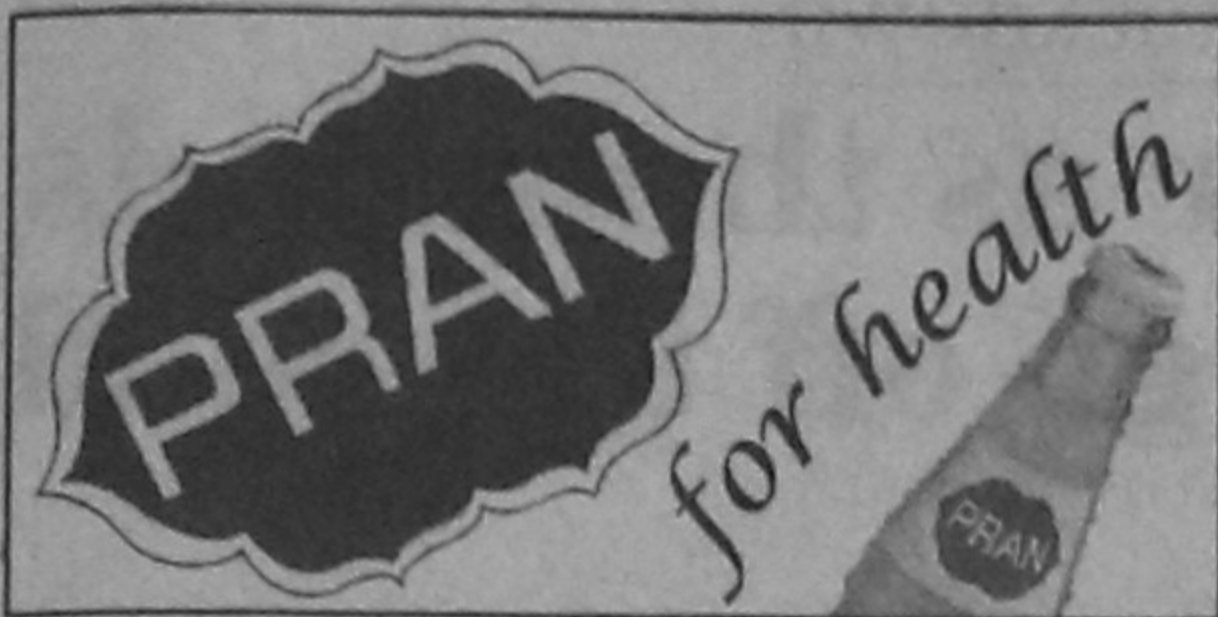


The Daily Star



LEASE FINANCING
Are You Looking For Financial Assistance In

- Capital Machinery
- Heavy Construction Equipment
- Medical Equipment
- Marine Transport
- Generator & Boiler
- Vehicle like Luxury Buses, Microbuses, Trucks, Tractors
- Cargo Carriers, Pick-Up, Cars
- Lifts/Elevators
- Air Conditioning Plants

PHOENIX LEASING COMPANY LTD.
Shadhinata Bhaban (1st fl.) 88, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka
Phone: 9569007 (Auto Hunting) Fax: 9567757
Agrabad Branch, R.M. House, 31 Agrabad C/A, Ctg. Ph: 710099, Fax: 710066

VOL. X NO. 9 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA SATURDAY JANUARY 22, 2000

3rd Millennium

MAGH 9, 1406 BS

SHAWAL 14, 1420 HJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: TAKA 6.00

No hartal this month because of Ijtema

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has given up its plan to call a countrywide hartal at the end of the month at the request of organisers of the Bishwa Ijtema, beginning on January 29.

The alliance will announce fresh programmes at the scheduled separate public meetings of the parties in the city tomorrow. The programmes will be finalised by the Liaison Committee of the alliance at its meeting at 29 Minto Road today.

"We will not hesitate to call hartal and announce any sort of programme if the government places the anti-people Public Safety Bill in the Jatiya Sangsad or announces the Ujzila polls scheduled this month," said a top leader of BNP.

The decision not to call hartal this month was taken at a meeting of the Liaison Committee, held at the residence of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan. The meeting was chaired by Bhuiyan.

See page 11 col 6

Opposition to hold rallies in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

BNP-led opposition alliance will hold separate public meetings in the city tomorrow demanding resignation of the government which it said, have failed to arrest the price hike of essentials and ensure security of public life and property.

