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Impeachment debate opens

WASHINGTON, Dec 18: Opening only the second debate in history on removing a US president from office, the House of Representatives weighed today four articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton. The debate went forward amid US military action in Iraq and after a top Republican lawmaker made a stunning confession of infidelity, reports AP.

In a somber voice, House reading clerk Paul Hays read the resolution of impeachment: "Resolved, that William Jefferson Clinton, president of the United States, is impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors."

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde called up the four articles against Clinton that his committee had approved last week despite Democratic objections to moving forward during the Iraqi military action.

Democrats forced a failed vote to adjourn and stepped up demands that majority Republicans allow a vote on censuring Clinton as an alternative to impeachment.

See Page 11

BIMSTEC meeting begins today

By Staff Correspondent

The second BIMSTEC ministerial level meeting begins in the city today to explore ways of greater co-operation among its member countries, particularly in the fields of trade and investment, communication, energy and tourism.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad is expected to inaugurate the meeting at the Sonargaon Hotel.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of host Bangladesh, Mrs. Vasundhara Raje, Minister for External Affairs of India, U. Khin Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, Lakshman Kiriella, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand will represent their respective countries, a senior foreign ministry official said.

Official level discussions.

See Page 12 Col 8

Dhaka deplores US attack on Iraq

Bangladesh deplored the US attack on Iraq and asserted that situation could have been resolved through negotiations, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad "deplored the US attack on Iraq" and said "this is a violation of international law and breach of sacred principles of UN charter."

In a statement to BSS, the foreign minister expressed his apprehension that "this attack will cause immense sufferings to the innocent civilians, including women and children."

"Bangladesh firmly believed that the situation in Iraq could be resolved through dialogue and negotiations and the United Nations has a vital role to play," the statement said.

The foreign minister while urging the US government to exercise restraint, said that Bangladesh expects Iraq to cooperate with the United Nations and comply with its resolutions.

Inside Today

Article

Pabna-2 By-election: A Preliminary Evaluation

Column : Currents and Crosscurrents
by M M Rezaul Karim
Page 4

Star Literature

Exhibition : The young ones should never be afraid; and Poetry: Moniruzzaman — A lyricist par excellence

Pages 6 & 7

Business

Low gas pressure takes tolls on factories

Pak banks to quote euro rate from January 5

Page 8, 9

25 Iraqis killed: Russia recalls envoys from US, UK

Third day of air strike



An F/A-18 Hornet, from Strike-Fighter Squadron One Zero Five, launches from the flight deck of the USS Enterprise, during the second round of strikes against Iraq on Thursday, (top) and Iraqis try to repair a burst water mains after a missile hit a residential area and demolished a house in southern Baghdad early Thursday morning. — AP/UNB photo

KUWAIT, Dec 18: British warplanes based in Kuwait launched fresh attacks today against Iraqi targets in a third day of a US-led air campaign.

Yes, RAF Tornados are taking part in the operation but I cannot disclose how many," a Royal Air Force (RAF) spokesman told Reuters.

Deafening explosions rocked Baghdad today in the latest wave of US and British air raids that Iraq says have killed at least 25 people in the last two days, says AP.

The Iraqi capital came under missile attack hours before dawn, capping a barrage of strikes that began late Thursday night. The bombardment covered Baghdad with a pall of smoke and set the skyline aglow in orange.

Again and again air-raid sirens sounded the warning and the sky was lit by anti-aircraft fire and tracer bullets.

But as a new day dawned, the tension of the night was less evident and early risers were seen going about their normal business. Traffic was light since Friday is the Muslim Sabbath, but worried motorists queued up at gasoline stations to make sure their tanks were full.

Iraqi newspapers urged the public to rally behind President Saddam Hussein.

The newspaper urged Iraqis to show their readiness for sacrifice and their readiness to face the evil aggressors.

In an apparent effort to incite the public to rise up against Saddam, US aircraft dropped leaflets over southern Iraq on Thursday, an Information Ministry official said.

