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Huge arms being sent for Indian rebels through Bangladesh?

GUWAHATI, Dec 12: India put its border troops on alert today following reports that a huge arms consignment, meant for separatist groups in the north-east, was on its way from Bangladesh, reports AFP.

A top Indian home ministry official said troops had sealed the eastern borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar to prevent the weapons reaching the region's 30-odd outlawed rebel armies.

"It is estimated that an arms consignment worth some 80,000 dollars has already landed at Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh awaiting transshipment to the various militant groups," the official, who declined to be identified, said by telephone from New Delhi.

The consignment is believed to include AK-47 and AK-56 assault rifles, mortars, 40 mm rocket launchers, pistols and revolvers, M-16 rifles, as well as Chinese-made explosives and hand grenades.

See page 11 col 1

Judgement in Bangabandhu murder case likely tomorrow

By SC correspondent

The verdict in Bangabandhu murder case is likely to be pronounced tomorrow. Deputy Attorney General Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik indicated while talking to newsmen yesterday.

"The judges are trying their best to pronounce the judgement before the court goes on winter vacation," the DAG said at his office.

The Supreme Court is going on vacation on December 15. It will reopen on January 8.

The Death Reference Bench comprising Justices Ruhul Amin and Justice ABM Khairul Haq heard the Bangabandhu murder case for about 66 days.

Government has taken security measures. More members of SB, DB and NSI are now seen on the court premises than ever before.

Two retiring judges of the

See page 11 col 3

Announcement

First year (Hons) admission test results of Jahangirnagar University are published on Pages 7, 8 & 9.

Inside Today Article

Kerala on the Decline

Column: Between The Lines
By Kuldip Nayyar
Page 4

Business

Kibria asks JBITC to complete deal on Japan-aid projects
Page 6

Arong Low Fat Milk
1% fat only

BRAC Dairy & Food Project

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 13		5.13 pm
Dec 14	6-32 am	

Prayer Timings

December 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-07	5-15
Zuhr	12-45	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
16	13	5-08	5-17
17	14	5-08	5-17
18	15	5-09	5-17

PM admits lack of success in law & order

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has identified law and order as the lone area where there is scope to criticise her government.

"There is no scope to raise questions on any other sector," said Hasina, visibly irritated by the state of law and order, at a press conference in the city yesterday.

The PM addressed the press conference at her official residence Gana Bhaban at the end of a nine-day visit to three European countries. Among others, State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Choudhury attended it.

Hasina said there had been some sporadic incidents despite her government's sincere efforts to maintain law and order, which led to some improvements. But such incidents were nothing new, the prime minister added.

"In many cases, members of the law enforcing agencies do not act as required of them. We are taking action against those who are failing to perform," she said, blaming a section of policemen recruited by the BNP government for damage.

See page 11 col 3



Sheikh Hasina

Forced retirement of 19 after Zia killing

JS body asks Army HQ to submit report

By Nazrul Islam

A Parliamentary Sub-committee on the Ministry of Defence has asked the Army Headquarters to submit a report on the forced retirement of 19 army officers following the killing of President Ziaur Rahman in 1981.

The JS body, at a meeting yesterday, considered an application by Brig (Retd) Gias Uddin Chowdhury and asked the Army Headquarters to submit the report at its next meeting.

Gias Uddin had alleged in his application that the 19 officers were given forced retirement in 1981 without any investigation.

The JS body viewed that there was no formal allegation against the 19 officers and that the Army Headquarters did not conduct any investigation against them before passing the order, meeting sources said.

Brigadier Hannan Shah, Brigadier M. A. Aziz and Brigadier Gias Uddin were among the officers given forced retirement.

The meeting also decided to summon former Air Force Chief Air Vice Marshal A G Mahmood to testify on the 'summary trial' of 686 Army and Air Force officers in 1977 for their alleged involvement in a coup, meeting sources said.

The meeting, held at the Jatiya Sangsad building, was presided over by its convener M Shawkat Ali.

The two other members of the Sub-committee-

Col (Retd) Faruq Khan of ruling Awami League and Maj (Retd) Akhteruzzaman (expelled from BNP) - and high officials of the Defence Ministry and the Armed Forces Division also attended the meeting.

