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CHT accord

Special JS session may be summoned this month

By Special Correspondent

A special session of the Jatiya Sangsad is likely to be summoned later this month to debate the CHT accord and to provide legal cover to the proposed Regional Council (RC).

A bill is being prepared in this regard and it will be placed before the special session. Another bill on the Hill District Councils will also be tabled, according to highly placed official sources.

The bill on district councils is required as their terms expired on December 5.

Earlier, the High Court had ordered formation of interim councils to function till elections took place within 60 days of the order. It also provided for delaying the elections for another 60 days in case of natural calamities, which took place later as flash floods swept the

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Road accidents kill 18 in Jhalakati, Dhamrai

By Staff Correspondent

At least eighteen people were killed and 110 others injured in two road accidents yesterday.

Of them, 11 died in Jhalakati, and 7 in Dhamrai. Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal says, at least 11 people were killed and 70 others injured, 19 of them seriously, when two passenger buses collided in Nalchiti thana of Jhalakati district on Barisal-Patuaakhali highway yesterday.

According to district administration officials and local people, a Patuaakhali-bound BRTC from Barisal collided with a Barisal-bound minibus from Bakerganj at Jurkati at about 7:30 in the morning.

The accident left seven people dead on the spot including the drivers of both the buses.

Four of the injured died on way to the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. Their bodies were sent to

the morgue for autopsy.

The dead were identified as Mokhelesur Rahman (35), a BDR personnel of Bakerganj, Sahajahan (35), the BRTC bus driver of Bakerganj, Shameem Ahsan Katir (36) of Bakerganj, Bilkis Begum (17) of Demra, Dhaka, Hanif Howlader (62) of Barisal, Jasimuddin Howlader (20) of Nalchiti, Kader Howlader (45) of Bakerganj, Ismail Sikder (50) of Bakerganj, Abdul Jalil (30), the minibus driver of Bakerganj, Kabir Khan (25) of Kalashkati and an unidentified woman.

The minibus was broken into pieces while the BRTC bus was severely damaged in the accident.

Bilkis Begum died on the spot as she was hit by a section of the blown rooftop of the minibus. She was walking on the roadside. Villagers said Bilkis was on a morning walk

and brushing her teeth when the minibus collided.

Seriously injured who were admitted to Medical College Hospital were Rab (32), Saheen (40), Solaiman (35), Lefazuddin (50), Siraj (25), Jasim (15), Mostafa (35), Fakrunnesa (35), Salma (20), Kanchan (50), Rafiq (18) and M A Hamid, a judge from Dhaka.

Another seven of the injured remained unidentified.

UNB adds: Seven people, including a woman, were killed and 40 others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

The accident took place when a Dhaka-bound bus collided with a molasses-laden truck near Bathuli bridge in Dhamrai at about 6 in the morning.

Most of the passengers of the night coach were asleep when

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THREE CHEERS: The victorious Bangladesh youth team returned home from Hong Kong yesterday after qualifying for the World Youth Cup cricket, to be held in South Africa from January 11. State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader received the zonal champions at the airport last night.

—Star photo by Amran Hossain.

Gunmen snatch Tk 20 lakh from US co staff in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 8: An amount of Tk 20 lakh of a foreign exploration company was snatched at gunpoint by a group of muggers in Agrabad commercial area this noon, police said.

The muggers came by a motorcycle and an autorickshaw and snatched the money drawn from the Agrabad branch of Grindlays Bank.

The accountant and bill clerk of American company, Grand Geophysical, were carrying the money on board a microbus.

When contacted, the duty officer of Doublemooring thana said that the accountant, bill clerk and driver of the microbus were being interrogated though the local area manager did not file any case.

Police suspected connivance of the three with the muggers.

Education policy: Report submitted to President

The National Education Policy Formulation Committee yesterday submitted its report to President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban, reports UNB.

Committee chairman and former Adviser to the Caretaker government Prof M Shamsul Haq handed over the report to the President.

He apprised Shahabuddin of the background of the preparation of the report and said it has already been submitted to the government.

