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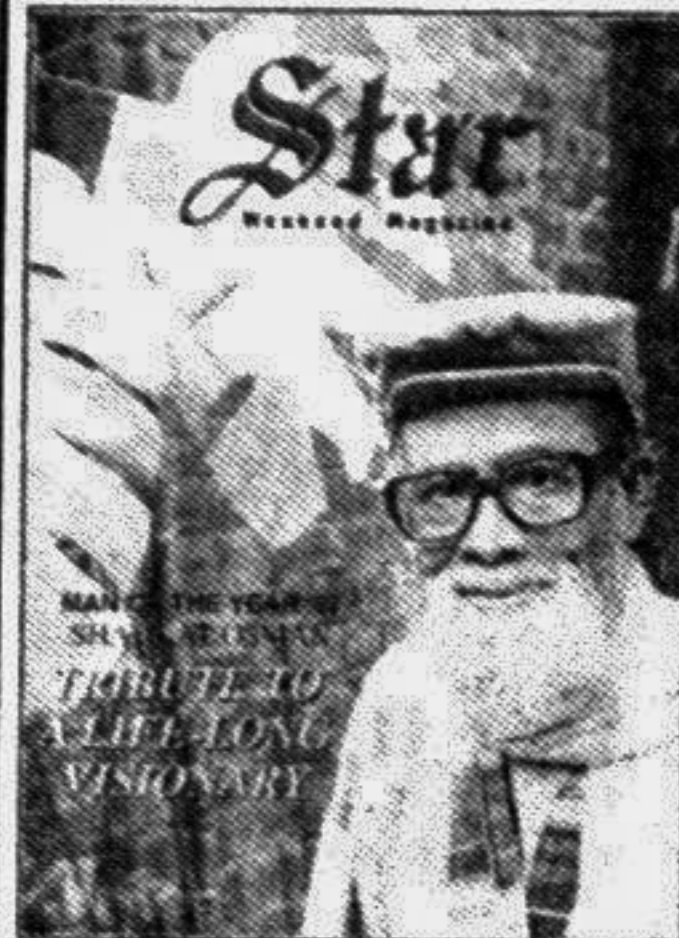
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The Daily Star
Man of the Year '97



Shaikat Osman
The Daily Star Man of the Year for 1997. Read the Star Weekend Magazine for the full story.

6 new ministers take oath, 2 promoted

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expanded her Council of Ministers inducting six new faces in it. She also promoted two members of the Council, axed portfolio of one and changed another.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed administered the oath of office to the new ministers at a simple ceremony at the Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban at 6.45 pm. The Prime Minister and her Cabinet colleagues were present on the occasion.

The new faces in the council of ministers and their portfolios are: Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism; Mofaz-

zal Hossain Choudhury Maya, Minister of State for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives; Prof. Rafiqul Islam, Minister of State for Energy, Power and Mineral Resources; AKM Jahangir Hossain, Minister of State for Textiles and Sabar Hossain Choudhury, Deputy Minister for Shipping.

Kalparanjan Chakma has been appointed a cabinet minister but is yet to be sworn in. Minister of State for Labour and Manpower M A Mannan has been made a cabinet minister while Deputy Minister Prof. Zinnatunnesa Talukdar has been made state minister with

her previous portfolio — Primary and Mass Education.

State Minister Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has been stripped of his Civil Aviation and Tourism portfolio. He continues to hold charge of the Ministry of Planning.

In another change, Dharendra Devnath Shambhu, who was at Deputy Minister for Shipping, has been made Deputy Minister for Food.

Saber Hossain Choudhury, born on September 10, 1961, is the youngest member of the Council of Ministers.

This is the second time, Sheikh Hasina has expanded her Council of Ministers since it was formed in June, 1996.

Implementation rate goes down further One-third of ADP projects likely to miss target

By Inam Ahmed

Implementation of the government's Annual Development Programme (ADP) faltered in the first quarter of fiscal 1997-98.

During July-September this fiscal year only 11 per cent of the ADP allocation was spent, down from 13 per cent during the corresponding period last year. In terms of taka, the amount was Tk 1382 crore.

Moreover, 32 per cent of the projects scheduled to be completed this fiscal year are likely to miss their target, spilling over to the next year.

The government had released Tk 1142 crore in local currency which is 15 per cent of the local currency component of the ADP. But only Tk 748 crore or 10 per cent was used by the implementing agencies, down from 13 per cent last year, leaving Tk 394 crore unutilised. In project aid, Tk 634 crore

was spent, which is 12 per cent of the component as against 13 per cent last year.

