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Let's make things better

PHILIPS

Smaller ones

From Page 1
tion of the JP. But while returning to the party fold, Zafar has carved out some political gas which his predecessors - Razak and Obaid - could not even think of.

When they went back to the mainstream organisations, the rebel leaders of the breakaway factions of AL and BNP were left with no option but to forget about the issues they had once differed on. Sheikh Hasina did not need to promise Razak that she would make even slightest adjustments in the AL politics to conform to BAKSAL. In the same way, Obaidur Rahman did not even dare remind Khaleda Zia that he would not have left the party had she been a little more democratic.

But Zafar's case seems to be entirely opposite to those of Razak and Obaid. He came out of the JP in protest against the party's, or Ershad's, reluctance to play the role of a traditional opposition party in a parliamentary democracy of this sub-continent. Those days, Ershad used to preach an opposition role that does not oppose the governing party on every account. Rather, he found it rational to hail the government for a pro-people programme, had there been any. On top of that, all the JP chief had vehemently been opposing the idea of enforcing *harkats* that, according to him at that time, causes irreparable damages to the country's already vulnerable economy.

Ershad was so firm about his position that the party's secretary general Nazimul Rahman Manju, a relation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, did not fail to take advantage of the situation. He openly, in front of Ershad, assaulted Kazi Zafar Ahmed for an anti-government speech at a party rally some one and half years ago. Two months after the incident, Kazi Zafar and Shah Moazzem Hossain left the party to form their own faction.

Sixteen months after the incident, both Ershad and Nazimul Rahman Manju went to the city's Engineers' Institution Auditorium, the venue where the JP's break-away faction was holding its council sessions, to welcome Zafar to the party fold.

The point that made the case of Zafar different, rather qualitatively different, with those of Abdur Razak and K M Obaidur Rahman, is important. It is not that Ershad went to welcome Zafar after the latter had decided to return, rather Zafar decided to go back to Ershad only after the latter had publicly announced his 'anti-government position' two weeks ago.

In a public rally in the city on December 15, Ershad announced that his JP, along with other opposition parties, was now poised to wage a united movement aimed at ousting the government of Sheikh Hasina, that he would go for as many *harkats* as necessary to oust the AL government, that the JP leader Anwar Hossain Manju who is communication minister in the cabinet of Sheikh Hasina has either to quit the government or the party, in a bid to sever the official relation with the government. Ershad has even gone to the extent of sacking his one time best friend Anwar Hossain Manju from the JP.

These are what Kazi Zafar Ahmed had been demanding of Ershad. Just bowing to the demands, Ershad repeated his revised positions at the Engineers Institution on December 28 that eventually put an end to the existence of the Kazi led faction of the JP.

With the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami already expressing determination to oust the government of Sheikh Hasina through movement, not unlikely that the newly forged understanding between Ershad and Zafar would now contribute to shape up a political polarisation already familiar to the people - a decisive confrontation between the governing party and the entire opposition.

Mahbub Jamil

From Page 1
Asghar Karim, Managing Director of Pacific Services Limited, was also elected vice-president of MCCI.

Karim is also on the boards of directors of a number of companies including Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd. The other members of the committee are:
1. Chakladar M Alam, FCA, Managing Director of IPDC.
2. M A Awal, Chairman and Managing Director of Prime Composite Mills Limited.
3. Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan, Managing Director of BOC Bangladesh Limited.
4. A Q I Chowdhury, General Manager of James Finlay PLC.
5. A Rahim Chowdhury, Managing Director of AB Bank Ltd.
6. K Z Islam, Managing Director of Nirman International Ltd.
7. Habibullah Khan, Managing Director of Meenhar Sea Foods Ltd.
8. Latifur Rahman, Managing Director of Transcom Limited.
9. Ramzul Seraj, Managing Director of Elite International Ltd.
10. Feisal Siddiqi, Managing Director of Sidko Limited.
11. Feoff Williams, Chief Executive, Standard Chartered Bank.

Default, recovery of bank loans go hand in hand in 1998

Default loans of the banks have increased substantially over the last 10 months of this year although recovery also rose considerably compared to last year.

Bankers attributed the paradoxical credit situation to a higher rate of repayment of regular loans and lower recovery from the classified credits, which altogether stood at a staggering figure of about Tk 21,241 crore at the end of October.

The total amount of overdue loans of all state-owned, foreign and local private banks and specialised banks in 1997 was Tk 19,121 crore.

Sources said the volume of the classified loans increased because of a low pace of rescheduling during the January-October 1998 period.

"If the downtrend in rescheduling continues, the total classified loan at the end of the year will be huge compared to last year's," an official of the Bangladesh Bank told UNB.

