

NEWS DIGEST

Bad loans stand at Tk 2600 cr

Bank lawyers urged to pursue defaulters

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday urged the panel of lawyers and legal advisors of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and financial institutions to put in their best efforts for quick disposal and settlement of cases involving recovery of bad loans of the banks, reports BSS.

1993. Of the amount, Taka 6,574 crore had been classified as time-barred.

As many as 1,77,428 certificate cases were pending with different financial loan courts to recover Tk 2,618 crore bad loans, out of which only Taka 150 crore has so far been recovered against decrees obtained in 15,883 cases.

Biman flight

quoting Ujjal, said the man entered the airport's highly protected area by jumping over a fence — an under construction site — and sneaked into the aircraft before anyone else.

A Biman crew noticed Ujjal when a passenger found him occupying his seat.

Ujjal was immediately handed over to the airport security, but the captain of the flight refused to fly without a proper security check of the aircraft following the incident.

However, the authorities changed the aircraft for the London flight (BG-005).

Ujjal said he was from Krishnanagar village of Jessore. When he approached the aeroplane, he saw some people working nearby. He asked them which one would go to Dubai or Kuwait and the people showed him the aircraft, he added.

Police suspect the adventurous young man is of unsound mind.



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina handing over prize to a winner of the first Bangabandhu Indoor Games Competition at the Public Library auditorium in the city yesterday.

Hasina calls to resist BNP corruption, terrorism

MUKTAGACHHA, Jan 2: Awami League president Sheikh Hasina today called upon the people to unitedly resist corruption and terrorism of the government to save the country, reports UNB.

The people have lost confidence in the ruling BNP because the corruption resorted to by the Prime Minister's relatives, ministers and the BNP men had ruined the national economy, she told a public meeting here.

Hasina alleged that the government had now resorted to terrorism and repression to cling to power.

Addressing the public meeting, organised to protest a recent attack on Advocate Badar Ahmed, a local Jubo League and Ghata-Dalal Nirmul Committee leader, the Awami League leader demanded punishment of those responsible for the attack.

Party sources alleged that the activists of the BNP-backed Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal attacked Advocate Badar Ahmed on December 19 and severed tendons of his legs. He is now under treatment at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

She said repression and killings cannot stop the Awami League from pursuing its politics for the welfare of the commonman. "It has a long tradition of struggle against autocrats and establishing the rights of the people."

The Awami League chief said her party wants to build a poverty-free Bangladesh and free the country from the curse of illiteracy within 10 years. It is also in favour of providing subsidy to agriculture and building

up agro-based industries to generate employment opportunities.

Referring to the debacle in the recent FAO Executive Director election where Bangladesh got only two votes, she blamed the government for tarnishing the country's image abroad. "The BNP has no friends abroad, only masters."

Hasina, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, accused Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of signing a 'bond of slavery' with India.

She said Begum Zia, who led a 'long march' on the Farakka issue only a few years ago, did not mention anything about the Ganges water sharing during her talks with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in Delhi last year.

Hasina called the BNP a 'betrayed government' saying it did not implement the joint declaration of the Three Alliances, nor did it fulfil its 'commitment' about repealing the Indemnity Ordinance and separating the judiciary from the executive. The BNP also did not honour its agreements signed in Parliament and with the workers, she added.

The meeting, at the Shaheed Smriti College ground, was presided over by former MP Shamsul Huq. It was also addressed by Awami League president members Abdul Mannan and Amir Hossain Amu, Shamsul Huq MP, Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Advocate Fazlur Rahman, and Jalaluddin, father of Advocate Badar Ahmed.

Earlier, Hasina visited Badar Ahmed at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Bangabandhu Indoor Games: Hasina distributes prizes

Chief of the Awami League (AL) Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for committed leadership to retrieve Bangladesh from backwardness, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, was addressing the prize distribution ceremony of the 'Bangabandhu Memorial Indoor Games Competition' at the chief guest at the Public Library auditorium here.

The Bangladesh Chhatra League organised the competition for the students of the University of Dhaka on the occasion of the Victory Day 1993.

She distributed prizes among the winners urging them to be imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Sheikh Hasina, referring to the present situation of the country, was critical of command of weapons over politics. She thanked Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for her call to the students to be with books, pens and papers in their hands in the pursuit of knowledge. "Though late, I still appreciate her call", Sheikh Hasina said.

With Chhatra League president Mainuddin Hasan Chowdhury in the Chair, the function was also addressed, among others, by Awami League leaders Abdul Mannan, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil, Obaidul Kader, Abdul Mannan, eminent soccer players and AL leaders Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chhunu, Badal Roy, Abdul Gaffar, general secretary of the Chhatra League Iqbalur Rahim and sports secretary Khawja Rahmatullah.

