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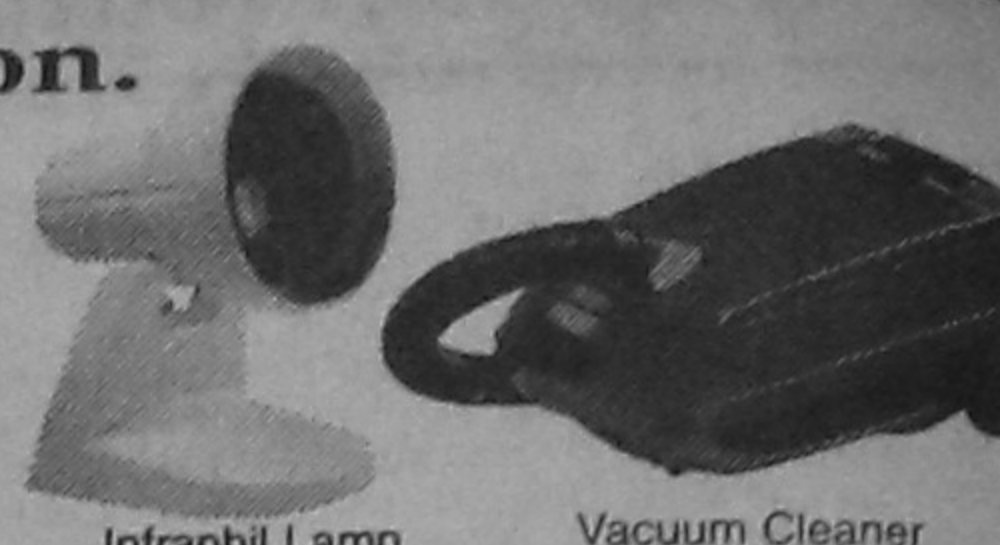
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PM at BCL reunion Days of ousting govt thru' movement over

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that the days of ousting government through movement are over, reports BSS.

Apparently referring to the on-going opposition agitation, she said, "The movement that does not enjoy the backing of people can not attain success. People would resist such movements which do not bring any benefit to them."

The prime minister was speaking as chief guest at the reunion of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), organised to mark the 52nd founding anniversary of the student front of ruling Awami League.

Held at Paltan Maidan, the function was presided over by BCL president Bahadur Bepari and conducted by general secretary Ajoy Kar Khokon.

Rounding on the negative attitude of the opposition, Hasina said, "We want to run the country through understanding and consensus while they want chaos and confrontation to capture power."

Without peace and stability, the nation would not reach the desired level on the economic front.

"But the anti-social elements through their heinous activities including terrorism, extortion, hijacking, killing and other crimes have made social life miserable, and are trying to hinder development," she said.

The prime minister said the Public Safety Act has been enacted to root out the vested quarters from society and ensure peace, safety and security of the people.

She asked the BCL leaders and workers to mould public opinion against the evil forces.

The prime minister said her government is pledge-bound to root out campus terrorism and ensure a sound academic atmosphere.

"We don't want to see arms and weapons, but books and *khatas* (exercise book) in the hands of our students."

Lauding the roles of BCL in crucial junctures of the country's history since its launch on January 4, 1948, the prime minister said, "You have to take the leading role for rebuilding the nation facing the challenges of the new millennium."

The prime minister said: "Neither we wish nor is it safe to put illiterate people at the helm of the nation. The nation experienced terrible situation when leadership went to illiterate people."

Among others, former BCL presidents and general secretaries including Mohammad Guamaruzzamma, Abdul Razak, Tofiqul Ahmed, Khaled Mohammad Ali, Abdur Rashid, Ismat Kadir Gama, Bahlul Majnu Chinnu, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, A K M Jahangir Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, Abdur Rahman, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Mooinuddin Hasan Chowdhury, Iqbalur Rahim, A K Enamul Haq Shamim and Ishahaque Ali Khan Panna were present.

Earlier, the prime minister formally inaugurated the function by releasing balloons and pigeons in the sky.

Clinton's visit US advance team due in second week of next month

An advance team of White House officials will arrive in Dhaka on March 8 or 9 to put the finishing touches on US President Bill Clinton's visit to Bangladesh.

US diplomatic sources told UNB the advance team would stay until Clinton's arrival on March 20.

The team comprised of officials from different departments of the US administration, including security and secret services, is expected to finalize Clinton's itinerary in consultation with the Bangladesh government.

