

Regional tensions won't affect SAARC: Silwal

The new Secretary General of the SAARC Yadav Kant Silwal yesterday allayed fears that contentious bilateral issues in the South Asian region could affect the progress of the SAARC and said regional tensions in no way would stand on the SAARC advancement, reports BSS.

"Regional tensions have not affected many other regional groupings and as such why should it afflict the SAARC?" He asked during a press briefing with the Overseas Correspondent Association of Bangladesh (OCAAB) at the National Press Club here.

This is the first visit of Silwal to Bangladesh after he took over the responsibility of new SAARC Secretary General on January 1, 1994.

An experienced diplomat, Silwal was Nepal's Foreign Secretary till his assumption of the new assignment.

The post of SAARC Secretary General rotates among the member nations and Silwal is the fourth person to adorn this office after Bangladesh, India and the Maldives have occupied this.

Answering questions about bilateral tensions in the region vis-a-vis the SAARC, the SAARC Secretary General said there is absolutely no reason why vexed

bilateral matters should affect the SAARC.

He said these problems were there when SAARC was conceived and born and the SAARC is meant to prosper weathering this situation.

Silwal said the ASEAN is progressing effectively despite having serious bilateral problems at one stage between Malaysia and Indonesia and relations among the European Commission are not also free from trouble, but the regional forums are prospering.

He said the SAARC acquired a new dimension following the last and seventh summit that signalled the beginning of the second cycle of the summits. More and more hardcore issues are being now dealt with, he said.

Silwal listed poverty alleviation as a top priority and said all efforts are being made to achieve this objective.

He told a questioner that the SAPTA will be implemented in due course and said the SAARC will also make endeavour for elimination of terrorism in the region.

Sayed Kamaluddin, president of the OCAAB introduced guest while Farid Hossain general secretary, gave the vote of thanks.

India rejects fresh talks on plebiscite in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Jan 19: India today rejected a proposal by Pakistan that further talks between the two countries pave the way for a referendum in disputed Kashmir, reports AFP.

"Pakistan should not have any doubts whatsoever on this score," a foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement, adding that Delhi did not see the need to conduct a plebiscite in any part of India.

Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, is claimed by both India and Pakistan and the rivals have fought two of their three wars since independence from British colonial rule in 1947 over the Himalayan territory.

India, which holds the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, accuses Pakistan of providing arms and training for the Muslim separatist movement in Indian Kashmir.

Pakistan denies the charges but provides diplomatic and moral support to a campaign which it describes as a legitimate struggle for self-determination.

The Pakistani government, in a statement Tuesday, suggested that the next round of bilateral talks with India lay the groundwork for a referendum in the northern Indian state gripped by a Muslim separatist rebellion.

"Further bilateral talks should aim at finalising the modalities for the holding of a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," the Pakistani statement said.

But the Indian spokesman reiterated that "Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India" and said the Pakistani proposal was "a propaganda exercise to obfuscate the realities of the situation."

Zia's birthday

From Page 1 Col 5 and discussions were also held at the mazar premises since early morning. Begum Zia spent some time there. She also visited the blood donation camp organised by the Zia Jubo Forum at the Zia Uddyan.

Speaking at a discussion arranged at the mazar premises, Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury said those who want to give leadership to the nation must acquire unique personal qualities like those of the late President.

BNP secretary general and LORD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar, Food Minister Lt General (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali, Chief Editor of the Financial Express Reazuddin Ahmed, Editor of the Bangladesh Times, Mahub Anam, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the National University Prof Mahubullah also spoke on the occasion.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said Ziaur Rahman was the first president after independence who had taken up specific programmes for the development of the country, imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War.

"He was one of those rare leaders throughout the Subcontinent who were free from all black spots in personal life," he said.

Barrister Talukdar said a country like Bangladesh which has achieved independence through a Liberation War must have a political goal.