The Midnight File

Archbishop of Canterbury returns to Kenya

NAIROBI, Jan 2: The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, flew back to Kenya today after a visit to rebel territory in southern Sudan which led to an order expelling the British ambassador from Khartoum. Carey, spiritual leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans, arrived on a charter plane and declined to talk to reporters, reports Reuter.

Paolo Benelli dead

PESARO, Jan 2: Paolo Benelli, an engineer and major figure in the Italian motorcycle industry, died Saturday after a long illness. He was 59. Benelli was the son of Tonino Benelli, a motorcycle racer in Italy's pioneer racing days and founder of the Benelli motorcycle business, reports AP.

Rohingya refugees

Repatriation of 119th batch cancelled

From Abdul Monayem Khan

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 2: The repatriation of the 119th batch of Rohingya refugees today has been cancelled because the Myanmar authorities did not give their permission.

Sources said, so far 52,917 Rohingya refugees have returned to their homeland in 118 batches.

Although the repatriation process had been steady till the last week of December, it has recently slowed down.

The 117th batch, which returned home on December 24, comprised 57 persons while another schedule of the 26th repatriation was cancelled. However, on December 30, a group of 172 persons returned to Myanmar.

The cancellation of today's programmes has put a question mark over the future of the repatriation process, the sources said, adding that the Myanmar authorities had permitted the return of only 56 persons of 12 families on the next scheduled day, Tuesday.

"This number is remarkably low," the sources pointed out. "Previously they allowed up to 2000 persons in a batch to return."

The sources also hinted at a possible conspiracy to slow down the repatriation process by a particular quarter on both sides of the border. "Such a politically motivated conspiracy has been hatched by some NGOs," the sources further added.

The UNHCR, which had been active in the repatriation process since January last, has also limited its activities.

Presently, there are 1 lakh 98 thousand 786 Rohingya refugees in 17 camps located in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

So far, 12,940 babies have been born in the camps while 5133 refugees have died.

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Zhirinovskiy

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post-Soviet elections, has dismayed Russian reformists and western governments alike with wild calls for restoration of the Russian empire and aggressive comments about neighbouring states.

Only two years ago, he threatened to drop nuclear bombs on Germany if it interfered in Russian affairs.

Welt Am Sonntag, without providing any full quotes, said the diplomatic report and a tape recording showed that Zhirinovskiy threatened Germany with "World War III" and its "complete destruction."

The article, released ahead of publication on Sunday, said the ultra-nationalist would not complete the Russian pullout from former Communist East Germany should he come to power.

Some 60,000 Russian soldiers and family members are still stationed in eastern Germany.

Moscow, which once had 380,000 troops stationed in East Germany as the spearhead of the WARSAW Pact, will withdraw all its soldiers by August this year as a part of international agreements accompanying German unification in 1990.

Zhirinovskiy said he would return 300,000 troops to eastern Germany to back up additional reparations claims from World War II that would make Germany "a poor country," the article said.

All buildings constructed by Soviet soldiers in East Germany would have to be returned to Russia for use by Russian industry, he was reported to have said.

In another road accident, a fish monger was killed when a running train knocked him at the Kawran Bazar rail crossing at about 7.30 am yesterday.

The victim, Mohammed Monu Miah, 50, died on the spot.

Nilufar, a 14-year-old girl, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding bus at Khilgaon Vishwa Road at about 8 am yesterday.

Nilufar was seriously injured and admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where she succumbed to her injuries within half an hour.

Tk 7 lakh looted from bus

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 2: Armed bandits intercepted and looted a bus on the Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway at 6 pm today.

Around 50 passengers were forced to remain silent spectators as seven dacoits stopped the bus a mile from Dulhazara Hospital and commanded it to stop.

The dacoits relieved the passengers of nearly Taka seven lakh in cash.

3 killed in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least three persons were killed and as many injured in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

An auto-rickshaw driver was killed when a speeding truck knocked his vehicle at Johnson Road, Dholaikhal at about 4 am yesterday.

The victim, Mohammed Ruhul Amin, 38 died on the spot.

In another road accident, a fish monger was killed when a running train knocked him at the Kawran Bazar rail crossing at about 7.30 am yesterday.

The victim, Mohammed Monu Miah, 50, died on the spot.

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Aricha clash

From Page 1 Col 5

rushed to the scene, but came under attack. Police rounded up several students with kirich, ram daos and Chinese axes.

