

What's on today . . .

Dress exhibition: Rakha's creation opens its 3-day-long dress exhibition. Venue: Gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Exhibition: Kay Kraft opens an 11-day-long exhibition of its Eid-ul-Fitr collection. Venue: Conference room of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Seminar: A week-long seminar on "Role of women in the changing society" will be inaugurated. Organiser: Sanjukta Mohila Parishad. Venue: BSSF Support Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 10 am.

Seminar: A seminar titled "Power Sector Reforms: Bangladesh Perspectives" will be held. Bangladesh Water and Power Diploma Engineers' Association has organised the seminar on the occasion of its 10th National and 16th council conference. Venue: WAPDA auditorium.

..... and tomorrow

Jewellery Show: A week-long exhibition by Abrarur Rahman will begin. Abrar, a graduate of Industrial Arts from Chittagong University, experimented with different forms and medium for bringing out the excellence in jewellery. Mahub Jamil, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will inaugurate the exhibition. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3 pm to 8 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Prevailing dry weather will continue over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, according to Met Office.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 29.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and lowest of 10 degree at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	26.1	13.0
Chittagong	27.9	72
Rajshahi	25.6	81
Khulna	27.8	74
Barisal	27.0	76
Sylhet	26.8	79
Cox's Bazar	29.0	70

HERE and THERE

IEB workshop

A workshop on "Foundation Equipments and Foundation Technique" organised by the Civil Engineering Division, IEB was held at the Engineering Staff College in Munshiganj on December 21, says a press release.

Prof Dr AMM Safiullah, Dean, Department of Civil Engineering, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Md Nurul Amin, Managing Director, Foundation Consultants Ltd, Bipradash Rajbongshi of House Building Research Institute were present as speakers in the workshop.

SM Shahidullah, Managing Director, Shahidullah and New Associates Ltd, was present as special guest while Md Meser Ali Khan, Chairman, Civil Engineering Division, IEB, presided over the inaugural ceremony.

Sixty-two delegates from government, semi-government, autonomous and private organisations participated in the workshop.

Bangladesh Scouts

A day-long orientation course on leprosy was held at the Shams Hall of Bangladesh Scout Bhaban in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Scouts, Dhaka Metropolitan Scouts and Leprosy Control Programme jointly organised the course.

M Fazlur Rahman, National Commissioner (Community Development and Health) and Secretary to the Ministry of Science and Technology, attended the inaugural ceremony as chief guest while Mohammad Lutfur Rahman, Civil Surgeon, Dhaka was present as special guest.

Habibul Alam, Bir Protik, National Commissioner (Programme) and Mohammad Abul Hossain Sikder, Executive

Secretary (in-charge) of Bangladesh Scouts also spoke on the occasion.

Dr Jalaluddin Ahmed, Deputy Programme Manager of Leprosy Control Programme, was the course coordinator while Mihir Kanti Majumder, Deputy National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts, presided. A total of 70 professionals, unit leaders and Scouts took part in the course.

Khelaghar

A 15-member team of Khelaghar led by its Chairman Prof Panna Kaiser yesterday called on State Minister for Children Affairs Prof Zinnatunnesa Talukdar, reports BSS.

The team will attend a week-long camp beginning December 24 in Nadia district of India at the invitation of the all-India children organisation "Sab Peyechhir Asar", said an official handout.

Talking to the team, the state minister said the government has taken a long-term programme to help blossom the latent talents of children.

DAB

Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) has condemned what it dubbed, "harassing" transfer of the doctors throughout the country since after the last elections of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA).

A DAB press release issued yesterday by its member secretary Dr A Z M Zahid Hossain also condemned five-time transfers of Khulna unit general secretary of BMA Dr Rafiqul Haq within a span of two years time and latest relieve order on him.

DAB noted that BMA leadership should rise above political allegiance and redress such transfers under duress.

Dhaka eagerly waiting to give hearty reception to Clinton: Sayeed

WASHINGTON, Dec 22: Bangladesh is eagerly waiting to give a hearty reception to President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton, State Minister for Information Prof A. Sayeed told Karl F. Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, reports BSS.

