



Police say 'missing', Star reporter finds her in 3 hrs

By Staff Correspondent

While police claimed in court on Monday that witnesses in Jalal murder case, notably Jalal's four family members, could not be traced, the victim's wife, Halima Khatun told The Daily Star yesterday that she and her children were told by the Public Prosecutor to 'keep away' until he called her.

After a report on Halima Khatun's 'disappearance' appeared in the Star on Tuesday, it took this correspondent only three hours to track down Jalal's family at an address in Mohammadpur. Halima said whenever she went to Public Prosecutor Advocate Qamrul Islam, she was told to keep away from the court.

Halima and her children have been subjected to physical assault, harassment and intimidation since the brutal murder of Detective Branch source Jalal Ahmed Shafi on March 25, 1999. She has come under pressure from her uncles-in-law to withdraw the case of which her son Abbas is the complainant.

Two men in plain clothes, identifying themselves as brother and relative of the main accused in the case, Inspector Ziaul Hasan, went to her residence recently and offered her Tk 10 lakh to withdraw the case. Halima said she has been shifting residence in fear of her and her children's lives and has been living in extreme financial hardship.

"The lawyer and the brother came to me and asked me to change my story slightly in the court in exchange for money." She said brother of Ziaul Hasan would come back with the money on January 12.

"But how can I betray my deceased husband and my six children who want to see the killers of their father punished?" said a tearful Halima at her tinsed abode in a run-down area of Mohammadpur.

It may be recalled that Jalal's decomposed body was recovered from the rooftop water reservoir of the Detective Branch (DB) office at Minto Road in the city.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in its investigation found DB Inspector Ziaul Hasan, DB Havildar Bilal Hossain, Constable Abdur Rab, DB Driver Constable Abdul Malek and DB Office Canteen Manager Anwar Hossain guilty of killing Jalal and submitted a charge sheet accordingly.

Among the five, Constable Abdul Malek is now absconding while others are awaiting trial at the Dhaka Central Jail. But, mysteriously none of the 15 witnesses to Jalal murder case was produced before the court for the last one year.

Public Prosecutor, Dhaka Metropolitan Advocate See page 11 col 4



A partial view of an embankment being built by Nasaka, Myanmar's border forces, on the river Naf. BDR and Nasaka traded fire for several hours over construction of the embankment on January 8. -- Star photo by Monayem Khan

EC declares Akhter's JS seat vacant

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission yesterday declared the parliamentary seat of Major (retd) Akhteruzzaman vacant with immediate effect as he joined parliamentary proceedings defying a decision of the party on the ticket of which he was elected.

Akhter was emerged winner from Kishoreganj-2 constituency in the 1996 general elections on a BNP ticket. BNP expelled its rebel MP after he joined the 19th session of parliament going against the party position to continue boycotting parliamentary proceedings.

BNP also filed a petition with the speaker seeking vacation of Akhter's seat and the speaker referred it to the commission for disposal.

The commission heard the See page 11 col 3

Bill on women's reserved seats seems set to lapse

By Nazmul Ashraf

Now that BNP has officially said it will not support the ruling party move for retention of 30 parliamentary seats reserved for women, the government has decided not to sit any more on a long-pending bill in this regard.

The Treasury Bench is likely to seek passage of the crucial bill providing for a 10-year extension of tenure of the reserved seats during the ensuing session of parliament beginning today, ruling Awami League sources said.

If included on the agenda, the bill is bound to lapse, as support of two-thirds members in the House

is required for its passage, a strength the ruling party and its partners in the government lack.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury recently wrote to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia requesting the opposition lawmakers to play their due role in the coming session on two issues, including retention of the women's seats.

Khaleda, also Leader of the Opposition in the parliament, said in her reply the opposition need not attend parliament session to help retain the constitutional provision for reserved seats.

The reserved seats, she argued, could be retained if the govern-

ment resigned immediately and the next parliament was elected before April when the constitutional provision for reserved seats is due to expire.

Khaleda's statement removed ambiguity over the BNP stance on the ruling party move to retain the existing provision of reserved seats in parliament. Her suggestion for election of the next parliament before April appears to be See page 11 col 1

JS goes into session today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into its New Year Session today without the mainstream opposition parties.

This will be the 21st session of the Seventh Parliament.

Instead of a Presidential address as a convention, the year-opening session, starting at 10 in the morning, will begin with adoption of an obituary reference on the death of Syed Kamal Bakht Saki MP, who died on December 15.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad will deliver his speech after a small recess following adoption of the obituary

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BDR forces beefed up along Naf river

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Bangladesh Rifles yesterday beefed up its strength considerably along the Naf river in Teknaf thana following "provocative moves" by Myanmar troops on the other side of the border.

Myanmar started massing regular troops on Tuesday morning, violating international border regulations.

