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Anup Chetia to be produced in court today

By Staff Correspondent
 Anup Chetia alias Golap Barua, said to be the general secretary of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), is scheduled to be produced in the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka today.
 Chetia, along with two others, identified as Lakshi Prasad Goswami and Babul Sharma, were arrested from a flat in the city's Mohammadpur area on December 21 last year.
 Chetia was charged with three cases by Mohammadpur police on January 5.
 The charges are illegal entry into Bangladesh, procuring Bangladeshi passports under fake identity and possessing foreign currency illegally. The two others were charged for illegal entry and stay in Bangladesh.
 The three were given deten-

Cabinet okays amendment to Pourashava Ordinance Each municipal ward to be split into three

The Cabinet yesterday approved the proposed amendments to the Pourashava Ordinance, 1977, splitting one municipal ward into three with a commissioner to be elected from each ward, reports UNB.
 In addition to the three ward commissioners, a seat for woman commissioner will be kept reserved for each three wards. The women commissioners will be elected by direct votes.
 The approval was given at the weekly Cabinet meeting held in the Prime Minister's office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.
 The Cabinet also approved the draft bill seeking to make the Bangabandhu University of

Post Graduate Education in Agriculture into Bangabandhu Agriculture University.
 Our Staff Correspondent adds: The meeting also decided that disbursement of old-age allowance across the country will begin by March. The Social Welfare Directorate will disburse the money.
 The government had announced introduction of the old-age allowance while adopting the national budget for fiscal 1997-98 in June last year. Fifteen aged people in every union are entitled to get a monthly allowance of Taka one hundred each under the programme.
 The old-age allowance could not be disbursed so far due to

lack of a decision as to which ministry or department would do the job. The Cabinet yesterday decided that the Finance Ministry would handover the money to the Social Welfare Ministry and the latter would disburse the money through the Directorate of Social Welfare.
 Cabinet sources said that the government will begin, "as soon as possible," open market sale of rice at the larger markets in each of the country's 464 thanas through selected dealers. The Deputy Commissioners have been asked to give two dealerships in every thana, the sources added.
 The Cabinet has also approved



The city streets are now free from traffic jam as most of the city dwellers are yet to return from their village homes after the Eid vacation. Now it is time to launch a drive against illegal rickshaws by the authorities before these return to the streets. —Star photo

UNHCR team meets officials to resume return of Rohingya refugees

By Special Correspondent
 A high-level team of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) talks with Home Minister Rafiqul Islam yesterday on the resumption of repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.
 The four-member team led by Francois Foinat, director of Asia and Pacific, met the Home Minister and high officials at the Secretariat to discuss how to resume the repatriation process, stalled in July last year after rioting by some refugees declining to return.
 The UNHCR team is meeting foreign ministers and Relief Ministry officials today.
 Earlier, the team arrived in Cox's Bazar from Myanmar on Sunday after holding talks with



A refugee family from Myanmar observed a token hunger strike in front of the UNHCR office in the city yesterday demanding more subsistence allowance. —Star photo

Myanmar refugee family seeks more subsistence allowance

By Shehab Ahmed
 A refugee family from Myanmar observed a token hunger strike in front of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) yesterday, demanding a rise in their subsistence allowance by the agency.
 "We want more money. We cannot survive on Tk 90 for myself and half of it for my dependents," Pho Hla, 41, said as UNHCR officials and police tried to pursue him to end the protest.
 Pho Hla is among 37 Myanmar dissidents, who are classified as urban refugees, living in Dhaka surviving on the dole of Tk 90 provided by the UNHCR.
 Some like Pho Hla had been living in Bangladesh since they fled their homes to escape alleged persecution by the Myanmar junta when it cracked down on pro-democracy activists in 1988.
 Pho Hla said the daily allowance of Tk 90 was not enough for his family, wife Ma Pu Sein, 38 and son Aung Zaw, 12 to survive, living in a rented home at Mandala.
 Both his wife and son squatted beside him. Behind them a poster in English said: "An individual Burmese refugee with family members hunger strike for dependent family members who are neglected by UNHCR BRANCH OFFICE OF DHAKA BANGLADESH."
 A UNHCR official, who declined to be named, denied the

