

Police squads to curb car thefts in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three special police squads have been formed to check car thefts which have increased alarmingly in recent times. According to press reports, 521 cars were stolen last year of which 403 vehicles disappeared from the capital alone. The number of stolen automobiles stood at 440 in 1992. The increased police vigilance was immediately reported by the city.

BNP MP mugged in city

By Staff Correspondent

A female parliamentarian fell prey to muggers in the city yesterday and was robbed of her gold chains.

Anwara Habib, a Member of Parliament of the ruling BNP, was waylaid by a group of three to four muggers at road No 5, Dhanmondi yesterday afternoon. She was stabbed on her left arm and robbed of two chains.

The MP was going to her daughter's house at Paribagh from her residence at Dhanmondi Road No 15 by a rickshaw. The muggers sped off on an auto-rickshaw leaving the MP bleeding. She was later given first aid at a nearby clinic.

A case was lodged with the Dhanmondi police but no arrests had been made till writing of this report last night, almost 12 hours after the incident.

Withdrawal of VAT

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"responsible for destruction of the national industries," and compensations for the sufferers. Enactment of laws for rehabilitation of sick industries was also demanded. It also demanded a White Paper on the allocation of money and actual expenditure in respect of various projects since the independence of the country.

The committee also urged the authorities to stop selling public sector units at throw-away prices to, what it called, 'vested quarters'.

"Since Article 34 of the State Acquisition Act contradicts with the fundamental rights, it should be repealed. One of the Articles of the Arthashastra is: For any appeal against its verdict, one is to deposit 50 per cent of the borrowed money. Such a law is also against the fundamental rights. This, too, should be repealed," Alauddin Ahmed said.

Demanding withdrawal of VAT on local products, the committee suggested the setting up of a commission comprising the people's representatives, civil servants and representatives from commerce and industry. All VAT, tariff values and tax structures should be framed on the basis of the recommendations of this commission, it was suggested at the press conference.

Chakma refugees' return

From Page 1 Col 4

and headed by Thana Nirbahi Officers, will receive the tribals.

Local authorities at Rangbar and Tabalchhari have also arranged temporary shelters for the tribals before their final rehabilitation in their own homesteads in different areas of the hill tracts, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Tribal Rehabilitation Committees have been formed from the village to national levels to ensure quick rehabilitation of the returning tribals.

Security forces and members of the law enforcing agencies at different levels have been asked to ensure the security of the tribals.

Measures for rehab

Meanwhile, an official announcement yesterday said that the Bangladesh government had taken measures as per the law and the Constitution of the country to ensure safety and security of all, including the Chakma refugees, in the hill districts.

It said that in the light of the existing situation, as well as taking into consideration all other aspects, the government has decided to assist the returnees in their rehabilitation.

An official press release said that the government would give a lump sum of Taka ten thousand to each returnee family as house building and agricultural grant.

Each returning family will be given a free weekly ration of 21 KGs of rice, and a monthly ration of four KGs of pulses, two KGs of soyabean oil and two KGs of salt for six months (26 weeks), it said.

The government, it said, will give two bundles of CI

warded with the recovery yesterday of four vehicles which were stolen from different areas of the city Friday. Two of these were stolen from Uttara on the outskirts of the city while the rest from Mirpur and Dhanmondi.

Interestingly, all the four cars were found abandoned on the road sides with some parts removed. Police, however, failed to make any arrests in connection with the thefts.

Police suspected involvement of an organised ring behind the growing number of car thefts. This gang breaks into the parked vehicles and changes the number plates at convenient places. Those stolen cars which are in good condition are taken outside the cities and sold to unsuspecting buyers. But those with poor engine conditions are dismantled and sold at the Dholakhal area in the older part of the city, a haven for old and stolen cars.

According to sources, a number of government employees are allegedly involved in the ring. They help the crooks dispose of the vehicles with forged registration papers.

CU student shot dead

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: Unidentified gunmen this evening shot dead a student of the Chittagong University on the Chandanpura Road in the city here.

The assailants attacked Nurul Alam, 26, while he was going to a mosque for offering his tarabi prayers, witnesses informed. He was rushed to the Chittagong Medical College where he was pronounced dead.

