

Protest against fresh DU 'sunset rules'

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities have issued a set of new directives for female residential students restricting this movement outside the halls after evening, sparking protests from the female students.

Some 300 students of the Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship Women's Hostel brought out a procession on the campus yesterday protesting the directives saying those, issued Tuesday last, violated an earlier understanding between them and the hall authorities.

The new directives came in notices which also said that those were passed by the DU Syndicate on November 30, 1995.

According to the new directives, gates of female students' halls will be closed at 7 pm in the winter and at 8 pm in the summer and the gate can not be opened without Provost's permission before 6 am next morning. Students, in special cases, can enter their respective halls until 9 pm in the summer

and 8 pm in the winter through the narrow gates beside the main gates but they have to record their particulars in the gate book.

If any girl student returns to her dormitory after 9 pm or wants to stay out at night she has to take prior permission from the House Tutor or the Provost.

The hall authorities will pay surprise visits to the halls between 9 pm and 10 pm in the summer and 8 pm and 9 pm in the winter three days a week. In the rest four days, the students will sign the register.

The protesting female students demanded that the hall gates should be kept open from 5 am to 9 pm and that in case of staying out at night, informing the office and registering their names in the gate books should be enough.

It is difficult to get the Provost or the House Tutor after 9 pm to take permission to enter the hall, some of the students claimed.

Hartal passes off

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the city today, the date for scrutiny of nomination papers.

In the city, all modes of transport except rickshaws and rickshaw vans stayed off the roads. Rickshaws plied from the early hours of the hartal. While visiting the areas, this correspondent saw private cars and jeeps on the roads in the afternoon Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara areas.

Shops, markets and business houses remained closed. Attendance in government offices was relatively thin.

A rickshaw-puller was injured when a few bombs were hurled from a pro-hartal procession near the Bangladesh Bank at around 11 am. Some pickets damaged a rickshaw at Tophkhana road at around 1 pm.

According to a news agency report, a free lance photographer was assaulted allegedly by some activists of pro-LDF Gonotantrik Chhatra Oikya (GO) in front of the Jatiya Press Club at about 10 in the morning. The victim was taking a snap of a Shibir procession.

No inter-district passenger buses operated during the hartal hours. Pro-hartal activists were seen picketing at various points in the city. Contingents of police backed by BDR personnel were posted at vulnerable points to avert untoward incidents.

Railway communication was partially disrupted. Trains, which left Kamalapur station in the city since early morning got stuck up at different stations due to barricades put up by pro-hartal activists.

Two domestic flights of the Biman — to Chittagong and Jessore — were cancelled while all the scheduled international flights operated to and from the Zia International Airport (ZIA) normally.

River transports operated almost normally. According to reports received from different parts of the country, the hartal was observed by and large peacefully.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: Normal life was disrupted here during today's dawn-to-dusk hartal.

None requested EC

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nomination filing, scrutiny and withdrawal of candidature are over, the candidates' rights are automatically established. There is no provision to reverse the situation," said another top official of the EC, expressing his frustration at the prevailing political situation.

"On past occasions, representatives of different political parties approached the EC for rescheduling of dates, but today none has come," he said.

However, another source in the EC claimed that there was still provision for the EC to postpone or adjourn the proceedings of nomination filing under Clause 18 of the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

Clause 18 of the Representation of the People Order, 1972 reads: Where the proceedings relating to nomination, scrutiny or withdrawal cannot for reasons beyond the control of the Returning Officer, take place on the day appointed therefore, he may postpone or adjourn such proceedings and shall, with the approval of Commission, by public notice fix another day for the proceedings so postponed or adjourned and, if necessary, also the day or days for subsequent proceedings.

However, when asked Justice Jaill, referring to the

Clause, said that this was applicable to any one or two polling centres — not to the whole country. When asked how he evaluated a possible elections without participation of the major opposition parties, Justice Jaill replied that in the eyes of the EC, all parties were the same.

Since yesterday morning, the EC Secretariat received innumerable telephone calls from people wanting to know if the nomination filing date has to be rescheduled.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque left his office at about 3 pm. After 5 pm — the time limit for filing nominations, returning officers from districts started to ring the EC secretariat to update the number of nominations. The few officers, still in the office, spent hectic time to compile the reports.

