

Six to die for dacoity, killing 4 in Bogra

BOGRA, Jan 12: Six people were sentenced to death by a court here on Wednesday for committing a dacoity in a night coach after killing four people, including a policeman, reports UNB.

The convicts are Mostafa Kamal alias Lovel, 24, Habibur Rahman alias Hoby, 52, Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, 24, Nazrul Islam alias Nazu, 26, Bidu alias Bipul, 24, and Nazrul Islam alias Bulbul, 20. Bulbul was tried in absentia.

According to the prosecution, the accused swooped on the Dhaka-bound coach when it reached Kaliarpukur on Bogra-Naogaon highway on July 8, 1996. They looted valuables worth Tk 2 lakh after stabbing to death police constable Abdul Kasem, 40, coach helper Abdul Mannan, 22, passengers Binoy Kumar Das, 26, and Saidul Islam, 18.

Police later arrested seven people in this connection. Of them, Bulbul went into hiding after he was released on bail. Police submitted a chargesheet against them on Dec 31 the same year.

After examining the records and witnesses, the Additional District and Sessions Judge pronounced the verdict, acquitting one of the accused.

Road accidents kill 5 in city

By Staff Correspondent

Five people were killed in separate road accidents in the city yesterday.

The first accident occurred when a passenger bus of the Motijheel-Banani route hit a rickshaw in front of Nightingale Restaurant at Bijoy Nagar at around 10am, killing both the passenger and the rickshawpuller.

The passenger was identified as Ferdousi Jhumur, 30, a teacher of Agrani School and College and wife of Samit Ahmed, principal officer of Eastern Bank. The identity of the rickshawpuller could not be ascertained.

The rickshawpuller died on the spot while Jhumur was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

The body of the rickshawpuller was kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Motijheel police in this regard.

In the second accident, a BDR sepoys was fatally injured after he was kicked out of a running minibus near the Firm Gate footbridge at around 12 noon.

The deceased was identified as Nurul Afsar hailing from Bramanbaria.

Tejgaon police rushed Afsar to the DMCH where he died at about 12:30pm.

The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy. A

See page 11 col 6

Power crisis to persist in coming lean season 200mw loadshedding a day despite all possible steps

By Raziur Rahman

Although the Power Development Board (PDB) is taking all possible steps to face the inevitable power crisis in the coming lean season from March, there would be at least 200 mw of loadshedding daily across the country, official sources said.

However, as per directives from the Prime Minister's Office, PDB would take measures to keep loadshedding as low as possible in Dhaka.

Loadshedding in last year's lean season even shot up to as high as 500 mw. "This shows the situation is better this year," one source said.

At present nine power generating units out of the 63 in the country have remained closed

for a quite long time for maintenance work. They can generate 898 mw.

PDB officials said as most of these units are likely to resume power generation by April-May this year, they would be able to overcome the lean season crisis this time to a great extent.

On the other hand, experts say that power shortage in the lean season would not be less than 500 mw daily because of scheduled closure of some other units including a few major ones for maintenance work and temporary suspension of generation in various units.

The First Unit of Ghorashal power plant with a generation capacity of 55 mw, a 56 mw unit

and a 34 MW unit at Ashuganj would resume production this month, PDB sources said.

Overhauling of 210 mw Raujan-1 unit at a cost of Tk 30 crore is nearing completion and it would resume power generation by the middle of next month.

Rehabilitation work of Khulna 110 mw power unit will be completed by May 30 this year. Production in 30 mw Syedpur power unit has been temporarily suspended.

The first and second units of Fenchuganj power plant remained closed for two years and one of the units recently

See page 11 col 1



Chhayanaut artistes performing at a convocation function at Bakultala of the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Khaleda's 'reconciliation' in JCD not working

By Abul Kalam Azad

JCD and have asked their followers not to come to the campus.

A group of supporters of Pintu and Laltu came to the campus on Thursday for the first time since formation of the new committee. The rebels halted them in front of Madhu's canteen and asked them to leave the campus. They however did so.

JCD sources said the rebel group agreed to accept the new leadership and withdraw their agitation against it under pressure from Khaleda Zia. But now they are feeling frustrated.

Earlier, they demonstrated against Pintu-Laltu committee with the hope that it would be cancelled and a new one would be formed.

Meanwhile, a small number of leaders and activists of the rebel group attended BNP's public meeting at Paltan Maidan in the city on Thursday. The others condemned them for this.

The rebel leaders were now being blamed by their supporters

Corruption case against 30 PWD men in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 12: Khulna District Anti-corruption Bureau has filed a case with Sonadanga thana against two officers and 28 employees of PWD division-2 office on charge of selling an abandoned house by forged means.

The case was filed on Thursday.

