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Young girls dance before British Prime Minister John Major and his wife during a visit to the Kasbah slum in southern Calcutta yesterday. Major began a six-day trade mission to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh along with representatives of 50 British companies.

Illegal licences for rickshaws DCC files cases against two trade unions

By Staff Correspondent

Thousands of rickshaws are plying on the city streets with illegal authorisation plates issued by some trade unions, violating the Rickshaw By-laws 1973, sources in the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said.

The DCC has filed cases against two such trade unions with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court and served notice to another, the Sultanganj Union Parishad for violating the laws. The DCC is the only authority to issue licence or authorisation to any non-mechanised vehicle in the city, an official of the DCC said.

The trade unions are charging Tk 250 for such an illegal authorisation plate. The traffic policemen on the street are also accepting the trade unions' authorisation as a valid document, the official said. There are more than 30 thousand such rickshaws new and the number is rapidly increasing, the official said.

On the city streets, this correspondent saw several rickshaws with illegal authorisation plates issued by Jahangirnagar Rickshaw Milk Samity, Mahanagar Rickshaw Chalk Samity, Dakshinkhan Rickshaw Malik Samity, Rickshaw Chalk Oikya Parishad and Sultanganj Union Parishad.

"Sultanganj Union Parishad has the right to issue rickshaw licences for plying within its jurisdiction, outside the city but we found hundreds of rickshaws regularly plying in the city, with authorisation plates issued by it. We recently served a notice on the Parishad," the DCC official said requesting anonymity.

He, however, did not disclose the names of the two trade unions.

The DCC recently issued forgery-proof blue books and tokens to the 79,700 authorised rickshaws in the city at a cost of nearly 30 lakh taka, another DCC official said. But the number of authorised is about two lakh. Apart from mobile courts, no other action is taken either by the police or any other authority, the official said.

We are soon introducing Premium Bus Services in the city and we need to restrict the haphazard growth of rickshaws and autorickshaws to keep the city roads clear but the problem is being aggravated day by day," the official said.

Most of these trade unions are affiliated with different political parties and so a firm government policy is required to tackle the problem, he observed.

Road barricade in and around Kailashtila Gas Field

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 9: The vehicles of the Kailashtila Gas Field could not ply due to the barricade put up in and around the field today.

The All-party Action Committee enforced the road barricade programme to press its 6-point demand. The people from different villages gathered around the field in processions.

The barricade programme will continue tomorrow, the action committee leaders said.

The agitators also brought out a big procession. A rally was also held.

The speakers at the rally demanded withdrawal of the corrupt officials of the Kailashtila Gas Field.

No classes held at RU

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Jan 9: No classes and examinations were held at Rajshahi University today as the Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) and the All-Party Students Unity (APSU), enforced a strike on the campus while the university teachers and officers abstained from work protesting violence at the university.

The leaders of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association said they would refrain from all kinds of academic activities until the Vice-Chancellor, Prof M Eusuff Ali, is removed.

Bank, post office, 'business establishments and all offices of the university remained closed due to the strike today.

Final today

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team, said. There is no basic deference between us as we follow almost the same style. Moreover, we don't have any pressure here as far as crowd support is concerned. I think my boys will play a better game today."

About their formation, the PSM coach said that initially his team will follow the 1-2-5-3 formation but if the situation demands it will be changed as per the requirement. When asked whether there would be any change in their first eleven, the middle-aged Indonesian informed that they would field the same team which played the semifinal against Mohammedans.

On the other hand, the Malaysian coach Irfan Bakti (42) said his team will not make any major change in their tactics and will maintain their defensive formation (1-3-5-2). "Our objective is to win tomorrow and we have chalked out our plan accordingly. We will try our best to win the match with an all-out approach. Rest is on Allah," said the softspoken Malaysian coach.

He said that his team is a combination of players from the Malaysian League and they were well aware of their responsibilities when they appear to play football in the ground.

"I agree my team did not play anything impressive so far. That is because of their lack of coordination as a team. But now as they have already played three matches, I think they have overcome that problem and developed some sort of a team spirit," said the Malaysian coach. "This is my first trip to Bangladesh and I want to return home as a winner," Bakti added.