Prof Sayeed, who is now on a visit to the United States, had a discussion with Inderfurth yesterday on a wide range of issues including the forthcoming visit of President Clinton to Bangladesh and US-Bangladesh business relations.

The visit of President Clinton will make significant contribution to the relations between the two countries, Prof Sayeed commented.

Reiterating Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's appeal to the US companies to make more investments in Bangladesh and also to diversify those, Prof Sayeed said telecommunications, computer software and leather could be the probably areas where the US companies will find investment attractive.

The Information Minister briefed Inderfurth on various steps taken by the present government to improve standard of living, strengthen democratic institutions, alleviate poverty and remove illiteracy.

Referring to cultural invasion through satellite, the State

Minister said appropriate measures should be taken to protect one's own cultural heritage. He said cultural aggression is posing a threat to the protection and promotion of one's values, culture, heritage, history and tradition.

Prof Sayeed informed Inderfurth that Bangladesh was going to enact laws to deal with cultural invasion and sought US assistance in the form of legislative document if they have any.

On the question of the press and publication, the Information Minister said the present government has ensured total freedom of the press. As a result there has been a geometric growth in the number of dailies and weeklies in the last few years. We neither censor nor issue instructions as were done in the past, he mentioned.

Haripur project

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trend' in power sector investment and so PDB had to reschedule the bid closing deadline.

PDB recently took up several small and medium size power projects and is also pursuing private power projects. PDB will set up two gas-based power plants in Baghabari and Kushia in near future, the sources said.

Ershad hosts iftar for politicians

By Staff Correspondent

Former president General H M Ershad hosted an iftar party for the politicians yesterday, drawing top brasses to minnows from the opposition alliance and journalists.

And the host Secretary General of the party Nazim Rahman Manjur, known for his hospitality, did not lag behind to treat his guests at his sprawling compound of the Asiatic Printers' at Tejgaon.

The elite among the politicians had a special treat. The iftar dish was replete with a fruit basket, containing grapes to apples. But for the lesser mortals the iftar was simple — puffed rice, pila, dates, etc minus the fruit basket.

The sit planning for Khaleda Zia and Ershad was side by side at the iftar party. The JP chief sat at the right side of the BNP chairperson. After the iftar, the sit arrangement of Khaleda and Ershad was similar at the office room of the JP secretary general where they discussed for sometime.

Khaleda Zia, HM Ershad, AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Prof Jahannara Begum, Nazim Rahman Manjur, Roushan Ershad, Golam Azam and Fazlul Haq Amini sat in one table at the iftar.

Ershad was seen always trying to talk with Khaleda Zia while the photo journalists continued taking snaps until the BNP chief left the Asiatic Printers' at 6:10 pm. Khaleda reached the venue at 5:02 pm.

There was also a tough competition among the junior and mid-ranking JP leaders, who lined up behind Khaleda and Ershad for taking photographs. Khaleda's private security members apparently failed to refrain the JP leaders from doing so.

BNP leaders including Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Moudud Ahmed, M Shamsul Islam MP, Tariqul Islam, Lt Gen (Retd) Mahbub Rahman, Abdullah Al Noman and Anwar Zahid, Jamaat leaders Abdul Qader Mollah and ATM Azharul Islam, IOJ leaders ARM Abdul Matin, Jagga president Shaiful Alam Prohan, PNP chairman Shaikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu and others attended the iftar party.

Opposition

From page 1

taken the decision to refrain from attending the upcoming Sangsad session. We have discussed the matter of resignation of MPs of the opposition parties from parliament, but it is yet to be finalised.

BNP leaders including Moudud Ahmed, Abdullah Al Noman and Anwar Zahid, JP leaders Kazi Firoz Rashid and Saifur Rahman, Jamaat leaders Abdul Qader Mollah and ATM Azharul Islam and IOJ leaders Fazlul Haq Amini and ARM Abdul Matin also attended the brief meeting.

Meanwhile, the BNP is expected to formally respond to the Speaker's letter today explaining why the party MPs would not join the Sangsad session beginning January 1.

Competent sources said the draft of the reply letter has already been finalised after consultation with top ranking leaders and party MPs. The draft letter was also placed to Khaleda Zia for her approval, and she okayed it yesterday.

Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar, who returned from his constituency yesterday afternoon, told this correspondent that he had not yet seen the reply letter and added that he would definitely read it today.

Talking to The Daily Star, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury said: "the reply letter is being prepared and there is possibility of handing it over to the Speaker by tomorrow. Now we are taking opinion from all about joining the Sangsad."

In reply to a question regarding joining the upcoming session, he said: "everybody will be able to know the contents after the delivery of the letter." He, however, declined a direct reply to the question, whether or not the BNP will join the session.

Khandaker Delwar said it is yet to decide whether the Deputy Leader or the Chief Whip will reply to the letter on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Millennium bug: Is country ready to face Y2K problem?

Is Bangladesh really ready to face the millennium bug problem beginning at dawn of the year 2000?

Government officials are everyday describing their success in making systems and microchips as Y2K compliant with optimism that nothing will happen in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

But a belated step by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) raised many a question about the actual preparedness and the veracity of statements released by the concerned Y2K officials.

While both the CAAB and the Y2K Emergency Centre on December 14 said except radar everything of the Civil Aviation system is geared up to deal with the millennium problem, a tender was floated only this week to make its Flight Information Data System (FIDS) Y2K compliant.

The tender was floated on Dec. 20 for upgrading and Y2K compliance of the FIDS at Zia International Airport. Among the firms taking part, one will be given the work on Dec. 27 with only four days in hand to complete the job.

"We are hopeful the concerned party will be able to make the FIDS Y2K compliant by Dec 31," CAAB chairman Group Captain Iqbal Hossain told.

"The FIDS is not something big that might be a cause for a disaster in controlling flights," he said when asked about the belated step to make a system Y2K compliant at the end of the year.

Private sector experts concerned about the millennium bug problem said the FIDS may be a minor system, but the belated step proved "how serious they are on the matter and what bluff the government officials gave earlier saying everything of the CAAB is Y2K compliant."

A high-level audit and review team of the Y2K Emergency Centre, led by national Y2K coordinator and Bangladesh Computer Council executive director Dr Abdus Sobhan, visited the CAAB on Dec. 14 and expressed satisfaction over its preparations certifying everything of the organisation as Y2K compliant.

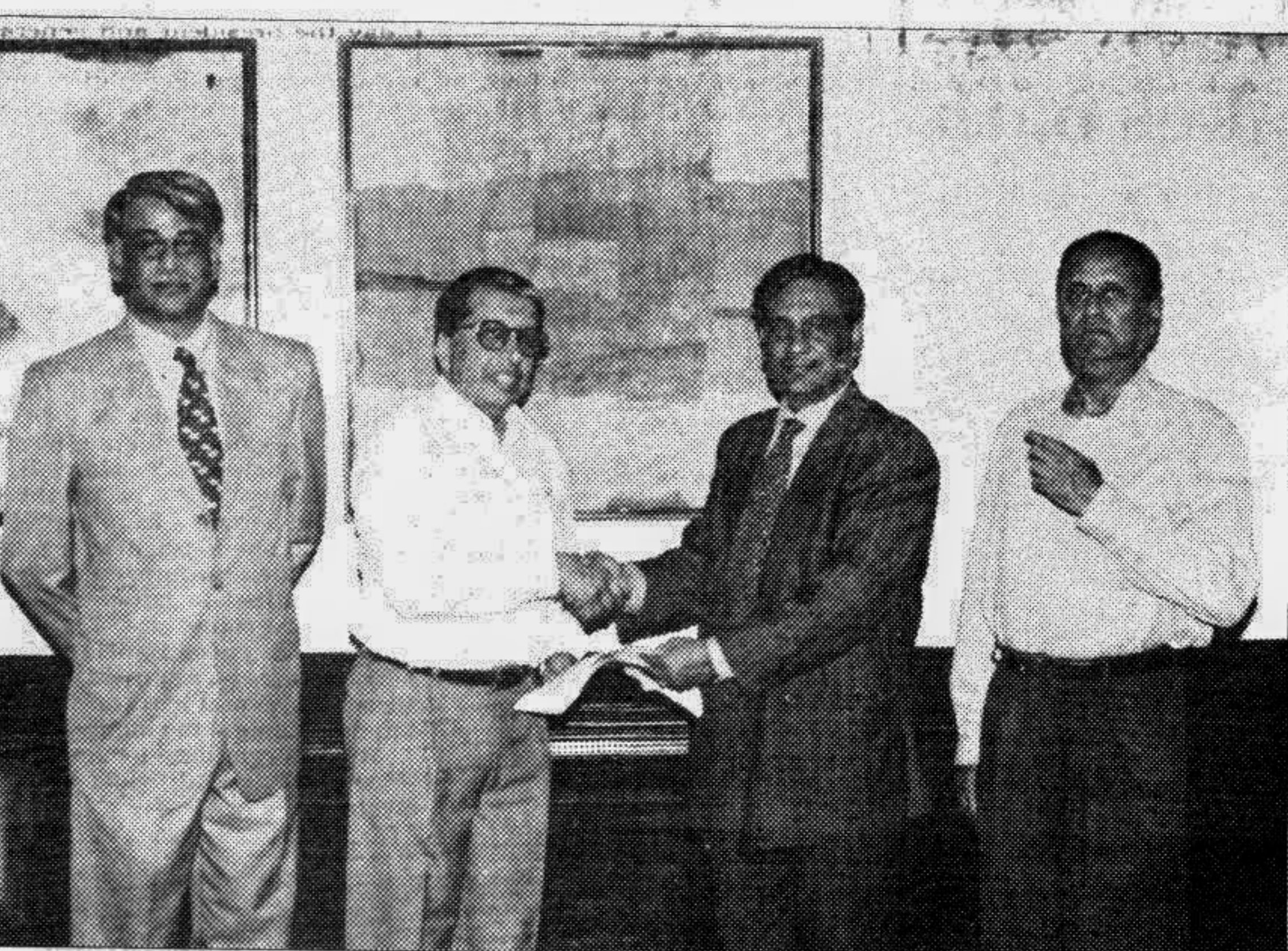
After this visit, officials at the CAAB also gave similar opinion.

Despite the decision of suspending radar operation in the early days of the next year as it was not Y2K compliant, it was surprising that they officially said that the radar operation would not be suspended unless and until any trouble is found.

Meanwhile, a release of the Y2K Emergency Centre said that a high-level team, led by Dr Abdus Sobhan, today (Wednesday) visited some important establishments and checked their computer systems and microchips and expressed satisfaction over their Y2K preparedness.

The installations included Chittagong Port, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation headquarters and its ship Banglar Kollol, Eastern Refinery, Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Factory, Chittagong WASA and Raozan Thermal Power Station.

After examination, the expert team opined that the establishments would not collapse during the rollover period. They, however, advised the concerned authorities to take more steps in strengthening the contingency plan.



Rathikant Basu (left), Chairman, STAR TV Network (South Asia) and Broadcast Worldwide Pvt Ltd shaking hands with Abul Khair, Chairman, Bengal Group, after the signing of two agreements on December 20. Also present on the occasion are Ravi Charanj, Managing Director, Nationwide Communications Ltd and Guha, Director, Broadcast Worldwide Pvt Ltd.

CA Foundation Course admission test results

The Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) has announced the results of CA Foundation Course admission test held on November 26, says

a press release.

The successful candidates have been requested to contact the institute's Senior Assistant Director (Education) or Assistant

Secretary at its Dhaka or Chittagong office for further information.

Following are the numbers of the successful candidates:

1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 113, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 132, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 170, 173, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180, 183, 184, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191, 195, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 204, 205, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224, 225, 226, 229, 230, 231, 232, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, 243, 244, 246, 248, 249, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 260, 261, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 282, 283, 285, 287, 288, 290, 291, 292, 293, 295, 296, 297, 298, 300, 302, 304, 305, 307, 308, 309, 310, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 344, 346, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 355, 356, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 368, 369, 370, 371, 373, 376, 377, 380, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 411, 413, 415, 416, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 480, 481, 482, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 510, 511, 512, 513, 515, 516, 518, 519, 520, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 570, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 582, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 596, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 605, 606, 607, 608, 610, 611, 612, 614, 615, 618, 619, 621, 622, 624, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 659, 660, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 683, 684, 685, 686, 688, 689, 690, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 698, 699, 700, 704, 705, 708, 709, 710, 713, 715, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 729, 730, 731, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 750, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 788, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 809, 813, 814, 815, 818, 819, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 837, 838, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 861, 862, 863, 864, 867, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 879, 880, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 893, 894, 895, 896, 898, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 910, 912, 914, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 926 (Total 700 nos.)

BOI employees

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of an organogram for BOI. BOI leaders claimed that the promotions were due for years and that an organogram for the BOI could not be finalised in the last ten years.

The officials and employees were staging demonstration and chanting slogans against Haque when this correspondent visited the BOI office at Jiban Bima Tower at Dilkusha at about 2 pm. Haque was holding a meeting with senior executives in his room at that time.

Police was guarding the office.

Talking to this correspondent OEWEC Convenor Mahmud Hasan Mia alleged that the executive chairman's decisions and actions were affecting chain of command and working atmosphere in BOI and foreign and local investments as well.

Citing examples, other leaders said immediately after take over, the executive chairman raised the company registration fee with BOI to Tk 100,000 from Tk 10,000 and introduced a work permit fee of Tk 500 for foreign nationals. Such decisions affected investment, they claimed.

The executive chairman over-exercises his powers and misbehaves with officials and employees, they alleged.

The OEWEC was holding a meeting on its four-point demand at the BOI conference room at about 1 pm. Haque entered the room all of a sudden and started abusing them, the

OEWEC leaders alleged. The officials and employees came out immediately and started chanting slogans against the executive chairman, they said.

The BOI Executive Chairman who enjoys the rank and status of a minister denied all the allegations and claimed that the protests were instigated by some vested quarters outside the BOI. But he was reluctant to name those.

He said the decisions to increase the company registration fee and introduce work permit fee for foreign nationals were taken by the BOI Executive Council, not by him.

The decisions were taken in the interest of BOI and to give incentives to its employees, he claimed.

"No complaint was received from any investor or foreign worker. These are nominal charges," he said.

Asked about the demands, he said he also wanted a solution. "These are long-drawn issues and can not be solved in a day".

Haque later offered a dialogue but the OEWEC leaders rejected it, sources said.

Some senior executives said they were trying to find out a solution.

Haque left the office under police protection at about 3:00 pm.

Later, a press release issued by the OEWEC said a memorandum will be submitted to the Prime Minister for his removal.

9 posts of envoys

From page 1

China and South Korea. Besides, tenures of the Bangladesh Ambassador to the US and the Permanent Representative to the UN are also due to expire shortly.

It was however learnt that the government has decided to extend on contract the services of the envoys to the US and UN. They are K M Shehabuddin, Ambassador to Washington and Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Permanent Representative to the UN. The government have found track record of both the envoys "satisfactory", according to sources. Both of them are likely to receive a two-year service extension.

The sources said a few career diplomats; at least two senior serving army officials and a retired bureaucrat are being actively considered for the posts of envoy.

Dr Iftekharul Karim, a director general at the foreign ministry, is expected to be made envoy to Malaysia. The position fell vacant following the recall of political appointee Wajed Ali Khan Panni. Mahbubul Alam, another senior diplomat, is expected to be posted as envoy to Saudi Arabia following the retirement of Abdul Momini Chowdhury. Mohammad Ziauddin, now chief of Protocol, is due to be posted as envoy to Italy. Mohammad Zamir who is posted in Rome is likely to be posted to Brussels as Bangladesh's anchorman to the

Belgium and the European Union. Khairul Anam whose contract was extended is due to return home. Dr M A Samad, another director general in the foreign ministry, is tipped to become the new ambassador to Poland while Humayun Kamal who is now in Poland is due to move to China as the country's new ambassador to that country. AKM Farooq, who served successfully as the country's envoy to Beijing, is retiring from service.

Alimul Huq, who is serving as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Delhi, is likely to be appointed as the envoy to Pakistan. The position fell vacant following retirement of Masum General Anwar. A man who is posted as envoy in Jordan is due for recall following attainment of retirement age. Major General Anwar Hussain and another senior serving general is due for appointment as envoys to two other countries.

Ahmed Rahim has already been appointed as the new envoy to Myanmar replacing Jahangir Sadek.