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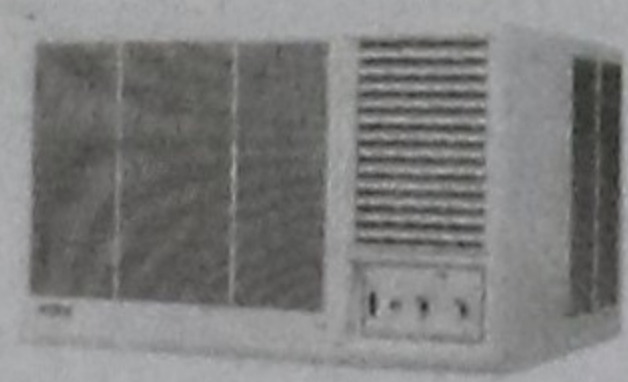
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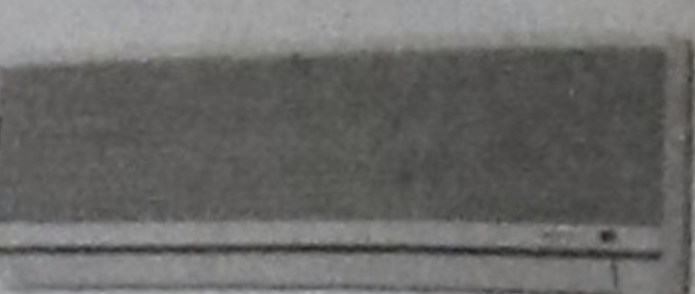

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# Barak quits over handling of Palestinian uprising

JERUSALEM, Dec 10: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak resigned today after weeks of pressure over his handling of the Palestinian uprising, setting the stage for an election within 60 days, billed as a referendum on peace, reports Reuters.

Barak said before he handed his resignation to President Moshe Katsav that he would seek re-election and a fresh mandate for negotiating a peace deal with the Palestinians after 10 weeks of bloodshed that has shattered peacekeeping.

"I decided to submit my resignation," Barak said in a terse unemotional statement to reporters during a brief appearance with Katsav, who stood beside him at the president's official residence.

He set no date for the election but under Israeli law his resignation takes effect in 48 hours and the vote must take place within 60 days. The election is widely expected to be held on February 6.

His popularity eroded by the 10-week-old Palestinian uprising, Barak initially made the surprise announcement on Saturday that he would call a snap "special" election.

Barak, 58, said he wanted to reaffirm his leadership role in efforts to end decades of Israeli-Palestinian conflict because the bloodshed had created an emergency situation.

But his decision was widely seen as a ploy to invoke procedures that would stop former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the front runner in opinion polls, from challenging him because only members of parliament can take part. Netanyahu is not a member.

Many Israeli political commentators said Barak was unlikely to be re-elected because he was now dependent on making peace with the Palestinians, who have shown no sign of changing their negotiating terms to help him.

See page 11 col 6

## N'ganj to have container depot

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 10: Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) recently with BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) to install an inland container depot (ICD) in Khanpur area of Narayanganj in a bid to ease container congestion at the port's sheds, port officials concerned said.

The new ICD will be same as that of Kamalapur in Dhaka said Mohsin Sarkar, Director (Traffic) of Chittagong Port.

"Presently, we are facing space

See page 11 col 2

## PM returns home today

GRINDELWALD (Switzerland), Dec 10: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returns home tomorrow morning ending her three-nation Europe tour, reports UNB.

After an overnight stay in the Swiss City of Grindelwald, Hasina was scheduled to leave for Geneva this afternoon. From Geneva, she will resume her homeward journey this evening.

The 9-day trip that began on December 2 took her to Italy, Germany and Switzerland. The Prime Minister held talks with leaders of the three European nations and sought investment and economic cooperation with Bangladesh.

## Plan to set up Tk 3096 cr solid waste-based power plant in city

Three private companies have jointly initiated an ambitious plan for setting up of a Tk 3096 crore solid waste-based power plant in Dhaka, reports UNB.

Cambridge Bangladesh Ltd, Marly Trade Ltd and Integrated Environmental Technologies Ltd are now engaged in groundwork for the project.

Some 2000 metric tons of garbage will be used daily in the environment-friendly power plant for producing 100-megawatt electricity.

Besides, additional 200 mw electricity can be generated from the thermal unit of the plant, the entrepreneurs told a meeting with government agencies yesterday.

They said they would use 50 mw power for running the plant and sell the rest 250 mw to the government, which is facing acute problem of electricity shortages.

Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury chaired the meeting in the ministry conference room.

Briefing on the project, the entrepreneurs said they would engage 50 trucks for collecting garbage from around the city, which would also help reduce city corporation's scavenging costs.

All types of solid wastes, including domestic garbage, paper, wood, cloth, glass, left-overs of restaurants, tannery wastes, hospital garbage, poly

See page 11 col 4

## Teachers ransack Cox's Bazar PTI

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 10: A group of primary school teachers ransacked the Primary Training Institute (PTI) here today, reports UNB.