They will examine sites Clinton will visit and discuss security matters, prepare schedules and an agenda of the official talks between Dhaka and Washington.

However, the sources would not discuss the members of Clinton's entourage or the contents of the official talks between Clinton and Hasina.

"We're discussing the agenda with the Bangladesh government," said a US diplomat on condition of anonymity. "I don't want to get into a discussion on the agenda."

However, he said, "We've effective military cooperation with Bangladesh," when asked whether Washington would be interested in signing a defence pact with Dhaka during the visit.

The diplomat described Clinton's visit to Dhaka as "an important and historic bilateral visit." He said it reflects "the good and friendly relation" between the two countries.

The US advance team will follow a 30-member pre-advance team that arrives on March 1 for a two-day visit.



Unauthorised parking of rickshaw van and stacks of rubbish in front of The Daily Star office has made the place a mess.

'Enact consumer protection act immediately'

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday urged the government to enact a consumer protection act immediately to protect the rights of consumers.

The seminar was jointly organised by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh and the British Council. CAB President Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury was in the chair.

Addressing the seminar, foreign minister M Shamsul Huq MP alleged that the government has made various unnecessary laws like Public Safety Act (PSA) but it is not making a badly needed law like consumer protection act which, he said, would benefit the people.

Chief Editor of the Financial Express Rezauddin Ahmed stressed the need for a consumer protection act to protect the rights of citizens.

Executive Editor of the Daily Janakantha Borhan Ahmed said people want to buy goods and services at fair prices but they cannot do so because unscrupulous businessmen manipulate prices.

Executive Director of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (BELA) Syeda Rizwana Hassan described different aspects of the proposed act for protection of consumers' interests and the need for it.

Member of the Law Commission Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, who was the chief guest at the function, said such a law would be enacted shortly after the general election, as it needs updating in line with similar laws in different countries.

He, however, said it would take some time to examine the act.

Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury urged the government not to waste much time to enact the law for the sake of the people.

M A Rashid presented the key-note paper on the proposed act and OGC Director Monzur Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

An open discussion followed and a cross section of people gave suggestions regarding the act.

IT education: No central examination system yet

By Asad-uz Zaman

Resource, manpower and infrastructure shortages have delayed plans to introduce a standardised testing programme for information technology students.

There are no facilities available at present to conduct examinations centrally at the public level," said an official from the Bangladesh Computer Council, the Ministry of Science and Technology's information technology watchdog.

"We are preparing a standard curriculum for information technology education in the country. Examinations will be conducted under the curriculum as a separate subject," he said.

Meanwhile the country's private sector should follow India's example and become more involved in testing and standards.

"The Bangladesh Computer Society could undertake such an initiative in our country," he said.

Professionals working in the country's information technology sector called for standardised testing to ensure the graduates entering the workforce have the same skills.

One professional working in the field said 99 per cent of India's information technology employees graduate from universities, while the rest come from various training centres. In Bangladesh, the situation is reversed.

An accreditation or central examination system is needed in order to maintain a general standard, since there are different kinds of education and training systems in the country," he said.

Experts said public universities, such as Dhaka University, BUET, Shahjalal Science and Technology University, Rajshahi, are providing quality information technology training, while the quality at private universities is low due to a lack of skilled teachers.

For example, some training centre in local areas are registered as *Natrams* with the Ministry of Education but the training they provide does not meet minimum standards.

Other institutions are franchises of foreign training centres. They do brisk business due to flashy publicity campaigns but the quality of the education they provide is low compared to the high tuition fees they charge, said the experts.

Prof Bayes made UCB chairman

By JU Correspondent

Prof Abdul Bayes, Vice Chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University (JU), has been appointed chairman of the University Council of Bangladesh (UCB).

He was appointed chairman of the UCB's organisation for two years on February 22.

Roundtable on CU crisis 'Arrange dialogue, haul up all terrorists'

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: Participants at a roundtable discussion session here today underscored the need for a dialogue of all concerned to help remove the current impasse at the Chittagong University campus and resumption of classes without delay.

The roundtable entitled "Prevailing crisis in the Chittagong University and the way to its solution" was organised by the Chittagong University Journalists Association (CUJA) at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCC&I) auditorium today.