Both coaches expressed their gratitude to Bangladesh and its people for their hospitality during their stay in this country.

Ershad freed on bail

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His wife Begum Raushan Ershad, MP, acting Jatiya Party Chairman Mizanur Rahman Choudhury and Kazi Zafar Ahmed, both his former prime ministers, accompanied him to his Gulshan residence, escorted by a caravan of vehicles and motorcycles with his supporters.

Most of them including JP Secretary General and Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju had been waiting for more than three hours for the arrival of his lawyer Yusuf Hossain Humayun and his brother Golam Kader, MP.

They had been trudging down different offices from the Supreme Court building to the Deputy Commissioner's office, where they had to furnish a bail bond to secure Ershad's release order, which they took to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Jail officials carried the file and executed the order for opening the high iron gate of the villa to allow the former army chief, who seized power in a coup on March 24, 1982, to taste his freedom.

The prison officials included DIG (Prison) Abdus Zahir and Jailor Giasuddin Mollah. As soon as they formalised the unlocking their celebrated prisoner, whose upkeep cost Tk one lakh per month at the converted sub-jail, formerly the residence of the Deputy Speaker, Ershad strode out.

But he had to beat a retreat. Throngs of party loyalists surged ahead despite a cordon by riot policemen. Finally, the police made a path clearing the crowd and made way for general's exit. He was received by Begum Raushan Ershad, Anwar Hossain Manju, Mizanur Rahman Choudhury, Nazur Rahman Manju and a host of other party leaders.

Commenting on the JP chief's release, Anwar Hossain Manju told newsmen that it was the manifestation of the government's determination to uphold the rule of law. "We are happy that he came out of prison on bail by order of the court. The previous government wanted to destroy him filing false cases. But with Allah's blessing he had been able to come out overcoming all conspiracies," Manju added.

His comments matched those offered by Mizanur Rahman Choudhury, who steered the party during Ershad's imprisonment. "The judgment of Supreme Court on his bail petition bears testimony to the government's commitment to rule of law," he said.

Kazi Zafar Ahmed said this was a moment of utmost importance for the nation as they are yearning for an alternative leadership. "Only Ershad, the Palibandhu, could provide leadership in this hour of need when a vacuum is prevailing all over national life," he added.

Begum Raushan said that she was extremely happy to receive her husband back as a free man. She thanked Almighty Allah that he was enlarged on bail and congratulated the government for not influencing the courts.

Earlier, Raushan Ershad arrived from Singapore and went straight to visit her husband at the sub-jail and stayed there for sometime. She returned around 4 pm and drove back with him to their Gulshan residence where Ershad later met senior party leaders and addressed supporters.

UNB adds: Ershad said his release now proved that all the cases against him were politically motivated to destroy him. He also appealed to the Prime Minister for withdrawing the "false cases" filed against leaders and workers of the Jatiya Party all over the country.

In his first speech after release on bail, the deposed president made it clear that he was freed not out of kindness of anyone, rather through justice.

"I am freed as the present government did not influence the judiciary which the previous government did. The release was possible as the judiciary could function independently," he told his party workers and newsmen.

Ershad said he didn't make any *entente* with the government for his release. "I have been released under the provisions of law."

Referring to BNP, he said rather proposal of *entente* had come from a political party which was "refused by us."

Ershad, in an emotion-charged voice, said: "I am happy having been freed after six years. I am grateful to Almighty and also to people for their love for me."

The former president specially thanked the people of Rangpur who elected him MP twice. "I would not be able to return it in my life."

Making a dig at BNP, Ershad said a party had tried to destroy him. "They interfered in the lawsuit for which my freedom was not possible," he said, "but I am still alive fighting against all conspiracies."

The JP Chairman had a message for his party workers and leaders: "Work together and march forward. Inshallah, we'll win the next general election."

Khaleda

From Page 1

India." Referring to BNP's planned vigorous movement after the coming Eid-ul-Fitr, Begum Zia called upon her party workers to mobilise public opinion and organise small gatherings in this regard during the Ramadan. "Insha Allah, we'll be able to launch the agitation since people in larger number are now with us," she said.

