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PHILIPS

BNP alleges govt move for repression under cover of new law

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday protested the alleged government move to persecute its political opponent under the cover of a new law, reports UNB.

In a statement, he referred to the proposed bill on Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 1998, approved by the Cabinet recently, and questioned the inclusion of a new provision relating to terrorism.

The government wants to hoodwink the people and repression the opposition by abusing this law, Bhuiyan alleged.

He said earlier the government had to postpone the

Women Children and Terrorism (Special Provision) Act in the face of wide spread protest by the people.

The BNP leader said failing to face the situation by filing thousands of false cases against BNP leaders and workers the government is planning to perpetrate its oppression on the opposition.

Bhuiyan said torture on women and children has increased alarmingly, following breaking down of law and order due to government's inefficiency and failure.

Although it is named as children and women repression act the main objective of the proposed law is to deal with terrorism, extortion, and interfere in tender purchase etc.

Bhuiyan said under the draft of the new law, the Awami league government is planning to appoint its party lawyers in the post of district judges.

He said BCS (Judicial) Association has already expressed its resentment over the appointment of district judges from lawyers.

The judicial administration and judicial system will collapse if the posts of district judges are filled up directly by lawyers, he said.

BNP: CHT bills

From Page 1

"meticulously" by legal experts so that the party could ventilate all its points, legal and political, to back up its stance on the agreement.

In yesterday's meeting, two party MPs, who are not members of the Standing Committee, were invited for taking their legal opinion on the bill. They are Barrister Nazmul Huda and Barrister Jamiruddin Sirkar.

The nearly two-hour meeting from about 8 pm also planned to meet the Speaker shortly to discuss certain things about the passage of the bills.

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting, held at her Minto Road official residence.

A top leader of the party who attended yesterday's meeting told The Daily Star that they may request the Speaker for arranging a general discussion on the proposed bills before their passage.

The meeting also discussed the party's plans for street agitation against the CHT agreement, including a long march towards the CHT sometime after the Eid.

Prices of rice

From Page 1

55 to Tk 60 per kg.

Small size ruhi fish was selling at Tk 60 to 70 per while bigger size ruhi was selling at Tk 110 to 120. Beef was selling at Tk 70 to 80 and high breed chicken at Tk 75 to 80 per kg.

Our weekly feature 'Down to Earth' could not be published today due to space constraint. Inconvenience to the readers regretted.

One killed, 5 hurt in roof collapse

From Our Correspondent

BARGUNA, Apr 3: One person was killed and five others were injured in a roof collapse here this morning.

Masud, 20, died on the spot when the roof of the Betagi Sadar thana Union Parishad building collapsed at around 11 am. Five other persons also received minor injuries in the incident.

The victims are the construction workers who went to repair the building.

An unnatural death case was lodged with Betagi thana in this connection.

Sharif

From Page 1

lar contempt charges in more than 20 petitions pending against former premier Benazir Bhutto. Law Minister Khalid Anwar, MPs and local journalists, the sources said.

The Pakistani nation should learn "tolerance and inculcate the habit of appreciating the opposite point of view," the court remarked.

20pc JS seats for minorities demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad in a resolution yesterday demanded of the government to ensure 20 per cent seats for the minorities in all representative institutions, including the Jatiya Sangsad, under a joint electorate system, a Parishad press release said.

The Oikya Parishad adopted the resolution at its council session held at Engineers' Institution in the city yesterday.

The resolution also called for ensuring 20 per cent quota for the minorities in educational institutions and in jobs and promotions.

It also demanded formation of a separate ministry for the minorities and the repeal of Vested Property Act.

Attended by representatives from the district units of the Oikya Parishad, the council expressed deep anguish at 'continuous discriminations' in government recruitment.

Maj Gen (Retd) C R Dutta, Bir Uttam, presided over the council session.

Noakhali

From Page 1

The roots of the keora trees burrows deep into the soil, helping to consolidate the land.

At Bayar Char mouza under the Habibia range, 9,000 acres of land was afforested at a cost of Tk 10 crore in 1984.

Despite forays by people and animal some survived. But the green became an eyesore to the powerful local politicians, their cronies, musclemen and landlords who specialise on grabbing other peoples land and the public land.

They had been clearing the forest for a long time. On February 9 it became too much when they hoisted red flags to demarcate their territory. Forest guards intervened but they had to backtrack under gunfire.

The ruffians pillaged and set on fire the local beat office at Bhuiyar Char, driving away its staff. The forest officials never dared to go back till date.

There had been several exchanges of fire between the forest guards and the foot soldiers of landlords of Ramgali in the recent past and they completed burning of at least 2,000 acres of forest, Forest Department officials said.

They said one Mir Khabir, Bacchu Chairman, Jasim Chairman and Azad Chairman are allegedly behind the occupation.

Although Forest Department filed cases with Sudharam thana, nothing except the arrest of one, had happened so far, forest officials said.



Garments Srämik Oikya Parishad staged a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding payment of salary and bonus before Eid-ul-Azha. — Star photo

2 buried alive during bridge construction

By Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Apr 3: Two day labourers were killed on the spot and six others injured when a big chunk of earth fell on them during construction of a bridge near Chhalabhara under Kaliganj thana on Jessore-Jhenidah highway this morning.

The dead were identified as Khaleque, 28, and Jalal, 30.

According to eyewitnesses and local people, the accident occurred at about 8:30 am. The day labourers of village Goriata under Jhenidah sadar thana were digging earth there.

Of the injured, four were identified as Moksed Ali, 45, Eradul, 25, Ismail, 26, and Ershad, 28. The two others could not be identified immediately. The injured were rescued by the local people and sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

182 killed

From Page 1

at strategically important points while on duty policemen should take immediate action against those violating the speed limit, he added.

Another police official identified the plying of slow moving vehicles like rickshaws, rickshaw vans and carts on the highways as another reason behind road accidents. He also said lack of awareness of people is a major reason for accidents.

Police observe traffic week in urban areas to increase public awareness but there is no such programme yet for people living beside the highways.

8 killed in road accidents

At least seven persons were killed and 22 others injured in two road accidents in Mymensingh and Bandarban yesterday, reports BSS.

Three persons were killed and seven others injured when a tempo was hit by a Dhaka-bound minibus near Raghama under Trisal thana on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in the afternoon.

Two brothers Atahar Ali, 20, and Emdadul Haque, 13, died on the spot while one Akkas died in Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, police said.

The injured passengers are undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

Police seized the minibus, but the driver managed to escape, police said.

At least four persons were killed and 15 others injured when a truck loaded with cattle fell into a deep ditch at Recha, about 11 km from Bandarban last night.

Two Bangladeshi diplomats join team to inspect arms in Iraq

Two senior Bangladeshi diplomats have been appointed by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan for weapon inspection in Iraq, a message from New York said yesterday, reports BSS.

It said Ambassador Ruhul Amin in Egypt and Syed Maudud Ali, Minister in Bangladesh Embassy in Turkey will work in the special group which will inspect eight presidential sites in Iraq.

Power supply system 'fragile'

From Page 1

The Ghorashal unit was later tested and PDB found no fault in the plant yesterday. "It now seems that the problem must have had originated from the line fault (Ashuganj-Comilla Double Circuit line). Line fault can occur from any mishap — from a tree falling on the line to a transformer explosion," the official pointed out.

"It is very risky for the whole power sector to continue to generate power to the maximum level steadily for years. This situation is prevailing since '91-92," said an expert.

There is a demand for 2250 mw of power now and PDB can hardly generate 1800 mw. Again, this demand would have been higher if PDB this year had not succeeded in convincing farmers across the country to operate electricity-based irrigation pumps during night time, thus improving distribution of power load in different hours of a day, he mentioned.

"If the farmers did not agree to operate pumps at night, the demand for power would have been more than 2400 mw at peak hours now, instead of 2250 mw. That would mean the load-shedding would have been worse," the expert noted.

After Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took over charge of the Energy Ministry,

Malaysia

From Page 1

fifties with three children. Her father had migrated to Malaysia from Kerala, India.

