

Copies of split verdict to be sent to CJ this week

By Special Correspondent

Copies of the split verdict of the Death Reference Bench of High Court in the Bangabandhu murder case is not likely to be submitted to Chief Justice Latifur Rahman today when the court reopens after vacation.

The copies may be submitted later this week, it was learnt yesterday.

After receiving the copies, the Chief Justice will form a third bench to hear the acquittal of five of the 15 accused by Justice Ruhul Amin, one judge of the Bench. The other judge—Justice Khairul Huq—upheld death sentences of all the 15.

In the split verdict was given on December 14.

A trial court in its verdict on November 8, 1998 sentenced all the 15 to death for murdering Bangabandhu along with most of his family members on August 15, 1975.

Four of them Faruq Rahman, Bazul Huda, Shahriar Rashid Khan and Mohiuddin Ahmed—are in Dhaka Central Jail. Others are absconding abroad.

Cold wave death toll in India rises to 68

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: Cold weather sweeping northern and eastern India has killed at least 68 people in the past few days, officials said today, reports Reuters.

In the northern state of Uttar Pradesh 35 people died, officials said, while the United News of India (UNI) said 33 people died in the eastern state of Bihar. The news agency said 335 people had also been taken ill.

Night temperatures have dropped to around four degrees Celsius in parts of northern India, hitting the poor who live on the streets.

"Those who died on account of the cold wave were people who could not afford woollen clothing," Uttar Pradesh's relief commissioner RC Dwivedi told Reuters.

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are among India's most populous states, have a majority of the country's poor and are among the worst affected during the winter months.

Thick fog and mist have disrupted the movement of trains, buses and aircraft in many states.

New Delhi's international airport was forced to cancel several flights earlier this week.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 7		5.27 pm
Jan 8	6-43am	

Prayer Timings

January 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-10
Zuhr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-30

Cancer among children alarmingly high

No registry, no population-based study: Experts

By Naimul Haq

Cancer among children in Bangladesh is alarmingly high, according to a three-year study.

The study conducted by the Radiotherapy Department at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) found that out of 10,095 patients who were detected having cancer, 495 were children aged up to 14. The rate is five per cent.

The study was done from January 1990 to December 1992 but not made public earlier.

Of the 497 children, 16.3 per cent had (eye) retinoblastoma, 14 per cent blood cancer, 13.48 per cent bone cancer, 12.47 per cent lymphoma, nine per cent tumour in the central nervous system, 7.85 per cent (brain) neuroblastoma, 7.44 per cent germ cell tumour, 6.84 per cent soft tissue sarcoma and 4.43 per cent had nasopharyngeal tumour.

"The rate is quite horrifying," Prof Hye, former director of Cancer Hospital in the city told this correspondent when contacted. "It is a significant finding and is a matter of great concern", he said.

Of the 10,095 patients, 30 per cent was of 15-45 age group and 65 per cent was above that age group.

Among the males, 21 per cent had cancer in lung, 12 per cent in larynx, six per cent in lymphoma, 6.35 per cent in oropharynx and 5.86 per cent in oral cavity.

Among females, 24.32 per cent had cervix cancer, 17.6 per cent breast cancer, 8 per cent oral cavity cancer, 5.93 per cent ovary cancer and 3.31 per cent had lymphoma cancer.

Another leading oncologist of the country said, "Cancer is a growing problem in developing countries. Unfortunately, population-based study on cancer is lacking in Bangladesh and so we can not fix strategy for cancer treatment."

Dr Pinaki Bhattacharya, Member Secretary of Oncology Club said, "There is no cancer registry in Bangladesh, which is a big hurdle. In fact, we are developing a cost-effective cancer registry to study See page 11 col 7

Opposition calls hartal in Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 6: BNP led All-Party Action Council (APAC) will enforce a day-long hartal in the port city tomorrow demanding withdrawal of case filed against BNP central leader M Morshed Khan MP.

The authorities have already tightened security in the city with deployment of additional police force fearing violence during hartal hours.

Meanwhile, police arrested some opposition activists including six JCD leaders which prompted APAC to take a decision for a 48-hour hartal in the port city from January 10.

Chittagong chapter of All-Party Action Committee (APAC) took out a procession in the city this afternoon in support of its tomorrow's dawn-to-dusk hartal. The procession was brought out after a rally held in Lalldighi See page 11 col 3

Official talks held Indonesia offers zero tariff facility for Bangladeshi goods

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Indonesia will give zero tariff facility to Bangladeshi products to reduce its trade imbalance with the former.

