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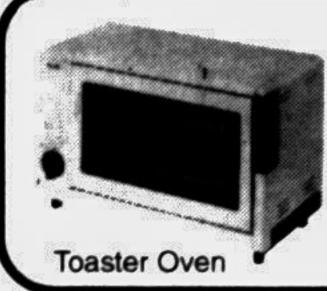
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PHILIPS



Speakers at a discussion meeting on 'National Responsibility Towards the Migrant Workers' organised by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit at the CIRDAP auditorium in the city yesterday. - Star photo

Woes of migrant workers worrying experts

Speakers at a discussion meeting yesterday called upon the government to take necessary steps to lessen sufferings of the 'migrant workers' both in the country and in the 'receiv-

ing states. The discussants expressed their dissatisfaction at the way the government was dealing with the migrant workers' issue at home and abroad.

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit organised the discussion meeting on the occasion of International Day of Solidarity with the Migrant Workers at the CIRDAP auditorium in the city. Tasneem Siddiqui of Politi-

cal Science department of Dhaka University presented the key-note paper on "National Responsibility Towards the Migrant Workers." The session was presided over by CR Abrar, Chairman of International Relations department of the Uni-

Chandnighat Water Plant opens

The rehabilitated and expanded Chandnighat Water Treatment Plant in the city was inaugurated vesterday three months ahead of the schedule, reports UNB.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman opened the plant implemented with the financial and technical assistance of Japanese government.

The modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion work of the Treatment Plant was completed at a cost of Tk 154 crore including Japanese assis-

tance of Tk 107.25 crore. With the inauguration of the expanded plant, the water raising capacity of the plant has increased to 3.19 crore litre per day from its previous capacity of 1.70 crore litre. Some 10 lakh people of old Dhaka would be benefited from the additional 2.21 crore litre production of

Speaking on the occasion, the LGRD Minister said Dhaka WASA has undertaken short and long term plans to meet the demand of 130 crore litre water per day for the growing number of people of the city.

From page 1

lam, had done so. They however

pointed out that a consensus

had been reached before the

election. All three were on the

consensus list and among those

claimed that it had been done to

protect the "national institu-

tion", the arrangements left

most candidates unhappy who

reported that they had just

bowed to pressure exerted by the

thing went according to plans,

the exercise was restricted to

the 28 who were made to show

race refused to act according to

the so-called consensus, the re-

sults would have been different

because they outnumbered

those chosen for election," a

intensive efforts by ruling party

politicians, business leaders

and powerful stock market op-

hind the scenes, accommodated

six men from each group. It also

stipulated that the group getting

the post of chairman would

concede the two positions of

vice chairman to the other

The group backed by former

chairman Khurshid Alam is

likely to have the chairman.

Rakibur Rahman, the key oper-

ator in the group who is known

for his proximity to the prime

minister, would like to see him-

self in the chair. Challenging

him is Kazi Firoz Rashid, a

former chairman and a minis-

The agreement, reached be-

Their "retirement" followed

who they were voting for.

DSE insider explained.

erators.

And to ensure that every-

"Had the 16 forced out of the

While the consensus builders

declared elected.

political authority.

By Staff Correspondent

The discussants observed that there was no specific law in the country to protect the interests of those working abroad although their earning was one of the major sources of foreign exchange for the country.

"There is in fact no policy for dealing with the matter officially," the key-note paper said.

"In the age of open market economy, we are now facing tough competition in the world labour market. We will soon lose our market in case we fail to send skilled people as workers", it noted. The speakers urged the gov-

ernment to ensure skill-oriented education for all for competing in the world labour mar-

They pointed out that the recruiting agencies were also exploiting the job-aspirants. Unauthorised agencies also deceive them by giving fake job documents, they added. They speakers alleged that

EU: Ensure peace From page 1

Jahangirnagar University, he said, "if such events spill over, our projects will be harmed". Earlier, Albuquerque said the EU wants Bangladesh to become an equal trading partner. "Bangladesh has good balance of trade and we would help you

to increase trade." She said the EU is ready to support Bangladesh in good governance, capacity building and creating an enabling environment for investment.

Talking about the current mission which is looking into the ban on frozen food export to the EU. She said the mission will submit its report in Brussels and then the European Commission will propose to the Council of Ministers to take up the issue.

The decision regarding lifting the ban on fish export from Bangladesh is expected to be made by end-January.

"We are seeking improvement in inspection control mechanism of the government. EU authorities only check samples of fish. This is why a strict controlling mechanism is essential at the exporters' end,"

ter under General Ershad.

· will also take over.

machinery

party MPs.

