based cadre, separation of the judiciary from the executive, transfer of the executive powers to the elected public representatives and overhauling the present bureaucracy.

SEACO: Dhaka's proposal recommended

The Bangladesh proposal for establishing South East Asian Cooperation Organisation (SEACO) has been recommended by the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commodity Exchange (ICCCIE) to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), reports UNB.

The proposed SEACO comprising Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Brunei, Darussalam and the Maldives will be aimed to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation.

President of the Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mahbubur Rahman tabled the proposal at the 11th ICCIE meeting held in Kuala Lumpur from December 4-7.

The proposal emphasised that some regions of the OIC have established their regional cooperation arrangements such as Arab Magreb Union (UMA), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Organisation of African States and Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO).

However, in South East Asia which is having nearly a quarter of the Ummah comprising Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Brunei and Maldives no such forum for close economic cooperation exists.

The nine-member Bangladesh delegation at the ICCIE meeting included Alhaj Mohammad Akram Hossain, Neyamatullah Sabu MP, Obaidur Rahman, MA Mannan, Reaz-ul-Islam, Salahuddin Kasem Khan and AKM Shamsuddoha.

Mediators plan fresh Bosnian peace talks

SARAJEVO, Dec 10: International mediators announced that they plan a new round of Bosnia peace talks this month as an upsurge of shelling and sniping surrounded at least eight people in Sarajevo today, reports Reuter.

Peace envoys Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg hoped to reconvene the talks between Bosnia's warring Serbs, Muslims and Croats in Geneva on December 21, said the mediators' spokesman John Mills.

MPs urged to unite against terrorism

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad should endeavour to take a unified stance, irrespective of party affiliation, to abolish terrorism and ensure human rights in the country's newly-created democratic dispensation.

This was the unanimous call made by participants at a discussion meeting on 'Human Rights: Bangladesh Perspective', organised by the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) on the occasion of the 'Human Rights Day' yesterday.

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda was the chief guest while BSEHR president, former Chief Justice Kemaluddin Hussain chaired the function. Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad, Gano Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain and Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam were among the speakers. The gathering was also addressed by Falu Mia, who spent 21 years in jail without a trial and was released last month at the initiative of the BSEHR.

Sigma Huda, Secretary General of the Society, gave the address of welcome.

The speakers identified terrorism as the main hindrance to the establishment of political and economic rights in the country and blamed violence for retarding the development process.

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda suggested that the opposition parties concentrate more on national political issues like terrorism instead of fighting on non-substantive issues.

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Nelson Mandela



F. W. de Klerk

Mandela, de Klerk accept Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Norway, Dec 10: Nelson Mandela said the Nobel Peace Prize he accepted with South African President F W de Klerk on Friday was a call from the world to continue their efforts to end apartheid, reports AP.

'We stand here today as nothing more than a representative of millions of people who dared to rise up against a social system whose very essence is war, violence, racism, repression and the impoverishment of an entire people,' said Mandela, according to a copy of his

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Agro-based industries if voted to power: Hasina

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 10: Awami League president Sheikh Hasina has declared that if her party returns to power she will build agro-based industries in the country.

This will be done in line with the Chinese model using modern technology for the well-being of the labourers and farmers who constitute 90 per cent of the population, she said.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament was addressing a big public meeting at the Khalishpur Sramik maidan this afternoon.

Presided over by the party's city president Advocate Manzurul Imam, the meeting was also addressed among others by Salahuddin Yusuf MP, Obaidur Qader, Mahbubul Alam Hiron, the AL's mayoral candidate and Mannujun Sufian.

Ashrawi quitting PLO leadership

STOCKHOLM, Dec 10: Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian spokeswoman at the Middle East peace talks in Washington, is quitting the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in protest against chairman Yasser Arafat's leadership, Swedish radio reported from Jerusalem today, reports Reuter.

Swedish Radio's Middle East correspondent, currently in Jerusalem, quoted Ashrawi as saying she would not take part in any Palestinian government but would concentrate on human rights and preparing the Palestinian people for self-rule.

The radio said Ashrawi was leaving the PLO leadership because she considered it undemocratic.

\$ 14m ROK credit for Khulna power project

Bangladesh will receive US dollar 14 million in credit from South Korea under an agreement signed in Seoul yesterday, reports UNB.

The amount to be received under the agreement signed between the government of Bangladesh and the Exim Bank of Korea will be spent for expansion of electricity supply in greater Khulna.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, now on an official visit to Korea, attended the signing of the accord which he described as a memorable event in the history of relations between the two countries.

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Back draft constitution or face civil war: Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Dec 10: President Boris Yeltsin threw his full weight behind his draft new constitution on Thursday, warning Russians that if they rejected it in a national vote on Sunday, the country could slide into civil war, reports Reuter.

