

Autorickshaw strike called off

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Autotempo, Autorickshaw and Autotruk Malik Sramik Oikya Parishad has called off its strike, said a press release of the communications ministry last night.

It said Convenor of the Parishad Nasir Ahmed Khan and member secretary Mokhlesur Rahman announced the withdrawal of the strike after a 'fruitful meeting' with the government, chaired by Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at his ministry.

State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed, Communications Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat and other leaders of the Parishad were present in the meeting.

Huda called upon the leaders and workers of the Parishad to help implement the steps taken by the government to keep the capital free from air pollution and traffic jam.

The communications minister assured the transport owners and workers of extending necessary assistance to them for their rehabilitation.

Prof Nuruddin Chy appointed CU VC

CU CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Professor A J M Nuruddin Chowdhury has been appointed Vice-chancellor of the Chittagong University.

Chancellor of the university President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday appointed Prof Nuruddin under Section 12(1) of the Chittagong University Act, 1973.

Prof Nuruddin of the Marketing Department of CU received his appointment letter through fax at about 2.30 pm.

Outgoing Vice-chancellor Prof Fazlee Hossain handed over the charge to the newly appointed VC at a simple function at 4.30 pm.

Meanwhile, BNP-backed teachers of the university have expressed their dissatisfaction at the appointment.

Some of them, preferring anonymity, said the government has appointed a pro-Jamaat teacher as Vice-chancellor of the university.

'We cannot rely on him for a neutral role to end CU stand off,' they said.

Aedes, Culex breeding fast in 30 city wards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The breeding of Aedes and Culex mosquitoes has been increasing in an alarming rate in 30 out of 90 wards of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

This was revealed in a report prepared after a six-month field level study conducted by the DCC under its surveillance project on Aedes mosquito control.

The report was discussed at a seminar on the prevalence of Aedes mosquito in the city held at the Nagar Bhaban auditorium yesterday.

The seminar was presided over by Chief Executive Officer of DCC, AZM Shafiqul Islam.

It was participated by secretary, chief health officer, consultant of Aedes mosquito control surveillance project and others concerned with the project.



Friends and families of pilgrims gather outside the departure lounge of Zia International Airport to see them off prior to their flight to Saudi Arabia yesterday (left) while some of the less fortunate pilgrim-clients of Shah Jalal Aviation pass their days in uncertainty at the nearby Haji camp (right).

