

Govt firm to denationalise loss-making industries, says Kibria

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria yesterday said the government was determined to denationalise the loss incurring industries, reports BSS.

"The nation cannot sustain loss in industries for indefinite period," the minister said while addressing the first meeting of the high-powered committee to review the prevailing situation in the loss-making jute and textile industries.

Kibria said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is very sincere to protect the interests of the workers. He assured that the interests of workers would be protected in the denationalisation process.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, State Minister for Jute and Textiles A K M Faezul Haq and Parliament Members A B M A Kashem, Ah-sanullah Master, Shahajan

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AL, BNP accuse each other of secret entente with Ershad

Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday accused each other of undermining certain laws of the land to maintain secret entente with Jatiya Party chief H M Ershad.

The accusations and counter-accusations were made in the Jatiya Sangsad while Ershad was seen smiling in the House. Accused in various corruption cases and recently freed on bail, the former president kept mum throughout the hour-long debate centering him.

A Jatiya Party MP claimed during the debate that Ershad had appeared as the balance of power in Bangladesh politics.

The unscheduled debate began following the winning of a division vote on the introduction of the Code of Criminal Procedure (amendment) Bill, 1996 by the ruling party on the private members' day yesterday.

BNP legislator Major (Retd) Akhtaruzzaman moved the bill seeking to limit the power of police in arresting people under Section 54 of the CrPC.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khashru opposed the bill.

Akhtaruzzaman MP apologises to Speaker

BNP legislator Major (Retd) Akhtaruzzaman yesterday apologised to Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury for his indecent behaviour during the first session of parliament, reports BSS.

"It was just a slip of tongue. I hope the honourable Speaker will consider it with forgiveness," he said.

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PM's Relief Fund

Probe into alleged misappropriation underway, JS told

By Staff Correspondent

An investigation is underway into alleged misappropriation of funds allocated from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund during the previous BNP government.

State Minister for Planning, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir said this yesterday while replying to a number of questions and supplementaries in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Speaking for the first time in the JS, the bureaucrat-turned minister said that Tk 30 lakh was allocated to each BNP MP during the previous government and the amount was utilised to serve 'political interest'.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption is now probing it, he said.

Replying to a question from Awami League (AL) lawmaker Kazi Sekender Ali on the amount of money 'misappropriated' the state minister said, "The amount of money misappropriated is yet to be determined but, the government is well aware about the wrongdoing and investigation is being

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Violence, gherao by CBA KAFCO terminates 12, two arrested

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 23: Police arrested two employees of the Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (KAFCO) today in connection with a case filed by its management here.

In the case, the KAFCO management brought allegations of violence by the CBA for forcing the officials to sign an agreement on profit participation on January 19.

Meanwhile, KAFCO authority terminated 12 operators and technicians in connection with the incident, factory sources said.

UNB adds: The Managing Director has ordered immediate termination of the employment of 12 of the culprits who were the main cause of the illegal union action and gherao of the management," said a KAFCO press release in Dhaka today.

The newly-formed KAFCO Srantik Karmachari Union (KASKU) confined 12 top management members, including the Managing Director, for eight hours on January 19 demanding five per cent profit participation.

The unruly workers led by KAFCO CBA had allegedly gheraoed the rooms of top officials, seized all control and forced the management to sign a written promise for payment of the profit participation.

The press release said the management had also issued a letter repudiating and cancelling the letter which was extracted under duress, pressure and threat of violence from the KAFCO management that the company would pay the sum of Tk 10,000 to each of 300 non-management union employees.

"It is understood that KAFCO management will be following up with further decisive measures to reimpose its authority and discipline on those workers who took matters into their own hands and breached the provision of criminal law," the release added.

The Chittagong Police Commissioner has taken the responsibility of safety and security of KAFCO complex and

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JC reviews monitoring of Ganges water flow

By Staff Correspondent

The Indo-Bangladesh Joint Committee (JC) on Ganges water monitoring began its first Joint Inspection Meeting (JIM) at the small north-western town of Bheramara, a few kilometres from the Hardinge Bridge site yesterday, according to official sources.

