

Order to produce
ULFA leader in
court on Feb 3

By Staff Correspondent

The court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) on a petition of the Bangladesh Manobadikar Shamman Parishad (BMSP), on Thursday ordered for production of Anup Chetia alias Golap Barua, in the court on February 3. BMSP lawyers said.

Alina Khan, one of the lawyers of the organisation who moved the petition said that they prayed for open trial of the cases filed against Barua and his production in person before the court.

BMSP sources said that their lawyers were denied access to Daka Central Jail to see Barua, serving a 30-day detention.

Barua said to be the secretary general of United Liberation Front of Assam was arrested from a house in the city's Mohammadpur area and sent to the Daka Central Jail on January 1.

Charges brought against Barua include entering the country with false travelling documents, possessing illegal foreign currency, satellite phone and illegal stay in Bangladesh.

Police sources in the Mohammadpur thana when contacted last night said that they were yet to file the chargesheets of the cases filed against Barua.

Sunken launch
traced, another
body recovered

PIROJPUR, Jan 23: The death toll from Thursday's launch disaster in the river Kocha here rose to three with the recovery of the body of a minor girl today, reports UNB.

Two women were killed and 150 people reported missing after MV Baleshwar, hit by cargo vessel MV Faisla, sank in the river Thursday afternoon, survivors said.

Identity of the minor girl, aged about 10, could not be known immediately.

Divers traced the capsized launch about 200 yards south of the main spot this afternoon. They also continued the search for those missing.

However, rescuers were yet to ascertain if bodies were trapped inside the launch.

Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah visited the spot and directed the authorities concerned to bring rescue vessels Hamza or Rustam to salvage the ill-fated launch.

The Divisional Commissioner, DIG, Deputy Commissioner and Police Super were present.

Sunni protester
gunned down
in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Jan 23: Gunmen opened fire on a demonstration by Sunni militants in a remote corner of northwestern Pakistan today, killing one person and injuring nine others, some of them critically, the authorities said, reports AP.

Barely 100 members of the militant Sunni group, Sipah-e-Sabah or Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet, had converged on the bazaar in Hangu, about 60 kilometers (36 miles) southwest of Peshawar, when gunmen opened fire.

The gunmen attacked the

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Akhtaruzzaman's party activities suspended

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has suspended 'all organisational activities' of dissident party MP, Major (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, accusing him of breaching party discipline.

A BNP press release last night said, 'All organisational activities of Maj (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, as a primary member, BNP National Council member, Kishoreganj district committee convenor and BNP National Executive Committee member have been frozen.'

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star yesterday that the disciplinary action against Akhtaruzzaman would not affect his status as a BNP lawmaker 'as long he does not vote against the party.'

Replying to another question whether the party lawmaker was consulted before the action, Mannan Bhuiyan said that the decision of suspension was taken after the party's Standing Committee heard him recently.

Meanwhile, in an instant reaction to his suspension, Akhtaruzzaman told The Daily Star last night that he would launch a signature campaign in his constituency and meet the party Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia soon to demand withdrawal of the suspension order.

Talking over telephone from his constituency in Kotiadi, Kishoreganj the 'rebel' BNP lawmaker said he along with his supporters will come to

Dhaka to seek an audience with the party chief.

Akhtaruzzaman's suspension came in the wake of his recent campaign for the party's return to the parliament. The BNP has been staying out of parliament since it walked out of the House on August 30 last year.

BNP Standing Committee, the highest policy making body of the party, on January 12 summoned Akhtaruzzaman and had a written apology from him for circulating an open letter among party MPs arguing for the party's return to parliament.

Akhtaruzzaman addressed a party rally yesterday evening at Kotiadi to explain his stand. See Page 12 Col 7

Jumatul Wida observed

The holy Jumatul Wida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, was observed throughout the country yesterday with due respect and solemnity, reports UNB.

Thousands of devoted Muslims thronged different mosques to offer Jumma prayers.

At the Baitul Mukarram Mosque over one lakh devotees offered prayers.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed offered his prayer at Bangabhaban mosque.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Nurul Islam, Director General of Islamic Foundation Mohammad Morshed Hossain, Religious leader of Iran Hazrat Ayatullah Shahrami and Iranian Ambassador to Bangladesh Sadique Falaz were, among others, present during the Jumatul Wida Khutba at Baitul Mukarram National mosque.

Special prayers were offered

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10 killed as truck, bus collide at Chandina

COMILLA, Jan 23: Ten people were killed and 40 others injured when a bus collided with a speeding truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Chandina thana early today, reports UNB.

Seven died on the spot while three people, including an army man, succumbed to injuries at Chandina thana health complex and Combined Military Hospital (CMH) here, police said.

The accident occurred at around 1:00 am at Kutumbapur. The Chandpur-bound bus also fell into a roadside ditch after colliding head-on with the truck.

The dead were identified as Ratan Datta, 32, of Brahmankhara village in Debidwar

thana, Qari Zulfiqar Patwari, 70, of Jarishpura in Baru thana, Musar Ali, 45, of Sayedpur in Sadar thana, Nazrul, 22, of Betora in Debidwar thana, Khamar Ali, 32, of Namata in Burichang, Harunor Rashid, 28, of Harong in Chandina thana, Bashir Ahmed, 32, of Tulagaon in Debidwar thana and Lance Nayek Dawlat Hossain Bhutiani. Two others could not be identified.

Of the injured, eight were admitted to Chandina health complex and eight in Comilla Medical College Hospital. Another 24 were given first aid at the Chandina health complex.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has expressed deep shock at the loss of 10 lives at the road accident.

'Devalue Taka to make exports competitive'

By Special Correspondent
Different bodies of exporters including Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers Association (BGMEA) have demanded immediate devaluation of Taka further to make exports competitive.

