

Anup Chetia chargesheeted

By Staff Correspondent
Police submitted chargesheet against ULFA leader Anup Chetia and two of his associates yesterday for possessing foreign currencies illegally.

The chargesheet was submitted to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court by Mohammadpur police.

Police said chargesheets in three other cases against Anup Chetia alias Golap Barua, are likely to be submitted shortly. He is now detained in Dhaka Central Jail.

Investigating Officer (IO) SI Farid Ahmed filed the chargesheet under Clause 25 (B) of the Special Powers Act. Two others accused in the chargesheet were Laxmi Prasad and Babul Sharma.

The three Indian nationals were arrested by Special Branch police from a flat at Adabar under Mohammadpur thana on December 21.

Four cases were filed with
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Occidental extends bank guarantee for 2 blocks

Star Report
US oil company Occidental has extended its 3 million US dollar bank guarantee for blocks 13 and 14 for another two months. The bank guarantee was due to expire on March 11.

The bank guarantee was given by Occidental three years ago for its three-year initial operation period in blocks 13 and 14 under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC).

The PSC expired on January 11 as Occidental failed to fulfill its contractual obligation.

Since extension of the PSC is now under consideration, Petrobangla has given a chance to Occidental to extend the bank guarantee for two months. The deadline for extension of the bank guarantee expired on Sunday. Occidental submitted its prayer for extension at the last moment.

If Occidental had failed to extend the bank guarantee, Petrobangla would have encashed the 3 million dollars.

Cause of Nasim's death yet to be known

By Staff Correspondent
Senior doctors of PG Hospital will sit tomorrow to determine the cause of the death of Dr Ehteshamul Huq Nasim Biswas MP who died on Thursday night at the age of 38.

In a preliminary assessment, doctors had earlier declared that he died of "sudden unconsciousness followed by cardiovascular failure."

Dr KM Iqbal, head of the Anesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine at PG, was one of the doctors who was present when Nasim Biswas died. He told The Daily Star yesterday that in Sunday's meeting, physicians will try to understand what caused such an "exceptional collapse."

"We are discussing possibilities like mid-brain hemorrhage and pre-diabetic syndrome," said a doctor.

He said that when the patient was transferred from Holy Family Hospital to PG, he was already in comma and "it was
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Gas price to go up by 31 pc next month

By Sharier Khan and Inam Ahmed

The government is going to increase gas price by 31 per cent next month to minimise its loss due to gas purchase from multinational company Cairn at a higher rate than the local gas sale rate.

As per the Gas Purchase Sales Agreement (GPSA), the government will buy Cairn's gas at 80 per cent of the price of High Sulphur Fuel Oil (HSFO) in international market (which is the formula to calculate international price of gas). Accord-

ing to that calculation, the government will buy Cairn's gas at 2.6 dollars per thousand cubic feet or per unit.

But since the current domestic per unit price of gas is only 1.2 dollars, it has been decided to increase gas price to off set the loss.

Economists and industrialists now fear that the gas price increase will have a widespread cascading effect on the economy.

Cost of production in the

manufacturing sector will go up. From power to fertiliser, and industrial goods to agricultural products, everything will become costlier.

The result, economists say, will be another jump in inflation rate, requiring a number of monetary measures which will also have many circumstantial effects.

The government has plans to gradually increase gas tariff by 60 per cent by the end of this year. The last time government

increased the tariff was in 1993. Petrobangla, which will buy gas from Cairn under a GPSA signed in late 1996, has no foreign currency reserve to pay the monthly bill to Cairn for the gas from Sangu-1 well.

As guarantor of the GPSA, the Finance Ministry will have to pay the foreign oil company if Petrobangla fails to pay the bills.

The Finance Ministry is determined not to give any subsidy on account of gas purchase

from the company. It is already striving hard to maintain a fiscal balance because of revenue shortfall.

According to an estimate, at the present price of gas, Petrobangla's loss will not be less than 2.64 million US dollars in the initial months when Cairn will supply 100 million cubic feet of MCF gas everyday.

Of the 100 mcf, Cairn owns about 80 mcf and Petrobangla 20 mcf. Cairn's share is higher because it includes cost recovery and profit sharing. Cairn's investment in the Sangu field has been calculated at 300 million dollars.

The monthly total gas sales will be 3 BCF. Of this, Cairn will get 2.4 BCF and Bangladesh 0.6 BCF.

