

Business & Metropolitan

China to protect intellectual property on Internet

BEIJING, Dec 24 A Chinese court has made a ruling that will provide legal protection of intellectual property on the Internet, Chinese media reported Friday, reports AFP.

The Supreme People's Court on Thursday issued a judicial interpretation which grants copyright owners the right to use or allow others to use their works online and receive payment for it, the China Daily said.

Websites that display copyrighted content will not be judged as having violated the law as long as they obtain the owner's permission, pay the owner and give credit to the original author, the report said.

The court defined violations of digital format copyrights as including plagiarism and the intentional changing of any text or information that is part of

the original copyrighted material.

The ruling comes as the latest government figures showed the number of Internet users in China doubled in the first eight months of this year to 16.9 million, but China Daily said the current figure stands at more than 29 million.

A large portion of the Internet users get online to read books and listen to music, most of which is copyrighted, China Daily said.

China's copyright law, which was promulgated in 1991, does not contain specific clauses to protect copyrights on the Internet.

The court's action comes amidst an increasing wave of disputes over Internet content.

Before the judicial interpretation, courts in China had been struggling with the issue

of online copyright infringement.

Most courts upheld copyright protection on the Internet, citing the 10th clause in the Copyright Law, which contains the phrase "et cetera" at the end of a list of publishing forms it considers protected.

The China Daily said sources with the Supreme Court said the judicial interpretation aims at guaranteeing the uniformity of court decisions across China in cases of online copyright infringement.

The interpretation allows courts to order offenders to remove unauthorized material from their web-sites and compensate the authors of that material, the China Daily said.

The limit on compensation has been set at 500,000 yuan (60,000 US dollars).

Guatemala among LatAm states opposing EU banana scheme

GUATEMALA CITY, Dec 24: Guatemala will join Latin American banana producers in a formal complaint to the World Trade Organization against the proposed European Union banana import regime, the economy minister said Friday, reports AFP.

Eduardo Weymann told a group of local reporters the Latin American countries could take legal action to ensure they are equitably compensated for their products by the EU.

The EU on Tuesday proposed a blend of tariffs and quotas for imported bananas under which import licenses would be accorded on a "first-come, first-served" basis until 2006, when the procedure would be replaced by a WTO-compliant tariff-only system.

Guatemala joined Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama in criticizing the EU regime, claiming it fails to dismantle protectionist policies which have for decades given privileged access to Europe to bananas from former European colonies in Africa and the Caribbean.



An iftar party was held at The Daily Star office yesterday. The Editor, union leaders and all staff members of the newspaper were present. - Star photo



Palestinian children look at toys displayed by a vendor in the streets of Khan Yunis yesterday in the Gaza Strip. People are heading to marketplaces to shop for the Eid al-Fitr celebration that falls on Tuesday or Wednesday, marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The Gaza Strip has been hit hard economically by the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence and the ensuing punitive Israeli blockade. - AFP photo

Taiwan's Nov unemployment hits 14-year high

TAIPEI, Dec 24: Taiwan's unemployment rate in November rose to 3.1 per cent, a 14-year-high for the month, as more workers were laid off amid economic sluggishness, it was reported today, says AFP.

Around 300,000 people were out of work in November, according to figures to be officially released by the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS), on Tuesday, the Commercial Times said.

Of the total, 93,000 had lost their jobs due to company or factory shutdowns, it said.

Despite a slight decrease from the previous month, the November unemployment rate marked the fifth consecutive month this year in which the jobless rate had exceeded three per cent, the paper said.

There used to be a cycle on Taiwan's job market. The jobless rate rose in Julys and

Augusts due to the entry of first-time job seekers, but the rate started to fall markedly from Septembers," a DGBAS official was quoted as saying.

"However the cycle was gone forever," the official said.

The report said every signal suggested the rate would not reduce in December, as more factories were shutting down.

Prior to this year, the island had only reported a three per cent unemployment rate three times.

The number of companies which closed down in the three months ending in September totaled 2,200, twice that of the first half of this year.

Taiwan's unemployment rate in the first 10 months to October averaged 2.94 per cent, up 0.01 of a percentage point.

