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Protest for release of teachers, students at DU, RU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday formed a human chain on the campus demanding immediate release of the detained university teachers and a student.

Students against repression, formed by the left-leaning student organisations, organised the programme which began at 11:20am.

The organisation will hold different programmes including boycotting classes for two hours from 11:00am to 1:00pm tomorrow, wearing black badges and hoisting black flags atop the buildings on the campus to press home their demand for the release of the detained teachers and the student.

About 1,000 students joined hands to form the human chain stretching from Aparajeyo Bangla to Curzon Hall. General students along with the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), and other organisations took part in its spontaneous.

Meanwhile, a group of BCL leaders and activists, led by its DU

BB projects 6.2pc growth this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday said GDP growth in the current fiscal year would range between 6 and 6.2 percent.

At the beginning of 2007-08, the growth target was set at 7 percent.

The central bank has come up with the revised projection in its monetary policy statement released yesterday.

It also made an upward adjustment to the inflation rate for the second half of the year, and said 2007-08 would see the rate of inflation moving between 8 and 8.2 percent.

In July last year when the fiscal year began, inflation was projected to be between 6.5 and 7 percent.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data shows that inflation in November 2007 was already running at 8.61 percent. Prices of both food and non-food items have been showing a rising trend and it will affect the inflation rate, say

economists.

Presenting the monetary policy at a press briefing, BB Governor Salehuddin Ahmed said, "In the next six months inflation rate will show a reducing trend because supply chain of commodities will be improved and at the same time there will be less demand."

Asked about 5.5 percent GDP growth forecast by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), he said, "They [World Bank and IMF] don't run the country."

He said donors made the projection in consultation with a few people in Dhaka. "We are dealing with real situation and have revised the targets in light of the present circumstances," he added.

The BB governor said the policy stance has been revised in the wake of unexpected domestic shocks and unfavourable international developments.

Strong inflationary pressures emanating from both domestic and external sources led the infla-

DU VIOLENCE HEARING Cop says nothing against teachers, students

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A policeman giving statement to a Dhaka court yesterday did not say anything against the Dhaka University (DU) teachers and students accused in the case for breaching Emergency Power Rules (EPR) in August last year.

The additional chief metropolitan magistrate recorded the deposition of Constable Syed Morshedul Haq and fixed January 14 for next hearing.

In his statement, Morshed told the court that he had taken some photographs of a procession brought out by university teachers



Students look at the broken "hate post" on the Dhaka University campus yesterday afternoon. Unidentified persons broke the structure which symbolises hatred for the war criminals.

Geeta Pasi sees right direction for polls

UNB, Dhaka

US Charge d' Affaires Geeta Pasi yesterday said things are moving in right direction towards holding general elections in Bangladesh before the end of this year.

"We continue to urge the caretaker government to restore democracy in Bangladesh," she said while talking to reporters at G4S headquarters in the capital.

The envoy commended the voter-registration process, saying that 23 to 25 million voters have already been registered and hoped that the process would be accelerated.

KHULNA POWER PLANT ACC presses graft charges against Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against detained former premier and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina and seven others in connection with Tk 3 crore graft case during the setting up of 100MW barge-mount power plant in Khulna.

The ACC yesterday also approved the filing of first information report (FIR) against eight persons including former state minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and former Awami League

HASINA WEALTH STATEMENT CASE ACC gets SC nod to appeal against HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday granted the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) permission to appeal and extended the stay order on the High Court (HC) judgment that had declared illegal the ACC notice served on detained former prime minister Sheikh Hasina asking her to submit wealth statement.

The court fixed February 12 for hearing on the appeal filed by the anti-corruption watchdog. The court also asked the ACC not to proceed further with any activities regarding the issue of Hasina's wealth statement until the matter is settled.

Hasina's counsel Barrister Rafique-ul Huq expressed satisfaction over the SC order saying, "We are happy with the order of the apex court as the order is given in



Dhaka University students form a human chain on the campus yesterday, demanding release of the detained teachers and a student.

Rab man injured in gunfight with drug dealers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A member of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and a drug peddler were injured during a gunfight between the law enforcers and a gang of drug dealers in the city's Badda area last night.