The facility will be effective after the first meeting of the proposed Joint Commission, to be held in Jakarta within the next two months. The Commission is likely to be formed soon.

At official talks here yesterday, the two countries also agreed to exchange "concrete ideas" for poverty alleviation, removal of illiteracy and empowerment of women to make greater strides in these fields which are crucial for development.

The two countries also decided to hold single country exhibi-

tions, fairs and to exchange business and trade delegations to boost trade.

Visiting Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Alwai Shihab and his Bangladeshi counterpart Abdus Samad Azad led the two sides at the hour-long talks held at the state guest house Padma.

The talks were held on the sidelines of the on-going visit of Indonesian Vice-president Megawati Soekarnoputri. She arrived here yesterday on a three-day official visit.

A joint statement issued after the talks also emphasised "building a bridge of friendship, trade and understanding" between the See page 11 col 4

Jubo League leader shot dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 6: Shaikh Kabirul Islam, chairman of Dumuria Union Parishad and president of upazila unit of Awami Jubo League was gunned down by unidentified assailants near Dumuria AL office at about 9 pm on Friday.

Police said the gunmen shot Kabirul, 30, point blank while he was about to board a Khulna-bound passenger bus.

He was taken to the Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) at about 9-45 pm where the doctors declared him dead.

According to family sources, Kabirul was on the 'hit list' of Dumuria-based unit of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP). He had been residing in a rented house in Khulna town fearing attempt on life, sources added.

Another source said the murder was a sequel to previous enmity with some top leaders of Khulna district Chhatra Union for his firm stand against toll collection from businessmen and shrimp farm owners of Dumuria upazila.

The slain UP chairman filed a case against BCU leaders with Dumuria thana in September last year.

The armed cadres of Biplobi Communist Party were hired by BCU leaders to kill Kabirul who was to marry a member of the women wing of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), family sources said.

A case was filed with Dumuria thana this afternoon accusing some BCU leaders. But police arrested four persons having link with the 'Barun group' of Biplobi Communist Party.

The arrested are Ensar Ali, 26, Islam Hossain, 24, Akshed Shaikh, 30, and Abdur Razzaque, 30.

With the murder of Kabirul Islam, the total number of UP chairmen murdered in last 4 years stands at five in Khulna district.

Manzoor Watoo jailed for graft

ISLAMABAD, Jan 6: A court today jailed a former Pakistani provincial chief minister for graft, the latest conviction in a crackdown on corruption launched by the military rulers, reports AFP.

Manzoor Watoo, former chief minister of Punjab province, was found guilty by an accountability court of misusing official funds to benefit a private firm, state-run Associated Press of Pakistan said.

He was given three years jail and also fined rupees 100 million (about 1.6 million dollars) by the court sitting in Punjab's capital, Lahore.

Watoo has also been debarred from holding any public office for 21 years.

Scores of people, including politicians and bureaucrats, have been punished under the anti-corruption drive launched by military ruler General Pervez Musharraf since he seized power in October 1999.

But Musharraf came under fire after he pardoned former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from serving lengthy jail terms on hijacking and corruption charges and exiled him to Saudi Arabia.

Critics said the deal brokered by Saudi royalty undermined the credibility of Musharraf's crusade against plunderers of national wealth. The regime defended the decision, saying it was taken in the national interest.

Road accidents kill 6 in 2 dists

By Staff Correspondent

Six people were killed and 10 others injured in separate road accidents in Bogra and Rajshahi districts yesterday.

Of them, four were killed in Bogra while the rest in Rajshahi. In Bogra, four people were killed and 10 injured when a bus skidded off the road and fell into a ditch at Godarpara on Bogra-Rangpur highway yesterday, according to UNB.

Police said the bus fell into the ditch at about 11.30 am leaving its four passengers dead on the spot. Two of them were identified as Abdul Hamid, 45, and Shahin, 20, of Shibganj upazila in Bogra. The identity of two others could not be known immediately.

The injured were admitted to local hospitals.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent reports: Two people were killed in two separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

One Abdus Sattar, 30, of village Santhia under Pabna district was injured when he fell from a running truck at 9 am.

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BNP won't join JS session

Khaleda's reply to Speaker's letter today

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia will reply to the Speaker's letter today, regretting his request to join the 21st session of the parliament, beginning on January 11.