Attributed by the persistent rise in the unemployment rate, premier Chiang Chun-hsiung told a cabinet meeting earlier

this month the government planned to spend more than 65.5 billion Taiwan dollars (1.98 billion US) to create 270,000 new jobs.

Chiang said the cabinet has adopted a package aimed to strengthen employment services and offer subsidies to job seekers next year.

The package, effective on January 1, will also include expansion of job training programs and amendment of related regulations to reduce barriers for job seekers.

An inter-agency panel has been asked to present a long-term job-creation scheme in one month since more people are likely to lose their jobs, particularly in the agricultural sector, once Taiwan joins the World Trade Organisation.

Taiwan is expected to join the global trade regulatory body next year.

JPC polls: Shafiq-Swapan panel places 3 options for remedy

Election fair: Manir-Badiul Panel

Alleging "subtle rigging" of the polls, a group of journalists yesterday rejected Friday's National Press Club election results and placed three options for a remedy, reports UNB.

The Shafiq-Swapan Panel known as pro-Awami League forum, at a press conference demanded announcement of election results keeping aside the counting of the last controversial bundle containing 25 ballots.

In a second option they called for announcing fresh election schedule by December 31 or forming an interim managing committee with senior press club members to deal with the proposed next elections.

The journalist leaders suggested that the stopgap committee would run the managing committee of the club for the period.

Shafiq Raihan, who contested the election as president candidate for the forum, re-elected general secretary of the club Swapan Saha, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Golam Sarwar, Habibur Raihan Milon

JPC polls: Shafiq-Swapan panel places 3 options for remedy

and Baby Moudud, among others, addressed the news conference.

"Fresh election is mandatory to hold the dignity of National Press Club, which has already been damaged following the poll rigging," said Shafiq Raihan.

He regretted that election commission without resolving their allegation declared the election results, which is not of practice. In this connection, he mentioned the results of a by-poll in Tangal that could not still be announced because of dispute.

Replying to a question, Shafiq said the entire election process was responsible for "rigging" in the poll.

He said investigation would unveil the culprit who he said manipulated the vote count.

Swapan Saha extended his support to the stand of his panel head, Shafiq Raihan.

Another report adds: The Manir-Badiul panel that won most of the posts in Friday's Jatiya Press Club election has termed the polls free and fair.

What's on today . . .

Christmas rally: Bangladesh Christian League will hold a colourful rally and bring out a procession on occasion of Christmas. Venue: From National Museum to Jatiya Press Club. Time: 7:30 am.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Dry weather is likely to prevail over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over northern part and river basins of the country during morning. Met Office said adding little change in night temperature is expected over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 29.7 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 10.6 degree at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.3	15.7	79	62
Chittagong	27.8	14.0	89	73
Rajshahi	25.5	12.0	71	82
Khulna	27.8	13.6	78	60
Barisal	27.0	13.8	90	60
Sylhet	27.3	14.8	79	69
Cox's Bazar	29.7	16.2	80	78

US expresses concern over British Telecom access

WASHINGTON, Dec 21: The United States on Thursday expressed concern that Britain might fail to implement procedures to open British Telecom telephone lines to competitors by the end of the year, reports AFP.

But US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, commenting on the results of an ongoing review of the British telecommunications sector, said some progress had been made in efforts to improve outside access to British Telecom's (BT) telephone infrastructure.

We commend the United Kingdom, and its regulator OFTEL, for its rule-making proceeding to permit competitive access to phone lines of British Telecom for high-speed internet access," she said in a statement.

"At the same time we are concerned that the United Kingdom will not implement these rules by the end of the year, as required by the European Union's regulation on unbundling of the local loop."

"Competitors have indicated interest in numerous BT ex-

changes, of which 90 per cent have been deemed to have space available for additional equipment. We encourage OFTEL to ensure that competitors gain access to all available exchanges in a timely, non-discriminatory manner."

The review of Britain's telecommunications procedures was carried out under provisions of 1988 US trade legislation that requires an assessment of US telecommunications trade agreements.

Results of the next review will be released in March 2001.

