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NEWS BRIEFS

EC asks candidates to submit posters

The Election Commission has asked all mayor and commissioner candidates in January 30 elections to country's four city corporations to submit two copies each of all the electioneering posters to the respective returning officers by January 16. The EC in a press release yesterday urged all to cooperate in smooth, fair and neutral holding of the election, reports UNB.

Clinton's stopover in Kiev

KIEV, Jan 12: US President Bill Clinton makes a stopover in Kiev this evening to support Ukrainian leader Leonid Kravchuk in a deal to rid the former Soviet republic of nuclear arms. But Kravchuk could still face stiff opposition from a parliament suspicious that the deal, announced by Clinton at this week's NATO summit will jeopardise Ukrainian interests, reports Reuters.

Rao to go Germany Feb 3

NEW DELHI, Jan 12: Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, will pay an official visit to Germany from February three, after attending the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland on February one, reports PTI.



The Dhaka-bound bus from Faridpur which fell 30 feet from a bridge on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday killing 18 people on the spot and seriously injuring 26 others. — Star photo

18 killed, 50 hurt as bus falls from bridge

By Staff Correspondent

At least 18 persons were killed and 50 others injured in the new year's worst road accident at Shibaboy on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

The accident took place when a Dhaka-bound bus fell from a small bridge at around 7:30 am.

Twenty-six of the injured were in critical conditions. Witnesses said, the passenger-packed bus No. Dhaka Cha-4488, belonging to Subarna Paribahan, which was coming from Faridpur, hit the guard rails of a bridge while making way for a truck coming from the opposite direction and plunged almost 30 feet.

There was thick fog at the time of the accident.

Eleven passengers died on the spot. Seven others, including the driver, succumbed to

their injuries shortly after they were taken to different hospitals.

All other passengers also received injuries.

The dead were identified as Advocate Alimuzzaman (40), Tarun Kumar Basu (34), Tarun Saha (38), Shanti Lal Dey (30), Babul Dey (30), Bacchu Chowdhury (42), Palash (25), Rezaul (16), Sattar Mollah (40), Mohiuddin Chowdhury (41), Hafez Amzad (45), Jalli Khan (50), Golam Sarwar Milon and his brother Suman (14) of Monipur in Mirpur, Ahmad Ali (40) of Gopalganj and Mona of Faridpur.

The bodies were taken to the Manikganj hospital, some 22 kms from the spot.

Some of the critically injured passengers were identified as: Jamaluddin (40) of Gourdia

Health Complex, Abdur Rashid (30) of Pangsha, Rajbari, Swapan Kumar (30) of Faridpur, Matir Rahman (30) of Dhupkhola, Nilkamal (30) of Shibaboy, Babul (30) and Yunus (25), both from Tangail, Yakub Ali (35) of village Diashuk in Barisal and Shahidul Islam (27) of Faridpur. They were all admitted to the Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

Nitai Chandra Kundu (35) of Khankhanapur, Rajbari, Shahidul Islam (40) of Faridpur, Nasima Akhter Renu (55) of Gurulaxmipur in Faridpur and Anwar Hossain (35) of Faridpur were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Some of the passengers of the ill-fated bus were heading for the Biswa Jitima, to be held

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News Analysis

Govt practice contradicts its professed policies

By S Y Bakht

The recent import of diesel oil by a private firm has brought to the fore some glaring contradictions in the government's policy environment and, more importantly, it has also raised a few questions vital to the interest of the consumers.

First of all, how much longer is the government going to fleece the hapless consumer by charging nearly double the actual imported price of diesel and kerosene oil?

Secondly, why is the government still clinging on to this monopolistic attitude when diesel and other petroleum by-products have already been withdrawn from the import restriction list and the newly-formulated petroleum policy eagerly seeks private sector participation in the sector?

The existing pricing policy of the government for marketing petroleum products in the country appears to be flawed

and intrinsically against consumer interests. For the past several years Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the lone player in the import, distribution and marketing of petroleum products in the country, has been charging exorbitant prices for the products without any relation to the international market price. In the process the corporation is making several hundred crores of taka windfall profit every year.

The government had fixed the present pricing policy during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, as a pre-emptive move fearing global price hike of crude oil. The same pricing was renewed in June 1992.

Accordingly, the retail price, which is tagged directly to the refinery transfer price, was based on a perceived international crude oil price of 34 US dollars per barrel. Thus, the retail price for one litre of diesel or kerosene was fixed at

Tk 13.41 at the equalised points, taken as the four primary and other secondary depots around the country.

However, the present international crude oil price is hovering around 16 to 18 dollars per barrel and is said to be the lowest since 1988. Moreover, even at the height of the Gulf War the price did not reach the 34 dollar mark, market watchers pointed out.

According to insiders, during the month of November last BPC imported four consignments of high-speed diesel upto Chittagong port at a maximum cost of 24.24 dollars per barrel while the lowest price was 22.94 dollars per barrel.

