



JS goes into session Jan 14

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has summoned the parliament session on January 14 at 11 am, reports UNB.

This will be the 8th session of the seventh Jatiya Sangsad, said an official announcement yesterday.

The session is seen as very important as it will pick up general discussion on the much-debated peace agreement on CHT and is likely to adopt four bills to give legal coverage to the accord.

President Shahabuddin will deliver his speech at the opening session of Parliament in the new year as per the constitution.

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Export: Thrust on garments, leather goods & software

The government has decided to expand the country's export market putting thrust on garment, leather and software sectors in the proposed industrial policy, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Export Committee yesterday at the Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

All-out efforts would be continued to expand the export market giving proper emphasis on these sectors and diversifying the export items.

The meeting was informed that country's export target earning has been fixed at 6 billion US dollar for the current fiscal year and so far the earning is higher than that of the corresponding period of the last fiscal year.

The meeting, which discussed in detail the problems and prospects of the export sector, also decided to include more non-traditional items in the export list.

(See details on page 6)

JCD gheraoes DU VC's office

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, yesterday gheraoed the office of the Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University.

The gheraoed the office demanding punishment to those responsible for humiliating a house tutor of Sir AF Rahman Hall on the Victory Day.

The JCD leaders at a rally in front of the VC's office expressed concern over the price hike of the education materials.

The rally was addressed, among others, by JCD president Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anne, general secretary Habib-UN-Nabi Shohel, DU unit convener Nasiruddin Asim, DU unit convener Selimuzzaman Selim.

Later they submitted a memorandum to the VC.

First year (hons) classes of JU from Jan 4

By JU Correspondent

First year Honours classes of 1996-97 session of Jahangirnagar University will begin from Sunday, January 4.

This was said in an official notification which also mentioned that admission of a student would be cancelled if he was found absent from classes.

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Saga of Radio-TV autonomy Authorities sitting on Commission's report

By Reaz Ahmad

It has been nearly five months now that the report suggesting full autonomy for the state-run electronic media was submitted to the government but, instead of any real progress in its implementation, a new confusion has arisen over the issue.

Confusion over the 'authority of control' diminishes chances of any immediate changes in the day to day affairs of the two electronic media in the country, Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar. It appears that there is no likelihood of these two institutions becoming

autonomous entities in near future.

"I wonder how a team of five or seven eminent persons would run these two institutions all alone, without any control of the ministry concerned," said Minister of State for Information Prof Abu Sayeed recently in an interview with The Daily Star.

Recalling his recent visit to the BBC headquarters in London, Sayeed said, "Despite the fact that BBC enjoys autonomy, its funding comes from the information ministry and there persists some sort of government control as well."

"Besides," said Sayeed, "there is confusion among BTV and Betar staff whether they would remain public servants anymore if these two institutions gain autonomous status." Asked what steps he, as the minister concerned, has taken to remove the confusion, Sayeed said, "I am having interactions with officials and employees of these media from time to time." Asked how long it would take, he said, "some more time."

However, talking to a number of people working in the electronic media over the last one week, this correspondent

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Cadre service assocs likely to go for identical programmes

By Special Correspondent

Different cadre service associations have expressed resentment over the upgradation of 329 BCS (Administration) posts in different grades in the National Pay Scale.

They are likely to announce identical action programmes coinciding with the abstention from work for the whole day on January eight, announced on Sunday by the central coordi-

nation council of Prokrihi, grouping Engineers, Doctors and Agriculturists, sources concerned said.

The leaders of BCS taxation, economic and other cadres were in touch with each other, reviewing the situation and coordinating their action programmes to press their demands.

They will meet today to decide their next course of action to protest what they described as illogical and impractical steps to placate a particular section of officials in group interest.

6 shops looted at Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 29: Six shops were looted by armed miscreants within a span of an hour in Anderkilla area last night, police sources said.

The miscreants looted Tk one lakh at gunpoint from a wholesale paper house at Anderkilla at 8 pm. They came by auto-rickshaws and decamped after exploding five cocktails at Anderkilla crossing near Chittagong city corporation office, witnesses said.