Half an hour later, more students from the college came out to the ghat and attacked the workers and police. They snatched their mates from the police.

The unruly students beat a retreat when local people held Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader and GS of the college student union Nur Mohammad Khan Biplob with a Chinese axe. He was handed over to the police.

A case was filed with Shibaya thana.

Phone links

From Page 1 Col 7

operative. The government has taken up the T&T expansion programme after repeated complaints from the clients that they cannot get connections easily.

In fact, the channels are overburdened," the minister said. "Sometimes, the people have to wait for a long time for a single call, for example, to India."

Tariqul Islam said the government was exploring the possibilities of floating bonds for the channel expansion programme. According to T&T sources, the software business is growing fast. People are setting up firms and exporting data for which an increase of channels has become very necessary.

The recommendations of the committee, however, included rescheduling of the loan and providing working capital to the company.

some officials of the Sonali Bank responsible for the sickness of an electric lamp industry — Elite Lamps — and recommended some measures for its rehabilitation.

The Sonali Bank, instead of doing so, lodged a case against the company for recovery of its outstanding loan and summoned the company owners, through newspaper advertisements, on December 28 for attending the trial, scheduled on the ninth of this month. The outstanding loan of the company to the bank, as described in the summons notice, is over Tk 75 lakh.

DC-10 crash

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When contacted over telephone, Captain Azizullah conveyed the same feeling, saying "I was given the wrong forecast."

"I was told by the Control Tower that I was landing into a 22-knot headwind but basically it was a tailwind," Azizullah said. "Because of the tailwind the aircraft overshot the runway."

He claimed that during his 19-year career, he had a 10,000 hour flying record. He commanded DC-10 aircraft for 6,000 hours.

Sonali Bank

From Page 1 Col 7

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Raise voice against hartals

From Page 1 Col 5

ests of the workers. They call hartals and strikes without any issue to halt production in the mills and factories.

Begum Zia said the BNP wants to develop the country. But the opposition wants to destroy it. She questioned their patriotism. "Are they friends of the people? Do they want welfare of the commonman?"

She mentioned that the party, which now accuses the BNP government of failure, was also in power but failed completely to serve the people. This party also fails to play its due role as the opposition."

Begum Zia said her government has adopted a suitable industrial policy, opening up investment opportunities for all to resolve the unemployment problem and ensuring development of the country.

Pointing out the baneful impact of shutdowns and indiscipline, she said foreign investors feel shy to invest in Bangladesh

when they see frequent shutdowns and blockades as well as arson and destruction of public property.

"We are now trying to stand on our own feet. We have a rich soil but we must also exploit the resources from beneath the soil," Begum Zia said, adding that her government had undertaken programmes to extract the hidden wealth.

The Prime Minister said more than one lakh teachers for schools and colleges would be appointed within a year to help implement the government's education programmes. She asked the local leaders and guardians to look after schools and colleges in their localities.

Referring to the population boom, she said Bangladesh is a very small country but with a large population and urged all to share the responsibility of controlling population by keeping their family small.

"Bangladesh is dubbed a country of problems. But it can

be turned into a country of prosperity if we all keep our families small."

Local MP Joyanal Abedin Faruq put forward various problems and urged the Prime Minister to resolve those to ensure development of the area.

Assuring that she would look into the problems, the Prime Minister said roads and bridges would be constructed and educational institutions provided with additional financial support.

Four Union Parishad Chairmen of Senbagh thana joined the BNP at the meeting expressing their allegiance to the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia.

The meeting over, Begum Zia planted a 'neem' sapling and distributed some poultry birds and cattle among the distressed women of the area.

She also visited a number of houses in Arjuntall, a village adjacent to the meeting venue, and talked with the women and children.

Indo-Pak talks on Kashmir

From Page 1 Col 4

widespread human rights abuses in Kashmir.

The longstanding dispute has become more worrisome in recent years because both countries are now believed capable of building nuclear weapons.

AFP adds: Indian Foreign Secretary Jyotindra Nath Dixit termed the current round exploratory and said attempts would be made to narrow the widely differing stances over Kashmir.

Pakistan had expressed pessimism on the eve of the talks, but the Indian diplomat, refusing to prejudice the outcome, said he was neither optimistic nor pessimist.

"We abide by sense of realism in dealing with issues when relations are problematic," he said.

The problems between the two countries have to be addressed with a "sense of respect for each other's concerns and willingness to see how far we can progress in

bridging the differences," he added.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Ateef Ahmed Ali told a news conference here Friday that, "We have afforded India an opportunity to prove their good faith" in peacefully settling the Kashmir issue.

