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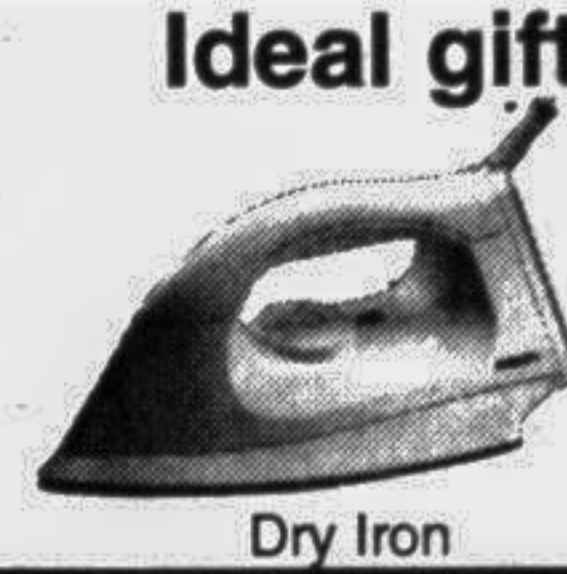
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PHILIPS

Just to get rid of vagrant children?

By Staff Correspondent

While the Bangladesh Railway Police are trying to conceal facts about their involvement in bundling out about 40 vagrant children in a goods wagon at the city's Kamalapur Station on Saturday, a 'mysterious' group of people has cleaned up the station of all vagrant children.

In a bid to rid the station of such children, registered coolies in collaboration with some 'BR officials' and 'security personnel' rounded up the children and bundled them into a goods wagon of the Isha Kha Express passenger train bound for Mymensingh. BR officials later said the children were 'only being sent to far away places' so that they could not return to the station.

The children were released when a citizen intervened moments before the train's departure, challenging the legality of the move. The panic-stricken children immediately ran away screaming. A top BR official later admitted the facts but said, "It (removal of the children) had to be done because the problem of vagrant children in the station was becoming unbearable."

Kamalapur railway station which for long had the problem of squatting destitutes and vagrant children was cleaned up following the incident. The children are believed to have been driven away. It is also suspected that at least some of the 26 children arrested Monday allegedly for stealing at Zia International Airport Customs godown were 'evicted' from Kamalapur station.

The government has ordered a probe into the incident and formed a two-member committee. GRP officials at Kamalapur station, BR authorities and the Railway security force, however, kept on insisting that no such incident had ever taken place. Several national dailies have also reported their denial.

Again, on Sunday, a top official of BR's Public Relations Department admitted that the incident had taken place and the children were bundled into a 'luggage compartment', not into a goods wagon.

Since the operation was done without any legal or official approval, the probe body will not find any document in this regard, sources said.

Helaluddin, the flagman (guard) who released the children from the sealed wagon, was yet to be questioned by the authorities, they added.

Over 500 Rohingya flee camps

From Abdul Monayem Khan

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 1: Over 500 Rohingyas fled two refugee camps in the district since repatriation of the refugees to Myanmar resumed on November 25 after 16 months.

The refugees, unwilling to return home, slipped out through the fragile security system in Kutupalong and Nayapara camps.

Red Crescent authorities said they were providing food against 20,815 Rohingyas in the two camps whereas, according to official statistics, there should be 21,365 refugees in the camps.

Local people said many Rohingyas have taken refuge in remote villages or have left for third countries.

Kotwali police rescued 14 Rohingyas women and children from the district bus station while they were being trafficked to Pakistan and arrested an alleged trafficker on November 25.

Since repatriation resumed on November 25, only 46 refugees returned to Myanmar and another 50 are scheduled to return on December 2.

DSE polls

From Page 1

Present DSE Chairman Md Rakibur Rahman along with three others councillors - Kazi Feroz Rashid, Ahsanul Islam, Dewan Suhel Afzal - were retired as a result of a lottery.

But Rakibur Rahman was trying to continue for a second term. He along with some powerbrokers managed to convince Council Member Jahangir Kabir Chowdhury to withdraw in favour of Rakib.

The Election Council changed its earlier decision reportedly under pressure and allowed Rakib to continue. The move prompted protests from the other retiring councillors. One of them claimed to the Election Council that if Rakibur Rahman could stay despite being "out" then the whole council should be allowed to remain.

Kazi Feroz Rashid later went to the Appellate Division of the DSE which upheld the decision of the Election Council. Rashid later went to court and the court stayed the election yesterday.

2nd UK Trade Fair begins in city today

The second UK Trade Fair will begin in the capital today, reports BSS.

British Minister of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs Dr Kim Howells will attend the inaugural ceremony of the three-day fair. Dr Howells arrived here Monday evening on a three-day visit.

The UK Trade Fair, which includes a British education exhibition, will provide a showcase for an extensive range of world class British goods and services available in Bangladesh, a British High Commission press release said.

Minister for Commerce and Industries Tofail Ahmed and British minister Dr Howells MP will jointly inaugurate the fair at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.



Justice Mohammed Habibur Rahman, former chief advisor in the caretaker government, visits a stall at the Fifth Dhaka Book Fair at Chandrima Uddyan in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday.

— Star photo

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HIV infection

From Page 1

through New Delhi today shouting AIDS awareness slogans and waving banners declaring 'together against AIDS'.

The theme of the 11th World AIDS Day is 'Be a force for change'.

Experts have warned recently that although powerful new drugs have sent AIDS deaths plunging in industrialised countries, the disease continues to kill millions of people in the impoverished nations of Africa and Asia.

According to a new UN report, about 33.4 million people around the world are infected with HIV, two-thirds of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Two million people will die of the disease south of the Sahara this year, four times the total for the rest of the world.

Adult HIV infection rates in Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe are between 20 per cent and 25 per cent, the United Nations says.

About 1.7 million people in Africa and 700,000 people in Asia and the Pacific are infected with HIV every year, according to UN figures.

The Cambodian government marked AIDS day with the grim announcement that 150,000 people — 1.3 per cent of the population — are infected with the AIDS virus.

Officials said that 50 to 70 people catch HIV in Cambodia every day, the highest HIV infection rate in Asia.

Kalparanjan Chakma on peace accord All conditions to be accepted in phases

KHAGRACHHARI, Dec 1: CHT Affairs Minister Kalparanjan Chakma has urged the PCJSS to immediately recognise the interim regional council for the sake of peace and development in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, reports UNB.

Talking to newsmen at Khagrachhari Circuit House today the minister said there were no major obstacles with the passage of amendment to the Rangamati Hill District Bill in the last session of parliament to remove an anomaly that the PCJSS leaders had objected to.

"All other conditions will be implemented in phases," he said holding out government's assurance as the PCJSS leaders sounded grievances over a sloth in implementation of the December 2, 1997 CHT peace agreement on the eve of the first anniversary of its signing tomorrow.

Reviewing the success of the peace deal, he said unrest had prevailed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts for last 23 years, but the scenario changed with the signing of the agreement.

The Minister said within one year of the agreement, the government had implemented many of its terms.

About the non-acceptance of the interim CHT Regional Council by the PCJSS, the CHT Affairs Minister said it was formed as per the agreement and non-acceptance is obstructing the implementation of other terms and conditions of the accord.

He said the Land Ministry is working on formation of a Land Commission to solve the land disputes in the area and as per the agreement, Chairman of the Regional Council or his representative would be in the Commission.

Shantu Larma

But PCJSS Chief Shantu Larma feels his dream is dashed down by people of his own community, the tribal leaders representing in the government.

"A particular quarter in the government is involved in the conspiracy in delaying implementation of the peace accord," he said indicating to Kalparanjan Chakma, Dipankar Talukdar and Bir Bahadur.

"Some criminal minded people of both tribal and non-tribal are also involved in the conspiracy," he added.

"One year has passed since the peace accord was signed. We are observing the first anniversary of the accord with a heavy heart," he said.

Shantu Larma, Chairman-designate of the CHT Regional Council, was talking to UNB by telephone from Rangamati Development Board Rest House on Monday night. "It is not true that peace accord is not being implemented, but the progress is very slow."

"It will take many months, may be running into 2001, if the existing process continue," he said referring to the government approach in amending the disputed clauses in the hill districts local government parishad act of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

Responding to a query, he said he would take the charge of chairman of the Regional Council after amendments to the acts of local government district parishads of the hill region.

He reiterated the demand for withdrawal of three nominations of the government to the Regional Council beyond the recommendation of PCJSS.

Asked about the nature of future course of action for implementing the accord, Shantu said, "We will continue non-violence means to press home our demand."

"We will enforce hartal if it is consistent to democracy," he said and hastened to add, "there is no possibility of calling hartal in the near future."

Netrokona-3 seat

Fresh voting in 3 centres Dec 20

Fresh voting will be held in three centres in the parliamentary constituency 163, (Netrokona-3) on December 20, Election Commission sources said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The centres are Avoyanagar Government Primary School, Avoyanagar, Baniajan City High School, Baniajan and Teligati High School, Teligati.

Shawkat Ali new IFIC Bank MD

Star Report

An emergency meeting of the Board of Directors of IFIC Bank yesterday made Shawkat Ali, senior executive vice-president, managing director of the bank.

He assumes office tomorrow and will be there for a month. The Bangladesh Bank (BB) on Monday rejected the reappointment of former managing director Abbasuddin Ahmed whose tenure ended in September. The BB earlier also served showcause notices on Abbasuddin after several incidences of fraud in the Bank were revealed.

Three killed

From Page 1

Mohammadpur Thana and Monir Hossain, 18, of Keraniganj.

Police said Saleh Ahmed and Azizur Rahman and their friend Zilhaj came under attack by a gang of dacoits in the small hours of yesterday at Basila under Mohammadpur Thana.

The dacoits took them to a nearby jungle, looted their belongings and stabbed them indiscriminately. Both Saleh Ahmed and Azizur Rahman died on the spot.

Zilhaj with stab injuries in his body managed to escape. He, however, could not identify any of the attackers.

In another incident, one Monir Hossain, 28, was beaten to death in Waizghat area in the city under Kotwali Thana.

Son of one Mohammad Abbas Ali of Keraniganj, Monir had been working for a hosiery shop for last two years at Sadarghat.

He went to India for business purpose and returned to Dhaka two days ago.

A group of eight to ten people reportedly led by one Jalli beat him up severely at around 11 am, police said.

He was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at around 11:45 am where he succumbed to his injuries at around 12:15 pm.

Discontent brews

From Page 1

But Rupayan Dewan, a close aide to Shantu Larma earlier this month told a seminar in the city that there had been some. "A gentleman's agreement was reached that PCJSS would give the list of all nominees to the 22-member RC and a retired Judge would head the Land Commission," he said.

As Shantu Larma is declining to take up his job despite three meetings of the CHT Agreement Implementation Committee, the latest on November 3 in Chittagong, the deadlock is yet to end.

Besides, the government is yet to announce the formation of the Land Commission to carry out a survey of the land in CHT. Legal tangles also held up functioning of two Rajas of Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

The fate of thousands of Bangladeshis who settled in the CHT in late 70s and 80s, is yet to be settled. The PCJSS wants them out of the CHT. But the government said they would be resettled elsewhere in the CHT.

The PCJSS also complains that all the members of its armed cadres, Shantibahini, some 2,000 of whom laid down their guns on February 10, 1998 as per the peace treaty, have not been resettled or given jobs.

The government says they were given Tk 50,000 each, ration for a year and other help to rebuild their houses and start life anew. A number of them were absorbed in police department and government jobs they held before their joining the insurgency. Most of the cases against former Shantibahini members were withdrawn and those who were in prison released, the government said. A few cases remained to be sorted out it said.

But the PCJSS leaders alleged that a section of the ruling party leaders and a section of the bureaucracy was delaying implementation of the accord.

They are still dissatisfied despite withdrawal of a number of field camps of security forces from the CHT.

PCJSS sources said they feel vulnerable to their opponents in their ranks. A group of young activists of the student wing and two other front organisations of PCJSS have accused Shantu Larma of "deviating" from their original goal of 'full autonomy' for the CHT. Clashes also took place between the two groups.

Sources in the Oikya Parishad said they are maintaining a low profile now, watching the "friction" between the rival groups of PCJSS and Shantu Larma's "hitch" with the government.

Shantu Larma has also sent feelers that he would talk with the BNP and other opposition groups and formed a pro-PCJSS group among the settlers as part of his plan to get support from the Bangladeshis.

Delimitation of 4 city corps finalised

The Election Commission has finalised the delimitation of the country's four city corporations for elections and published it through a gazette notification, an EC press release said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

As per the delimitation, Dhaka City Corporation has been divided into 100 wards instead of old 90 for election of commissioners.

Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi City Corporations have been divided into 51, 37 and 35 wards respectively instead of old 41, 31 and 30 wards.

Besides, election for the reserved ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation has been divided into 33 wards instead of old 18.

Election for the reserved ward commissioners of Chittagong has been divided into 17 wards instead of old 8 while Rajshahi and Khulna have been divided into 12 wards instead of old six.

Remembering
DR. MOHIUDDIN FAROOQUE
Founder of BELA
On His First Death Anniversary



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OF YOUR DEPARTURE,
YOU WILL REMAIN ALIVE
ON THE FACE
OF EVERY LEAF AND
FLOWER IN THE GREENS.

Your Ever-Weeping
Colleagues at
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