

JS body on foreign ministry slams Raja's remarks

By Staff Correspondent

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Ministry at a meeting yesterday condemned the audacious comments made recently by Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka about the country's War of Independence and his conduct devoid of diplomatic norms.

Chaired by Committee chief Dr Mohammad Selim, the meeting also discussed at length the progress of implementation of the resolutions adopted at the committee's previous meetings.

The meeting was told that the authorities concerned were making sincere efforts to implement the suggestions of the committee.

It also discussed the prime minister's participation in the ninth IOC conference held at Doha during November 12-14 last year and condoled the death of Awami League MP Syed Kamal Bakht.

Chairman of the committee apprised the meeting of his experiences when he attended a seminar on Peace and Security in Asia held in Japan recently.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Choudhury and Mariam Begum attended the meeting among others.

Alleged mugger succumbs to injuries at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

An alleged mugger, who was injured in a mob beating at Section-14 Mirpur on December 25, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Nabi Hossain alias Jasim, son of Abdur Rashid of Section-14, Mirpur.

Mob beat up Jasim while he tried to snatch away valuables from a pedestrian on December 25 at Mirpur, police said.

Police rescued Jasim in a critical condition and sent him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"Jasim was an employee of a shop at Mirpur in the city" one of his cousins said.

Jasim was an accused in a mugging case recorded with Pallabi police station, duty officer of Pallabi thana said.

A case was filed in this regard.

AL leader slaughtered in Naogaon

NAOGAON, Jan 4: An Awami League leader was slaughtered by unidentified assailants in Raninagar upazila yesterday, reports UNB.

The assailants stabbed Mojibar Rahman, 48, indiscriminately and then slaughtered him on Abadpukur-Jalkoi road at about 6:30 pm.

They fled the scene firing several shots.

Mojibar Rahman, vice president of local Awami League unit and a former member of Ekdala Union Parishad, came under attack while he was returning home at village Dakahar.

A case was filed with Raninagar thana, but none was arrested till filing of this report at 5 pm today.

BNP's press confce today

Opposition BNP will apprise the people of the party's decisive stance against "misuse" of the Public Safety Act through a press conference today, reports UNB.

Deputy Leader of the opposition Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury will address the conference at 29 Minto Road at 4 pm, a party release said.

BNP's position regarding the Speaker's letter to opposition leader Khaleda Zia asking her to join the January 11 parliament session may also be made clear to the press.

Boral murder: Another held

BAGERHAT, Jan 4: A charge-sheeted accused in Awami League leader Kalidas Boral murder case was sent to jail after he surrendered before a court here today, reports UNB.

With the arrest of Chan Mia Molla, police have so far arrested eight people, among 22 charge-sheeted accused, all are leaders and supporters of ruling Awami League.

Earlier, Chan Mia surrendered before High Court but the court ordered him to appear before the lower court.

However, 14 others remained at large after the killing of district Awami League general secretary Kalidas Boral on August 20.

PDB poised to turn down Marubeni amendments

"Decisive negotiation meeting" on January 10

By Sharier Khan

The Power Development Board (PDB) will hold a "decisive negotiation meeting" on January 10 with Japanese company Marubeni on the 450 MW Meghnaghat Phase-2 power plant, sources said.

Marubeni earlier agreed to set up and operate the plant as per terms and conditions set for the Meghnaghat Phase-1 plant. But it later proposed some amendments, which "grossly deviate" from the agreement (for Phase-1 plant) and are "less favourable" to Bangladesh, the sources said. The Phase-1 plant is being installed by US company AES.

The government is unlikely to accept the proposals and stick to its earlier decision to implement the Phase-2 project as per terms and conditions under which the Phase-1 plant is being built.

Since losing the bidding for the Phase-1 plant in 1997 to AES, Marubeni has been strongly lobbying with different circles to get the Phase-2 project.

In 1998, it had proposed to the government that it would install the Phase-2 plant as per terms and conditions including the power tariff set for the Phase-1 plant.

Accordingly, the Cabinet Purchase Committee gave a green signal PDB to involve Marubeni in the Phase-2 plant on condition that the agreement is as per the terms fixed for the first one.

Marubeni began unsolicited negotiations in late

October. At one stage, Marubeni offered free electricity worth five million dollars during the Initial Operating Period (IOP) instead of 45 million dollars as in the agreement for Phase-1 plant. The proposal was discussed at several meetings and in all the meetings the government clearly said that this was not acceptable.

Marubeni then calculated the value of free electricity offered by AES at 35 million dollars and gave some other proposals.

It said, instead of giving free electricity worth 35 million dollars during the IOP, it will give free electricity worth 5.7 million dollars before the end of the 22-year contract period and give the plant to PDB as 'gift' when the contract will expire.