M A K Azad, a former Air Force officer, had complained to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Defence that he was "sacked" in connection with the coup on October 2, 1977 although his innocence was proved by the tribunal.

Three other former Air Force officers, Mohammad Nurul Alam, Golam Mustafa Kaman and Tofael Ahmed Khandaker also submitted applications to the JS body for "justice".

The Standing Committee was informed at its last meeting that the trial of the Air Force and the Army personnel was "completed duly" and none was punished without trial.

Among the 686 officers, many were given death penalty.

The Sub-committee also directed the Army Headquarters to send a list of the allottees of DOHS plots in the city to see if there was any irregularity in the allotment.

The sub-committee in its next meeting will review the authorities' probe report on the clash between some Navy personnel and local people at Halishahar in Chittagong in 1993, the sources said.

Khaleda cold-shoulders plea of 'think-tank'

Gias Kamal assaulted : Aftab on forced leave

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka University teachers Prof Aftab Ahmed and Prof Mahbubullah, known as pro-BNP intellectuals, yesterday met Khaleda Zia at an Ifar party and denied having made derogatory remarks about the National Anthem and her.

But she rejected their contention and was reluctant to talk to them, party leaders who attended the Ifar party at her official residence told this correspondent.

The Ifar party was hosted by the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament in honour of professionals.

At one stage, the two, along with some others, followed her to her office room and told her that they were misquoted by the press. Khaleda Zia then asked them why they did not issue a rejoinder. But they kept mum, the sources said.

Some BNP hardliners who attended the party were seen "very active" to convince Khaleda Zia that the two teachers and journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury were misquoted by the press. Chowdhury works with state-run news agency BSS.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University Syndicate at a meeting yesterday sent Prof Aftab Ahmed on three months' forced leave for his "unwanted comment" about the National Anthem. It also asked him to show cause within fifteen days why he made such remarks.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury chaired the meeting.

"He will be terminated from job if he is found guilty after an inquiry," said a Syndicate member.

A group of students yesterday set ablaze the room of Prof Aftab Ahmed at the Political Science Department of DU. Witnesses said the students broke open the door, sprayed kerosene and set it on fire at about 3:15 pm.

The BSS in a news item last night said that a process was initiated to take action against Gias Kamal Chowdhury for his "audacious and derogatory remarks" about the War of Liberation and the Language Movement.

"The national news agency wants to make it clear that the recent remarks made by Gias Kamal Chowdhury against national values and the hard-earned independence were entirely his own, and he himself will have to bear the consequences as it hurt people's sentiment and fuelled nationwide protests," BSS Managing Director and Chief Editor Haroon Habib said in a statement yesterday.

A group of BNP activists yesterday assaulted Gias Kamal Chowdhury for his reported remarks about late President Ziaur Rahman at a discussion meeting recently.

Witnesses said some activists of BNP and its front

See page 11 col 7

SC still ponders its ruling in US presidential polls

WASHINGTON, Dec 12: One day after closely questioning lawyers for all sides, the Supreme Court pondered its ruling today in the US presidential election, a contest that holds Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore in limbo. The Florida Legislature moved cautiously to intervene, careful not to get ahead of the high court, reports AP.

As is their custom, the justices gave no indication of when they might rule in the case of Bush v Gore, the name on the court docket as well as the choice that confronted the voters when they marked their ballots five tumultuous weeks ago.

There were obvious time pressures, since Tuesday was a deadline of sorts for the states to certify their slates of electors. Only 20 had submitted the necessary paperwork to Washington by day's end on Monday.

But there was controversy about only one Florida and the court's widely anticipated ruling on the issue of manual recounts of ballots, as well as the Legislature's stated readiness to appoint a slate of electors of its own, added to the sense of uncertainty.

"I think we ought to just wait and see what they do," President Bill Clinton said Monday after the justices heard the case. "One way or the other, it will be a historic decision that we will live with forever," he added, more than a month after the United States voted on his successor.

