

Corruption case against Ershad, 2 others Money for JP office renovation was spent illegally: PW

The corruption case against former President Hussein Muhammad Ershad and two others with respect to misuse of official fund in the renovation of an abandoned house in the capital was filed after completing the investigation and necessary formalities, an official of the Bureau of Anti Corruption (BAC) yesterday told the special judge's court, trying the deposed ruler, reports BSS.

as the JP office) that included installation of air-coolers and other electrical gadgets. Das is the first of the 21 PWs named by the prosecution in this case to make the deposition. Senior Special Judge Mohammad Abdus Salam on January 25, 1994 read out the charges against Ershad, former minister Mostafa Jamal Haider and former acting Works Secretary Abdur Rouf. The deposition remained incomplete when the judge called it a day and fixed February 28 as the next day of hearing. The PW-1 briefly narrated the investigation and other works carried out before the FIR (First Information Report) was lodged with Dhanmondi thana on 24.6.93. He told the court that one Hamdul Hasan, an inspector of the BAC, made

the preliminary investigation in this case and seized some documents as late as on 31.7.1991. Das stated that the house in question which is located on Road No 3 of the Dhamondi residential area since being hired by the Janadal, the predecessor of the Jatiya Party on 4.9.1984 and till 30.11.1990, had its rent amounting to Taka 30,83,390.00 remained unpaid. The prosecution witness said after completing the investigation, he had submitted the charge sheet against the accused persons on 27.9.1993. Judge charged Ershad with committing offence under Section 5(1) (D) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947 and found the rest two as abettors of illegal activities committed by the former general.

It economic body to meet during PM's Japan visit

The 7th meeting of the Japan-Bangladesh Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation will be held in Tokyo during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's forthcoming visit there, reports UNB.

Begum Zia will begin her five-day official visit to Japan on March 28 with a mission to further consolidate Dhaka-Tokyo ties.

Japan, the biggest donor for Bangladesh, has pledged to extend financial assistance for the implementation of the much-cherished Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge.

During the visit, Begum Zia is expected to hold talks with Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

The Bangladeshi leader will also take the opportunity to see some of the huge industrial complexes and visit some industrial cities there including Kyoto and Osaka.

More than two dozen top businessmen of the country will accompany the Prime Minister, sources said.

The Bangladeshi businessmen will also exchange views with the Japanese traders and industrialists on commercial expansion, investment and joint ventures.

Maghi Purnima tomorrow

The holy Maghi Purnima, one of the greatest religious festivals of the Buddhist community, will be celebrated tomorrow, reports BSS.

The Bangladesh Buddhist Federation will arrange rituals to celebrate the Purnima at Merul Badda and International Buddha Bihar at Gulshan. The Kamalapur Dharmarajik Buddha Bihar has also planned elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

One electrocuted in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Feb 23: A man was electrocuted yesterday at Pangsha village under Babuganj thana of Barisal.

Police and local people said the victim Alauddin, 50, was mentally sick and went out of his residence at dead of night. He was found dead under an electric pole near his house.

Villagers oppose military base

From Page 1 Col 5 up elsewhere in the district which is less populated, the organisers said adding that the proposed site was a densely populated area.

A part of Goalchamat was within the municipality area, they added.

Meanwhile, the Faridpur district units of all political parties including BNP, Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat, Gono Forum, and JSD have formed a "Combined Resistance Committee" against the proposed acquisition.

Speaking at the rally, the political leaders cautioned against any acquisition move and vowed to "paralyse" the district if the move was not withdrawn.

It would be one of the worst examples of human rights violation in the country if the land acquisition took place without the consent of the local people, they said.

They also drew the attention of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf

Ctg lawyers continue to boycott CMM's court

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 23: The lawyers in Chittagong have continued boycotting the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) here in support of their demand for his immediate withdrawal.

The boycott programme of the lawyers began afresh on February 2 creating a stalemate in the functioning of the court of CMM.

According to sources, the authorities have taken no step so far to end the deadlock.

The president of the Chittagong Bar Association, Shaiful Islam, talking to this correspondent said they had been boycotting the CMM court as he said no measure had been taken against the persons responsible for the

2 killed, 5 hurt in city road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent

Two persons, including a minor boy, were killed and five others injured in two separate road accidents in the city during the last two days.

One person was killed and another five were injured when a tempo collided with a speeding truck in front of 'Banga Bazar' at Fulbaria at about 11:30 am Wednesday.

Among the victims an unidentified young man died after admission in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The injured Amena, 30, Shifa, 4, Mohammed Hossain, 45, Mohammed Alam, 37 and Labiu Miah, 25, were admitted to the DMCH.