Accusing the ruling party leaders and activists of establishing a reign of terror all over the country, the opposition leader said, "...hungry for long 21 years, they're now engaged in sucking everything within the shortest possible... They are involved in extortion, plunder etc. The country can't exist and the people can't survive in such a circumstance."

Speaking about the 'endangered' national economy, she said the ruling Awami League had plundered national wealth by nationalising industrial units during the '72-'75 period and is doing the same now by selling out the state-owned enterprises at throwaway prices. In this context, she alleged that a Tk 100 crore jute mill in Jessore was being sold to an 'Indian Marwari' only for Tk 10 crore.

Earlier, a group of Jatiya Party leaders and workers of Kishoreganj district announced their joining the BNP.

Those who spoke on the occasion included BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Maj (ret'd) Akhteruzzaman, Nazrul Islam Khan, Nazimuddin Al Azad and Bazil Karim, under whose leadership the JP members joined the BNP.

Mannan Bhuiyan said the government spoke against corruption but released a 'notorious and corrupt' man like Ershad. "If Ershad is freed, all the criminals should be released from jails," he added.

He brushed aside speculations that release of JP Chairman Ershad would harm the BNP and claimed his party would rather be benefited.

Explaining he this, he said "Some of the JP leaders had already joined our party and the rest, excepting a few sycophants of Ershad, would join soon."

Major's visit

From Page 1

explored and to be developed for commercial production by a British company.

The British premier will visit a BRAC project in Manikganj, partly funded by the British Overseas Development Administration. Major will address a gathering of local business and trade leaders organised by the FBCCI tomorrow.

Officials talks between Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and her British counterpart will be held tomorrow. It was learnt that the talks will focus on boosting further British investment in Bangladesh, particularly in the industrial and energy sectors.

Talks will also focus on further boosting exports of Bangladeshi goods to Britain. Bangladesh exports primarily ready-made garments, jute and fish products to Britain and imports mainly machinery and chemicals from that country.

Dhaka, it was learnt, would seek further British investments and would offer incentives for relocation of its sunset industries.

In recent years, Britain has emphasised on increasing bilateral trade cooperation between the two countries and the balance of trade now is in favour of Bangladesh.

Dhaka exported goods valued at nearly 418 million US dollars to Britain and imported items worth around 130 million dollars in 1995-96.

Britain has one of the largest foreign investor presence in Bangladesh, with more than 45 companies active in the market. Britain is Bangladesh's third largest export market, mainly as a result of Bangladesh's vibrant ready-made garments industry.

Bangladesh is also the largest recipient of British Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and receives nearly 50 million US dollars annually for various development projects. London has also set up an assistance monitoring office in Dhaka recently.

British assistance has been forthcoming in road construction, building of bridges and assistance for the social service sectors.

The Bangladesh and British Prime Ministers are also likely to discuss all bilateral matters for further strengthening political and economic ties. Talks will also cover mutual issues of regional and international concern.

During the official talks, Dhaka will also stress on further simplifying immigration procedures for family members of the large number of Bangladeshis residing in Britain and also raise the problems faced by Bangladeshi immigrants there.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will host a banquet for John Major on January 11 at the state Guest House Jamuna. He will visit the National Memorial at Savar to pay homage to the Liberation War martyrs.

Major will call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed. He is also likely to meet BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Begum Khaleda Zia.

The British Prime Minister is scheduled to leave Dhaka on Sunday at 10 am. He will address a press conference prior to his departure.

The British public and media played an active role in supporting the country's liberation war. The founder president of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, after his release from prison in Pakistan after liberation, first went to London where the British government accorded him special honour and provided him a special plane of the Royal Air Force to fly him to Dhaka on January 10. Pakistan later quit the Commonwealth when Britain extended recognition to Bangladesh.

John Major will be the second British Prime Minister to visit Bangladesh. In 1978, former British Prime Minister James Callaghan visited Dhaka.

John Major: A profile

John Major, Conservative Member of Parliament for Huntingdon, was appointed Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service on 28 November 1990, following his election as leader of the Conservative Party the previous day, reports BSS.

He retained the post when the Conservative Party won the general election of April 1992.