According to latest available data at the central bank, the amount of bad loans during the first 10 months of current year surpassed last year's sum total.

The dud money grew by Tk 2128 crore during the period over last year's mark.

The total outstanding credits of the banks were about Tk 59,216 crore of which some 35.88 per cent classified as bad loans.

State-owned banks have so far disbursed Tk 26,914 crore while the local private banks distributed Tk 13,472 crore in credit. The foreign banks have given Tk 10,394 crore while the

specialised banks distributed Tk 8415 crore.

Classified loans of the nationalised banks reached Tk 10,635 crore while of the local private banks Tk 4,440 crore. The dud money of the foreign banks stood at Tk 834 crore while of the specialised banks Tk 5340 crore.

Meanwhile, the recovery of overdue loans of the state-sector, local and foreign private and specialised banks was Tk 10,894 crore of which the commercial banks recovered Tk 10,320 crore.

The total recovery in 1997 was only Tk 5677 crore.

Rescheduling of overdue loan was done for Tk 2916 crore this year while the amount was more than Tk 3800 crore in 1997.

Vajpayee disowns VHP's views on Sen, churches

BHUBANESWAR, Dec 30: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today publicly dissociated himself from the views expressed by Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leaders of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and about the ongoing violent incidents in Gujarat, reports PTI.

"I do not agree with their views," he told newsmen at the airport here before leaving for Port Blair.

Vajpayee said "we are proud of Sen and I will like to meet him more because I want to seek his advice on economic matters."

When asked about the demand of CPI leader D Raja that the prime minister should publicly disown VHP, he said, "What am I doing now?"

The prime minister was also asked about the allegations that the VHP leaders were instigating communal violence in Gujarat.

The matter is to be inquired, he said, adding, some of the statements of VHP office-bearers were very unfortunate.

Another report says, a defiant VHP today said no decision of any court can stop construction of temple at Ayodhya as a judicial verdict cannot apply to Lord Rama and a construction schedule for the temple would be decided in February next.

Under the Indian laws, the deity of a temple is not subject to judicial review and there is no case pending against the deity in any court of law, asserted VHP working president Ashok Sinhal at a news conference in Jaipur.

All the cases pending in courts over the Ayodhya issue were against certain individuals or institutions. Therefore, the courts' decisions cannot be applied to the deity, Sinhal said.

He challenged jurists and law experts to refute his assertion.

New general secretary of VHP Pravin Togadia said the eighth 'dharma sangad' (Religious parliament) meeting in Ahmedabad on February 5-6 next year will decide the schedule for the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Sinhal and Togadia said the BJP was there to implement the wishes of saints over the temple issue and it was not concerned with what the political

parties were thinking about them.

Replying to repeated queries regarding VHP's differences with BJP, the two leaders said, we are not falling apart as you are imagining.

AP adds: With a dozen churches in ruins, Christian congregations in western India are canceling New Year prayers this year, fearful of provoking more violence from radical Hindus on an anti-missionary crusade.

In the last five days, animosity has polarized Hindu and Christian villagers in the dry hills of Gujarat.

The troubles also are rebounding against the ruling BJP, facing demands to protect the Christian minority from its affiliated Hindu parties, and pressure from its hard core supporters to act against what they call the induced conversions of poor Hindus to Christianity.

In the latest incidents, two prayer halls in southern Gujarat were razed Tuesday. Since Friday, 17 churches, prayer halls or Christian schools have been attacked by mobs wielding axes, iron bars, hammers and stones.

Sufferings of the people have increased manifold due to widespread corruption, mismanagement and politicisation of the administration, she alleged.

The government started borrowing huge amounts from foreign banks as local banks have been facing serious liquidity crisis. Domestic banks are facing liquidity crisis due to excessive borrowing by the government to meet administrative expenditures, she observed.

Begum Zia called upon all 'democratic, nationalist and patriotic political parties as well as Islamic forces' to unite and launch a vigorous street agitation to dislodge the government.

Welcoming the freshers, the BNP chief asked them to work unitedly to further strengthen the party and build up anti-government movement.

The function was also addressed, among others, by BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, local leaders Abdur Rashid Talukder, Mohidul Islam, Mizanur Rahman, Abdur Rouf Talukder, Khadaker Ilias Mortuza and Shahida Akhter.

Earlier, Begum Zia attended an *iftar* party at Dholaihar High School premises and addressed local people.

Port sources said, such a threat angered the stevedores who threatened to go for work stoppage at Chittagong port from 4 pm tomorrow.