After killing Alam the gunmen fled the spot amid volleys of gunfire. Later police recovered the body.

The cause of the attack and the political identity of the victim are yet to be ascertained.

But the Islami Chhatra Shibir here, though not claiming the victim as one of its activists, blamed the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal for the incident.

Elections to DU bodies today

By DU Correspondent

The teachers of the Dhaka University will elect their representatives to the University Syndicate, the Academic Council and the Finance Committee today.

The elections of the three policy-making bodies will be held at the Teachers' Students' Centre (TSC) from 9 am to 1 pm.

Teachers from three panels — White, Blue and Pink — are contesting for six posts each in the syndicate and Academic Council and one post in the Finance Committee.

The government will either give a pair of cows, as draught animals or in lieu, Taka 8,000 to each of the returnee families, having cultivable land, subject to verification that the family owned the land.

The official announcement said that the government decision with regard to exemption of agricultural loan of up to Taka 5,000 would be applicable to the returning families as well.

It said that the question of writing off of the other bank loans of the returnees would be considered sympathetically. It said the general amnesty declared by the government until June 30, 1994 would be applicable with regard to all Emergency-related cases and also with regard to warrants of arrest against unsettled cases.

It said that the returnees would get back their land and that the tribals would not be rehabilitated in clustered villages.

The question of restoring the jobs of those who were in service before leaving Bangladesh in 1986 would also be considered. The questions of seniority and service benefits would also be considered under the existing service rules, it added.

It further said that arrangements would be made for taking special examinations for the students who will bring with them their SSC and HSC certificates from the schools and colleges set up at the refugee camps in Tripura state of India.

The opportunities for readmission into schools and colleges would be expanded for the students in the returnee families, it said.

The government, it said, will give two bundles of CI



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and party leaders interviewing an aspirant for the Magura II seat of the Jatiya Sangsad at the party's Bangabandhu Avenue central office yesterday. The seat felt vacant following the death of AL MP Asaduzzaman. — Star photo

19 envoys visit Moulvibazar, Srimangal

MOULVIBAZAR, Feb 12:

Nineteen foreign mission chiefs on an outing from the capital visited today ongoing development projects and saw the landscape of the district in the vicinity of hills and falls, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam accompanied the envoys who visited several sites and schemes, including the Manu River Embankment Project and Shrimangol Tea Research Centre.

The diplomats, accompanied by their spouses, were impressed by the landscape of the area, including the Madhabkunda water falls.

A video film on the lifestyle of the local people was shown to them at the circuit house.

The envoys visited several tea gardens besides the tea research centre at Srimangal on Friday.

Envoys of the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil, Morocco, Poland, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Palestine saw the development projects and lauded the initiatives behind such uplift programmes taken to promote socio-economic condition of the people.

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Pakistan for impartial monitors in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Feb 12: Pakistan asked India today to accept the stationing of impartial monitors along the border in Kashmir, after New Delhi again blamed Islamabad for the ongoing strife in the Himalayan state, reports AFP.

If India believed its own propaganda, it would agree to station UN observers or other impartial monitors along the dividing line of control in Kashmir between India and Pakistan, a Pakistani Foreign Office spokesman said.

"The whole world knows full well the reality of the situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir," the spokesman said, reacting to a statement by New Delhi's External Affairs Ministry Friday.

The ministry, rejecting a US official's reported statement comparing the situation in Afghanistan to Kashmir, said that Pakistan-sponsored terrorism was the major hurdle to peace in Kashmir.

Robin Raphael, head of the South Asia bureau in the US State Department, reportedly said that conflicts in Kashmir and Afghanistan were similar in that they were 'exacting a terrible toll on civilians'.

India holds the southern two thirds of Kashmir while the northern third of the disputed region is controlled by Pakistan.

The spokesman said the 600,000 Indian troops in Kashmir area much larger military presence than the

150,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan during Moscow's 1979 to 1989 military intervention there.

He said not only the US but almost every other member of the United Nations understood that Kashmir killings 'were the consequence of the repression of Kashmiri people's quest for the right to self-determination'.

More than 8,000 people have died in the Indian-administered zone of Kashmir since 1989 amid a Muslim campaign for freedom, which New Delhi calls a secessionist drive inspired by Pakistan.