Bush was in Texas and Gore in Washington as the justices pondered the legal controversy that turned on the vice president's bid to resume manual recounts ordered by the Florida Supreme Court over the weekend. The recount was suspended less than 24 hours later when the US Supreme Court, divided 5-4, granted Bush a stay.

The Texas governor has been certified the winner by 537 votes by Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, a victory that would give him the state's 25 electoral votes and the White House if it stands up in court. Gore looked to the recount to overtake his rival statewide and give him the presidency.

Away from the courts, the Republican-controlled Florida House of Representatives began debate on legislation appointing electors loyal

See page 11 col 7



A canopy has been erected on Road No 32 in the city's Dhanmondi area in observance of the Victory Day, obstructing traffic movement. -Star photo

Zia murder IO given another 3-month time to submit report

CHITTAGONG, Dec 12: The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate has granted another three months' time to the investigating officer to submit report on the May 1981 murder of President Ziaur Rahman by a group of army officers in Chittagong Circuit House.

Pleading for further time for investigation and submit report, IO Abdul Kader Khan of the criminal investigation department (CID) said it was a political case and hence he is required to interrogate certain politicians. He submitted that despite summoned to CID office, eight BNP leaders and relevant army officials failed to turn up.

Today was 159th day of hearing of the Zia Murder Case.

People cautioned against sending Bank Draft for jobs in Canada

Bangladesh Bank yesterday cautioned those who are intending to send Bank Draft in response to a newspaper advertisement inviting application for jobs in Canada, reports UNB.

"It is essential to carefully investigate the identity and credibility of the advertisers, before responding to such advertisements," said a central bank circular, drawing attention to the quarter-page advertisement published in a Bengali daily on Monday.

The advertiser, titled Bangle Inc, Canadian Section, giving a

See page 11 col 6

Timber merchants threaten hartal in CHT Dec 18

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 12: Timber merchants in the hill districts threatened to enforce a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Chittagang Hill Tracts on December 18 if the interference of army on transportation of timber was not immediately stopped.

The timber merchants, under the banner of Rangamati Timber Merchants and Joti Owners Association, staged demonstration in Rangamati yesterday protesting what they said 'harassment and interference' by army.

An army spokesman today told journalists here that army personnel started checking the trafficking of timbers from CHT at

See page 11 col 8

Dhaka asks Delhi to lift time bar on movement

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Dec 12: Dhaka today urged New Delhi to lift time restriction on movement of Bangladeshi nationals across Tin Bigha corridor and expeditious resolution of the exchange of enclaves between the two countries.

Bangladesh's imperatives in its relations with India were conveyed by visiting Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad during his nearly hour-long talks with his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh at the latter's office in Parliament House this afternoon.

Emerging from the talks, Samad Azad told this correspondent that "I have requested Mr. Singh to consider removing restriction of time to allow continuous movement of our people across the Tin

Tin Bigha corridor

Bigha corridor." At present, the corridor is open to movement of Bangladeshis every alternate hour till sundown.

He said the Indian External Affairs Minister has also been urged to expedite the exchange of enclaves envisaged under the Indira-Mujib accord of 1974 so that a major bilateral issue could be resolved to the benefit of both the countries.

During the talks, the two ministers stressed on strengthening and diversifying trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and asked Singh to suggest dates for holding the next meeting of Indo-Bangla Joint Economic Commission, scheduled in Dhaka, at the earliest. Singh said

See page 11 col 1

Withdraw circular for LC margins Chamber bodies urge Bangladesh Bank

By Staff Correspondent

Different chamber bodies and associations yesterday strongly demanded that the Bangladesh Bank immediately withdraw the circular that requires LC (letter of credit) margins, saying that it will have adverse impact on overall economy.

The central bank in a circular on December 11 announced enhancement of the margin for opening of LC with immediate effect for import of certain categories of goods.

The circular drew widespread criticism, and the chamber bodies as well as business associations

reacted sharply and said that the circular was issued without any reason and explanation, and consultation with anybody.

Chamber bodies and associations, including Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Bangladesh Aushad Shilpa Samity and Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association jointly called a press conference at the MCCI office to

See page 11 col 3

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