The meeting discussed and reviewed all the technical aspects of water monitoring on the Bangladesh side. The meeting is likely to continue today, the sources said. The Indian team at the meeting is being led by S K Das of the Indian side of the Joint Rivers Commission. Other members are Partha Nanda and M S Gupta.

The Bangladesh side led by Khalilur Rahman, Member, Bangladesh side of Joint Rivers Commission, includes Md Lutur Rahman and Towhidul Anwar.

The joint meeting began after physical inspection of the monitoring process at Hardinge Bridge site yesterday.

The team members are staying at the Bheramara Rest

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Judiciary bill's copy will be presented to Opposition Leader

Star Report

A copy of the Bill on Separation of Judiciary will be formally presented to the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad after it is approved by the cabinet, according to an authoritative source at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

The copy of the bill is likely to be presented to the Opposition Leader before it is placed in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone last night, Abdul Matin Khashru, the Minister for Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, said that he had informal chats with some leading opposition lawmakers about the proposed Bill.

Separation of Judiciary Bill is likely to be placed in parliament in the current session, he said.

The Bill named the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution would require two-thirds majority for it to be passed by parliament. For the passage of the bill, support of the Opposition bench would be essential, as the ruling party

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Visiting executive directors of the World Bank called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. — PID photo

WB executive directors tell PM Privatisation a major strategy of fiscal reforms

The World Bank has reiterated its continued support to reform programmes in different sectors of the economy in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The assurance was given when a delegation of executive directors of the World Bank called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

The delegation members discussed the difficulties in implementing various reform measures and expressed their readiness to help Bangladesh alleviate poverty.

They focused on the dominant role of the private investment in growth process. Reforms in financial and administrative sectors including enforcement of property rights and the implementation of debt collection also came up for discussions.

The executive directors mentioned privatisation as one of the major strategy of fiscal reforms and in this regard they wanted to share the experiences of their respective countries.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina listed various reform measures and mentioned her government's commitment to implement them. She highlighted the long struggle to obtain people's democratic rights, particularly their right to vote. The priority of her government is to achieve economic emancipation and to eliminate illiteracy within ten years, she said.

She stressed the need for strengthening regional cooperation for improving the lot of the people.

The Prime Minister spoke of the need of micro-economic strategy, the major goal of her government.

While talking about privatisation, she said:

"Referring to the free and fair general elections, held under a neutral caretaker government, the Prime Minister said that a government of national consensus was formed keeping in mind the interest of the people. The main opposition, BNP, was also invited to join the government. It, however, did not respond positively, she added.

The Prime Minister said that the agenda of her government of national consensus was to implement the agenda of the people.

The executive directors of the World Bank who called on the Prime Minister included Luc Houboul, Jan Piercy, Enzo Del Bufalo and host executive director Surendras Singh.

Minister of State for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Alternative Executive Director (designated) of the World Bank Syed Ahmed and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr S A Samad were present on the occasion.

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JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf

Some BNP lawmakers made a hasty move to look for Jamaat-e-Islami MP Mizanur Rahman Choudhury at a time when the House was locked in a debate on whether Choudhury was present or not during a voice-vote in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Within minutes, the BNP legislators were seen escorting the Jamaat MP into the House and helping him take his seat.

Following opposing views expressed by the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP on whether the Jamaat MP had voted for placing a private member's bill moved by Maj (Retd) Akhtaruzzaman of BNP, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury asked the lawmaker, "Please tell me, swearing upon Allah in the holy month of Ramadan, if you were present during the voice-vote."

"Avowing upon Allah, I hereby tell the House that I went outside after casting my vote for placing the bill," said the Jamaat deputy amid applause by the BNP members.