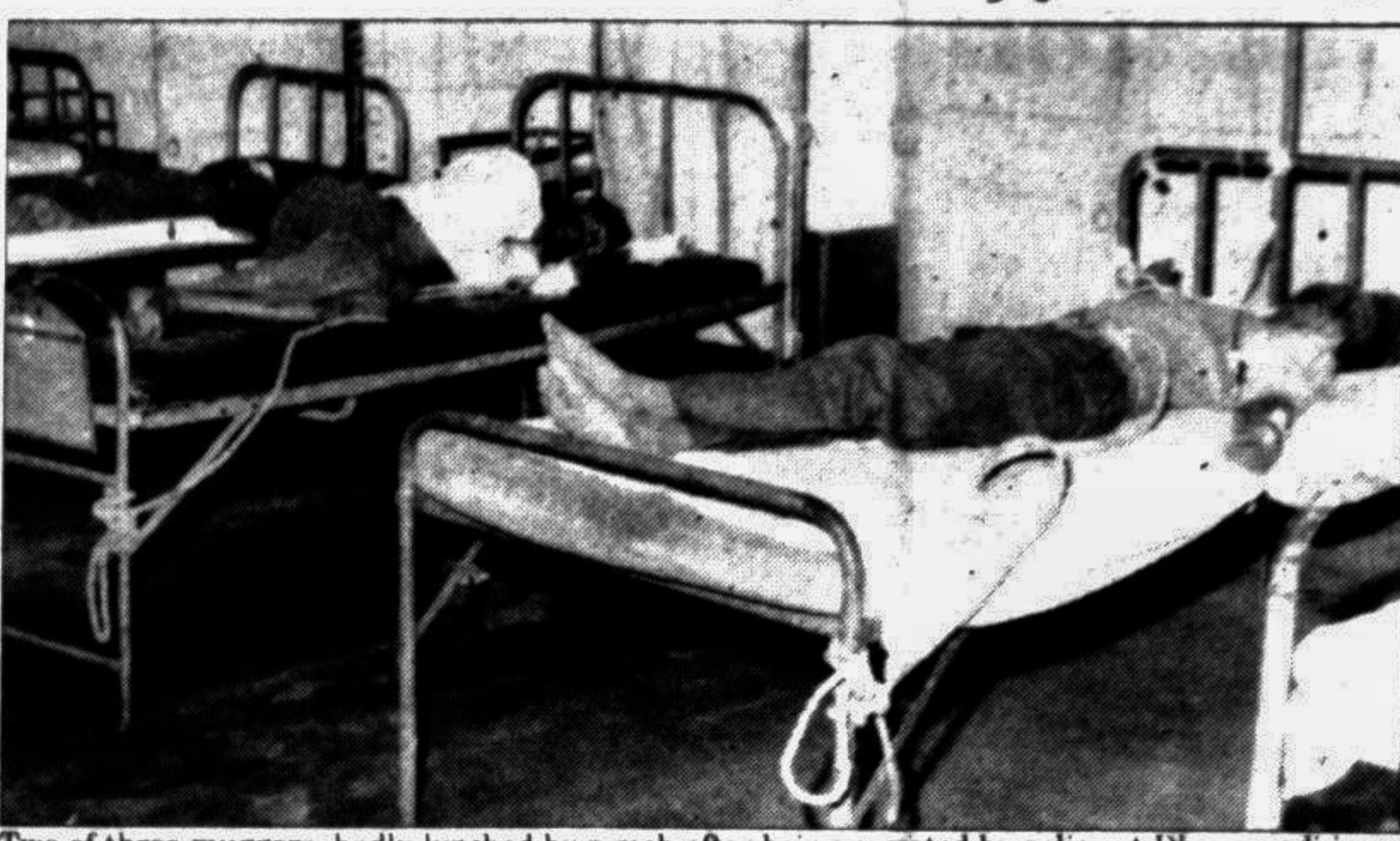
"Only through Bangladeshi nationalism, introduced by Shaheed Zia, this goal can be achieved," he said.

Barrister Talukdar said those who do not believe in Bangladeshi nationalism in fact look at nationalism with a narrow outlook, ignoring the spirit of the independence war and the sovereignty of the country.

Reazuddin Ahmed said Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had initiated the process of a stable democracy and the present government has put in its efforts to give it an institutional shape. Introducing the elections for city corporations is a glaring example, he said.

Prof Mahubullah said Shaheed Zia was such a leader who had effectively motivated the whole nation towards development, progress and production.