Prof Haq said the formulation committee, consisted of 56 members and 19 sub-committees, sought opinion from persons of various walks of life and their opinions were duly considered.

The chairman said the report was widely discussed before it was finalised.

Education Minister ASHK Sadek, who was present during the submission of the report, said the report will be placed before

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Tk 457cr shortfall in revenue collection

By Inam Ahmed

The government's revenue collection effort faltered badly till November, leaving doubts about its resource mobilisation efforts.

Despite the shortfall, the government has been able to reduce its borrowing from the central bank. In fact, the government has till now retired about Tk 400 crore of its debt to the central bank, according to a senior finance ministry official.

A Tk 457 crore shortfall in revenue collection emerged at the end of the first five months of FY 98. Only last month, the gap between target and actual collection was Tk 318 crore.

The shortfall till November includes Tk 286 crore at import level and Tk 148 crore at local level.

November alone saw a Tk 121 crore shortfall in collection.

There is a shortfall of about Tk 210 crore in the collection of Value Added Tax (VAT) alone during the July-November period. This includes Tk 150 crore shortfall in import sector and Tk 60 crore in local VAT collection.

Despite simplification of income tax payment procedures in the budget in the hope that

more people will pay taxes, there was a Tk 20 crore shortfall till November.

The total revenue collection till November was Tk 5185 crore, which is Tk 425 crore higher than last year's Tk 4760 crore for the corresponding period.

Meanwhile, government borrowing from the central bank has been checked mainly by a good sale of savings certificate and fall in ADP and current expenditures. But from February, expenditures will pick up necessitating resource mobilisation. If the trend in revenue collection continues, we would then need to borrow from the banking system," an official said.

But government borrowing would increase the inflationary pressure in the economy, the official said, pointing out that the government's main aim is non-inflationary growth.

To remain on its target path, the government would then need to cut its ADP spending. The World Bank has already suggested that there is ample scope for reducing the size of the ADP by strictly cutting out the low priority projects and projects with doubtful rationale.

Remain alert against BNP conspiracy: AL

Awami League acting president Amir Hossain Amu and general secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the people to remain alert against what they said conspiracy of BNP and its anti-liberation allies to create anarchy and destabilise peace, reports UNB.

In a joint statement, they said when the people at home and the international community have greeted the peace accord to end the longdrawn bloodshed in the CHT, the BNP and its partners are out to create anarchy by calling successive hartals.

The AL leaders said after "imposing" hartal on December 7, fresh hartal calls for two successive days on December 10 and 11 in Chittagong and the CHT have stunned the people across the country.

They said that the fresh call for hartals are designed to collapse the port city, Chittagong and disrupt export-import and overall economy as well as to incite trouble between the hill people and the Bangalees in the CHT.

"They are engaged in a conspiracy to fish in the troubled water," the AL leaders said and urged the people from all walks of life to build a united resistance to foil the conspiracy.

Activities of communal groups in BNP Khaleda, Mannan exchange hot words over policy matters

By Nurul Kabir

Ideological differences among the top-ranking leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party reached a crisis point on Sunday, with the party chairperson and secretary general exchanging hot words over policy matters of the organisations.

Party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is convinced that a faction of the BNP leadership is out to divert the organisation from its 'nationalist' objectives and turn it into a platform for religious fundamentalists, BNP insiders said.

According to sources, Bhuiyan is also convinced that the said group has continuously been trying to mislead the party chief, sometimes with successes.

Meanwhile, a BNP leader close to Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star last night that if he (Bhuiyan) fails to resist the trend of communalisation of the party, he would resign from the post of secretary general anytime. The BNP secretary general could not be contacted for his comments yesterday.

Sources close to the party policymakers said, party chief

Begum Khaleda Zia and Mannan Bhuiyan were engaged in a war of words over a package of agitation programmes Sunday evening to continue the party's protest against the peace accord on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Earlier during the day,

Injured BNP leader dies in Khulna

KHULNA, Dec 8: A BNP leader, who sustained injury after being hit by a tear gas shell on Saturday in Rupsha thana, died at a local clinic today, reports UNB.