Earlier, the BNP contended that the lone Jamaat member present at the time voted for the bill while the AL was claiming the Jamaat MP was absent during the voting.

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Govt, PCJSS hold talks in city tomorrow

Star Report

A military helicopter will bring a delegation of the Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) to Dhaka on Saturday from Dudukchhara, a tiny frontier hamlet in south-eastern Bangladesh, for an expected peace accord with the government to end more than two decades of bush-war in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The delegation will be led by Jyotipriyo Badhipriyo Larma alias Shantu Larma, supreme of the tribal rebels fighting for self-rule in the 14,200 sq km CHT.

They are expected to reach Dhaka around noon Saturday for the third round of talks with the National Committee on CHT and the PCJSS, sources in the hills told The Daily Star last night.

To pave the way of the crucial talks the authorities withdrew security forces from eight camps and neutralised five others along the frontier region of Khagrachhari district near Panchhari on January 21. An advance team of PCJSS including the armed detachments for 'security of the PCJSS high command' arrived at Dudukchhara Tuesday afternoon, the sources said.

Shantu Larma reached Dudukchhara yesterday with his entourage to prepare for Saturday's journey to Dhaka, the first by a PCJSS team since their military wing, the Shantubahini took arms in 1973 under Shantu's elder brother, former MP Manabendra Naryan Larma.

The groundwork for the

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911 held during drive against outlawed parties, says BBC

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested more than 900 people in the last ten days in a special drive against the banned political parties in thirteen districts of the south-western region of Bangladesh, said a BBC report last night.

A total of 911 persons were arrested and 43 arms recovered during the drive, said the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Khulna Range. Only a few of the arrested belonged to the extremist parties, he added.

Following a decision taken at a meeting of the cabinet committee on law and order on January 14, the drive was launched the next day, the report said. Police said, they were keeping water on the outlawed revolutionary communist parties.

The 13 districts where the drive was launched are: Jessore, Jhenidaha, Chuadanga, Meher-

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
14	24	—	5:43
15	25	5:19	5:43
16	26	5:19	5:44

Ready-made garments export Body to monitor issuance of GSP certificates

The RMG export target for the current financial year is 2750 million US dollars. European union is the single largest market for Bangladeshi RMG, contributing 54 per cent of the total RMG export.

Tofael Ahmed said the present government was committed to be transparent in all its activities including issuance of GSP certificates. He said, EU is providing this facility to the LDC countries including Bangladesh to be self-sufficient in producing yarn and fabrics of the garments industries.

Bangladesh is enjoying 12.5 per cent duty exemption for export of RMG to Europe through GSP certificates. But for qualifying for GSP three stage transformation, from fibre to yarn, yarn to fabrics and fabrics to garments is required for knitted items and two stage transformation (yarn fabrics-garments) is needed for woven products.

He said government would provide all necessary assistance including giving GSP certificates to the genuine RMG exporters to refurbish the garments sector.

The minister said in the backdrop of Uruguay Round Agreement and WTO declaration, the special facilities given to the LDCs would be shrinker gradually through globalization and liberalization of trade. So we should take immediate steps to face the growing challenges of world economic order, he observed.

Laying stress on the importance of setting up of back-up linking industries for knitted and woven products, the minister said the sooner we achieve self-sufficiency in this sector the better would be the future of our garments export.

He assured the entrepreneurs to provide all possible help in establishing textile, knitting and weaving industries.

Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury, Textiles Secretary KM Ezaul

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Historic mosque at risk of collapse

By Staff Correspondent

A historical mosque dating back between 1493-1519 at Gaur under Chapainawabganj district is at risk of collapse as a highway is being paved by the Roads and Highways Department only yards away from the site, warned officials of the Department of Archeology.

Heavy traffic, particularly heavy vehicles plying on the highway, has already caused cracks on the stone-built fifteen-domed mosque built by the Sultan of Gaur, Alauddin Hossain Shah, sometime between 1493-1519, said Mohammad Abul Hossain, Director, Department of Archeology in the city yesterday.