In another road accident, a minor boy was killed when a speeding tempo knocked him in front of his residence at Bara Maghbazar on Tuesday night. The victim Foez, 7, died on the spot.

Prisoner dies in Sylhet jail

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 23: A scuffle between two mentally retarded prisoners in the Sylhet District Jail left one killed and the other injured seriously.

The incident took place at 11 pm Tuesday in a cell where they had been kept for the last few months.

and all MPs of the district and sought their intervention. Presided over by Akbar Kabir, the rally was addressed, among others, by Awami League Central Committee member Imanuddin Ahmed, BNP's Faridpur unit general secretary Motaleb Ali Isa, Awami League district unit general secretary Bipul Chandra Ghosh, Khandaker Abdur Kader, Gono Forum leader Atiar Rahman and Janata Dal leader K M Mujibur Rahman.

Later talking to this correspondent, Akbar Kabir, convenor of the Resistance Committee, said that they were now planning to file a memorandum to the Prime Minister with signatures of all the tax-payers of the locality.

Earlier, some 300 to 350 acres of land had been acquired over the years in the same mouzas for different purposes like digging a one-kilometre-long canal, camp for the now abolished Rakkhi Bahini, helipad, Upazila Health Complex and a 132 KVA power

ICRISAT chief due today

Director General of International Crop Research Institute for semi-arid tropics (ICRISAT) Dr J G Ryan will arrive here today on a four-day visit at the invitation of Government of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Dr Ryan, during his stay here, will discuss future collaboration and enhancing of the existing agriculture and research cooperation programmes between the ICRISAT and Bangladesh.

He will call on senior officials and functionaries of the government. The ICRISAT chief will also visit chick pea and groundnut research projects and farmers' fields in the Northern Barind areas.

Opposition meets today

By Staff Correspondent

The leaders of the opposition parties in Parliament will meet this morning to decide their strategy on how to proceed with the allegations of corruptions against the cabinet ministers.

Mohammad Nasim, Chief Whip of the Opposition, while talking to The Daily Star, confirmed the move. Replying to a question, the opposition chief whip said they were preparing to produce in the House soon the documents relating to the alleged corruptions of the ministers.

All the leaders of opposition parties in Parliament, including the Jamaat, are expected to attend today's meeting.

5 more medical colleges to be set up

Five more medical colleges will be set up in the country, Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf informed Parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a question from Begum Rashida Khatun (Jamaat), the minister said the project to set up five medical colleges would be implemented by 1996.

The colleges will be set up at Dinajpur, Bogra, Faridpur, Khulna and Comilla.

Qian Qichen

From Page 1 Col 8

Sino-Bangladesh relations that observers describe as "warm and excellent". Relations between the two countries have been strengthened over the past years through trading and economic cooperation. A long-term agreement is in existence between Bangladesh and China which expires in 1995.

During the visit, Qian is expected to sign an agreement to extend Bangladesh with an 'untied' credit of 8.5 million US dollars.

China has been providing assistance in different financial and technical fields, including water control, environment, textiles and agriculture.

Dhaka and Beijing had earlier signed an agreement for extraction of coal from Barapukuria. China had also provided assistance for building a bridge over the river Buriganga.

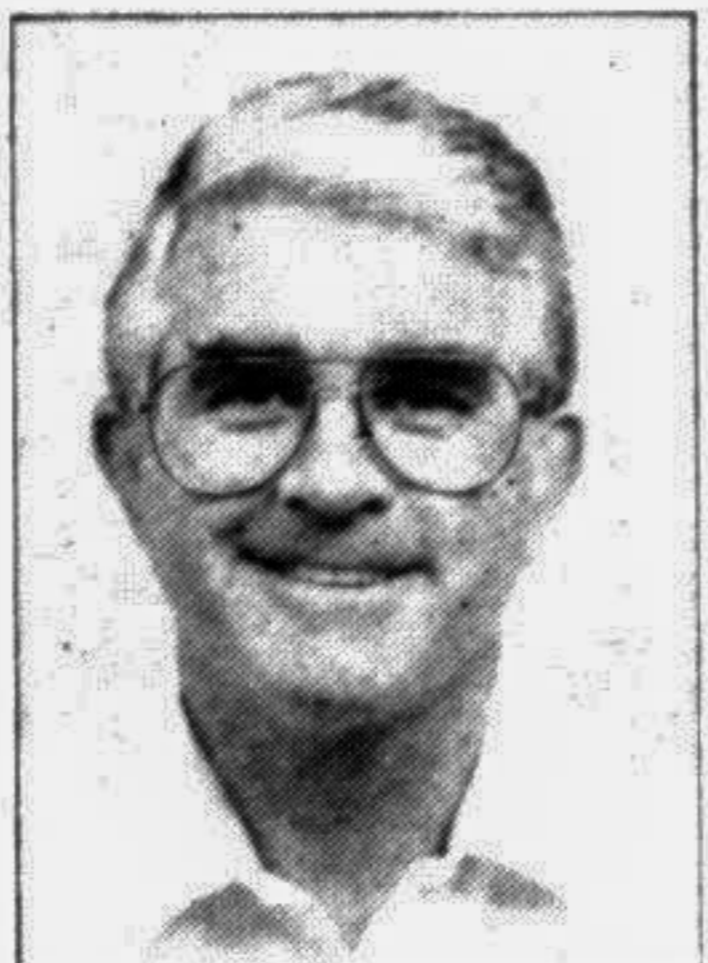
However, the balance of trade is heavily lopsided against Bangladesh. Dhaka exported goods worth 168.19 million US dollars during 1981-91 while its import from Beijing were of the tune of 697.2 million US dollars.