See Page 12 Col 7

Russian forces on red alert

MOSCOW, Dec 18: ITAR-Tass news agency said today Russia's military, including its strategic nuclear forces, was being placed on heightened alert because of the Iraq crisis, reports Reuters.

A defence ministry spokesman said by telephone he could not confirm the Tass report, which quoted one defence source as saying, "All measures are being taken to carry out the main role of the defence ministry — guaranteeing the security of the state."

Earlier, Defence Minister Igor Sergeev called into question relations with NATO and said the Iraq crisis was forcing Moscow to rethink its overall security strategy.

Film star Sohel Chy murdered

By Staff Correspondent

Film star Sohel Chowdhury was shot dead in front of a club at Banani in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

According to Gulshan police, the film actor was shot dead by some unidentified gunmen in front of the Abedin Tower while he was on way to the club — Trump — at about 3 am. He was accompanied by three friends, one of whom, Kalam, was also bullet-hit.

Relatives of Sohel said that the miscreants waylaid them in front of the building and started an altercation with Kalam. At one stage, they fired several shots, one of which hit Kalam. When Sohel attempted to save him, a bullet hit his chest and he fell on the ground. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctor declared him dead.

Sohel's friend Kalam was admitted to the hospital with bullet injuries in his abdomen. He is now undergoing treatment at Ward No 31. Shipul and Hafis, two other friends of Sohel who were in his car, were unhurt.

One of the assailants, Adnan Siddique, was caught by two employees of Abedin Tower and handed over to police. The arrested will be produced in court today.

The two persons, identified as Dayan 35, and Nirab, 21,

were also bullet hit during the scuffle. They were released after first aid at the DMCH, hospital sources said.

A case was filed with Gulshan thana by Sohel's elder brother, Tuhidul Islam Choudhury.

Sohel's body was later taken to Film Development Corporation (FDC) after autopsy at the

DMCH morgue and was buried at the Banani graveyard.

His Qul Khwani will be held after Asr prayer on Monday at their Gulshan residence, family sources said.

Sohel, former husband of actress Diti, performed in over 50 Bangla films. His last film was 'Mahan Bandhu'. Lamia and

See Page 12 Col 1



Murdered film star Sohel Choudhury — Star photo

3 foreign ships with 'damaged' rice still at Ctg port

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 18: Three foreign cargo ships carrying 3500 metric tons of damaged imported rice have remained stranded at the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port for about three months, port sources said.

With the suspension of dumping of the imported rice found unfit for human consumption, the damaged rice carried by the three ships could not be dropped in the sea and this forced the vessels to incur huge demurrage due to overstay here.

Dumping of the rice damaged in the sea was suspended as the department of environment (DOE) slapped a ban on it recently raising the question of sea pollution threatening ma-

rine resources, a senior port official said.

The stranded vessels are Mariya Santose loaded with 1268 MT of rice, Rong Jiang with 1367 MT and Rits with 900 MT.

The DOE suggested 'shore-dumping' of the damaged food-grain at a particular place in the port city.

But officials concerned of the food cell at Chittagong Port termed 'shore-dumping' very cumbersome.

"It is difficult to bring the ships to the jetties for unloading of damaged rice and then to carry those in trucks for destruction," said an official of the food cell. "It is quite easy to distribute the damaged rice

while in the deep sea as those are fit for animal consumption, though unfit for human."

Port officials noted that there is no possibility of return of the damaged rice to the markets through 'black channel' if those are dumped in the sea.

After the formation of food cell, the dumping of damaged rice continued for some time in presence of army personnel deployed at the port to monitor unloading and delivery of food-grains.

Port officials said some vested quarters had raised an issue of fish mortality in the sea due to dumping of 'rotten rice' in October last.

The issue prompted the gov-

See Page 12 Col 8

Ten killed as trucks collide in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Dec 18: At least 10 people were killed and three others injured when two trucks collided in foggy weather at Guatula, some nine kilometres from Phulpur thana headquarters, on Mymensingh-Sherpur Highway early this morning, police said, reports BSS.

