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Govt puts administrator at BGMEA

Move seen as attempt to control the association before elections

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday appointed an administrator to replace the executive committee of the largest trade association of Bangladesh following a court ruling.

Many believe the move is nothing but an attempt of the government to clamp down control on Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) with only a month to its election.

A court order, which took the BGMEA leaders by surprise, directed the Director of Trade Organisation under the commerce ministry to appoint an administrator.

In the wake of the court order on January 3, the government appointed Joint Secretary of industries ministry Mohammad Ayub Miah to take over charges "immediately" and conduct election of the new office bearers within the next six months.

The administrator has also been directed to run daily business of the association whose members directly employ 18 lakh workers.

Sources said one MA Masud filed

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BGMEA President Annisul Huq, second left, confers with lawyers at the Hotel Sonargaon lobby yesterday on possible legal moves against a court order following which the government appointed a joint secretary as administrator of the country's largest trade association.

Benapole strike continues for sixth day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Stalemate at Benapole land port yesterday continued for the sixth day amid holding of protest meetings and processions by the five striking organisations of the port users.

Leaders and activists of the organisations held rallies and marched in processions the main thoroughfares of Benapole.

Acting president of Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) Agents Association Shamsur Rahman described the government's decision to reduce charges by 50 percent as an eyewash. He said the proposed reduction is meant for charges other than those of the warehouses.

Meantime, Mahbubullah, director (traffic) of the land port, said the

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11 AK47s, ammo seized at Bandarban again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members yesterday seized another huge cache of firearms and ammunition, including 11 AK47 rifles, from Naikkhongchhari with the law-enforcers still clueless about rampant arms smuggling in the area.

With this arms haul, the paramilitary force retrieved a total of 26 AK47 and two M16 rifles, four mortars, eight light machine guns, one rocket launcher and more than 14,000 bullets in last one and a half months from the upazila.

Tipped off, a team of 40 Rifles Battalion led by Lt Col Hasinur Rahman, raided Chikonchhari area,

some eight kilometres west of Lambuchhari camp, at dawn yesterday and found a den of criminals after searching the area until 4:00pm.

The BDR members dug out the sophisticated assault rifles, 53 magazines, 1,506 bullets, 11 cleaning kits and 21 oil cans, sources said. But the gunrunners had fled the scene before the security forces surrounded the area close to Myanmar border.

The BDR and army last year seized 22 AK47 rifles, eight LMGs, eight stenguns, three M16 rifles, seven sub-machine carbines, four mortars, three pistols, 24 guns, 10 other types of rifles, 38 wireless sets,

169 shells of heavy machine gun and 24,585 bullets.

Arms and explosives experts of the army examined the arms. A team of US arms experts also visited Naikkhongchhari last January. But they could not find the origin of the arms as the smugglers rubbed out the brand and the names of the manufacturing countries.

The law-enforcers so far failed to arrest anyone in connection with the arms smuggling.

In mid-December last year, the BDR seized seven sub-machine carbines with 37 magazines, eight stenguns with 19 magazines, ten .303 rifles, two locally made guns, four .303 rifle

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BNP meet sings Rab praises

UNB, Kushtia

There has been a marked improvement in law and order situation in the trouble-prone southwestern region following a crackdown on criminals by the government with an elite force, local BNP leaders told a party grand conference here yesterday.

Appreciating the government for its move to deal with the criminals, they said a sense of security has been created in public minds as at least 24 outlaws were killed in police and Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) drives in the region. Seventeen of them were killed in the last two months.

The grassroots guards felt that the BNP will surely return to power if it can continue the drives against the

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Two army men, 11 others killed in road crashes

STAR NEWS DESK

Thirteen people, including two army personnel, died and 52 others were injured in road accidents in Gazipur, Sirajganj, Cox's Bazar, Satkhira, Rangpur and Faridpur districts yesterday.

In Gazipur, two army personnel died and 24 were injured, four critically, as a lorry carrying them back from winter exercises in Tangail skidded off the Dhaka-Tangail highway and fell into a ditch in the morning, according to the UNB.

The dead are Lance Corporal Mahmud and Sepoy Jahangir.

Kaliakoir police and army sources said the accident occurred at about 11:00am at Shimultali as the driver of the Savar Cantonment bound lorry lost control over the steering.

"One of the army men died on way to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Dhaka, while another succumbed to his injuries at the CMH," said an official.

The critically injured were admitted to the hospital and the rest given first aid.

The army personnel were returning to Savar Cantonment after

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RAPE BY COPS Rights body takes victim's responsibility

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad on Wednesday took the housewife, who was gang-raped by police at Gokuldhali Camp in Chuadanga, in their safe custody.

The women rights organisation will provide the housewife full legal support to fight against the culprits.

The victim's family at a press conference at Chuadanga Press Club handed her over to Husney Ara Rubi and Mina Khatun of the organisation. The leaders of different rights organisations of 10 southwestern districts were present.

The Mahila Parishad yesterday took the woman to its shelter centre Rokeya Sadan in the capital.

Earlier, a Chuadanga

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APPOINTMENT SCAM RU recruits stage rally, sit-in

RU CORRESPONDENT

The controversially appointed 546 employees at Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday held a rally and staged a one-hour sit-in in front of the RU administration building demanding immediate confirmation of their jobs and two months' salary before the Eid-ul-Azha.

They also brought out a procession on the campus and chanted slogans in support of their demands and against the university authorities.

The rally warned of a 'mass agitation' from Sunday to realise the demands if they are not met by that time.

Chaired by Newly Recruited Employees' Interest Preservation Committee Convenor Rafiqul Islam Sadar, the rally was addressed by Akkas Ali, joint convenor and Masud Rana.

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Gas shortage forces PDB to shed 300mw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shortage of gas supply to the power generating has forced the Power Development Board (PDB) to shed 150-300mw load during the evening peak hours across the country since December 30 last year.

A PDB press release yesterday said 85 percent of the country's electricity is produced by gas turbines. Petrobangla is currently supplying 313-500mmcf gas against the daily demand of 600mmcf, the release added.

The PDB said load-shedding will decrease as soon as Petrobangla makes it to supply adequate gas.

ACC to ask for wealth statements of VIPs

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) soon will ask the VIPs and the rich including ministers, lawmakers, bureaucrats and businessmen to furnish their statements of wealth and property.

The commission is going to set up a cell to collect, keep and update the statements of the VIPs and the rich to begin with, to be followed in respect of people of other walks of life.

A commissioner will be in charge

of the cell to be equipped with most modern gadgets.

The statements will be made public by posting them on the ACC website, sources said.

The groundwork for the cell has already commenced but the ACC is yet to finalise the details and its mode of operation, they added.

Soon after taking charge, ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan and member Maniruddin Ahmed on November 23 disclosed their plan to gather the statements.

To ensure its own accountability,

before collecting others' wealth statements, the ACC also asked the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) staff who had been working at the commission since the bureau's dissolution to come up with their statements in one month's time.

"You don't have the moral right to ask others to disclose the details of their wealth and property if you don't do it yourself first," observed a source at the commission.

But, though the deadline passed on December 24, the ACC chair and

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Zimbabwe sent on cherry chase

Century eludes Bashar

AL MUSABBIR SADI, Chittagong

Habibul Bashar led from the front with a sparkling 94 as Bangladesh expectedly dominated the first day of the first Test against Zimbabwe, cruising to 280 for four at stumps yesterday.

The inexperienced Zimbabwe attack toiled on a pitch that offered nothing to the pace bowlers and even the spinners could not make much of a typical first day track at the MA Aziz Stadium.

But the Bangladesh captain was

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PBCP leader killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party's (PBCP) M-L faction was killed in 'crossfire' between police and his accomplices in Ghatatala under Khanjahan Ali thana yesterday.

Iqbal Hossain alias Shaikat, 38, accused of seven murders and several other criminal offences, was arrested from KD Ghose Road Wednesday.

Police said Iqbal was killed in 'crossfire' when he made an attempt to flee with the help of his accomplices. He was taken there to seize his arms and ammunition, they added.

A swan-off rifle, three bullets and four bombs were seized.

Meantime, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) Wednesday arrested an NBCP cadre from opposite Palli Bidyut office in Batiaghata upazila.

Chitta Ranjan Gain, son of Monohar Gain of Rajabadi village in Batiaghata, is a chargesheeted accused in several murder cases. The Rab handed him over to Dumuria police yesterday.



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