John Major was born in 1943 and educated at Rutlish Grammar School. He was an executive with Standard Chartered Bank from 1965 to 1979 and is an Associate of the Institute of Bankers. He served on Lambeth Borough Council from 1968 to 1971.

Before his election to Parliament as member for Huntingdonshire in 1979, Major contested Camden (St Pancras) in February and October 1974. Since the general election of 1983 and following constituency boundary changes, he has sat for Huntingdon.

From 1981 to 1983 Major was Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of State at the Home Office. He became an Assistant Government Whip in 1983, being appointed a Lord Commissioner of the Treasury (a senior government whip) in 1984. In 1985 he was made Parliamentary Under

Secretary of State for Social Security at the Department of Health and Social Security and was promoted to Minister of State for Social Security and the Disabled in 1986, remaining in this post until his appointment as Chief Secretary to the Treasury following the general election of June 1987. He was created a Privy Counsellor in the same year.

He served as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Minister of Overseas Development from July to October 1989, when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. He remained in this post until his appointment as Prime Minister in November 1990.

Major was a member of the board of Warden Housing Association from 1975 to 1983. He was a Joint Secretary of the Conservative Back-Bench Environment Committee from 1979 to 1981, parliamentary consultant to the Guild of Glass Engravers from 1979 to 1988; and President of the Eastern Area Young Conservatives from 1983 to 1985.

His recreations include opera, cricket and football.

Major married Norma Johnson in 1970. They have a son (James) and a daughter (Elizabeth).

Writ: Indemnity repeal

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submissions of the Attorney General adjourned the hearing on the petitions till Monday and invited Barrister Syed Istiaq Ahmed as the senior most *amicus curiae* to present his opinions on that day.

"Under Article 93 no ordinance can be promulgated inconsistent with any provision of the constitution but the Indemnity Ordinance is inconsistent with Article 61 and 62," argued the Attorney General.

He said, "According to Article 102 (5) of the Constitution the killers would not get any remedy under writ jurisdiction, they would go to court martial."

Justifying the Indemnity (Repeal) Act, 1996, K S Nabi said, "The Jatiya Sangsad under Article 80 legislates law and under Article 149 can amend or repeal any law or bylaw made under the Constitution by simple majority in Parliament and hence, Parliament most legally repeals the ordinance."

He further submitted that according to the saving Clause 39 (A) (10) law includes ordinances and as such the ordinance is a law and can be repealed like other ordinances as the same does not fall within the purview of the ordinance.

The fire rendered more than 200 families, mostly belonging to low-income groups, homeless and caused an estimated loss of property worth Tk 50 lakh.

Fire Brigade and officials concerned will investigate the reason for the fire incident and also assess the extent of damage.

200 houses gutted
From Page 1

incident. They took treatment from different clinics and hospitals.

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Yasmin murder
From Page 1

The trial of the three main accused is being held in the Special Court under Section 6 (4) of the Women and Children Repression Act. The trial of six other accused will begin in the District and Sessions Judge Court of Rangpur from January 13 under Section 201 (34) of BPC.

the scope of Article 142 having provisions for amendment of the Constitution.

Termining the ordinance as *ultra vires* of the Constitution K S Nabi said "The so-called saving clause cannot destroy the basic structure and principle of the Constitution."

"Any void law like the ordinance cannot be saved or continued, even ratified," he submitted.

He further submitted that right to life even is not inserted in any Constitution, it is a natural and fundamental human right.

"No barbarian law like the ordinance protecting the killers of people including innocent children can be enacted in any civilised society," he submitted.

PM tells RUTA leaders

Steps to be taken to maintain peace on RU, IU campuses

RAJSHAH, Jan 9: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here today that the government would take appropriate measures to maintain congenial academic atmosphere on the campuses of the Rajshahi and Islamic universities, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said this while a group of teachers including Syndicate members, outgoing president of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association Prof Mohammad Yunus and the newly-elected RUTA president and general secretary Prof M Shahidul Islam and Prof Abbas Ali called on her at local circuit house.

VCs suggest
From Page 1

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Prof Iqbal Mahmood led the nine-member delegation of the VCs.