A Shepur bound speeding truck loaded with potatoes collided with another truck coming from the opposite direction and skidded off the highway killing nine persons on the spot. Phulpur thana police said.

One person died on the way to Phulpur Thana Health Complex. All the victims were travelling on board the potato carrying truck.

One critically injured person was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital while two others were admitted to Phulpur thana health complex.

Of the dead, four were identified as Abdul Jabbar 40 of Shepur thana, Abdul Khaleq 35 of Bakshiganj thana, Shafiqul Islam 16 of Sreebordi thana and Basali 4 of Shepur thana.

The drivers of the vehicles managed to escape immediately after the accident, police said.

District administration and police officials visited the place of occurrence.

Jubo League leader shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A Jubo League leader was shot dead in a clash between two rival groups of the organisation in city's Shyamapur area at about 8 pm on Thursday.

The victim was identified as Humayun Kabir, Publicity Secretary of Shyamapur unit of Jubo League.

Police said the killing was a sequel to a previous clash between the two groups over collection of toll.

Following the murder of Humayun, one of the rival groups set fire to a slum in the area.

At least 50 shanties were gutted, police said.

Fire fighters rushed to the spot but they failed to perform their duty as agitated people chased them. Later, they re-

See Page 12 Col 8

13 killed, 40 hurt as train rams night coach in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Dec 18: Thirteen people were killed and 40 injured when the Khulna bound 'Shimanta Express' train rams a Chaudanga-bound night coach at Kashish level crossing in the early hours of today.

Ten of them died on the spot and three on way to hospitals, police said. Condition of seven is stated to be critical.

The accident took place near Mobarakganj railway station at about 4.45 am, 18 miles off the district town. The bus of the Chitra Paribahan had started from Dhaka at 10-30 pm Thursday night.

Of the injured, 15 were admitted to Jhenidah hospital, 14 to Kaliganj health complex and six to Jessore General Hospital, police said.

Those died on the spot are bus driver Abdus Salam, 36, supervisor Raisuddin, 35, and helper Altaf Hossain, 34, passengers Buli Khatoon, 30, and her son Biplob, 10, Abul Kalam, 40, Pannu, 30, Abdur Rashid, 40, and Babu, 35, of

Chougachha, and assistant driver of the train Mohammad Hossain, 45. One of the three who died at the hospitals, was identified as Bidhan Chandra, 40, of Laksam, Comilla. The identity of two could not be known till filing this report.

Four of the seven critically injured persons admitted to Jhenidah and Kaliganj hospitals are Zahurul Haq, 40, Abdul Ali, 35, Soleman Ali, 30, and Uzzal, 20. The rest three could not be identified.

UNB quoting survivors and witnesses said the gate of the level crossing near Mobarakganj railway station was open and there was no gate man on duty at the time of the accident.

Railway officials have been directed to launch a departmental investigation and to identify the causes and individuals responsible for the accident.

Train communications were restored at 2-40 pm after a crane from Jessore cantonment removed the coach from the tracks.

PM's directive to DCs Monitor disbursement of agri credits

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked officials to implement post-flood rehabilitation programmes with utmost sincerity and optimum speed for utilising foreign assistance in time, reports UNB.

A smooth flow of foreign assistance depends on speedy completion of the programmes and the responsibility lies with you," she said addressing the Deputy Commissioners at the ICC yesterday morning.

The DCs' conference was held to discuss in detail the post-flood rehabilitation programme, progress in disbursement of agricultural loan and other development programmes.

The prime minister said the

government was receiving huge amounts in foreign aid for the post-flood rehabilitation programmes. "And it is your duty to utilise this properly for the welfare of the people."

She said "government's money is the money of the people and this should be used properly for the welfare of the people."

She also asked the district-level officials to strictly maintain law and order and take steps to keep prices of essentials at reasonable levels, particularly during the month of Ramadan.

The prime minister suggested long-term plans and designs of all government establishments.