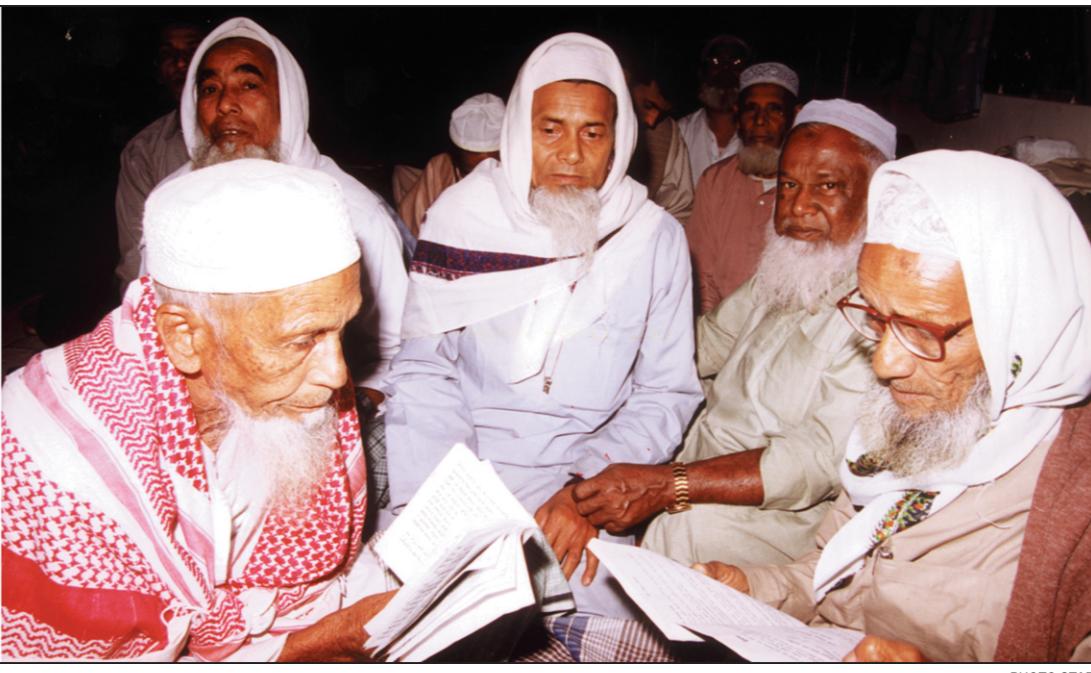


PHOTO: STAR

Hearing on contempt petition against Hasina Feb 6

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday fixed February 6 for hearing on the contempt petition filed against Awami League President Sheikh Hasina for her reported remarks regarding the judiciary.

A division bench comprising Justice Syed Amirul Islam and Justice Sikder Maqbul Haque heard the matter.

Advocate Syed Ziaul Karim filed the petition. Counsel of the petitioner Advocate Zanul Abedin produced the copy of 'Weekly Thikana' which published the interview of Sheikh Hasina on December 21 before the court.

Earlier, on January 26 the same court directed the counsel of the petitioner to produce the same weekly before the court. Yesterday the court again directed the counsel of the petitioner to produce only those pages relating to the interview of Sheikh Hasina before the court with an affidavit.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina during her recent visit to the USA reportedly made some adverse comments in an interview with New York based 'Weekly Thikana' regarding judiciary on December 21, 2001. The contents of her interview were republished in some local newspapers in Bangladesh on December 22, 2001.

Police asked to keep vigilance on minority issue

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet committee on law and order yesterday directed the police to keep vigilance on the minority and other sensitive issues.

"Take instant action when it comes to minority and other sensitive issues, and let people be informed of the actions through media," the committee asked the police.

Presided over by LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the meeting also discussed legal reforms for effective actions against crimes.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Labor and Manpower Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadeq Hossain Khoka, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar.

Minority issues whipped up criticism home and abroad as reportedly a number of minority

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Bush advisor on Asia quits ahead of trip to region

REUTERS, Washington

The top White House adviser on Asia has resigned from his post just weeks before President George W. Bush makes a major trip to the region, US officials said on Friday.

Torkel Patterson, who served as the National Security Council's senior director for Asian affairs for less than one year, left his position "for personal reasons" a week ago, an NSC spokesman said. The spokesman did not elaborate and Patterson was not immediately available for comment.

Although there was some speculation that Patterson might have had a policy falling out with the administration, several of his colleagues said they believed the motivation was indeed personal.

The resignation stunned many officials, especially because it came so close to Bush's planned trip later this month to China, Japan and South Korea.

"This makes planning for the trip a lot more difficult. He was really in charge of that," one senior official said.

James Moriarity, a career foreign service officer with several tours in Beijing who worked under Patterson as the NSC China expert, will serve as acting senior director for Asia until a replacement for Patterson is named.

Before being named special assistant to the president and senior

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Compaign on in Ctg to foil Shahriar's reception

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

A section of people reportedly supporters of the anti-liberation forces under the banners of some newly formed organisations are hell-bent on thwarting a scheduled reception for eminent writer and journalist Shahriar Kabir on February 5 on the Central Shaheed Minar premises here in the city.

These people are now campaigning against the reception, which was planned by members of the civil society here including academicians, professors, intellectuals, journalists, writers, cultural activists and others, said a co-ordinator of the reception.

They have even gone to the extent of declaring Shahriar Kabir *persona non grata* in the port city, vowing to resist him on his arrival here, he said.

Under the circumstances, police administration in Chittagong allegedly on January 30 refused permission to use any open space including the Shaheed Minar premises and microphone for the scheduled reception, sparking off tension in the city.

