

# Employees vow to resist move to restructure BTTB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board Protection Committee, a platform for BTTB employees, yesterday vowed to resist any move to restructure the state-owned telecoms operator and the handover of its mobile venture to another company styled as Teletalk.

The government has already formed a five-member committee to turn the BTTB into a public limited company and offload its shares in phases, said Abdul Quayyum, coordinator of the committee, at a press conference.

Handing over the mobile venture to Teletalk is a prelude to the offloading of shares in the public operator, he said.

The committee leaders said the BTTB can offer a competitive call tariff of mobile phone as low as Tk 1 per minute if it itself operates the mobile venture.

The BTTB is one of the profit-making organisations and it paid over Tk 1600 crore to the government exchequer last year, they said.

They leaders said thousands of workers and employees have been passing their days in a state of uncertainty as the restructuring of the BTTB will lead to job losses.

They also alleged that the BTTB had obtained licence in the BTTB's

name but now it is handing over its operation to Teletalk.

The leaders urged the government to regularise 5,000 casual workers who have been working side by side permanent staffs.

They also urged the government to regularise services of 350 staffs appointed in 1989-90 under special quota.

The committee announced that the employees will hold agitation programmes at different BTTB installations on January 15 and 16. A grand rally will also be held on February 9 in the capital.

BTTB CBA President Firoz Miah, Secretary General of Bangladesh Telejogajog Sramik Karmachari Parishad Md Rafiqul Islam, Abdul Hakim Miah and MA Mukit attended the press conference.

## Khulna jute mills workers observe hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The day-long hartal called by Khulna regional unit Patkal Sangram Parishad passed off peacefully from Rupsha to Noapara yesterday.

Patkal Sangram Parishad called the hartal to press home its eight-point demand, including regular payment to workers, adequate fund to buy jute for state-owned jute mills and payment of all outstanding salaries to retired workers and employees.

All state-owned and private jute mills of Khulna-Jessore region remained closed in support of hartal. Jute mills workers and employees brought out a big procession at Khalishpur during hartal hours.

They put up barricade on Kashipur rail line to stop Rajshahi-bound 'Sundarban Express' from Khulna. Later, police remove the barricade.

Left-leaning eleven-party alliance leaders and workers brought out a procession in the city in support of hartal.

Jute mill workers and employees at a rally at Khalishpur 'Gol Chatter' in the afternoon said that they would continue movement to realise their demands.

## US embassy IRC closed Jan 16-23

BSS, Dhaka

The American Centre of the US Embassy in Dhaka has announced closure of its Information Resource Centre (IRC) from January 16 to January 23.

The IRC will remain closed for its renovation work and on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. It will reopen on January 24.



Teachers, students and staffs of Jahangirnagar University took out a colourful procession on the campus yesterday to celebrate the University Day.

## Regional resolution of disputes over Ganges stressed

BSS, Dhaka

Water experts and senior journalists yesterday reiterated the need for regional resolution of the disputes over the Ganges and other common rivers allowing the nature to decide the courses of the streams instead of politics to evade natural wrath.

"I don't see any solution to the water problems other than a regional resolution," leading water expert and the Anti-Corruption Commission member Prof Moniruzzaman Mian told a function launching the Bengali version of Disputes over the Ganga, a Panos Institute Publication consisting of articles of experts from India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

He added that unlike all lower riparian countries including Egypt, Bangladesh was in a disadvantaged position because of socio-economic and political reasons, which made the country vulnerable to any unilateral interventions in the upstream regions.

Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) held the dissemination seminar on the 'Disputes over the Ganga' in which the authors analysed counter-productive effects of the Farakka Barrage and other upstream interventions in common rivers in both India and Bangladesh. FEJB chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury presided.

The Daily Independent Editor Mahbubul Alam, the New Nation Editor Golam Tahaboor, BSS Chief Editor Gaziul Hassan Khan, UNB chief news editor Shamsuddin Ahmed, the News Today chief Badiul Alam

and journalist Mostafa Kamal Majumdar spoke at the discussion.

Mahbubul Alam said India's river linking plan added a new dimension to the crisis with common rivers while "we are in a critical situation for being a downstream country with growing need for water due to growing population".