According to Planning Commission, disbursement of money was the lowest this time in the last three years. In 1996-97, 19 per cent of the ADP outlay was disbursed in the first quarter and 21 per cent in 1995-96.

The ADP outlay for this fiscal year is Tk 12800 crore, of which Tk 7483 crore is in local currency and Tk 5317 crore in project aid.

According to statistics, five ministries, wings and divisions failed to use any of the allocated money in the first quarter of this fiscal year. Twenty three ministries, divisions and wings spent five per cent or less of their allocation, 30 spent eight per cent or less and 35 spent less than 11 per cent of their allocation.

Those who spent less than eight per cent of their allocation are: Rural Development and Cooperative Division (three per cent), Primary and Mass Education Directorate (five per cent), Post and Telecommunications Ministry (one per cent), Fisheries and Livestock sub-sector (five per cent), Livestock and Industry ministries (five per cent), Information Ministry (two per cent), Defence Ministry (zero), Ministry of Religious Affairs (six per cent), Ministry of Science and Technology (two per cent), Cultural Affairs Ministry (four per cent), Establishment Ministry (five per cent), Ministry of Housing and Public Works (one per cent) and Prime Minister's office (five per cent).

The Planning Commission had identified 16 ministries and divisions as most important bodies regarding utilisation.

Welcome '98, with a look back

Star Report

Welcome 1998. A happy New Year begins today. Today is the first day of year 1998 in Gregorian calendar.

This time the New Year day in Bangladesh coincides with the beginning of Holy Ramadan, a month of fasting for Muslims. As the clock ticked zero hours last night, people in the country as elsewhere in the world joined New Year celebrations expressing greetings to one another.

The year that passed off will be remembered for various significant events in national life.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expanded her Council of Ministers on the eve of the New Year, inducting six new ministers and promoting two state ministers, to revamp her administration.

The reshuffle did not come as a surprise.

It reflected her efforts to streamline her government to

crowned her administration with an agreement in December, 1996 on Ganges water-sharing with India. The accord for 30 years ended decades-old acrimonious relations with India. She also initiated moves for developing closer economic ties with neighbouring countries, succeeding in signing an agreement with India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand for economic cooperation.

But in the home front, she has been grappling with the main opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which lost power in the last election.

The BNP legislators are staying out of Jatiya Sangsad since August 30 this year.

The year was also marked by

See page 2

AL invites BNP for dialogue

By Staff Correspondent

In a fresh bid to bring the BNP back to the Jatiya Sangsad, the ruling Awami League has invited the main opposition party for a dialogue.

Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim told the Daily Star last night that he was eagerly awaiting a response from the BNP to the Awami League's fresh offer for a dialogue he communicated on Monday night.

"I telephoned BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan inviting his party to return to the House and sit for a dialogue with a view to resolving the political crisis," said Nasim, who is also AL's Organising Secretary. Mannan Bhuiyan assured him of calling back after discussing the matter in the party, "but I'm yet to receive any response," Nasim added.

The ruling party's offer for a

See Page 12 Col 5

Lloyds team surveys damages to F-28

By Special Correspondent

The surveyors of Bangladesh Biman's F-28 aircraft yesterday held a meeting with officials of Sadharan Bima Corporation to sort out details of the six-million-dollar insurance claim for the damaged plane.

The aircraft had crashed-landed on a mud flat, eight km off Sylhet airport, on December 22.

Biman sources said two surveyors representing the Lloyds of London had surveyed the damages to the F-28 at Metkar Haor. They interviewed the crew and some passengers and other persons concerned. They have already sent their preliminary report to London.

The sources claimed quoting Sadharan Bima officials that insurance payments for the F-28 were up to date.

They expect proper settlement of the claims as soon as

See Page-12 Col 4

First day of Ramadan today

By Staff Correspondent

The holy month of Ramadan begins today as the moon of the Arabic month was sighted in Bangladesh yesterday evening.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages have congratulated the countrymen on the occasion of the holy month and urged all to maintain the sanctity of Ramadan.

The President said this holy month brings ample scope to practice self-restraint and self-purification every year.

He said Ramadan's teachings of fellow-feeling are unique for the welfare of the people in this world and hereafter and for establishing peace in the society.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the main teachings of this month are self-restraint and sacrifice.

She called upon the people irrespective of party affiliation and opinion to come forward to establish peace in the country shunning all differences.

She hoped the countrymen

See Page 12 Col 1

BCS (Police) Assoc submits memo to Home Minister

BCS Police Service Association yesterday submitted a memorandum to Home Minister Major (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam protesting a government circular which has created "discontent" in the police administration, reports UNB.