After 22 years of operation, the plant will be worth 31.4 million dollars, it claimed.

It argued that the plant's value would still remain at 31.4 million dollars even after 22 years of operation because its longevity would be 35 years.

It however said the plant will need overhauling in the 26th year, which will cost around 25 million dollars. Its value will remain at 31.4 million dollars even after the overhauling, it claimed.

Marubeni also said that the Phase-2 plant will need only 35 acres of land, which is half the area

See page 11 col 7

DCC drive to rid footpaths of hawkers may hit snag

By Raziur Rahman

Lack of coordination among the agencies concerned, absence of permanent monitoring cells and shortage of required manpower might lead to failure of the on-going drive for eviction of hawkers from pavements in the city and removal of unauthorised roadside shops, officials concerned and city dwellers fear.

The drive launched by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Dhaka Metropolitan police (DMP) after the Eid holidays has greatly eased movement of pedestrians as well as vehicles in some of the busiest areas in the city. But whether this would continue when usual activities in the city resume is a question agitating the minds of many.

Top officials of DCC and DMP used to blame each other for allowing hawkers to occupy pavements and also parts of roads for years. But this time, officials of both expressed their determination to keep the city roads and pavements free of hawkers 'as long as possible,' sources pointed out.

Hawkers have already been evicted from pavements in the busiest areas like Gulistan, Firmgate, Purana Paltan, Karwan Bazar, Hatirpool, Shapla Chattar, Nilkhet and New Market.

Besides, unauthorized shops were removed and hawkers evicted from footpaths and roads in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), BUET, Panthapath and Lalbagh areas.

Asked about the drive, pedestrians, traders at various markets, passengers of vehicles, traffic police and many others expressed their satisfaction. They, however, questioned, "How long would this improved situation last?"

Similar drives failed in the past, they recalled.

A top official of DMP said DCC is supposed to keep pavements and roads free from illegal occupation. He, however, admitted that under DMP Act, police are also supposed take care of anything that obstructs movement people and vehicles.

See page 11 col 7



The ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out a colourful rally in the city yesterday to mark its 53rd founding anniversary.

Admission ordeal begins in city

Parents, students crowd govt schools for forms

By Mustak Hossain

Thousands of students and guardians crowded government schools in the city for procuring and submitting admission forms on the last day yesterday.

As the new academic year begins, parents and guardians are having a tough time as in the previous years to get their wards admitted to any of the good schools.

Admission tests for classes I to IX in the 24 government schools will be held on January 9, 10 and 11. More than 31 thousand forms were sold so far against 6,845 seats in the schools.

Last year, about 24 thousand forms were sold.

There is heavy rush for admission in the reputed schools as the guardians are naturally eager to see their wards get into one of those so that they need not change school till the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations.

"Competition for admission is going to be tougher this year than in the previous as the number of candidates is much

Ctg BNP threatens non-stop hartal

Case against Morshed Khan

CHITTAGONG, Jan 4: City BNP today threatened to go for a non-stop hartal in greater Chittagong if the "false cases" filed against Morshed Khan MP and his son were not withdrawn by Sunday, reports UNB.

The warning came from a rally of city BNP held at Dewanhat today with local leader Niaz Morshed Khan in the chair.

City BNP convenor Meer Mohammad Nasiruddin, general secretary Dastagir Chowdhury and general secretary of Dhaka city unit of BNP Abdus Salam also addressed the rally.

They called upon the people to make Sunday's hartal an all out success.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami-backed Samaj Kalyan Parishad has threatened to enforce a two-day hartal in greater Chittagong on January 14 and 15 if the people arrested in connection with November 10 gunfight at Andarkilla are not released by January 13.

The ultimatum came from a meeting of the Entejamia Committee of the Parishad held at the local press club auditorium this afternoon with Moulana Muhammad Shamsuddin in the chair.

Forty people were arrested following a clash between Jamaat cadres and police on November 10.



Friends try to console the family of Mohammad Ali Moin (inset), a meat vendor of the city's North Bashabo area who was killed reportedly by a lethal injection yesterday.

-- Star photo

DNC trio let illegal liquor flow for protection money

Each reportedly earns Tk 15 lakh per month

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Three top-ranking officials of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) allegedly derive huge protection money from illegal liquor traders in the city.

According to sources at the department, each earns about Tk 15 lakh every month from unauthorised bars and clubs across the city. One of them even owns a bar in the city's Shukrabad area, 'selling all sorts of liquor to people of all ages,' said a junior official.

In one instance, sources alleged, the three received Tk 40 lakh from a club on the assurance that they would provide it with licence to run a bar. The club already runs an unlicensed bar, paying Tk one lakh every month to keep these officials mum.

"Even the superior bosses are unable to take any departmental action against the three," said a junior official of the department, "because they are in the

good books of political and administrative high-ups."