## ATTACK ON TAYEBUR PBCP cadre Joy shown arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mashiqul Islam alias Joy, an armed cadre of outlawed PBCP (M-L), was shown arrested on Tuesday in the Khulna grenade attack case.

Joy, 30, is now in Khulna district jail.

The miscreants threw grenade on Khulna City Corporation (KCC) Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman on February 29 last year while he was returning home by his official car after attending a function at the United Club at KD Ghose Road in the city.

Mayor survived the attempt on his life as the grenade did not explode.

Police arrested Joy, a cadre of Purbu Bangla Communist Party (PBCP-ML), in May from Dhaka on the basis of a hand-written letter mailed to Khulna thana officer-in-charge (OC) claiming responsibility for the grenade attack on Tayebur.

## 34th founding anniversary of JU celebrated

JU CORRESPONDENT

The 34th founding anniversary of Jahangirnagar University (JU) was celebrated yesterday amid much enthusiasm and great festivity.

Thousands of former and present teachers, students, officers and employees of the university took part in the daylong programme inaugurated by Textile and Jute Minister Shahjahan Siraj.

The day's programme began with a colourful procession at 10.00am.

Vice Chancellor Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman presided over the inaugural ceremony. Pro-VCs Prof M Imamuddin and Prof Enamul Huq Khan and Treasurer Prof ABM Enayet Hossain were also present.

Two former VCs Prof Abdul Bayes and Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmad and 18 retired professors were awarded for their contribution to the university. Prof Selim Al Deen and Prof Dilara Chowdhury also received awards for their achievement at national level.

The Jahangirnagar Sangskritik Jote organised a cultural evening at 7.00pm and the Jahangirnagar Theatre staged a drama titled 'George Dandiyu'.

The JU began its journey on January 12 in 1971 with 150 students in four departments under two faculties.

## ROBBERY, CARJACKING Govt takes tough steps to deal with criminals

UNB, Dhaka

In the wake of rising incidents of robbery and carjacking in the capital, the government has taken tough measures to deal with such criminal acts.

In an exclusive meeting with the law enforcers yesterday, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babor directed the police to investigate the robbery and car jacking incidents within 15 days of the heists.

Sources said the state minister cautioned the cops about punishment for failure and reward for success, underlining the imperative of working hard with "utmost honesty and dignity".

Two trained and efficient sub-inspectors in each police station are being set with specific responsibility of dealing with the robbery and car jacking incidents, police sources said.

Besides, a special squad of detective branch is also being formed with a view to preventing and promptly detecting the heists.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Home Secretary Omar Farook, Inspector General of Police Ashrafur Huda, additional director general of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), acting DMP commissioner, deputy police commissioners, assistant police commissioners and the officers-in-charge of the police stations under DMP.

Sources said that the home minister also asked the assistant commissioners and officers above the rank to closely monitor and supervise the work of the field-level officers.

## Body to probe timber smuggling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Environment and Forest has formed a three-member committee to investigate the incidents of smuggling of timber.

On Monday, the paramilitary BDR seized five trucks laden with timber in Feni, sources said.

The committee headed by Monwarul Islam, deputy secretary of the ministry, has been asked to submit its inquiry report within next seven days and identify the forest staffs involved.

Timber worth about Tk 25 lakh were seized in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban during the joint drives by BDR and forest officials in December and the first week of January, sources added.

# 'Criminalisation of politics main obstacle to dev'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The growing criminalisation of politics is the main obstacle to the development of the country, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

"The country has received a total of Tk two thousand billion in loan assistance from foreign countries and donor organisations since independence, but 75 percent of the amount was grabbed by a handful of people, including politicians," said economist Dr Abul Barkat, a professor of Dhaka University.

Politics is now most profitable venture in the country, he added.

The Projanmer Chetona, a social organisation, arranged the roundtable on 'Political reform movement: Problems and solutions' at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in the city.

