

Indian team

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here yesterday where they were again assured by Dhaka of a "fool-proof" security for the cricketers during their stay here.

The team will visit Pan-Pacific Hotel Sonargaon, where the Indian cricket team will be based during their 20-day stay in Dhaka, and Bangabandhu National Stadium, the venue for the first Test and the last two one-day internationals.

The team will submit a report on whether it is safe for the squad to go through with the tour.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told reporters at the home ministry yesterday, "We have investigated the matter and it is a hoax. No such organisation exists on Bangladesh territory."

"We have assured them of the highest security for the cricket team as we plan to make every effort to ensure their safety," he added.

Emerging from the meeting at the home ministry, Reazuddin Al Mamun, Media Committee chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), told reporters, "We had a cordial meeting. They were really concerned about the security of the Indian cricketers but, we have

assured them of their safety during their tour."

"We expect a decision from the inspection team after their visit to the hotel and the first Test venue tomorrow (today)," Babar said. "If possible, they might visit the venue for the second Test match in Chittagong. If it is not possible tomorrow (today), they will visit it the day after."

Speaking to reporters on their arrival at Zia International Airport yesterday, KBC Katoch, member of the security team and joint-secretary of India's external affairs ministry, did not rule out the possibility of the threat being a hoax. But he was reluctant to reach a conclusion before their own investigation and home ministry briefings today.

"We have come to check the full security of the Indian cricket team," Katoch said. "We will give our decision tomorrow (today)."

Indian officials in New Delhi and Indian High Commission officials in Dhaka have said the tour, now scheduled to start on December 8, would be on hold until the Indian authorities assess the finds of the five-member inspection team.

Apart from Azad, the other four members of the inspection team are Indian cricket team's Tour Manager Sudhakar Rao, Indian cricket board's Director of Communications Amrit Mathur and Director of Indian Ministry of Home Affairs Shantanu Mukherjee.

Azad also led the security team to Pakistan before the historic Indo-Pak Test series in March this year, where he was responsible for giving the Indian team the go-ahead to visit Pakistan for their first full-tour of Pakistan after 14 years.

The Indian High Commission officials here said the embassy had received a letter faxed on Sunday from Islamist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad threatening the cricketers with serious consequences if they went ahead with the trip.

Little is known about the group or their existence.

2 boys die in market fire

UNB, Sirajganj

Two boys were burnt to death and 17 others injured in a fire at Dharal bazaar in Ullapara upazila of the district early yesterday.

Sources said the fire originated from a grocery shop of the bazaar at about 3:00am and soon engulfed the adjoining shops, killing two employees of a sweetmeat shop instantly and injuring 17 others.

The dead are Alauddin, 13, and Shaiful, 12, of Dharal village.

On information, police went to the spot yesterday morning and recovered the bodies.

Seven of the injured were admitted to hospitals and clinics while the rest given first aid. The cause of the fire could not be known. A case was filed.

Delhi for best

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with Bangladesh "right from the beginning."

He said the two countries were enjoying "very good political, economic and social relations."

Saifur said Singh assured him that trade imbalance should not continue for long as it is and it should be reduced on practical lines through corrective steps.

The finance minister said he also suggested export facilitation to Bangladesh for the northeast Indian market by removing non-tariff barriers like the problem of banking under which presently letter of credit (LC) opening requires permission from the central bank of India.

He said the Indian prime minister assured him that he would look into the matter.

Saifur said Singh had congratulated the Bangladesh government for restoring macro-economic stability.

Earlier in the day, the finance minister had talks with his Indian counterpart, P Chidambaram, at the latter's office.

Saifur said Chidambaram had agreed to reduce the trade gap between the two countries.

The Indian National Security Adviser JN Dixit called on Saifur Rahman at his hotel suite.

Rawshan meets

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quick arrest of price spirals caused by the devastating floods.

They thanked the prime minister for the post-flood rehabilitation programmes taken by the government.

The opposition members lauded other steps of the government that ensured a "peaceful and congenial atmosphere" during the Eid and Durga Puja.

They noted with satisfaction the efficient handling of the situation during the just concluded Biswa Jitema.