An oil industry expert noted that even if the C&F cost of imported diesel is taken to be 25 dollars per barrel, the maximum retail price per litre stands at Tk 8.22, inclusive of all transportation costs, duties, See Page 12 Col 1

Interview with KCC mayor candidate

I'll fight for right shares: Hiron

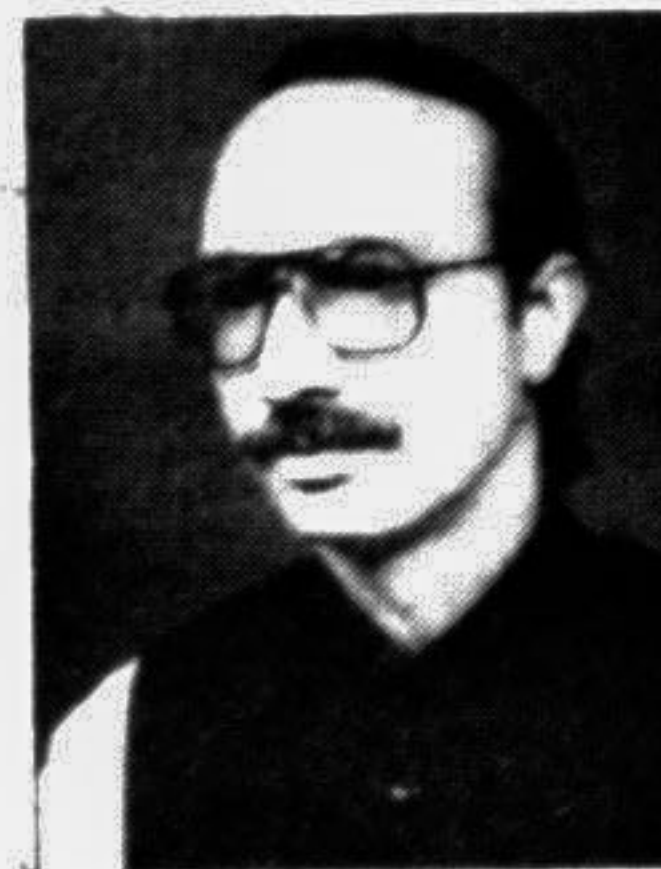
From Munir U Ahmed

KHULNA, Jan 12: Mahbubul Alam Hiron, if elected Mayor of the Khulna City Corporation will give top priority to the development of the city in a planned way like any other modern port city of the world.

Besides, the Awami League nominee for the January 30 mayoral election said, "There is need for developing a drainage system in the city of nearly sixteen lakh people."

In an interview with The Daily Star, a former student leader of the late eighties Hiron said, "The Khulna city did not get much attention like other two cities of the country after independence and the city dwellers had to fight to get their right share from the national wealth and we have to survive by doing so."

Hiron, who left politics after the Liberation of the country and became a mayoral



Mahbubul Alam Hiron, candidate of the Bangladesh Awami League while talking to this correspondent at the party office alleged that the ruling BNP had betrayed the city dwellers in the past in the name of development and I'm committed to do something better for the citizens of Khulna, the port and indus-

trial city. Hiron further said the large scale development activities undertaken by the KCC ahead of the election were aimed at wooing the voters and added, "It's an old Ayub style trick to bribe the voters by launching so-called development projects before the polls."

Welcoming the code of conduct for the elections the Awami League nominee alleged that the ministers, including the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, have joined the campaign in favour of the ruling party candidates in clear violation of the code of conduct. He said, "I urge the authorities to strictly implement the code of conduct and punish the violators."

The AL nominee hoped the voters would give their verdict considering the fact that a mayor submissive to the government cannot serve the citizens better

Current account shows surplus of \$103m

Deflation at minus 0.37pc

By Staff Correspondent

The rate of inflation, one of the most vital indicators of the economy, dropped alarmingly to a negative 0.37 per cent last month from an earlier all time low of 1.3 per cent in June, 1993.

"The deflation rate is a reflection of the overall sluggishness in the economy, as the demand for money has declined and government spending is not picking up, resulting in no money generation," said Khorshed Alam, Governor of Bangladesh Bank, at a press briefing on the economy yesterday.

He declined to elaborate on the possible economic impacts of the negative inflation rate.

What is more alarming is that during the first five months of the ongoing fiscal

year the country had a current account surplus of 103 million US dollars for the first time in 10 years. The current account deficit stood at 535 million dollars in 1992-93 and was 932 million dollars the year before.

Reviewing the just-released Bangladesh Bank's Annual Report for 1992-93, Alam also spoke of the economic performance during the first five months of 1993-94 and shed some light on the possible prospects for growth in the immediate future.

He said the central bank is trying to formulate a new package of the consumer price index (CPI) to monitor the inflation rate. The old package, which is still being used, was

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Khorshed Alam

Stand-off continues

By Staff Correspondent

The second day of the three-day strike by the non-administrative government officials and professionals passed yesterday with the government showing no sign of softening its stand regarding the agitators' 17-point charter of demands for administrative reforms.

