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Probe body report on Biman's DC-10 accident

Demotions of captain, co-pilot recommended

By Asjuzzaman

The Inquiry Committee on Biman's DC-10 accident has held the captain, the co-pilot and the air traffic controller responsible for the May 18 crash and suggested their demotions, committee sources said.

The committee recommended that captain Azizullah, co-pilot Kaiser and traffic controller Abdur Rahman should be demoted from their present position and should undergo further training, a member of the seven-man committee told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

Commanding pilot Captain Azizullah and second-in-com-

mand Captain Kaiser will be assigned to fly low category turbo-prop ATP aircraft if the recommendations are accepted, the source said.

The probe body made 25 recommendations in its more than 100-page report. The details of the recommendations were not immediately available.

The seven-member committee, headed by Group Captain Nazmul Huq Chowdhury, Member (Operation), Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), was formed following the accident on May 18 last year in which one of Biman's four DC-10s skidded off the runway with

135 passengers and crew on board at Zia International Airport (ZIA). The passengers, who were on a flight from Jeddah, however, survived unhurt.

The other members of the committee were P K Biswas, Chief of Airworthiness, CAAB, Captain Mustaq, former chief of flight operation, Biman, Flight Engineer Islam, Ground Engineer Chowdhury, Squadron Leader Kazi and Squadron Leader Anis of Bangladesh Air Force.

During their six-month inquiry, they found that the air-



AUREATE FAREWELL: A lonely fisherman in the azure waters of the Bay of Bengal is suffused in a transient, transcendental glory as the sun sets for the last time in 1993.
— Star photo

Govt to set up 6 more Artho Rin Adalat

By Sohel Manzur

The government has decided to set up six more Artho Rin Adalat (money loan courts) in the country by this month to quicken the disposal of the cases.

According to official sources, about 4000 cases are now pending with the existing 24 loan courts because of shortage of judges.

The other reasons for the slow disposal of cases, as stated by some officials of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs — include some legal flaws and 'non-cooperation' on the part of the parties concerned in holding the hearings in time.

It is, however, yet to be decided where the courts will be set up.

A high official of the Law Ministry, when contacted last night, said the sites for the courts would be selected considering the volume of cases of certain places. He said the ministry has been finding it difficult to accommodate the loan courts in the existing district court buildings because of their own space problem following the shifting of the Upazilla Courts to the District Hqs.

The official also said the ministry had been asking the loan courts continuously to dispose of their cases as early as possible and hoped the situa-

Family is the abode of peace: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday hoped that the observance of the International Year of Family would help cement amity among the members of the family towards building a happy and prosperous family as well as the society, reports BSS.

In a message on the occasion, she said through the observance of the year it would be possible to make each member of the family conscious about his or her duty, responsibility and rights.

All preparations have been taken to observe today the International Year of Family, 1994 in Bangladesh.

The objectives of the year is to ensure equity between man and woman, rearing the children properly and ensure their safety, take care of the old and retarded members of the family

Cost of living up by 5.55 pc

By Staff Correspondent

The prices of essentials in the Dhaka city increased on average by 6.41 per cent during the last year, according to a report of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB).

During the same time, the cost of living increased by 5.55 per cent.

The CAB said the purchasing power of the farmers and the people dependent on agriculture went down drastically because of the price slump of farm products. At the same time, the prices of industrial products and imported goods jumped up.

Agricultural items like potatoes, soyabean oil, onion and dried chilly witnessed galloping rise in prices.

During the year, the prices of edible oil increased by 14 per cent, spices by 24 per cent, vegetables by 30 per cent, fish by 16 per cent, and powdered milk by 12 per cent.

The gas and water bill marked a 14.72 per cent rise during the period while prices of postal service shot up to Tk 4 from Tk 2. Per unit electricity charge was Tk 3.10 in December, 1992, it was fixed at Tk 3.37 in December 1993, registering a 19.35 per cent increase. The charge for 1,000 litre water was Tk 3.17 and rose to Tk 3.49 in 1993, the increase being 10.09 per cent.

The house rent increased by 12.16 per cent in 1993 as compared to the previous year.

KAFCO goes into production in Oct

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 31: The multinational 100 per cent export-oriented Tk 2000 crore KAFCO project being implemented over 80 acres of land on the bank of the Karnaphuli river here, is expected to go into production in October, 1994.