The opposition parties are likely to announce next course of action to intensify the out-governance movement from the rallies.

BNP will hold its meeting at Palton Maidan at 3:00 pm. Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the meeting as the chief guest.

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh will hold its meeting at the North Gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 3:30 pm. Jamaat Ameer Golam Azam will address the meeting as the chief guest.

Islami Oikya Jote will hold its public meeting at Palton crossing at 3:00 pm. Chairman of the Jote Saikhul Hadis Moulana Azizul Huq will address the meeting as the chief guest.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Party has postponed its rally scheduled for tomorrow at Muktangan at 3:00 pm as the Party Chairman Hossain Mohammad Ershad will not be available, said a party press release.

The party chairman will have to appear before the court at 2:00 pm on January 22, 23, and 24 in connection with cases.

See page 11 col 8

Inside Today

Article

How Different is Awami League from Others?

by Dr Mozammel H Khan
Page 4

Business

Experts advocate (RMG) backward linkage for post-MFA era

G7 meet to focus on macro fears, micro cures
Pages 8 & 9

Star Literature

Essay: Goethe and Tagore: An evaluation and inspiration; and Book review: Environmental politics or politics of environment
Pages 6 & 7

Prayer Timings

January 22		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:40	6:10
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:40	5:45
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Conference begins today Business leaders resolve dispute at PM's call

By Staff Correspondent

Following a last minute initiative by the Prime Minister, the Businessmen's Conference beginning in the city today will now be attended by the country's business leaders including those of four key trade bodies and chambers.

Chiefs of the four bodies who had earlier decided to stay away finally agreed to attend the conference after a compromise brokered by the commerce minister.

The two-day conference is being sponsored by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

Talking to The Daily Star, the four business leaders said they have agreed to attend the conference "to honour the re-

quest of the Prime Minister." Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her senior cabinet colleagues will address the inaugural session of the two-day conference at Osmani Memorial Hall.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia and senior leaders of the party will speak at the conference on Monday.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil at a hurriedly called press conference yesterday said that the Prime Minister had initially consented to attend the conference only if leaders of all the chambers and trade bodies attended it.

"So I called the business leaders and conveyed the PM's desire and they finally agreed to

attend the conference," Jalil said.

"Every citizen wants to see a successful conference targeted to resolve the ongoing problems facing the country," he noted.

MCCI President Latifur Rahman, BGMEA President Anisur Rahman Sinha and BCI President Khandaker Musharraf Hossain and FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo were present also at the press conference.

The minister replying to questions from newsmen said that government did not intervene but only requested businessmen to minimise differences in the interest of the country.

Later, The FBCCI President See Page 12 Col 8

No decision yet on proposed changes in electoral laws

EC favours one central tribunal

By Nurul Kabir

Unhappy over the slow disposal of election disputes, the Election Commission has proposed certain changes in electoral laws creating election tribunals that deal with disputes on parliamentary polls.

An Election Tribunal comprising two High Court judges be set up in the capital exclusively for trial and disposal of election cases, abolishing the present divisional level tribunals, the EC has said in a proposal to the law ministry.

The time limit for the final verdict on any election case should not be more than one year, the Commission said in its proposal sent in October last year.

The ministry is yet to take any decision on the EC proposal.

After 1996 general elections, the EC received 66 petitions. Of them, 19 cases are still pending before the High Court and the Appellate Divisions of the

Supreme Court on appeal.

After the 1991 general elections, the EC received almost a similar number of cases. Sixty-one tribunals were set up with District Judges to try those.

Under the Representations of People Order (RPO), 1972 that deals with conduct of elections, the EC is obliged to refer a petition, made duly, to the tribunal within 15 days of its receipt, and the tribunal shall try an election petition as expeditiously as possible and shall endeavour to conclude the trial within six months from the date on which the election petition is referred to it for trial.

"But they were unable to dispose of election petitions within six months as they, in addition to certain circumstantial compulsions to frequently adjourn hearings on election matters, were heavily burdened with their usual load of other civil and criminal cases", an EC report says.

Of the 47 cases disposed of by the tribunals, 33 were not persuaded by the petitioners, 13 were contested by the respondent.

"Most of the petitions pending before the tribunals dragged on for years, while disposal of such petitions through trials within the term of the Jatiya Sangsad was rare."

After June 1996 parliamentary polls, the EC strongly felt that election tribunals needed to be reconstituted with the exclusive responsibility of trial and disposal of election cases.