Indonesian FM due Feb 7

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Atas will arrive in the city on February 7 on a four-day visit, reports UNB.
 He will hold official talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad to boost bilateral economic relations.
 His visit follows Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's trip to Indonesia last September.
 Diplomatic circle here attaches importance to the visit of Ali Atas as Bangladesh and Indonesia enjoy good relations and both are members of the OIC, NAM and newly launched D-8.
 During official talks on February 8, the two Foreign Ministers are expected to focus on further cooperation in trade and economic fields between the two countries.
 See Page 12 Col 5

\$50 million project to fight arsenic contamination

By Naimul Huq
 The aim of the project is to provide safe or arsenic-free water to the people in the affected areas," an official said.
 The World Bank will finance the 15-year project, under an agreement signed with the government last month.
 A National Steering Committee headed by the health minister was formed earlier to address the problem. A draft National Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Policy has been formulated in view of the problem.
 The project will look into alternative ways for water resources management in 4,000 severely affected villages and 64 municipalities. It will involve augmentation of water supply and development of existing sources of water.
 It will also help build capacity to develop water resources management at union, village and community levels.
 "For a better understanding of the problem, field surveys will collect data and monitor the problem continuously," the official said.
 A National Arsenic Mitigation Centre (NAMIC) will be set up to collect data.
 According to the latest information, as many as 2200 people have been confirmed with cases of arsenicosis across

2 housewives strangulated in city

By Staff Correspondent
 Two housewives were strangulated in separate incidents in Mohammadpur and Sabujbagh areas in the city yesterday.
 Police said, a sixty-one-year-old housewife was strangulated in the city's Mohammadpur area at about 1:30 am yesterday.
 Police said, the housewife, identified as Toufika Begum, a former principal of Kurigram Degree College, was married to a 25-year-old man, Faruk, of Shibpur thana of Bhola last November.
 On receiving information, a police team reached the third floor apartment at Kazi Nazrul Islam Road at Mohammadpur and recovered the woman's

Sindhis against repatriation of stranded Pakistanis

KARACHI, Feb 2: Sindhi nationalists staged a token hunger strike here today to protest against a possible repatriation of Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh for the past 26 years, reports AFP.
 The protest organised by the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz is to continue until the weekend, a spokesman said.
 The move came after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Bangladesh last month where he discussed the repatriation of Urdu-speaking Biharis community with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina Wajed.
 Dozens of Sindhi nationalists holding banners and placards said they did not want the settlement of Biharis in southern Sindh of which Karachi is the capital.

Gen Khalil tells trial court Disappointment among Armed Forces personnel was not removed

The then Chittagong divisional commander of Bangladesh Army was said to have intended not to express allegiance to the Mushataque government after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975, reports UNB.
 The commander Brigadier Kazi Golam Dastagir, had also wished to go to the radio station to express his allegiance to the Constitution, not to the new government, before three chiefs of the armed forces announced their oath of allegiance.
 This was claimed by the then BDR chief Major General (ret'd) Khalilur Rahman, the 47th prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, during cross-examination at the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court today yesterday.
 During cross-examination by the defence lawyers, the re-

tired General-turned-politician also quoted Dastagir's wife as saying that the then divisional commander had told her that he didn't recognise the Mushataque government.
 "I talked to Dastagir's wife by telephone on that morning, but I had no conversation with Dastagir at that time... I also didn't hear any announcement by him from Chittagong radio," he said replying to a query from a defence lawyer.
 General Khalil, the former Director General of para-military BDR, said he had telephonic conversation with the then Home Minister Mansur Ali in the morning of August 15. "Perhaps, he told me to do something saying that some people captured the radio station or were trying to capture it."
 He added: "Later, I opened my radio and listened to Dalim's announcement that

Bangabandhu was killed. I also asked my troops to get ready for action."
 The PW-47 admitted that after returning from Pakistan, he had observed disappointment among the Armed Forces personnel as there was a feeling that they were being deprived by the government. "The feeling was not eliminated."
 However, General Khalil, repatriated from Pakistan after the independence, said he was not disappointed seeing his junior Shafulah as the Chief of Army Staff, nor became angry when Ziaur Rahman, also junior to him, was made the chief.
 He agreed that the freedom fighter officers were given two years seniority. "But I don't know whether there was a conflict between the freedom fighter officers and the repatriated officers for the promotion."
 See Page 12 Col 3