Referring to the improvement of law and order and the development programmes taken all over the country, the prime minister said the welfare of the country takes preference over anything else in his politics.

"The development programmes of the government are designed for balanced development irrespective of the elected representatives of the area," she told the JPL lawmakers.

The parliamentary party delegation included Moshir Rahman, TIA Fazley Rabbi, Karimuddin Bharsa, Tajul Islam, Hafizuddin, AKM Mostafizur Rahman, Mojiur Rahman, Golam Habib Dulal, Noor Mohammad, Mohammad Ali, M Solaiman and Motiur Rahman.

WB lending

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them as satisfying conditions.

The amendments have already been okayed by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs and will be sent to parliament soon.

"Fighting corruption is one of the Bank's key objectives for growth," said a WB official. "The tendering process is a major area of corruption. The changes proposed will create more scope for corrupt practices as unscrupulous people will get more time to tamper with bid documents. Similarly, procurement without competition always breeds corruption."

Every development credit agreement on investment projects spells out how goods and services would be procured through competitive bidding. The ongoing projects had been signed before this move to amend the procurement guideline and so if these two clauses are changed, they will violate the contracts.

One of the major implications of the changes will be that all ongoing projects will be delayed leading to other complications.

"The Bank has already expressed its reservations about the proposed change," said an official. "Even if it decides to accept the amendments, all investment agreements will have to be changed. This would take quite some time."

On November 3, a meeting of the planning ministry decided to change the process of procurement to accommodate a range of objections and demand of different ministries.

Following this, World Bank Country Director Christine Wallich wrote to Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman saying that the changes would affect the Bank's lending and give rise to corruption.

National plan

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the Ministry of Social Welfare in collaboration with the National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD).

The prime minister urged the private social-welfare organisations and conscious citizens to supplement government efforts in transforming the disabled population into human resources.

Referring to the function, the prime minister said this fair proved that the handicapped can also actively participate in economic and productive activities.

Minister for Social Welfare Ali Ahsan, Mohammad Mujahid, Khandaker Mahbubuddin MP, president of NFOWD Khandaker Juhurul Alam, Managing Director of the National Foundation for the Development of the Disabled M Ishaq Bhuiyan and Social Welfare Secretary Kazi Monwarul Huq also addressed the function.

Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, diplomats and representatives of a large number of national and international social-welfare organisations were present.

The prime minister opened the fair by releasing pigeons and balloons. She went round different stalls and witnessed a cultural programme performed by the disabled artists.

Civil, defence

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smuggling of forest resources, especially timber, can be checked.

The official announcement says the taskforces will carry out sudden raids on railway stations, roads and highways and waterways to check illegal timber transportation and take legal action on the spot.

Tariqul said his ministry has taken all-out steps to protect the forest resources and will do everything possible to check smuggling.

They have taken up a massive plan to increase the volume of forests in the country, he added.

When asked, he admitted several forest officials were suspended for their alleged involvement in timber smuggling and the ministry has started taking departmental action against them.

One-fourth ACC

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chosen from among the government high officials who earlier worked with the Bac on deputation.

"We have been asked to scrutinise the staff on the basis of their ACRs (annual confidential reports), skill, honesty, involvement in corruption or irregularity, and see whether their lifestyle is consistent with their earnings," one of the committee members said.

There are some other criteria, which the member would not disclose.

"We have provided them with specific criteria for staff selection," ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan told The Daily Star yesterday without detailing further.

About the allegation of corruption by Bac staff, one of the committee members said, "There are allegations against many staff, but we did not find enough evidence. Maybe action could not be taken earlier against some of them for the lack of evidence."

Asked to comment on the selection of the scrutiny committee members and their honesty, ACC Director General MA Matin told The Daily Star that the Commission selected them only after being sure that they are good men. "Commission has trust in them."

BDB, Oikya Mancha

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November, two such mass dialogues in Rangpur and Mymensingh were foiled by activists allegedly belonging to the ruling BNP.

Badruddoza yesterday said successive governments ruled the country ignoring people's voice. "We want to formulate a people's manifesto on the basis of suggestions from people," he said.

