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Delwar not allowed to meet Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia-backed BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain was not allowed to meet the former prime minister at the makeshift jail she is detained in at Jatya Sangsad Bhaban complex yesterday.

A Dhaka court ordered the authorities January 7 to allow Delwar and two other lawyers to meet Khaleda as her counsels.

Delwar and the other two counsels -- Sanaulah Mian and Nowshad Jamir -- went to the subjail at 3:05pm, but the jail authorities said he does not have permission according to the jail code.

The authorities, however, agreed to allow Sanaulah and Nowshad in, but they did not agree to enter the subjail without Delwar Hossain.

Explaining why Delwar was denied entry, DIG (Prisons) Maj SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

JAMUNA BRIDGE
Cracks develop as overloaded trucks let pass over it

MIRZA SHAKIL from Tangail with SHAMIM ASHRAF

A syndicate of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (JMB) employees and police guards have been allowing overweight vehicles to pass over the bridge in exchange for bribes for a long time, contributing to development of cracks on its surface.

Four police officials including the officer-in-charge (OC) of JMB East police station were closed and an employee of Marganet One, the company responsible for operation and maintenance of the

bridge, were arrested since Saturday from the weigh stations at the bridge in connection with the bribery scandal.

Saying that letting overweight vehicles get on the bridge contributed to the development of cracks, an official of Bangladesh Bridge Authority yesterday said they do not have an adequate number of staff to monitor the management firm's activities.

Although the bridge authorities had fixed the weight limit at 25 tons for consumer product laden vehicles and 21 tons for other vehicles, over 100 goods laden trucks weigh-



A crack across the width of the north lanes of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge is visible on the foreground while the expansion joint that had been disjointed on November 18 last year is seen half mended behind the crack, the photo was taken a few days after the expansion joint had come apart.

Barapukuria Power Plant resumes generation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Barapukuria 250MW Power Plant in Dinajpur yesterday resumed power generation with its two coal-fired units and is believed to help irrigation during the upcoming Boro season.

But the plant, which will have to be run for at least three-four months without any stop during the Boro season, already faces coal shortage as the Barapukuria Coal Mining Co Ltd (BCMCL) does not have any alternative phase other than phase-1103 for coal extraction.

Plant officials fear if coal extraction from the running phase is SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

POWER PLANT GRAFT
Dr Toufiq sent to jail on surrender

Hasnat Abdullah charged with hiding wealth

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former energy secretary Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury was sent to jail yesterday after he surrendered to a Dhaka court in a case filed for Tk 3 crore graft during the setting up of a barge-mount power plant in Khulna.

Meantime, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against former chief whip and Awami League (AL) leader Abul Hasnat Abdullah for concealing Tk 52 lakh in his wealth

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9yr old freed from jail after news reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government on Tuesday released the nine-year old girl imprisoned for the last six months in the name of safe shelter, and transferred her to the adolescent development centre at Konabari in Gazipur.

The girl was being held at Kishoreganj District Jail.

Her release follows a report in the daily Prothom Alo on Monday and an editorial in The Daily Star on Tuesday on the plight of the nine year old rape victim.

A letter from the Social Welfare Ministry on Tuesday praised the two newspapers for their role in highlighting the plight of the child.

The letter said, "It was possible for the government to take quick actions for release of the child for

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WB for cuts in ADP, hiking fuel prices

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government should cut back on the Annual Development Programme (ADP) expenditure to tackle an extra \$1.1 billion pressure on the current budget arising from international oil price hike and natural disasters, says a World Bank (WB) report.

The report also suggests reducing the gap between administered prices and import cost of fuel and fertiliser, saying that the pressure on the budget have resulted in a precarious fiscal situation.

The FY08 budget has come under severe pressure from three shocks: international oil and non-oil commodity price hikes, July-September floods and the cyclone Sidr, observed the report that was placed in WB board meeting in Washington on January 9.

The report said that the adjustment pains can be mitigated, at least partially in the short run, through increased concessional foreign assistance.

