



VOL. X NO. 340 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarmnews.com

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2001

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POUSH 20, 1407 BS

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16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Reports on Ershad's takeover, Nasim's 'coup bid' demanded

JS Committee on Defence Ministry meets again on Jan 7

By Nazrul Islam

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Defence has asked the government to submit within 15 days separate reports on the 'process of illegal takeover of power' by former army chief H M Ershad in 1982 and the 'coup attempt' by General Mohammad Nasim in 1996.

After about two and a half hours' discussion at its meeting yesterday, the committee finally fixed the agenda to examine the process of illegal takeover of power by Ershad and asked the defence ministry to submit its reports. The meeting was adjourned till January 7.

After receipt of the reports from the ministry, the committee will hold detailed discussion and constitute separate parliamentary sub-committees, if needed, to conduct independent investigation into the military takeover and the coup attempt.

Committee Chairman and former Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. (Retd) Shafail told a group of journalists at the parliament building that the committee would look into the activities of Ershad before he took over.

The committee would also examine whether the process of illegal

PM's directive to implement ADP speedily

In a midterm review meeting yesterday, the National Economic Council (NEC) expressed satisfaction over national economic activities and implementation of ADP in last six months of the current fiscal, reports UNB.

At the same time, the NEC meeting, presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, emphasized yet speedier implementation of different development projects for achieving more success in economic fields.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked officials concerned to devise effective plans for speedy implementation of development.

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Bus service with Nepal likely

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Possibility of opening Dhaka-Kathmandu bus service will be discussed during the forthcoming visit of Nepalese Foreign Minister Chakra Prashad Bastola to Bangladesh.

The Nepalese foreign minister will pay a four-day official visit to Bangladesh from January 8 to 11. Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said this while briefing newsmen in the city yesterday.

The two countries will hold talks on bilateral issues including scope for expansion of trade and investment, he said. Talks will also take place on enhancing transit facilities and the opening of a direct bus service between the two countries, Azad added.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 3		5.24 pm
Jan 4	6-42 am	

Prayer Timings		
January 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-14	5-20
Zuhr	12-45	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-23	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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HC asks police not to arrest Morshed Khan

By Special Correspondent

The Vacation Bench of the High Court yesterday directed police not to arrest or disturb M Morshed Khan MP and his son Faisal Khan 'till one week' after the court reopens on January 7, pending hearing of the 'substantive application' for their bail by a Regular Bench, court sources said.

The Vacation Bench comprising Justice Fazlul Karim gave the order following anticipatory bail prayer by Morshed Khan, a leading businessman and a central leader of BNP and his son in a case filed with Kulshi thana in Chittagong on December 26 under Public Safety Act (PSA). The case is now lying with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Chittagong.

Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed along with Dr Kamal Hossain, Rafiq Ul Huq and Abdul Malek moved the anticipatory bail petition while Deputy Attorney General AKM Saifuddin opposed it.

The lawmaker and his son are sought by police since filing of the case in which they have been accused of rioting, ransacking a sweetmeat shop and looting Tk 45,000 from the shop.

They have denied the allegations and also filed a case, which police had first refused to accept but later recorded it on orders from a magistrate.

It was complained in the case that Faisal Khan along with his wife went to buy iftar items from the shop but they came under attack by some young men following an altercation over parking of their vehicle. They were beaten. When Morshed Khan arrived there on information about this, he was chased.

Megawati's visit will be significant, says FM

Dhaka will propose to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Jakarta when Indonesia's populist leader and Vice-President Megawati Soekarnoputri arrives here on January 5, reports UNB.

Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's founding father Soekarno, will be visiting Bangladesh on a 3-day official tour at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

She will be here on the second leg of her 3-nation tour that will also take her to Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

Her visit is seen as significant as it would be Megawati's first official tour of Bangladesh and a follow-up to the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who toured Jakarta in September 1997.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will receive the Indonesian Vice-President at the Zia International Airport breaking usual protocol, possibly on grounds that both Hasina and Megawati are daughters of founding fathers of their respective nations.

"It would be a high-profile visit and significant as well," Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told reporters at the Foreign Office. He said Bangladesh and Indonesia being members of OIC and D-8 enjoy excellent relations.

The Indonesian Vice-President will call on the President and meet with the Prime Minister on January 5 and is expected to hold official talks with Foreign Minister Azad on January 6 at state guesthouse Padma.

Asked whether Bangladesh would place any specific proposal for closing the widening trade gap with Indonesia, Additional Foreign Secretary Ruhul Amin said: "There is scope for expanding Dhaka's trade with Jakarta ... we will explore means of achieving more export to Indonesia."

Bilateral trade is heavily inclined towards Indonesia. In 1999-2000, Bangladesh's exports fetched USD 8.13 million while imports cost USD 159.47.

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PSA fails to curb crime

Only 40 out of 476 cases disposed of in 9 months

By Court Correspondent

The Public Safety Act (PSA) failed to make any positive impact on improvement of law and order mainly because most of the cases filed under the Act were disposed of without punishment, according to judicial officials and legal experts.

During investigation, police are generally reluctant to apply the PSA against the offenders, sources in courts said.

Under the PSA, an accused is put behind the bar after charge is brought against him, and no court can grant him bail during the 30-day investigation period. However, investigation sometimes takes more time.

A tribunal was constituted in the city on March 28 last year for

trial of cases under the PSA.

A total of 476 cases were registered with the tribunal in nine months ending in November, 2000. Of these, 40 were disposed of and 436 are pending. The accused in 20 cases out of the 40 were acquitted as the allegations against them proved to be "false, fabricated and vague", sources in the tribunal said.

In the rest 20 cases, 25 offenders were given rigorous imprisonment for their involvement in such crimes, the sources said.

Many other cases filed with different thanas

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Drifters... fourteen people, who had been stranded at the transit lounge of the Zia International Airport since December 16 after being forced back to Dhaka by the Indian authorities, were placed on a day's police remand yesterday by a magistrate's court. The 14, including four women, were deported from Vienna by the Austrian immigration authorities to New Delhi.

- Star photo

Fourteen people, who had been forced back to Bangladesh by India after being deported to New Delhi by the Austrian immigration authorities, were placed on a day's police remand yesterday.

The suspected Chinese and Taiwanese nationals, including four women, who reached the Indian capital via Bangkok, Dhaka and Calcutta, have no valid travel documents. Austrian immigration authorities seized the papers, sources said.

The 14, believed to be victims of organised human traffickers, were boarded a Biman flight to Dhaka by the Indian authorities.

"We had to play the host to these people who had no papers, offering them food and keeping them at the transit lounge of ZIA, since Indian authorities forcibly boarded them on a Dhaka-bound Biman flight on December 16. The decision to hand them over to police was taken after the Chinese embassy in Dhaka had declined to take their responsibility," a Biman source said.

Earlier yesterday, they were handed over to the police by Bangladesh Biman, which had played the unwilling host to the group stranded in the transit lounge of the Zia International Airport since December 17 last year.

The accused include ex-MP Habibul Islam Habib, Sonarbaria UP chairman Abdur Rashid, Koyla UP chairman Abdur Rakib, ex-Uppazila chairman of Kalaroa on October 5 last year.

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