Those who took part in the discussions included Kamaluddin Ahmed, President, CCCI, CU professors and students' representatives including Yusuf Sharif Ahmed Khan, Dr. Faridul Alam, Kazi Mustafiz Billah, Dr. ANM Munir Ahmed, Imam Ali, Badrul Alam, Khan Tauhid Osman, Mohammad Salehuddin, Imran Hossain, Faze Hossain, Dr. Syed Mohammad Akhter, Muhtul Alam, Mohammad Shahidullah Lipon, Siddique Ahmed Chowdhury, Dr. Mohammad Shamsuddin, Sureh Biswas, Nazimuddin Alam, Mahbubur Rahman Shamim, Tauhid Ibne Farid and Mujibur Rahman Monzu.

Ganguly, besides being vice captain on the recent tour of Australia, had also led India in the DMC Cup tournament in Toronto when Sachin Tendulkar was nursing his back injury at the start of the current season.

The selectors also announced the Indian team for the second Test against South Africa to be played at Bangalore from March 2 to 6. Two players on the injured list, Sadagopan Ramesh and former captain Mohammad Azharuddin are back in the squad.

Azhar was in fact selected for the Mumbai Test but was ruled out due to a thumb injury he sustained while playing for the Board President's XI against the South Africans in the game prior to the Mumbai Test.

My ease is different, says Manju

By Staff Correspondent

Anwar Hossain Manju, the communication minister, said on Friday that his ease is different from Habibur Rahman Swapan and Dr Alauddin, who joined the government of Sheikh Hasina defecting from BNP.

"I am not Swapan or Alauddin," he said reacting to a report where Jatiya Party chief H M Ershad asked speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury to declare his (Manju's) parliamentary seat vacant.

In an obvious reference to Ershad's lack of knowledge in Parliamentary rules, he gave the example where a man upon his return from England told Rabinranath Tagore that living abroad has taken its toll; he cannot speak Bengali properly.

Replied Tagore: "I do not feel bad that you cannot speak Bengali properly but I feel sorry that you cannot speak English correctly."

Adulterated milk: Culprits yet to be rounded up

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: The businessmen who allegedly sold adulterated, date-expired powdered milk have not been caught, despite a police manhunt.

Police sources said they are trying to locate and arrest the unscrupulous businessmen involved in the racket, but they have gone into hiding. Four shops in Khatunganj were closed after the drive began.

Police have seized over 10,000 sacks of date-expired skimmed milk in the last 15 days from different places of the city.

In the latest raid three days ago, police sealed a godown on Sadarghat Road containing 2600 sacks of expired powdered milk worth about Tk one crore.

Police said samples of the seized milk have been sent to Dhaka for chemical tests. The expired milk was probably smuggled into the country from India by the businessmen, they added.

After dumping the product in different godowns, milk is modified and sold in the market under a fake levels, police source said.

Most of the processing hideouts are located in Sadarghat, Majirhat, Khatunganj, Korbanganj and Chandgao, sources said.

The adulterated milk is bought by restaurants, sweetmeat producing factories, shops and some icecream factories to cut costs and rake in the profits at the people's expense, sources said.

However, police sources said the drive to seize adulterated food, including milk, would be intensified soon.

Saurav

From Page 1

correspondent in Calcutta.

"I just used to tell him to work hard and not think about the results. He has really put in a lot of hard work for cricket and the effort has paid off."

Ganguly, besides being vice captain on the recent tour of Australia, had also led India in the DMC Cup tournament in Toronto when Sachin Tendulkar was nursing his back injury at the start of the current season.

The selectors also announced the Indian team for the second Test against South Africa to be played at Bangalore from March 2 to 6. Two players on the injured list, Sadagopan Ramesh and former captain Mohammad Azharuddin are back in the squad.

Azhar was in fact selected for the Mumbai Test but was ruled out due to a thumb injury he sustained while playing for the Board President's XI against the South Africans in the game prior to the Mumbai Test.

JU administrative bodies' polls March 4

By JU Correspondent

The election for teachers' representatives to the Syndicate, Academic Council and Finance Committee of Jahangirnagar University will be held on March 4.

A total of four teachers — one from each of professor, associate professor, assistant professor and lecturer category will be elected for the Syndicate.

Three associate professors and three assistant professors or lecturers will be elected for the University Academic Council while one teachers' representative will be elected to the Finance Committee.

Forty-two out of 65 teachers have withdrawn their nomination papers yesterday on the last day of withdrawal of nomination papers.

Two teachers will contend from the professor category, two from associate professor, three from assistant professor and two from lecturer category for the four posts to the syndicate.