The Rab arrested the wounded criminal with 200 Yaba tablets and a revolver with four bullets.

Major Haider of Rab-1 was bullet-hit during the gunfight and

7 RHD engineers held while 'sharing' bribes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The task forces held seven engineers of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and an official of a construction firm from a coffee shop in the city on Tuesday night while the engineers were allegedly distributing bribes among themselves.

Members of the task forces also recovered Tk 13,99,000 from their possession.

The arrested officials are RHD additional chief engineers Muzammel Huq (Dhaka Division), Mominul Huq (Comilla Division), Md Rafiqul Islam (Planning, Comilla Division) and Abdullahel Kaf (Rangpur), Executive Engineer Md Ali Masud Haider, superintendent

Koko tells ACC about his Tk 6cr wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's younger son Arafat Rahman Koko yesterday submitted his wealth statement worth about Tk 6 crore to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Koko's lawyer Ahmed Azam Khan yesterday confirmed that the wealth statement was submitted to the commission yesterday afternoon through the jail authority.

Ahmed Azam informed that Koko in his statement of wealth showed 40 decimal of land worth Tk 4.48 lakh at Ukhaia in Cox's Bazar in his own name, 34 decimal land worth Tk 1 lakh in Gazipur in his name, two plots measuring 20 kathas worth Tk 9.90 lakh in

AL again demands early polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday reiterated its demand for general elections by the middle of this year and handover of power to an elected government to resolve the persisting crises in the country.

"If you [government] want to put an end to the current crises, hold the elections by June-July instead of implementing the earlier announced electoral roadmap and handing over power (by the year end) to an elected government," said acting AL President Zillur Rahman.

Speaking at a discussion in the city to mark the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Zillur said, "Resignation or inclusion of advisers will bring no solution to the present crises. The only way to solve the problems is to hand over power to people's representatives by holding elections quickly," he added.

Demanding immediate release of detained AL President Sheikh

Tamil Tigers want truce, Norwegian peace role

Lankan fighting kills 29 rebels, 1 soldier

AFP, AP, Colombo

Tamil Tiger rebels said yesterday they were ready to revive a dying ceasefire abandoned by Sri Lanka's government and urged Norway to maintain its role as peace broker as fighting claimed 29 insurgents and a soldier in the north.

In its first public reaction to the Sri Lankan withdrawal from the 2002 truce earlier this month, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) expressed willingness to salvage the ceasefire, the basis of a moribund peace process.

"The LTTE wishes to state that even at this juncture, it is ready to implement every clause of the CFA (ceasefire) agreement and respect it 100 percent," a statement from the rebels said.

"We also request that Norway should continue with its facilitation role with the support of the international community," it said. Sri Lanka's government last week signalled that it wanted Norway's role to end.

There was no immediate reaction from Norway, which together with the European Union, the United States and Japan, has expressed concern over Colombo's move to quit the truce and warned there could be more bloodshed.

Meanwhile in fresh fighting between troops and separatist

NY confce on investment opportunities in Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A major conference on investment opportunities in Bangladesh, organised by the Asia Society and sponsored by the financial services group JPMorgan, will be held in New York later this month with the country being described as "one of the world's most exciting investment opportunities."

The conference titled 'Updated Investment Opportunities in Bangladesh' is being held at a time when foreign investment in the country's stock exchanges has been rising. In 2007, net foreign or portfolio investment on the Dhaka Stock Exchange surged 830 per cent to Tk 8.9 billion.



Law enforcers browse through the mess at the residence of actress Shabnam Parvin at Uttara in the capital after robbers looted the house yesterday.

Editor, publisher of Prothom Alo discharged from Pintu's case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday discharged the editor and the publisher of the daily Prothom Alo from a defamation case filed by detained former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu in June 2006.

After a long hearing from the prosecution and the defence, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani issued the order finding no elements to frame charges against the defendants - editor Matiuur Rahman and publisher Mahfuz Anam.

The case was filed on June 25, 2006 with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court claiming that the editor and the publisher of the daily Prothom Alo ran a series of defamatory news items implicating the former lawmaker.

Moving the discharge petition, defence lawyers argued that the