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PM's fresh call to BNP Return to JS, demands will be considered

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday made a fresh call to the opposition to return to parliament and resolve all problems through discussion in the House, reports UNB.

"We will consider all your demands ... come back to the House, take part in discussions and make the parliament effective," she told the opposition while addressing the golden jubilee celebration of Bangladesh Chhatra League at Ramna Batamul.

The Prime Minister said, "We want the main opposition BNP to return to the House and we will accept their demands through negotiations. We want the opposition leader to take part in discussions for solution to all problems."

Earlier, the opposition was allowed in the House to take part in discussions, but the leader of the opposition ignored our call and now is blaming the government without any reason, she added.

Stability is essential for the development and progress of the country and the opposition should return to the parliament shunning the street movement, which has been inflicting sufferings on the public life, the Prime Minister said.

"Now there is no need for any movement as the present government is pledge-bound to quit power upon completion of its tenure."

A large number of students from different educational institutions gathered at the lush green of Ramna Park to join the golden jubilee celebration. The

jubilant workers, including female students, came to the venue carrying party and national flags.

Pointing to the opposition leader, the Prime Minister said she (Begum Zia) was engaged in spreading falsehood against the CHT peace agreement and trying to confuse the people as she does not want peace in the region.

"She (Begum Zia) is demanding the cancellation of the peace accord to continue the war-like situation in the CHT region," the Prime Minister said.

Hasina said the opposition leader said that a portion of the country — from CHT to Feni — will be the part of India after the signing of the agreement, but it did not happen.

She alleged that when BNP was in power, the then Prime Minister signed the joint communique with India and sold out the interest of the nation.

Turning to educational arena, the Prime Minister said the government has taken every possible step to make the educational institutions free from violence and the influence of arms.

"There is no scope for the terrorists to stay on the campus, the troublemakers will not be spared from legal action. The law will take its own course," she said.

Chhatra League president Enamul Huq Shameem presided over the meeting, which was also addressed by Chhatra League general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna.

50 die as bus crashes into burning oil tanker in Pakistan

JHELUM, Pakistan, Jan 4: Cranes removed the twisted and charred remains of several vehicles today that were involved in a fiery crash that killed at least 50 people and injured seven others on a narrow rural road in eastern Punjab province, reports AP.

There were conflicting casualty reports from Saturday's accident near Jhelum, about 115 kilometres (69 miles) southeast of the federal capital of Islamabad.

Police said 25 people were killed while rescue workers put the death toll beyond 50 and some eyewitnesses said as many as 65 people died.

Many of the dead were passengers on an overcrowded bus which slammed into an oil

tanker that was already on fire after colliding with an oncoming truck, eyewitnesses said.

The truck was heading toward Islamabad when it collided with an oil tanker, carrying more than 40,000 litres (10,400 gallons) of petrol, police said.

Both vehicles flipped over and immediately caught fire, said Mohammed Wasim, a witness who was working on a construction job repairing a bridge near the accident.

Within moments, a bus packed with passengers hit the fiery oil truck and was immediately engulfed in flames, Wasim said. A small car also slammed into the wreckage.

Many of the victims were passengers in the bus, many of them sitting on the roof, said Wasim. He estimated the death toll at close to 65.

There were charred bones throughout the burned out hull of the bus on Sunday.

ULFA leader

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tarian ground.

The BBC further said Delhi has requested Bangladesh to hand over Barua to Indian authorities. But Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said his government is yet to receive any such formal or informal request.

Azad said the government will release information regarding Barua if he was found linked to ULFA after interrogation.

Quoting a high police official the BBC said that there is no prisoner exchange accord between Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh can take legal action against the arrested for illegally entering into Bangladesh.

UNB adds: Police will file three cases today against Barua who was arrested along with two of his accomplices recently in the city.

Barua will face cases for his illegal stay in Bangladesh, possessing foreign currency and for carrying forged Bangladeshi passports bearing false names and addresses, police said.

Police recovered photocopies of several forged passports from Golap Barua's possession in which he used two false names — John David Momarna and George William Bernard.