The demand was made at a meeting of the exporters on Thursday with BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Kuddus in the chair.

After reviewing the currency adjustment by competitor countries like Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Philippines, India, Thailand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka the meeting urged the government to adjust the exchange rate at Tk 50 for one US dollar.

They also urged the main opposition party in parliament BNP to return to House, putting economic agenda above political goals.

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Mass Upsurge Day today

The Mass Upsurge Day will be observed today to commemorate the popular uprising against the Pakistani military dictatorship in 1969, reports UNB.

On this day in 1969, school student Motiur Rahman Mallik and a teenager Rustam were killed in police firing at the final stage of the mass movement that ousted General Ayub Khan from power and paved the way for the country's independence.

Motiur was a student of class ten of Nabakumar Institute. Many others were also injured in the indiscriminate police firing during a general strike in the city on that day.

In a message on the eve of the day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the memory of Shaheed Motiur and other martyrs of the historic Mass Upsurge of 1969.

Different political and socio-cultural organisations and student bodies have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend a discussion meeting at Nabakumar Institute this afternoon.

Dacoit dies as he jumps from rooftop to flee

An alleged dacoit arrested by police died as he tried to escape by jumping from the roof of a five-storeyed building at Lal Mohon Saha Street in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The alleged dacoit, Arun Chakrabarty, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and then shifted to Pangu Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 4:30 am, said a DMP press release.

Earlier, Detective Branch police arrested Arun along with two accomplices — Hefaj and Ayub — on charge of committing dacoity at a house at Padmaidhi Lane on January 18.

During interrogation, Arun admitted that he kept some of the looted goods and fire arms in his house at Lal Mohon Saha Street.

According to his confessional statement, police took Arun to the house to recover the goods on Thursday night. At one stage of searching, Arun jumped from the roof of the building.

An unnatural death case was filed with Tejgaon police.

Israel rejects US proposal

JERUSALEM, Jan 23: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected US proposals for an Israeli troop pullback from at least 10 per cent of the West Bank, a senior Palestinian negotiator told Reuters from Washington today.

The Americans told us that Netanyahu has rejected two digits for the redeployment and he insists on cancelling the third phase of further redeployment," the negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said by telephone.

The gaps between us and Netanyahu are very big because what Netanyahu is offering is totally alien to the Oslo accord," he added.

Alleged trader of illegal firearms arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police arrested an alleged illegal firearms trader along with two revolvers and a gun from Bonogram area in the city Thursday evening.

The arrested person was identified as Mojibar Rahman alias Tota, 28, an accused in several cases filed with different thanas in the city.

In a six-hour operation, police arrested Mojibar from a house at Bonogram Road in Sutrapur thana.

Mojibar was involved in selling firearms to criminals in the city for long, police said.

A case was lodged with Sutrapur thana in this connection.

Large-scale retrenchment unlikely 1000 Bangladeshis lose jobs in Malaysia

By Reaz Ahmad

About one thousand Bangladeshi workers have lost their jobs in Malaysia in the wake of a recent slump in the fast growing economy of that country.

Official sources in Dhaka confirmed yesterday that about 1,000 Bangladeshi workers have been retrenched, mainly from service sectors, by private companies in Malaysia. They, however, brushed aside a recent report of a Malaysian daily that had estimated retrenchment of forty to sixty thousand Bangladeshi workers in that country.

Talking to The Daily Star, officials of the Labour and Manpower Ministry said that the Bangladeshi workers who lost jobs in Malaysia over the last one week were not expected to return home right now.

Quoting a message received from the Bangladesh mission in Kuala Lumpur, the sources told this correspondent that the Malaysian government was trying its best to absorb the retrenched foreign workers having legal work permits in the export-oriented manufacturing sector and the plantation sector.

Officially, there are some three lakh Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia whose jobs feared to be vulnerable in the wake of the current spell of depression that swept the so-

cially.

The Malaysian government

EU body meets soon to discuss ban on shrimp

By Special Correspondent

The veterinary standing committee of the European Commission (EC) would take up the issue of whether to continue the ban on entry of Bangladeshi shrimps to the European Union (EU) market, in the first week of next month.

The EU slapped a ban on Bangladeshi fish products following a report by its inspectors that the EU health guidelines were not being followed in the fish processing plants it visited last year.

Bangladesh embassy officials in Brussels told Frozen Foods Association president Mohammad Golam Mostafa Thursday that the veterinary standing committee may take up the case of Bangladesh either on February 4 or February 10.

They said that they have been lobbying hard with the EC to lift the ban that has almost halved the annual Bangladeshi frozen fish exports of 350 million US dollars, as the EU ban was followed by similar moves by Kuwait and Canada.

The embassy officials told Mostafa they are hopeful that the ban is likely to be withdrawn by EU following measures taken by fish processors to improve hygiene conditions in their factories.

Mentionably, there are some three lakh Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia whose jobs feared to be vulnerable in the wake of the current spell of depression that swept the so-

cially.

The Malaysian government

plant and build an improved power supply infrastructure in that area.

Meanwhile, sources said Petrobangla has taken a 'strong stance' about Cairn's budget for the Sangu-1 gas field. Cairn's budget dramatically escalated to 264 million dollars recently from the original 180 million dollars after it began fast track development of Sangu gasfield without going for the appraisal first.

"This was a sure hit structure for Cairn," said one source.

This is the second gas re-

serve struck by Cairn. The first one, at Sangu, was found in the Bay of Bengal in January '96. The gas reserve at Sangu esti-

mated at about 900 BCF.

Cairn and its partner oil giant Shell and British power company Midland have jointly submitted to the government an integrated development plan for Semutang