

Secretariat goes slow as PM, top ministers abroad, sick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Works at the secretariat have slowed down in the absence of the prime minister and a number of senior ministers who are staying abroad. The situation has worsened further as some other ministers are sick.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is now in Saudi Arabia for performing Umrh. Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman is undergoing treatment in Singapore.

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CHUADANGA 9-MURDER

All 16 PBCP men acquitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sixteen operatives of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party's (PBCP) M-L faction, including one of its commanders Nuruzzaman Laltu, were acquitted yesterday in the sensational Chuadanga nine-murder case of 1995.

The judge of Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal Mohammad Abdus Samad delivered the verdict.

The 16 acquitted are Nuruzzaman Laltu, Salimuddin, Chakbar Shaikh, Asad, Alal, Habibur Rahman Oltu, Siraj Molla, Pachu, Ruhul Amin, Nurul alias Sabuj, Kalu alias Zahid, Nurul Haque, Parvez, Biplob, Rana alias Shahidul, and Alam alias Khokon.

The prosecution said a gang of armed criminals swooped on Kulbila model cluster village in Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga on July 6, 1995. They cordoned the entire village and asked for arms

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Saarc secretariat putting finishing touches to meet preparations

BSS, Kathmandu

The secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) is taking all preparations for holding the 13th summit of the regional forum in the Bangladesh capital, Dhaka.

The secretariat is in touch with host Bangladesh, current chairperson Pakistan and all other member states with a view to making the

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Jamaat mother body of 58 militant groups

Claims AL at seminar; blames govt for protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh the 'mother organisation' of 58 militant groups in the country, the Awami League (AL) yesterday said the government is protecting militancy as Jamaat is its coalition partner.

Tracing the root of militancy, the

major opposition party pointed fingers at former president Ziaur Rahman for legitimating the banned Jamaat by restoring its right to partake in politics and elections, and former president HM Ershad for making Islam the state-religion, which strengthened the ethical stand of Jamaat.

The AL's views were highlighted at

a seminar on 'The Rise of Militancy' as part of a series of seminars on the coalition government's performance during its four-year rule.

Former state minister for information and AL central leader Abu Sayeed presented the keynote paper at the seminar held at Dhaka

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This hog badger, scientific name *Arctonyx collaris*, caught last Monday in Sitakunda is now housed at Chittagong Zoo. The colour of the endangered species commonly found in the tropical forests in Southeast Asia varies from yellowish or brown to grey. It has a long, mobile and hairless snout like a pig.

Bribery at 10 levels to get medicare

Reveals TIB survey on Rajshahi public hospitals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A patient in Rajshahi City has to spend up to Tk 5,000 on bribes for obtaining their fundamental rights to medical care at government hospitals in the city, including Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The Committee of Concerned

Citizens (CCC) formed by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) disclosed the dire findings at a news briefing at its office yesterday on the occasion of the publication of a survey report titled 'Medicare in Rajshahi City'.

The patients have to pay bribes

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Sangsad goes into session Nov 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into the 19th session on November 20, stepping onto the fourth year of its tenure.

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday summoned the session while the main opposition Awami League (AL), boycotting parliament since last year, has yet to

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HC orders not to arrest, harass ETV chairman till Nov 20

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday ordered the government not to arrest or harass Ekushey Television (ETV) Chairman Abdus Salam until November 20 in a women repression case filed with Kafrul Police Station by his divorced second wife Farjana Shilpi.

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Dinajpur-1 by-polls Dec 5

BSS, Dhaka

The by-election in Dinajpur-1 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad will be held on December 5.

The Election Commission (EC) announced the election schedule yesterday through a gazette notification.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of

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Clarification

Incidin Bangladesh, a non-government organisation (NGO), has protested the news item headlined "Conspiracy on to destroy RMG sector" published in The Daily Star yesterday.

The Daily Star report, which was based on a press conference, quoted a speaker as saying that Incidin Bangladesh is one of the NGOs trying to destroy the country's export-oriented garment industry by staging demonstrations with garment workers on different issues.

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PRO-BNP LAWYERS FORUM

Huda trashes his expulsion decision by Aminul faction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (JAF) led by Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque yesterday said they will hold the central conference of the pro-BNP lawyers' body by February next year.

The decision came in the wake of Monday's wrangling, in which one JAF faction dissolved the central committee and another expelled the rival self-proclaimed

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Uttara OC, 7 others sued for murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A woman sued the officer-in-charge (OC) of Uttara Police Station and seven others at a Dhaka court yesterday on charge of murdering her husband.

The accused are OC Mohammad Akhteruzzaman, Assistant Sub-inspector Fazlul Haq Talukder, Monirul Islam, Mohammad Titumir Hossain alias Ripon, Mohammad Tota Miah, Mohammad Alamgir, Rahman and Roman.

Sumi Begum, widow of private car driver Anis who was murdered last month in the capital, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.

In her complaint, Sumi told the court that accused Ripon had a feud with her husband's employer over the distribution of toll money. Her husband knew all about their secret dealings and this led to his murder, she added.

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Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
21	26		5-27
22	27	4-41	5-26



Prayer Timing		
October 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	4-46
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-42
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

BIRD FLU Plan to make vaccine available in 3 months Move to copy Roche drug in India

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh branches of Roche and Novartis, two multinational companies, may form a joint venture to produce the Tamiflu vaccine for treating human cases of bird flu in Bangladesh, although commercial production may take several months.

"As we do not have a sophisticated laboratory, we have been discussing with [Novartis] to produce it jointly," said a high official from Roche Pharmaceuticals Company, headquartered in Switzerland.

Sources said it would take several months for the product to reach the market as the idea remains at the conceptual level. But the authorities of Roche are planning to import five thousand doses of flu vaccine to Bangladesh from their head office in Switzerland to tackle the emergency situation.

"We want to make the flu vaccine available [in Bangladesh] within three months. It is hard to go for a new production within just three

months, as we have to maintain the quality and take permission from the government. So we have asked them to send us five thousand doses of flu vaccine," said a Roche official.

Costs of the bird flu vaccine are expected to be high. A per person dose, consisting of ten capsules, will cost Tk 1,800 to 2,000 if imported from Switzerland, sources said.

"Many people will not be able to afford that, so we are planning to talk with the World Health Organisation and with the government officials to know their strategy to tackle the deadly virus," he said.

Bangladesh has no reported cases of bird flu, but the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) warns that the country could be vulnerable to outbreaks, given that it lies on a major route of migratory birds, which can carry the disease.

Our New Delhi correspondent reports that India is considering whether to invoke a special law to

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New outbreak in China, 4th person dies in Indonesia

AFP, Beijing

A virulent strain of bird flu has broken out again in China, officials said Tuesday, as the human toll from the virus rose and Europe mulled a ban on wild bird imports to help avert a feared human pandemic.

Also in Asia, which has borne the brunt of a recent outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of avian influenza, Vietnam said it had contained its first outbreak of the approaching winter.

In eastern China's Anhui province, 2,100 geese and chickens were infected with H5N1, which has now killed at least 62 people in Asia since late 2003, two-thirds of them in Vietnam.

The outbreak, the sixth to hit China so far this year, was detected on October 20 and prompted the culling of nearly 45,000 birds, according to a Chinese agriculture ministry report to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

On Tuesday, Indonesia confirmed its fourth human fatality from the virus, the World Health

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