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Bill to repeal PSA may be tabled in JS today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to introduce in the Jatiya Sangsad a bill seeking repeal of the controversial Public Safety Act (PSA), as the parliament returns to session at 4.30pm today after a two-day weekly recess.

As approved by the cabinet earlier, the planned bill empowers the government to selectively withdraw cases filed under the law with 'political motives'. Otherwise, all ongoing cases under this act will continue until their disposal.

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PCP leader gunned down in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A leader of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) was gunned down allegedly by the activists of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in Gagrabazar area under Kawkhali thana of the district, yesterday, police said.

The victim was identified as Bhubon Moni Chakma, 26, son of Padma Mohan Chakma of Chowdhurypara under Gagra union.

Local people said the gunmen opened fire on Bhubon Moni while he was standing in front of a shop at

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Hole in the net!

DCC says its coffer is empty, but does not collect tax from lakhs of holdings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is deprived of holding tax from lakhs of holdings in its 360 square kilometre area, according to figures published in the annual report 2001 of the Bureau of Statistics.

There are nearly 1,80,000 households registered with the DCC's Revenue Department and it collects about Tk 100 crore as holding tax between July 1 and June 30 every financial year. But the Bureau report showed there are 11,07,474 holdings in the area.

Sources at the DCC said if half of these new holdings come under taxation, the DCC's revenue earnings would go up by cores of taka annually. Due to procedural complexities and unwillingness of the mayor to abide by the City Corporation Ordinance and reassess holding tax for more than 10 years, these new households are escaping tax.

Not all the holdings come under the DCC taxation. If a multistoried housing complex is built on a plot and retained by a single owner, the plot owner pays tax for one single unit. But thousands of apartments built over

the years under separate ownership have not been taken into account by the DCC.

Over the last 10 years, multi-unit complexes have been built on 'single unit plots' and sold out to individuals. The practice is still continuing at a very high pace. But due to absence of assessment and monitoring, the DCC's Revenue Department has failed to keep track of the tax evaders.

Sources said that in thousands of cases, when a house owner showed willingness to register his name as holding tax payer, zonal tax inspectors offered them 'convenient' assessment in exchange for bribes, depriving the DCC of huge amounts of tax.

Complexities in the assessment procedure have led to irregular practices to such an extent that the DCC is now struggling hard to cope with its expenses. It is now in such a financial crisis that its senior officials do not know how to pay the staff this month's salary and the Eid bonus, sources said.

White paper: AL to file writ today

STAR REPORT

Awami League will file a writ petition with the High Court today challenging the legality of the government's white paper on corruption by the immediate past AL government.

On behalf of AL, its presidium member and former industries minister Tofael Ahmed and former education minister ASHK Sadique

yesterday filed an affidavit with the High Court (HC) for the writ petition.

In the affidavit, they did not make any comment on corruption charges against former AL ministers. They categorically challenged whether it is within the jurisdiction of the government to bring out such a white paper.

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SSC candidate beaten to death at Khilgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A school boy was beaten to death by a garment employee and his accomplices at a playground at Khilgaon Chowdhurypara in the city yesterday.

Russel Ahmed, 16, an SSC candidate from Khilgaon High School, was beaten up mercilessly by Malek, a garment employee and his accomplices following a row over playing cricket yesterday morning. The attackers left the spot, leaving Russel in a pool of blood.

Russel was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 10 am and then shifted to a private clinic at Shahjahanpur.

He succumbed to his injuries at the clinic in the afternoon.

Khilgaon police recovered the body and sent it to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Russel's father Falan Mollah filed a murder case with Khilgaon Police Station. Police arrested Malek's father Abdus Sobhan, mother Hamida Begum, and two aunts-Tohida Begum and Jarina Begum-in connection with the murder.

Police could not arrest Malek and his accomplices till writing of this report last night.

Plane lands at ZIA but fate of pilgrims unchanged

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The fate of hundreds of pilgrims continued to remain uncertain till last night as private tour operator Air Bangladesh was yet to provide any aircraft for their maiden Hajj flight that was earlier scheduled for a January 28-start.

Some 350 pilgrims who paid 950 dollars each to the company have since been awaiting their flight at the Hajj camp at Ashkona near Zia International Airport (ZIA), camp officials said.

None from Air Bangladesh visited the pilgrims. The company had booked passage for about 9,000 pilgrims.

Another 247 pilgrims in the camp whose passage was booked by other travel agencies are also facing uncertainty about the availability of plane seats, camp sources said. A consortium of travel agents is looking after them.

A 360-seater Tri-Star aircraft chartered from a Jordanian company Air Universal however landed at ZIA at 7:13 p.m. yesterday, Air Bangladesh official Alamgir said last

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PHOTO: STAR

Pickets run for cover as policemen club them at Purana Paltan in the city during a procession as part of yesterday's eight-hour hartal sponsored by the left-leaning 11-party Alliance.

Pickets clubbed, kept confined inside office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 25 people were injured as police clubbed and teargassed strikers in the city's Purana Paltan area during yesterday's hartal.

Law enforcers, who outnumbered the pickets, virtually kept the pro-hartal activists confined inside the CPB office at Paltan.

Huge battalions of police were

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JU students go on rampage

VC's residence, teachers'quarters & admn bldg attacked

JU CORRESPONDENT

Agitated students of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) vandalised the vice-chancellor's residence, administrative building and teachers' quarters on Friday night following a rumour that police shot dead a student.

Meanwhile, police arrested nine students under the Public Safety Act Friday night and produced them before the court yesterday.

In the last 24 hours, the number of injured students climbed to 250.

Sources said the agitated students were pacified after the namaj-e-janaja of Kausar Hossain, acting chairman of the Department of English, who died in a road accident on Friday.

Hundreds of students rushed out into the streets, hearing the news aired on the Ekushey Television (ETV) that police arrested 40 agitating students.

About 1,500 students rushed to the residence of JU Proctor Enamul Parvez on Friday midnight and attacked the teachers' quarters located in front of the Jahanara Imam Hall.

The students armed with iron

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