The formality of electing the

The other group backed by

chairman will be done on De-

cember 24 at the annual general

meeting when the new Council

Khwaja Abdul Quddus will

nominate the two vice chair-

men. Most of the 'disgruntled'

members belong to this faction

who complained of "harass-

ment" by the government

two men who led the two parties

to the series of negotiations in-

volving such businessmen as

Yusuf Abdullah Harun, Salman

Rahman, and several ruling

justify their way of doing busi-

ness on the day when they were

confronted by reporters later.

"This was just a formality. As

there was already a consensus

among the contestants, so the

voters were not much interested

to cast votes," M Shahidullah,

the election commissioner, told

journalists at 5:30 pm. He

claimed every member who

in 1986 when the council mem-

bers had been selected before

the election was held, DSE offi-

(Khurshid Alam-Rakibur Rah-

man Group) Kazi Feroz Rashid,

Jahangir Kabir Chowdhury,

Ahsanul Islam, Md Rakibur

Rahman, Dewan Suhel Afzal

Abdul Haque; (Khwaja Abdul Quddus Group) Hasan Faruque Khan, Onu Jaigirdar, Shahiq

Khan, AKM Shamsuddoha,

Ahmed Iqbal Hasan, M

Enayetur Rahman.

There was a similar election

The elected councillors are:

came was allowed to cast vote.

Election officials sought to

Alam and Quddus were the

DSE mock polling

Uneasy calm From page 1

Secretary SM Akram.

countries.

attack and submitted a memorandum to Vice-Chancellor Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury demanding punishment of those responsible.

officials at the country's em-

bassies abroad did not cooper-

ate with the workers in times of

their needs. The government

was urged to look into the mat-

ter for the security of

Bangladeshi nationals abroad.

the government to take initia-

tive for the formation of an in-

ternational association of the

labour exporting countries so

that they could press the 'receiv-

ing states' to recognise legal

of the workers abroad, the

speakers also suggested signing

of bilateral and multilateral

agreements with the receiving

cussion included Law and Par-

liamentary Affairs Minister

Abdul Matin Khasru, Dr Moin

Khan, MP, Aktaruzzaman, MP,

Ahsan Ali Sarkar and Labour

The participants in the dis-

To ensure proper protection

rights of the migrant workers.

The discussants also urged

Earlier, a section of students under the banner of General Students' Unity brought out a procession and submitted a separate memorandum to the VC demanding punishment of those in responsible for the police action on students and teachers and attack on students by BCL activists on Wednesday. They also urged the authori-

ties to ensure security of the students on the campus. Meanwhile, the students injured in the police action and admitted to Dhaka Medical Col-

lege Hospital were released yesterday. No buses of the university plied yesterday and most of the classes were not held. Earlier,

the examinations were postponed till December 24. Several political parties and cultural and student organisa-

tions yesterday condemned the police action on students and teachers of the JU. BNP, in a statement, con-

demned the police attack in presence of the Home Minister and demanded punishment of those responsible.

Federation Bangladesh University Teachers' Associations, Dhaka University Central Students Union, pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal also condemned the police action demanded exemplary punishment of those responsible.

Sekandars

From page 1

as a peon in an office. PWD officials present during the eviction said the house was taken up by Sekandar when it was being white washed for a new occupant — a joint secre-tary of the Ministry of Finance. Sekandar Ali was not at the

BISTEC.

observer. From page 1

Two days of preliminary discussions between senior officials will be followed by a ministerial-level meeting on Monday. The talks are also expected to touch on the impact of Southeast Asia's currency turmoil.

BNP team From page 1

cember 2. The Standing Committee meeting last night, chaired by BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia did not spell out details of the tour programme.

According to the sources, the
BNP leaders are likely to start their visits by rotation in a

couple of days. The nearly three-hour meeting at the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad also discussed preparations for BNP's grand rally in the city later this month.

Housing in city: Pvt developers need financiers

By Staff Correspondent Some leading private sector developers have blamed government policies for exorbitant prices of houses in the city.
They also said unless the

government plays a more active role in financing the housing sector, it will be impossible to provide low-cost housing facil-

The only government institution, House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC), at present has no funds. So, we are forced to borrow from private lenders with extremely high interest rates," said president of REHAB (Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh), AHM Abdul Momen.

In an informal discussion with journalists of some national dailies yesterday the president and senior members of REHAB said the number of financing firms in the country is far too less and the government scheduled banks are also "too shy to lend."

The developers said that at least five 'active financing companies' were needed to help them build houses for all categories of people in the city.

They said exorbitant land price was one of the reasons why housing was so expensive in the city. "Now the time is right for the government to recover the more than one thousand acres of khas land from illegal occupation in the city and develop it," said Mahtabuddin Ahmed

Moreover, the developers said, Rajuk and PWD rules in the construction sector must be made uniform and fair. "We are subjected to unnecessary registration and transfer fees which must be made uniform," said Ahmed.