The Election schedule was first announced on December 4, fixing January 18 as the polls date. The voting date was then deferred to February 7. On January 7, the EC made a partial change in the schedule fixing January 8 and 9 as the last date for filing nomination papers and the date for scrutiny. Then on January 8, the EC again revised the schedule for parliamentary elections fixing January 17 and 18 as nomination filing and scrutiny dates. The polls date was shifted to February 15.



The Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the "firing by the Indian BSF at the BDR and Bangladesh people and construction of Indian offices in the no-man's land" along Tamabil sector of the Indo-Bangladesh border along Sylhet. — Star photo

Tamabil

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immediately protested the attempt.

The BDR and BSF exchanged at least 70 rounds of gunshot yesterday afternoon at Tamabil border following a dispute over the fresh Indian move to construct a pucca building very close to the 'no man's land'.

A BDR official told this correspondent that the Indian authorities took the move to construct a pucca building near the border pillars—1274 and 1275 — at about 7 pm on Monday, violating the international border conventions. BDR immediately protested this and asked BSF to stop the construction work.

The situation became normal when BSF suspended the construction following a high level flag meeting which decided to follow the international border convention.

PTI and the United News of India said Jaxhar and Scindia also quit after the Prime Minister returned to New Delhi from Calcutta.

On Tuesday, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) accused seven opposition leaders and the three ministers of taking bribes from a businessman in exchange for

favours.

Opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani, one of those accused by the CBI, denied charges that he took bribes, but resigned from parliament on Tuesday and vowed not to fight elections until he was proved innocent.

The scandal has been simmering for five years following the discovery of a coded diary belonging to the businessman which showed he paid more than 20 million dollars to politicians and bureaucrats between April 1988 and March 1991 to win contracts.

Reuter adds: India's federal police said today that more politicians would be charged in a widening bribery scandal as pressure mounted on three members of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's cabinet to quit.

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Brushing aside corruption charges filed against its own president, the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) urged the three members of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's cabinet to quit immediately.

A BJP President Lal Krishna Advani, touted until recently by the party as a potential premier, resigned from parliament after federal detectives accused him and nine other politicians Tuesday of accepting bribes from a businessman.

Advani rejected the charges against him as "politically motivated," and his Hindu-revivalist party, which has vowed to storm to power in elections expected in April, went on the offensive.

PTI adds: Advani today tendered his resignation from the Lok Sabha before the Speaker Shivraj Patil and said it is final and there was no question of reconsideration.

Advani, who has been implicated in the Rs 65 crore Hawala Case, met Patil along with his party colleagues Atal Behari Vajpayee, Sikander Bakt, Dr Murl Manohar Joshi and Vijayaraje Scindia.

The speaker said, "I will act constitutionally" on the resignation letter.

Lankan govt, opposition open talks on new constitution

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COLOMBO, Jan 17: Sri Lanka opened talks with political parties in a bid to hammer out a consensus on a new constitution aimed at ending the country's protracted ethnic war, a senior minister said today, reports AFP.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister GL Peiris said negotiations were aimed at obtaining the mandatory two-thirds majority needed in parliament to implement the sweeping reforms.

Peiris said he was confident of winning support for the reforms which envisage greater devolution of power to minority Tamils with the aim of halting the Tamil separatist war which has claimed more than 50,000 lives since 1972.

"I am very hopeful of obtaining a consensus. People are sick and tired of this war," Peiris told reporters here. "The war is necessary but we must take a political decision on what we are going to spend our money."

He said the defence expenditure was estimated at 38 billion rupees (716 million dollars) in 1996, up from 32 billion dollars (603 million dollars) in 1995.

He said the draft chapter on the new constitution unveiled by him Tuesday sought to lay down the structure of devolution by turning Sri

3 Indian ministers quit over payoff scandal

NEW DELHI, Jan 17:

Three Indian cabinet ministers named in a huge payoff scandal today resigned from the government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, domestic news agencies reported, says AFP.

Agriculture Minister Balram Jaxhar, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vidya Charan Shukla and Human Resources Development Minister Madhav Rao Scindia submitted their resignations to Rao, the news agencies said.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said Shukla informed Rao in a letter that it would not be appropriate for me to continue as a member of the government after being accused in the multimillion-dollar scandal.

PTI and the United News of India said Jaxhar and Scindia also quit after the Prime Minister returned to New Delhi from Calcutta.