His address was shown in the passports, issued in June 1996, as Tahipur thana of Sunamganj district.

Besides, while recently visiting South Africa, Barua also reportedly used a passport as a South African citizen named Abdul Aziz, police said.

Police recovered some foreign currencies, including Indian rupees and US dollars, worth over Tk 20 lakhs from Barua's possession.

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Shops and business establishments in Aganagar Union of Keraniganj thana remained closed yesterday as the situation did not return to normalcy following two gruesome killings there on the previous day. — Star photo

RUTA polls today

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 4: The election to the executive committee of Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) will be held tomorrow.

Two panels — Yellow and White — are contesting the polls.

Pro-Awami League teachers supported by a faction of Pro-BNP group have formed the Yellow Panel while White Panel has been formed by moderate teachers, who claim themselves as genuine BNP.

Professor M Abdur Razzak of Statistics Department and Professor Muzzal Hussain of Applied Physics are contesting for the posts of president and general secretary respectively from Yellow Panel.

The White Panel's candidates for the posts of president and general secretary are Professor M Azhar Ali of Chemistry Department and Professor Asrafuzzaman of Social Work Department.

About 598 teachers are expected to cast their votes from 8:30 am to 1 pm without any break.

2 doctors beaten up in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Jan 4: A group of agitating people today beat up two doctors of the district hospital alleging that their negligence caused the death of a patient, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Shah Alam of village Soata near the town died yesterday at the hospital while he was under treatment.

Following the death, a group of angry people attacked Dr Abdul Ghani and Dr Alam. They alleged that Shah Alam died due to negligence of the doctors.

All the doctors of the hospital have been abstaining from their work protesting the attack.

No arrest yet in Keraniganj OC, 2 other police officials suspended

By Raziur Rahman

Keraniganj police could not arrest any of the alleged killers of Torikullah or Nurul Islam till yesterday.

Meanwhile, three police officials of Keraniganj thana, including the Officer in-Charge, were suspended yesterday.

The suspension order came after Inspector General of Police M. Ismail Hossain and DIG Dhaka Range Nurul Alam visited the spot.

The officials are: OC Noor Mohammad, SI Abu Taher and ASI Ashraf (duty officer).

Torikullah, newly elected chairman of Aganagar union parishad under Keraniganj thana was shot dead by some unidentified persons Saturday afternoon. Within about two hours, Nurul Islam, a freedom fighter, was hacked and burnt to death in the same area, allegedly by Torikullah's men.

Keraniganj police only said yesterday that the killings were sequel to a long-drawn rivalry between the two persons.

This correspondent, during a visit to the area, found local people tight-lipped, not to earn the wrath of any of the groups supporting the two persons. But some people claimed that Nurul Islam was not involved in the killing of Torikullah, who was the leader of Torikia Bahini. They however said that enmity between the two persons had intensified after Torikullah was elected UP chairman last month.

Some local people, however, said they thought that an influential leader of old Dhaka might be behind the killing of Torikullah because he was growing as a potential rival of that leader.

ID police unofficially began investigating the incident, a

CID official said yesterday requesting anonymity. CID will take up the case officially within a couple of days, he said.

Two cases were filed yesterday with Keraniganj thana in connection with the Saturday's killing. The supporters of Haji Torikullah filed a case against 18 people while those of Nurul Islam Commanded filed another case against 22 people.

Talking with this correspondent some local people posed the question why police did not take any pre-emptive steps after the killing of Torikullah. Nurul Islam's killing took place after about two hours and the killers took about half an hour to hack and burn him to death, they said.

When asked the duty officer of Keraniganj thana said that a large force was deployed at Kaliganj Bazar where one person was killed and at least 30 people were injured in a clash on December 29.

Torikullah, an accused in several cases including murder and abduction was shot by an unidentified gang which were waiting inside a hotel in the area. Some local people said. Law and order has deteriorated in the area and the killings took place due to negligence by police, they alleged.

Police said the two bodies were handed over to their families.

No untoward incident was reported till filing of this report last night. Huge police force was deployed at Aganagar, across the river Buriganga.