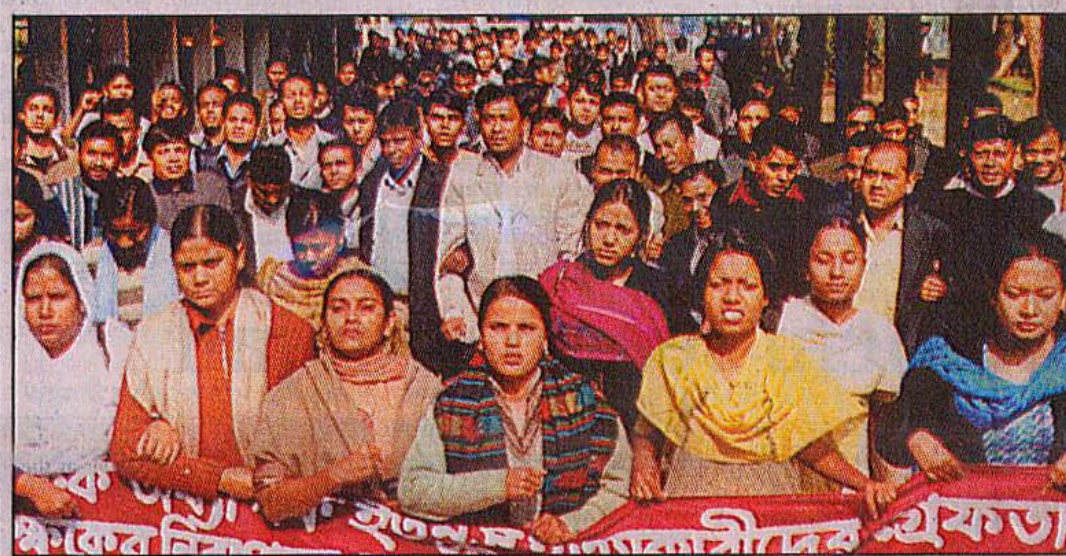
Prof Barkat said 84 percent of lawmakers are engaged in business, which shows that the politics has become polluted.

## 1,275 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,275 people, including three listed criminals, on various charges during their countrywide drive in the last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, the law enforcers recovered nine firearms and 32 bullets and filed five cases against seven people under Arms Act, says a police headquarters press release.



A combine of student organisations against terrorism and communalism took out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday demanding arrest of the killers of Rajshahi University teacher Prof Mohammed Yunus and security of all teachers. The student organisations also observed strike in all educational institutions.

## 94 kg marijuana seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) seized about 94 kg of marijuana at Sutrapur in the city yesterday.

A special team of DNC officials recovered the drugs from a sweeper's colony at Walter Road during a raid at around 12.00 noon.

They also arrested one Aushi, 40, in this connection.

In another raid, another DNC team seized 25 grams of heroin and arrested three people -- Oli Sikdar, Mamun and Suman Khan -- at Bangabandhu Avenue.

## Obituary

Quazi Abdur Razzak, former member of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, died of cardiac arrest at Suhrawardy Hospital in the city on January 7 at the age of 54, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter.

## Death anniversary

Today is the second death anniversary of former textile minister M Mansur Ali, says a press release.

On the occasion, M Mansur Ali Smriti Sangsad organised a discussion on his life and a doa mahfil at Sakthira Jana Samity office at 44-F/7 Panthapath at 4.00pm in the city.

## Daniel Koraia

Today is the second death anniversary of Daniel Koraia, former president of the Bangladesh Christian Association, says a press release.

To observe the day, Bangladesh Christian Association will place wreaths at his grave near Tejgaon Church at 8.00pm and special prayers will be offered at his residence at 34 East Tejuri Bazar in the city at 6.30pm.

Most lawmakers possess black money, he said, and called on all political parties not to give nominations to black money holders in the election.

He also called for making the Election Commission fully independent for a free and fair election.

Prof Barkat termed the killings by law enforcers in the name of 'crossfire' an extreme form of terrorism.

AAMS Arefin Siddique, president of Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta), underscored the need for reforms in the education system to make the people con-

scious about politics.

The majority of people cannot understand how they are being deprived because they lack proper education, he added.

"We have to change our mental make-up before bringing about reforms in politics and a good leadership can help us in this regard," Arefin said.

Noted economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmed, Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin, Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani, Prof Abul Kasem Fazlul Haque, Dr Mohammad Samad and Dr Shahdin Malik also spoke.

# Domestic help dies after forced abortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage domestic help died of excessive bleeding in the city yesterday during an alleged forced abortion.

Rozina Akhtar Rozy, 16, daughter of Kajo Miah, died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) two hours after she had a forced abortion at a clinic at Badda on Tuesday night.

Deserted by her husband, Rozy had been working at a house at Joarshahara, Badda, but her employer and his friend lured her into having abortion, said Badda

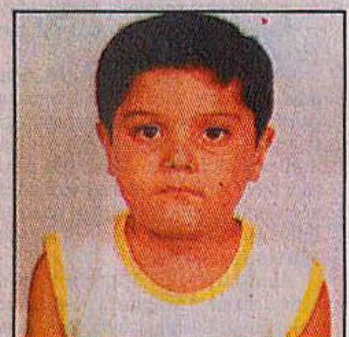
police.

They took her to Unique Maternity Clinic on Tuesday night for abortion, they added. But she was soon shifted to the DMCH as her condition deteriorated.

Her employer also brought her body to his house without autopsy.

Acting on information, police recovered the body and sent it to the DMCH again for autopsy.

Police also arrested her employer Kazi Akhtaruzzaman Chandan, owner of the clinic Abdul Kaiyum and his wife Shahin, also a nurse, and a clinic employee Sazzad Hossain.



## Appeal for help

The father of a six-year-old boy who has been suffering from acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, a cancer of white blood cells, seeks financial assistance for the treatment of his son, says a press release.

Ratul, a nursery student, is now undergoing treatment at Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital in Mirpur.

Doctors have advised his father to take the boy to Singapore for immediate bone marrow transplantation involving around Tk 40 lakh.

But Ratul's father, a farmer of Sonakhali village in Fakirhat, Bagerhat, could not afford such expensive treatment. He appeals to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save his son.

Contributions can be sent to the Savings Account No.-02099565, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, Shamoly Branch, Dhaka. Interested persons can also contact his family at mobile No. 0189900625.



Swami Vivekananda Uddipan Committee brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday marking the 142nd birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.



## Light to moderate fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country till 6.00pm today.

Light to moderate fog is also expected over the country during morning, Met Office said.

Mild cold wave may sweep Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Mymensingh, Tangail and Srimangol during next 36 hours.

Highest temperature 26.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 08.2 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:31pm today and rises at 6:44am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	23.6	13.2	74	58
Chittagong	26.5	15.0	78	65
Rajshahi	23.4	11.8	93	70
Khulna	23.8	13.5	93	82
Barisal	24.0	13.4	89	92
Sylhet	25.0	11.8	68	72
Cox's Bazar	26.0	16.5	89	83



## Art exhibition

A five-day exhibition of selected artworks by children will begin and a prize giving ceremony for the winners of art competition will be held. The event is a part of a festival marking the birth anniversary of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin. Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, 275/F, Road # 27, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm. The exhibition will remain open from 11.00am to 7.00pm daily and 3.00pm to 8.00pm on Friday.

## Film show

Dhaka Film Society will screen two films titled 'Bowling for Columbine' (2002) and 'Roger and Me' (1989) directed by Michael Moore. Venue: CAAC Auditorium, 62 Science Laboratory Road. Time: 4.30pm and 7.00pm.

## Indian film show

The High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Main Hoon Na'. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2.

## Scouts procession

Bangladesh Scouts will take out a procession to raise awareness about conservation and protection of migratory and indigenous birds. Venue: Bangladesh Scouts premises. Time: 9.00am.

## Mehendi Festival

A week-long free Mehendi Festival, organised by Cool Exposure, a media communication house, with support from Elite Cosmetics, will begin. Venue: Food Court, Metro Shopping Mall. Time: 12.00 noon.

## CD releasing ceremony

An audio CD and a cassette of modern songs titled 'Bhor Hobe' will be released. Venue: Biswa Sahitya Kendra. Time: 12.30pm.

## Protest rally

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal will hold a rally to protest killings in crossfire and the move to build a dam at Tipaimukh. Venue: Muktangan. Time: 4.00pm.



## Human chain

Paribesh Bachao Andolon will form a human chain and stage a demonstration demanding compensation for the damage caused by the fire at Tengra gas field in Sunamganj and punishment to the persons responsible for it. Venue: Shahbagh. Time: 11.00am.



GrameenPhone Managing Director Erik Aas hands over a cheque for Tk 1,07,85,784 to Unicef Representative Morten Giersing for the tsunami-hit children of Sri Lanka and the Maldives.