The delegation also included, Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, VC of the Dhaka University, Prof Abdul Mannan, VC of the Chittagong University, Prof Aminul Islam, VC of the National University, Prof M Aminul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of the Open University, Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, VC of the Jahangirnagar University, Prof Golam Ali Fakir, VC of the Khulna University, Prof Mohammad Hossain, VC of the Bangladesh Agricultural University and Prof Mohibuddin Ahmed, VC of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said a Bangabhaban press release yesterday.

Rafiqul Islam Mia sued for corruption

Former Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia was yesterday sued for corruption in allotment of a 10-katha plot, official sources said, reports UNB.

The former Chairman of RAJUK, Humayun Khadem, and five others have also been charged with misappropriating about Tk 74 lakh while giving allotment of the plot at Baridhara in the city.

An official of the Bureau of Anti-corruption filed the case with Motijheel police after investigation.

Hasina

From Page 1

The Prime Minister flew to the Padma area to see the flow of the water and met a cross-section of the people. She first dropped at a char named Talbaria in Kushtia district and inaugurated a Gorai dredging project.

The river Gorai has lost its depth and flow due to lack of water flow in its mother river the Padma, which caused increased salinity and initiated desertification process to its nearby areas.

Addressing the gathering at Talbaria, the Prime Minister said the rivers of Bangladesh were drying due to lack of water.

She said there was no water in the rivers in last few years, the land lost its fertility being dry for want of irrigation, the fish production was dropped in the area and the people suffered a lot.

In Rajshahi, Prime Minister inaugurated a special literacy campaign, saying that the only objective of her government is overall development of people's lifestyle which is not possible without removing illiteracy from the country.

"Our target is the people, their welfare and development of their living condition," she told a huge public rally at Rajshahi Madrasa Maidan in the afternoon where she announced the programme styled "Sandipan".

"Sandipan project is a unique programme for removing illiteracy," she said urging all educated people of the district to involve themselves in the project to make it a success.

Home-coming day
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with their unbounded love and affection.

In a message on the eve of Bangabandhu's home-coming day, President Shahabuddin Ahmed called for participation of all irrespective of party affiliation in the efforts for building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh is now independent and sovereign. We all want an exploitation-free and prosperous Bangladesh," said the President, adding that the people whose sufferings knew no bound during the nine-month war were overwhelmed with joy, emotion, hopes and aspiration getting Bangabandhu back amidst them.

The day is, therefore, a memorable day in our national history, he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message said the nation after a long period today got the scope to complete the unfinished task of the Bangabandhu.

"We can pay our highest respect to him by building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said, on this day the independence of the country achieved perfection with the home-coming of the leader who's call and stewardship had inspired the people of all sections of life to fight for liberation, and achieve independence, defeating the occupation forces.

Sheikh Hasina said, soon after his announcement of independence the Pakistani forces arrested the great leader from his Dhanmondi residence.

The Prime Minister said after his return home, Bangabandhu started an untiring effort to reorganise and rehabilitate the war ravaged economy of the

One roasted alive, shops gutted in Patuakhali

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 9: One person died and two others were seriously injured in a fire that broke out in a market near the Telukhali bridge under sadar thana of Patuakhali district last night.

Witnesses said the fire originated from an electrical short circuit. A number of shops were gutted in the fire at about 1 am.

Alamgir Hossain, 22, a student of Patuakhali University college, was roasted alive, the witnesses added.

Rao granted bail

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: An Indian court today granted bail to former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao in a one-million dollar vote-buying case, officials said, reports AFP.

Arjun, Tiwari rejoin Congress

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: India's Congress (I) Party, stung by a series of corruption scandals after being ousted from government last year, received a boost today when two top rebels rejoined the party, officials said, reports AFP.

Narayan Dutt Tiwari and Arjun Singh were re-admitted to the Congress, which they left on May 20, 1995.

Bank timings during Ramadan

Bangladesh Bank and all scheduled banks will remain open from 9 am to 3:30 pm from Saturday to Wednesday during the holy month of Ramadan. On Thursday, the office timing will be from 9 am to 1 pm, a Bangladesh Bank press release said yesterday. The banks will transact business from 9 am and to 2 pm from Saturday, Wednesday, and from 9 am to 12 noon on Thursday, reports UNB.

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