Standard & Poor's improves outlook for Estonia rating

LONDON, Dec 24: US rating agency Standard and Poor's raised its outlook for Estonia's credit rating to "positive" from "stable" Friday, citing the Baltic country's success in carrying out economic reforms, reports AFP.

The long-term credit ratings were affirmed at "A-minus" for local currency and "BBB-plus" for foreign currency while the short-term ratings were kept at "A-2."

The outlook revision reflects the country's success in instituting economic reforms and maintaining prudent fiscal policies," the New York-based agency said in a statement.

Economic reforms have attracted substantial foreign direct investment and established the export-oriented and increasingly diversified private sector as the engine of economic growth," it said.

Gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to grow by five-to-six per cent in the medium term, Standard and Poor's said.

Prudent economic management was reducing the risk of Estonia's weak international liquidity position, it said, caused by a high current account deficit that was expected to average six-to-seven per cent of GDP in the medium term.

"Additional reforms, in particular of the energy sector and pension system, are needed to strengthen Estonia's economic structure, decrease the country's vulnerability to external shocks and put public finances on a sustainable footing in the longer term," the agency said.

"Completion of such reforms, combined with further progress in Estonia's international integration, notably European Union accession, would support an upgrade," it added.

Poet Abdul Hye Al-Hadee dead

Eminent poet and lyricist Abdul Hye Al-Hadee, who shot into fame for a number of memorable modern and patriotic songs, died of a heart attack early yesterday morning. He was 61, reports BSS.

Abdul Hye Al-Hadee, the founder-executive secretary of Bangladesh Geeti Kabi Sangsad, left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and innumerable friends, relations, and admirers to mourn his death.

Bangladesh Geeti Kabi Sangsad and Bangladesh Sangeet Parishad in their condolence messages expressed deep shock at the death of Poet Abdul Hye Al-Hadee whose poems spoke specially of deep patriotism and songs depicted the picture of eternal love.

"*Ek Hriday Heenar Kachhey Hridayee Dwan Keer Achhey*" is one of the most memorable love songs written by the poet who had almost equal stakes in Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and the cine world.

A large number of poets, lyricists and singers visited the residence of the poet to pay their last respects.

Christmas rally: Bangladesh Christian League will hold

colourful rally and bring out a procession on occasion of Christmas. Venue: From National Museum to Jatiya Press Club. Time: 7:30 am.

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Sylhet	27.3	14.8	79	69
Cox's Bazar	29.7	16.2	80	78

Japan cabinet okays 2001 budget draft

TOKYO, Dec 24: Japan's cabinet today approved a budget plan for next year that aims to ensure the fragile economic recovery does not fizzle out, while trying to curb growth in the biggest debt in the industrial world, says Reuters.

The budget draft reflects the tough balancing act that unpopular Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and his government must perform ahead of an Upper House election next July, with voters increasingly worried about the runaway public debt but still demanding a full-fledged recovery.

"But Japan has such a big economy and the Japanese people are resilient, so we won't be buried by debt," Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

The budget, which is for the fiscal year 2001/02 starting on April 1, totals 82.65 trillion yen (\$737.3 billion), down 2.7 per cent from this year's initial budget.

The headline figure is unchanged from the Ministry of

Finance's draft unveiled last Wednesday, although slight changes were made in spending allocations following eleventh-hour haggling between the MOP and spending ministries.

The cut is the first in six years, but it mainly reflects a 22-per cent drop in debt-servicing costs due to the completion of a scheme to set aside reserves to protect bank depositors.

Discretionary spending - covering everything from social security to defence and public works - is in fact set to rise 1.2 per cent on an initial budget basis to 48.66 trillion yen.

The government, which is counting on the budget to help it hit an official forecast of 1.7 per cent economic growth in fiscal 2001/02, will submit the draft to parliament in January.

The budget will enable Japan to achieve a self-sustaining recovery next year, Miyazawa said. He made no reference to recent indicators that the show the economy may have already stopped dead in its tracks in the last months of this calendar

year.

The budget also includes the sort of pork-barrel projects that have helped the Liberal Democratic Party keep its supporters happy and itself in power almost without a break since 1955.