Despite repeated warnings by archeologists, the particular section of the highway was nevertheless completed recently. "There are lorries weighing up to 20 tonnes plying on the road and the vibration is too much for the old structure to bear. It may cave in anytime," said Hossain adding that their tests showed that the highway must be diverted from that point to at

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Rivals reject new committee Gunshots at DU, JCD president, GS chased

By DU Correspondent

Violence flared up once again at the Dhaka University when some Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists chased two of their central leaders on the campus following declaration of a new DU unit committee of the JCD.

A ten member convening committee of the DU unit of the BNP-backed JCD was announced on Wednesday midnight.

JCD president Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anney and general secretary Habib-uz-Nabi Sohel were chased when they came to the Modhu's canteen yesterday morning. They took shelter at the Surya Sen Hall and were later released when they promised to reform the convening committee.

The three rival factions of the JCD at a joint meeting at the Aparajeo Bangla yesterday rejected the new committee and declared Anney, Sohel and four members of the committee persona non-grata on the campus.

The three factions, known as Babu group, Zahir group and Danney group, were unanimous on rejecting the new committee as each group wanted the post of general secretary. They had also resentment over placement as joint conveners in the convening committee, according to sources in the groups.

The meeting at the Aparajeo Bangla was addressed by among others, Zakir Hossain, Abdul Bari Danney, Sultan Salauddin Tuku and Benazir Ahmed Titu.

Earlier, just after the declaration of the committee Wednesday midnight, the groups reacted by firing gunshots in the JCD-dominated dormitories of the university.

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Raphel to return from Calcutta tonight

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Robin Raphel arrived in Dhaka yesterday from Islamabad, reports BSS.

Raphel left Dhaka for Calcutta in the afternoon. She will fly back to Dhaka tonight to begin her 5-day visit to Bangladesh.

The US official will attend a conference of heads of American diplomatic missions in five South Asian countries.

Diplomats from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will attend the two-day conference that begins here tomorrow.

The conference is designed to discuss coordination programmes of mutual interests of the US embassies in the region.

During her stay here, Raphel will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed.

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Mugger killed in police firing in city

By DMCH Correspondent

He died on the spot, police said.

The injured trader identified as Badsha Miah and another mugger identified as Mosharrar Hossain were injured and admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Constable Abdul Motaleb also injured in the incident was under treatment at the Police Hospital, police and hospital sources said.

Sutrapur police recovered two daggers and three bombs from the muggers.

According to police about four muggers in an autorickshaw halted a rickshaw in which fruit trader Badsha Miah was passing the Victoria Park crossing at about 7 am. Badsha came to the city from Kaliakoir in Gazipur to purchase fruits.

The muggers stabbed Badsha, snatched Tk 15,000 from him and started fleeing.

Meanwhile, the screaming of Badsha drew the attention of the local people who immediately chased the autorickshaw while the patrol police signalled the vehicle to stop when it

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Australian Open ladies' finals match notes

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan

MELBOURNE, Jan 23: After the eventful preliminary rounds, sixteen-year-old Swiss starlet Martina Hingis and French glamour girl Mary Pierce finally surged into the final of the Australian Open yesterday, leaving the record books and the WTA rankings for an eventual correction. Some interesting notes are listed below.

* Martina Hingis is the youngest Ford Australian Open finalist. She is not the youngest Grand Slam finalist — Pam Shriver was 16 years and two months old when she reached the 1978 US Open final (there may be others younger whose birth dates could not be confirmed).

* If Martina Hingis wins the final, she will become the youngest Grand Slam champion in the Open era (which started in 1968) at 16 years, 3 months and 26 days, surpassing Monica Seles who was 16 years, 6 months old when she won the 1990 French Open. The youngest Grand Slam singles champion of all time is Charlotte "Lottie" Dod, who won

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