Police said the unruly teachers attacked the PTI office protesting an announcement that certain amount would be deducted from their salary due to absence.

The teachers who came from various schools for basic training at the PTI also kept its Superintendent Abdul Wahab confined in his office and allegedly assaulted the trainers.

Five people including senior instructor Alhaj Nasir Uddin, Uttam Kumar Datta and Sabuj Kanti were injured during the attack. Nasir Uddin was rushed to Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Police said the teachers left the hostel.

## Florida recount blocked by divided Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, Dec 10: A divided US Supreme Court, throwing the latest bombshell into the disputed presidential election, halted manual recounts of the vote in Florida on Saturday, freezing the battle between Al Gore and George W. Bush until it can hear arguments tomorrow, reports Reuters.

The decision, possibly robbing Gore of his best hope of victory, means that the nine justices of the US Supreme Court could well decide the winner of the Nov. 7 presidential election. The court scheduled 90 minutes for oral arguments on Monday morning.

Seven of the nine Supreme Court justices were appointed by Republican presidents. In recent years, the court often has had a narrow conservative majority.

### High drama in US polls

By a 5-4 vote, the justices granted a motion requested by Bush, the governor of Texas and Republican nominee, to halt manual recounts of disputed votes in Florida that had been ordered by that state's Supreme Court only one day before.

They also voided an order by the Florida court that had reduced Bush's lead from 537 to 154 votes. The state court, all of whose judges were appointed by Democrat governors, on Friday had allowed the inclusion of nearly 400 Gore votes that Florida's Secretary of State Katherine Harris, a prominent Republican, had refused to accept.

In the seesawing drama that has followed the election, the ruling was a crucial success for Bush

See page 11 col 7



Eid is still two weeks away, but traffic jam in the city is getting worse. Photo shows a road in front of the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque yesterday.

--Star photo.

## Expelled JCD leader, PBCP member held in Khulna

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, Dec 10: Khulna thana police arrested expelled JCD leader Rawshan Zaman Mithu, 32, and a member of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) Rafiqul Islam Hittler, 30, from a three-story building at Sher-e-Bangla Road here early this morning.

Both of them are accused in several murder cases including that of JCD central Vice President Wahiduzzaman Chanchal.

Chanchal was hacked to death in the early hours of October 19, 1998 at the residence of now-defunct Muslim League leader late Mohammad Ali of West Banialkhamar.

Police quoting the FIR said Mithu was acting organising secretary of the district committee of Jatiyatabadi Chhaira Dal (JCD) before being

### Chanchal, Rab murders

expelled for his alleged involvement in the murder.

Police further said Mithu took Chanchal from party office to the place of occurrence where other alleged killers including Hittler and some JCD activists were present to execute the murder plan.

Chanchal's body was recovered from Nijkhama area near Khulna University at about 8 am on October 19, only four hours after he was killed.

In the evening of October 19, his mother Badrumessa filed a case with Khulna thana accusing Rawshan Zaman, Mithu, Moyeen, Mohon, Advocate Ruiku and Khokon.

All these five accused named in the FIR were leaders of JCD's city and district committees.

See page 11 col 6



Prof RIM Aminur Rashid (left) and Sharifullah Bhuiyan.

## DUTA polls: Landslide win for Blue Panel

By DU Correspondent

Awami League supported 'Blue Panel' had a landslide victory in the 15-member executive committee election of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) for the year 2001, held yesterday.

The blues' captured 12 of the 15 positions including president and general secretary while their archrivals the 'White Panel', supported by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, secured only three. The other competing panel left leaning 'Pink Panel', did not get any seat in the DUTA committee.

The incumbent DUTA president Prof. RIM Aminur Rashid of the Physics Department was reelected president, polling 473 votes while his 'White' rival Dr. Zinnatun Nesa Tahmidia Begum of Botany got 450 votes.

Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan, associate professor of History was elected

See page 11 col 1

## Chargesheet in Bushra murder case likely by Thursday

Star Report

CID is likely to submit chargesheet in Bushra murder case by Thursday, accusing five people including her uncle Abdul Kader, a leader of city Awami League, sources concerned said.

But even after four months of investigation, police have failed to identify the three hired killers who raped and killed Rushdania Bushra Phool, a student of the City College, at her residence on the night of July 1 as per a blueprint masterminded by Abdul Kader.

Police probe revealed that she was killed following a dispute over the house where her father retired ASP Serajul Islam and Abdul Kader were staying with their families.

The feud originated when the family of M A Samad, owner of the house who died in 1985, gave Serajul Islam the responsibility of looking after the house at West Hajipara on DIT Road since 1996.

CID would file chargesheet against Social Welfare Secretary of city AL Abdul Kader, his brothers-in-law Ruhul and Kabir, sister-in-law Hena and maid Sufia under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000.

Four of the accused, except Kabir, have been detained in Dhaka Central Jail for the last few months. Kabir has been absconding.

Runu Kader, wife of Abdul Kader, was also accused by Bushra's mother Laila Islam. CID however failed to ascertain her involvement in the killing.

