

Biswa Ijtema Special

FROM PAGE 12

December 3-5.

Besides, from December 1-4, two special trains will run on Jamalpur-Tongi route and one each on Noakhali-Tongi and Akhaura-Tongi routes daily. The special trains will depart Jamalpur for Tongi at 8:45am and 6:30pm while Noakhali at 7:00am and Akhaura at 8:00pm, said a press release yesterday.

On the day of akheri munajat on December 5, six special trains will ply Dhaka-Tongi route from 7:00am to 10:30am. The trains will leave Dhaka for Tongi at 7:00am, 7:20am, 8:20am, 8:40am, 10:05am and 10:30am.

Six inter-city, mail and express trains from Dhaka for will also touch Tongi Station on Dec 5.

After akheri munajat, seven special trains and seven inter-city, mail and express trains will run on Dhaka-Tongi route between 12:20pm and 7:00pm. The special trains will depart Tongi at 12:20pm, 12:45pm, 1:40pm, 2:00pm, 2:20pm, 4:15pm and 6:55pm.

And two Akhaura-bound trains will leave Tongi at 3:35pm and 8:10pm while the Noakhali-bound at 12:50pm and four Mymensingh-bound trains at 12:25pm, 12:40pm, 2:15pm and 10:00pm.

Moreover, all inter-city and mail and express trains will halt at Tongi Station for two minutes from December 3 to 5.

The press release said the devotees will be able to collect advance return tickets for Dhaka-Tongi-Dhaka at a cost of Tk10 from Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka.

In addition to fixed ticket counters at Kamalapur and Tongi Railway

stations, tickets can also be purchased from mobile ticket collectors on the station platforms.

Suborna Express on Dhaka-Chittagong route and Teesta Express on Dhaka-Dinajpur route will not ply on the day of Akheri munajat, the release added.

Another arms

FROM PAGE 1

Sources said the Muslim insurgents in bordering Arakan of Myanmar might have link to the huge firearms, explosives and ammunition.

The Arakan Rohingya Nationalist Organisation and the communist groups fighting against the military ruler of Myanmar got united last year and started arms and ammunition trafficking to different countries with the help of Rohingya refugees.

Asked, Lt Col Hasinur said he does not know clearly who were hoarding the arms and ammunition in the area. He said using BDR's own intelligence network he is seizing the firearms and ammunition.

In the last few months, BDR seized huge arms, ammunition and explosives including M16 and AK47 rifles, grenades, anti-tank mine, anti-personal mine, rocket launcher, powerful bombs, wireless sets, machineguns, plastic explosives, gun powder, containers full of acid and various chemicals from the frontier area.

Jaundice plagues DU

FROM PAGE 12

while the students blame the water supplied to the dormitories for it. They said the water pipes are faulty and the ground and overhead water tanks remain unclear for years. They also criticised the hall authorities for not taking sufficient measures to prevent the epidemic.

DU Proctor Prof AKA Firoz Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday that the varsity authorities have taken initiatives to test the resident students to detect who are hepatitis B positive. Separate monitoring cells have also been formed at the three worst affected halls.

"If any one feels sick, the monitoring cells will arrange treatment for him," the proctor said.

He claimed examining the water at the three halls the university authorities did not find any hepatitis virus in it, adding, "But, we will test the water again tomorrow today."

Officials of the university's maintenance and engineering section said they have been ordered to check and remove the faulty water pipes across the campus.

The hall administrations are supplying boiled water at the halls' messes, though many of the students seemed to be sceptic of its cleanliness.

Abu Sadat, a resident of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, said he had to buy an electric heater to boil water, as he is not a member of the hall's mess. "I know that use of electric water heater is prohibited in the hall, but I have no other way," he said, "one of my roommates are ill with jaundice."

Abu Bakar, a master's student of Political Science and resident of Room No 501 of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, died on November 9 at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) from jaundice.

Provost Mohammad Mahfuzul Islam of the hall said, "I've taken all the measures required to prevent the water-borne disease, but I don't why the infection continues to spread."

He said the hall administration has been providing the hall's mess with boiled water for the last two months, though the microbiology department of the university found nothing in the water in his hall testing it on October 21.

STUDENTS' DEMONSTRATIONS Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of Awami League, demonstrated on the campus yesterday demanding measures to immediately check the epidemic.

