

### BCL observes founding anniversary

**By DU Correspondent**

The 48th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was observed yesterday by its different factions.

The Chhatra League was founded on January 4, 1948.

The Awami League (AL) backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) inaugurated its programmes at one minute past zero hour yesterday at the Curzon Hall premises of the Dhaka University by lighting 48 *Mangal Prodips* (earthen lamps) from where the organisation emerged first.

The national flag and party flag were hoisted at the party office at 6 am. The party workers placed floral wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Bhaban. They also met the AL chief Sheikh Hasina at her residence.

The BCL brought out a procession on the DU campus and held a rally at the Aparajeo Bangla at 11 am.

The rally was addressed by BCL president Enamul Haq Shamim, general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, DU unit president Bahadur Bepari, and city unit leaders Nazrul Islam Babu and Mazhar Anam.

The leaders said the BCL was created through democratic process and still BCL is in the street for establishing democracy in the country, they said.

They urged the Prime Minister to resign and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government for holding the next general elections.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) backed Bangladesh Chhatra League also inaugurated its 48th founding anniversary by hoisting national and party flags at the party office.

The party activists placed floral wreaths at the central Shaheed Minar to pay respect to the martyrs of different democratic movements.

### DU student commits suicide

**By DU Correspondent**

A student of the Dhaka University allegedly committed suicide by taking poison yesterday.

Keshab Chandra Saha, 22, a resident of Jagannath Hall of the university, reportedly took poison at around 10 pm Wednesday in his room. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died at around 8:45 am.

Keshab is the son of Rakhal Chandra Saha of Kheura of Kishoreganj district.

An unnatural death case was lodged with the Ramna thana.

### BMCH internes begin strike

**From Staff Correspondent**

BARISAL, Jan 4: The Internec Doctors' Association of the Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in an emergency meeting decided to go on a nonstop work-stoppage from today.

The decision has been taken following some unpleasant incidents occurred in the Gynae and Labour unit of the hospital on January 2 and 3.

In a statement they also alleged that the working environment in the hospital is not satisfactory.

However, special emergency squad will continue their duties for 24 hours.

### URAA

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suggested the study.

The government should make appropriate regulations so that export of food grains may be controlled in time of need, it added.

Attempt should be made to encourage farmers to go for crop diversification suiting demand pattern at home and abroad, it added.

It also recommended that financing of the 'agriculture support programme' might be carried out through progressive taxation.

Since export of hides and leather goods showed remarkable performance in the recent past, the study further suggested that the livestock sector should be developed to explore the possibility of milk and meat export.

Horticulture and foodprocessing industries should be encouraged in to develop export potential, the study said.



The Awami League and Left Democratic Front meeting at the Dhanmondi office of the AL yesterday.

— Star photo

### PM chairs DSCSC governing body meeting

The 8th annual meeting of the governing body of Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) was held at the college premises yesterday, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khajeda Zia who is in charge of the Defence Ministry presided over the meeting which took stock of matters relating to development of training and other activities of the DSCSC.

Chiefs of three services Secretaries of the Ministries of Defence, Finance and Foreign Affairs, Vice Chancellors of Dhaka Jahangirnagar and National Universities, the Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division and the Commandant of DSCSC attended the meeting.

A total of 109 student officers, including 23 overseas student officers, are undergoing the current 20th Army 14th Naval and 16th Air Staff Courses in the DSCSC.

The overseas student officers are from China, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Zambia.

### Clash halts work at Ctg port for 14 hours

**From Staff Correspondent**

CHITTAGONG, Jan 4: Container headline operation at Chittagong port was suspended for about 14 hours till 2 pm today as stevedores and dock labourers stopped work after a clash with some Philippine crew last night, port sources said.

The clash erupted at about 12 last night at the port terminal when the crew of two Singapore flag carrying vessels beat one port watcher after an altercation. The clash then spread to the entire terminal as a group of dock labourers joined the stevedores. Some dock workers received minor injury.

Work resumed after port officials intervened and fined the Philippine crew Taka 20,000.

### Parleys

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Replying to a question if there was any possibility of changes in their position, he said, "There is nothing final in politics. But any arrangement must be covered by the Constitution."