In the meeting, the WB board also approved \$100 million budgetary support for Bangladesh due to huge economic losses in the cyclone.

Asked about the WB suggestions, a finance ministry official said they are working to slash at least Tk 3,000 crore from the ADP expenditure. "Price increase of fuel and fertiliser is a sensitive issue and there is no decision in this regard so far," he said.

Considering the present state of economy of Bangladesh, the World Bank report said having nearly exhausted the potential for reallocating expenditure within the FY08

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

26 killed as Tigers bomb bus after end of truce

AFF, AP, Colombo

At least 26 civilians were killed and dozens wounded yesterday in a suspected Tamil Tiger bomb attack on a crowded bus in southern Sri Lanka, officials said, as the island's ceasefire was set to end.

The defence ministry said the bus packed with schoolchildren was hit by a powerful Claymore-type mine -- a bomb packed with explosives and ball-bearings. It also said the bus was shot at after the blast.

"Police sources said that the terrorists have exploded a Claymore mine targeting the bus and subsequently opened fire at the survivors," the ministry said in a statement.

More than 60 people were also wounded in the blast, which took place at WelIara, 230km southeast of the capital Colombo.

Eight were reported to be in critical condition, and the govern-

EPR BREAKING CASE
DU teachers, student plead not guilty

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained Dhaka University (DU) teachers and a student pleaded not guilty before a Dhaka court yesterday and said that charges brought against them for breaking Emergency Power Rules (EPR) on DU campus were false, fabricated and concocted.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani read out the charges extracted from the statements of 12 prosecution witnesses taken during the trial of the case.

Meanwhile, in a second case brought against the same, also for breaking EPR in a second place of occurrence, another court completed recording statements of 16 witnesses including the investigating officer (IO) of the case.

The accused are Dhaka University Teachers' Association

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AUG '07 VIOLENCE
Prof Anwar for publication of probe report immediately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Dhaka University (DU) teacher Anwar Hossain yesterday demanded immediate publication of the Justice Habibur Rahman probe report on student protests in the university in August last year.

In a statement to the Chief Magistrate's Court, Anwar said during a hearing that courts had formed a committee with Justice Habibur Rahman to probe the events of August and Justice Habib pleaded with the chief adviser to publish the report.

"It is a matter of regret that the report has not been published as of now," Anwar said.

Justice Habib had taken statements of over 100 people, including the four detained DU teachers, he said, adding that Justice Habib also said at a press conference that the events of August 20 were

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Rice floods capital as dist traders fear jt force raid

Price expected to come down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rice traders forecast a sharp fall in rice price soon as the hoarders in the country's northern part have started supplying a huge quantity of rice to the city's wholesalers fearing raids by joint forces.

Meanwhile, the price of coarse rice fell by Tk 15-25 per maund in the wholesale market yesterday while it remained stable in the retail market after witnessing a slight rise at the end of last week.

Coarse rice was sold at Tk 30-31 per kg in the retail market yesterday. Joint forces in a drive on Tuesday seized about 500 tonnes of rice in Chuadanga and arrested some hoarders. However, they were released later and given back the rice on condition of selling those at Tk 26 per kg in the market.

"As the news of the arrest of the hoarders and the seizure of rice in Chuadanga spread, hoarders from different parts of the country begin sending rice asking us to sell those first and pay them later," said a wholesaler at Babu Bazar in the capital.

He said truckloads of rice had started reaching various wholesale markets including Babu Bazar, Badamtoli, and Mohammadpur Krishi Market since yesterday morning.

"It will be difficult for us to preserve a huge quantity of rice," he added.

The traders fear that if the rice price falls sharply, they have to incur losses.

"Sudden fall in rice price might result in a sharp price hike after a few days," said a trader at

Badamtoli wishing anonymity.

Meanwhile, supply of Indian Swarna rice remains adequate in the city's wholesale markets. However, the price of fine rice is yet to go down significantly. It was sold at Tk 38-45 per kg in the capital's retail markets yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent from Bogra reports: members of joint forces held a meeting a few days ago with rice traders and asked them not to hoard rice. Traders in Chuadanga are supplying a huge quantity of rice to different districts including Dhaka.