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Advani, Vajpayee court arrest

NEW DELHI, Jan 17:

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President L K Advani, the leader of the opposition in parliament, Atal Behari Vajpayee and party colleagues today courted arrest defying prohibitory orders imposed around the prime minister's residence, reports AFP.

They were going to submit an open letter to the prime minister on the Purulia arms drop.

The BJP delegation comprising about 150 MPs, MLAs and party office bearers were protesting against the failure of the government to safeguard national security and being unable to come forward with full facts regarding the arms-drop.

Vajpayee had served an ultimatum on the government giving a week's time for it to unfurl full facts regarding the arms-drop in Purulia.

The BJP delegation which was to have been led by Vajpayee was instead led by Advani who had announced his resignation from the Lok Sabha last night following his implication by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Rs 65 crore Hawala Case.

Meanwhile, Indian opposition parties today demanded the resignations of three ministers named in a multi-million-dollar bribery scandal as a political volcano erupted with general elec-

3 JCD leaders held in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 17:

Law-enforcing agencies today arrested three leaders of ruling BNP's student wing in the town and took them on five days' police remand, reports UNB.

They are Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) district unit Joint Convenor and former VP of Gurudayal Government College Mohammad Saifur Malek Chowdhury, JCD college unit President Mahmudur Rahman Khan Tuhin and another former VP of the college, Mohammad Bahar Miah Bahar.

Army and police in a joint drive picked up Saifur and Tuhin from Kachari Bazar area at about 2:30 pm while they were moving in the town with BNP nominee Masud Helali. Bahar was arrested from court area in the afternoon.

Police said the JCD leaders were arrested under Section 54. They were produced before court where police prayed for seven-day remand.

The court granted five days for interrogating the JCD leaders.

Aricha

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ferry services for transportation of goods to and from northern and southern regions of the country during the month of holy Ramadan. He advised the senior officials of BIWTC and BIWTA to stay at Aricha ghats during Ramadan to monitor ferry services.

The state minister also directed them to procure a weighing machine to weigh the goods of trucks and a crane to lift inoperative vehicles to be used at Aricha ghat. He urged the truck drivers and owners not to carry goods beyond capacity.

Suicide

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sources quoting the primary assumptions of the attending doctors said that Babu died a normal death.

The address and other details of Babu could not be known immediately. His body was handed over to Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam for the burial. Motijheel police said.

Malaysia

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after he was found with the passports at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on October 23.

"I pleaded guilty because the passports were in my hand," he said, adding that his bag had been switched with someone else's.

Tay set a hearing for February 27.

Bangladeshis make up a major portion of the country's 1.2 million legal foreign workers and many more of its illegal ones.

Opposition

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administration at the district and thana levels to disassociate themselves from the election process.

He blamed that ruling party's efforts for holding "unilateral elections" was leading the nation to a confrontation.

"It is now a big question whether our hard-earned democracy will survive or not," Nasim cautioned. "Khaleda Zia will be responsible for any unbecoming situation."

The Opposition would never let democracy destroyed under a one-man rule, he added.

On the resignation of the CEC, Nasim said "We believe that the CEC would not only stop this election, but would also step down because of his respect to democracy and his exalted position."

Riyadh

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the UN and Iraq on the huge quantity of oil now preserved in the cross-border pipeline through the KSA. Once a deal is agreed upon, the oil in the pipeline will be put on sale to pay for Iraq's food and medicine imports and to meet the compensation claims, the official said.

A conference of 78 countries having the war-affected people is being planned for March next to put pressure on the international community to expedite the payment of the compensation, he further added.

Meanwhile, leaders of the KIRBA met President Abdur Rahman Biswas on January 9 and earlier on December 20 it sent a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urging him to expedite the process.

The three categories of claimants are — persons forced to flee (Cat-A), persons died or injured (Cat-B) and individual losses of property (Cat-C).

BNP pushing country toward crisis

Star Report

The Opposition parties yesterday blamed the ruling party for going ahead with its 'blue-print' for unilateral elections, as the last date for filing of nomination expired yesterday.

"The BNP government is pushing the country toward a further crisis," said Zillur Rahman, General Secretary of the Awami League.

Anwar Hossain Manju, the Secretary General of the Jatiya Party said, "holding of general elections without the participation of the major political parties would be disastrous for the whole nation."