Morshedul Haq Monju, 48, former president of Rupsha thana unit of BNP was injured when police lobbed a tear gas shell to disperse the clashing groups at Gazi Memorial School centre during the Nohati union parishad election.

Monju succumbed to his injuries at about 9 am.

Angered by his death, the supporters damaged some shops at Rupsha Bazar and attacked the TNO office.

Bhuiyan reacted sharply to an "instruction of the party Chairperson" to announce a package of agitation programmes that included laying of a 48-hour siege in and around Chittagong and CHT from December 10, holding a grand rally following prayer in the Manik Miah avenue on December 26 and holding demonstrations with party activists wrapped in shrouds.

According to the proposed programmes, Begum Khaleda Zia was to lead such a procession in the capital on December 19. The instruction was conveyed to Bhuiyan through Anwar Zahid.

Bhuiyan found the nature of the proposed programmes to be consistent with a communal party and told Zahid that he would rather talk to the party chief. Aware of the troubles, the Leader of the Opposition in parliament arrived at her Minto road official residence in the evening and held a meeting with Bhuiyan. They had a lengthy exchange of hot words over the party's policy matters at the meeting, the sources said.

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PM arrives in Tehran

TEHRAN, Dec 8: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was accorded a red carpet reception when she arrived at the Mehrabad International Airport to attend the eighth OIC summit beginning here tomorrow, reports BSS.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami received Sheikh Hasina, the lone woman head of government to attend the summit, as she alighted from a commercial flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, who is attending the foreign minister's conference here and Bangladesh ambassador to Iran Syed Muazzem Ali were also present at the airport to receive the Prime Minister.

She was then escorted to a tastefully decorated dais when the national anthems of both the countries were played. Later she drove in a ceremonial motorcade to the Aghdasia Palace where she will be staying during

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OIC summit opens in Tehran today

TEHRAN, Dec 8: Muslim leaders descended on Tehran today for this week's OIC summit, the most prestigious international event hosted by Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, reports AFP.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami stationed himself at Mehrabad airport along with foreign minister Kamal Kharazi and vice president Hassan Habibi to meet and greet the guests as their jets touched down every 15 minutes.

Red carpets stretched across the airport's tarmac to allow the Iranian leaders to escort their guests to waiting limousines after brief ceremonies at which national anthems were played by a ceremonial military band.

Many Middle Eastern leaders are making their first visit to Iran since the revolution after Iran went on a diplomatic

offensive to smooth over hostility to the country's militant brand of leadership.