The organisations which placed wreaths at the mazar included the Zia Parishad, the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, DUCSU, JASAS, Zia Forum, Zia Shishu Kishore Sangathan, the Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal, and the Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal.



Two of three muggers, badly lynched by a mob after being arrested by police at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday, seen lying in a ward of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, tied to their beds.



DCC polls diary

By Staff Correspondent

Promises, promises and promises — that's what polls are all about, it seems. At least for the residents of Khilgaon. An aspirant ward commissioner from the area has even promised a removal of the Kamalapur Railway Station, of course, if elected!

Abdul Qader is harping on the theme that the country's biggest rail terminal is the root of all traffic jams in the area.

His grievance is understandable. The Khilgaon level-crossing near the station is on a major shunting line and everyday, traffic going both ways has to suffer, often for hours on end, because the level crossing gate remains closed.

A university employee was served with a show cause notice from the authorities recently, reportedly for not seeking prior permission for contesting the DCC commissioner elections.

Rustam Ali, an independent candidate of ward no. 57, had earlier sought the BNP nomination but failed. Nevertheless, determined to run, Rustam submitted his candidature as an independent without taking any leave or permission from the Dhaka University, where he works.

With only 10 days to go for the polls, the makeshift campaign stalls are getting more crowded with each passing day. The bamboo and thatched stalls have already become convenient spots for the local idle youngsters to gossip and chat away their hours. What more, often there are free cigarettes and tea!

According to a campaigner, the candidates have to spend between 100 and 800 taka a day for each camp. Some of the candidates have even provided television sets or cassette players. And to talk of bringing down these 'unauthorised' constructions!

Brickfields asked not to use firewood

The government has urged the people to refrain from using firewood in the brickfields, except bamboo-roots, which is an offence under the Brick Burning (Control) Law, reports UNB.

The Ministry of Environment and Forest yesterday said it has been observed that firewoods are being used in the brickfields in different parts of the country, adversely affecting the forest resources as well as environment.

It reminded that people violating any provision of the law or conditions of the licence for brickfield were liable to suffer punishment, and said that authorities concerned had been asked to take stringent measures against the law-breakers.

BCS (Edn) calls off programme

The BCS General Education Association has called off its strike, scheduled from today, after a meeting with Education Minister Jamir Uddin Sircar at his residence Tuesday night, reports UNB.

The Association called the strike to protest the killing of Jayanta Kumar Day, a teacher of the Sunamganj Government College and the attack on Atul Chandra Chanda, an Associate Professor of the Rajendra University College, Faridpur.

Construction of second Buriganga bridge soon

ZINZIRA, Jan 19: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said construction work of the second bridge across the river Buriganga will start soon to make Zinzira a part of the capital, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister was addressing a huge public meeting at Aganagar Kathuria ground arranged by local BNP on the occasion of the 58th birth anniversary of the party's founder President Ziaur Rahman.

She said that groundwork of the project had already been started. Foundation for the Taka 138 crore Babubazar-Zinzira bridge project was laid by President Ziaur Rahman in February 1981, but it was shelved by the past regime.

The bridge will be built entirely from local resources and with local expertise. The Communications Ministry sources informed that tender for the bridge would be invited on January 23.

The bridge is designed to expand the over-populated capital and the Prime Minister assured that all steps for building Keranigah into a modern town have been taken.

Referring to the displacement of some people in constructing the bridge, she assured that the plan of the bridge had been made in such a way that they would not be affected. "And if anyone is affected, he will be duly compensated."

In response to some local demands, Begum Zia said the 31-bed hospital in Keraniganj will be upgraded to a 50-bed, a fire station will be set up and the Zinzira-Dohar road will be completed soon.

The face of the country will change if the development process initiated by the present government continues, she said, but lamented that hartals and other activities of indiscipline by the opposition were hindering development efforts.

Construction of the bridge over the Buriganga was one of the election commitments of the BNP. "We are fulfilling all our election pledges one by one," the BNP chairperson said.

The new bridge is expected to usher in a new era of development for Zinzira, famous for its cottage industries, the Prime Minister said and asked the local people to set up more industries for achieving self-reliance.

She assured of all-out cooperation of her government in this regard, particularly in getting bank loans.