As a result, six election tribunals were set up at divisional headquarters with six district judges, exclusively for trial and disposal of election cases.

Of the 66 petitions, 47 were disposed of until December, 1999, while most of the rest 19 cases are still pending before the High Court the Appellate Divisions of the Supreme Court on appeal.

See page 11 Col 7



Artists perform a dance number celebrating Poushmela (winter festival) at Ramna Batamul in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh crush Kenya

From Al-Amin

MATARA, Jan 21: Bangladesh routed Kenya by 125 runs in their second Plate group league match of the World Youth (U-19) Cricket Championship at the Uyanwate Stadium in Matara today.

The outstanding victory of the spirited Bangladesh youths against their Kenyan rivals came as a compliment of their disciplined performance in a match where the Africans were outplayed in every department of the game.

The match petered into a one-sided affair when Bangladesh, defending 198 on a difficult wicket, shot the Kenyans out for a meagre 73 in 37.3 overs.

Sundries stood highest in both the innings (Bangladesh conceded 19 extras against Kenya's 37) but it hardly reflected the real picture of the match where Bangladesh

again with the bat but Nahidul dictated on the opponent bowlers right from the beginning.

The southpaw hammered three eye-pleasing boundaries in his 31-ball 23 and appeared more confident in the company of Rajin Saleh, who came in to bat at number three after Selim departed for a chancy 11.

Together they produced 12 runs in no time and Bangladesh reached fifty in only 9.3 overs before Rajin departing sadly while chasing a non-existing second run. Nahidul, paying the penalty of playing across the line, perished in the very next ball after Rajin's departure. The scoreboard was reading then 54 for three.

Two successive blows stemmed the free flow of runs. Hannan and Kuntal withered away the pressure and helped

See page 11 Col 7



Untimely rain caught the city dwellers enjoying weekend off guard yesterday afternoon apart from leaving streets under water.

City experiences rain with hail

By Special Correspondent

The city experienced two millimetres of rain with hail and thunder yesterday afternoon.

A high wind drove the rains and hails over the city leaving its streets deserted of usual traffic.

People rushed for cover as the hail shower pounded the streets.

Motorists and rickshaws sought shelter fearing damage from the hails. But the pebble-sized hails did not cause much damage.

Children were out to collect the hails. The unusual rain washed the city streets and trees clean.

The Met Office reported rains from Comilla which had 21mm shower followed by Srirangang with 20 mm and Khepupara 13 mm.

The mild cold wave that started blowing over the north and northwestern region since Thursday would get a fresh impetus with the clear weather, it added.

Night temperatures are likely to fall further, the Met Office said in its forecast for today ending 6 pm. The weather would improve gradually during the next 48 hours, it added.

Moderate fog may occur over the Rajshahi division and on the river basins this morning, it added.

Yesterday's lowest temperature of 9 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi followed by Ishurdi 9.2, Syedpur and Dinajpur 9.8, Rangpur 10.4, Tangail 10.6, Jessore 10.6, Chuadanga 10.6, Dhaka 17.2, Chittagong 15 and Khulna 13.2 degree Celsius.

SSC exams from March 2

This year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations will begin on March 2 under five education boards of the country, officials said, reports UNB.

According to the schedule, the examinations under the boards of secondary and higher secondary education of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Comilla, Jessore and Chittagong will conclude on March 15.

On the first day, examinations will be held on English first paper.

The total number of candidates appearing at the examinations this year was not immediately known. From Dhaka board, about 263,000 candidates are to sit for the tests.



India, SL enter final

By Lenin Gani

South Asian heavyweights India and Sri Lanka qualified for today's final of the Second SAARC Championship at the Kurmitola Golf Club course.

The familiar foes renew a rivalry, which dates back to the inaugural edition in Bangalore in 1999, when hosts India edged out the Lankans for the crown in an absorbing 18-hole match-play.

After two days of the preliminary strokeplay round (which only counts the aggregate of the two lowest scorers in a three-

Two sacked pilots challenge Biman's action

By Staff Correspondent

Two of the three Biman pilots, who were sacked for suspected links to a hijack plot, have challenged the national airline's action and served legal notices on Wednesday.

Captain Ishfaqur Rahman and his wife Captain Yasmin Rahman sent the notices to the state-run Biman Bangladesh Airlines asking why the sacking orders should not be declared illegal and contemptuous of an earlier Supreme Court order.