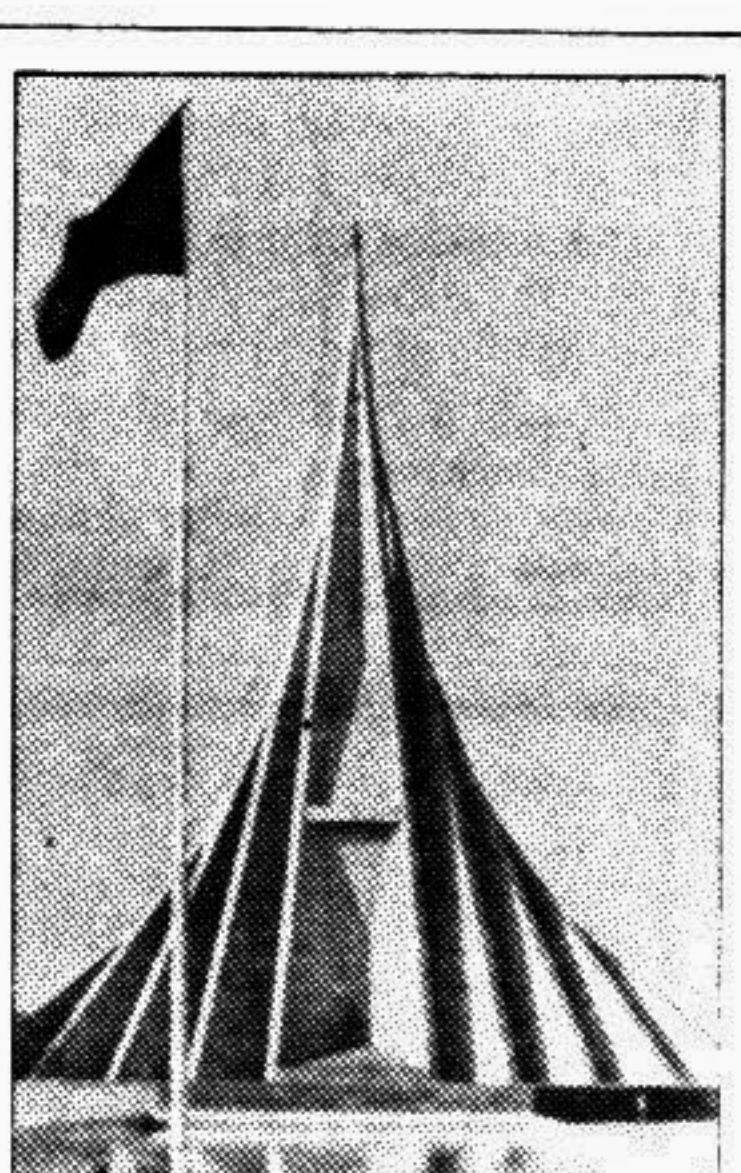
Tehran is pushing a theme of cooperation and solidarity, urging a strong and influential Muslim bloc to use its weight on the international stage.

Dignity, dialogue and participation are the buzzwords Iran has chosen for the December 9-11 summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and walls in Tehran are plastered with the slogan.

Among former foes to have arrived today were Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Iraq's vice president Taha Yassin Ramadan.

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdel Aziz and Crown Prince Hassan Ibn Talal of Jordan are expected later in the day.

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'Only Bangalees fought a war for freedom in Sub-continent'

By Staff Correspondent

An exhibition of the original copy of the Constitution began yesterday at the city's Liberation War Museum in observance of the Victory Day 1997.

The Constitution introduced in 1972 bears the signatures of all Parliament members including that of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The special edition of the

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JCD calls strike in educational instns Thursday

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) has called a strike in all educational institutions in the country on Thursday protesting the CHT accord.

The call was given from a rally of the BNP back student body on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

The rally was addressed by, among others, JCD President Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anney, Nasiruddin Pintu and Selimuzzaman.

The speakers said the 'black accord' on CHT is out of the ambit of the Constitution. If the accord is implemented, Bangladesh will lose its sovereignty over the three CHT districts.

Torture of maid Runa untraced, SI suspended

By Staff Correspondent

Police were yet to arrest the Sub-Inspector's wife Nazmun Nahar alias Runa who was accused of torturing a housemaid at Motijheel thana staff quarter on Thursday.

Meanwhile, her husband Shamim Ahsan, a Sub-Inspector of Sutrapur thana, was suspended yesterday, police said.

The maid, Mahmuda Aktar alias Mahi, is now undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Mahi was seriously injured after Runa allegedly poured hot water on her body.

Trafficking: 23 rescued at Sunamganj

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 8: As many as 23 men, women and children were rescued and three members of an organised gang of traffickers were arrested by police from the Sunamganj Bus terminal last night.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Special Branch and Kotwali police of Sunamganj raided the terminal and rescued the 23 persons from a Dhaka-bound night coach while they were being

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Those arrested for barricading Dhaka-Chittagong highway seen on the Sonargaon thana compound yesterday.

Barricade protesting Tuhin's death Another prisoner dies in N'ganj jail custody

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 8: An under-trial prisoner in Narayanganj sub-jail died at Narayanganj Hospital today, the second such incident in the last 48 hours.

Meanwhile, agitated people clashed with police and damaged at least 20 vehicles during a six-hour barricade on Dhaka-Chittagong highway today protesting the death of an under-trial prisoner in the district jail here.