Our Correspondent from Dinajpur reports: Joint forces at a view-exchange meeting at Dinajpur Army Camp yesterday asked the journalists to inform them if they have any information about hoarding of rice.

Pak militants capture paramilitary fort

7 troops, 50 militants killed in fighting

AFF, Wana

Hundreds of Islamist militants captured a Pakistani paramilitary fort near the Afghan border yesterday, sparking fierce fighting that left seven troops and up to 50 rebels dead, the army said.

Security officials said another 20 troops were missing after insurgents armed with rocket launchers blasted their way into the outpost at Sararogha town in the rugged South Waziristan tribal district.

The area is said to be a stronghold of Baitullah Mehsud, a tribal warlord with alleged links to al-Qaeda who is accused by the government of masterminding the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

"Around midnight 400 miscreants attacked the Frontier Corps at Sararogha. The fort was captured by militants, we are taking stock of the situation," chief military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told AFP.

"There are reports of 40 to 50 dead miscreants, while seven personnel embraced martyrdom."

The attack highlighted growing insecurity in Pakistan ahead of crucial elections on February 18, which were postponed because of widespread unrest sparked by Benazir's killing.

Military sources said the Islamist fighters besieged the remote fort in darkness before blowing up part of the walls, storming inside and taking control of the building.

Abbas said that of 42 troops manning the fort, 15 had escaped and reported back to a separate base while the whereabouts of the rest were not known.

"There are reports that they are returning to scattered posts," he said.

A senior security official however said that the 20 troops were still missing.

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Coalition partner's pullout rattles Israeli govt

Lieberman resigns protesting peace talks with Palestinians

AFF, Jerusalem

Israel's hawkish Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman resigned yesterday and pulled his party out of government in protest at renewed peace talks with the Palestinians, rattling Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's coalition.

The departure of the ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party's 11 MPs leaves Olmert's coalition intact with 67 seats in the 120-member parliament, but could increase the pressure on other coalition partners to follow suit.

"Informed Olmert that we were quitting the coalition and the government," Lieberman told a press conference in parliament.

Lieberman's abrupt resignation came two days after Israeli and Palestinian negotiators officially launched talks on the thorniest

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Ancient temple on verge of ruin

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, back from Tarash, Sirajganj