The developers said government should also improve infrastructure facilities in and around Dhaka so that high-rise buildings could be constructed to meet the increasing demand for housing.

Trains

From page 1 forward by the drivers and

guards was referred to the Ministry of Finance for consideration today. However, passengers re-

turned their tickets at Chit-

tagong Railway Station and took back their money.

Sharif's presidential candidate rejected

Mukhtar Ahmed Junejo, a

party spokesman said.

ISLAMABAD, Dec 18: A Pakistani judge rejected the presi-dential candidate of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) Party today, charging him with defaming the judiciary in a new twist to a constitutional crisis that has shaken the country, reports Reuter.

The PML would appeal against the rejection of the can-

Polls violence: Voting in 10 centres cancelled

By Staff Correspondent Polling in ten centres was cancelled due to electoral violence yesterday, the 12th day of the on-going union parishad elections across the country. **Election Commission sources**

Elections were held at 3128 centres of 340 union under 50 thanas of 47 districts.

The polling centres where elections were suspended included two centres in Kajali union of Sariakandi thana under Bogra district, one in Khurdukomarpur union of Sadullapur thana under Gaibandha district, two centres in Sonapur union of Tajimuddin thana under Bhola district, one each in Radhanagar and Nilkhi unions of Homna thana under Comilla district, one each in Sarail, Naogaon and Paniswar unions of Sarail thana under Brahmanbaria district.

Tribunals formed to resolve UP polls disputes

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday formed election tribunals to resolve the disputes relating to the ongoing Union Parishad election '97, reports

Senior assistant judges and

assistant judges of each district have been appointed heads of the tribunal while in case of yesterday. three hill districts - Rangamati. Bandarban and Kha-"Friendship" has been formed grachhari — additional district magistrates will head the tribunals of their respective dis-

12 projects involving Tk 2300 cr approved

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved 12 projects involving a cost of about Tk 2,300 crore, including a project aid component of over Tk 1,200 crore, reports UNB.

Of the total, four projects will be funded from local resources amounting to over Tk 177 crore.

The approval was given at the ECNEC meeting held in the city yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The projects include Foodaided Rural Development Project, Protection of pump station and inlet channel of GK Irrigation Project from erosion of the Padma, Setting up of Science and Technology University in 12 districts (six to be set up in the first phase), Higher Secondary Education Project (Reamended). Non-formal Education Project (Amended), environmental sanitation, health care and water supply to urban slums and in downtown areas.

Other projects are construction of 100 flats of 1800 sft in Dhaka for high government officials, 16-district Power Supply Project (Amended), rehabilitation and modernisation of number 1 and 2 units of Ghorashal Thermal Power Station, Extension of Ghorashal Thermal Power Station (6th unit)

(amended), Rashidpur-Ashuganj Transmission Loopline Project and Construction of an international standard National Stadium Number-4 in Dhaka (first phase).

The meeting was informed that the literacy rate went up to 51 per cent from 47 during the tenure of the present govern-

Speaking on the occasion. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed the hope that illiteracy will be removed completely from the country before the target year of 2006.

Ban on import, production of explosives

The government has banned production, stock and import of explosive materials, reports

However, the government recognised industrial units and companies engaged in exploration and extraction of gas, oil and other mineral resources and those involved in construction of roads would need prior permission from the government to manufacture, possess and import of explosives for public interest.

Water resources

From page 1 management does not mean an end to the government presence. We have to make a compromise to make the system work."

The conference was designed to revamp the Grassroots Participatory Plan (GPP) of 1994. stressing utilisation of the ability of people and involving them as stakeholders in a partnership with officials and local government leaders for a better understanding of the water management practices.

A number of issues came up for discussion while preparing guidelines for the participatory water management strategy. The conference also took note of the socio-economic and institutional issues like empowering the elected local body leaders to represent the people as regards their water management interests. It identified the technical, material and organi-sational capacity to make substantive contribution to the operation and maintenance of the Flood Control Drainage (FCD) system, with accountability and local control over re-

Besides, the conference was aimed at learning about the capacity of people to manage their water resources and arriving at a common understanding on the implications of the nature of water management in FCD system preparing the guide-

The participants were given the model for the participatory water management by Dutch experts Flip Westers, Jan Bron and anthropologist Dr Jennifer E Dyne, who studied for a long time the indigenous technology of harnessing the water in Bangladesh.

In a message on the occasion, Minister for Water Resources Abdur Razzak said there is now a very strong realisation that in the process of development and empowerment of people, their participation is a key element. The Ministry of Water Resources and the agencies working under it genuinely seek to ensure participation of the project-affected people from "conceptualisation to the maintenance of pace," he added.

didacy of Senator Mohammad Rafiq Tarar by acting chief election commissioner Justice

Tarar, a former Supreme Court Judge, was certain to win Junejo accepted the candi-dacy of another PML member. the December 31 presidential election to replace former retired army Captain Halim President Farooq Leghari be-Ahmed from the Sindh cause of a huge PML majority in the electoral college consisting of the two-chamber parliament and four provincial assemblies.