Loadshedding

From Page 1

observed, "Last year, to improve the supply in Dhaka, the government instructed DESA to install certain devices in its system. The devices improve stable power supply by 25 per cent."

The system requires some 100 such devices to cover DESA areas. PDB had supplied some of these to DESA and the remaining were supposed to be procured by it. Yet DESA did nothing to install these devices," the source said.

Besides problems in transmission lines, power management in Dhaka continues to deteriorate for other reasons also.

Despite warnings from higher authorities for improvement, DESA's system loss continues around 25 - 26 per cent. At the same time, PDB is persuading the authorities to merge DESA back to PDB on the ground that it would never be able to pay its Tk 2500 crore dues to PDB.

The DESA management can neither take stern action against the unscrupulous section of its meter readers nor maintain its equipment with its own expertise," said a PDB official.

"Attempt to punish a DESA meter reader by transferring him is futile because that keeps him within its area in Dhaka. Whereas, punitive transfer works fine in PDB as it has network in the whole country," he said.

Meanwhile, performance of DESA-owned company Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) has also come under fire from the Energy Ministry, PDB and DESA itself. DESCO,

US human rights

From Page 1

extremely poor for majority of the prison population and female detainees in prison or other official custody is also a problem, it said.

"The government continued to arrest and detain persons arbitrarily and use the Special Powers Act (SPA) and Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which allow arbitrary arrest and preventive detention to harass political opponents and other citizens by detaining them without formal charges."

"The government filed numerous criminal cases against opposition leaders and activists. At least sometimes, these charges were false. Much of the judiciary is subjected to executive influence and suffers from corruption. A large case backlog slowed the judicial process and lengthy pre-trial detention was a problem."

The report said that virtually all journalists practised some self-censorship. Attacks on journalists and efforts by government officials, political party activists and others to intimidate them occasionally occurred.

The government limited freedom of assembly, particularly for political opponents, and on occasion limited freedom of movement, it added.

According to the report, the government generally permitted a wide variety of human rights groups to conduct their activities, but it continued to refuse to register a local chapter of Amnesty International.

Violence and discrimination against women, children, disabled, indigenous people and religious minorities is still a serious problem in the country, the State Department report said.

Arsenic contamination Access to safe drinking water declines by 17 pc

Access to safe drinking water in Bangladesh has declined by 17 per cent in the last three years due to arsenic contamination in ground water, according to a UNICEF study, reports UNB.

Over the years Bangladesh has sunk about five million tube wells providing safe drinking water to 97 per cent of the population. But with the detection of arsenic contamination in the ground water, access has dropped to 80 per cent, stated UNICEF at a briefing with the Overseas Correspondents Association of Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh has become the victim of its own success," said Collin Davis, UNICEF's chief of water, environment and sanitation.

Davis said although they were marked red, people are still taking water from contaminated tube wells.

The massive Nationwide Communication Strategy for Arsenic campaign was launched by the government in December 1999 to redefine the concept of safe water, said Davis.

Davis said a 1998 survey found only 14 per cent of households knew about arsenic contamination.

Alauddin

From Page 1

A veteran parliamentarian Dr Alauddin was elected to Jatiya Sangsad from Rajshahi in 1996 on BNP ticket. Later he crossed the floor and joined Sheikh Hasina's government as State Minister for Water Resources.

The High Court declared his seat vacant, but he returned again in the by-election as ruling party candidate and was appointed as State Minister for Public Works and Housing.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has expressed his profound shock at the death of Dr Alauddin.

In a condolence message yesterday, the President said that Dr Alauddin was a freedom fighter and senior politician. He was very popular in his locality.

President conveyed his heart-felt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has also expressed her deep shock at the death of Dr Alauddin.

The country has lost a distinguished politician, said the Prime Minister in a message of condolence yesterday.

She recalled Alauddin's contribution in the war of liberation in 1971 and said he will be remembered also for his contribution to socio-economic development.

Prime Minister conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Contraband worth Tk 75 lakh seized at Teknaf

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 26: The Anti-smuggling Task Force seized two truck loads of contraband goods worth about Tk 75 lakh and arrested three people from Teknaf highway in this connection on Friday, reports UNB.

The Task Force comprising BDR and Narcotics Control personnel headed by a first class magistrate seized the two Chittagong-bound trucks from Myanmar at Martichapalong. The goods seized from the trucks including shoe, sandals, battery, gas lighter and clothes were handed over to the local customs office.

The arrested are Abu Tayeb, Korban Ali and Belayet. A case was filed with the police against them.