Two of the three are leaders of the Narcotics Officers' Welfare Association (NOWA) and one has been posted at the head office for the last 12 years.

These corrupt officials don't allow the junior officials to carry out inspection of these illegal establishments, as they have big stakes there, complained one official.

"If any officer tries to defy the superiors' orders, he gets into trouble," he added. "He either gets transferred or is harassed otherwise."

One of the three has even 'assigned' ten inspectors to collect Tk 5,000 every month from some

See page 11 col 1

Road accidents kill 6 in 2 dists

Six people were killed and 55 others injured in separate road accidents in Tangail and Bogra yesterday, reports UNB.

Of them, four were killed in Tangail and the rest in Bogra.

In Tangail, four people were killed and at least 30 injured when a Dhaka-bound bus fell into a roadside ditch at Bauikhola in Basail upazila.

The identity of the victims could not be known immediately. The bus was carrying mostly devotees for Biswa Ijtema at Tongi.

Three of the victims died on the spot while another succumbed to his injuries at Tangail General Hospital.

In another accident, two people were killed and 25 others injured in a bus-tempo collision on Bogra-Natore road.

Police said the Rajshahi-bound bus from Bogra collided with the tempo, injuring 27 people.

Twenty-four of them were admitted to Bogra Moahammad Ali Hospital where tempo driver Belal Hossain, 30, and a 40-year-old unidentified bus passenger succumbed to their injuries.

Ministry of Food under fire

Delay in making a big scandal public irks JS body

By Reaz Ahmad

The Ministry of Food came under fire yesterday for delay in carrying out a decision of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the ministry to make public a big scandal concerning rice import.

Six months have passed since the committee decided to place an investigation report on the scandal before the Jatiya Sangsad but the ministry did not comply with that decision.

The committee at a meeting yesterday blasted food ministry officials for deliberately delaying the process to cover up a big 'theft' in the name of rice import.

Neither the Food Minister nor the Food Secretary attended the meeting held at the Sangsad Bhaban with Committee Chair-

man Abdur Hakim in the chair.

A parliamentary sub-committee headed by ruling party lawmaker Mirza Azam submitted an investigation report more than seven months ago, revealing that a consignment of 12,000 tonnes of rice never reached Bangladesh though the ministry concerned showed in papers that it spent money for the rice import.

Though initially it had been reported that a vessel MV Hafina carrying 12,000 tonnes of rice meant for Bangladesh was missing, the sub-committee found the report baseless.

M/S Ramesh Kumar and Co of India was awarded the job of

See page 11 col 1

Lethal injection kills one in city

By Staff Correspondent

A meat vendor at North Bashabo in the city's Khilgaon area was allegedly killed by a lethal dose of injection Wednesday night, family members said.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Ali Moin, 50, son of late Abdur Rashid Sarder of 55/7/A North Bashabo and owned seven shops at Bashabo market.

Hospital sources quoting family members said that Ali went to Zaman Medical Hall at 49 North Bashabo for a routine medical check-up for his arthritis, where the doctor gave him an injection. But within a few seconds, Ali was suffocating.

In a critical conditional, he was sent to the Suharwardy Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Ali's Family members alleged that one Shahin in the market who was in conflict Ali might have played a role in his death.

A medical board comprising Dr Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Dr Fazlul Karim and Dr Ashraf

See page 11 col 3

By-polls to Pabna-5 JS seat Feb 5

By-election in Pabna-5 Constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad will be held on February 5, an official announcement said yesterday, reports UNB.

The seat fell vacant following the death of BNP MP M Rafiqul Islam Bakul on November 10 last in a tragic road accident.

The Election Commission in a gazette notification has announced the poll schedule.

According to the schedule, the last date for submission of nomination papers is January 10 while scrutiny of the nominations will be held on Jan 11. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is January 18.

Stranded Taiwanese on fresh remand

By Special Correspondent

The two Taiwanese nationals in the group of 14 Chinese deported from Austria and subsequently stranded in Dhaka for more than two weeks now, were taken on a fresh two-day remand by Special Branch of Police in a bid to find out more about their role in accompanying the group. The group was deported by Austrian authorities to New Delhi where Indian police in turn forced them abroad a Bangladesh Biman flight on December 16.

Shan Chen Wen and Ms Wang Chia Lian were produced before a Magistrate yesterday by cantonment police at the end of their one-day remand. The Magistrate granted the police a fresh two-day remand.

The 12 others identified as Chinese nationals have been released into the custody of the Chinese Embassy. Although the 12 Chinese were scheduled to leave Dhaka for Hong Kong early yesterday on a Dragon Airlines flight, they were instead taken to the Chinese Embassy for unknown reasons. Police sources however said that their journey was delayed due to unavailability of seats on the flight.