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Bangla Academy staff start 4-hr work abstention today

By Staff Correspondent The officers and employees of Bangla Academy yesterday decided to observe work abstention and wear black badges from morning to noon everyday in all units of the Academy till the punishment of the attackers.



Members, officials and staff of the Bangla Academy yesterday staged a sit-in on the Academy compound protesting ransacking of some rooms at the Academy on Saturday.

Directive to check fertiliser smuggling

The 14th meeting of the National Smuggling Resistance Committee was held in the city yesterday, reports UNB. The meeting chaired by Home Minister Rafiqul Islam directed the concerned agencies to take effective measures to check smuggling.

It discussed different organizational issues relating to resistance of smuggling and asked the country's coast-guards to be more active in curbing fertiliser smuggling. The meeting decided to build up an anti-smuggling mass awareness in the country's frontier areas, said an official handout.

Additional Home Secretary and high officials of the concerned departments attended the meeting.

India test-fires Trishul missile

NEW DELHI, Dec 29: India has successfully test-fired a short-range anti-aircraft missile it has developed, the Press Trust of India said today, reports Reuters. The news agency said Trishul missiles were fired on Saturday from a mobile launcher at the Chandipur test range in the eastern state of Orissa.

The Trishul, named for the trident carried by the Hindu god Shiva, operates on solid fuel. It has a range of up to nine km and can carry a 15-kg (33-lb) warhead.

Earlier this month, India bowed to Western pressure and rolled back its nuclear programme. It decided to shelve deployment of the Agni, an intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads, after successfully completing research on the project. The Agni is designed to hit targets up to 2,500 km away.

BCL leader

From Page 1 retary of the Pallabi thana unit of the BCL, the student wing of the Awami League.

The injured - Baset, 27, son of Majed Bhuiyan of Mirpur-2, and Rahat Khan, 22, son of Ali Ahmed of Mazar Road, Mirpur - were under treatment at the DMCH till the filing of this report last night. Both of them received bullet injuries. The attack was made allegedly by their rivals in the BCL. A dispute over the ownership of a snacks shop, near the Mirpur College was reportedly the cause of the attack.

A gang of some eight young men armed with weapons came to the snacks shop in a red microbus at about 1:30 pm, said police, adding Delwar and Baset a former vice president of the Mirpur College unit of the BCL, and some of their friends were taking tea at the time there. An altercation started between the two sides and at one stage the armed men opened fire on Delwar and his friends. The body of Delwar, a former student of Bangla College was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy. His elder brother, Bashiruddin, filed a case with Mirpur thana.

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Stalemate over ICD expansion continues

by Reaz Ahmad

The stalemate persists over expansion work of Bangladesh Railway's Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Kamalapur station in the city following inclusive talks on Saturday between representatives of BR and local people resisting it.

BR sources told this correspondent that the expansion work which was scheduled to resume yesterday would now resume tomorrow to enable the contractors and labourers to take part in the 'Akheri Munaajat' at the Biswa Ijtema today.

The work of ICD expansion remained suspended since December 24 following violent resistance from residents of Muga, Sabujbagh and other nearby areas, under the banner of Committee for Resistance to Closure of Muga-Kamalapur Road.

Meanwhile, in a bid to find a solution to the problem, both BR officials and the protesters contacted local MP Saber Hussain Chowdhury.

Convener of the resistance committee, Advocate Shaha-juddin Sarkar told The Daily Star that a delegation of the committee would have a meeting with Saber Hussain Chowdhury.

Nirmul Committee Observes 'Hatred Day'

Ghatok Dalai Nirmul Committee yesterday observed the 'Hatred Day' renewing its demand for trial of the war criminals and a ban on communal politics of Jamaat Shibir axis, reports UNB.

On this day in 1991, Ghulam Azam became Ameer of Jamaat and since then Nirmul Committee has been observing the day as the 'Hatred Day' throughout the country.

On the occasion, Nirmul Committee held a rally in front of the Central Shaheed Minar in the city and burnt an effigy of Jamaat-e-Islami chief Prof Ghulam Azam.