At around 9 pm, five shops were looted by another group of armed miscreants from a place

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Peace accord BNP to stage demonstration in city today

By Staff Correspondent

BNP will stage demonstration in the city today demanding cancellation of the CHT accord and protesting price-hike of essentials.

City unit of the main opposition party will bring out processions in all thanas in the afternoon, said a press release.

Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, convener of the city unit, in a statement last night called upon the party workers and supporters to participate in the demonstrations.

'No scope to scrap CHT accord' BNP free to give opinion or objection in JS: Nasim

Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim, who is planning to open talks with the BNP leadership, said yesterday that the BNP MPs should join the parliament and place their opinions on the CHT peace agreement.

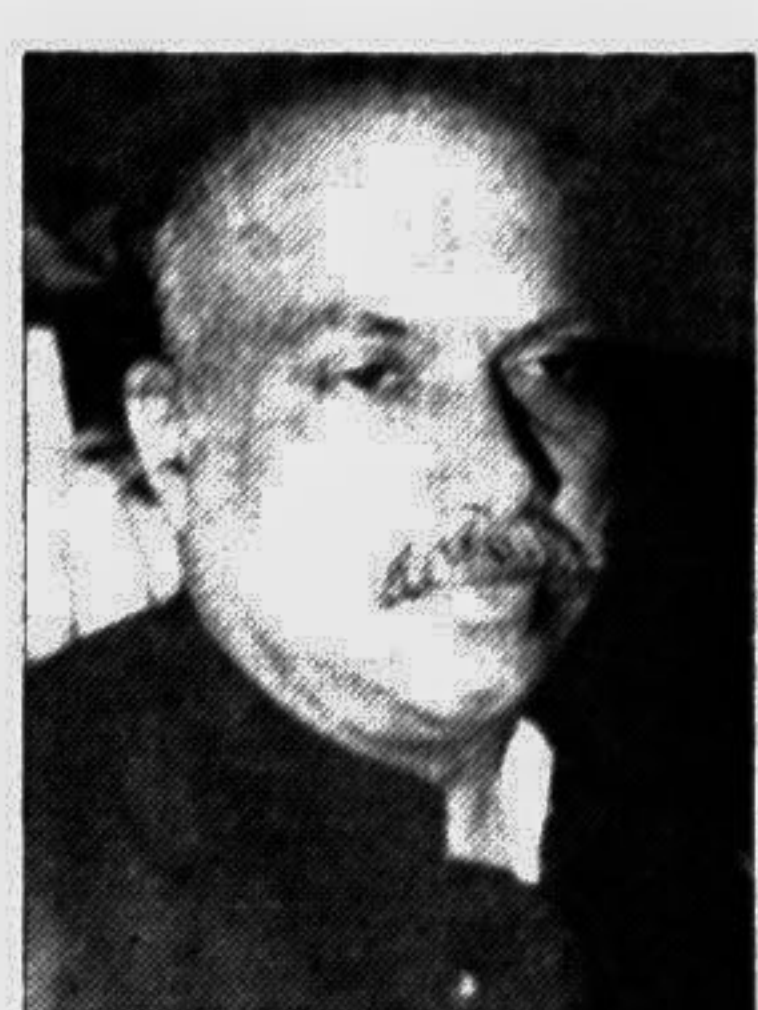
"In a day or two, I'll talk to the BNP secretary general and other leaders and invite them to give their opinion on the peace accord in Parliament," he said.

Talking to UNB at his Secretariat office, Nasim said the peace accord, signed on December 2, has not yet been given a legal coverage. "Before it turns into a law, a Bill will be placed in the House and there'll be extensive discussion on it."

The draft bill, he said, will be scrutinised at the Select Committee before its adoption by Parliament following the parliamentary procedure.

"So, in the process, there will be detailed scrutiny of the peace agreement and BNP can give its opinion or objection at different stages," Nasim said.

He added, "I think a national



consensus can be built up through discussion on the propositions of the agreement and the opposition's opinions."

All the apprehensions expressed by BNP about the peace accord would be removed through discussion on it in the Select Committee and also within the chamber of Parliament.