The leaders of the coordination council of the agitating government officials claimed that all of their members observed the strike.

Meanwhile, sources close to the coordination council said Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury summoned the council chairman Dr M A Majed yesterday evening for a clarification regarding a recent statement by the organisation relating to the killing of President Ziaur Rahman.

M A Majed, while addressing a press conference early this week, claimed that some

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List of polling centres comes out tomorrow

The list of polling centres for the coming city corporation elections will be published in Gazette Notification tomorrow as per Election Commission Act, reports BSS.

Concerned returning officers had already submitted a draft list of polling centres to the Election Commission.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rauf held a meeting yesterday on the list of polling centres with five major political parties who have representation in the Jatiya Sangsad. It was the first discussion meeting of its kind.

Economic body meets today

By Staff Correspondent

The scheduled meeting of the seven-member Economic Sub-Committee of the cabinet to review the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) of the two foreign companies interested in oil exploration in the Bay of Bengal was not held yesterday.

However, the meeting will take place today, sources indicated.

Patients leaving hospitals as doctors continue strike

By Staff Correspondent

The sufferings of patients in government hospitals in the country worsened further yesterday, the second day of an indefinite strike by doctors.

The Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) called the strike to press home its 21-point charter of demands.

The doctors abstained from work in all hospitals and medical centres, excepting the Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital (SSMCH) where doctors have been observing the strike partially as a British Medical Council source said.

Our DMCH correspondent says, at least 30 patients left the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday as they did not get any treatment.

All scheduled operations were postponed while a few emergency operations were carried out by BMA voluntary doctors.

During the strike the BMA made arrangements for running outdoor units in every hospital premises.

The demands include — increased budget allocation for the health sector, building up an infrastructure for primary health care for all by 2000, setting up new hospitals and recruitment of more manpower in the health sector.

During the first two days of the strike, no negotiation took place between the government and the BMA.

The BMA held a number of rallies and brought out processions in the city yesterday.

A rally was held at the Institute of Food and Nutrition of the Dhaka University with Dr Shah Md Keramat Ali in the chair. It was addressed by Dr Khurshid Jahan, Dr Mushtaq Hossain, Dr Khaleeda Islam, Dr Lutfar Ahmed and others.

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17 DCC mayor candidates disclose fund sources

By Staff Correspondent

Seventeen out of 24 mayoral candidates in Dhaka have so far submitted to the Returning Officer their statements of probable sources of funds to meet the election expenses.

However, the number of ward commissioner candidates who submitted their statements, could not be confirmed by the Returning Officer, Syed Ehtesham Rasul, till the writing of this report last night as the counting of the statements was continuing.

According to official sources, 174 commissioner candidates had filed their statements till Tuesday.

Mirza Abbas, MP of the BNP was among the 11 mayoral candidates who submitted their statements yesterday. Earlier, six candidates, including Mohammad Hanif of the Awami League, Manzurul Ahsan Khan of the Left parties and A T M Azharul Islam of the Jamaat-e-Islami submitted their statements.

Col (Retd) Abdul Malek of the Jatiya Party did not file his statement till the 5 pm deadline yesterday.

BSF kills two Bangladeshis

JESSORE, Jan 12: Two Bangladeshis were shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) early today across the border.

The dead were identified as Sadu Mia, 32, and Kalu Mia, 28, both the inhabitants of village Bhoberber in Sharsa thana of the district. They were reportedly bringing fruits from India.

BDR 22 Battalion Commander Lt Col Niaz-ur-Rahman confirmed the incident. He, however, told UNB correspondent that he had the information of one killed and another injured. He said the BSF was yet to make any contact with the BDR in this regard.

BDR sources said the Indian border guards fired four gunshots at them at about 2.45 am. Sources said Bongaon police of India found the bodies in a field of village Proipour, south of the Benapole check post of India.

Indian police sent the bodies to the Bongaon thana hospital.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh National Board of Revenue Dhaka

Quick Clearance of Imported Goods

Government is pleased to announce that importers who will undertake preshipment inspection of their cargoes by engaging any Preshipment Inspection Agency (PSIA) listed in the Speedy Clearance of Imported Goods Order 1992, issued by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), will be entitled to the following facilities:

- Information certified by the listed PSIA on the classification, quantity and quality of goods will be accepted for customs assessment purposes;
 - In case where there is no prescribed tariff value for imported goods, duties and taxes will be assessed on the basis of declared values certified by the listed PSIA;
 - Speedy clearance of goods inspected by the listed PSIA will be ensured.
2. The NBR has listed twenty-nine companies for preshipment inspection of imported goods. The names and addresses of these companies are available with the NBR and all customs stations. For additional information, the undermentioned official may be contacted in writing or over telephone.

Dr. Md. Zahid Hossain
First Secretary (Customs)
National Board of Revenue

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