The Chinese Vice-Premier who is the fourth ranking member of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party, is also expected to apprise Bangladesh leaders of its foreign policy in the regional context vis-a-vis its neighbours, particularly India with which China has been "improving" relations.

The Chinese leader is arriving in Dhaka from Islamabad on the second leg of his visit. He will also visit Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Qian Qichen is scheduled to meet President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on February 26. He will also hold extensive discussions with Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman.

The Chinese Foreign Minister will also call on leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina on February 27 and hold a press briefing the same day prior to his departure.



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Police trade fire with terrorists: Two arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police exchanged gunshots with a group of four terrorists and arrested two of them on the Narayanganj Road under Demra Police Station around noon yesterday.

The arrested persons are Chan Mia alias Nizam and Asaduzzaman. Police also seized a .32 bore revolver with four bullets from the possession of the later, according to a police press release.

Police said that local Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Hamdul Haque challenged four youngsters on suspicion near the Geet Sangeet Cinema on the Narayanganj Road, but the youngsters fired gunshots to make good their escape.

The earlier acquisitions had displaced some 100 families and affected another 200 most of whom had not been duly compensated for, he added.

Without directly opposing the setting up of a military barrack, Kabir said "we want to make it clear that no inhabitant of Shovarampur, Goalchamat, Raghunandanpur and Komarpur mouzas will ever leave their ancestral home voluntarily."

Besides homesteads of an estimated 20,000 people, many graveyards, more than 20 primary, high schools and madrasahs, industrial units, one orphanage and a fuel station are also located in the area, he pointed out.

The proposed military base can be set up at Tepakhola or in Dhulid areas near the town where there are lots of open land and where the acquisition would displace minimum of homesteads, he pointed out.

When contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Faridpur K M Nurul Huda, however, said that he had not received any instruction from the higher ups to acquire any land.

When asked, the DC admitted that any acquisition in the four mouzas could displace thousands of people.

Daudkandi incident Row in JS over Energy Minister's statement

Parliament yesterday heard noisy shouts over the statement of Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain on the incident at Sadananda village in Daudkandi where dozens of houses were set ablaze on February 15, reports UNB.

The Energy Minister made the statement when Manirul Haq Chowdhury of Jatiya Party blamed him and BNP for the incident.

The minister termed the incident as heinous and said 18 people have so far been arrested following the incident which was a sequel to old rivalry and business conflict between Sadananda village and three other nearby villages.

Dr Mosharraf Hossain said certain quarters were trying to give political colour to the incident, but as a matter of fact, no particular party or quarters were involved in it. The people involved in the incident belong to different sections and shades of opinion, he added.

The opposition member burst into protest against the statement of the Energy Minister. They wanted the Speaker to explain on which ground Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain gave the statement.

Some angry Awami League members shouted at the

Energy Minister blaming him for the incident and demanded of the chair to expunge his "unwarranted" statement.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad alleged that the February 15 incident at Sadananda village inhabited by gypsies took place at the instigation of the Energy Minister.

He said the incident was the outcome of the conflict between two groups of BNP.

Azad said Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina and he himself had visited the fire-devastated village where the local people blamed the Energy Minister for the incident.

He mentioned that they have already submitted a notice of adjournment motion to discuss the matter.

But in what capacity the Energy Minister made his statement yesterday, the Deputy Opposition Leader said adding he (Mosharraf) is not the Home Minister and has no right to make such a statement in the House.

Azad demanded of the Speaker to expunge the Energy Minister's statement from the proceedings.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali assured that remarks outside the "personal explanation" and the rules would be deleted.