Criticising the government 'bid to foil' the BDB-Oikya Mancha movement, the former president said this showed the rulers got scared of the 'success of our mass dialogue programme'.

He also alleged the coalition government did not allow the BDB to hold any public rally in the capital since its formation.

Referring to 'crossfire' incidents as stated by Rapid Action Battalion, the BDB president said, "Killing of some criminals will not improve the situation, rather, godfathers of the criminals have to be rooted out."

Responding to a question on a persisting debate about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and late president Ziaur Rahman, the BDB chief said, when he was in the BNP, he never showed disrespect to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Dr Kamal Hossain said people are now hostage to corruption and criminal activities. The prevailing politics breeds corruption and criminal activities pushing the country to a vulnerable state, said Dr Kamal, also president of the Gono Forum.

People have to forge unity to contain corruption and criminal activities, hestressed.

Govt should've

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to make the payment, for contempt of court.

After hearing, a bench of Appellate Division of the Supreme Court set today for delivering its verdict upon the IGP's appeal petition against the High Court verdict.

A four-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain heard the petition yesterday.

Saying that the honour of the judiciary has been put into question and that the institution must be saved, the court maintained that the highest officer of the police department 'did behaved arrogantly with the court and underestimated it'.

What would his subordinates learn and do if he, being the head of an institution, behaves this way, the court wondered.

An HC division bench last January had found IGP Shahabul Haque guilty of "gross misconduct" in a contempt case and slapped the fine on him.

The HC had also fined three traffic policemen for the same offence, but exonerated two others from the contempt of court charges.

The police boss had to face the contempt proceedings for his remarks in a written reply to certain queries in a contempt case earlier initiated against the five traffic policemen for showing disrespect to a sitting HC judge at Farmgate in Dhaka.

On his way to court, the flag car of the judge was stopped roadside by the on-duty traffic policemen to let a police officer's vehicle pass in June last

The Oikya Mancha convenor also criticised successive governments for not taking effective steps to resolve unemployment problem.

"The country does not belong to any individual or any particular group, rather the masses own the country. This is why a people's manifesto is necessary for the country," said Dr Kamal.

Replying to a question he said, "Get united against MPs who don't attend parliament sessions but remain busy with other activities."

Mohammed Mostafa, a businessman present at the dialogue, said the government is indifferent to skyrocketing prices of essentials.

Abul Hossain, a garment worker, alleged their employers harass them at their workplace and deprive them of their basic rights.

Several discussants blamed a section of politicians for harbouring criminals.

The government should first take action against godfathers and then it should go for action against other criminals, said Mohammed Mahiuddin, a student.

Mohammad Shamsul Haque, Narayanjan district convenor of Oikya Mancha, chaired the mass dialogue. Leaders present included Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, BDB Secretary General Abdul Mannan, Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury MP and Joint Secretary Firoz M Hasan, BDB Narayanjan district unit leader ATM Kamal and Oikya Mancha leaders Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Samsuzzoha, Mafizul Islam Kamal and Abdur Rouf.

Three Marines

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although he walks with a limp, said a report from the Philippine embassy in Baghdad.

Manila pulled out its small military contingent from Iraq and banned the deployment of Filipino workers there after a Filipino truck driver was kidnapped by Iraqi militants and threatened with death.

The truck driver was later released after the pullout of the Filipino troops.

Despite the ban, Filipino workers already working in Iraq refused to leave while other Filipinos have been sneaking into the war-ravaged country to seek employment. About 6,000 Filipinos are believed working in Iraq, most of them with private contractors serving US-led coalition forces.

A Filipino accountant, Robert Tarongoy, employed by a Saudi Arabian trading firm, was kidnapped by Iraqi militants on November 1. His fate remains unknown.

One shot dead

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walked away from the place, police said, quoting a witness.

Police could not nab or identify the miscreants till 7:30pm.

Meanwhile, police recovered the body of an unidentified man, aged about 35, from a water-body at Sector-12 in Uttara yesterday.

The body did not bear any marks of injury, police said.