Programme co-ordinators Mafizur Rahman, Shawkat Bangali and Rashed Hasan met the Deputy Police Commissioner (North) of CMP Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura on the same day and sought permission to use the venue along with microphone.

"But instead he (DC of CMP)

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Simi's suicide Bail prayer of police SI rejected again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Dhaka, yesterday rejected the bail petition of Sub-Inspector of Police Mohammad Abul Bashar, arrested on charge of neglecting his duties that led to the suicide of Simi, 21, in Khilgaon area of the city on December 23, last year.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa passed the order following a criminal appeal, by the defence lawyers seeking his bail.

The court said the charges brought against Bashar were primarily proved and the case was at a primary stage of investigation. So, the petition for bail is rejected.

The defence lawyers had filed the appeal with the metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court on January 7 against rejection of Bashar's bail prayer by the CMM's Court.

Advocate Rani Akhter, legal adviser of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Court Inspector Shah Alam opposed the bail petition.

Bashar was arrested on December 29 last year following an order from Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury.

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Another forex smuggling case detected in N'ganj

FAISAL PARAG, N'ganj

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) has unearthed yet another case of smuggling of US\$ 1,47,000 by a businessman here in Narayanganj only a few days after the detection of three other similar cases of smuggling worth over \$1.4 million.

According to a case filed by BAC with the Narayanganj thana on Friday, Narayan Chandra Roy, owner of Loknath Traders of Nitaiganj of Narayanganj, smuggled US\$ 1,47,000 out of the country into India by opening fake L/Cs through the AB Bank here in the name of importing Indian yarn.

Roy followed the same fraudulent method as in the three other cases in which fake L/Cs were opened through the IFIC bank here.

Sources said Roy produced fake import documents to the AB Bank officials to open the L/Cs. The documents included false seal and signature of Hill Border officials.

The L/Cs were opened between November '99 and January '00, and AB Bank paid USD 1,47,000 against the L/Cs to the designated bank account in India. Only recently did the bank find out that the import papers were false.

As in the three previous cases, no yarn was imported.



A passenger bus (left) leaves behind a trail of thick, black smoke in the city yesterday not giving a damn to the government move to clamp down on pollutant-spewing motorised vehicles.

BNPPP meets today

BSS, Dhaka

A meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party Parliamentary Party (BNPPP) will be held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban at 3 pm today.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting.

Biman's privatisation plan loses way

SHEHAB AHMED

After spending 1.44 million dollars from a 1.80 million dollar World Bank loan, Bangladesh Biman has terminated its contract with the consultant -- Citibank Group of New York -- for its failure to make any headway in privatisation and restructuring of the national carrier.

But the privatisation programme has not been abandoned. It will be materialised with Biman's own effort, high officials of Biman said.

The decision to cancel the contract was taken by Biman Board of Management recently after reviewing Citibank's efforts to find a strategic partner to take 40 percent of

Biman's shares. Under the plan, nine percent shares will be kept for its employees and 51 percent for the government.

The consultant was paid 1.44 million dollars, they said.

Only two airlines from the Gulf region offered to buy the 40 percent shares and become a strategic partner but they later backed out.

Repeated attempts by the consultant failed to enthuse others.

The reasons for lack of response from reputed airlines was attributed to agitation by Biman employees against its privatisation. But the authorities cooled their agitation by promising that no jobs would be axed and their interests would be

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Juba Dal leader, 2 others held with arms at N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police arrested Juba Dal leader and his two associates with arms and ammunition from Masdar area of the town yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, Fatullah thana police chased a microbus (Dhaka-Metro-GA-12-6313), and intercepted it in Masdar area on around 10:30 am.

They arrested Obah, 32, vice president of Fatullah thana Juba Dal and his two associates Naimul 25 and Jasim 28, from the microbus. Police recovered a German made pistol loaded with six bullets from Obah.

Police said Obah was wanted in several cases in connection with terrorism and extortion in Masdar area.