The BCL leaders at a rally urged the university authorities to bear the medical expenses of the students suffering from jaundice. BCL DU Unit President Delwar Hossain presided over the rally. BCL President Liaqat Sikder, General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu and DU Unit General Secretary Hemayet Uddin Khan Himus spoke at the meeting.

Leaders of Pragottit Chhatra Jote, a combine of left-leaning student organisations, and the BCL

backed by Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal met DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz yesterday and made the same demands.

The VC said an eight-member body has been formed to face the crisis and promised to provide medical support to the students sick with hepatitis infection.

Islamist militants

FROM PAGE 12

compartment of Shantaher-bound local train.

Police ascertained from primary interrogation in Gaibandha that the arrested militants had planned to use the explosives in the planned concert of Montazat Bogra.

On Tuesday a police contingent shifted the militants to Dhaka for questioning before further interrogation cell.

A manually prepared live bomb was recovered from the ground of Pilot High School in Sonatola Upazila on November 22.

The bomb was assembled with sulfur, gunpowder, stone, iron and glass pieces that exploded with bang, said Captain Ismail, an expert on army explosives.

Some packets of explosives were inscribed with 'Power Gel Explosive, India Explosive Ltd, Gomia-829112'. Another packet was inscribed with 'Sun Brand Explosive 25mm, 125gm'.

Outlaw killed

FROM PAGE 12

Mosha was an accused in several cases including murders filed with Sadar and Almudanga upazila.

Police sent the body to Chaudanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Meanwhile, Janajuddho in a statement claimed responsibility for bombing at the office of Bapa union unit BNP on Tuesday that killed the unit BNP president Saifullah Islam Saif and injured eight activists.

Benazir

FROM PAGE 12

Pervez Musharraf called a second exiled former premier, Nawaz Sharif, in Saudi Arabia, to convey his condolences on the death of his father.

Sharif was toppled by the military in 1999.

Benazir was twice prime minister of Pakistan. Her governments were dissolved in 1990 and 1996 for alleged corruption.

She lives in exile in the United Arab Emirates and London with the couple's three children.

Blanket prices shot

FROM PAGE 1

Retail

traders

who

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blankets

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scarcity.

A couple of years ago when it shifted from the old Bangabazar Hawkers' Market to its present ideal location which features a couple of road links around it, said the traders.

Most of the traders around Gulistan and in other shopping centres used to purchase blankets for wholesale prices from the burned down market and sell them for retail prices.

Retail traders are now rushing to wholesale markets at Sadarghat and Kaptan Bazar, and other garment factories that manufacture clothes for blankets.

As winter is approaching people of a low-income group are now rushing to the old Bangabazar Hawkers' Market at Secretariat Road and other cloth-stalls on pavements in the capital.

The sale of blankets rose in the last week, said some sellers at different spots adding that they expected that it would rise more in the next couple of days.

Minister

FROM PAGE 1

State-owned Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) struck a deal in Bali, Indonesia, on September 4, 2002, with the consortium of the 13 countries to hook up its telecommunication network with the SEA-ME-WE4 transoceanic under-sea cable system. Indian operators Bharat Telecom Ltd and Videsh Sanchay Nigam Ltd (VSNL) also joined the pact to be included in the highspeed network.

The deadline for completion of the project was scheduled to be June 2004 but later was shifted to September 2005.

The consortium members agreed to equally share the cost for laying the submarine cable estimated at \$600-700 million, according to an earlier estimate.

The BTTB that had marked Chittagong as the submarine cable's landing station while making the deal with the international consortium later shifted the location to Cox's Bazar. Sources said the higher risks of the cable being cut from fishing and anchoring at the Chittagong coast prompted the change in location.

There is a huge enthusiasm in the telecom and information and communications technology (ICT) industry for the connection to the submarine cable network, which would create huge job opportunities in the country.

The country currently maintains its international telecommunication link through 3,300 satellite circuits, which is costly.

US Congress

FROM PAGE 12

"We are hopeful that GAO's non-partisan and expert analysis will get to the bottom of the flaws uncovered in the 2004 election," added representatives John Conyers, Junior, Jerrold Nadler, Robert Wexler, Robert Scott, and Rush Holt.

The lawmakers said the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee has received some 57,000 complaints of voting irregularities.

3 forest officials

FROM PAGE 12

Ranger Abul Hashem. Deputy Ranger Mohammadulah was transferred. All the four were serving at Jalamjhat forest station in Chittagong (South) region.