Meanwhile, Keraniganj unit of Awami League in a press release condemned the killings and alleged that Torikullah was killed due to conflict among local factions of BNP.

BIRDEM: Resist evil attempts

From page 1

the matter.

But EWA rejected the decision and continued to agitate inside the hospital.

Meanwhile, EWA staged sit-in and went for one-hour work stoppage from December 29 to January 3, two-hour yesterday and is scheduled to go for a three-hour work-stoppage today.

President of DAB Prof Dr. Wahiduddin Ahmed, who read out a statement signed by Fasih Uddin Mahabab at yesterday's press conference, said that the 1996 service rules were essential for the BIRDEM to ensure better treatment of the patients and thus uphold the image of the hospital. "Under the said rules, BIRDEM is to offer better payment to the talented persons

Edn board

From page 1
The government had formed the TF on April 3 last year to identify alleged irregularities in the education boards to bring transparency, accountability and dynamism in their activities.

The Task Force in its report submitted to the education ministry last year had said that a section of officials and employees of different boards were responsible for irregularities in the boards.

The Federation observed a two-hour work stoppage daily from December 1 to 10, followed by a three-hour work stoppage from December 11 to 19 and a four-hour work stoppage from December 19 till Thursday last.

Activities including filling up of forms by the examinees and sending registration numbers to the computer centre in Dhaka after scrutiny were hampered due to the movement by the board employees, some examinees alleged.

joining on contract basis, while the authorities would enjoy the right to terminate their jobs in case of their failure to give better service."

Replying to a question, the DAB president said the 1996 rules would in no way affect those who had joined the hospital before that year, because there was no compulsion for the old employees to come under the new rules. "They are, however, free to take the advantage of getting a little higher salary under the new rules, if they like to take the risk of termination of jobs in case of failure to give proper service."

Replying to another question, former cabinet secretary and member of the National Council of DAB Mujibur Huq said that the management had no scope to arbitrarily terminate the job of anyone even under the 1996 rules. "Under the 1996 rules, there is a three-member-body, including a retired judge of High Court, to see whether there was any arbitrary decision of termination." Termining the provision unprecedent in the country, Mujibur Huq posed a question: "Why should then the employees would go for strike to get the rules scrapped?"

The DAB chief further said that work stoppage or chanting of slogans by the EWA leaders and supporters was completely illegal. DAB is a non-profit voluntary socio-medical service organisation registered with the Ministry of Social Welfare and there is no legal provision for trade unionism in such organisations. We are determined not to concede to the illegal and unreasonable demands of EWA," he asserted.

Asked what stopped them from taking disciplinary actions against 'unruly' employees, the DAB President said the management was still willing to forge a negotiation with the

employees. "We have nothing against the employees. What we want is to make the BIRDEM a centre of excellence with the co-operation of the employees."

The others present at the press conference included DAB Vice President Maidul Islam, Treasurer Maj Gen (ret'd) AR Khan, Director General of BIRDEM Dr Fariduddin Ahmed and member of the National Council Dr Abdul Matin.

3 shot dead

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At one stage at about 11.30 am, the mob started pelting brick-bats and opened fire on police.

Additional Superintendent of Police of Chittagong M A Rahim said police opened fired on orders from the magistrates to control the situation. Sixty shots were fired, he said.

He said that the mob had taken a police personnel hostage forcibly. The police personnel was rescued after dispersing the mob by opening fire, he added.

The clashes marked by exchange of fire, continued for about one hour, he said.

Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong K M Habibullah said the acquired land was later handed over to the cantonment authorities when the situation came under control.

The occupants, belonging to 222 families, vacated the land, he said.

He said that the occupants were staying there illegally even after payment of compensation.

He also informed that a one-member committee was formed with ADC (General) to probe the incident. He has been asked to submit report within 15 days.

Ideal gift for any occasion.

Bangabandhu Murder Case 100 MPs had charged Mushtaque with Aug 15 killings: PW-43

Some 100 MPs had refused to express their allegiance to President Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed when he called them to Bangabhaban two months after the gruesome killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

"They also blasted Mushtaque and charged him and others with the August 15 killings," the then MP Prof Khorshed Alam, a prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, told the court when the trial proceedings resumed yesterday.