Bill on judiciary

From Page 1 Col 7

less than 60,000 Taka each. However, the minister, in a bid to justify the allegedly disproportionate allocation of public money, said the disbursements were made according to the demands.

After the question-answer hour, seven opposition MPs called the attention of the ministers concerned to matters of public importance in their respective areas.

Munirul Haque Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party, in his call attention notice on the February 15 incident in Satananda village of Daudkandi, in which several houses had been set ablaze, blamed the ruling party activists for the tragic occurrence.

But the opposition members started shouting when Energy Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain made a statement on the issue protesting the JP MP's allegations against the BNP activists.

The opposition members protested against making the statement because such notice was, according to the JS Rules of Procedure, to be allowed to

be read out by the concerned MP, but the minister concerned was not allowed to reply. Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali eventually expurgated the minister's statement.

The Financial Loan Court (Amendment) Bill, 1994, was introduced in the House by voice vote. Opposition MP Shawkat Ali opposed the introduction of the bill on the ground of principle.

He said the promulgation of an ordinance regarding the financial court amendment bill only three weeks before the JS session had eventually bypassed Parliament. "It is an abuse of the constitutional provision on promulgating an ordinance by the President," the MP said. However, the bill, if passed by the House, would bring the Bangladesh Krishi Bank and the Rajshahi Agriculture Development Bank under the existing financial loan court — a court to recover the outstanding loan money from the clients of the banks.

The Speaker adjourned the House at 1:45 pm yesterday to resume again at 10:00 this morning.

'Small units yet to get proper financing'

Speakers at a workshop in the city yesterday called for removing the bottlenecks in obtaining finance by small and micro industries for generation of employment and acceleration of economic growth, reports UNB.

They said that finance is available for the large scale industries but small and micro industries in the country have difficulty of access to formal finance.

Timely and adequate financial support by banks and other financial institutions is very much needed and important for the small and micro enterprises for their development growth and sustainable operation, the speakers observed.

The day-long workshop on 'Access to Formal Finance for Small and Micro Enterprises and the Role of FBCCI and its Memberbodies as Facilitators' was jointly organised by Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and German Federation of Small Business and Technonet Asia (ZDH-TA).

Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed, FBCCI President Mahbubur Rahman, German Ambassador in Dhaka Dr Juergen Gehl, Regional Coordinator of ZDH-TA Heiko G Waesch and FBCCI Project Coordinator Abdus Salam Bhuiyan addressed the inaugural function.

Addressing the function as guest of honour, Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed said the small and micro enterprises (SMEs) of the country did not get the desired attention for a long time despite their tremendous potential in generating employment and boosting the economy.

But the present government, he said, has come forward with special emphasis on promotion and development of the SMEs and has taken necessary steps to provide formal capital for this sector.

On high lending rates, the Finance Secretary said the banks had brought down their lending rates but these were still too high compared to the current rate of inflation.

Such high lending rates adversely affect investment, Ahmed said and urged the

banks to further bring down the rates to a satisfactory level facilitating promotion of small scale industries.

Appreciating the idea of the working group proposed by the FBCCI President, the Finance Secretary said the Federation could play an important role in execution and implementation of the policies relating to industrial promotion.

Earlier in his address of welcome, FBCCI President Mahbubur Rahman said the small and micro enterprises are facing various problems in availing financial support by the banks and other financial institutions.

"We have to pinpoint those problems and take steps to resolve them for better growth of the small and micro industries," Rahman said.

He said the desired result of economic growth and employment generation can only be achieved through undertaking appropriate steps towards removing the constraints.

Referring to recommendations adopted at different workshops and seminars, the FBCCI President said policies were formulated based on such recommendations but there was lack of initiatives to implement those.

The government policies should focus in detail on their implementation to avoid misinterpretation and confusion by the executing agencies and the beneficiaries, he added.

In this context, the FBCCI president proposed the formation of a working group with representatives from the Federation and its member bodies, ministries of Finance and Industries, Bangladesh Bank and other commercial banks.

Deputy Managing Director of MIDAS and Consultant of FBCCI Abdul Karim presented the key-note paper at the first working session of the workshop, chaired by Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed.

Representatives of various trade bodies, Bangladesh Bank, senior officials of different nationalised commercial banks and representatives of small scale enterprises participated in the workshop.

The Midnight File

Attack on Pak embassy condemned

ISLAMABAD, Feb 23: Pakistan today condemned a mob attack on its embassy in Kabul and regretted that the mission and its staff were not protected. "The Pakistan government condemns and deplores the attack on our embassy in Kabul," a foreign office spokesman said in a statement carried by official Associated Press of Pakistan. Demonstrators protesting the killing of three Afghan gunmen at the Afghan embassy in Islamabad on Monday attacked the Pakistani mission in Kabul earlier in the day, severely beating some employees and burning the Pakistani flag, reports AFP.

