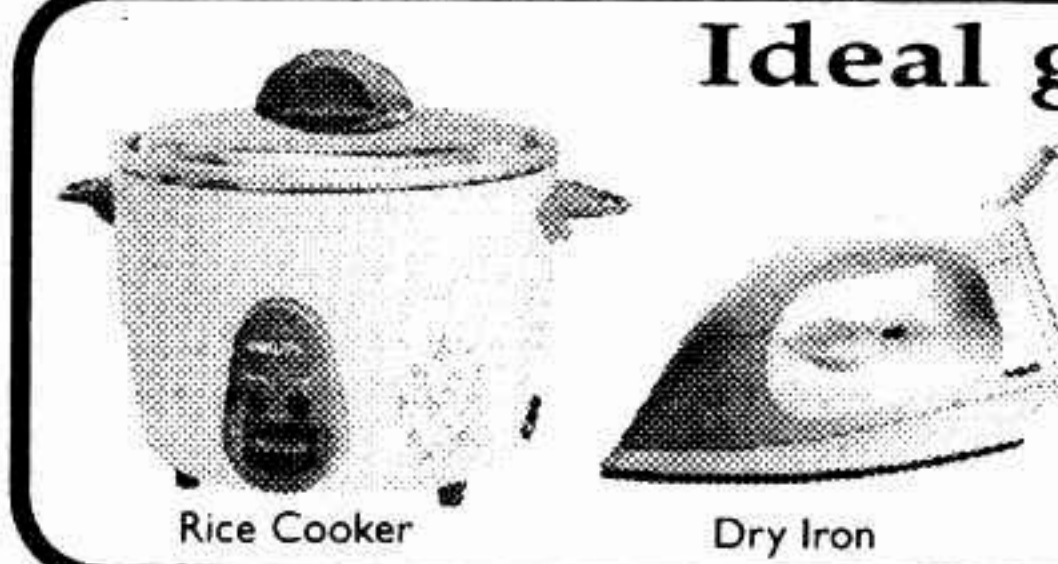


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Jurors take oath today for impeachment trial

WASHINGTON, Jan 5: Within hours after the ceremonial convening of the 106th Congress tomorrow newly sworn-in members of the House will vote on authorizing key lawmakers to present evidence against President Bill Clinton in a Senate impeachment trial, officials said, reports AP.

Rep Dennis Hastert, the Illinois Republican on the brink of election as House speaker, said he hopes the proposal — identical to the one that cleared the House in December will pass, and Republican vote counters expressed confidence.

"I would certainly like to see Henry Hyde be able to present the testimony and what he needs to do to put his case forward," Hastert said Monday in a reference to the Illinois lawmaker who chaired the impeachment inquiry in the House.

Hastert made his comments as Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott struggled to line up fellow Republicans behind a bipartisan plan for a truncated trial-like proceeding that could be wrapped up within days, without testimony from any of the key principals in the case. Key conservatives expressed unhappiness with the suggestion.

At the White House, the president's lawyers continued to develop and elaborate defense that could take weeks or months to present if the case goes to a full-blown trial.

Advisers familiar with the developing defense strategy said lawyers are working on trial motions concerning evidence and an opening presentation that would sharply attack the House conclusions and the evidence from prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

The opening presentation

"would be far more extensive and sharper in tone and content" than the one Clinton's lawyers made before the House Judiciary Committee in arguing the evidence didn't warrant impeachment, one lawyer said.

The House approved two articles of impeachment on Dec 19, accusing Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice in connection with an attempt to conceal his sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

The requirement for a repeat vote on appointing so-called House managers, or prosecutors, in the new Congress means newly elected lawmakers will vote on the momentous issue on their first day in office. It also gives fresh opportunities to Democrats — who gained seats in the November elections — to affect the course of an impeachment they have sought to thwart.

New citizen's body in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Jan 5: Brihattar Chattagram Nagorik Parishad (Greater Chittagong Citizen's Committee) a new organization floated here to fight for the cause of greater Chittagong, today demanded transparency in the deal for setting up a private container terminal by a foreign company at Patenga.