BCL factions trade fire over control of bus stand at Bakerganj

BARISAL, Jan 12: Two factions of Chhatra League today exchanged gunshots at Bakerganj to take control of a local bus stand, reports UNB.

However, nobody was injured in the gunfight between BCL's Lokman Dakua group and Jalal-Khokon group.

Today's clash erupted when Lokman Dakua group tried to recapture the area. Witnesses said the warring BCL men traded 25-30 rounds of gunshots in the hour-long battle from 2pm.

Traffic on Barisal-Kuakata road came to a halt for over two hours during the clash in which the feuding groups also exploded bombs and pelted brickbats at each other.

Local MP Syed Masud Reza and Awami League leaders rushed to the spot but failed to pacify their student activists. Police was present there but they did not go into action, locals said.

JRC meet begins

Bangladesh and India began talks in Dhaka yesterday for devising modalities of further cooperation in economic use of waters of the common rivers and fighting floods that hit both the countries last monsoon, reports UNB.

The talks are being held in a two-day meeting of the Joint River Commission (JRC). Bangladesh Minister for Water Resources Abdur Razzak and Indian Minister for Water Resources Arjun Charan Sethi are leading their respective sides in the meeting.

Last meeting of the JRC was held in New Delhi in 1999 where the two sides had agreed on sharing data on the common rivers flowing down the two countries. The two neighbours share some 54 rivers, including the mighty Ganges and the Brahmaputra.

Talking to newsmen during a recess, Indian Secretary for Water Resources Z Hasan said sharing of Teesta waters was also on the table. He, however, parried a question whether an agreement on the Teesta, like the Ganges Water Treaty, would be soon capping the talks.

44 Jamaat-Shibir activists held in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Jan 12: At least 44 Jamaat-Shibir activists including their trainer Jamaat leader Habibur Rahman were arrested by Santia thana police today.

Policemen recovered 25 bamboo sticks from their possession.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the Hatbaria Dhakil Madrassah and arrested them.

They were arrested under Section 54, police said.

A case has been lodged with Santia police station in this connection.

Lawyers belonging to BNP, JP call on Khaleda

A group of lawyers belonging to BNP and Jatiya Party met Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia at 29 Minto Road, yesterday evening and apprised her of the latest development triggered by the appointment of two judges in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, reports UNB.

The lawyers present at the unscheduled meeting at around 9 pm were Barrister Nazmul Huda MP, Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan MP and Fazlur Rahman of BNP, and Khandaker Mahbub Hossain and Kazi Firoz Rashid of Jatiya Party.

Ziaur Rahman Khan told newsmen after the meeting that they would continue boycotting the court until the problem is resolved.



Senior lawyers of the Supreme Court holding a meeting in the chamber of Barrister Ishtiaque Ahmed in the city yesterday to resolve the crisis at the court over appointment of two judges. —Star photo

Israeli, Palestinian negotiators say

Little hope for an accord during Clinton's tenure

By Staff Correspondent

JERUSALEM, Jan 12: Israel and the Palestinians held high-level peace talks into the early morning hours today but negotiators said they didn't think they would be able to reach an agreement before US President Bill Clinton leaves office, reports AP.

After three hours of talks at the Erez checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel, an Palestinian negotiator said it would take a miracle to strike a deal in the eight remaining days of US President Bill Clinton's term.

The two sides are working toward a treaty outline leaving it for a proposed visit by US mediator Dennis Ross to narrow differences on key points.

The negotiations resumed unexpectedly after both sides agreed to try to reduce friction. On

Thursday, Israel began easing its closure of Palestinian areas.

Today, there were only scattered confrontations in contrast to previous weeks when Palestinians would often march toward Israeli positions after Friday noon prayers.

In the West Bank town of Hebron, a Palestinian man was shot and killed by Israeli troops during stone-throwing clashes. As they carried the dead man to a nearby Jewish settlers' compound, soldiers held up what they said was his gun. It was not immediately clear if he had tried to shoot at the soldiers.

See page 11 col 7

Dispute over appointment of two IT experts in EC drags on

By Staff Correspondent

The dispute over appointment of two IT experts in an Election Commission project that sparked a tussle between the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and his deputies has not yet been resolved.

The IT experts Lionel J Wolner and Mainul Haq appointed in August last year by the CEC in an EC project to "strengthen" it are working.

Their appointment created a tussle between CEC M A Syed and the three election commissioners Abidur Rahman, Moshtaq Ahmed Chowdhury and Shafiqur Rahman who opposed it

decided to cancel the appointment of Wolner, who allegedly interfered in the Commission's activities.

The CEC stood by Wolner and justified the appointments. The three commissioners termed his activities "whimsical".

When contacted by telephone, Election Commissioner Moshtaq Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday that the issue was still undecided. "We gave decision for cancellation of the appointment, but the consultant is working."

See page 11 col 6