Muslims, Croats sign truce

ZAGREB, Feb 23: The Bosnian Muslim and Croatian military commanders, Generals Rasim Delic and Ante Roso, signed a general ceasefire agreement here today, UN special representative Yasushi Akashi said. The agreement, which calls for the immediate and total cessation of hostilities, is to come into force as of 12:00 hours (1100 GMT) on Friday, he added, reports AFP.

Over 100 feared dead in S African dam burst

VIRGINIA, South Africa, Feb 23: More than 100 people were feared dead today after a disused slime dam burst its banks and buried a gold mine housing complex in mud, mine company officials here said.

Spokesmen for the Randgold Mine Company said 10 bodies had been recovered so far and 94 people were missing and feared dead at the residential section of the Harmony Mine near this Orange Free state town 200 kilometres (125 miles) southwest of Johannesburg.

Rescue workers using four-wheel drive vehicles, earth-movers and helicopters were still looking for survivors this afternoon, but police told AFP they did not expect to find anybody alive.

At least 80 houses were destroyed, 200 were damaged and more than 450 people were forced to flee their homes when the dam wall collapsed.

Double agent

From Page 1 Col 5 top Russian spy-catcher, served two years as chief of the CIA's Soviet counterintelligence branch.

Meanwhile Russia sought today to downplay a burgeoning dispute with the United States following the arrest of a top CIA official accused of spying for Moscow and called for calm in examining the case more closely.

US President Bill Clinton said Tuesday the arrest Monday of Aldrich Ames, along with his wife, was a "very serious" case and US officials have suggested it could harm ties with Moscow.

Pak embassy

From Page 1 Col 7 gunmen holding six children hostages.

The kidnapers had demanded five million dollars ransom and the delivery of 3,000 food trucks to Kabul.

The demonstrators, after yelling insults at the Pakistani embassy, quickly became emboldened and began throwing rocks at windows, then wrenched the brass name-plate from the embassy wall and smashed it.

Soon after a wild stream of Afghans began climbing the sandbags lining the embassy walls for protection against incoming artillery, and began sacking the premises.

ICC Trophy

From Page 1 Col 8 has unveiled the possibilities of a feared premature ouster for Bangladesh from the 20-team meet. They now have to win the remaining two matches against hosts Kenya and Hong Kong in the Group E draw of the quarterfinal to stay in the reckoning for a semifinal berth.

True to the trend, set right from the beginning of the ICC associate members' championship, Bangladesh's batting proved to be their bane yesterday as almost all the recognised batsmen failed again.

Jahangir Alam, who scored an unbeaten hundred in the previous match topscored with 48. But his peers with the notable exception of all-rounder Enamul Haq and tail-ender Mizanur Rahman failed to take the cue from the tenacious little opener.

Earlier in the day, young Sharfuddinul Islam Shaheed Saikat bowled superbly as Bangladesh skipper Faruque Ahmed won the toss and decided to bat first.

Myanmar

From Page 1 Col 7 turn of the Rohingya refugees. The proposed agreement is also seen as an open door posture by Myanmar towards its neighbour.

After the agreement, trade between the respective zones of the two countries would be conducted in accordance with the foreign exchange regulations and other rules now in force. Payments shall be effected through the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank and a Bangladesh nationalised bank, most likely the Sonali Bank.

According to knowledgeable sources, Bangladesh is to import from Myanmar items like timber, forest products, bamboo, fresh vegetables, pulses, garlic, chillies, spices, betel nuts, livestock, shrimp and fruits.

The items Myanmar is likely to import from Bangladesh include pharmaceutical products, ceramic goods, tobacco, leather products, cosmetics and toiletries, ball pens, newspaper and fertilizer.

Transport worker

From Page 1 Col 5 General Hospital for autopsy.

Earlier, the agitated transport workers brought out a procession carrying Kamal's body. The processionists submitted a memorandum to the DC.

Additional police were deployed at several strategic points of the town to defuse tension.

According to transport workers and witnesses, Kamal, Pappu and Alam Chan, while returning home on a rickshaw, were attacked by their rivals allegedly led by Farid, Montu and Hanif near the Laxmi Narayan Akhra of Deobhab at about 10 last night. The attackers chopped Kamal to dead on the spot and seriously injured Alam Chan and Pappu at Shakin Ali Mosque Lane. However, Pappu managed to flee with wounds.