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Text book trouble

NCTBB yet to decide on Beximco trio's fate

By Staff Correspondent

The National Curriculum and Text Book Board is yet to take a decision about three concerns of Beximco Group which have allegedly failed to complete printing of 8.12 crore text books within the time limit -- November 30-- sources in the NCTBB said.

Pustaka, Free Press and Suktara -- three Beximco concerns-- were scheduled to deposit the text books for class one to class ten to the NCTBB by yesterday.

"We are yet to take any decision regarding failure of the printers as today (Thursday) was the last date for depositing the books," NCTBB Chairman Dr Tapan Kanti Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

He said the Board is likely to extend the time limit for the printers so that students could get the books by January next year.

But he pointed out that the Board needs approval from the Ministry of Education for extension of time limit or cancellation of work order given to the defaulting printers.

"I am optimistic that books will reach the students by January next year.

We are working to ensure that students get books

within the stipulated time," the Chairman added.

Printing industry sources said it is certain that students of both primary and secondary levels would not get text books in time as Thursday was the last date for depositing the books.

The Beximco concerns so far printed only a little over 40 lakh books out of 8.12 crore and it is impossible to supply the books in time, the sources said.

"It is unusual that the job of printing such a large number of text books was given to only three printers, ignoring 800 experienced printers," a leader of text book printers association said.

"It might take at least three or four months more to complete the job if it is done by the three printers," he claimed.

Meanwhile, a scheduled meeting of the curriculum and text book committee of NCTBB, which was supposed to cancel the contracts with Pustaka, Free Press and Suktara for printing 8.12 crore text books, did not take place yesterday due to unknown reasons.

According to the terms and conditions in the tender documents, the companies were supposed to

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Police intercepted a JSD march at Gulshan Circle 2 yesterday. The processionists planned to lay siege to the Pakistan High Commission protesting audacious and derogatory remarks on Bangladesh's War of Liberation by the Pakistani Deputy High Commissioner. -- Star photo

Three more Juba League men killed in Feni

FENI, Nov 30: Three more Juba League activists were killed in the district today (Thursday) by their rivals, reports UNB.

Today's killings raised the death toll of Juba League men to four in less than 12 hours.

Police and witnesses said, Juba League activist Belayet Hossain alias Bela Driver, 35, was shot dead during a gunfight between Awami League and BNP activists at about 8 am in Dhalla union under Sadar upazila.

In Sonagazi, miscreants chopped to death two other Juba League activists Abul Kalam, 25, and Bela Hossain, 27, at Adarsha Gram in Chardarbeshpur union of Sonagazi upazila early today.

Ruling Awami League and opposition BNP activists locked in a gun battle at Ukilbari of Dhalla union as a sequel to Wednesday night's clash that left one Juba League leader dead.

Belayet Hossain was killed on the spot during the clash while four others suffered bullet injuries. Condition of Juba League activists Swapan, 27, and Ripon, 30, was stated to be critical.

The killing of Belayet sparked off violence in neighbouring villages where the rival groups were engaged in a series of armed clashes till 5 pm.

"Many people were injured in the clashes, but they were taken to unknown places for treatment to avert police arrest," witnesses said.

Armed cadres of both the parties took position in their respective strongholds as the battle for political dominance continued amid armed attacks, ransacking and kidnapping, the sources said.

Traffic on the Feni-Sonagazi road remained snapped all day long as Juba League workers blocked the road at different points.

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Palestinians reject Barak's new offer

TEL AVIV, Nov 30: Prime Minister Ehud Barak outlined his vision of a future interim peace deal with the Palestinians on Thursday, as Israel's political parties began preparing for a long and turbulent election campaign, reports AFP.

Barak said he was ready to "move heaven and earth" to make peace after two months of deadly Israeli-Palestinian violence that chipped away at his already shaky minority government.

He proposed putting off the thorniest issues of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees for up to three years and offered an interim accord transferring more West Bank land to the Palestinians, recognising an independent state and giving Israel control over Jewish settlements.

However, his plan was swiftly rejected by the Palestinians.

Barak's battered Labour Party, pushed toward early elections, was meeting Thursday to discuss a date for primaries, as a feisty right-wing opposition tried to block his efforts to strike a peace deal he can take to the nation.

The beleaguered prime minister has faced a mountain of criticism as violence has spiralled between Palestinians and Israeli troops, leaving more than 290 people dead, mostly Arabs living in the territories.

Both Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who spoke by phone a week ago, dismissed media reports of a possible summit in Cairo or Amman to try to end the violence.

And fresh clashes flared in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Thursday, the worst in two days, leaving two Palestinians dead and several more wounded.