Matur Rahman Nizami, the Secretary General of the Jamaat-e-Islami termed the move as, "blue-print of the ruling party to establish a rubber stamp parliament to establish a one-party autocratic rule."

LDF leader Rashed Khan Menon said, "the decision to go ahead with unilateral elections will automatically bring into question the political maturity of the leadership of the country."

Bosnian Muslim prisoners being held in secret camps

LONDON, Jan 17:

Hundreds of Bosnian Muslim prisoners are being held at two secret camps in Serbia. The Guardian newspaper reported today quoting a group of Bosnian refugees evacuated by the Red Cross to the Irish capital last month, reports AFP.

They said that while they themselves had been released, the other refugees from the enclaves remained in a camp at Sijevocia and in another near Mitrovo Polje.

The Guardian said the Red Cross in Belgrade has been negotiating for several weeks to have the prisoners released and given sanctuary in their countries, and hoped that they might be out "by the end of January."

The paper noted that this date would be 10 days after the deadline set for the release of all detainees under Bosnia's peace accord signed last month by all sides.

The men evacuated to Dublin said they were treated "like animals" on their arrival at the Serb camps, with routine and random beatings.

Sanitation was appalling, they said, and food rations were restricted during their first weeks in the camps, when the men were also subjected to psychological abuse such as being made to salute Serbian emblems and curse their own leaders.

25 injured in Barisal clash

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 16: Clashes between the students of BM University College and a group of people left at least 25 people injured in the Hospital Road and Natun Bazar area of the town.

The three-hour clashes erupted at around 11 am when a group of people tried to occupy a disputed property, Surendra Bhaban, which is being used as a hostel of the college, and assaulted two students.

No contact

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deadline for filing nomination papers today (Wednesday), BNP Secretary General Barister Abdus Salam Talukdar told newsmen at his Bailey Road official residence yesterday evening. "But the constitutional experts may have different views on the issue."

Replying to a question, Salam Talukdar said he expected that the Opposition, after cancelling Tuesday's scheduled meeting without showing any reason, would contact his party (BNP) yesterday. But they did not come forward, he added.

Asked if the BNP was going ahead with polls, boycotted by the major opposition parties the BNP leader commented, "The Election Commission would go by the Constitution."

Hasina

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in any related activities.

The AL chief urged the people to build up united resistance against the holding of 'unilateral farcical elections', ignoring the demand for elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Hasina said that the greed for power and obstinacy of the Prime Minister was pushing the country towards confrontation.

Credit rating co to be launched today

By Staff Correspondent

A credit rating company, the first of its kind in the country to give data and information about capital and money markets to investors and offer project appraisals, will start functioning here today.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will inaugurate the company, the Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL) at a function at the Sonargaon hotel, former deputy prime minister Jamaluddin Ahmed, chairman of the company said at a press conference Monday.

Services of the company, to be run by a group of internationally known professionals, will create greater confidence among local and foreign investors in the capital market as well as of the issuers of debt instruments and equity, he said.

The CRISL will benefit all in the capital and money markets, the former deputy prime minister said.

Muzaffar Ahmed FCMA, M Mobassar Husain MBA and other members of the board of directors of the company were present at the press conference. Jamaluddin said that the CRISL will offer independent rating of securities and make project appraisals for prospective investors in any sector.

Former UP CM Yadav arrested

LUCKNOW, Jan 17:

The national president of the Samajwadi Party and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh Yadav and many of his former cabinet colleagues were arrested under Section 151 in front of the party office, about one km away from the Rajbhawan, here this afternoon, reports PTI.

Earlier, at about 1150 hours, Yadav led the party workers' march from his residence to the party office at Vikramaditya Marg, along with the party's national general secretary Mohammad Azam Khan where it was converted into a public meeting.

The meeting was addressed by Yadav and Azam Khan besides some others.

At about 1430 hours, the district administration arrested Yadav under Section 151 (Apprehension of Breach of Peace) along with Azam Khan and other office bearers of the party.

The Midnight File

Israeli troops quit Abu Dis

ABU DIS, West Bank, Jan 17: Israeli soldiers withdrew unannounced from their headquarters in this town on the outskirts of Jerusalem today, prompting celebrations that quickly resembled a campaign rally for supporters of Yasser Arafat. The headquarters, perched on a hilltop with a clear view of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, was set up after the start of the 1987-1993 Palestinian uprising, reports AFP.

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