Talking to The Daily Star and some other newspapers at his Hare Road official residence at about 8 pm, Shamul Islam said, "We would respond positively if the Opposition express its willingness for further dialogue. We want to go for the polls with all the Opposition parties."

### Hasina

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dressing a rally of Chhatra League, her party's student wing held in front of her Dhanmondi residence on the occasion of the 48th founding anniversary of Chhatra League.

Before the rally, the BCL workers placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Bhaban.

Sheikh Hasina asked the BCL workers to resist what she called the farcical election at any cost.

AL presidium member Amr Hussain Amu was present at the rally, which was also addressed by Enamul Haq Shamim and Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, president and general secretary respectively of the BCL.

## Fertiliser production higher than demand: Govt Change distribution system to avert fresh crisis: BFA

**Star report**

The price of urea fertiliser may go up during the January-March peak season as the government is yet to establish an 'effective distribution system' throughout the country, Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) claims.

A review meeting chaired by State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan was held yesterday that production and supply of urea during the last six months were higher than the demand for it.

"If the government does not withdraw the command area and district quota system of allocation, the country cannot avert another fertiliser crisis," said Abdul Baten, Executive Secretary of the BFA.

BFA, in a letter to the Agriculture Ministry recently, urged the government to abolish the command area and district quota system. BFA thought that the command area and district quota system would leave dealers in an adverse situation in which they would not be able operate efficiently and economically.

The government is introducing district quota and command area system for stabilising the fertiliser market. BFA leaders, however, say that it would be tough to reach necessary fertilizer to the farmers under the system.

Abdul Baten said command area system 'might make urea surplus in the low demand areas and create shortage of it in the high demand areas' during the peak season.

Despite adequate production and stock, the country faced a fertiliser crisis during the peak season last year due to mismanagement in supply and distribution, BFA source pointed out.

BFA has suggested that the government should ensure free movement of fertilizer in the country and watch the situation. "Free movement of fertilizer can only help avert any possible crisis," a BFA leader said, adding, despite that if there is a crisis.

The government could release fertilizer from the buffer stocks. It was disclosed at yesterday's review meeting that six urea fertilizer factories under BCIC supplied 983,606 metric tons of urea in six months of the current fiscal against the demand for about 9,10,000 tons.

The supply was 148,168 metric tons higher than that of the corresponding period of the last fiscal (1994-95). Some 835,438 metric tons of urea were supplied during the period.

The review meeting was held at Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) Bhaban in the city.

The meeting was told that the factories produced 10,60,209 metric tons of urea fertilizer during the period (from July 1 to December 31), indicating an increase of 55,212 metric tons in production.

Some 10,04,997 metric tons of urea were produced in the first six months of 1994-95 fiscal year.

The State Minister at the meeting directed BCIC authorities to ensure availability of adequate quantity of fertilizer during the next three months and its effective delivery to the dealers round the clock in accordance with the government's distribution policy.

Lutfur Rahman instructed the management of each fertilizer factory to ensure uninterrupted production and bagging of urea.

The meeting was informed that buffer stock was being built up at different places to meet possible escalation of price of urea in the remote and inaccessible areas.

A stock of 92,015 metric tons of urea has been created at the selected places.

Some 8,642 metric tons were stockpiled in Khulna while 11,520 tonnes in Bogra, 6,011 tonnes in Mahendranagar, 1,999 tonnes in Gaibandha, 6,645 tonnes in Rajshahi, 1,986 tonnes in Joypurhat, 9,995 tonnes in Thakurgaon, 4,150 tonnes in Baghabari, 9,775 tonnes in Takerhat, 1,800 tonnes in Rangpur, 5,296 tonnes in Brahmanbaria and 4,000 tonnes in Kaliganj, said a PID handout.

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### BNP factions

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Joint Secretary of Rangania thana BNP CM Kader Bachhu announced that he will stage a token hunger strike in front of the Thana Parishad to realise the demand.

The communication on the Chittagong-Kaptai road disrupted for about an hour from 4 pm as the protesters held the rally blocking the road, witnesses said.

In Sirajganj, local BNP has called a half-day hartal in Ullapara thana on Saturday protesting the nomination of a candidate for constituency-4.

The hartal programme was announced at a protest rally in front of Shaheed Minar here today.

Witnesses said supporters of BNP and its front organisation, led by Ullapara thana unit BNP president Abdul Mazid and general secretary Shamul Islam, brought out a torch procession in the evening protesting the nomination of Akbar Ali.