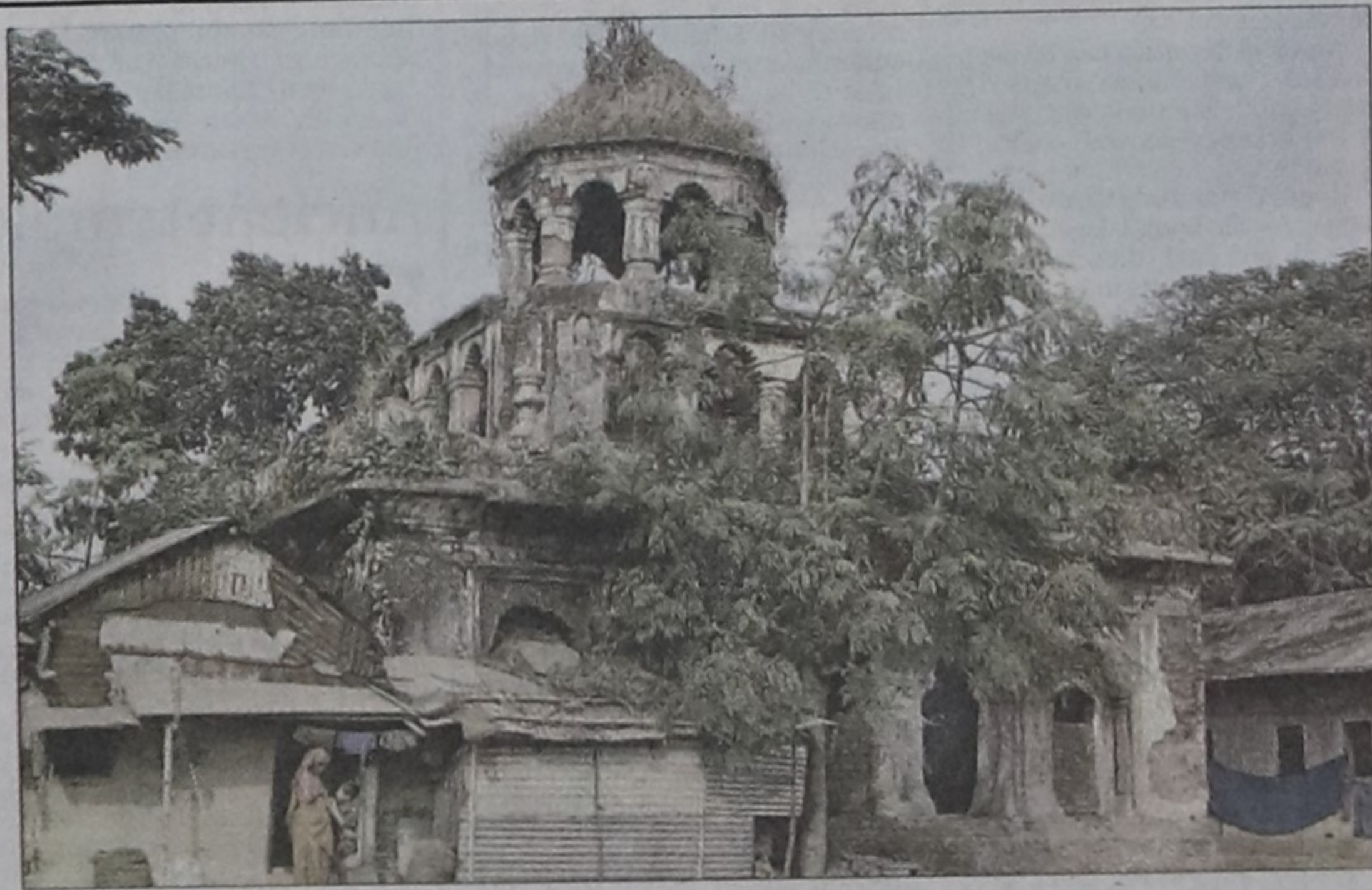
The ancient Treedal Manch temple at Tarash upazila in Sirajganj is turning into ruins because of the authorities' negligence in its maintenance and preservation.

Locals alleged that a few influential traders have encroached upon and built houses and shops on the land of the archaeological site.

Deep cracks have developed in the sides of the temple while weeds have grown on the 17th century structure as the Archaeology Department has never taken initiatives to renovate and preserve the temple.

The temple has also lost much of its terracotta decora

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Tin-sheds have been built encroaching Treedal Manch Temple in Tarash Upazila in Sirajganj, damaging the ancient temple.



Use of wood in brick kilns is prohibited by law. Yet this picture taken yesterday at Amin Bazaar shows woods being piled up for use in the kilns.

Deals signed for 7 rental power plants

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday signed contracts with private sponsors for installing seven rental power plants having a total capacity of generating 270 megawatts.

According to the contracts, the private sponsors will set up the plants on rental basis to start commercial production within a stipulated period of 120 days from signing of the deals.

The Power Development Board (PDB) will purchase electricity

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Qulkhwani
Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim



Begum Syeda Nurresh Maksud, former MP of Greater Faridpur from Jatiya Party, and an Advocate of the Supreme Court and educationist died of massive heart attack on Monday, the 14th of January, 2008 at 2.00pm at the Apollo Hospital, Dhaka. (Innallaha wainna ilaihe rajeun).

At the time of her death she has left behind her husband Engr. Rashed Maksud Khan, a leading industrialist, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren, and a host of friends, relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

Her qulkhwani will be held on Friday, the 18th January, 2008 at her own house at House # 18, Road # 6A, Sector # 5, Uttara Model Town after Asr prayers. All friends, relations and well-wishers are requested to participate in the qulkhwani and pray for her departed soul.

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