"If the deal is transparent, we have nothing to oppose," Chairman of the Parishad Giasuddin Kader Chowdhury MP said at a press conference. He claimed that his organisation was a non-political forum.

Asked about the Parishad's policy on transit facilities to India through Chittagong port, Giasuddin replied "We wouldn't say anything about it right now."

He also demanded development of infrastructures in Chittagong city to turn it into a commercial capital.

In this regard he urged the authorities concerned to shift the offices of Shipping Ministry, Industries Ministry, Naval headquarters, Chief Controller of Import and Export, Joint Stock Company, National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Export Promotion Bureau to Chittagong.

Member Secretary of Parishad Kazi Akbar also spoke on the occasion.

All voters to get ID card by June this year

All the 56.72 million voters will be given Identity Card (ID) by June next, assured the Secretary of the Election Commission yesterday, reports UNB.

The ID card will have multiple purposes — in 14 other purposes besides voting.

Abdullah Haroon Pasha informed this at a workshop on parliamentary reporting at PIB which was organised by the Commonwealth Press Union, Bangladesh Section.

Sayedee couldn't hold meeting at Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Jan 5: Police swung on action when activists of Tawhede Janata tried to hold a meeting defying section 144 at Charpara in the town today, reports UNB.

Maulana Delwar Hossain Sayedee was scheduled to address the meeting.

The local administration imposed section 144 as Tawhede Janata and All-party Students Alliance (APSA) called meetings at the same venue at the same time.

Police lobbed 32 rounds of teargas shells to disperse the party members and broke down the stage. They also prevented the APSA members from going to the meeting venue.

The APSA activists and supporters laid a road block and a protest procession and demonstrated on the Anandamohon College campus.

Delwar Hossain Sayedee, however, addressed a meeting at Chhonkanda Dakhil Madrasah in Fulbaria thana this morning.

Bridge

From Page 1

gerous level," said Dr Shafiqul of Civil Engineering Department of BUET, who visited the site as an expert under invitation of the RHD.

He said there might be some problem at the foundation level, adding the RHD is taking steps to measure the level of settlement of the bridge.

US, Iraqi jets clash in 'no-fly' zone

WASHINGTON, Jan 5: Four US fighter jets fired air-to-air missiles at Iraqi planes today in a confrontation in the 'no-fly' zone over southern Iraq, a senior US administration official said, reports AP.

The US missiles apparently failed to hit the Iraqi planes, although one Iraqi plane was believed to have crashed, apparently after running out of fuel, the official said.

The American planes — two Air Force F-15 strike aircraft and two Navy F-14 fighters — returned safely after the confrontation, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The Navy planes were from the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson.

The incident, which happened at about 2:30 am EST (0730 GMT), marked an escalation of tensions between Iraq and the United States and Britain over enforcing the 'no-fly' zones in northern and southern Iraq. Iraq considers the restrictions illegal and has vowed to defy them.

A senior Pentagon official, who also confirmed the incident, said the air-to-air altercation was the first in Iraq since December 27, 1992, when a US F-16 shot down an Iraqi MiG-25.

The Pentagon official said he could not identify the number or type of Iraqi aircraft involved in today's incident, but that the Iraqis have MiGs and Mirage F-1s in their current inventory.

President Bill Clinton has said US and British forces will continue banning Iraqi flights in the restricted zones, arguing that Saddam Hussein's military still represents a threat to minority Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

"The president has made it clear we will enforce the no-fly zones vigorously. The Iraqi violations are at their own peril," David Leavy, spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said today.

Earlier, the prime minister witnessed the operation of the most modern technology used in the OB Van. She saw the new equipment and machinery, including digital camera, video mixing panel and lighting system set under the BMR project.

Hasina also visited master control room, news studio and a programme studio decorated with modern facilities.

BTV used 22 cameras, including two cableless RF cameras to record the entire function. This is for the first time BTV has used 22 cameras for one function.

Later, addressing the guests at the BTV auditorium, the prime minister said the world has entered into the bedroom of people due to free flow of information, satellite system and modern broadcasting facilities.

