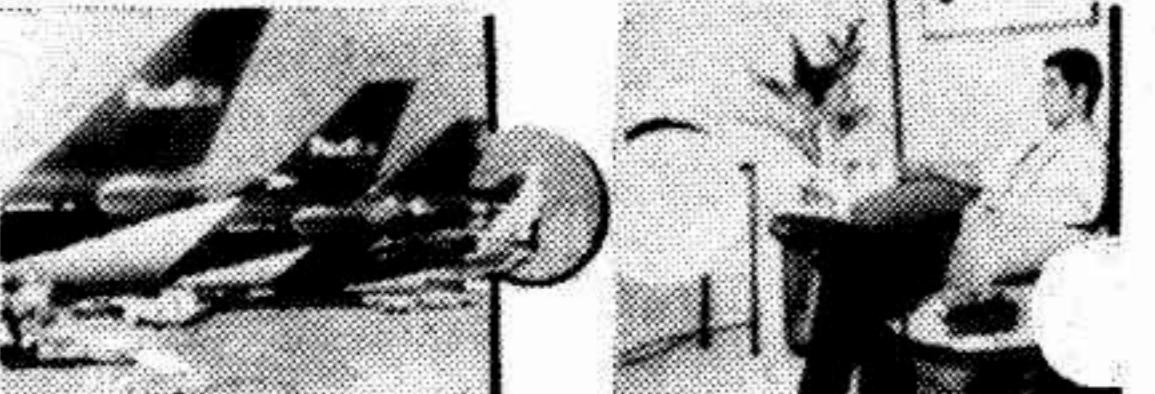


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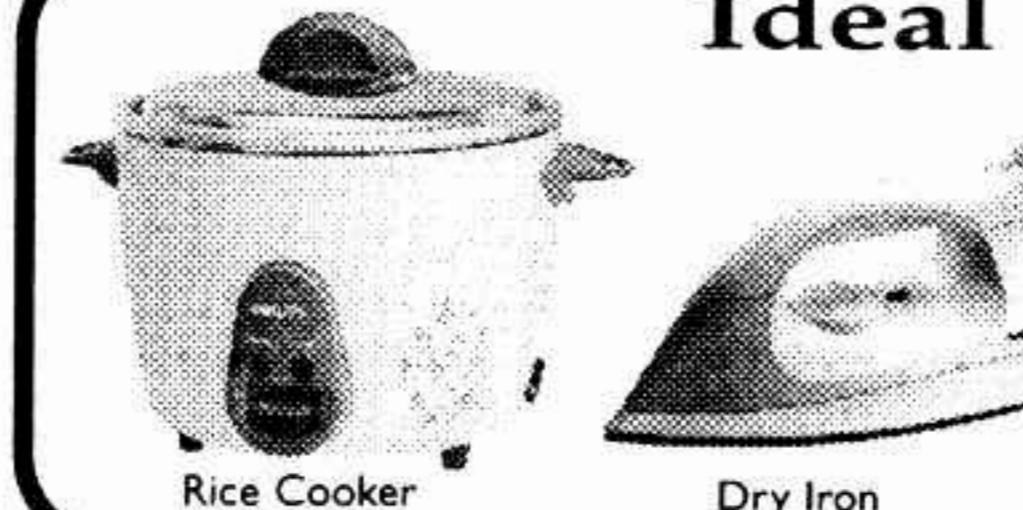
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Jurors take oath today for impeachment trial

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.

The opening presentation

New citizen's body in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 5: Brihatter Chittagong Nagarik Parishad (Greater Chittagong Citizen's Committee) a new organisation 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 Giassuddin 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, Giassuddin 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 Comptroller 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 multipurpose use — in 14 other purposes besides voting.

Abdullah Haroon Pasha informed this at a workshop on parliamentary reporting by 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 Tawhidia Janata tried to hold a meeting defying section 144 at Charpara in the town today, reports UNB.

Maulana Delwar Hossain Sayeede was scheduled to address the meeting.

The local administration imposed section 144 as Tawhidia Janata and All-party Students' Alliance (APS) 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 later brought out a protest procession and demonstrated on the Anandamohon College campus.

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

Bridge

From Page 1
gerous level," said Dr Shafiqullah 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.

"It is clear that the (jail killing) case is politically motivated," he added.

The BNP lawmakers said: Before submitting charge sheet in the cooked up case, public statements were made from the top level of the government and by other leading figures issuing threats and dishing out falsehood to influence the legal process. Such statements tantamount to showing disregard to the law and the judiciary.

"It is clear that the (jail killing) case is politically motivated," he added.

"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 (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.

He then referred to the fifth charge which said that the probe committee found Tk 163 crore against an issue of Tk 163 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 1996.

"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."

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

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 there total ignorance and misconception due to which the economy is suffering. Is it an offence if the sponsors subscribe the un-subscribed 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 163 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 1996."

"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 Salma is a god," Haq said. "It is impossible to predict such things."

He also said that Sohel 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."

"What did they do in the two

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).

"I 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 Shilnepukur 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.

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"What did they do in the two

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 plane, 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.

In this regard he urged the authorities concerned to shift the offices of Shipping Ministry, Industries Ministry, Naval headquarters, Chief Comptroller 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.

Accord to oust govt

From Page 1

campaign.

A top BNP leader confirmed the Jamaat-BNP accord. "As we did with the JP yesterday, we've reached similar understanding with the Jamaat today," BNP secretary general told reporters, emerging from the meeting.

He also disclosed the BNP plan to open dialogue "soon" with the Left and centrist parties.

Jamaat leader Nizami was more specific. "We're preparing for any kind of agitation programme needed to have a mid-term election."

Her meeting with Jamaat over, Khaleda Zia had her third round of discussion — this time with Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) at the same venue.

A seven-member IOJ team, led by its chief Mufti Fazlul Haq Amin, also agreed with the BNP chief along the JP-Jamaat lines.

BNP also plans to sit with some other smaller parties this morning before announcing its fresh agitation programmes in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, a JP presidium meeting today is due to endorse the party's understanding with BNP in their meeting on Monday.

Reached by telephone, JP chief General Ershad told The Daily Star last night that the four parties had already on their programmes.

"We'll make our identical demands public tomorrow. But all our programmes may not be the same. From four separate platforms -- BNP, JP, Jamaat and IOJ -- we'll launch agitation programmes with the common objectives -- making fair all the future elections including those of the city corporations, pourashavas and the Upazillas," the former general said.

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 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 Minto Road has had a spurt of activity for the past few days. Top leaders of BNP came regularly, so did many from other opposition parties.

BNP sources said the party is unlikely to boycott the city corporation and pourashava 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.

Referred to law and order situation in the city he said that the party's understanding with BNP in their meeting on Monday.

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According to sources, the opposition parties might go for such programmes as public rallies, processions and "mass contact" while tougher ones like "hartaal and gherao" might follow. But all those programmes would start after the Eid-ul-Fitr, the sources said.

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