In a television address to Russia's 107 million voters, Yeltsin avoided taking sides between the parties competing in simultaneous parliamentary polls, making it clear that approval of the constitution in

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the referendum was his key target.

'It is our decision — is Russia to be or not to be, the country we voted for in the presidential election and the April (1993) referendum. It is your decision — is there to be, or not to be, peace and calm in Russia.'

Yeltsin's priorities are clear. If the new national charter is approved, giving him broad powers at the expense of the legislature, the parliament's composition is not vital to him.

If it is rejected, he risks a repetition of the power struggle between president and parliament that culminated in an armed revolt by his opponents which he crushed two months ago, at the cost of

nearly 150 lives.

Meanwhile, eager voters in a remote Siberian region and sailors in the Pacific fleet began casting ballots Friday in Russia's first post-Soviet elections, two days before the rest of the country.

Most of the 94,000 polling places spread across Russia's 11 time zones will open Sunday, and the first results are not expected until Monday at the earliest.

In the election, called by President Boris Yeltsin when he disbanded Parliament in September, voters are selecting deputies to a new Parliament and considering a draft constitution that would replace Russia's current Soviet-era charter.

Sailors in Russia's Pacific Fleet voted aboard their ships at sea, with the results being transmitted to the mainland, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported. The first ship to cast ballots was the Professor Kabanovskiy from the Pacific fishing reconnaissance and research fleet.

Several thousand servicemen in remote outposts also were allowed to vote early, the news agency said.

In the Altai republic of southern Siberia, polling places were opened in mountain hamlets.

Rajshahi City Corpn polls Hectic lobbying for BNP nomination

By Asiuzzaman, back from Rajshahi

Hectic lobbying is on to secure the ruling party's nomination for the Rajshahi City Corporation election, scheduled to be held on January 30, party sources said.

Incumbent mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu and local stalwart Enamul Huq are vying for the BNP nomination, party insiders said, adding that the two leaders represent two factions of the Rajshahi city BNP.

The city unit split into two during a conference ahead of the national council of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) held in Dhaka on September 1-3 last.

Ekhlaq Hossain and Azizur Rahman, MP are the president and general secretary of one faction while Abul Hossain and Enamul Huq are leading the rival group as president and secretary respectively.

RCC mayor Mizanur Rahman is one of the vice-chairmen of the Ekhlaq-Azizur group.

The ruling party high command has asked both groups to patch up their differences but there were no signs of rapprochement until last week, sources said.

Elections to three city corporations — Rajshahi, Khulna

and Chittagong — will be held simultaneously on January 30. The date for filing nominations is December 21.

The main opposition Awami League has already finalised its candidate for the post of mayor. City committee executive member Abdul Matin Khan won the party's approval by a margin of 49-36 votes. He

defeated his main contender and city vice-president Masudul Huq Dulu in a secret party balloting held in late August.

The Jamaat-e-Islami is still undecided whether to contest the election or to extend its support to the ruling party. Jamaat sources, however, said that they will nominate city

unit president Ataur Rahman for the post of the mayor but local political sources said that the party may extend its support to the BNP candidate if current negotiations succeed.

Relations between the ruling party and the Jamaat became strained following the bloody clashes in the Rajshahi University campus on February 6 last in which two JCD activists were killed and dozens of others injured.

Following the incident present mayor Mizanur Rahman filed a case against a number of Jamaat central leaders. That case is pending before the court.

Three former mayors under deposed President HM Ershad — former mayor and minister Mesbah Uddin Bablu, Durul Huda and Abdul Hadi — are coveting the Jatiya Party ticket. It is yet unclear whom the JP central high command will support, sources said.

The left-leaning parties may also put up a candidate. Majibul Huq Baku of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) and Liaquat Ali Liku of the Workers' Party are the possible candidates of the Left group, Five-Party Alliance sources said.

Jamaat candidates for 4 corpns

By Nazmul Ashraf

The Jamaat-e-Islami has finalised its list of candidates for the forthcoming city corporation elections in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi, reliable sources said.

Elections to the post of mayor and commissioner of the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), the Khulna City Corporation (KCC) and the Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) are due to be held on January 30 next year while the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) poll is likely to take place in mid-March. The delay in the DCC election is being caused by fresh delimitation of wards under the corporation.

The Majlis-e-Sura, the highest decision-making body

of the Jamaat, finalised the list of four mayor candidates following a four-day deliberations by the Sura members last night.

According to meeting sources, the candidates are: for DCC — ATM Azharul Islam, Dhaka city Amir, CCC — Afsaruddin, Chittagong city nayebe-amir, KCC — Golam Parwar, leader of the Jamaat's labour wing Sramik Kalyan Federation and RCC — Ataur Rahman, Rajshahi city Amir.

The Sura meeting also decided that the party would contest the city corporation polls independently and reject any offer of electoral alliance with any other political party.

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