The rally was addressed by poet Shamsur Rahman, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Singer Kalim Sharaif, Barrister Shaukat Ali Khan, journalist Kamal Lohani, Moulana Abdul Awal, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Sheymol Nasreen Chowdhury, Mozammel Haq BP, Kazi Mukul and UK unit leader of the Nirmul Committee Mia Akhter Hossain. Journalist Shamim Akhter read out the declaration of the rally presided over by Nirmul Committee acting convener Shahriar Kabir.

hury on January 5. BR sources said they were also seeking the lawmaker's help in resolving the stalemate. A BR official pointed out that BR would construct an alternative road 700 feet away from the existing link road through Kamalapur station and was considering construction a foot overbridge near the planned alternative road.

High-powered body to accelerate flow of foreign investment

The government set up a high-powered inter-ministerial committee to accelerate the flow of foreign investment into the country, reports UNB.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister has been made convener of the investment-promotion body that will expedite the approval process of proposals for foreign investment, said an official announcement yesterday.

The other members are Industries Secretary, Energy Secretary, External Division Secretary, Secretary to the Prime Minister and Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment.

This committee will expeditiously consider all proposals for foreign investment along with memorandum of understanding (MOU) and contracts.

In case the relevant ministries or divisions or the Board of Investment fail to take a decision under the existing rules and regulations or guidelines, they shall refer the matter to this committee for quick decision. And the decision of the committee will be deemed as the decision of the government.

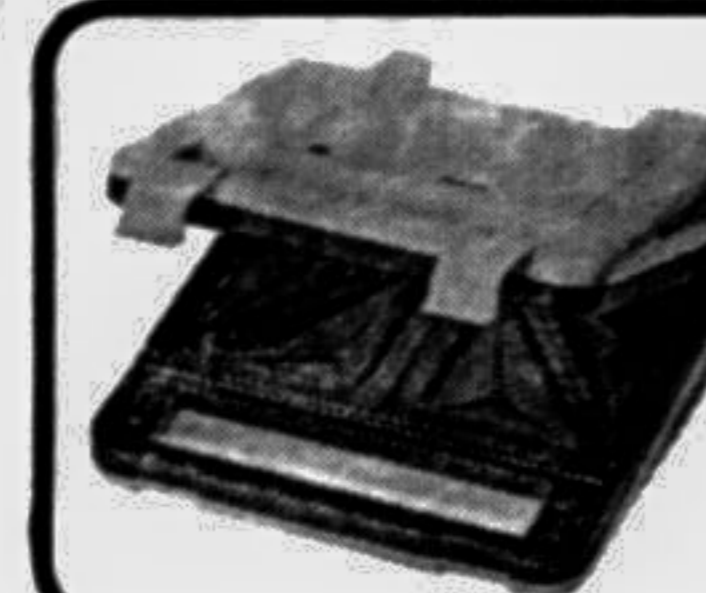
Committee's first meeting decided that the Board of Investment would be the first contact window for all foreign investment and all proposals for investment should come to the BOI for approval.

BNP calls hartal

From Page 1 put up barricades at Sarmatha crossing for two hours from 11 am.

Earlier on Saturday, they laid a siege to the DC office and handed over a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner to press the demand.

BNP leaders alleged that ADC Mushtaque Ahmed tore a picture of late President Ziaur Rahman at Bijoy Mela in the town on December 16.



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12 audit reports submitted to President

Audit reports detecting irregularities like non-observance of financial rules, pilferage, defalcation and spendings without budget provision since the inception of Bangladesh were submitted yesterday to the President, reports UNB.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, M Hafizuddin Khan, apprised President Shahabuddin Ahmed of the malpractices while submitting a total of 12 reports to him at Bangabhaban.

An official release said the reports included the audit reports and appropriation accounts of the government.

The President thanked the Comptroller and Auditor General for submitting the reports and accounts. He stressed completion of backlog reports.