To facilitate free flow of information and build up a competitive broadcasting system, the government has decided to open the television to private operation, she said.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, Japanese ambassador in Dhaka Yoshikazu Kaneko, information secretary M Akmal Hossain and

BNP sources said the party is unlikely to boycott the city corporation and municipal elections if it thinks it could be "useful to create power-base for a bigger purpose" — winning the next general elections.

Nevertheless, the party would continue to demand a new look Election Commission and "an end to repression" on its leaders and workers till the local polls.

All the parties would also keep demanding introduction of ID cards for voters before the coming elections, the sources said.

Khaleda Zia's official residence-turned-party office at 29 Minar Road has seen a spurt of activity for the past few days. Top leaders of BNP came regularly, so did many from other opposition parties.

Asked if his party demanded all local polls under a caretaker government, the deposed President said, "If our demands for fair polls are met, we're ready to contest the city corporation and the pourashava elections only under the AL government. But we still prefer the Upazila polls under a caretaker administration."

"The nature of movement would be the same as Hasina and Khaleda did against my government and Hasina and myself did against Khaleda's,"

of the company. So why should they be charged?" He said there were seven other directors of the company beside these two.

"And the managing director who has also been accused does not have a single share in the company. He is a paid employee."

He also criticised the probe committee report. "It said 'Shinepukur appears to be one of the companies having large volume in trading.'"

It's a company with a paid-up capital of Tk 252 crore and the number of its shares are 2.92 crore. Its 51 lakh shares have been transacted during the period under review. The trade amounts to only 19.75 per cent, he argued. "So could it be considered large volume of trading?"

One of the accusations against his clients, he said, was that the shares were sold in the kurb market, which is illegal. Then, he asked, why the government did not take steps to stop this illegal trading.

He quoted the probe committee report to say aspiration and expectations of people picked up in the wake of political stability after the general elections of 1996 and the installation of a new government, which gave investors the confidence, stirring up the stock market.

"There was increase in pressure to buy shares both in primary and secondary markets."

"If the committee whose report is the basis of the petitions says this then why are my clients being accused," he argued. "It's the government and finance minister S A M S Kibria who should be blamed."

Everyday the market went

BTV must keep pace with fast changing world: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh Television will have to play its role in protecting, preserving and flourishing history, tradition, culture and heritage of the Bengali nation, reports UNB.

"BTV should also play its part in building poverty and exploitation-free prosperous Bangladesh and inspire the people to keep pace with the fast changing world," she said while inaugurating a BMR project of BTV at TV Bhavan in the city yesterday.

The BMR (Balancing, Modernisation and Rehabilitation) project of Bangladesh Television has been completed at a cost of Tk 69 crore that include a Japanese grant of Tk 41 crore.

A latest OB (outdoor broadcasting) Van, with cableless RF cameras, was also procured at a cost of Tk 12.50 crore under the project. This van will give a new dimension to BTV's outdoor shooting.

Earlier, the prime minister witnessed the operation of the most modern technology used in the OB Van. She saw the new equipment and machinery, including digital camera, video mixing panel and lighting system set under the BMR project.

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Everyday the market went

Earlier, seven other accused in three other cases appeared in the court and prayed for bail.

The companies are: Mostak Ahmed Sadek, Sharif Ataur Rahman, Syed Habbub Morshed and Hemayetuddin Ahmed of HMMS Financial Consultancy & Services Ltd, Nurunnabi of Rupon Oil, Runa Alam and Sabet Siddique of SES companies.

The hearings on framing charges against HMMS would begin on February 8, Rupon Oil on February 9 and SES on January 14.

Sabet Siddique prayed for appearance through his lawyer on the next day of appearance saying that he was suffering from heart ailments. The court will hear on the petitions on January 14 as there was objection from the prosecution.

Construction of low-cost flats Rajuk rules to be amended to allow foreign investors

The government has decided to invite foreign and local investors to construct housing complexes for low and limited income groups on the outskirts of the capital, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting relating to construction of housing flats in the city with Telecommunications and Works Minister Mohammad Nasim in the chair.

Talking to newsmen at his office yesterday Nasim said the meeting decided to amend the existing rules of Rajuk making provision for foreign investors to invest in the housing sector as they are doing in the gas and telecom sectors.