Briefing the newsmen at the Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company (KAFCO) project office this afternoon, Minister for Industries Zahiruddin Khan informed that 93 per cent works of the KAFCO project had already been completed paving the way for commissioning of it ahead of schedule despite suspension of works for about a year. The plant was earlier scheduled to be commissioned by January '95.

The minister said the gas-based KAFCO plant would be able to earn foreign currency of Tk 400 crore per year by exporting fertilizers to be manufactured by it.

As a result, the project will get the total investment returned in five years, the minister hoped.

Zahiruddin claimed that the KAFCO project had generated tremendous impact in the field of international cooperation with Bangladesh.

"Foreign investors now feel encouraged to come here," he added.

The shareholders of the KAFCO project include the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), Japan, Denmark, UK and Holland.

Professionals slam Press Note, meet again today

By Staff Correspondent

The councillors' meeting of the professionals Friday blasted the Government Press Note but ended inconclusively.

The Prokricchi-BCS Central Action Council would meet again today (Saturday) to decide whether to continue the on-going agitation or call it off for a while, sources said.

Meanwhile, the convener of the Central Action Council and president of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), Dr M A Majed was injured in a road mishap on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway while returning to the capital to attend

the council session.

Heated debate on the on-going programme and 'language' of the Government Press Note gripped the nearly three-hour meeting that started at 6-30 pm at the conference room of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB).

Sources at the meeting said the Prokricchi councillors, particularly those belonging to the agriculture and health cadres, sharply reacted to the Press Note saying it had attempted to cause a rift among the professionals.

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Code of conduct for city polls underway

By Nazmul Asraf

The Election Commission (EC) is expected to finalise shortly the code of conduct for the candidates contesting the upcoming elections to the four city corporations, official sources said.

The EC officials are now working to give a final shape to the 12-point code of conduct by incorporating in it the suggestions made by the major political parties and the task is likely to be completed within a couple of days.

"With the finalisation of the code, the commission will circu-

late the same through the mass media and publish booklets for distribution among all concerned," the Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf told The Daily Star last night.

Earlier on Tuesday, the EC distributed copies of the draft code among the political parties, having representation in Parliament and sought the parties' views on the draft by Thursday.

Justice Rouf confirmed that he had received the views of the

Greetings



The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, well-wishers, patrons and advertisers a Happy New Year.

Hasina blames BNP for violating election rules

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday squarely blamed ruling BNP for violating the election rules 'apprehending debacle' in the ensuing city corporation elections in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna, reports UNB.

Addressing a group of political workers who joined Awami League yesterday evening, she said the government being isolated from the people for its unbridled corruption, misuse and terrorism, is violating election rules at the very beginning of the electioneering.

The Prime Minister herself has been giving assurances to the people in presence of the BNP candidates. Ministers are also doing the same at different public meetings in violation of

BMA leaders injured in road mishap

By Staff Correspondent

President, secretary general and several central leaders of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway Friday afternoon.

Sources said BMA president Dr M A Majed and secretary general Dr Gazi Abdul Huq and four other leaders were injured when the microbus carrying them skidded off the road and dashed a tree near Lalmai area at about 4:15 pm.

The driver of the microbus

NEWS BRIEFS

PM opens National Book Fair today

The 15th National Book Fair begins at the Osmani Memorial Hall here today. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the fortnight long book fair. A colourful rally was brought out under the auspices of National Book Centre this morning. State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan-Ara Begum led the rally, which began from National Public Library and ended at the Osmani Memorial Hall premises.

Writers, publishers, scouts, girl guides and eminent persons took part in the rally. The rally was the first of its kind in the country, reports BSS.

AL last elections meet Jan 28

Awami League will hold its last election meeting for the mayor election of Dhaka City Corporation at Manik Mia Avenue on January 28. Party chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina will address the meeting. Mohammad Hanif, president of city Awami League, is the party candidate for the mayor elections scheduled for January 30, reports UNB.

Hason Utsab begins today

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Dec 31: A week-long festival 'Hason Utsab' will begin at Sunamganj tomorrow, in memory of the renowned mystic poet Hason Raja. The programme includes 3-day mela, seminar, discussion, poetry session, cultural session, cultural contest, and others. Renowned educationists, folklorists, poets and artists from Dhaka and West Bengal are expected to attend the festival.

The economy in 1993 Stable without moving ahead

By A Special Correspondent

The Bangladesh economy has stepped into 1994 as one of the best managed economies in South Asia. It is also likely to be one of the slowest growing ones.