His candidature was challenged by an opposition candidate and two lawyers on the basis of local newspaper reports that quoted him as criticising some judges during the constitutional crisis, which subsided on December 2 when President Leghari resigned and Supreme Court Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah was suspended by a rival bench of the court.

"We have rejected the nomination papers of (retired) Justice Mohammad Rafiq Tarar."

said Junejo, who is a Supreme Court judge, after holding a formal scrutiny of nomination papers of 39 candidates, of whom only six were cleared for the contest.

province capital of Karachi. The party had asked him to file his nomination as what it called a "covering candidate." In a formal order issued later, Junejo said Tarar's interview in an Urdu-language weekly, Takbeer, "leads one to

an irresistible conclusion that the author of the interview wanted to defame the judiciary of Pakistan and to bring it into ridicule. Zafar Ali Shah, PML Par liamentary Secretary for Law called the ruling "illegal and

unconstitutional" and told reporters that the party would go to court to challenge it.

Floating hospital set to sail soon

By Staff Correspondent

The project for a 'Floating Hospital of Bangladesh' is finally going to take off, threeand-a-half-years after it was conceived. "The French barge to be used

for the hospital will be floated as soon as we get it released from the Narayangani Dockyard and necessary transformation work is over", said Yves Marre, the originator of the project. The barge was obtained from

the French government. Mother Teresa had inaugurated the project in 1995. The project suffered a "cal-

lous handling" by the French and Bangladeshi organisations causing huge financial liabilities and complications. Yves claimed at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the city A new association called

and donor countries and organisation have been approached for assistance to make the project operative, he said. The remote char areas in Raipura thana of Narsingdi district have been selected for initial operation, he added. "The floating hospital on the barge will also operate in other

remote areas of the country and the second phase of the project will commence with the arrival of 12 more barges from France", Yves said. Under the revived project, he said, the Heart Research Asso-

ciation (HRA) will provide voluntary medical treatment and medical instruments while the Chetona Bikash Kendra (CBK), a



yesterday

voluntary organisation, will felicitate all local arrangements at Raipura where a 'mobile hospital' was organised on Tuesday.

"Apart from treatment, the floating hospital will provide primary and secondary medicare mainly in the remote areas, train up and educate people on medical service and help set up basic hygienic facilities like tubewell and latrine", said Yves.

Syed Murad and Runa Marre, two other members of the "Friendship", Dr SR Khan of the HRA and Fazlul Hug Khandakar of the CBK also addressed the press conference.

Tk 1000 cr for Gulf War returnees in Bangladesh

Bangladesh will receive Tk 1000 crore from the United Nations as compensation for 72 thousand returnees who fled Iraq and Kuwait due to Gulf War, reports BSS.

Official sources yesterday said, Tk 50 crore has already been distributed among 4620 returnees from the first instalment received.

The process is going on to distribute Tk 170 crore received as second instalment among 15,365 persons, said the sources, adding that each will get on an average Tk 1,10,075 as compensation.

Road barricade From page 1

deployed in Matiranga thana area due to tense situation prevailing there following Sunday's violence that left two people killed and over 100 injured.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent adds: Demonstrators damaged three jeeps and a bus at Nancy bazar and Kalpani on the Chittagong-Khagrachhari road during a road barricade programme today.

Police, meanwhile, arrested two persons from Shalban area of the town for hurling rocks at

Administration sources said police escorted two Chittagongbound buses from Khagrachhari. The administration also assured the transport owners that it would provide all help to restore communication.

Mobil

From page 1 about keeping Tullow as a partner in Block 9.

Tullow, a 5.8 million Pound Irish company, was offered Block 9 on the first day of negotiations which began on October 22. Tullow's proposal for this most-sought after block was to drill 10 wells in the initial exploration period at a cost of 58 million US Dollars.

French company Total and US company Niko Resources will hold discussions with the **Negotiation Committee today** (Friday). It was earlier intended that Total would be asked to be a partner of Tullow in Block 9. However Mobil's position regarding Tullow will now changes the scene, observed a

The negotiators also held one round of talks yesterday with Unocal-Triton over Block

Twenty foreign companies and the local BAPEX are participating in the second round block bidding for oil and gas exploration in Bangladesh.

As per the latest decision, government is likely to sign **Production Sharing Contracts** (PSCs) with Tullow for Block 9. US company Triton for Block 7. **Dutch** company Maersk for Block 19, Shell-Cairn for Blocks 10 and 5, Enron-Oakland for Block 6 and Pangaea for Block 8.

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