

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

Janatar Mancha Case Alamgir, Shafiur & 6 others chargesheeted

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has pressed charges against former state minister for planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and seven others in a sedition case (Janatar Mancha Case).
Munshi Atiqur Rahman, ASP of CID and Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, submitted the chargesheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka yesterday.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina takes former commerce minister Abdul Jalil, who was later elected general secretary of the party, into confidence during the inaugural ceremony of the triennial council at the Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday.

ISPs urge govt for Internet telephony licence

The Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA) yesterday urged the government to give its members Internet telephony license on easy terms so that they can provide people with cheaper telephony.
The country can earn billions of dollars by legalising VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) as there are huge potentials for cheaper Internet telephony in the Asia Pacific region, ISPA President Akhtaruazzaman Manju told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club here.

Jalil succeeds Zillur

Sheikh Hasina was yesterday re-elected unopposed president of the Awami League at the party's triennial national council at the Paltan Maidan in the city.
The councillors also chose Abdul Jalil to succeed long-serving general secretary Zillur Rahman. The former commerce minister, too, faced no contender.
A three-member election commission, headed by former education minister ASHK Sadique, declared Hasina and Jalil president and general secretary respectively, as there was no response to its invitation for candidature to these posts.
Later, after her election to presidency for the sixth term straight, Hasina designated 37 office-bearers in the 73-member central working committee. The rest would be announced soon as per the party constitution.
Thousands of councillors and delegates articulated their support to Hasina's leadership, as the former prime minister asked her party colleagues to find a new leader in her speech as the outgoing president.
As the election commission invited nomination for presidency, former foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad proposed Hasina, seconded by presidium members Amir Hossain Amu and Suranjit Sengupta.
The councillors greeted with cheers as the election commission declared Hasina's re-election.
Abdur Razzak proposed Jalil as the general secretary candidate while Obaidul Quader and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim seconded his candidature. There was no other candidate.
Meanwhile, the council adopted a number of amendments to the party's manifesto and organisational structure.
According to the new organisational structure, the party will have a 73-member central committee, a 71-

Deaths, torture in custody disgrace to civilisation

President calls for an "end to these"

President Iajuddin was addressing the inaugural session of the eighth National Convention and 24th founding anniversary of the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) at the LGED auditorium in the city yesterday.
The president lauded the role of human rights organisations and pointed out that human rights activists and organisations had come forward to protect the rights of the unaware section of the society by imparting training and extending legal aid.
Speaking on the occasion, former chief advisor of the caretaker government Justice Latifur Rahman said adversarial to human rights abound in an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh, and poverty and illiteracy are the major reasons that undermine human rights.

Buriganga taskforce suggests ways of saving river

Members of a taskforce yesterday made several recommendations to protect the environment and remove illegal establishments on both sides of the river Buriganga to maintain its navigability as well as normal flow.
The recommendations were placed at a meeting held here with Shipping Minister Lt. Col (retd) Akbar Hossain in the chair. The taskforce members Land Minister M Shamsul Islam, Minister for Housing and Public Works Mirza Abbas, DCC Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka, Prof. Abdullah Abu Sayeed, The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam and Md. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury attended the meeting.
The recommendations include compulsory certificate to be obtained from BIWTA before approval for construction of any establishment within 50 metres and

New faces crowd out old guards

New leaders have emerged as the majority in the organisational structure of the Awami League (AL), while a number of old ones have apparently said goodbye to vital positions.
The 17th national council of the AL yesterday brought some structural changes to the 53-year-old party.
However, the council did not pronounce the names of well-known leaders like Mohammad Nasim and Professor Abu Sayeed in the central committee yesterday, as the full list of new leaders was not announced.
Earlier, Nasim was organising secretary and Sayeed the information and research secretary.
The number of the central committee members has reached 73 up from 67.
Six more posts have been added to organising secretary. They are new generation leaders: Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Sultan Mohammad Monsur Ahmad and Abdur Rahman.
Finance and planning secretary: Professor Ali Ashraf; law secretary: Sahara Khatun; international affairs secretary: Syed Abul Hossain; education secretary: Nurul Islam Nahid; agriculture secretary: Dr Abdur Razzak; labour and manpower secretary: Habibur Rahman Siraj; publicity secretary: Asaduzzaman Noor; deputy publicity secretary: Asim Kumar Ukil; assistant office secretary: Mozammel Hossain; religion affairs secretary: Sheikh Abdullah; environment affairs secretary:

Get ready for tough battle ahead

Hasina asks partymen at council opening session of the council.
Colourful banners, festoons and posters lent the sprawling Paltan Maidan an air of festivity. The podium was also elegantly decorated. Most of the banners were inscribed with demands for release of AL leaders and workers arrested across the country.
Yesterday's council was aimed to rejuvenate the main opposition party that had been in doldrums since its debacle in last year's general election.
"A lot of time has been wasted and there is no more time for us to waste," Hasina said in her bid to energise her party deputies. She also stressed on revamping her party's countrywide network and asked the delegates to launch a membership drive.
"You have to make the people aware of the misdeeds and corruption of the coalition government. Explain them how this government has miserably failed to protect the people's lives and property. Stand up to its propaganda and establish

Geetara new Dhaka Club president

Geetara Safiya Choudhury of Adcom Limited has been elected president of the Dhaka Club.
The elected executive members are Jahangir Shah Badsha, Tulu Kalimulla, Ruhul Amin Babul, Oliur Rahman, Lutse Nazib Khan Rumi, Zahed Huda, SM Bakhtiar Alam, Niaz Md. Khan Boby, Khandakar Mahub Zaman and Syed Iqbal Azim.
Elections to the 11-member committee was held yesterday.
Premier Bank in a rejoinder to a story headlined "BB leash squeezes directors' loans" published in The Daily Star on December 22 has said none of its directors had taken any loan facility from the bank.
Reply: The Daily Star story was based on Bangladesh Bank statistics which showed loans against the bank's directors.

China offers HYV rice technology

Hainan governor hosts banquet for PM
UNB, Haikon (China)
Bangladesh and China agreed to share experiences and intensify cooperation in the fields of agriculture and tourism to the benefit of the two countries.
The agreement was reached in a meeting of visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia with government leaders of Chinese island-province Hainan yesterday.
"We will work untiringly to expand the existing friendly relations," Wang Ziopeng, Governor of Hainan Province, said later speaking at a banquet hosted in honour of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on the penultimate day of her five-day official visit to China.
Just before the banquet, Khaleda Zia and Wang Ziopeng led their respective sides to a meeting that discussed possible areas of cooperation between Hainan and Bangladesh.
At the meeting at Boa Aaguapalis Golden Hotel, Khaleda Zia was assisted by all ministers and state ministers accompanying her while the Hainan Governor's team included officials from his office.
Khaleda Zia sought technological know-how of developing high-yielding varieties of rice, fruits and vegetables.
The province, with an agrarian economy, plays a significant role in meeting the food need of China supplying its high-yielding rice, quality fruits and vegetables.
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia proposed training of Bangladeshi farmers in cultivating the high-yielding rice with similar technology in Bangladesh.
The Hainan governor gladly agreed to the proposal and offered his full support.
The meeting agreed to start official talks at the ambassador level immediately.
When Khaleda Zia asked about

IRON IN THE SOUL



Steel re-rolling mills have sprung up in the city's Postagola-Shyampur areas since independence to cater to the growing demand for house-building and other essential metal products. There are nearly 50 such factories in the city alone, employing nearly 5000 people.
These mills convert old wrecked ships into angle, grills, jet bars and other essential construction materials using gas-fired furnace.
However, allegations of wholesale gas pilferage, environmental degradation and a lack of enforcement of any safety regulations have shadowed the success of these mills.
For only Tk 80 to Tk 150, labourers risk their lives everyday working dangerously close to metal-melting furnace and carrying heavy-duty steel and irons. According to them, minor injuries are very common.
Locals of Postagola-Shyampur areas on many occasions have voiced their demand for removal of these factories from the area as these often create smog and other environmental hazards.

CNG autorickshaw meter monopoly

Owners allege firm charging high price
JULHAS RIPON
Import and sale of digital meters for CNG-run green autorickshaws and petrol-run mishuks have been monopolised by a company.
This would result in much higher price of the meters and a slowdown in their installation in the vehicles, sources said.
The company -- Distribution One (DO) -- has fixed retail price of the meters at Tk 7,500 each but sources in the transport sector said the price is supposed to be Tk 4,000 to 5,000.
Nearly 2,500 four-stroke CNG-run three-wheelers and about the same number of mishuks are now plying in the city.
The government had earlier made it mandatory to install meters in those vehicles from January 1. Proper action would be taken in case of violation of this.
Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) permitted the DO on December 21 to import and sell meters. The company has already started importing those from Taiwan.
The sources mentioned that lack of interest of the major importer of CNG-run three wheelers to import meters and absence of prompt initiative by the government to handle the situation have added to the undesirable situation concerning meters. Uttara Motors limited alone has imported 4,000 CNG-run autorickshaws, out of a total of 5000 permitted by the government so far.
When contacted, top officials of the (BRTA) said they permitted only one company to import and sell digital meters as other companies failed to meet the criteria for this. They however said more companies would be permitted to import if they meet the criteria.
Many of the owners and drivers of the three wheelers and mishuks alleged that the company is charging