See Page 12 Col 2

BNP won't rule out movement in league with JP

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia yesterday indicated that her party would not mind to launch simultaneous movement with Jatiya Party of deposed president Ershad to unseat the government, reports UNB.

She gave the indication at a meeting with Overseas Correspondents' Association, Bangladesh (OCAAB) at Hotel Sheraton yesterday afternoon.

"We consider the present government as the biggest autocrat... Whoever is on the street and wants to oust the government to protect the economy and country's sovereignty may join us," she told a questioner when asked if she would join hands with Ershad whom she had branded as autocrat.

The main opposition BNP for the first time in last seven years did not observe the "anti-autocratic day" to mark the fall of Ershad on December 6, 1990.

The BNP chairperson portrayed a gloomy picture of the country's economy and the law and order. She said the Awami League government has completely failed to run the country.

Asked for her comment on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "no hartal" call in future, Khaleda gave a detailed background and the present context

See Page 12 Col 1

Striking interns threaten to lock up hospital directors' rooms

By DMC Correspondent

The indefinite strike by some 1200 intern doctors of eight government medical college hospitals across the country passed the third day yesterday.

They began the strike on Tuesday to press their six-point demand which include enhancement of salary. The Victory Day was exempted from strike.

A good number of patients were seen leaving the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday due to lack of treatment. Services at the outdoor patient department (OPD) and at wards were also badly affected. No scheduled operation was performed, sources at the DMCH

See Page 12 Col 3



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handing over the certificate of honorary citizenship to Amartya Sen at Ganabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

Freedom holds the key to development, asserts Sen

By Sabir Mustafa

In a week when a global survey has found Bangladesh to be the "happiest nation in the world", Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen has suggested that quiet acceptance of one's lot does not necessarily indicate the existence of a just and equitable society. He said that the only way to judge an individual's advancement was through the freedom people enjoy.

"Freedom is not only an end in itself, it is also a very important means to development", Amartya Sen said Friday while delivering a lecture on Social Choice at the National Museum auditorium.

Sen, however, said that people's ability to utilise their creativity and freedom depended on a number of factors, such as education, nutrition, health, land reform, access to credit etc. This is where, he said, the state has an important role to play.

He pointed out that state intervention to deliver social goods in China in the 1950s, 60s and 70s made the reforms of the 80s and 90s possible. On the other hand, market reforms in India would have limited impact due to its lack of social investment.

Sen cited the two examples as a way to illustrate his point that both the state and the market have their own roles, and it would be a mistake to get dogmatic about either.

"It is very important to avoid dogmatism of all kinds. The role of the market and what it has to offer has to be seen in non-dogmatic terms," Sen said.

Sen dismissed suggestions that the absence of rebellion among the masses in South Asia indicated a state of mental welfare or justice. He said that

Hony citizenship for Amartya Sen

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen was yesterday given honorary citizenship of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed over the certificate of honorary citizenship to the world-renowned economist at a simple ceremony at Ganabhaban.

She also handed over a Bangladesh passport to the visiting Bengali scholar, Amartya Sen, saying, "You are ours."

While receiving the citizen-

See Page 12 Col 3

absence of rebellion "should not generate a feeling that they face no deprivation. That happiness is not one of justice, but a quiet acceptance of injustice".

On the other hand, Sen suggested that existence of anger in people facing uncertainty and deprivation would not be a bad thing. "This anger may lead to social change," he said.

Both quiet acceptance and anger were in evidence at the National Museum Friday morning as hundreds of people who turned up to listen to the 1998 winner of the Nobel prize for economics, were denied entrance.

The scene outside the museum resembled one usually associated with presence of movie stars, as hundreds waited patiently to catch a glimpse of Sen. Several hundred more were within the museum ground, refusing to leave even after being turned away from the door.

Entrance was on an invitation-only basis, but even then the organisers had to arrange for extra seating for several hundred people in the lobby of the museum with a giant video screen relaying the lecture there.

See Page 12 Col 7