Calling it a decisive session, he warned New Delhi that the current round would be the last chance to resolve the dispute.

The November 24 joint declaration on the talks stated that "all aspects" of Kashmir issue would be discussed.

The minister forewarned that Pakistan would refuse to continue the dialogue if the Indian side indulged in 'purposeless' discussion.

Pakistan will raise the matter at international forums and seek international initiative to resolve 'explosive situation'.

Pakistan had agreed to hold talks 'under very, very difficult circumstances,' the minister said, regretting a statement Friday by his Indian counter-

Mizan demands white paper on foreign aid

Jatiya Party leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday blamed the BNP for stagnation in the economy and demanded a white paper on the receipt and utilisation of foreign aid in the last three years, reports UNB.

Production and development have stopped, mills and industries remained closed and workers are losing jobs because of the government's wrong economic policy, he told a meeting of ex-Chairmen of the now-defunct Zila Parishads at the "Grantha Kendra" in the city.

Chowdhury described as 'futile' the government claim of a huge foreign exchange reserves and the lowest inflation rate, saying these are negative symptoms, demonstrating total stagnation in the economy.

The BNP, during its electioneering, had promised to provide jobs to one crore people, he

said. "But we saw tens of thousands of workers and employees sacked by the BNP government," he added.

On the JP policy of decentralisation, he said former President Ershad had introduced the upazila system and formed the Zila Parishads with elected representatives to develop the rural economy and improve the condition of rural people.

He criticised abolition of the upazila and Zila Parishads and claimed this was hampering the development process in rural areas. The proposed Zila Parishad Bill of the BNP government is now lying in "cold storage."

Chowdhury asked the party workers to rebuild the organisation at the grassroots level and said the future national elections would be seen as a referendum for the Jatiya Party and Ershad.

Chemists

From Page 1 Col 8

Ali Bhuiyan. The procession ended in front of the National Press Club.

"Only two years ago the government tried to enhance the drug licence renewal fees to Tk 5000 and Tk 10,000 from Tk 200 and Tk 500 respectively," a leader of the samity told the rally. "But we had convinced the government to raise the fees only up to Tk 1000 and Tk 2500 and now the government has once again raised the fees by another 50 per cent."

"We immediately protested the government decision and demanded its withdrawal. But so far there has been no response. Therefore, we have to resort to a strike," he added.

A separate 48-hour nationwide strike in all drug stores on January 10 and 11, and a continuous strike starting from January 26 was also announced.

There are about 22,000 licensed drug stores in the country while another 40,000 are operating without any licences.

BCS (Edn)

From Page 1 Col 8

a press conference today to give the government time to accept their demands.

The decision to defer the campaign was taken after a two-day meeting of the Prokrichi councillors on Friday and Saturday in view of the government's announcement to transform and upgrade jobs of some cadres at the district level.

Talking to The Daily Star Sunday night, Prokrichi leaders indicated they would be forced to take "tough decision" on launching an all-out agitation programme on April 8 if the government failed to weigh the gravity of the situation and seriousness of the agitation by the professionals."

"The press conference has been organised to dispel any confusion and also to inform the nation about the latest condition of the movement," said MA Hena, secretary general of the action council.

He called upon the government to immediately accept and implement the demands put forward by the professionals.

Daring burglary

From Page 1 Col 4

that some officials had worked at the office until 4 pm on Saturday and the incident was noticed only yesterday morning when the employees returned for their duties. It is presumed that the burglary was committed sometime during the night. It might have taken the thieves hours to break the sophisticated locks.

As normal practice, the keys of the doors and the collapsible gates are kept in the custody of the Secretariat's caretaker.

Some government officials pointed out inadequate security arrangements at the Secretariat, particularly at night. Only a small contingent of 14 policemen guards the huge complex, the seat of almost all the ministries and the civil service. Half of those police-

men guard the two main gates while others patrol the premises in small groups.

Saturday night's incident is not the first of its kind in the Secretariat, though it was undoubtedly the biggest attempted burglary. Similar incidents also occurred previously at other offices located in the same building — Number 6.

Only about two weeks ago, a fire broke out at night in a room of the Religious Affairs Ministry, located on the 15th floor. The fire destroyed some papers and other materials. It was suspected to have been an act of sabotage.

A few months ago, burglars broke open a door of the Civil Aviation Ministry, housed on the 19th floor. The miscreants also opened an almirah. However, no major loss was reported.

A good amount of cash was taken away by the burglars about a year ago from the then Science and Technology Division, again at the same building.

Cases were registered with police about all these incidents, but the mysteries are yet to be unearthed.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam