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Shahjahan, Morshed new IEB leaders

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Engr Muhammad Shahjahan and Engr Khan Monjur Morshed have been elected President and honorary General Secretary respectively of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) for the year 2000-2001 according to unofficial results.

Golam Mohiuddin have been elected Vice-President (Academic), Md Nurul Huda Vice-President (Administration and Finance) and MAK Azad Vice-President (EPSSW).

Md Monowar Hossain Chowdhury and Md Rabul Alam have been elected President and Honorary Secretary General respectively for IEB, Dhaka Centre.

The IEB's biennial election held on Thursday. Some 7,800 voters cast their votes in the election.

Meanwhile, a group of newly elected office-bearers of Institution of Engineers' Bangladesh (IEB) yesterday met BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia at her 29 Minto Road official residence.

The delegation led by Association of Engineers' Bangladesh (AEB) President Engineer L K Siddique and secretary general F M Atiqur Rahman apprised Khaleda Zia of their victory in the IEB polls.

Khaleda Zia congratulated the newly elected office-bearers and said this election will inspire the nationalist and patriotic people of the country to carry forward the current movement.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Tarique Islam, Ashraf Hossain, Haris Chowdhury, Amanullah Aman MP, Zahiruddin Swapan were present on the occasion.

Followers of Charmonai pir postpone march toward Dewanbagh

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 24:

Followers of Charmonai pir here today decided to postpone their procession toward Dewanbagh for three months after a meeting with the local administration, reports UNB.

The administration assured them that the government would fulfil their five-point demand in phases within three months.

Local DC Abdur Rahman presided over the meeting at his office. Divisional Commissioner Mohammad Nizamuddin, Dhaka Range DIG Matir Rahman, president of Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce A K M Selim Osman, district Awami League president Prof Nazma Rahman and president of Unisalamic Activities Resistance Committee Moulana Abdul Awal were present.

Meanwhile, eight magistrates were given the charge of eight vulnerable points as tension gripped the town after Charmonai and Dewanbagh 'pirs' called for gatherings at the same place next Monday.

Four platoons of BDR and huge number of policemen brought from different parts of the district were deployed in the town and its adjoining areas to avert any unwanted incident.

But agitated followers of Charmonai pir gathered on DIT premises after Jumma prayers ignoring presence of law enforcers. They demonstrated and chanted slogans against Dewanbagh 'pir' who allegedly gave some contradictory statements on Allah and His Rasul.

KCC commissioner arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 24: Mohammad Hossain Mukta, KCC commissioner elected from Ward No. 31 was arrested by police this evening from his residence at Labonchora.

Expedited from Awami League last year, Mukta allegedly obstructed arrest of some terrorists from Labonchora this morning.

Police said he was giving shelter to the alleged terrorists for which they could not be arrested. Mukta also attacked police with the help of his armed cadres, it was alleged.

Meanwhile, supporters of the ward commissioner went on rampage for about an hour at different places of the city protesting the arrest.

They exploded cocktails and chased the pedestrians with arms.

Shopkeepers at Picture Palace Square, Dabunglow Square, Sir Iqbal Road and K D Ghouse Road down their shutters in panic.

Mukta is an accused in several criminal cases, police said.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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—AFP photo

PM launches social security scheme for distressed women

TUNGIPARA (Gopalganj),

Dec 24: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today launched a new social security scheme for the upkeep of widows and wives abandoned by husbands, reports UNB.

"Even if the distressed women have little earnings, they will get importance in the family and not feel neglected," she said at the launch of the programme here.

The prime minister said her government was trying its best to improve the lot of the down-trodden as well as for women's empowerment and this new programme is a headway to that end.

"I know the suffering of widows and forsaken women after talking to them during visit to different parts of the country," she said.

The prime minister said her government was trying its best to improve the lot of the down-trodden as well as for women's empowerment and this new programme is a headway to that end.

"The government is spending Tk 50 crore annually to implement the superannuation programme.

She hoped that the allowance would help the recipients bring about change in their socioeconomic conditions by adopting small-scale income-generation works, including poultry farming and cultivation of vegetables.

"At every Eid our government helps distressed women with lump sum," she told the function, adding that this year also her government would distribute money among the poor women instead of spending those in the name of iftar party.

From the venue, Hasina went to her ancestral home and placed wreaths at the mazar of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She offered *fateha* there and special *munajat* praying for eternal peace of the departed soul and seeking divine blessing for the peace and progress of the nation.

One of the recipients, Rekha Rani Mondal, addressed the function acclaiming it as a

Shikdar's men kidnap, torture witness

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 24: A witness in a murder case against notorious terrorist Ershad Shikdar was kidnapped and tortured by the armed cadres of Shikdar, police said.

Severely stabbed, Golam Mostafa, 45, a businessman, is now being treated at the Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Police yesterday rescued him from a house in Jorhagate area. Mostafa, kidnapped from *ghat* area, was beaten up by iron rods and then stabbed several times by Shikdar's men, police said.

The kidnappers, however managed to escape, police added.

A case has been lodged with Sonadanga thana in this connection.

Meanwhile, sources informed, necessary arrangements are yet to be made for setting up a special court here for trying cases against Ershad Shikdar and his accomplices.

The judge of the court is also yet to be named, they said, adding the trial scheduled to start from the first week of January is likely to be delayed.

A KMP source said that a total of forty cases have so far been recorded against Shikdar with different police stations in the Khulna City and Rupsha thanas of the district.

Most of these cases are ready for trial, the source said. But delay in beginning the trial may discourage the complainants and witnesses as most of them are feeling insecure with the

2 more activists of 'Jihadi' group held in Jhalakati

JHALAKATI, Dec 24: Two more activists of 'Jihadi' group of so-called 'Santras Nirmul Committee' were arrested from village Baurkati in Uzirpur thana Thursday night, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Mozahar Ali, 50, and Mirza, 27.

Police said they raided the village and nabbed the two with a handgun and some documents relating to Jihadi Group.

Earlier on the day, police arrested 17 activists of Jihadi Group.

Convention

From page 1

A brief scuffle between the participants and the vandals ensued. The vandals fled away. Some of the participants, enraged due to police inaction, swooped on the policemen, injuring four of them, and ransacked a few vehicles passing through the Maulana Bhashani Road in front of the IEB.

Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells and arrested four of the participants.

The convention began again after a short while.

After about 20 minutes, gunmen from adjacent Suhrawardy Uddyan Park attacked the venue, firing shots from sawn-off rifles, shot guns and pistols and blasting crackers. The panicked participants ran for life, some taking shelter inside the IEB complex and some others hiding themselves wherever possible. Some including this correspondent lied on the ground to escape gunshots.

Kader Siddique who was then speaking attempted to restore order. But random gunshots compelled him to leave the venue in a hurry, taking Dr. Kamal Hossain and some other leaders along with him at about 11:40 am.

It was then free for the armed goons who 'conquered' the venue and foiled the convention.

They ransacked the podium, smashed portraits of Maulana Bhashani and Shamsul Haq founder president and secretary of the then Awami League and took away the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, hung in the background of the podium.

The prime minister said her government also had introduced the old-age pension before, which is now helping some 431,100 people for sustenance.

The government is spending Tk 50 crore annually to implement the superannuation programme.

She hoped that the allowance would help the recipients bring about change in their socioeconomic conditions by adopting small-scale income-generation works, including poultry farming and cultivation of vegetables.

"At every Eid our government helps distressed women with lump sum," she told the function, adding that this year also her government would distribute money among the poor women instead of spending those in the name of iftar party.

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