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PHILIPS

Cabinet meets**President's JS opening speech discussed**

By Staff Correspondent

The Cabinet yesterday discussed the contents of the presidential speech to be delivered on the opening session of Jatiya Sangsads cabinet sources said.

The JS is scheduled meet on January 14 and President Shabuddin Ahmed will address the House on the opening day.

The Cabinet had a four and a half hours discussion, beginning from 11:30 am, on a draft of the presidential speech. The ministers found the draft incomplete, especially in projecting the 'development activities' the government had done over the last year, a Cabinet member attending the meeting said.

The meeting resolved that all the development activities done by the government would be incorporated into the presidential speech.

Then the ministers, one by one, mentioned the development activities already done by their respective ministries and also those under implementation.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who presided over the meeting, instructed the officials concerned to rewrite the speech, mentioning the achievements of the government especially its development works.

Cold wave

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tricts yesterday.

Of the victims, three were reported from Sirajganj district. They are Abdul Halim, 5, of Chowhali thana, Helaluddin, 6, of Taras thana and Pervin, 4, of Kazipur thana.

Hospital sources said over 100 people, some of them children, were admitted to different health complexes of the district with various cold-related diseases.

In Jamalpur district, four people died of cold wave yesterday.

The victims were identified as Anisur Rahman, 55, of Bakshiganj thana and Amejuddin, 75, Shaher Ali, 65, and Taison Ali, 75, of Sadar thana.

Beximco

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repay their defaulted loans in January, without mentioning any specific date, and till the writing of this report they have not repaid the money.

Meanwhile, AB Bank yesterday informed the Bangladesh Bank (BB) that these companies defaulted in their instalments.

This is not the first time that these companies had defaulted in their repayment in instalments. In June, 1997, they had also defaulted by submitting a post-dated cheque. However, the defaulted amount had later been adjusted.

According to rules, a defaulted loan cannot be rescheduled more than twice. In case of these four companies, rescheduling had been made on many occasions.

The accounts of these four companies containing defaulted loans were detected by the Bangladesh Bank. Later, Beximco Group came forward and gave guarantee for the loan's amounting to Tk 90 crore.

3 missions

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Presently, the country's full-fledged embassies in Europe are located in London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Geneva, The Hague, Moscow, Madrid, Bonn, Stockholm and Warsaw.

After the opening of the Male mission, Bangladesh will have resident missions in all the SAARC countries.

Meanwhile, Dhaka needs to examine seriously the opening of missions in some other European capitals including those of Norway and Hungary. Both these countries have resident missions in Dhaka. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of Norwegian assistance in Asia while Hungary is considered one of the fastest emerging economies in East Europe, diplomatic sources pointed out.

Radio-TV

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He expressed resentment over the rejection of one of his programmes by the committee and said, "I am planning to approach the Appeal Board for reconsideration of the committee's decision."

Mentionably, there is a three-member Appeal Board headed by the Information Secretary to take up cases of aggrieved package programme providers.

A member of the expert committee, however, claimed that despite limitation in the very formation of the committee, "it always tries to maintain neutrality in judging the quality of package programmes."

He denied allegations of favouring any single private production house and named three major houses — Impres, Tele Real and the Inframe — to claim that all of those were being treated equally as far as selection of package programmes is concerned.



A delegation of Prokrichi-BCS Coordination Council called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

—PID photo

Bus service on Sylhet-Sunamganj road suspended

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 5: Plying of buses on Sylhet-Sunamganj road remained suspended for the second day today due to a strike jointly called by Sylhet Motor Owners Group and Sunamganj Transport Workers Association.

The strike was called protesting attacks on vehicles on the road during the last three days by some rival groups of transport workers.

The strike has caused untold sufferings to the passengers.

Shantibahini men assembling in temporary HQs at Dudukchhari

RANGAMATI, Jan 5: Members of Shantibahini, the armed wing of the Parbattya Chhatram Jana Sanghati Samity, have reportedly started assembling in their temporary headquarters at Dudukchhari in Khagrachari district for surrendering arms and ammunition as per the CHT peace accord, reports BSS.

Sources said the armed cadres of the PCJSS reportedly abandoned their hideouts in the hill district of Bandarban about a week ago, the sources said.

Administrative and security officials stationed at Bandarban told BSS over telephone that necessary preparations have also been taken to deal with other terrorist groups, apparently active in the district in jeopardising normal life.

Sharif to attend Dhaka summit

ISLAMABAD, Jan 5: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will join his Bangladesh and Indian counterparts in a three-nation economic summit in Dhaka this month, the Foreign Office here said today, reports AFP.

ULFA leader

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currencies.

Golap Barua, Laxmi Pradip and Babul Sharma were arrested by Special Branch from a flat at Adabar under Mohamadpur thana on December 21. Police said Golap Barua was charged in all the three cases while the other two face a separate case in connection with the illegal entry.

BIRDEM

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He further said, "Once the new service rule is approved, the 1996 service rule will automatically be cancelled."

Sports and Cultural Secretary of EWA Noor Mohammad said, "All the employees working under the service rule of 1996 have to be brought under the new service rules. There are about 200 such employees who are working under the 'hire and fire' rules. The authorities wanted to create fear among the employees by implementing the contract service rules."

The Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (DAB), which runs BIRDEM, and the EWA had reached an agreement on Sunday night following a meeting.

Tribal affairs

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awaiting a fresh reply from the Parbattya Chhatram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on its proposal to hold a meeting with the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) on January 12 or 13. The PCJSS had earlier proposed that the meeting be held in Khagrachari on January 15.