Khaleda continues mass contact in city

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday continued her hectic mass contact in the city seeking votes for her party's mayor candidate Mirza Abbas, reports UNB.

"Mirza Abbas thinks about developing Dhaka city according to the liking of its residents," she told an election meeting at the Nawab Yusuf Market as part of the massive campaign.

"You all know him and about his work," she said, mentioning the doings of Abbas during his tenure as Mayor of Dhaka. She urged all to cast vote for him in January 30 polls.

She made a whirlwind tour from 6 pm to 10 pm. During her four-hour campaign, Begum Zia addressed about a dozen election rallies at the Nawab Yusuf Market, Kotwali, Chakhbazar Crossing, Islambagh Park House, Lalbagh, Kella crossing, Lalbagh Bhata Masjid, Chankherpuli, Azimpur Battala crossing, Azimpur Chhatra Market, Hazaribagh Park, Hazaribagh Market and Nawabganj Chowdhury Market. Mirza Abbas was with her.

Shiv Sena calls strike in Maharashtra tomorrow

BOMBAY, Jan 19: Hindu militants today called a general strike across India's Maharashtra state to protest the renaming of a university after Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the hero of the untouchable community, reports AFP.

The dawn-to-dusk strike would be observed Friday, the BMA said.

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It reminded that people violating any provision of the law or conditions of the licence for brickfield were liable to suffer punishment, and said that authorities concerned had been asked to take stringent measures against the law-breakers.

The Association called the strike to protest the killing of Jayanta Kumar Day, a teacher of the Sunamganj Government College and the attack on Atul Chandra Chanda, an Associate Professor of the Rajendra University College, Faridpur.

Saifur leaves for France, Switzerland today

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman leaves for London today (Thursday) on a fortnight-long official visit to France and Switzerland as Chairman of the board of governors of the World Bank and IMF, reports UNB.

He will chair the first meeting of the joint committee of remuneration of the executive directors and their alternates of the World Bank and the IMF in Paris January 24-26.

Saifur Rahman will also participate in the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos in Switzerland January 27-30.

Muggers

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deployed on regular patrol. Later, another police constable, Mohammad Azizuddin and another Ansar man who were on duty near the Abahani Club, followed their colleagues to help arrest the muggers, the policeman said.

The on-duty policeman said, "We five police personnel nabbed the muggers but failed to rescue them from the wrath of hundreds of enraged people, who beat them up and hurled bricks at them."

STOL licence

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Earlier, the authorities awarded PATOL to Borak Air, Royal Bengal Airlines and Air Parabat to operate STOL aircraft to six domestic destinations where the national carrier Biman is not operating.

Meanwhile, a press release issued by the CAAB yesterday, clarified that the STOL service is not likely to start from January 31, as expected, because the licensed companies are yet to position their aircraft in Dhaka for inspection and clearance.

It said the CAAB, however, would make its STOL-ports in Barisal, Sharnagar, Comilla, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Ishurdi and Dhaka's Tejgaon airport operational by January 31.

The press release also said it would take about ten days to scrutinise the documents submitted by the operators and to accord necessary clearance for commencing commercial operation.

Entertaining

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one found guilty under this Section and fined up to Tk 200 by a summary court cannot appeal against the verdict, the Election Commission remained the contenders in the January 30 polls.

The EC called on all concerned, including the candidates and their activists and supporters, to refrain from entertaining people with food and drinks at the election of offices and camps.

Econ diplomacy

From Page 1 Col 7

ties of our missions more effective, rational, action-oriented and coordinated one in the light of the recommendations of the commission. She listed the measures undertaken by the present government to reduce country's import dependence, boost export earnings, raise foreign investment and transfer of technology and said her government has attached importance to economic diplomacy.

She said the present government has brought in qualitative changes in the country's economic policies and asked the diplomats to raise the demand of the country's products and services abroad through public relations and publicity.

Begum Zia pointed out that if they could attract positive responses from the foreigners then it would help accelerate the pace of development and turn the country into a self-reliant one.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the country had earned over Taka 4000 crore in foreign exchange by sending 2.5 lakh persons abroad with jobs last year. She thanked all concerned, specially those workers who had sent remittances out of their relentless hard labour abroad.