Israel is beefing up security in Jerusalem, bracing for possible violence when Muslims flock to the al-Aqsa mosque compound for the first Friday prayers of the holy month of Ramadan.

Israel has lifted age restrictions for worshippers but has refused to end a blockade that prevents Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip from praying at the site, at the centre of the two-month uprising.

SC accepts Manju's plea on poll symbol

By SC correspondent

The full bench of the Appellate Division comprising Chief Justice Latifur Rahman, Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, Justice Ebadul Haq and Justice Maimur Reza Chowdhury yesterday accepted a leave petition filed by General secretary of Jatiya Party (Mizan-Manju) Anwar Hossain Monju.

Earlier on 23rd February this year, the then acting CEC Moshaq Ahmed Chowdhury awarded Ershad the symbol Langol (plough) on the ground that being the leader of Jatiya Party in Parliament, Ershad was entitled to use the symbol langol in any by-election during the lifetime of the 7th Parliament.

Challenging the decision, Anwar Hossain Monju filed a writ petition that under article 108, acting CEC has no right to take such a decision, which shall be taken only in the presence of CEC. Monju prayed to declare the decision illegal since CEC was absent when the decision was taken.

Tussle over Tanguar haor

Wrangle over management threatens Ramsar site

By Shehab Ahmed

A tussle over management of the Tanguar Haor between different ministries has threatened the future of the country's only surviving wetland, rich in bio-diversity and swamp trees and home to rare stocks of fishes and birds.

Despite declaration of the fresh water Haor in Tahirpur in Sunanganj district as a Ramsar site for its better conservation, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) is yet to get the responsibility of its management.

The land ministry declined to hand over its management to the MOEF, questioning how the MOEF declared it as a Ramsar Site.

Official documents said the land ministry was supposed to give its opinion on the issue by September 23 last year. But in a letter to the MOEF on November 22 it asked how the hand-over was assured and also sought a reply within one month, sources concerned said.

In April this year, the land ministry cancelled the lease of the huge wetland, accusing the lessee of failure to pay the bid money.

But it declined to hand over the lake to the MOEF for its proper management as per regulations of the Ramsar Site Committee.

The International Secretariat of Ramsar Site on July 10 this year declared it Ramsar site No. 1031 on the list of wetlands of international importance.

An international convention held in Ramsar city in Iran in 1992 decided to select wetlands of interna-

tional importance for their better conservation. Bangladesh is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention.

Declaration of the Tanguar Haor as a Ramsar Site followed approval of a MOEF proposal by the Prime Minister on October 10 last year. The MOEF sent the proposal to Ramsar Secretariat on March 20 this year.

Meanwhile, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has also shown interest to develop the Tanguar Haor as a fish sanctuary in cooperation with of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

The government recently asked the Secretaries of land, MOEF and fisheries ministries to sort out the issue. But the three Secretaries are yet to meet, the sources said.

Meanwhile, some unscrupulous people have taken the opportunity to deplete its fish stocks and hunt the birds indiscriminately.

The 9727 hectare lake with swamp trees like Koroch and Hijal is home to over 140 species of fish and rare birds including the Pallas's Eagle.

Thousands of migratory birds including the rare Tibetan Black Net Stork flock to the lake from Siberia and the Himalayas every winter.

The National Conservation Strategy of the MOEF has prepared a detailed plan for its management after a study, the sources said.

QAB in quagmire

Quality enhancement of medical education remains a far cry

By Naimul Haq

Very little effort has been made so far to make the Quality Assurance Body (QAB) scheme functional in order to ensure quality in medical education.

The QAB is supposed to maintain, promote and enhance the level of teaching and learning in medical colleges. The responsibility of overall management, monitoring and review of effectiveness of the scheme lies with the body. The Centre for Medical Education is the secretariat for technical support.

On November 13, 1999, the National Consultation meeting concluded that the QAB should take effect immediately in all medical colleges. But no concrete step followed.

Senior faculty members of medical education from Chittagong University, the director general of health services, director of medical education, health ministry officials, WHO consultants and other medical education officials met on March 27 this year to find a way to properly utilise the QAB.

Several important decisions were taken in that conference but virtually none of those were implemented.

The March meeting decided that the director general of health services, who is also chairman of QAB, would instruct all government and non-government medical colleges to take necessary steps to make the quality assurance scheme operational in their institutions.

The DG of health services was also to send messages to principals of all medical colleges to nominate an external assessor.

It was also agreed that the director of CME would arrange training and technical support to the medical colleges regarding quality assurance. The CME will be provided necessary financial support.