To buy Cairn's 2.4 BCF gas, Petrobangla will pay 6.24 million dollars to Cairn every month. But by selling 3 BCF gas in the local market, Petrobangla can get 3.6 million dollars.
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Rapist yet to be traced

By Staff Correspondent
Police investigators have deployed plainclothesmen to trace the person who raped the six-year-old girl inside a police control room at the CMM's court building on Wednesday.

However, none was arrested in connection with the incident till yesterday, police said. An official hoped last night that they would be able to arrest the rapist within a short time.
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Minor girl raped in Rangunia: One arrested

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Mar 13: Police last night arrested an alleged rapist, Mujakkir Hossain (22) on charge of violating a four-year-old girl at Bonagram Natunpara village under Rangunia thana on March 2.

Police said the victim was kept under safe custody at Rangunia thana for sending her to Chittagong Medical College Hospital on Sunday for medical examination.

She was produced at the court yesterday for taking permission for medical examination.
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11 OSDs made Jt Secys

By Staff Correspondent
Eleven officers on special duty have been made joint secretaries in various ministries and divisions, said an official yesterday.

Officers on Special Duty (Joint Secretaries) Dipak Kanti Chowdhury has been made Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Chand Kumar Roy in the Economic Division, Khan Mohammad Nurul Huda in the Parliament Secretariat, Mohammad Maqsoodul Haque in the Local Government Division, Julhasuddin Ahmed in the Food Ministry, SC Khan in the
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21 more Myanmar nationals arrested

From Our Correspondent
COX'S BAZAR, Mar 13: Police arrested 21 more Myanmar nationals here late last night on charge of illegal stay in Bangladesh.

Earlier, police nabbed 14 persons over the last four days during their ongoing special drive. The last group was arrested from the Royal Boarding at Cox's Bazar.

Meanwhile, some 2,500 Rohingyaas at Kutupalong refugee camp deepened when two
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A LOSING BATTLE: An age-old tree is gasping amid polluted air at a brickfield by the river Buriganga under Keraniganj thana. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Road accidents in five districts kill 22

By Staff Correspondent

At least 22 people were killed and 77 injured in road accidents in five districts — Pabna, Bhola, Cox's Bazar, Mymensingh and Sirajganj — yesterday.

Our Pabna Correspondent reports: Six persons were killed and two others injured when two trucks collided near village Mubarakpur, 24 miles from Pabna town on Pabna-Nagarbari Highway in the morning.

Witnesses said, six people were burnt alive after the fuel tank of a truck caught fire following the collision. They were travelling by the truck.

When contacted, police, however confirmed four deaths.

The victims were identified as truck driver Joinal Abedin, 35, Daulat Ali, 32, Asgar Ali, 33, and Mosharrar Hossain, 35.

The injured were admitted to Pabna General Hospital.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal writes: Six people

were killed and seven injured when a tempo collided head on with speeding truck near Bhola bus stand early yesterday.

Of the dead, three were killed on the spot while the others succumbed to injuries at Bhola Sadar Hospital. All the victims were going to Bhola from Daulatkhan by the tempo.

The injured were taken to Barisal Medical College Hospital and their condition was stated to be critical, hospital sources said.

Our Cox's Bazar Correspondents adds: Five persons were killed and 35 others injured when a truck overturned and fell into a roadside ditch on Teknaf-Chittagong road near Gayalmaradala in Ukhia thana at about 7 am.

Four persons — Ataur Rahman, Abdul Latif, Nazaruddin and Isa Peer died on the spot while the another victim,

Shamidul Haq succumbed to injuries at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, Ukhia thana police said.

Of the injured, 24 were admitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital while the rest 11 persons were treated at the Ukhia Thana Health Complex.

The ill-fated truck was carrying 60 construction workers. They were returning to their homes at village Khursa in Nikili thana of Kishoreganj district from a construction site in Teknaf.

A Mymensingh-bound bus overturned and fell into a roadside ditch near Bhabanipur in Gazipur district on Dhaka-Mymensingh road at about 2:30 am killing three people and leaving 30 injured, according to UNB.

In Sirajganj, two people were killed and three injured in a road accident.

Redress BTTB style!

By Aminul Islam
A subscriber's telephone connection was snapped on March 10 for demanding redress for inflated bills.

Advocate Sayed Sirajul Huda had filed a petition with the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board on March 5 urging the authorities concerned to investigate alleged inflated telephone bills.