The draft of the letter finalised yesterday mentioned non-implementation of the two four-point agreements signed between the government and the Opposition earlier, BNP sources said.

It also mentioned non-fulfilment of Opposition's five pre-conditions regarding withdrawal of the Prime Minister's "indecent" remarks about Khaleda Zia in the House.

The sources said a group of senior BNP leaders finalised the draft, following the decision of Thursday's meeting of BNP Standing Committee.

Later, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan separately scrutinised the contents and language of the letter and approved it.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury in a letter to the Leader of the Opposition on January 2 urged the Opposition to join the 21st JS session to resolve two important issues: retention of the reserved JS seats for women and establishment of voting right of expatriate Bangladeshis.

This was the fourth letter from the Speaker to the Leader of the Opposition urging the Opposition to join parliament session.

In her reply Khaleda Zia narrated the background behind BNP's abstention from attending the JS sessions. The ruling party failed to fulfil the Opposition demands and pre-conditions, she said.

The reply also mentioned the Speaker's previous letters and replies to those.

She said the Opposition See page 11 col 3

No hartal this month, BNP decides

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has decided not to call hartal this month and instead put more emphasis on mass contact across the country to mobilise people's support prior to launching a "militant" movement next month.

The party plans to organise, both separately and jointly with its alliance partners, a series of public meetings in the capital and elsewhere in the country up to January 30.

BNP will hold a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on January 11 while the four-party alliance will jointly organise public meetings at Commilla on January 15, at Rangpur on January 21, at Jessore on January 25 and at Bandarban on January 30.

Besides, BNP yesterday outlined a 10-day programme to celebrate the 65th birth anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman. BNP and all of its front and affiliated bodies will organise separate programmes to mark the occasion.

The BNP yesterday formed a See page 11 col 4

Another cold wave likely next week

6 more die: Mercury drops to 7.9°C in Chuadanga

By Special Correspondent

The cold wave that has claimed at least 16 lives over the last three days would ease up a little from today (Sunday) before resuming in full force from next week, preceded by a light drizzle, meteorologists said yesterday.

Yesterday was the coldest day at a number of places. The mercury dipped to 7.9 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga, as a northwestern wind from Siberia and parts of Europe continued to sweep through Bangladesh. Elsewhere temperature fell by one degree Celsius from Friday's levels.

On Friday, too, Chuadanga recorded the lowest temperature in the country at 8.5°C. The biting wind, sweeping the country's northwest since Wednesday, also spread down the central and southern Bangladesh.

The minimum temperature was 8 degrees at Jessore, 8.1 at Srimangal, 8.5 at Rajshahi, 8.6 at Barisal, 8.9 at Mymensingh and Tangail, and 9°C at Rangpur and Dinajpur on the Celsius scale.

In the capital the minimum temperature was 10.9 degrees Celsius, down from Friday's minimum of 12.8 degrees, the met office said. In Chittagong it was 12°C.

Our correspondents in Sirajganj and Rangpur, quoting family and hospital sources, reported that the cold wave had claimed at least five more lives in the country's north over the last 24 hours.

Three of them died in Kurigram and the rest in Rangpur. One old woman also died in the capital's Nilkhet area.

The Sher-e-Bangla headquarters of the met office recorded the wind velocity at ten kilometres per hour at 12 noon yesterday.

A veil of mist shrouded the sun in the morning and late afternoon. Rickshaws and even auto-rickshaws plied in lesser numbers than See page 11 col 3

Dense fog at ZIA delays landing of flights

6 more die: Mercury drops to 7.9°C in Chuadanga

By Special Correspondent

Thick fog in the morning delayed landing of a number of flights at Zia International Airport (ZIA) for the second day yesterday.

Passenger and cargo handling facilities at the airport were in a disarray, creating problems for both incoming and outgoing passengers, when the flights landed within short intervals later, sources at the airport said.

Fog delayed arrival of 11 flights on Friday.

The sources said arrival of five flights including two of Biman was delayed yesterday. All the flights later landed between 7:40 am and 11:41 am.

The Oman Airways flight from Muskat was scheduled to land at 4 am. It landed at 7:40 am. A Biman flight from New York which was scheduled to land at 6:15 am, landed at 2-25 pm. It came late as its departure from New Delhi was delayed by thick fog there.