On December 25, an agreement was signed between the government and the leaders of dock workers on introduction of an incentive scheme.

As per the deal the dock workers will get maximum 25 per cent of their wages as incentive based on their performance from January 1.

But port users alleged that they were not allowed enough time to give their opinion.

Asma
From Page 1
"If Asma's mother agrees to donate her kidney we can set a date for transplantation, most likely on Monday, Prof Harun, head of Nephrology of the hospital told The Daily Star last night.

He also said, "Asma is now fit to undergo the surgery. The time is very appropriate for Asma. She has no infection and she has no other complications."

Feni
From Page 1
The injured could not be identified.

Police fired 15 warning shots and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the clashing groups.

An uneasy calm was prevailing in the town since evening as explosions of crackers were heard in some areas.

Five projects involving Tk 1,376.31 cr approved

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved five projects involving Tk 1,376.31 crore, including project aid of Tk 783.3 crore, reports UNB.

The approval was given at a meeting of the ECNEC held at NEC Bhaban at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The approved projects are: Emergency maintenance and rehabilitation of sub-transmission and supply system under the area of Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (3rd phase, Tk 240 crore), Training on Fine and Performing Art (Tk 12.47 crore), river protection emergency work on the right bank of river Brahmaputra (Tk 712.75 crore), bio-diversity conservation in the Sundarban reserve forest (Tk 382.29 crore) and upgradation of Jessore-Benapole road, including the construction of alternative road near Benapole Land Port (Tk 28.78 crore).

Ministers, concerned Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, secretaries, Governor of the Bangladesh Bank and senior officials attended the meeting.

6 cr new books to be distributed among pry students from Jan 3

The government has decided to distribute six crore new books this year among the primary students free of cost from January 3, reports UNB.

According to an official handout issued last night, a decision was also taken to distribute old books alongside the new ones during the year.

It said each student of class one and class two would receive one old but useable book while that of class three and four get two old books. Each student of class five will get three old books alongside the new ones.

Khaleda

From Page 1
omy, education system, administration, industry and trade and business. Law and order also deteriorated.

The government started borrowing huge amounts from foreign banks as local banks have been facing serious liquidity crisis. Domestic banks are facing liquidity crisis due to excessive borrowing by the government to meet administrative expenditures, she observed.

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Earlier, Begum Zia attended an *iftar* party at Dholaihar High School premises and addressed local people.

Benazir allowed to leave for Dubai

KARACHI, Dec 30: Pakistani authorities allowed former prime minister Benazir Bhutto to board a Dubai-bound flight today, days after they barred her from leaving the country, an official from her party said, reports AP.

Benazir left for Dubai today, said Munawar Suharwardi, a spokesman of her Pakistan Peoples' Party.

On Monday, authorities prevented Bhutto from going to Dubai, saying she may not leave because of corruption cases against her.

Lahore High Court on Tuesday gave permission for her to leave.

"It is a victory of justice," Benazir told reporters at the airport.

guided bombs onto the site at 10:15 am (07:15 GMT), a Pentagon spokesman said.

The aircraft safely departed the area about a half hour later. A spokesman for the British Defense Ministry said: "The firm response to the latest Iraqi provocation is ample evidence of our commitment to patrol the no-fly zone."

No activity was reported in the northern no-fly zone. Senior Airman Adam Stump, a spokesman for Operation Northern Watch said: "We've been carrying out flights as usual today. Everyone arrived safely. There were no incidents reported."



AFM Yusuf Haider, Ferdous Hossain - new DUTA President and Secretary

Whites get top DUTA slots as Blues bicker

Pro-BNP 'White' panel and Pro-Awami League 'Blue' panel shared the 15 seats on the executive committee as Dhaka University teachers chose their new leaders yesterday.

The Whites secured seven posts including president and general secretary and the Blues bagged eight posts including that of vice president and treasurer of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA).

Dr. AFM Yusuf Haider of Physics and Provost of Surya Sen Hall was re-elected president, polling 481 votes. His Blue rival Dr. Md Sahadat Ali got 414.

His Physics colleague Dr. Mesbah Uddin Ahmed became vice president bagging 442 votes. His White panel rival, Dr. Md Khalilur Rahman of Biochemistry got 419 votes.

White panel nominee Md Ferdous Hossain of Political Science was elected general secretary by a narrow margin of seven votes. He scored 446 votes to beat his rival, Blue nominee AAMS, Arefin Siddique of Journalism who pulled 439 votes.

Dr. Md Habibur Rahman of Marketing was elected treasurer. The Blue nominee got 473 votes while his White rival Abu Ahmed polled 460 votes.