The memorandum said the government decision to upgrade some BCS (Admin) cadre posts keeping the similar police cadre posts in their previous status is an injustice.

Association representatives who called on the Home Minister to submit the memorandum included Additional IGs Burhan

See Page 12 Col 8



Asma, Najma and Nilufar, three of the four acid burn victims, at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Ghastly acid attack on 5

By Staff Correspondent

Four young women suffered acid burns when a young man threw acid on his wife at a slum at Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

The victims were Asma Khatun, 20, Nazma, 25, Lily, 22, and Nilufar, 18. They suffered burns as the three tried to save Asma from the wrath of her husband at the Babi Jheel slum in Tejgaon industrial area in the early hours of yesterday. The three shared a room with Asma in the slum.

In another incident at Pagla, Narayanganj, a housewife, Rahima Bibi suffered acid

burns when her husband threw acid on her late Tuesday night, our correspondent reported.

All the five injured women were taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Asma suffered burn injuries in her hands and Nazma, Lily and Nilufar on faces. Lily was released yesterday afternoon after treatment.

The condition of Rahima Bibi, 45, was stated to be critical.

"My husband started quarrelling with me as soon as he came to the house at about mid-

night. At one stage he started beating me without any reason," police quoted Asma as saying.

At one stage, Asma and her roommates forced her husband, Shahidul, 25, a day labourer, to get out of the room. Shahidul left.

"All of a sudden, he brought a bottle and threw a water-like substance on me," said Asma. The three others were also injured while trying to save Asma. Shahidul fled the scene immediately.

See Page 12 Col 7

Judicial capacity building project Needs assessment report to be submitted soon

By Staff Correspondent

The needs assessment report of judicial capacity building project, to be funded by the World Bank, is likely to be submitted to the government within a couple of days, sources in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs said.

The project is worth about Tk 200 crore. The follow up project on the basis of the needs assessment report is scheduled to be completed by the middle of this year.

"Soon after the report is submitted to the government and the WB, a copy of it will be forwarded to the Bank's head-

quarters," a ministry source said.

This is the bank's largest project in Asia, getting top priority on the current agenda, said a WB source.

A five-member panel of advisors with chief of the former caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman as its head was appointed by the WB for evaluating the needs assessment report.

The four other members of the panel are Barrister Rafiqul Haq, Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury, Justice Kemaluddin Hossain and Barrister Amir-Ul-Islam.

The assessment report will contain a diagnostic study of Bangladesh's legal and regulatory framework, court administration system, current status of case backlogs in courts, initial training system for judges and subsequent training programmes for them.

It will also determine the needs for introducing Monitoring Information System for the judiciary.

The report will also contain a set of recommendations for improvement of the existing laws and infrastructure where needed.

LC chairman resigns

By Staff Correspondent

Dr F K M A Munim, Chairman of the Law Commission, has resigned.

His resignation was effective from Wednesday, official sources said yesterday.

Munim, a former chief justice, submitted his resignation to the President. A copy of the resignation letter was sent to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, the sources added.

Justice Aminur Rahman Khan, now a member of the Law Commission is likely to be appointed acting chairman of the Commission. The law ministry is preparing papers to be sent to the Prime Minister's secretariat for his appointment, the sources said.

See Page 12 Col 1

Repatriation of tribal refugees resumes today

KHAGRACHHARI, Dec 31: Repatriation of the remaining 35,000 tribal refugees from the Indian state of Tripura begins tomorrow, the first day of the new year, reports UNB.

Refugee Affairs Task Force Committee chairman Kalparanjan Chakma, MP, Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Sakawat Hossain Khan and local DC AKM Zafrul Hossain will receive the returnees at the border at 9 am.

Local administration sources said some 941 members of 185 tribal families would return home from Kathalehri camp in Tripura through the Dakshinaghat frontier point in Ramgarh thana on the first day of the 6th phase of repatriation process.

39 died in custody last year

By Staff Correspondent

Thirty-nine people died in police and jail custody in the country during the last year, according to a survey conducted by Odhikar, a human rights organisation.

Odhikar's survey is based on reports published in different national dailies during the period between January 1 and December 31, 1997, says a press release.

According to the survey, 66 women were tortured and killed as they failed to bring dowry while repression of maid led to nine deaths last year.

Besides, 733 rape incidents and 110 acid-throwing incidents occurred in 1997. And some 84 others fell prey to 'Pattua' (religious edict).

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
1	1	5:17	5:28
2	2	5:17	5:27
3	3	5:17	5:27