And if opposition wants, even Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina can sit with them and

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Jamuna Bridge Proposal fixing tolls on vehicular traffic okayed

By Staff Correspondent

The cabinet yesterday approved a communications ministry proposal, fixing tolls on vehicular traffic over the Jamuna Bridge, cabinet sources said.

The ministry proposal also included tolls on the organisations using the bridge for installation of electricity, gas telecommunication and railway links, the sources added.

The bridge, connecting the northern part of the country with the rest of Bangladesh, is scheduled to be opened on or before June 28, 1998. The estimated cost of construction of the bridge is Taka 6000 crore.

Different rates of toll has been fixed for different categories of vehicles.

The Communications Min-

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Hired goons attack garments workers' rally: One killed

By Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed and about 30 people including two policemen were injured when a gang of miscreants attacked a rally of garments workers at Kaliganj Bazar in Keraniganj near the city yesterday afternoon.

Police identified the dead as Zaman, 30. He died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at about 9 pm.

The miscreants, equipped with rods, hockey sticks and sharp weapons, attacked the rally of over two thousand workers in front of their union office at Noor Market.

The workers were demanding fair wages and payment of

six months' arrear wages, local people and police said.

There are some small-scale garments factories in Keraniganj which supply ready-made wears to markets in the city.

There was a rumour of two more deaths in the incident but police or hospital sources could not confirm it till last night.

Most of the injured workers were aged between 25 and 30, hospital sources said.

Of the injured persons, 15 were admitted to the DMCH, Mitford Hospital and Orthopedic Hospital in the city. Others were released after treatment.

Local people and some of the

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One of the garments workers injured in clashes in Keraniganj yesterday being attended by relatives at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. — Star photo

Security alert delays Biman flight from Calcutta

By Special Correspondent

A Bangladesh Biman flight from Calcutta to Dhaka yesterday was delayed for more than one hour and a half due to a security alert at Dum Dum airport in Calcutta, Biman sources said.

The security at the Dum Dum airport gave a message to the Airbus captain 10 minutes before takeoff saying they had received an information that there would be an attempt to hijack the aircraft.

The Airbus A 310-300 was carrying a full load of 219 passengers including some foreigners. It was scheduled to land at Zia International Airport at 1:05 pm.

It took off after a thorough

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3 of a family die of food poisoning

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 29: Three members of a family died of food poisoning after eating cooked vegetables at their home in village Sekanderkhali under Amtali thana of Patuakhali district yesterday.

Three other members of the family also fell seriously ill as all of them ate the foodstuff during their meal at noon, witnesses said.

Fifteen-year-old Nasima died in the house while her mother Sonavan, 60, and sister Firoza, 35, died at the Kalapara Thana Health Complex.

The other three - Seuli, 10, Shilpi, 18, and Hazara, 28, — are now undergoing treatment at Patuakhali General Hospital and Amtali Thana Health Complex.

5 rifles looted from Ansars in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 29: A group of unidentified armed miscreants looted five 303 rifles and 15 bullet from five Ansars who were on duty at the Sundarban Sea Foods Ltd and Ramnagar under Rupsha thana, three kilometres from the city.

Police said the miscreants attacked the shrimp processing plant and opened fire in which Ansar Sher Ali received bullet injuries. He has been admitted to Sadar hospital in critical condition.

They overpowered the ansars at gun point and took away the rifles.

Four ansars are reported to have been closed to Alapur Ansar Camp for interrogation and injured Sher Ali is under police custody in Sadar Hospital.

New BUETTA executives

By DU Correspondent

Prof Dr Md Abdur Razzak Akand of the department of Mechanical Engineering and Dr Hasib Mohammad Ahsan of the department of Civil Engineering were elected president and general secretary respectively of the Teachers' Association of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUETTA).

Election to the 13-member

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No provision for widening bridges in Dhanmondi Lake project

By Staff Correspondent

Some residents of Dhanmondi area in the city have expressed their surprise that the Dhanmondi Lake Development Project has no provision for widening the bridges in the area to ease the growing traffic jam.

They said that increase in vehicular traffic in causing regular traffic jam at both the bridges at Dhanmondi. "It is unfortunate that the lake development project does not have a solution to this enormous problem," said Enamul Haque.