She further noted that with the plunge of ringgit's value against US dollar, one ringgit is now worth only Taka 10 whereas, it was Taka 17 earlier. "I wonder how Bangladeshi workers with such low payment would be able to send their savings home."

Besides, trade unions have now become vocal demanding of the government to give priority to local workers than foreigners because the economic slump has affected their jobs, he said.

"Not that foreign workers made their own fortune by giving labour rather, they did contribute enormously in building the economy of Malaysia. It would be the biggest blunder for Malaysia if it forgets that contribution," said Irene, who launched Tenaganita in 1991 to promote and protect rights of women. In Bangla Language, Tenaganita means 'Women Force' or 'Nari Shakti'.

Tenaganita opened two centres recently at Keleng Valley on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur to provide legal support to foreign workers. Irene said, there should be one at Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia.

the power generation level improved in the last one week due to increased gas supply to the power plants. Because of gas supply shortfall, PDB could not generate 320 mw of power till early last week. Now, by diverting gas supplies from fertiliser factories, power generation has been increased by 80 mw to 100 mw.

15 shops gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent

At least 15 shops were gutted in a fire at Shampur under Demra thana in the city early yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the fire, originating from the sparks in an electric switch board, engulfed the shops and restaurants in front of the Wasa Gate at about 3:30 am.

Two fire fighting units from city's Postogola station rushed to the spot and took more than an hour to extinguish the blaze. However, there was no information about any casualty.

BDR returns

From Page 1

village under Shyamnagar thana of Satkhira, which is opposite to the Burigoalini range, part of the Sundarbans, declared as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO.

Police and BDR claimed that the tiger had been menacing villagers at Datnekhali for the past two months, killing some cattle. But there was no record of the tiger attacking humans, or preying on the livestock.

Nor there was any complaint filed by police or BDR that it was 'menacing' or threatening the locals, according to preliminary information received by the Forest Department.

According to the Wildlife Act, 1973, only the Chief Conservator of Forest has the authority to declare a tiger 'man eater' and permit its culling.

Before that attempts must be made to send it back to its sanctuary in the Sundarbans if it had strayed out of the forest. The attempts include tranquilising a tiger using a dart gun.

The Forest Department officials did not investigate why the tiger had been reportedly streaking out of its habitat, 46/47 compartment of the Burigoalini range.

Local sources said the tiger's den had denied access to the illegal wood cutters so far, who are suspected of having spread rumours about the tiger menacing people and cattle in the area.

Since the slaying of the tiger, the Forest Department was yet to order an official investigation.

British company Cairn will start supplying 60 million cubic feet of gas per day from Sangu Field from April 22. This will help PDB to add 200 mw more to the national grid.

The two Raojan 210 mw units are now generating about 200 mw due to gas supply shortfall. Sangu's gas will help them to generate up to 300 mw, if not 420 mw (the full capacity). To utilise Raojan plants' full capability, the PDB needs to set up a high-power line between Hathazari and Comilla because the existing line between Chittagong and the national grid does not carry more than 300 mw.

PDB has taken up a project to build the Hathazari line from government resources. It is expected to be completed by July.

Besides, the government should speed up the old power plants rehabilitation scheme, now a year behind schedule, and pursue the private power plant schemes at Meghna (450 mw), Haripur (360 mw), and Baghabari (100 mw) and Barge-mounted plants (300 mw to 400 mw), one source said. "Otherwise, the coming years would be worse than ever."

Traffic movement returns to normal on Dhaka-Ctg Rd

Traffic movement on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway returned to normal yesterday afternoon as vehicular traffic began to move along two lanes on the Sonakhali bridge, reports BSS.

Missing wards

From Page 1

fickers in lieu of money, preliminary investigations by BJMAS revealed. But a few others are suspected to have links with the traffickers.

BJMAS officials said they faced a difficult task in identifying the real parents or guardians when the visitors made strong claims for their children or wards yesterday. None was however handed over.