The government side had told the PCJSS it would be difficult for it to hold the meeting on January 15 as it would coincide with the three-nation Business Summit.

The meeting is to sort out, among other things, the date and venue of surrender of the armed cadres of PCJSS, following submission of lists of the cadres and their arms and ammunition within 45 days of signing of the accord.

The agreement was signed on December 2 between the NCCHT and PCJSS.

Yellow Panel sweeps RUTA polls

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 5: The pro-Awami League Yellow Panel supported by a faction of pro-BNP teachers swept the election of the Rajshahi University Teachers Association (RUTA) held today.

The Yellow Panel candidates captured all the posts of the executive committee defeating their rival candidates from White Panel by a big margin.

The White Panel was formed by moderate teachers who claim themselves as genuine BNPs.

Prof Abdur Razzak of Statistics Department and Prof Muzaffar Ahmed of Applied Physics have been elected President and General Secretary respectively of RUTA for the year 1998.

As many as 493 votes were cast in the election held at Juberi Guest House from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm without any break. Prof M Zahidul Hassan con-

ducted the election.

Prof Abdur Razzak polled 371 votes while his rival Prof Azhar Ali from White Panel got 74 votes. Prof Muzaffar Ahmed secured 353 votes while his rival Prof Ashrafuzaaman from White Panel got only 91 votes.

The other elected office-bearers are: Vice-President — M A Halim, Treasurer — Chand Mohammad Mostafa; and Joint Secretary — M Shahidullah.

The elected members are: Shahidul Islam, KMB Mahabubur Rahman, M Akther Faruk, Jamsad Ali Sarker, Abdul Kuddus, Nurul Afas, Mustafir Rahman, Aminul Haq, M Golam Kibria and Abdul Hamid.

Meanwhile, the election of another RUTA formed by pro-BNP teachers will be held on January 8.

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SEC evaluators while scrutinising the applications, "We gave most weightage to companies having two crore taka, but not on their capability to do the job," the official said. The emphasis was wrongly placed.

Responding to DSE councilors' plea, the SEC also agreed to examine whether the regulations could be reviewed to bring in more mutual funds. "Here as well, the essential handicap is professional manpower of the companies," the official said.

"It was agreed that the ICB, the top institutional player in the market, was not being able to do it alone. Alternatives will have to be examined to create a facilitating atmosphere."

They also discussed appointment of DSE CEO, another important step necessary to separate management from policymaking. The process is being delayed as the new Council after taking over sought fresh applications for the job.

The SEC, which had earlier slapped a deadline on DSE to go on-line by March, asked for a status report. The councilors said a task force headed by FCCI president and DSE councilor Yusuf Abdullah Harun was already working to devise an action plan which should be ready by January 20.

The DSE is lagging far behind the CSE, which has already finished its automation work.

The SEC officials said brokers should submit periodic statements of transactions on their own accounts, which might be made mandatory after a gazette notification soon.

Some councilors' bid to discuss the court cases against some of them was averted citing the issues being sub-justice.

While an early entry of merchant banks was highlighted as a necessity, the fact that many of the firms awaiting licences did not have "adequate manpower" surfaced as a problem.

A SEC official admitted that a wrong approach guided the

Ferry services at Aricha ghat suspended again

By Staff Correspondent

Ferry services at Aricha ghat has been suspended again since 9:30 pm yesterday because of dense fog, leaving more than 1800 vehicles stranded at the ghat.

Earlier, ferry services resumed at 10 in the morning after remaining suspended for over 13 hours.

Ferry services in Maowabanga and Bhuapur-Sirajganj routes also remained suspended, sources said.

Thick fog has disrupted movement of the vessels. So, we have decided to postpone ferry services in Aricha-Antakola and Aricha-Daulatdia routes," a BIWTC high official told The Daily Star.

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The employees of eight boards went on an indefinite strike at the call of the Federation demanding cancellation of the TF report that brought corruption charges against some officials and employees of the boards, an end to "attempts" to curtail the autonomy of the boards, transfer of the centralised computer cells to the respective boards and stoppage of intervention in board matters by the Ministry of Education.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association in a statement yesterday urged the employees of the boards to call off their strike for smooth holding of SSC and HSC examinations on schedule.

The fate of the examinees has become uncertain as the talks between the ministry officials and the leaders of the board employees have failed," the statement said.

UNB adds: A technical committee, formed to look into the feasibility of shifting the computer cells to the respective

boards, said that it would be difficult to shift. Even if it is done, the process of publishing results simultaneously will be hampered.

Meanwhile, Education Minister ASHK Sadique told UNB that officials of the education boards are looking into the matter.

The minister declined to make any comment saying, "Discussion is on, so I should not make any comment at this stage. The boards were given the responsibility to resolve the problem arising out of the strike."

A decision will be taken after hearing from the boards' authorities about the outcome of their discussion, he added.

However, asked about the demand for shifting the centralised computer cell to the respective boards, the Education Minister said there was no such computer cells. These are just located in a building, but controlled by the respective boards and run by their employees.

He said the computers are kept in Dhaka for better maintenance.

The agreement was signed on December 2 between the NCCHT and PCJSS.

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Task Force report

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PM: Prokrichi

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which were created during the previous governments, would be solved through the Administrative Reforms Commission set up by her government.

In this regard, the Prime Minister said that the commission would be made effective by appointing a dynamic and neutral chairman. Besides, the commission would have representation from all cadres and professions, she added.