For instance, 75 billion yen is being allocated to build new "shinkansen" bullet trains to rural areas that will cost a hefty 2.5 trillion over 12 years.

But amid growing criticism of the wastefulness of traditional pump-priming, a record 272 public works projects are to be cancelled, saving taxpayers 2.6 trillion yen over coming years.

The overarching political purpose of the budget is to flesh out Mori's "Japan rebirth plan," which aims to promote information technology, facilities for the burgeoning elderly population, urban renewal and the environment.

To help finance the budget, the government plans to issue a record 98.50 trillion yen in government bonds - about equal to the combined income of South

Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong."

But it has been able to lower the volume of bonds for new financing by 4.3 trillion yen to 28.3 trillion yen - fulfilling a pledge repeatedly made by Miyazawa.

As a result, bond issuance will decline to 34.3 per cent of budget revenue, down from 38.5 per cent this fiscal year once a supplementary budget compiled in November is included.

However, debt-servicing costs were still too high at nearly 20-per cent of total budget expenditure.

Japan's deficit - including central and local government - is expected to decline to 6.4 per cent of gross domestic product in fiscal 2001/02 from 9.4 per cent this year. But it is still more than twice the maximum that members of the European Union's single currency area are permitted to run.

In recent years, successive governments have topped up the initial budget with a spending package to bolster growth.

Death anniversary

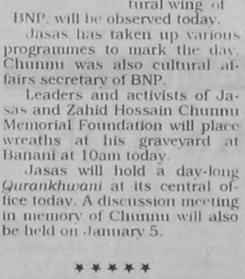
By Staff Correspondent

The fifth death anniversary of Zahid Hossain Chhunu, former president of Jatiyatobadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (Jassas), the cultural wing of BNP, will be observed today.

Jassas has taken up various programmes to mark the day. Chhunu was also cultural affairs secretary of BNP.

Leaders and activists of Jassas and Zahid Hossain Chhunu Memorial Foundation will place wreaths at his graveyard at Banani at 10am today.

Jassas will hold a day-long *Qurankhuan* at its central office today. A discussion meeting in memory of Chhunu will also be held on January 5.



The fourth death anniversary of Dr. Sofia Hassan Jahun Ali, a former Professor, Department of Economics, Dhaka University, and a renowned sportsman, will be observed today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the residence of Dr. Shaikh Maqsood Ali at House No 135, Eastern Road, Lane 5, New DOHS (Mohakhali) after Ash prayers.

The 8th death anniversary of eminent Sufi Abdul Majid will be observed on Tuesday at his village home at Jerone under Brahmaipara, Comilla, reports UNB.

He was a great Muslim scholar and a dedicated progressive activist of Comilla, a press release said.

AIUB admission test results

Asia International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) published the results of written admission test yesterday, says a press release.

The successful candidates have been asked to contact AIUB campuses for their interview schedule.

Following are the roll numbers of successful candidates:

DISCIPLINE	ROLL NO
M.B.A	101, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 207, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222 & 223
B.B.A	101, 103, 111, 123, 125, 126, 128, 135, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 145, 146, 153, 157, 158, 159, 167, 215, 217, 227, 233, 240, 244, 249, 256, 262, 263, 265, 272, 313, 315, 322, 337, 344, 347, 363, 369, 371, 372, 377, 384, 399, 412, 413, 414, 449, 454, 462, 464, 480, 495, 511, 515, 517, 518, 526, 530, 535, 544, 564, 572, 574, 578, 586, 598, 602, 603, 604, 614, 623, 626, 631, 632, 655, 660, 661, 678, 680, 694, 702, 707, 709, 711, 726, 728, 734, 751, 781, 793, 812, 814, 816, 818, 823, 840, 847, 849 & 200A
Computer Engineering & Electrical and Electronics Engineering	108, 143, 144, 160, 161, 162, 165, 208, 220, 250, 252, 258, 292, 300, 301, 326, 328, 332, 335, 341, 342, 343, 346, 348, 350, 352, 356, 365, 375, 402, 415, 417, 418, 420, 422, 427, 439, 453, 463, 473, 481, 485, 489, 490, 501, 503, 507, 510, 514, 519, 522, 533, 541, 553, 554, 562, 568, 571, 574, 582, 583, 584, 595, 596, 613, 621, 624, 625, 634, 637, 648, 649, 650, 677, 685, 690, 692, 699, 705, 706, 733, 735, 740, 747, 752, 759, 760, 770, 771, 772, 777, 791, 795, 800, 812, 820, 821, 831, 834, 835, 844, 845 & 846
Computer Science	149, 150, 151, 166, 200, 201, 204, 209, 213, 215, 241, 261, 266, 267, 298, 299, 302, 309, 319, 324, 334, 364, 368, 374, 381, 393, 395, 425, 430, 435, 437, 455, 460, 469, 470, 476, 492, 500, 516, 524, 525, 527, 534, 536, 540, 546, 551, 555, 560, 561, 567, 569, 573, 580, 593, 594, 606, 610, 612, 615, 616, 647, 665, 666, 668, 681, 697, 698, 700, 717, 721, 745, 755, 758, 762, 765, 788, 789, 790, 804, 805, 809, 817, 825, 827, 848 & 478A