The AGB office has submitted a total of 369 reports to the President during the last 25 years, out of which 298 have been placed in Parliament. So far, the Parliament has discussed 36 reports only.

Military Secretary of the President Maj Gen Ruhul Alam Chowdhury, Joint Secretary of the President's office M A Hye, Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General Qamrul Hai and Assistant Comptroller and Auditor General Abul Kalam Azad were present.

Pak Jamaat to boycott polls

LAHORE, Dec 29: Pakistan's influential Islamic fundamentalist party, Jamaat-i-Islami, said today it would boycott the country's general election February 3, reports AFP.

Party leader Qazi Hussain Ahmed told a news conference here the boycott was ordered because the caretaker administration of Malik Meraj Khalid had failed to end political corruption.

"We do not want to become part of a system which can prevent the entry of corrupt elements" into parliament, the head of the well-organised party added.

SAARCLAW confce ends

From Page 1

why bullets of our poverty alleviation ventures are being misfired," he said. Poverty alleviation programmes will never click, allowing corrupt practices to continue unabated," he observed.

On the issue of appointment of Ombudsman, he said, "An Ombudsman without enough powers will be turned a mere decorative office."

Justice Ahmad also stressed the need for speedy disposal of

Spl train service for home-bound Ijtema pilgrims

Bangladesh Railway will arrange special train service from Tongi station to different destinations across the country following the Akheri Munaajat of Biswa Ijtema today, reports UNB.

A BR release says to ease pilgrims movement towards their respective destination, nine special trains will run from Tongi and some regular trains also make stoppage at Tongi.

On the day, four special trains from Tongi will go to Dhaka at 12:30 pm, 1:20 pm, 2:00 pm and 3:50 pm while three others to Mymensingh and two to Akhaura.

Mymensingh-bound trains will leave Tongi at 12:35 pm, 1:10 pm and 10:50 pm while Akhaura-bound trains will start at 12:30 pm and 5:10 pm.

Besides, four regular trains from Dhaka to Dinajpur (Ekota), Jagannathganj (Jamuna), Sylhet (Jointika) and Chittagong-bound Gohuli Express will halt two minutes each at Tongi.

On December 31, five other special trains will run - one towards Rajshahi at 12:30 pm from Dhaka and four from Tongi, of them two will leave for Mymensingh and two for Akhaura and Bhairab Bazar.

40 Ijtema pilgrims hurt in bus accident

MYMENSINGH, Dec 29: At least 40 people were injured, 21 seriously, when a bus carrying the devotees of Biswa Ijtema fell into a roadside ditch at Shikari Kanda in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Police said a Dhaka-bound minibuss skidded off the road and tumbled into the wayside ditch at Shikari Kanda near the town in the afternoon.

Twenty of the injured including six-month-old Jaha, Berek 50, Moni, 20, Salam 7, Ferdous 30, Tara Miah 25, Arif 30, Asadullah, 50, Kasem 40, Iman 40, 50, Saiful Islam 20, Nur Mohammad 45, Kalam 40, Moti 28, Bashar 35, Murshid Kuli 48, Faruq Ahmed, Abdul Jalil 35, and Jamal Uddin, 40, were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. The driver fled the scene soon after the accident.

Soccer

From Page 1 three leading clubs of the host. Bargh Sirajh FC of Iran was the first to arrive in the capital yesterday afternoon, followed by Friends Club of neighbouring Nepal, who flew in the city in the evening. The All Star FC of Thailand arrived late last night.

The other participating teams including three Indian giants, Mohunbagan, Calcutta Mohammedans and East Bengal, are scheduled to arrive before the commencement of the meet.

The eleven teams, split into four groups, will feature in the round-robin first phase from where top finishers from each group will qualify for the semifinals. The semifinals will be held on January 8 while the final is slated for January 11.

Roundtable

From Page 1 Identifying lack of effective supervision, logistic support and adequate manpower in courts as the barriers to disposing cases quickly, he noted with dissatisfaction that appeal cases were "rotting" in the court for 10-12 years.