Later, they held the protest rally at the Shaheed Minar.

### Israel to free 1200 more Palestinians

GAZA STRIP, Jan 4: Israel agreed today to release next week more than 1,200 Palestinian prisoners, including about 400 militants from the radical Islamic movement Hamas, a Palestinian official announced, reports AFP.

Nabil Shaath, the international cooperation and planning minister for Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA), said Israeli Justice Minister David Libal agreed to the new prisoner release at a meeting here today.

Shaath said the prisoners would be released Tuesday or Wednesday, 10 days ahead of historic elections to a Palestinian self-rule council.

The prisoner release was ordered as part of an agreement signed in September between Israel and the PA extending Palestinian autonomy to the West Bank and setting out the terms for the elections.

Israel, which currently holds about 5,000 Palestinians in its prisons, released a first group of around 1,000 inmates shortly after the September agreement was signed.

A third wave of releases is due to take place once 'final status' talks on the future of the Palestinian territories gets underway in May.

### Snatcher stabbed to death by accomplices

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 4: An alleged snatcher was stabbed to death by his accomplices as he was wounded in road mishap while fleeing after robbing a businessman today, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said Helaluddin Turab, 25, who passed degree exam this year, was killed by his two accomplices near Taljanga bridge in Tarail thana, 6 km of the district town.

Witnesses said the three youngsters snatched TK 25,000 from Nurul Islam of the town by halting his rickshaw near Ghoshpara on the Kishoreganj-Tarail road at 9:30 am.

But they fell victim of road accident near Taljanga bridge as their motorcycle turned turtle. Turab was badly injured. His two accomplices stabbed him to death fearing that Turab might name them after arrest.

The two assailants, whose identity could not be known immediately, fled the scene with the money and the motorcycle.

## House rejects move to end shutdown US govt staff take to streets

WASHINGTON, Jan 4: With no money to pay their bills and no pay for some of those working, due to partial government shutdown, US government employees took to the streets Wednesday demonstrating against the deadlock between President Clinton and the Congress, reports PTI.

They put the blame squarely on the Republican-led Congress and demanded that when they are not paid, members of Congress should not be either. They carried placards of protest and shouted slogans.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher went round various sections of the State Department telling the 45 per cent of the staff at work how much he sympathizes with them. He also expressed sympathy for the employees demonstrating outside the building.

AP adds: With Republicans holding firm, the House of Representatives rejected Wednesday a move to end the 19-day partial government shutdown.

President Clinton condemned the defiance and the continued impasse, calling it "an unnatural disaster."

"Each day this shutdown continues, the consequences grow worse," Clinton declared. "This is not a natural disaster. It is an unnatural disaster, born of a cynical Republican strategy."

The budget impasse has idled 280,000 federal workers and about forced 500,000 more to labour without pay.

Although the Senate had voted unanimously through Jan 12, the House voted 206-167 against an attempt by Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt to force approval of a measure.

Americans abroad seeking assistance from their government are more likely to get closed doors and unanswered phone calls, US embassies say.

The partial government shutdown that began Dec 15 has hit the State Department hard at home and overseas.

In Russia, US diplomats

took out an interest-free loan from the Moscow embassy's community association to cover the payroll for Russian employees.

Beginning Thursday, all employees will receive only half pay, said embassy spokesman Richard Hoagland.

In Hanoi, the US embassy owes the Vietnamese electric company more than 1,900 dollar. But an embassy spokesman denied a report that the Vietnamese government had threatened to shut off utilities at the embassy and at the homes of American diplomats unless they pay their bills.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Wednesday that 6,500 of the 9,000 US-based department employees have been furloughed, affecting a broad range of operations.

For example, he said the State Department issues an average of 20,000 visas a day around the world but visas only are approved nowadays

for emergency situations.

Among those affected are foreign students studying in the United States and home for the holidays, who are now unable to obtain visas to return to America for classes. The department has no estimate on the number affected.

The backlog of passport requests from US citizens has reached the 200,000 mark, Burns said.

Contracts for guards who protect American embassies are running out and there is no cash to renew them, he added.

Other services cut include the issue of immigrant, tourist and business visas; programmes assisting American businesses; travel and representational activities; and economical and political reporting.

