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NEWS BRIEFS

Morshed Khan goes
to Japan today

Special Envoy of the Prime Minister M Morshed Khan leaves for Japan today on his first mission as an emissary of the government. During his week-long tour at the invitation of the Japanese government, Khan will have talks with the government of Japan regarding the visit of the Prime Minister to Tokyo in the last week of March, an official announcement said yesterday. Reports UNB.

Sarbaharaman
killed

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Jan 10: Sarbaharaman activist, Rashid, arrested in an injured condition last night from Kathiladaha of Mirpur thana succumbed to his injuries today. He was absconding for the last 10 years. The body has been sent for post mortem.

Change in Ctg
train schedule

CHITTAGONG, Jan 10: The inter-city train Mahanagar Purabi-703 up will leave the Chittagong station at 4 pm instead of 2:50 pm from January 15, a Railway press release said here tonight. It will reach Dhaka at 9:05 pm, reports BSS.

Council of Editors
concerned

The Bangladesh Council of Editors yesterday expressed concern over the shortage of newsprints in the city market. In a statement Sanaullah Noori, president and A Q M Zainul Abedin, secretary general of the Council of Editors called for making newsprint available in the market. They criticised the newsprint agents and traders for creating artificial shortage of newsprints and enhancing its price, reports BSS.

The Daily Star

PAUSH 28 1400 BS,

DHAKA TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1994

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Unutilised WB aid for rural electrification to be returned

By A Special Correspondent

Next April around 24 million dollars worth of assistance for rural electrification will stand returned to the World Bank (WB). This is the balance amount of credit for rural electrification sanctioned by the World Bank (WB) in December 1985. The full credit amount at current exchange rate was 104 million dollars.

The WB credit was originally provided for electrification of seven new Palli Bidyut Samities (PBSs), expansion of distribution facilities in four existing PBSs and rehabilitation of lines in ten other PBSs under the Second Rural Electrification Project. In all, the project was expected to reach electricity to around 140,000 consumers in 1,058 villages.

The project was scheduled for completion in 1991. But, by that time only a little over half of the 104 million dollar credit had been used. The credit has been officially closed by the World Bank last December. By

that time the credit closing date had been extended twice and project implementation delay had crossed 30 months.

Strangely, this is one of the projects where physical investment targets have been achieved, albeit after long delays. All the seven PBSs have been established and construction work of the PBSs' headquarters buildings completed. Twenty-five sub-stations have been constructed and energised. All these have helped to bring 1309 villages under electrification against a target of 1,058.

But, energisation of REB power stations and bringing more than target numbers of villages under electrification only mean that electricity is at the doorsteps of more village people than before. It does not

mean that the target number of additional electricity connections have been made.

Last October a mission from the WB visited Bangladesh to measure the actual progress achieved under the project.

The mission estimated that less than half of the target number of new rural electricity connections had been made till then. The mission concluded that the REB would not be able to use the balance amount of the credit within a reasonable period of time to further expand rural electrification. Accordingly, the mission recommended against extension of the credit closing date beyond December 31, 1993. This will mean that Bangladesh will have to return 24 million dollars to the WB in

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Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina handing over a fish — the symbol of her party's mayor candidate — to Mohammad Hanif at a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Hanif introduced as mayor candidate

Foil plan to rig polls: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday demanded that the Election Commission (EC) ensure fairness in the January 30 city corporation elections and take action against the violators of election rules and the code of conduct.

Addressing a huge public meeting in the capital, the AL leader also called on the people to foil, what she termed, the government's contemplation to rig the polls.

They (the BNP men) are conspiring to steal votes by using the administrative machinery, just as they did in the Mirpur by-election last year, Hasina, also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said.

Introducing the party nominee for the mayoral election in the capital Mohammad Hanif, the opposition leader promised.

If you elect our candidate, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will be freed from corruption; the taxation system will be modernised and there will be no

fresh tax in the next five years.

Handing over a dummy fish to Hanif, Hasina said, "The Bengalees, fish and rice are synonymous. If you prefer this traditional Bengalee menu, vote for Hanif and his poll symbol — the fish."

Negating Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's slogan, "Daal-Bhaat for everybody," the AL chief remarked, "We want fishrice for everybody."

Hasina also sought votes for the AL-backed commissioner candidates in the 90 wards of the DCC.

The meeting, organised to mark the homecoming day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman on this day in 1972 after nine months of captivity in Pakistani jails during the country's Liberation War, eventually turned into a projection rally for Hanif as the speakers mostly dwelt on the city corporation polls and sought votes for the party nominee.

He also promised to solve all the problems relating to taxation, water-logging, sewerage, sanitation, electricity and transportation and rid the city of the citizens here."

He will urge the city people here to extend their support to me to spearhead the agitation.

The JP candidate also said, "I will try to provide relief to the city dwellers from the burden of taxes by formulating a logical tax structure."

When election time comes, everybody indulges in rhetorics and makes new pledges, but after the elections they forget everything," he said.

Islam said he would also take measures to maintain law and order in the city.

When asked, Islam said, "The Chittagong City Corporation areas were only brought under some maintenance works but no real development

work was carried out by the present government."

Islam vowed to realise the due rights of this port city for its development.

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He expressed concern that crimes like hijackings, robberies and thefts had alarmingly increased in the city.

Interview with CCC mayoral candidate

Ctg to look like Bombay: Mahmud

From Nurul Alam



Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury

has no development work for Chittagong, he also alleged.

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