Speaking at the discussion, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru stressed the need for devising a mechanism to make the law cheap and easily accessible to the poor people.

He proposed formation of a supplementary forum like Grameen Court to help people in getting justice within the shortest possible time. "We've come out from the traditional boundary of the existing legal system," Khasru added.

Justice VR Krishna Iyer, a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India, said the people in both bench and bar should have a professional mentality. "They should be determined to finish a case quickly."

He stressed the need for ensuring brevity in the entire legal system, including submission and arguments, as well as speedy disposal of cases to make law people-friendly and justice available to the masses.

cases. "In India now, we are in a position to dispose of any case in the Supreme Court within one year time. The process should be more speedy in the lower courts, he added.

"At present we are going ahead with a gigantic task of computerising some three crore cases and we will also make all trial courts and district courts fully computerised by seven months," he said.

In his brief address Justice Sajjad Ali Shah said that in the field of judiciary, SAARC countries could learn from each others' experiences as they have many things common.

He said complexities in elections rules pose a threat to growth of democracy in South Asian countries. There should be collective efforts to simplify these rules so that poor but honest people can get chance to be elected as people's representatives, he said.

In his presidential address, Chief Justice of Bangladesh ATM Afzal expressed the hope that the Fifth SAARCLAW Conference would act like a pathfinder. Referring to the Second SAARC Chief Justices' Conference held in Comilla on December 28, Justice Afzal said, "We have detailed discussion on the need for both entry-point and in-service training for lawyers and judges."

He mentioned that in Bangladesh a Judicial Institution Training Act has been passed and a judicial training institution set up. The training institution will start functioning soon, he said.

Over one hundred leading jurists, judges, advocates and academicians from SAARC member countries attended the three-day conference. Organizers of the conference said that all the suggestions and papers presented in the conference would be published.

DUTA polls

From Page 1 ment - treasurer.

Those contesting for membership on this panel are: Prof Rahim B Talukdar of the Institute of Business Administration, Dr Mainuddin Khan, Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration; Dr Z N Tahmina Begum of Botany department; Dr Ishrat Shamim of Sociology; Dr Sayedur Rahman of Bengali; Dr Sirajul Islam Khan of Microbiology; Dr Amzad Hossain of Physics; Dr Jahidul Islam of Sociology; Dr Shaheer Rahman of Statistics; and Dr Mohammad Ahad Ali of Chemistry department.

Azad Siddiky

From Page 1 criminal cases.

In the early hours of Saturday, police broke open the door of their house and found Azad Siddiky, wanted for his alleged involvement in a prolonged intra-party conflict of Chhatra League in the town. But the ruling party MPs refused to allow police to arrest their younger brother and instead accompanied him to appear before Tangail Cognizance Court, Zone A. The Magistrate sent the accused to jail hajat.

Meanwhile, tension persists in the town centring the incident and three platoons of BDR personnel were deployed in various localities in the town.

In view of the prevailing situation in the town, the authorities cancelled a four-day drama festival which was scheduled to begin yesterday. Earlier, it was postponed and the announcement of cancellation came today.

Ship sinks in Atlantic Search for 28 missing seamen resumes

CAPE TOWN, Dec 29: A search resumed today for 28 seamen lost in a remote part of the South Atlantic after a freighter sank while carrying sugar from Brazil to Iraq, reports Reuters.

A Hercules C-130 plane was flying to the area for the third day to look for survivors or wreckage from the Jahan, which went down on Friday about 680 miles west of Cape Town.

South African Air Force spokeswoman Marietta Hopley said hopes were fading that the crew would be found alive, even though weather in the area was fine.

"Up till now no radio contact, beacon signals or flares have been received or seen by the Hercules search crew," she said in a statement.

The maritime rescue coordination centre in Australia picked up a distress call on Thursday night saying the freighter was flooding and the crew were abandoning ship. The centre said the Jahan went down five hours later.

There was no word on what caused the sinking of the 15,022 deadweight tonne Jahan, built in 1972, registered in Belize and operated by Seatinnes Shipping of Singapore.