BGMEA to take possession of land near Sonargaon Hotel

Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) will take possession of the land near Sonargaon Hotel donated by the government within a week and construct a modern "BGMEA Bhaban" there, report agencies.
 The new BGMEA Bhaban will be equipped with all modern facilities to attract more international buyers. The association has taken all measures to start construction work soon.
 This was disclosed at a meeting of BGMEA Executive Committee with Commerce and Industries Minister Toafeel Ahmed held at the Commerce Ministry yesterday.
 See Page 12 Col 5

1025 more tribals return home

RANGAMATI, Feb 2: After an interval of eight days, 1,025 tribal refugees of 180 families returned home today through Tabalchhari frontier of Maliriga thana under Khagrachhari district from Tripura in the ongoing sixth phase of repatriation resumed on January 1, reports BSS.
 With this, 51,462 tribal refugees of 10,124 families returned home from February 15, 1994 to till date.
 Thirteen thousand fiftyeight more tribal refugees of 2,458 families are still awaiting repatriation from the Indian refugee camps. The present phase of repatriation would continue till the last refugee was returned.

but was never invited for any discussion, was included as a "minor partner" in the proposal as suggested by the government.
 On January 26, Tullow disclosed to Chevron-Texaco's equity formula under which Chevron would get 35 per cent, Taxaco-35 per cent, Tullow-20 per cent and BAPEX-10 per cent. The Irish company had also rejected the US joint venture's suggestion that Tullow and Chevron-Texaco be "joint operators" in this block. Tullow wants to be the "sole operator" in this block.
 The revised proposal will now be discussed by the high powered Investment Committee headed by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. The Investment Committee guides the Negotiation Committee of the Energy Ministry.
 Although Tullow is only a 5.8 million Irish pound company, the government has been favouring it by offering two blocks since the negotiations
 See Page 12 Col 6

Jessore Jubo Dal leader murdered

JESSORE, Feb 2: A local leader of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal was stabbed to death at Jail Road in the town tonight, hospital sources said, reports UNB.
 The victim was identified as Khairul Islam, 35, a resident of Nawapara in the town and organising secretary of Ghop area committee of the main opposition's youth front.
 Witnesses said Khairul came under attack while chatting in a garage at about 9 pm. The armed miscreants stabbed him indiscriminately.
 He succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.
 Jubo Dal blamed the ruling party's youth front Jubo League for the murder. However, no case was filed till filing of this report at about 10:30 pm.
 Meanwhile, local Jubo Dal called for a half-day hartal in the district town on Wednesday protesting the killing.

Bangladeshi executed in Oman

MUSCAT, Feb 2: A Bangladeshi convicted of raping and murdering a woman was executed by firing squad in Oman yesterday, police said, reports AFP.
 Four Pakistanis convicted of killing two Omanis were executed by firing squad here on January 26.

Inside Today Article

Mandate of Democracy—How can it be Sustained
 Column: Window on Asia
 by Shahed Latif

Page 4 Focus

Rethinking the rhetoric of development; and Rights in ignorance
 Page 5

International

Congress asked to apologise for topping govt
 Page 8

Business

Stronger taka gives Bangladeshis the edge
 DSE price index continues to rise
 Pages 6,7