Several units of para-military BDR along with heavy equipment have been despatched to the south-eastern border areas and stationed at Ulubonia, Palangkhali, Rejupara, Chakdala and Ashartali.

"We have stepped by vigilance in the region to face any eventualities," said a ranking official of the government.

"We however hope that the cease-fire would continue and the Myanmar authorities would abandon construction of the embankment along the Naf river," the official said.

However, Army troops, stationed in Chittagong region, have not been alerted yet.

BDR sources said they are confident of containing any move, in case Nasaka indulges in activities contrary to international rules. Nasaka in the border security force of Myanmar.

The usual BDR strength of around one thousand along that border See page 11 col 3

Hearing on writ against PSA not held

By SC correspondent

Hearing on a writ petition challenging validity of the Public Safety Act (PSA) by BNP lawmaker M Morshed Khan and his son was not held yesterday in the High Court as the state attorney sought one day's time.

The hearing will be held today. Additional Attorney General Mahub-e-Alam informed the court that Attorney General Mahmudul Islam would not be able to conduct the case and asked him yesterday morning to represent the case. The AAG said he needs time to prepare his arguments.

A Division Bench comprising See page 11 col 7

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Jan 11		5.30 pm
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Prayer Timings		
January 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-10
Zuhr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-35	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

Trucks barred from playing in daytime

By Staff Correspondent

The decision by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to stop the plying of trucks on the city roads in daytime took effect from yesterday, easing traffic congestion to some extent.

At the same time, the ongoing eviction drive by Dhaka City Corporation and DMP has made the city pavements comfortable for pedestrians.

Following an instruction from the Home Ministry, DMP imposed a ban on the movement of trucks on city roads. The ban will remain effective from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Traffic police deployed at the city entry points were found resisting trucks from moving into the city yesterday.

Police have also been deployed in the city's busy areas from where hawkers were evicted as part of the current drive, though police and hawkers have been See page 11 col 6



DMP banned plying of trucks on the city roads in daytime from yesterday. Photo shows police obstructing a truck from entering the city at Postagola. -- Star photo

Hartal paralyses life in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 10: Normal life was paralysed in the port city today, the first day of 36-hour hartal called by Chittagong chapter of All-party Action Committee (APAC).

APAC enforced the hartal here from 6 am today demanding withdrawal of case filed against BNP central leader M. Morshed Khan, MP and release of the opposition activists arrested during a hartal on January 7.

Morshed Khan and his son Faisal Morshed Khan were sued under Public Safety Act (PSA) for 'ransacking' a shop at GEC crossing in the city on December 26.

The hartal was earlier called for 48-hour but it was relaxed for 12-hour, party sources said.

However, police arrested five pickets during hartal hours today.

No major untoward incidents were reported during the hartal, police said. See page 11 col 6

Promotion of two HC judges takes lawyers by surprise

By Special Correspondent

Justice Golam Rabbani and Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin, two judges of the High Court Division, have been promoted as judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, court sources said yesterday.

A gazette notification in this regard was issued on January 9. The judges received the appointment letters yesterday.

But their oath-taking did not

take place yesterday as Chief Justice Latifur Rahman was sick. It will take place today, the sources said.

The appointments were made by President Shahabuddin Ahmed on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Justice Rabbani supercedes Justice KM Hasan and Justice Ruhul Amin supercedes Justice JR Mudassir. Justice Ruhul

Amin was a member of the Death Reference Bench of the High Court Division, which gave the split verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case.

Their appointments superceding other judges was criticised by senior lawyers of the Supreme Court.

A meeting of senior lawyers and former presidents and secres See page 11 col 7

Directive to Bangladesh mission in Malaysia

Make list of fraud recruiters, arrange release of detainees

By Reaz Ahmad

Bangladesh's mission in Kuala Lumpur has been alerted in view of the renewed crackdown on undocumented foreign workers in Malaysia that began last week, official sources in Dhaka told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to reports reaching Dhaka yesterday, some 10 Bangladeshis were detained so far for not having proper documents. They are awaiting deportation, the sources said.

Officials concerned at the mission have been asked to visit the detained workers in detention

camps, arrange their immediate release and return home and to collect the names of fraud recruiters in Bangladesh so that action can be taken against them, the sources said.

It could not be known how many Bangladeshi workers would be affected by the crackdown, an official at the Labour and Employment Ministry told this correspondent.

There is an unspecified number of undocumented Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia and it is difficult to say how many of them

will have to return home this time, he said after a telephonic conversation with Mosharrif Hossain, Labour Councillor at Bangladesh mission in Kuala Lumpur.

But a high official said, "I think their number will not be high this time as the Malaysian government legalised some 150,000 undocumented Bangladeshis at the request of the government few See page 11 col 7