Ministry officials said on information from an intelligence agency, Environment and Forest Minister Tarique Islam instantly ordered higher officials of Forest Department to rush to Jalamjhat and foil a bid to smuggle wood. The officials along with law enforcers rushed to the spot and found nearly 2,000 sft of wood being smuggled out on November 17.

According to preliminary inquiry and intelligence reports, the four officials were directly involved in timber smuggling.

The minister ordered suspension of the officials and formed an inquiry committee headed by a joint secretary of the ministry to probe the smuggling bid.

The minister recently requested intelligence agencies to help track down corrupt forest officials and took action against a good number of such officials.

Moreover, Bangladesh Army has been asked to help protect forests in areas where it has cantonments and bases.

Tarique said his ministry has launched a massive hunt for corrupt officials to protect forests and forest resources. "For this, we are taking help from intelligence agencies and army."

Dhaka to attend

FROM PAGE 12

principal to the tri-national pipeline proposal.

"We have a proposal for a cross-country pipeline network, which is yet to be approved by the cabinet committee. I hope it will be okayed soon," he added.

Myanmar is keen to sell its gas as it has discovered huge reserve and is unable to find domestic market. On the other hand, has been scouting around the globe for oil and gas sources to meet its surging demand.

Bangladesh only can gain from such a pipeline project by collecting wheeling charges for gas transmission, the state minister pointed out.

A local business outfit, Mohoma Holdings, was first to come up with the proposal for a tri-national gas pipeline in 1999. However, it never gained ground for various reasons.

Meanwhile, India's oil minister told Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz yesterday in New Delhi that talks on a proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan should go ahead as part of a push for more regional trade.

"We did repeat what we have said earlier about using Pakistan as transit corridor (for sourcing gas from Iran)," Oil Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar told reporters, according to APP.

Staff asked

FROM PAGE 1

which was dissolved with the formation of the ACC, maintaining status quo.

Every employee of the Commission will have to submit wealth statement of their own and their dependent detailing all movable and immovable property and bank accounts.

If they provide wrong information or hide truth, their wealth will be confiscated and actions will be taken against them, the notification says.

Commission sources explained that the ACC wants to create an impression of having transparency in its own office first before pointing fingers at others.

Meanwhile, ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan and Member Maniuddin Ahmed attended their office at Segunbagicha, the office the now defunct Bac. They have decided to sit there although the government has set up a separate office for the Commission at Agargaon in the capital.

The other member M. Maniuzzaman Mia has not yet joined his office as he is processing his resignation from a private university where he is serving as the vice-chancellor.

The Commission will have a meeting on Saturday with all its officials and employees.

MPs file motion

FROM PAGE 1

the House of Commons by 10 Conservatives, two Liberal Democrats as well as nine Welsh or Scottish nationalists, was aimed at embarrassing or humiliating the prime minister if goes to a vote.

The MPs say Blair misled parliament and the country over the case for war, destroying "the fundamental principle of parliamentary democracy" that the government must tell the truth to MPs.

The group wants a select committee to be set up to examine the prime minister's conduct in relation to the war.

They want it to consider if there are sufficient grounds to impeach Blair on charges of "gross misconduct in his advocacy of the case for war and in his conduct with the war."

"We must make a stand or watch the democracy we have fought so often for against foreign enemies be subverted from within," he said.

"The rules of constitutional conduct have been brushed aside. The cabinet has been replaced with the sofa, cabinet minutes with e-mail and the facts replaced with belief," Price said.

of the MPA.

The post of vice-chairman of Mongla Dock Labour Board has also been lying vacant for more than a year. Daud Ali, chief of planning department, is now looking after the work in addition to his regular duties.

Sources said the shipping ministry had recommended extension of the job of MK Alam for another two years but the Ministry of Establishment did neither respond to the suggestion nor appoint a permanent chairman.

Shipping Secretary Ismail Zabihullah, however, told The Daily Star that he had requested the establishment secretary to appoint a new chairman for the port authority. He hopes the appointment will be made soon.

After the retirement of Member (Finance) Mosharraf Hossain, the charge was given to Capt Azizul Hasan, member (operations), but he was transferred to Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation as its director (technical).

Now only Member (Engineering) Ruhul Amin is working while the other two positions of MPA members remain vacant. Abu Tayeb, chief engineer of the mechanical department, is now acting as member (finance).