Guest birds arrive at JU lakes

By Morshed Ali Khan and Gobinda Bar
 The guest birds have finally started to swarm the Jahangirnagar university lakes after apprehension that no birds would come this year because poison had been used recently to catch fish in the lakes.
 The number of guest birds are, however, much less than in previous years and their arrival is at least two months late.
 JU students had staged at least two demonstrations following reports that the lake water was contaminated when the leasess used poison to catch fish.
 The JU authorities also came under severe criticism from the bird lovers for leasing out the water bodies which had been used by these birds since 1985. Few teachers and students then took initiative to cancel the lease for fish cultivation and create a congenial atmosphere for the birds.
 But in summer of last year, the JU authorities turned to leasing out the lakes for profit. Students and teachers said all the aquatic weeds (phytoplanktons and zooplanktons) were wiped out in the process and finally when the leasess used poison the birds just did not come.
 They alleged that the whole environment of the area became polluted due to widespread use of manures and medications in the lakes.
 "In the beginning of the season some guest birds were seen at the adjacent lakes belonging to the Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute but they boycotted the JU lakes altogether," said a JU student adding this also deprived hundreds of bird lovers from their yearly pleasure.
 The migratory birds which fly thousands of miles from Europe to take shelter in the warmer regions in South and East Asia in winter use the lakes and marshy lands in this region as stopovers as well as their roosting grounds.
 Around 20 different kinds of birds arrive on the campus every year, teachers in the Zoology Department of JU said. The species include Pintail, Pochard, Garganey Shoveller, Lesser Whistling Teal, Snipe, Sandpiper, Wag Tail and Wader.
 Talking to The Daily Star, eminent ornithologist and Director of the Life Science Institute at JU Prof Mohammad Anwarul Islam said that overall arrival of the guest birds in the country this year has been much lesser than before. He could not, however, say why the birds did not come. But the bird expert said by leasing out the lakes for fish cultivation the "bio-diversity of the JU campus has been affected."
 He said JU lakes could be
 See Page 12 Col 2

Lankan fighting: Death toll rises to 400

COLOMBO, Feb 2: Troops in northern Sri Lanka recovered more bodies of Tamil Tiger rebels today, raising to almost 400 the number of people killed on both sides in the latest bout of fighting, defence officials said, reports AFP.
 Soldiers recovered the remains of 12 members of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who staged an abortive suicide attack Sunday on an artillery position in the northern town of Elephant Pass, officials said.
 The attack came as more rebels tried to overrun army defences just south of Elephant Pass at Paranthan. They killed 35 soldiers for the loss of some 350 of their own fighters, the Defence Ministry said.
 The fresh wave of violence came as the country prepared to host Britain's Prince Charles at ceremonies to mark the 50th anniversary of independence from Britain on Wednesday.

Chevron-Texaco's new proposal for Tullow

Star Report
 Following the government mediated unsuccessful talks between Irish company Tullow and US joint venture Chevron-Texaco on January 26 over joint exploration of oil and gas in Block 9, the US joint venture submitted an alternative proposal for partnership, sources said.
 The talks had failed because Tullow, which was offered blocks 9 and 11 by the government, did not accept a number of proposals made by Chevron-Texaco regarding partnership in Block 9, the most prospective among the 12 blocks now being negotiated by different foreign companies.
 In their alternative proposal, Chevron-Texaco suggested that Tullow be an "operator" in this block and the equity ratio be Tullow-30 per cent, Chevron-30 per cent, Texaco-30 per cent and BAPEX-10 per cent.
 BAPEX, the subsidiary of Petrobangla, which participated in the second round bidding for oil and gas exploration

Tendons of 2 BNP activists cut off in Bagerhat

From Staff Correspondent
 KHULNA, Feb 2: A group of unidentified miscreants kidnapped two BNP activists named Badsha, 48, and Shukur, 56, from their houses at Bash-tali village under Bagerhat Sadar thana on Sunday night. The miscreants cut off tendons of their legs and hands before leaving them in a nearby paddy field.
 They were later admitted to KMC hospital.
 A case has been filed with Bagerhat Sadar thana in this connection. None was arrested till filing of this report.

ZIA authorities barricade shop at lounge

By Staff Correspondent
 The Zia International Airport (ZIA) authorities have put up a barricade with chairs in front of a shop on the first-floor passengers' lounge of the airport, obstructing smooth functioning of the oldest shop there.
 The barricade was put up on Sunday at the directive of the top officials of ZIA, employees of the shop, The Earnest Ltd, claimed.
 The action followed a court order to restore power supply to the shop, snapped earlier centring a dispute over enhancement of rent, they claimed.
 The Court of Third Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka on January 26 ordered the ZIA authorities to restore the power supply to the shop.
 The Earnest Ltd is one of the 16 shops at the airport where power and water lines were snapped by the authorities in early November last year in their bid to recover arrears rents and other charges. Cases lodged by the other shop owners are pending with the court, they claimed.
 Owners of seven shops claimed that the ZIA authorities
 See page 12 col 1



Migratory birds on the Jahangirnagar University campus. —Star photo