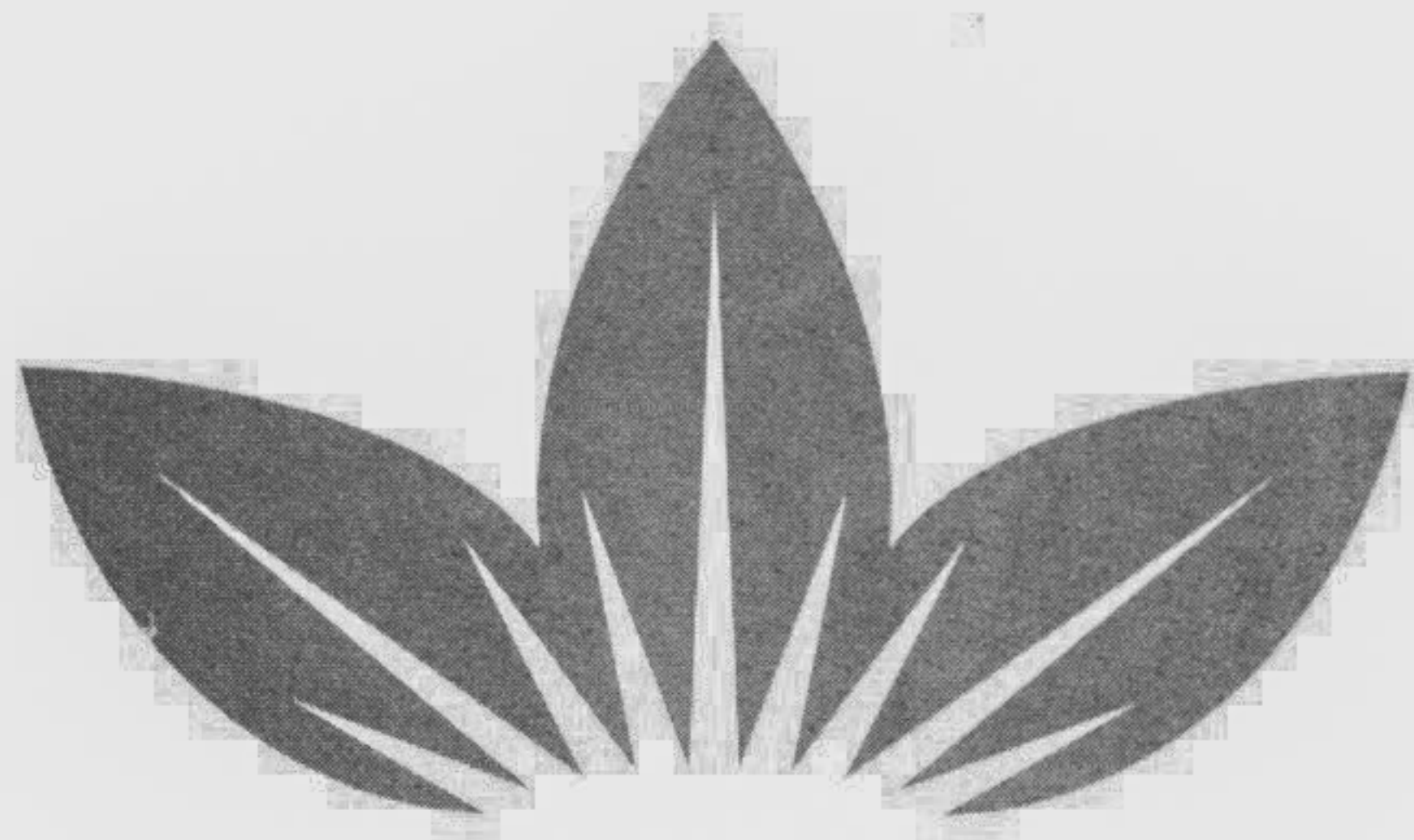
"We will go through each case carefully," Ms Salma Ali, Executive Director of BJMAS told The Daily Star last night.

Bus fare

From Page 1

Naim, Joint Convenor of the owners association at Gabtali said, "We took the decision to raise the fare to make up for the losses in return trips. Buses will return to Dhaka almost empty till the Eid Day."

Asked if the government was informed of the decision in writing, he said, "It is not necessary. This is not a new practice. We follow this practice every year."



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Editor: Mahfuz Anam