20 hurt in clash in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 12: At least twenty persons were injured in a clash between rival neighbours at Barokandi village of Sylhet Kotwali thana this morning.

Of the injured, twelve have been admitted to the Sylhet MAG

Osmany Medical College Hospital and local private clinics.

Police said the incident occurred when a *shaltish* (arbitration) was being held in the house of one Babu Miah over a boundary dispute with his neighbour. The opposing group, armed with deadly weapons, swooped on the assembly. They also fired about 45 blank shots, it was alleged.

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Shafiquzzaman AL nominee for Magura-2 seat

The Bangladesh Awami League yesterday unanimously nominated Shafiquzzaman Bachchu for the by-elections of Magura-2 seat reports BSS.

The nomination was given by the Awami League parliamentary board meeting held at its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue with party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Shafiquzzaman is the eldest son of late Sangsad Member Asaduzzaman. Former Chhatra League leader Shafiquzzaman Bachchu is now holding the post of Health, Population and Environment Affairs Secretary of the Magura district unit of the Awami League.

Pollwatch body faults EC

By Staff Correspondent

Failure to stop violations of election rules and conduct the polls on January 30 strictly in accordance with the rules have tarnished the image of the Election Commission (EC), noted the joint conveners of the National Steering Committee for observing the City Corporation Elections, 1994 at a discussion meeting in the capital yesterday.

At the discussion meeting the joint conveners — Dr Hamida Hossain and Justice KM Subhan, speaking about their observations regarding the polls, said, the voters' list was faulty, the polling booths were not adequately manned by security forces and there were instances of false voting.

The meeting, organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, was presided over by Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Bar-at-Law. The Honorary Director of the Institute was present on the occasion.

Justice Subhan pointed out that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), had given repeated warnings against the violation of election rules but actually he had taken no action against those who violated the rules.

"The CEC went to the extent of saying that he would be a musclemans three times more powerful than a single musclemans, if necessary, to ensure free fair and peaceful polling. Such statements only undermine the image of the EC," Subhan said.

However, he observed, the turnout of voters was satisfactory.

Hamida Hossain said a survey among 900 families in the Eskatan-Nayatola area had found that 40 per cent of the eligible voters' names were missing from the list.

"Slum dwellers, in general, were not enlisted as voters although they are permanent residents of the city," she pointed out.

"The expenditure limit of Tk five lakh for the mayoral nominees and Tk 50,000 for the ward commissioner candidates also proved to be absurd. Almost none of the candidates, it seems, kept within the limit," she pointed out.

They also criticised the EC for not allowing the 450 Steering Committee members to monitor the polls although the EC provided ID cards to the JASAS, Subhechha and Khan Foundation members."

Shahjahan Siraj, MP, addressing a meeting at the National Press Club in the city yesterday organised to condole the death of Abdul Quddus, Makhan. — Star photo

Jatiya Sangsad

From Page 1 Col 4

city on February 31. The incident left six persons dead.

Meanwhile, the Business Advisory Committee of the Jatiya Sangsad, stood sharply divided over whether further discussion on the issue of the judges' appointments were necessary.

The treasury bench representatives in the committee felt that the discussion on the issue was now completely unnecessary after the crisis had been amicably settled between the Chief Justice and the government, and especially since the judges had already taken their oaths, meeting sources said.

The Opposition members, however, held that it was absolutely necessary to discuss the issue thoroughly with a view to averting similar situations in future. They argued that a separation of the judiciary from the administration was the only answer for avoiding repetition of such crises and the House must debate the issue during the current session.

The meeting, lasting more than two hours, failed to produce any agreement on the subject. The committee, however, is scheduled to meet again at ten this morning to try to resolve the issue.

Abdus Samad Azad and Rahmat Ali of the Awami League, Shamsuzzoha of the Gano Forum, and Sheikh Anser Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami represented the Opposition while the treasury bench was represented by Salam Talukder, Nazmul Huda and Mahbul Alam Tara.

Nobody secured first class in the BSS examinations. While 147 passed in the second class, 1421 were placed in the third class.