She asked the diplomats to look after the Bangladeshi workers abroad and to ensure their safety and help stop harassment in getting work permit.

Biman

From Page 1 Col 8

for lease and outright sale options. Biman's financial evaluators had reportedly favoured the offer by Concorde Multitrade. However, the firm's financial capability and genuineness were seriously questioned by the media.

None of the local representatives of the bidders was available for comment regarding the Biman decision.

The Midnight File

Opponents of Rabbani agree to ceasefire

PESHAWAR, Jan 19: Afghan rebel forces seeking to topple President Burhanuddin Rabbani agreed to a truce today after heavy fighting broke out in Kabul ending a two-day lull. Afghan sources in neighbouring Pakistan said. A coordination council of Rabbani's opponents led by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum said it had agreed to halt fighting from 6:00 am Kabul time (01:30 GMT) tomorrow after an appeal by a council of Mujahideen guerrilla commanders, reports Reuter.

Y'slavia, Croatia sign peace accord

GENEVA, Jan 19: Serb-dominated Yugoslavia and rival Croatia signed an accord Wednesday aimed at improving relations, a move apparently meant to pressure Bosnia's Muslim-led government into a peace settlement. Both countries agreed to open representative offices in each other's capitals, Zagreb, Croatia, and Belgrade, Yugoslavia, on Feb 15, reports AP.

Pandemonium in Pak NA

Opposition's comment angers Nusrat

ISLAMABAD, Jan 19: Pandemonium gripped the Pakistani parliament Tuesday when the opposition raised a current family feud in the ruling Bhutto family and later staged a walkout from the House, reports AFP.

Begum Nusrat Bhutto, mother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, intervened angrily as a close aide of opposition leader and former premier Nawaz Sharif started to speak about the Bhutto family row.

"I will not allow any one to talk about my family members," said an emotion-charged Nusrat Bhutto.

"Nothing is wrong in my family. The press has exaggerated the matter," she said, as members from government and opposition benches engaged in a heated exchange of invectives.

Earlier, Sharif's lieutenant, Willoughby

Eyes gouged out

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 19: A group of about ten to fifteen people gouged out both eyes of one Manik, 35, yesterday night at Bilwabari High school ground under Kashipur of Kotwali thana.

According to Kotwali police, Manik was taken out of his house, forcibly in the dead of night by these people to the school ground.

After getting information from the local people, Kotwali police rescued Manik this morning and sent him to the Barisal Medical College Hospital.

He is a "Sarbahara Party" member, police claimed.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 3

assessment immediately. "Such assessment would act as the guideline for all new projects in the country," he said.

The recommendations call for setting up a cell to monitor and analyse international treaties that might affect the development of Bangladesh, changing the education curriculum according to the needs of the society, ensuring micro-economic stability, taking necessary steps to revitalise the jute sector and encouraging the growth of small industries.

Jamilur Reza pointed out that a task force set up by then acting president Shahabuddin Ahmed had made a number of recommendations for changing the administrative system, but those recommendations were shelved.

Urging the leader of the Opposition to place the recommendations, made in the seminar, before the Jatiya Sangsad, he said, "We hope the recommendations will be implemented."

বাংলাদেশ তার ও টেলিফোন বোর্ড
একটি জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মগাবাজার ও গুলশান এক্সচেঞ্জের আওতাধীন সমানিত ডিজিটাল টেলিফোন গ্রাহকবৃন্দের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সম্প্রসারণ কাজের কারণে নিম্নবর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী উক্ত ডিজিটাল এক্সচেঞ্জ বন্ধ থাকবে।

মগাবাজার (৮৩) এক্সচেঞ্জ : ২০শে জানুয়ারী বৃহস্পতিবার রাত ১০টা হতে ২১শে জানুয়ারী শূক্রবার সকাল ৬টা পর্যন্ত।

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উল্লিখিত সময়ে এক্সচেঞ্জ দুটির সমানিত গ্রাহকবৃন্দের অঙ্গণী ও বহির্গামী সকল কল বন্ধ থাকবে। গ্রাহকবৃন্দের এই সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য বাংলাদেশ তার ও টেলিফোন বোর্ড আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত।

গ্রাহক সেবাই আমাদের লক্ষ্য
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