The Biennial General Meeting of the Jatiya Press Club began yesterday.

2 SEC members

From Page 1

The minister directed the committee to take necessary measures examining various aspects of the problem.

He reassured that the government would continue to extend all-out cooperation so that the stockmarket could operate in a stable and normal way.

The delegation, comprising entrepreneurs, businessmen and leaders of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), met with the Finance Minister in the NEC conference room to discuss various issues related to the share market.

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Yusuf Abdullah Harun led the team in the meeting.

Members of the delegation held open discussion with the minister and stressed the need for maintaining stable atmosphere in the market.

Kerb marketmen

From Page 1

Islam Jahangir, Talukder Nasim and others. In an 11-point demand, the Association wanted punishment of the "corrupt" DSE officials and members, transparency in share trading and monitoring of the capital market by investors' representatives.

The association leaders said they would continue their protest programme until the market was stabilised and urged fellow traders in the kerb market to actively participate in the agitation in front of the DSE building.

SSMC student

From Page 1

main hostel and suddenly left it for his room (No 110).

On return from the TV room, his friends found a note saying, "Nobody is responsible for my death." It has two signatures of Kamal himself, police said.

College Principal M A Shakur had filed a general diary with Kotwali police mentioning Kamal's missing and police visited the campus yesterday morning after press reports in this regard.

At one stage of their hunt for the missing student, police found his body on the rooftop of the six-storey hostel building.

College sources said Mostafa Kamal who hailed from Sylhet, had been suffering from mental depression and did not appear in the first professional examination. He, however, had filled in the form to take part in the examination scheduled to be held in January.

Press Club

From Page 1

Khandaker Manirul Alam, general secretary of the club placed the annual report. Swapan Kumar Saha, treasurer, presented his report. The reports were approved by the meeting.

The traditional lunch also marked the meeting. A large number of club members attended the meeting.

The election is being contested by two panels. One panel is led by incumbent president Rezauddin Ahmed and general secretary Khandaker Manirul Alam. The other panel is headed by Shafiqur Rahman and Altaf Mahmood. A total of 17 executive posts - seven office bearers and 10 members - will be chosen by 447 voters.

Govt urged to annul SPA

From Page 1

Presidium member of the Jatiya Party and former Deputy Prime Minister Shah Moazzem Hossain yesterday urged the government to annul the Special Powers Act to help establish the rule of law and institutionalise democracy in the true sense of the term, reports BSS.

Speaking as the chief guest at a function held in observance of the Silver Jubilee of Independence by the Jatiya Tarun Party at Ramna Batamul, Moazzem said true rule of law cannot be established by keeping the Special Powers Act.

He said former president Ershad was still in jail due to the vengeance of the past BNP government.

He called for releasing the former president within the first week of 1997.

Tk 1454.97 cr sanctioned for 50 power projects

Taka 1454.97 crore was sanctioned for implementation of 50 projects in power sector during the 1996-97 fiscal year, reports BSS.

The sanctioned amount includes foreign exchange component of Taka 547.85 crore.

Progress of implementation of these projects was reviewed at a meeting yesterday with Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Lt. Gen. (Retd) M Nouruddin Khan in the chair. Secretary of the Ministry Dr S A Samad and heads of concerned corporations and organisations under the ministry were present.

The meeting was informed that till November last performance in implementation of projects under Power Development Board was 8.57 per cent against target of 7.69 per cent, Palli Biddutayan Board at 13.9 per cent and DESA at 9.08 per cent.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of rehabilitation projects under the power sector.

Garment factory worker found dead

By Staff Correspondent

A guard of a garments factory at Wari in the old part of the city was found dead yesterday morning.

Habibur Rahman, 35, an employee of Don Garments and Textiles Ltd at Chandicharan Basu Street in Wari under Sutrapur thana, was found lying in an unconscious state by another worker at 7:30 am.

He took Habib, son of one Rustom Ali, to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

A case has been filed with Sutrapur thana.