The Midnight File

US orders diplomats' dependents to leave Belgrade

WASHINGTON, Feb 12: The United States has ordered dependents of diplomats at its embassy in Belgrade to leave the country immediately, the State Department said today. State Department spokeswoman Maeva Dwyer said the order went out overnight and included an advisory to warn Americans not to travel in Serbia and Montenegro, reports Reuter.

France requires exit visas for 13 states

PARIS, Feb 12: France decreed Saturday that nationals of 13 countries will need exit visas to leave the country, reviving a measure adopted in the mid-1980s to combat terrorism. The countries include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, North Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Sudan and Yemen. Palestinians will also need the visas, reports AP.

2 US fighters collide over Adriatic Sea

GAETA (Italy), Feb 12: Two US fighters collided in mid-air over the Adriatic Sea today sending one jet crashing to the sea, a US military spokesman said here. The two-man crew managed to eject safely from their F-14 fighter after it hit in F-18 in mid-flight, and were later picked up by a helicopter from the US warship *Wilkesburg*, said US Sixth Fleet spokesman Major Graham Curry. The pilot of the F-18 managed to regain control of his aircraft and land at the Italian airforce base of Brindisi, on Italy's southern Adriatic coast, reports AFP.

Steps to raise safety at Indian N-plants

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: Surprise inspections and half yearly checks will be conducted at India's aging nuclear power plants to increase safety, a top official was cited as saying today, reports AFP.

The nation's seven nuclear power plants were closed for inspection last July after a fire March 31 injured two people at the Narora station in northern India. In 1992, five people were killed in accidents at Department of Atomic Energy installations.

The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) will perform safety checks twice a year, from March, instead of the current annual monitoring, the Press Trust of India (PTI) cited board Chairman A. Gopalakrishnan as saying.

The precise nature of the checks will depend on the age of the reactor and the components and sub-systems involved," he said.

The AERB will also conduct surprise inspections at nuclear installations across the country, deploying its inspectors at short notice, Gopalakrishnan said.

"We are trying to induct more experts from outside the Department of Atomic Energy in AERB activities," he said. "This will improve the credibility of the board."

Appointments, transfers

The government has announced the transfer and appointment of three high officials with immediate effect, according to a handout issued yesterday.

Md Ashrafuddin, a member of the Land Reforms Board, has been appointed joint-secretary of the Land Ministry. Jagannath Dey, joint-secretary of the ministry, and Md Nazrul Islam, Additional Commissioner, Dhaka division (Joint Secretary) have been made Officers on Special Duty at the Establishment Ministry.

US, Japan

after a bill-signing ceremony in the Oval office.

On Friday, the two sides failed to iron out their trade differences and come up with an agreement as planned, opening the door to possible retaliatory strikes by Washington.

Hosokawa said he hoped the Americans would not take unilateral actions that contravene international trade laws but said he was not frightened of a quick strike.

Zia Museum visiting hours

CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: Zia Memorial Museum here will remain open to the visitors from 9 am to 2:30 pm from Saturday to Wednesday during the holy month of Ramadan, reports BSS.

The museum will also remain open from 9 am to 11:30 am on Friday.

The museum will observe Thursday as weekly holiday.

Dhaka seeks seat

From Page 1 Col 7

According to UN sources in Dhaka, Bangladesh has a bright chance to be on the UNHCR Executive Committee.

The international community praises Bangladesh for providing shelter to a quarter of a million Rohingya Muslim refugees who have fled alleged persecution in Myanmar.

There could be one problem, though.

Bangladesh is still not a party to the 1951 conventions relating to the status of refugees nor to the 1967 protocol which deals with the same subject.

"Bangladesh's bid to be on the Executive Committee is welcome," said a Western diplomatic source in Dhaka on Saturday.

"But it would be fitting for Bangladesh to become party to the two legal instruments, which are the two basic documents pertaining to direct or indirect management of the refugee crises," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Bangladesh Foreign Ministry officials said Dhaka has no conflict with the two documents.

They referred to the fact that Pakistan, not being a signatory to the documents, is also one of the current 46 members of the Executive Committee.

"Bangladesh overqualifies for the membership, especially after what we have done for the Rohingya refugees," said a Foreign Ministry official.