The Gulf Air flight landed at 9:47 am instead of 6:30 am. Biman's flight from Riyadh landed at 11:41 am instead of 9 am and that of Emirates landed at 9:50 am instead of 9:20 am.



Innovation for wrong reason... Department of Narcotic Control (DNC) officials arrested four persons on their arrival yesterday at the Kamalapur Railway Station in the city from Akhaura on an Upaban Express train. They were specially deigned vests, each carrying 68 bottles of phenisidyl, a banned cough syrup used as intoxicant.

Discontent intensifies over appointment of IG Prison

High-ranking jail officials want their man, not one from armed forces

Star Report

Discontent amongst high-ranking officials at the Prison Directorate is intensifying over stopgap appointment to the position of Inspector General of Prisons, sources said.

Incumbent IG Brigadier Mohammed Waliur Rahman Chowdhury was drafted into prison services from the armed forces on a six-month deputation in February 1997. He has held the position ever since.

In March 1997, the Ministry of Home Affairs sent a letter to the Establishment Ministry, requesting withdrawal of Brigadier Chowdhury within six months so that the post can be filled in through departmental promotions.

The recruitment rules demand that officials within the department occupy top positions of the directorate. The Jail Reforms Commission (JRC) also supported such an arrangement.

However, suddenly by bypassing the rules, the establishment ministry appointed Brigadier Chowdhury as the IG through an

official order. Apparently the Armed Forces Division had nominated him for the position.

According to a source, the home ministry sent at least three letters to the establishment ministry, which suggested that the matter be settled directly through intervention of the Prime Minister's office.

Jail officials, at several meetings, urged the government to make the top post available for the departmental officials. The Jail Officers' Association also submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister, requesting necessary steps in this regard, but there was no follow-up, said a source.

The practice of placing army officers in the post started in 1977 during the regime of slain President Ziaur Rahman. The trend continued up to 1996.

Just before the general election in 1996, the position fell vacant, after the army official entrusted with the responsibility had been posted elsewhere. Initiatives to fill the vacancy as

per existing rules were stalled.

"It caused resentment amongst jail officials and hampered implementation of programmes taken to speed up jail reforms," a senior jail official told the Daily Star.

Apart from the Jail Reform Commission's suggestion, the Parliamentary Standing Committee in several meetings over the years has recommended that someone from the department should be made IG Prison for dynamism in the jail reform programmes.

Meanwhile, according to a source, the incumbent IG has recommended for immediate implementation of the jail reform programmes, including of filling in of the top position from within the department. In his recommendations, submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on home ministry, he has identified impediments to the reform programmes, the source added.

Over 100 houses gutted at Kamrangir Char in city

By Staff Correspondent

More than one hundred makeshift houses were gutted in a fire at East Rasulpur in the city's Kamrangir Char area yesterday morning, Fire Brigade sources said.

The reason of the fire could not be known immediately. Police suspected that the fire originated from an earthen oven in one of the makeshift houses at about 8:30 pm.

Four fire fighting units from different city stations rushed to the scene at about 9:30 pm and extinguished the blaze with the help of local people at 10:45 pm.

A general diary was filed with Kamrangir Char thana in this regard yesterday.

Transfer of Purbachal project 400 'political appointees' now preparing to stage protest

By Staff Correspondent

More than 400 employees of Rajuk, widely known as political appointees, are preparing to stage a protest against the government's recent decision to hand over the Tk 2000 crore Purbachal project to the LGED (Local Government Engineering Department).

The Ministry of Public Works and Housing decision puts the job of 400 employees, recruited on master roll more than two years ago ahead of the Purbachal project, on the line.

According to Rajuk sources, these employees a vast majority of whom comes from a northwestern district of the country, have been simply drawing salaries for over two years. Purbachal project could not take off due to compli-

cations over land acquisition.

The Ministry of Public Works in a letter to Rajuk on January 2 said that despite appointment of a contractor more than a year ago Rajuk has failed to implement the Purbachal project. Therefore, the ministry has decided to hand over the overall responsibility of the project to LGED for immediate implementation.

Rajuk sources said the ministry decision to strip hand over the project to LGED is not right. They said Purbachal project could not start because the local public representatives of Gulshan, Narayanganj, Rupganj and Kaliganj did not cooperate with them over the acquisition of 6,150 acres of land. They also See page 11 col 3



Local people sift through ashes to retrieve valuables after a fire gutted more than one hundred makeshift houses at East Rasulpur in Kamrangirchar yesterday morning.