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Shedding light on the deadly disease



Former actress and AIDS activist Nafisa Ali (C) leads a torchlight procession of sex workers through Delhi's red light district on the eve of the World AIDS Day yesterday. Sex workers, along with Indian AIDS activists took to the streets to raise awareness amongst sex workers and the public. An estimated 3.5 million Indians are HIV-positive. -- AFP photo

3rd anniversary of CHT accord

Govt, PCJSS to celebrate programmes separately

RANGAMATI, Nov 30: The government and PCJSS have taken up separate programmes to celebrate the third anniversary of the CHT Peace Accord on Saturday amidst fear and uncertainty looming large across the hill region, reports UNB.

Unlike the past, the government has chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the day. A number of ministers, leaders of the ruling party and its front organisations are expected to take part in the programmes.

The programme include a colourful rally at Zilla Parishad ground at 9 am that will be followed by a discussion meeting and cultural function.

The district Awami League has chalked out a month-long programme to celebrate completion of three years of the peace accord at district, upazila and union levels.

PCJSS (Parbatya Jana Sanghathi Samity) has decided to celebrate the occasion separately. It will hold a grand rally at Rangamati Stadium with the party Chairman Santu Larma as chief guest.

Although Larma has been

made chief patron of the government sponsored programme he is unlikely to attend any of the functions.

Workers Party's Rashed Khan Menon, Barrister Lutfar Rahman, Columnist Salam Azad and a number of intellectuals are likely to attend the PCJSS rally.

Parbatya Sarbadalya Oikya Parishad President Shahidullah in a statement has declared December 2 as black day. He described it a death trap for six lakh Bengalees living in the hill tracts.

Arms snatched from 2 policemen

By Staff Correspondent

Miscreants snatched away arms from two policemen at Diabari Bridge under Uttara police station in the city yesterday evening.

The incident took place at about 7 pm while the two were patrolling there.

A gang of 10 attacked the policemen and took away their weapons.

Rare gallantry

By Staff Correspondent

In a rare example of vigilance, a senior DMP official rushed out of his car to chase down two muggers and recover TK 3.28 lakh that they robbed from a motorist at Matshya Bhaban in the city's Ramna area yesterday, a police press release said.

According to the press release, two muggers Abdul Huq Swapon and Golam Kabir robbed Prodesh Poddar at about 2pm yesterday while he was going in his car towards Banglabazar along North Brook Road after withdrawing the said amount from a bank at Mohakhali.

As the muggers were fleeing the scene, Poddar raised alarm. Incidentally, DMP commissioner Mottur Rahman was passing through the area in his vehicle at that time on a routine inspection.

Hearing the victim's cry for help, the commissioner came out of his car and chased the muggers down, recovering the looted money and also a revolver from their possession, the press release added.

Later, the commissioner handed the two muggers over to the Ramna police.

A case was filed with the Ramna police station in this regard

AL reviews 1996 manifesto for 2001 polls strategy

"Achievements," not "big promises", to woo voters, senior leaders hope

By Reaz Ahmad

The ruling Awami League is carefully reviewing its 1996 election manifesto well ahead of the next polls to assess the government's success in fulfilling the pledges.

According to party sources, the AL leadership has taken up the matter "quite seriously" as the party could not fulfil some of the key commitments made before the 1996 election.

The party's 1996 manifesto covered 21 broad areas with many pledges. Those included ensuring transparency and accountability in governance and rule of law; separation of the judiciary from the executive; autonomy to the state-run media; solving the water-sharing problem with India and the CHT problem; development of physical infrastructures; and rapid expansion of power supply network.

However, after almost four and a half years, the AL government is

now far away from fulfilling some of the important pledges made by party chief Sheikh Hasina on May 10, 1996.

There has been no significant development as regards separation of the judiciary from the executive, creation of the post of an Ombudsman and giving autonomy to Bangladesh Television and Radio.

The AL had promised in 1996 that it would bring the whole country under power supply network within 10 years. But the overall power supply system remains abysmal.

However, some senior party leaders, who also hold important positions in the government, told The Daily Star that their review of last election manifesto was somewhat encouraging as far as "achievements" are concerned.

The election theme for 2001 has already been set. This time, we will go to the people projecting

our achievements and not with big promises," said a central leader.

Signing of the Ganges water sharing treaty with India, resolution of the CHT problem, better management of disasters, post-flood rehabilitation programmes, increasing food production, building infrastructures including roads and bridges, creating safety-net for the ultra poor are

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Prayer Timings

December 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-15
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-23
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Retrenched female workers have less chance to get jobs than the males

Report on impact of World Bank's structural adjustment policy on women reveals

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 89,971 male and female workers have been retrenched from different nationalised industries since June 1997 under the World Bank prescribed Structural Adjustment Policy, says a research report.