Under the plan, the government would construct 10,000 to 100,000 low-cost flats for the people having low and limited

income. Each flat would cost Tk 5-7 lakh.

Investors from Malaysia, Australia and other countries have already submitted proposals for the projects. The Works Ministry has asked Rajuk to examine the proposals. To maintain transparency, more than one proposal of private investors would be considered.

Nasim said the government would bring necessary amendments to the existing laws to quicken the implementation of the housing projects before the NAM summit in 2001.

The minister said big cities were facing an acute housing problem and the government could only solve 10 to 20 per cent of it. Without participation of local and foreign investors in

the housing sector, this growing problem could not be solved in next 30 to 40 years.

"The government," he said, "will follow the way Malaysia, Sri Lanka, China and Thailand have taken in solving the housing problem. In light of the government's plans, the housing sector would be opened up gradually for the private entrepreneurs."

He said amendments would be made to existing laws so that the Housing Directorate could also go for joint venture in real estate.

In reply to a question, the Works Minister said Malaysia had offered to construct 30,000 such flats. The probable site would be derelict land along the Mawa road.

Tug of war continues

From Page 1

of JP, had met Ershad on Monday, ostensibly to explain his meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Sunday night along with a dozen JP MPs including Anwar Hossain Manju.

Though Mizan denied having met the prime minister, he reportedly told Ershad that whatever he was doing was aimed at his (Ershad) "wellbeing".

Sources close to Ershad said that he served the elderly leader with a "final warning", asking him not to hobnob with Manju to avert meeting his fate. Manju was expelled from JP on Wednesday.

They claimed that the JP MPs who went to the Ganobhavan "explained" their position to Ershad. Eleven MPs had gone to the Ganobhavan Sunday night.

They either phoned him or separately called on him at his residence cum office at Baridhara since meeting the prime minister, explaining that they met her to discuss development programmes and post-flood rehabilitation in their constituencies.

Meanwhile, some more MPs including Advocate Fazle Rabbi, Dr Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury and Karimuddin Bharsa, all from Rangpur and Shah Moazzam Hossain Kaikobad from Comilla were present at an after party Ershad hosted for Ulemas and religious leaders at a city hotel yesterday.

Sources close to Manju said that apart from those who went

to Ganobhavan to express their solidarity with him, some more MPs met him since he was "arbitrarily" expelled from the party.

Kazi Firoze Rashid, known to be loyal to Ershad, also met Manju yesterday, the sources said. But it was not known immediately what they discussed.

Manju told The Daily Star before leaving for Bhandaria yesterday that he did not believe in "number". "There is no need for head-counting since their parliament membership is secured". He admitted having met some more MPs but would not disclose their identity.

"I am going to my constituency (Bhandaria) today. I am more concerned about country's stability. It is an issue of road to democracy vs the course of instability pursued by Ershad".

He also blasted Ershad for spitting venom against him. "What has gone wrong that he (Ershad) did not raise all these issues during the two and a half years since the government of consensus was formed", he posed the question.

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Share scam: Defence blames govt, SEC for mess

From Page 1
poses, they need to give a number of advertisements. And it is not clear which advertisement they are talking about."

The cement advertisement appeared on November 17 1996 and the share prices soared to their highest on November 30 1996. So if the advertisements at all affected the share prices, it would be only for eight days.

But in the petition, the SEC said that the period under review was July to December 1996.

Serajul Haq then argued that if anyone was to be blamed for the market manipulation it would have to be the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

"It was the SEC which imposed a 10 per cent restriction on price movement in the form of circuit breaker on October 10 1996. When the restriction was imposed the share price of Shinepukur was only Tk 194 per share."

"So how could my clients have raised the share price when their was circuit breaker imposed?"

"The SEC order to impose circuit breaker also came in the press and price of the shares rose by 10 per cent every day. So why should SEC not be blamed," Serajul Haq said.

The fourth accusation, he said, was that the company issued 125 rights shares against every existing share. "Even here, the prosecution failed to mention any date. The rights shares were introduced in 1994 but they are raising question about it in 1996."