Prof Alam, the then president of Comilla district Awami League, made his deposition to the trial court as PW-43 when it was adjourned on November 25 before the winter vacation. He is also the current president of district AL.

During his cross-examination yesterday, Prof Alam, also a former district governor, said Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed called all the then parliamentarians at a meeting at the President House sometime in October, 1975.

"Some 100 MPs were present at the meeting ... before attending it, we had discussion among ourselves that we would ask Mushtaque as to how he became President and tell him that we don't accept you as the President," said the witness.

As Sirajul Haq MP and others in their deliberations

echoed the consensus voice, the PW-43 said Mahbub Alam Chashi and Mushtaque government's minister Taheruddin Thakur tried to persuade the legislators to their side saying the time had changed.

"Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been killed. No gain will be achieved saying Mujib's name. It's better to support the Mushtaque government," Chashi and Thakur were quoted by Prof Khorshed Alam as saying.

The witness said the meeting was over after the speech of Sirajul Haq, who directly charged Mushtaque and his associates with the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and others, and finally refused to recognise the 'killer' government.

Prof Khorshed Alam said the majors whose name he had mentioned in the deposition were present while they had the meeting with Mushtaque. "We, through their conversation, clearly realised that Mushtaque and his accomplices had killed Bangabandhu."

He, however, said they could not inform the press about the protest made by the MPs. "I also could not file a case as the infamous Indemnity Act was imposed barring the trial of killers of Father of the Nation and others," the witness said.

"I informed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but

he laughed it away and ignored Khandaker Mushtaque," said the witness when he was asked if he had informed anyone that Mushtaque was used to criticise Bangabandhu and his policies.

As asked if he came to know that India, Pakistan and America were behind the killing, Prof Alam replied, "I don't know who were behind the curtain. But I knew that Pakistan hastily recognised the Mushtaque government as soon as it had assumed the power."

The witness was cross-examined by defence lawyers Khan Saifur Rahman and Gazi Zillur Rahman when the court of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge resumed in the chilly morning after more than a month's winter vacation.

Of the total 19 named in the case, the arrested accused were produced before the court. They were Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooq Rahman, Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriyar Rashid Khan, Lt Col (LPR) Muhiuddin, Hon Capt (ret'd) Abdul Wahab Joardar and former minister Taheruddin Thakur.

The judge, on request from the lawyers on both sides, decided to hold the trial proceedings three days a week during the holy month of Ramadan — Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The court resumes at 9:30 am today.

Rotarians to fight child abuse: Kinross

Visiting president of Rotary International (RI) Glen W Kinross yesterday said the aim of the Rotarians this year is to fight against child abuse and eliminate child labour from across the world, reports UNB.

Children are the poorest of the poor, that's why we lay emphasis on children's welfare for a better future of the nations," he told a press conference at a local hotel yesterday afternoon.

Rotary Club of Bangladesh organised the press conference which was addressed by Rotary District Governor M Jamaluddin. RI Directors Edgar C Hatcher and Rafael G Hechanova. Kinross's wife Hechanova was present.

Kinross said the Rotarians also have objectives to promote mass literacy and numeracy to reach the light of education to the doorstep of more and more people in 1998.

24 more killed in Algeria

ALGIERS, Jan 4: About two dozen more people died in weekend attacks while the government drew fire today for failing to prevent the slaughter of more than 400 peasants, the worst massacre of a nearly 6-year-old insurgency, reports AP.

Scattered shootings, slashings and a bombing outside a mosque shook the Algiers region since Friday.

Polls violence in Chandina: 1 killed, 30 hurt

COMILLA, Jan 4: A young man was killed and 30 others including four policemen were injured today in a clash between the supporters of the two chairmen candidates at Suhilpur union under Chandina thana of the district, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Mohan Mia, 32, son of late Ali Mia, of village Teerchar in Chandina.

Witnesses said the clash erupted in the morning between the rival groups at Bataghasi Government Primary School centre during re-election of the union parishad.