But the Board issued an order to snap his telephone connection for "non-payment of outstanding bill of Tk 23,912.53 within seven days." Sirajul Huda's number is 500955.

Huda had paid Tk 1276 in April, Tk 1191 in June, Tk 1314 in July and Tk 1096 in August last year. He had paid bills regularly till August last year. Nor-
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Politics on IU campus banned till June 30

From our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, Mar 13: The Islamic University authorities have banned all political activities on the campus from tomorrow till June 30.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the IU Syndicate with Vice Chancellor Prof M Kayesuddin in the chair last night.

The authorities took the decision amid a deteriorating campus situation. In the last few days members of the ruling party's student wing, Chhatra League (S-P), and the Jamaat-backed Islami Chhatra Shibir involved in a series of clashes on the campus.

During the ban period, no student organisation will be allowed to hold any meeting or rally or bring out procession or engage in any other kind of po-

litical activities in the campus.

"Celebration of the founding anniversaries of the student bodies or different national days and special days of the IU will, however, be allowed with prior permission from the syndicate.

The syndicate meeting also allowed the law enforcing agencies to recover illegal arms and ammunition and arrest terrorists or outsiders.

Earlier, 177 teachers of the University urged the authorities to impose a ban on political activities on the campus for smooth holding of the admission tests for first year Hons classes scheduled to begin on April 18.

The recent unrest on the campus deepened when two
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Congress, UF back in race as BJP struggles to form govt

NEW DELHI, Mar 13: Hindu nationalists struggled to form a government today, opening the possibility that India's oldest political party would take advantage of the political disarray and seize power, report AP, BSS.

Leaders of various political parties today called on President K R Narayanan separately and had consultations with him.

Those who met the president today were Congress president Sitaram Kesri, senior left party leaders Harkishan Singh Surjeet and AB Bardhan, and former prime minister VP Singh and Deve Gowda.

The President had invited these leaders for consultations after BJP's prime ministerial candidate Atal Behari Vajpayee submitted to him a list of 240

MPs in support of him but that fell far short of majority to form the new government.

The BJP was stalled in its bid to take over India's government Thursday, when it refused to meet the demands of a small party in its fragile coalition — leading the once dominant Congress party to make a try for power.

Jayalalitha, leader of AIADMK, who campaigned as a BJP ally, is now withholding backing unless some of her supporters are promised Cabinet posts.

The Congress Party met with the president today hoping to take advantage of the political opening. It is holding talks with members of the incumbent United Front coalition on a possible alliance.

"We told the president we are

in the process of exploring the possibility of forming a government," Sitaram Kesri said.

Two Communist leaders, whose parties are members of the United Front, also met with the president today and sought three to four days time to see if they could work out an alliance with the Congress Party.

"The country must have a government," said A K Bardhan, leader of the Communist Party of India. He was accompanied by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

After consultations with Congress and UF constituents the left leaders would get back to President K R Narayanan, Surjeet told newsmen after his meeting with the president.

Both VP Singh and HD Deve
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Border confce in Sylhet concludes

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Mar 13: A four-day Regional Border Co-ordination Conference between BDR and BSF ended here today.

An 11-member Indian team comprising IGP from Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura and a 10-member Bangladesh team led by Deputy Director General of BDR Brig M A Rab attended the conference. The Bangladesh team included BDR sector commanders of Sylhet, Mymensingh, Comilla, Khagrachhari and Rangamati. The conference was held at a Parjatan motel.

In the conference, both the sides agreed to "resolve any dispute through joint discussion in the light of the Mujib-Indira Pact signed in 1974 and the 'border guideline' of 1975."

Various cross-border problems like smuggling, insur-
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Unauthorised billboards all around



An advertisement hoarding is being erected on a road island on the Elephant Road. — Star photo

By Morshed Ali Khan
Hundreds of unauthorised advertisement hoardings are sprouting in the city everyday, greatly spoiling its beauty.

Many of these unplanned advertisement hoardings are also causing road accidents because of their haphazard location.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), which issues permission to place hoardings in the city, is unable to stop the practice because of severe manpower shortage and also because advertisement law needed to be modernised.

DCC's revenue department sources said they had rented out only 575 hoarding spaces in the city for Tk one crore revenue earning. But thousands of others have put up hoardings on DCC lands without any authorisation whatsoever.

Moreover, Bangladesh Railway, Cantonment Board, Roads and Highways, National Stadium and 'many' other organi-
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