The other sacked pilot is Captain Ajmal Hossain who is yet to serve any legal notice.

There was no immediate comment from the airline.

The three were axed on January 11, 2000. A messenger carried the letters dated January 4 to the couple on January 11.

The letter sent to Ishfaq said he has been sent on retirement in the interest of Biman. Yasmin was terminated.

Yasmin is the sister of Lt Col

(dismissed) Faruk Rahman, one of the 15 convicted leaders of the 1975 coup in which Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and almost all of his family members were killed.

The legal notice was served after Ishfaq had met with the Biman officials on January 18, sources said.

Biman had informed Ishfaq that his wife Yasmin will not get any benefits other than three month's notice pay while he will get about 30 per cent of the benefits he is entitled to, which is given to a pilot retired on medical grounds.

Yasmin served the organisation for about 19 years while her husband for about 32 years.

Earlier, Ishfaq and Yasmin were grounded on August 16, 1996, three days after Faruk was arrested from his house in the capital.

Earlier Ishfaq had sued Biman on June 30, 1997 for

See Page 12 Col 8

Ghost billing under analog system

BTTB fails to implement plan

By Mustak Hossain

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has failed to implement its plan to convert 26,000 analog telephones into digital ones in the city by December last year, sources concerned said.

There are 2,33, 923 telephones in the capital, of which 1, 77,923 are digital and 56,000 are analog telephones. Conversion of all those into digital is scheduled to be completed by June this year.

Life span of an analog telephone exchange is 15 years and in case of most of the exchanges in the city, this has expired, the sources mentioned.

Thousands of subscribers are facing problems due to poor service and ghost billing under the 'obsolete' analog telephone system, some sufferers told this correspondent.

A section of T&T employees

are compelling subscribers to pay toll to them by making ghost telephone bills, they alleged.

Even T&T linemen allegedly create problem for analog telephone subscribers to get tips for restoration of connection.

A political leader alleged that recently he received a bill of Tk 1,34,201 for five months for his analog telephone no: 500955. BTTB snapped his connection to compel him to pay the bill, he said.

Earlier also he had received a similar ghost bill amounting Tk 50,615 in 1997 and following complaints, the bill was reduced to Tk 4,739.

The victim said he sent a telegram to the Prime Minister drawing her attention to this.

The existing 56,000 analog lines are under seven ex-

See Page 12 Col 5

Opposition calls 8-hr hartal in Ctg tomorrow

CHITTAGONG, Jan 21: BNP-led opposition alliance has called an eight-hour hartal beginning at 6 am here on Sunday to protest the killing of a student of Government Mohsin College allegedly by BCL activists, reports UNB.

Salahuddin, a degree examinee, was abducted by a group of youths in front of Zahur Hawkers Market Thursday afternoon and his bullet-ridden body was recovered from Ishapur in Hat-hazari today.

The opposition alliance announced the hartal at a rally after the namaj-e-janjana of Salahuddin here in the afternoon.

Earlier, Chhatra Shibir filed a case accusing Chhatra League activists of the abduction and killing.

Special court set up in Khulna to try Shikdar

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Jan 21: Special court has been set up in Khulna for trying all cases against terrorist Ershad Ali Shikdar and his accomplices.

The court will start functioning from January 25.

The District and Sessions Judge, Khulna is expected to name and Additional District and Sessions Judge on January 23 to head the Special Court.

Two Additional District and Sessions Judges have been brought here from other districts. One of them will be appointed as head of the special court, said a reliable source.

The Special Court will be housed in the Judges' court building with separate establishment for trial of Shikdar who is one of the accused 60 criminal cases, including 23 murder cases.

The Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs decided

See page 11 col 8

'Behaviour of both of them was reckless'

By Court Correspondent

The behaviour of both the accused and the woman who was assaulted at the TSC of Dhaka University during New Year celebrations was reckless as per newspaper reports, a Metropolitan Magistrate observed yesterday.

Magistrate Abul Kashem made the observation in a crowded court room while sending the two accused to jail, turning down a prayer for their fresh remand by DB investigators.

The two accused - Fazul Huq Russel and Khan Mesbahul Alam Tutul - were identified by the victim at the DB office Wednesday night. Russel and Tutul are students of Dhaka University and leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of ruling Awami League.

Four persons have so far been arrested in connection with the case filed by the victim. Two persons - Mamun and Mokter - were arrested earlier and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail. But Mamun and Mokter claimed that they had tried to

See page 12 Col 2