The retrenched female workers have much less chance to get jobs than the males, the report on "Impact of Structural Adjustment Policy on Women" said.

Associate Professor of Economics at Dhaka University Dr. Nasrin Khandoker presented the report at a discussion organized by Karmajibi Nari and held at the CIRDAP auditorium in the city. Trade union leader and Executive Director of Karmajibi Nari Shirin Akhter presided over the discussion, moderated by economist and researcher Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya.

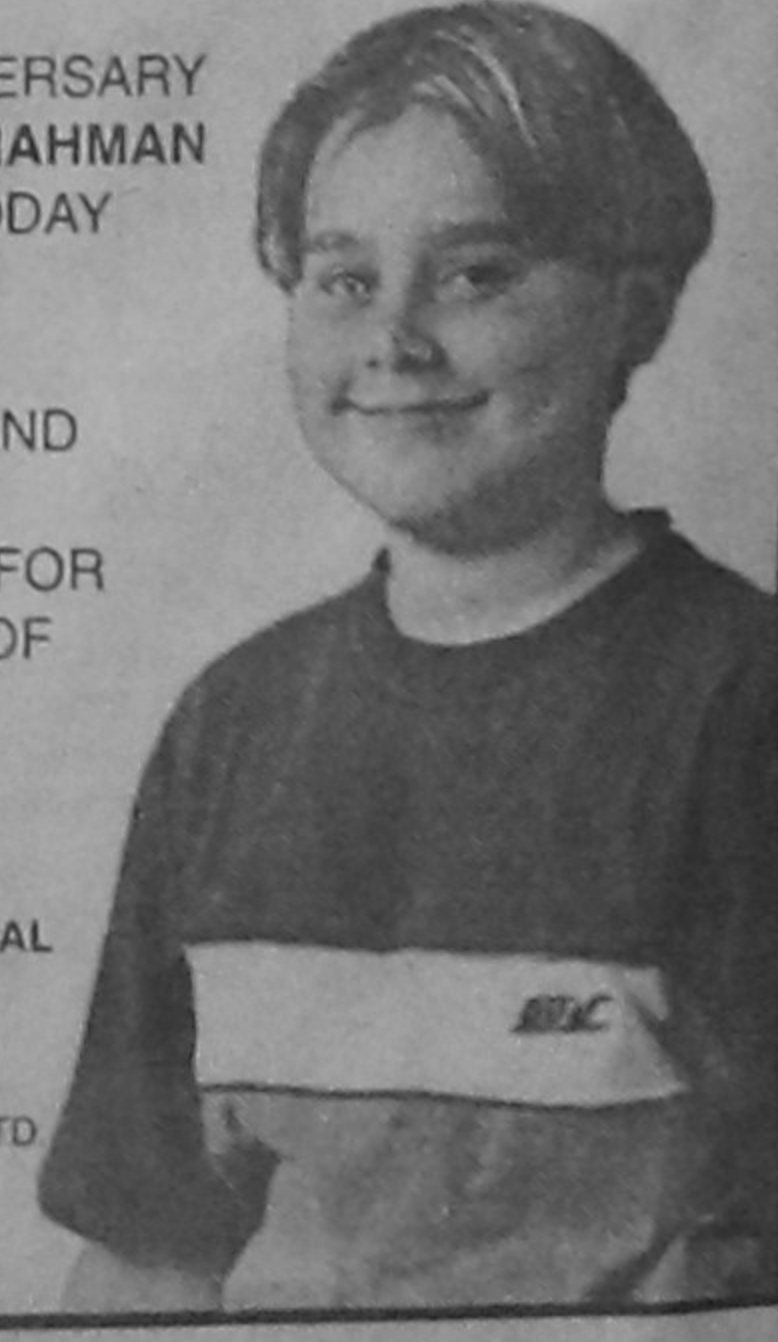
"It appears from various reports of the World Bank that women's interests were not given enough importance in the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP). Little notice was given to wage inequality between the sexes," Dr. Nasrin said.

Increased liberalization of global market will cause more competition in the garments sector resulting in more retrenchment of women workers after 2005, the report said.

1ST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAWN RAHMAN

THE 1ST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR SON SHAWN RAHMAN WILL BE OBSERVED TODAY 1ST DECEMBER, 2000.

FRIENDS, RELATIVES AND WELL WISHERS ARE REQUESTED TO PRAY FOR THE ETERNAL PEACE OF HIS DEPARTED SOUL.



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