CID recorded statements of 22 people in connection with the case. No judicial statement of the arrested was however recorded.

Asked whether investigators' failure to identify the hired killers and lack of judicial statement of any of the arrested would affect the case, investigation officer ASP Shafiqul Hossain said, "It is not always possible to detect hundred per cent of a crime".

## Kibria sees successful recovery of economy

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria has said low inflation rate, significant growth in revenue and export earning during July-October period of the current financial year and increased industrial and agricultural production indicate successful recovery of the economy from last fiscal's post-flood recession.

Deposits in banks went up by Tk 2,649 crore in October from Tk 70,653 crore in July. Inflation was 2.14 per cent in September, he said.

The Finance Minister was briefing newsmen on current trends of the economy yesterday. Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr M Farashuddin was also present at the briefing held at the State Guest House Padma.

Rice production this year will be 23.7 million tons, up by around three per cent from last year's 23 million tons. Growth of industrial production during July-September was 14.11 per cent, he added.

Foreign exchange reserve as on December 7 was 1349 million US dollars. It is expected that another 100 million will be added to the reserve by the end of December.

The Finance Minister said that the government borrowed Tk 925.62 crore from the banking system till November 29. It was Tk 2065 crore during the same period in the last fiscal.

Revenue collection posted a 21.62 per cent growth in the first five months of the current fiscal.

The collection from import duty witnessed a 31.86 per cent growth.

Value Added Tax (VAT) at the local level increased by Tk 231. Increasing VAT at the local level means industrial production has increased significantly.

See page 11 col 3

## Alleged conversation with HC judge

# Order to produce Ershad before court Dec 13

By Special Correspondent

The High Court yesterday directed the Dhaka Central Jail authorities to produce convict former President HM Ershad before the court on December 13 to clarify his position regarding his alleged conversation with a High Court judge.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Syed Amirul Islam and Justice AKM Shafiqul Hossain gave the directive following filing of a petition by Ershad's counsel Khandaker Mahbub Hossain.

The counsel pleaded that his client would like to hear the audio cassette in the court and clarify whether it contains his alleged conversation with a judge of the Division Bench that turned down his appeal against the conviction by a trial court in the Janata Tower case.

The alleged conversation was published in the tabloid daily Manab Jamin.

Mahbub Hossain in his petition said that a transcript of the tape containing the alleged conversation, given to him by Manab Jamin's counsel as per an earlier directive of the court, was not "fully clear"

and there were "discrepancies".

Attorney General Mahmudul Islam did not object to the prayer.

The HC order yesterday said the audio cassette would be heard at the judge's chamber in presence of lawyers.

For the alleged conversation, Ershad was charged with contempt of court and accused of trying to influence the course of justice. Hearing on the charge is on.

In the wake of the charges against Ershad, Justice Mohammad Latifur Rahman, a judge of the Bench that had turned down his appeal, tendered his resignation.

The HC also ruled on December 3 that Justice Latifur Rahman could not be charged for contempt of court because he was a sitting judge and it was yet to be known whether his resignation was accepted or not.

But the court issued a contempt rule on Justice

See page 11 col 1

## Law Minister admits delay

# Govt to appoint Ombudsman, set up HR Commission soon

By Staff Correspondent

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said yesterday the government is going to appoint an Ombudsman and set up the Human Rights Commission (HRC) soon to ensure rule of law and protect human rights in the country.

"Although we are late but we are determined to implement the constitutional obligation by appointing an Ombudsman," he said. "The government is going to appoint the Ombudsman in a month or two."

Addressing a discussion meeting on the occasion of World Human Rights Day, the minister said the government is also determined to constitute a Human Rights Commission. He hoped that the Bill on the HRC would be placed in the upcoming parliament session.

The programme was co-organised by the UNDP-funded Institutional Development of Human Rights in Bangladesh (IDHRB) Project, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) at Sheraton Hotel yesterday evening.

A draft bill regarding the HRC was approved on December 23 last year and it was due to be placed before the House in January this year.

Khasru admitted that the committee concerned is going slow in scrutinising the Bill.

He said the government could have appointed the Ombudsman and constituted an independent Human Rights Commission much earlier, but the delay has been due to the long absence of main opposition BNP in parliament.

See page 11 col 7



## TechBangla SHORT COURSES on IT in BUET

Short courses will be offered by **Non-Resident-Bangladeshi** experts as part of the "TechTransfer 2000: Bangladesh" (TT2000: BD) convention to be held in BUET on following topics:

1. "Distributed Systems and Network Programming Architectures, Protocols and Techniques" (17-21 December 2000; fee Tk 5000).
2. "Managing Information Technology Projects" (course & fees as above).
3. "Software Development Methodology" (2-hour course).
4. "Creating Scalable, highly available e-Commerce Solution Using Open Source Technology" (2-hour course).

**Register by 15 December 2000.**

For further details please contact: Room # 536, Computer Center, BUET. Tel: 966-5218. Fax: 861-3026. GD-1137

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