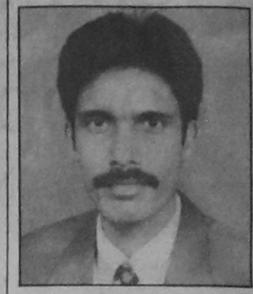
2390 held in Barisal

BARISAL, Dec 24: Police arrested 2,390 persons on various charges from Barisal range during the last one month beginning October 22, reports BSS.

According to official sources, police recovered huge quantity of arms and ammunitions including revolvers, shutter guns, shooters, cut rifles and pipe guns.

The arrest and recovery were made during a special drive conducted in Barisal, Jhalakathi, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuak-

Congratulations



The Syndicate of the University of Dhaka conferred PhD degree on Noor Mohammad of the Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka for his dissertation entitled "Development of Population Education Program for Out-of-School Puberty Girls in a System of Non-formal Education," says a press release.

Noor, one of the leading adolescent specialists in Bangladesh, has several researches in his credit on adolescent issues. Earlier he did his MPH from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), USA with Academic achievement (Best Student) Award. He has several articles published in different national and international journal and he is a regular speaker at international meets.

Noor Mohammad is working with Urban Family Health Partnership (UFHP), a cooperating agency under USAID, as Programme Coordinator, on full-time secondment from Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC).

He hails from Kushiata and is the 3rd son of Munshi Abdul Mannan and Nurun Nahar.



University of Dhaka has conferred a PhD degree on M. Manian for his thesis "An Evaluation of National Food and Nutrition Policy of Bangladesh," says a press release.

Dr. Manian earlier obtained his M.Sc in Biochemistry from the University of Dhaka in 1973 and Master of Community Nutrition (MCN) from the University of Queensland, Australia in 1996. He has a number of scientific publications published in national and international journals.

Manian is the eldest son of Late Md. Moslem Uddin Biswas, a former headmaster of Kashba-Majali A H High School and hails from Boyrat in Pangscha Upazilla of the Rajbari District.

He is the secretary of Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC). He is also the president of the Nutrition Society of Bangladesh.

University of Bradford, UK has conferred a PhD degree on Abul Kalam Azad for his thesis on "Analytical Studies on Interactions between Pharmaceutical Esters and Alcohols," says a press release.

Abul Kalam Azad is the Superintendent of Drugs, Directorate of Drug Administration.



Mostafizur Rahman has obtained first class in the MED examination (session 1999-2000) from Dhaka TT College under National University, says a press release.

He is the eldest son of Hayat Ali and Sufia Begum of Mosa-jan village in Tangal.

Rahman is at present serving Bangladesh Rifles College as a lecturer of Botany.

Chehlum

The *chehlum* of M A Latif, a retired commissioner of WAPDA will be held at his residence at House No 18 (New), Rd No 6, Dhanmondi R/A (behind Dhanmondi Plaza Shopping Complex) after Ash prayers tomorrow, says a press release.

All have been requested to attend the programme.