"What did they do in the two

years (1994-1996)?" he asked. Serajul Haq also said that the prosecution was blaming his clients for sufferings of the innocent people. "I say it's the SEC which should be blamed for their sufferings. It's their total ignorance and misconception due to which the economy is suffering. Is it an offence if the sponsors subscribe the unsubscribed shares? The law says that the underwriters and the sponsors can subscribe the shares. So where is the offence?"

He then referred to the fifth charge which said that the probe committee found Tk 163 crore against an issue of Tk 250 crore.

"The 40,000 shareholders who appeared in two annual general meetings (AGMs) did not raise any question about it ... neither the auditors nor the SEC ... but after the stock market crash, some committee members are saying that the fund is not there and it's a violation of section 17 of the Securities and Exchange Ordinance 1969."

"I don't blame the poor professors for not finding the money. Probably they don't know that much accounting. There is one more thing they probably don't know, that is, share purchase against property. They money was not found because of that reason," the defence lawyer argued.

Regarding hotel business, he said it was a matter of 1994 and that the promise could not be kept because the present government acquired the lands for Bangabandhu Medical College in exchange for another piece of

land. About cement company, he said it could not be set up as the government did not give permission for it.

Calling the prosecution allegations "frivolous, misconceived with mala fide intention and a conspiracy to ruin his clients' businesses," Serajul Haq said.

Barrister Rafiqul Huq in his arguments said that the charges were during the period between July and December 1996. "So anything before July should not come into the court."

Huq then quoted a section of the probe committee report which states, "In Bangladesh, before the promulgation of the guidelines on issue of rights shares by SEC dated February 11 1995, companies were free to issue rights shares at any ratio and at any price they decided."

"So rights issue could not be a ground since it happened long time ago -- in 1995. In December 1994, the rights issues were floated and the prosecution is saying they (the accused) manipulated the market with these unsubscribed issues of 1995."

"If prosecution is trying to say that my clients floated the shares in 1995 knowing that there would be a chance to manipulate and sell shares in 1996, after almost one and half years, then I would say that Salman is a god," Huq said. "It is impossible to predict such things."

He also said that Sohail and Salman are chairman and vice chairman of the company. "They only chair meetings of the company and are not responsible for day-to-day affairs

ফেডারেশন অফ বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার্স অফ কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি

ফোন : ৯৫৬০১০২-৩, ফ্যাক্স : ৮৬৩২১৩

সম্মানিত রপ্তানীকারকদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ

রপ্তানী খাতে অধিকতর পতি সম্ভরণের লক্ষ্যে ফেডারেশন অফ বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার্স অফ কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এফবিসিসিআই) বিশেষ উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করেছে। এ লক্ষ্যে দেশের রপ্তানীকারকদের পণ্য ভিত্তিক তালিকা প্রণয়ন এবং রপ্তানীযোগ্য পণ্য উৎপাদন নিয়োজিত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিনিধিকে পণ্য রপ্তানীতে সহায়তা প্রদান, রপ্তানী ক্ষেত্রে বিরাজমান সমস্যা/চিহ্নিতকরণ এবং সরকারের সাথে আলোচনার মাধ্যমে তার সমাধানের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হচ্ছে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, যারা রপ্তানীযোগ্য বা উন্নতমানের পণ্য উৎপাদন করছেন অথবা রপ্তানী করতে সক্ষম হচ্ছেন না, তাদের পণ্য রপ্তানী বিপণনেও এফবিসিসিআই সহায়তা প্রদান করবে।

এ উদ্যোগের কার্যকরী বাস্তবায়নের জন্য সম্মানিত রপ্তানীকারক ও রপ্তানীযোগ্য পণ্য উৎপাদকগণকে তাদের নাম, ঠিকানা, টেলিফোন নং, ফ্যাক্স নং, ই-মেইল নং সহ রপ্তানী সংক্রান্ত সমস্যাদির বিবরণ এবং সম্ভাব্য সমাধানের প্রস্তাবসমূহ সচিব, এফবিসিসিআই, ৬০, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০ এর নিকট আগামী ৩০শে জানুয়ারী, ১৯৯৯ ইং তারিখের মধ্যে প্রেরণের জন্য বিনীত অনুরোধ জানানো হচ্ছে।

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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