Hardships also are being imposed on the more than 10,000 foreigners employed by embassies around the world. Burns pointed out that many of these employees are low paid and live from paycheck to paycheck.

## The Midnight File

### Clash leaves 28 dead in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Jan 4: Local militiamen attacked the southwestern Somali city of Baidoa, fighting a four-hour pitched battle with the forces of warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid which left at least 28 people dead, witnesses said today. They said Wednesday's attack was the heaviest fighting in the city since General Aidid captured it in a lightning strike last September at the head of a column of 600 men, reports AFP.

## SAARC states to exchange data on poverty alleviation

NEW DELHI, Jan 4: The two day meeting of SAARC finance and planning ministers ended here today with recommendation for regular exchange of data on poverty alleviation through arrangements of necessary networks, reports BSS.

It was agreed at the meeting that member countries would exchange their experiences on poverty alleviation.

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee who is also deputy chairman of the Planning Commission said this at a press conference at the end of the two-day meeting.

He said the relevant SAARC technical committee would take up the issue of poverty alleviation in its broadest sense to intensify actions in areas falling under its purview.

Mukherjee said leaders of delegations favoured that the theme of the SAARC year 1997 should focus on greater participation of disadvantaged groups in the process of implementation of poverty alleviation programmes through social mobilisation. He said the meeting hoped that the 17th session of SAARC council of ministers would formulate the theme.

It was decided at the meeting that member states would prepare annual reports highlighting progress in poverty alleviation, which the SAARC secretariat would disseminate.

Mukherjee said the meeting endorsed the reports of first tier of the group of secretaries dealing with poverty and the second tier of the finance and planning secretaries. He said the role of NGOs was emphasised in the context of first tier and second tier reports.

He told a questioner that there had been mentionable reduction in poverty in the SAARC member countries during the last 10 years.

Quoting Planning Commission report, he said poverty ratio in India has come down to 19 as against 25 per cent in 1987-88.

The meeting favoured flexibility regarding timing of holding of third tier ministerial level meeting.

### Hasina at Tungipara

TUNGIPARA, Jan 4: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said BNP realised that people would reject it if election was held under a caretaker government, reports UNB.

"This is why they do not want it," she told a party rally at the entrance of Gopalganj town on way to her paternal home at Tungipara this evening.

She called upon the people from all walks of life, particularly the party workers, to resist the "one-party farcical" elections planned by the BNP government.

Hasina, accompanied by her younger sister, Sheikh Rehana, later offered fataha at the mazar of her slain father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, at Tungipara.

A *milad mahfil* will be held after *juma* prayers today at the mazar of Bangabandhu, said a party press release.

### Raushan

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pate in the negotiations between the ruling party and the Opposition to end the lingering political crisis.

The JP is a major party in the mainstream Opposition currently agitating for a caretaker government for holding of the forthcoming general elections, she argued.

The door for a compromise is still open, said Moudud Ahmed another presidium member of the JP.

The Constitution is not a barrier in the way of a settlement, said Moudud. The government may seek a reference from the Supreme Court after a compromise with the Opposition to end to the crisis, he added.

He also alleged that the Election Commission shifted the election schedule to serve the interest of the ruling party.

Elections will be held in the country only under a non-party caretaker government, JP Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju said. "Any conspiracy to cling to power has to be resisted," he said.

The JP rally, organised by its city unit, was presided over by Col. MA Maleque.

### LDF

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League Presidium member Abdus Samad Azad.

The opposition warned that the BNP government and Prime Minister Begum Zia would be held responsible if the situation deteriorated further landing the nation into conflict and confrontation.

Besides, he pointed out, it would not be possible for the opposition to take part in the elections even if they agree to do so if the irregularities were not removed.

He alleged that till now, voters, lists did not reach many constituencies. In that case, he pointed out, it would not be possible to mention voter's numbers of the proposer and seconder in the nomination papers.

Menon reiterated his party's stand on holding elections under a neutral government by forming an advisory council under the President.

### Diana

**From Page 1**

friends of Diana saying she had decided to say 'yes' to the queen's demand that she and Charles divorce but only on Diana's terms.

The Daily Mirror report on Monday said that Diana, who in a BBC television interview November 20 said she wanted a post as a roving good-will envoy for Britain,