House tutors

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letters to Vice-Chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz on Sunday night for "harassment by some CDD-backed outsiders".

The sources said the 12 acting house tutors, along with six other teachers who have finished their term recently as house tutors, went to the VC's office and submitted their resignations.

However, the VC did not receive the letters officially. He assured them of taking "immediate steps" against the persons concerned.

One of the house tutors, seeking anonymity, said a group of CDD activists confined some teachers to the hall office a few days ago, but the provost "didn't take any action against them".

Meanwhile, the Provost of the hall Nim Chandra Bhowmick called a meeting of house tutors at 7:00pm today.

Industrial emissions

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emissions, bio-mass burning and re-suspended dust.

"Air pollution from industrial sources is lower than vehicular sources and that is why we have not considered setting standards for industrial emissions," Dr Khaliquzzaman said.

About massive air pollution caused by the tanneries, brick kilns and other industries in the country, Khaliquzzaman said that those were "localised problems" not affecting the people in general.

It may be mentioned here that air pollution in the city's Hazaribagh, Rayer Bazar, Lalbagh, Basila, Kamrangirchar and Washpur areas - where tannery wastes are dumped - is so intense that people have developed various respiratory and skin diseases, according to findings by environmental groups.

The poisonous air causes erosion of corrugated tins, ornaments and all utensils. According to a report quoted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, tannery wastes affect about one million people, making the Hazaribagh tanneries one of the single largest urban polluters in the world.

An official source in the Ministry of Environment and Forest said that the government does not want to "upset" the influential industrialists by setting any standards. He said their reports showed that among the industries there are serious polluters of the land, air and water but nothing "drastic could be done to stop them".

During winter about 5,000 brick kilns around the city spew huge amounts of black smoke into the atmosphere, enveloping the city with smog. This causes various respiratory problems.

US consulate

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"Then some military people came, both sides were firing and we were in between. We were all on the ground and some people were injured," he said from his bed at King Fahd hospital.

US President George W. Bush said the attack showed "the terrorists are still on the move" and linked them to insurgents in Iraq, where violence threatens elections set for January.

"They want us to leave Saudi Arabia, they want us to leave Iraq, they want us to grow timid and weary in the face of their willingness to kill randomly, kill innocent people," Bush said.

US embassy spokeswoman Carol Kalin said five local staff, including a guard, were killed. She withheld their

CERTIFICATE DOCTORING Body finally meets on strategy

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University's (CU) much-talked about committee formed to work out ways to cancel the doctored certificates yesterday met to set its strategy while only 18 days are left according to the timeframe.

The meeting was held at the Pro Vice-Chancellor's office yesterday afternoon with the committee chief Professor Dr M Shamsuddin in the chair.

Members of the five-member committee - Professor Dr Sirajul Islam, Professor Quazi Mostain Billah, Professor Md Nurul Mostafa and Md Moshed Mahmud Khan were also present.

AL for ADB-style

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2004 was placed in parliament on October 31 amid widespread criticism by the opposition political parties, civil society and rights groups. The AL lawmakers in parliament protested the bill and said it is against the constitution and fundamental rights of people.

"I have pointed out my party's position on the proposed bill and she (Wallich) is satisfied with our explanation," Jallil told The Daily Star last night after the meeting held at his Gulshan residence.

The 1973 immunity given to the ADB bars the state from prosecuting the bank or its staff. However, it does not give immunity to the bank from legal proceedings by individuals. The proposed bill bars individuals from seeking legal help against the WB.

The AL at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry on November 27 demanded revision of the bill so that the institution enjoys immunity from judicial proceeding by the state only, not individuals.

Forced Labour

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The rescued hailed from Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Pirojpur and Barisal districts. They were identified as Rafiqul, 24, Noor Mohammad, 20, Mozilul, 24, Jamal, 30, Kalam, 24, Rezaul, 12, Mahmudul, 14, Ismail, 14, Abduul Noor, 13, Idris, 14, Mansoor, 20, Sarwar, 17, Akhter, 18, Zubair, 9, Jahangir, 13, Mohsin, 9 and Alam, 20.