According to plans available from the developer's site office, a 'steel framed pedestrian crossing' would be made along the bridges.

The residents said everyday, particularly during school and office hours, serious traffic jam occurs at the narrow bridges. Widening of the existing bridges could only solve the problem, they said.

"We were assured in the past that the bridges would be widened to ease the traffic jam but now the project is underway without the component," said another resident of the

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Armed gang slaughters three in Jessore

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 29: Three persons were slaughtered by a group of armed activists of an outlawed party at village Shidhipasha under Abhoynagar thana of Jessore district on Sunday night.

The victims were identified as Mohtuiddin Farazi, 45, Hafizur Rahman Farazi, 55, and AL leader Abdul Aziz, 45. The armed outlaws also looted their houses.

Police said, the outlaws first

asked the villagers not to come out of their houses by using megaphone and then picked up Mohtuiddin, Hafiz and Abdul Aziz from their respective houses.

They took them to a nearby field and slaughtered them.

To confirm their deaths, the armed outlaws also fired shots at them.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Jessore Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Three separate cases were filed with Abhoynagar thana in this connection.

UNB adds: The slaughtered three were close relatives of Farazi, a chairman candidate of Shidhipasha union.

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Meat prices fixed for Ramadan

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has fixed meat prices for the month of Ramadan, reports UNB.

As per the decision, taken at a meeting with meat traders' associations on Sunday, the beef will be sold at Tk 65, meat of buffalo Tk 55 and mutton Tk 110 per kg during the month.

The meeting urged all concerned to take necessary steps for keeping the meat prices stable, said a DCC press release yesterday.

No step yet to save last home of Pallas's Eagle

By Shehab Ahmed

The fate of the Pallas's Eagle in their last sanctuary in Tahripur thana of Sunamganj still hangs in the balance.

Last year, the government leased 250 acres of Rangchi Bag, a grove of hijal and karach trees, their last home in Bangladesh, to a person with important political connection for Tk 91,000 for five years.

This was ostensibly done to increase revenue earning of the government.

But the lessees' target was to get rid of the trees, something he has done so far with quite success, selling their ever green branches to fishermen in Tangar haor, a vast wetland.

As the remaining trees await the lessees' axe, the majestic Eagle finds it difficult to nest

during its breeding season, ornithologists visiting the area said. There are about 80 Eagles, adults and sub-adults, living in the area.

The Pallas's Eagle, known locally as Kura, is listed as rare in the world red book of endangered species, compiled by the International Union of Nature (IUCN).

They retreated to the Rangchi Bag, skirting the huge wetland of Tangar Haor, when they found their nests dwindling in other parts of that region and elsewhere in the country. When The Daily Star carried a story on the fate of the Eagle on November 25, the government decided to investigate.

An urgent message was faxed

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Pallas's Eagle: Days are numbered?

22 rly level crossings out of 51 illegal!

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is planning to remove unauthorised makeshift markets and level crossings at various points on the rail track in and around the city, according to official sources.

There are 29 authorised level crossings on the 39-km Narayanganj-Tongi rail track that passes through the city while the number of unauthorised ones is 22 in the Dhaka-Tongi section, there are 20 authorised and 14 unauthorised level crossings and in the Dhaka-Narayanganj section, the number of authorised crossings is nine and that of unauthorised ones is eight.

Some of the unauthorised crossings are at Khilkhet, Koshabari, Azampur, Membarbari, Pagla and Ganderia

Gumti. Most of the unauthorised makeshift markets have been set up by industrialists who have their factories beside the rail track.

A number of unauthorised makeshift markets have been set up on the rail track at Khilgaon, Malibagh, Nakhlaipara, Mohakhali, Gopibagh, Narayanganj, Fatullah and Jursin level crossings. Kawran Bazar fish market near the FDC level crossing is also unauthorised.

The unauthorised markets have been set up with the backing of local political leaders, activists and mastans.

In the past, the Railway Authorities had time and again evicted the encroachers but they managed a comeback soon afterwards.

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On January 1, 1998

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