Sixty-four people were arrested during clashes between police and more than one thousand demonstrators who barricaded the road at Meghna Ghat and Langalbandh from about 6 am to noon.

The demonstrators threw bricks as police tried to remove the barricade. At one stage, police lobbed tear gas shells and charged batons to disperse them. No report of injury was, however, received.

Traffic movement on the

road was disrupted because of the incidents.

Three cases were lodged in this connection.

Earlier, Mazharul Islam alias Tuhin, a Juba League activist of Sonargaon, died at Narayanganj Hospital on Saturday. He was in jail custody in connection with two cases.

Yesterday, Sonargaon thana complex was attacked by a mob following the death of Tuhin.

Today, Zainal Abedin alias Janu, 43, of Kashipur under Fatullah thana, was taken to Narayanganj Hospital after he reportedly felt pain in his chest in jail custody at about 11:30 am. He died just after admission in the hospital.

Zainal, son of Abdul Khaleque, was detained in connection with a forgery case. His body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Police were preparing to file a case in this connection.

Tk 5984 cr overdue loans realised in 9 months

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria yesterday said the government's bold steps resulted in the realisation of unpaid loans of Tk 5984 crore from January to October this year, reports UNB.

Of the amount, Tk 4548 crore was realised in cash and the rest rescheduled, he told a seminar on Bangladesh's economic situation, held at the TSC of Dhaka University.

Describing the present state of the country's economy as stable, the Finance Minister said the current rate of loan expansion is 16 per cent, whereas 12-14 per cent is considered as satisfactory.

He said the export growth was recorded at 21 per cent during July-September while the industrial growth was 12 per cent. The growth of revenue collection is 12 per cent compared with the corresponding period last year.

Kibria said at present, foreign exchange reserve is 1.6 billion US dollars. In this context, he said the forex reserve fell rapidly in the last two years of

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One killed, 100 injured in polls-related violence

A teenage boy was killed and 100 people were injured in clashes during the Union Parishad elections at 2331 centres of 259 unions in 37 districts of the country yesterday.

The dead was identified as Yunus, 14, a school student of Fapori Union in Sadar thana of Bogra district, according to UNB.

Official sources said votings were postponed amidst violence at two centres — Ichhachhari Primary School at Karmadha Union in Kulaura thana of Moulvibazar district and Gomodanga Primary School in Patgata union of Gopalganj.

A report from Bogra adds: "Polling at the Harigari Govt Primary School centre in Fapori Union of Sadar thana was postponed at 11 am following a series of clashes between the supporters of two chairman candidates."

Witnesses said the trouble erupted at the centre when a chairman candidate, Benu Master, allegedly forced the presid-

ing officer to stop voting on grounds of irregularities.

His supporters fired gunshots, exploded crackers and ransacked two restaurants, seven shops and a jeep in the area.

Twenty people, including schoolboy Yunus, Magistrate Mojibur Rahman and a policeman, were injured in the clash.

Two presiding officers held in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 8: Two presiding officers were arrested and sent to jail *hajot* yesterday for violating the election code of conduct.

Official sources said that Habibur Rahman, Thana Family Planning Officer, and Khurshid Alam, Thana Assistant Education Officer of Tahirpur

Critically injured Yunus, son of an employee of Bangladesh Bank, died after he was rushed to Bogra Mohamud Ali Hospital.

As the death news of Yunus spread in the area, angry people attacked and beat up candidate Benu Master and his associate Khoka. Benu Master was rushed to Dhaka in a critical condition.

Some 30 people, including women, were injured in clashes at four polling centres during election in seven unions of Shahzadpur thana in Sirajganj.

Of them, Delbor, 35, Kohinur Begum, 30, Zobeida Khatun, 42, Tofazzal, 30, Alamgir, 42, Sukhanda, 42, Montu, 35, Idris, 40, Aleya, 35, and Chand Miah, 35, were admitted to local hospitals and clinics.

Election at the Undadub Govt Primary School and Ranikholia Govt Primary School centres remained suspended from 12 noon to 4 pm.

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