White panel candidate Dr. Jahangir Hossain Sarder of Finance and Banking was elected joint secretary. He bagged 446 votes while his rival Blue candidate Dr. Mizanur Rahman got 395 votes.

Dr. SMA Fayed of White panel got the highest number of votes among members.

The Blues won six of the 10 executive committee member seats. They were Abdul Mannan Chowdhury of Management (447 votes), Dr. RIM Aminur Rashid of Physics (473), Dr. Nilufar Nahar of Chemistry (410), Dr. Mohammad Moniruzzaman of Bangla (449), Dr. MD. Anwar Hossain of Biochemistry (433) and Dr. Md Hossain Mansur of Geology (436).

The four White members were Dr. Abul Kalam Manzur Morshed of Bangla (426 votes), Dr. SMA Fayed of Soil Science (510 votes), Dr. Jinnatun Nesa Tahmidia Begum of Botany (461 votes) and Dr. Mamta Uddin Ahmed of Economics (412 votes).

The Left-leaning Pink panel failed to win a single seat. The panel put up candidates for all but treasurer.

The voting took place at the Dhaka University Club from 10 am to 2 pm. Prof. Haduzzaman conducted the election in which 965 teachers cast their votes.

Observers say the results indicated a clear no confidence in the way the current crisis regarding the alleged sexual assault by teachers is being handled by the university administration. It also pointed to the continued erosion of the Blue hold on the affairs of the premier educational institution.

The Blues staged a comeback in recent years, winning all major elections that gave them the control over the policymaking Syndicate, a clear majority in Senate. The deans came from among the Blues. So did most members of powerful the Academic Council. The current vice chancellor also belongs to the Blue panel.

Watchers say yesterday's DUTA results also brought to surface the feuding factions within the Blues. Only last month, the Blues lost vital seats on the Syndicate because of what insiders say intra-group conflict of interests.

Indian navy chief fired

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: India's controversial naval chief, who didn't promote officers recommended by the Defense Ministry, was fired today following a long-running spat with top bureaucrats, reports AP.

"The government has terminated the services of Chief of Navy Staff Admiral (Vishnu) Bhagwat with immediate effect," an official statement said.

Youngman drowns in Kaptai Lake

RANGAMATI, Dec 30: A youngman drowned in Kaptai lake on Tuesday evening, reports APB.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Nurul Islam, 26, son of Sultan Ahmed of village Saragaria in Satkania thana of Chittagong district.

Police said Nurul Islam drowned in the lake while fishing.

New Press Club office-bearers

By Staff Correspondent
Shapan Shaha became the new general secretary of the Jatiya Press Club while the count continued for president as the last reports came in late last night.

Badiul Alam was elected senior vice president and Farid Hossain vice president, while Abdul Baten won as treasurer.

Counting for other posts was yet to complete till writing of this report.

Sihanouk's 'no' to amnesty for Khmer leaders

PHNOM PENH, Dec 30: King Norodom Sihanouk refused Wednesday to approve amnesty for two leaders of the genocidal Khmer Rouge, setting up a collision course with his prime minister, who has pledged to shield them from trial, reports AP.

The refusal casts doubt on the legitimacy of the deal Prime Minister Hun Sen has made with Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea to defect to the government in exchange for assurances they will not be tried for crimes against humanity.

"Taking into account they very wide and undeniable discontent of the majority of the Khmer people, I announce to this majority that I respect them and will not renew my power of amnesty for major Khmer Rouge criminals, who are anti-Cambodian people," the king said.

Sihanouk, 76, receiving medical treatment for a brace of ailments in Beijing, made the comments in his palace bulletin.

Sihanouk said that an international tribunal would have "the perfect right to take up the case of genocide in Cambodia."

Protest

From Page 1
The Daily Star when asked if he was protesting the controversy and chaos on the campus surrounding the allegations of abuse by teachers.

The professor spoke of his plans to launch a campaign for a better campus situation, to which some 20-25 teachers had already lent support.

Activists of left-wing Bangladesh Chhatra Union also expressed solidarity with him.

Manju expelled

From Page 1
ouster from power.

The schism that rocked the JP boat began with a wrestling bout between Kazi Zafar Ahmed and present Secretary General of JP Nazimul Rahman Manju at a rally at Manik Mia Avenue shortly after Ershad was released from jail on January 8, 1997.

Earlier, Ershad had replaced Anwar Hossain Manju with Nazimul Rahman Manju party secretary general as Kazi Zafar had built pressure for withdrawing him from the government. But it failed to cool their heels and Kazi Zafar formed a JP faction bringing the group close to the BNP-led Seven Party Alliance and joined its agitation programmes.

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