They were working for nine dry fish farms, where they were not allowed minimum facilities and wage. The employers forced them to continue the job in subhuman conditions making it impossible for them to escape, police said.

SI Mominur Rahman of the 50-member Dublarchar Police Camp led the operation.

Including these 17, as many as 161 children and youths were rescued in last one month from Dublarchar, mainly a fishermen's village adjacent to the Bay of Bengal.

nationalities but security sources said they were Arabs and Asians.

Witnesses said the militants had hauled down the U.S. flag and burned it after bursting into the mission.

A Saudi security official said the militants entered the compound through a side door where mail is delivered, but the US official said at least some had used the main entrance.

AL, allies to announce agitation plan Dec 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the mainstream opposition parties will sit with Awami League (AL) chief and leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina in a couple of days to finalise their next agitation programmes that is likely to be announced on December 11.

Leaders of the AL, left leaning 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samaitantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) at the meeting in AL central office also discussed their preparations ahead of the December 11 human wall to show no-confidence on the alliance government.

Senior leaders of the parties in separate teams will begin three-day mass contact programmes at different places on the 900-kilometre route of the human wall from tomorrow.

The opposition parties will also hold four combined rallies in Comilla and Bogra on December 8, and Rangpur and Sitakunda on December 9.

"Our preparations to make the human wall from Teknaf to Jentulia a success are going on very well," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told newsmen after the meeting.

Presided over by Amir Hossain Amu, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Abdur Razzak, Rashed Khan Menon, Manjurul Ahsan Khan, Mujahidul Islam Selim, Bimal Biswas, Dilip Barua, Obaidul Quader, Syed Zafar Sazzad, Pankaj Bhattacharya and Abdus Samad.

Optional books

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the very first time to have seven books for class IX and X printed by private publishers for the academic year 2005. These are for algebra, general science, social science, physics, history, English grammar and business studies (Byabasa Porichity).

The rationale behind such decision was to upgrade curriculum and unload some of its responsibilities, said sources.

Earlier the NCTB formed Independent Textbook Evaluation Committee (ITEC) comprising academics, government officials and private sector representatives to evaluate books.

The committee so far has finalised selection of six books, four on November 28 and two on December 2.

It had decided to approve several textbooks for a particular subject. Primarily as many as 16 books have been selected for general science, 27 for business studies, 22 for algebra, 18 for history, eight for social science-8 and 13 for physics.

So many books on one subject would confuse the students and induce discrimination in standard of education, alleged one teacher.

Besides, it will confuse the teachers evaluating exam sheets of the public examinations, said the teacher seeking anonymity.

Senior officials of the NCTB at a parliamentary committee meeting had earlier give assurance that students will get books for the next academic year timely. NCTB Chairperson Dilara Hafiz could not be reached for comment.

The NCTB will hand over printing of 71 textbooks to private sector in 2006 and 2007.

 <h1 style="text-align: center;">PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY</h1>		
<h2>Faculty Position</h2>		
<p>Interested candidates are invited to apply for the following full-time positions available from January 2005 at Presidency University. Deadline for receiving applications is December 23, 2004.</p>		
Position	Department	Qualifications
Lecturer/Junior Lecturer	Civil Engineering/ Electrical and Computer Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.Sc. in Civil Engineering from BUET or a reputed foreign university. At least one article in a conference proceeding or journal as the first author. • B.Sc. in Civil Engineering and outstanding academic performance are required for Junior Lecturer position.
Associate Professor/Professor	Civil Engineering/ Electrical and Computer Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ph.D. from a reputed foreign university. The candidate should have outstanding academic achievements and publications in refereed journals. • At least three years of teaching experience as Assistant Professor for Associate Professor position; at least five years of teaching experience for Professor position.
<p>Salary is negotiable and competitive. Application (two sets) in sealed envelop, including CV, copies of academic certificates and transcripts, passport sized photograph and salary expectation, should be sent to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Pro Vice Chancellor Presidency University House 11/a, Road 92, Gulshan - 2, Dhaka - 1212 Tel: 8857617-8, 8859142 email: provc@presidency.edu.bd </p>		