The policy package that the Finance Minister pronounced last June were aimed at a six per cent growth of the economy. This target is now unlikely to be achieved largely because of a slowdown in investment in the public sector. Private sector interest in investment also remains lukewarm in spite of cuts in bank rate in two instalments.

The focus of the economic policy in Bangladesh during the last three years was on stabilisation and reform. Macro-economic management in Bangladesh has received acclaim at home and abroad. Reforms have

also progressed at a fast pace. Indian Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee, recently in Dhaka, has said that Bangladesh was one step ahead of India in the area of economic reforms.

Reforms have borne good results in the agricultural sector. Breaking of the BADC's monopoly in agricultural input distribution has induced good response from the private sector. Rice production is approaching self-sufficiency level. It remains to be seen, however, whether rice production can keep pace with the growth in population without reducing acreage under other crops.

Good foodgrain production has helped to keep the inflation rate down. In Bangladesh, the

official estimate of inflation rate is made by measuring movement in the Dhaka Middle-Class Cost of Living (DHAMCOL) Index. Food alone has a share of nearly 63 per cent in the representative expenditure pattern used to estimate the DHAMCOL index. Food prices have declined continuously since November 1992 on a year-on-year basis. As a result the inflation rate in September 1993 on a twelve-monthly average basis was negative.

Low inflation has helped the Taka to appreciate in real terms, making exports dearer to foreign buyers. Reduction in average tariff rate on imports has helped exporters to balance this to some extent by cutting cost.

See Page 8 Col 3

BADC will auction Tk 200 crore irrigation equipment

Star Report

The Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) will dispose of all its irrigation equipment through open auction.

The equipment worth over 200 crore taka, now stored in the BADC's godowns all over the country, will be sold by the third week of this month. The equipment include deep tubewells, shallow tubewells, power pumps, accessories and spares.

The BADC will have to clear the equipment to fulfil the conditions of agreement signed by the government with the World Bank for implementation of the National Minor Irrigation Development Project. Under that agreement, the BADC was scheduled to clear the stock by March 31, 1992, but the time was later extended.

There were several efforts by the authorities to sell the equipment through tenders, which failed to attract good number of buyers. Moreover, prices quoted by the intending buyers were not reasonable at all, said the sources concerned, adding that according to the previous schedule, the BADC will now have to go for auction.

With the sale of the equipment, the BADC will virtually cease its activities in the field of irrigation which the corporation had been doing for about 32 years.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to downsize the BADC by restructuring its activities and reducing the existing manpower. A four-member inter-ministerial committee was formed by the government in

October to work out the procedure of reorganising the corporation. The committee is expected to submit its report at the end of this month.

The reorganisation process of BADC is based on the recommendations made by a government-appointed committee headed by Dr Iqbal Mahmud, which submitted its report in March last year. Sources said that the recommendations suggested specific core functions of the BADC that include irrigation service upto a certain extent for promotional purpose. However, the proposal of the Agriculture Ministry put forward to the Cabinet excluded irrigation aspect from future activities of the corporation, they said.

Programmes at Engineers' Instt foiled

By Staff Correspondent

Police foiled conflicting programmes of the Sampradikaikata Birodhi Chhatra Samaj (SBCS) and the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), both scheduled to be held at the Institute of Engineers premises yesterday.

The students wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami, the ICS had scheduled its two-day conference from yesterday.

The SBCS, an anti-communal student group and alliance of 14 student organisations, announced to resist the ICS programme in order to 'uphold the spirit of the Liberation War.'

The authorities prohibited meetings, rallies and processions and imposed Section-144 at the Engineers' Institute area for 48 hours from Thursday.

Bangladeshi assaulted in Italy

ROME, Dec 31: Police arrested two skinheads for assaulting a flower peddler from Bangladesh, a news agency reported Friday, reports AP.

Abdul Kazi, 28, had entered a Chinese restaurant Thursday evening to sell individual blossoms to diners, a common sight in many Rome restaurants.

Seven 'nazis', as neo-Nazi skinheads are called here, insulted him and forced Kazi to leave, the AGI agency said.

Three of the skinheads followed him outside, assaulted him and stole his flowers. They distributed them to the other restaurant patrons.

A police patrol in the area arrested two suspects, AGI said. They were charged with robbery linked to racial hatred. The third was a minor and not arrested, the agency added.

Happy New Year

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