Heavy exchange of gunshots and blast of crackers created panic in the area, they added.

Police opened 44 rounds of blank shots to bring the situation under control.

Fresh voting at 21 centres under 11 unions of Chandina and Homra thanas, where the elections were postponed on December 1 following violence, was held today.

Dacoity at Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 4: A dacoity was committed at midnight last night at Dolkhola road residence of noted businessman Abdul Kader.

Police said a group of armed young men broke open the door, confined all inmates in a room at gun point and took away 20 tolas of gold, Taka 34,000 and other valuables.

A case has been lodged with Kotwali Thana in this connection, but none was arrested till filing of this report.

Shivering cold

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the airline was 'stretched' from 3:50 am to 7 am today following advice from Met office that fog would clear around 6 am.

The fog affected long-distance buses rolling off the city terminals, made truckers decide to wait until day-break and drove rickshaws virtually off the streets. Only a small number of auto-rickshaws, cars and buses operated late in the evening.

The city's poor living on streets tried to fend themselves against the cold burning rags from the little bins.

By mid-night, they found it difficult to stay in the open and fought for a space under a roof at bus stoppages, terminals, railway stations, commercial buildings, markets and bazars. But sleeping rough wrapping themselves in rags and gunny sacks in the absence of warm clothes and blankets made their lives miserable.

Only the thick blanket of fog kept the temperature from going down drastically, high moisture content blunting the cold wave to some extent, meteorologists said.

Met office sources said last night the minimum tempera-

ture in the capital was recorded at 11.5 degrees Celsius yesterday morning. But night temperature rose due to humidity and moisture content in the air.

"The cold spell is due to absence of sunshine and fog which may continue for the next two or three days," Director of the Met Office Sajedur Rahman told UNB last night.

He said no appreciable change in temperature is expected in the next couple of days.

The director dismissed press reports that there had been snow fall in Rangpur on Saturday morning. "It was dense fog that was dripping. Temperatures in room condition plunging at four degrees Celsius could freeze water. But outside, it requires zero degree to freeze," he added.

The lowest temperature of eight degrees yesterday was recorded at Jessore, followed by 8.4 degrees at Comilla, 8.5 degrees at Barisal and 8.6 degrees at Ishurdi. In Dinajpur it fell to 9.6 from 9.2 on Saturday, in Rangpur 10.2 degrees from 8.6 on Saturday and in Chuadanga 8.8 degrees from the previous nights 6.4 degrees.

Move to boost bourse

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tion to support you," Kibriya was quoted to have said.

The DSE leaders also spoke of funding the 'market makers,' DSE Chairman M Rakiur Rahman said 30 top dealers could be chosen for the purpose.

Most market operators complain the government hasn't done enough to support the market.

They would like to see merchant banks, mutual funds brought into the scene, and an active participation by major institutional players ensured.

Finance ministry officials said the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) was recently allowed to borrow Tk 50 crore from commercial banks on a government guarantee. And it was unlikely that ICB would be given more at the moment.

The Asian Development Bank, which is lending Bangladesh 80 million US dollars to develop the capital market, does not want "unlimited amount of concessional funds" to be put into ICB's hands, to which the officials said. The ADB's point is that the ICB should borrow from the market.

Stock brokers also want other institutions like Bangladesh Shiping Bank (BSB), Bangladesh Shiping Bank (BSB), Bangladesh Shiping Bank (BSB), Bangladesh Shiping Bank (BSB) and the two state-owned insurance companies to be allowed to play.

Amir-ul-Mulk said the BSB and BSRS had enough funds to be active but were lacking in "experienced people" to do the job. "They have their own resources and own portfolios," the official said.

The DSE councillors were also unhappy that the government had failed to bring in the merchant banks, awaiting clearance for months.

A finance ministry official said the Prime Minister's Office had been sitting on the file for the last two months.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued letters of intent to 19 applicants for merchant bank licence in two phases — in May and August last year. Fourteen of them are

interested to perform all three functions of a merchant bank — issue management, underwriting and portfolio management. The rest are only seeking the issue managers' licences.