

Maldives to fill Saarc secretary general post soon

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Maldives has conveyed to Saarc member states that it would soon nominate a new candidate as the Saarc secretary general.

The post fell vacant with effect from January 22 as the former secretary general, Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, a Maldivian national, resigned on January 20 amid allegations from senior Maldivian officials of favouring anti-government forces in the country's political issues.

The practice of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) provides each member state an opportunity, on an alphabetical rotation basis, to nominate a candidate of their choice as secretary general for a three-year term.

HC questions appointment of DoF DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday questioned the legality of appointment of the director general (DG) on current charge of the Department of Fisheries (DoF).

It issued a rule upon the government to explain in two weeks as to why its decision to appoint Syed Arif Azad as DG (current charge) of DoF should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim gave the rule after hearing a writ petition challenging the appointment's legality.

DoF Deputy Directors Nittanada Das and Abdul Jalil jointly filed the petition.

OFA distributes 7,000 blankets among poor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Old Faujians Association (OFA), the society of all 2,674 ex-cadets of Faujdarhat Cadet College, has distributed about 7,000 blankets among the destitute in different districts to salvage them from the cold this winter.

The association members contributed about Tk 10 lakh for procurement of the blankets, which were recently distributed in 40 places, including Rangpur, Gaibandha, Panchagarh, Tangail, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Hobiganj, Chittagong, Comilla, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, Nilphamari, Rajshahi, Khulna, Jessore and Pabna, OFA Secretary General M Musleh Uz Zaman said in a press release.

Besides its own efforts, OFA also distributed blankets in partnership with various local groups, NGOs, media outlets and cadet colleges.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Group Captain (ret'd) DS Raja died of kidney ailment at the city's Ibne Sina Hospital yesterday. He was 82.

Raja left behind his son Brig Gen (ret'd) DS Shaikat Raja and three daughters.

After namaz-e-janaza at Banani DOHS Mosque, he was buried at Bangladesh Airforce Graveyard near Dhaka Shaheen College.

DS Raja hailed from Syed Bari, Lashkarpur in Habiganj.



Roundtable

Janaganer Dhaka Andolon will organise a roundtable; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion

Deshpremi Janaganer Mancha will hold an open discussion; Venue: Gono Sangskriti Kendra, Shahbagh; Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable

Bangladesh Aurthany Samity will arrange a roundtable; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 10:30am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Village Doctors (Welfare) Association will organise a discussion; Venue: Bashir Uddin Auditorium, Mahanagar Natya Mancha; Time: 10:30am.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chairs a ministerial meeting at the Secretariat yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Save canal in Munshiganj

HC asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to take effective steps immediately to stop encroachment on the canal, Nayaner Khal, in Munshiganj.

During the hearing of a suo moto rule, the HC ordered the deputy commissioner (DC) and the superintendent of police (SP) of Munshiganj to take appropriate legal actions against the grabbers of the canal under Mirkadim pourasava.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim also asked the DC and the SP to submit a report to it after complying with its order by March 6.

Following a report published in the daily Prothom Alo, the bench issued the rule on January 19 asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to protect and preserve the canal and to take action against the land grabbers.

According to the report, the alleged land grabbers encroached upon a portion of the canal and constructed structures there.

SSC EXAMS 24pc drop out in Sylhet board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

About 24 percent of the students, who had registered in class nine for appearing in the SSC Examination under Sylhet Board this year, dropped out before the examination that is scheduled to begin on February 1.

The education board officials, however, claimed that this year's drop out percentage is much lower compared to last year's 32.72 percent.

Md Manir Uddin, examination controller of Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE), Sylhet, said the drop outs were mainly due to marriage, failure in class examinations and other reasons.

In total, 57,308 students registered for the SSC examination while in class nine, of which only 43,555 students will be appearing in the examination at present.

The total number of examinees this year under Sylhet Board is 58,476, including 43,555 regular students, 14,915 irregular students of previous years, and 6 improvement examinees.

This total examinees figure, including 25,893 boys and 32,537 girls, has gone up from last year's 48,527.

The number of girl examinees is also more than that of boys like previous year.

The SSC examination will be held at 72 centres in the division, with each of the centre having a vigilance team while four mobile teams will be present in each of the districts, the board officials said.

DU proctor files GD for his security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) acting Proctor Prof Dr Muhammad Amzad Ali has lodged a general diary (GD) with Shahbagh Police Station seeking personal security.

In the GD filed on Friday, he mentioned that Food Secretary Barun Dev Mitra and several people introducing themselves as DGFI and NSI personnel threatened him over phone saying that he did not know how to behave with a secretary.

On the same day, the proctor caught two former DU students with sets of leaked question papers hours before a written test for recruitment of sub-assistant food inspector and lower division assistant-cum-computer in the ministry.

To inform this he called the food secretary, who got angry at Amzad because he started his telephonic conversation asking "whether he is talking with food secretary Mr Barun Dev Mitra?"

Claiming that no incident of misbehaving took place during the phone conversation, the food and disaster management ministry, in a statement yesterday, said the proctor did not introduce himself first and rather uttered the secretary by name and tried to make sure whether he was talking to the secretary.

The explanation, signed by the ministry's Senior Information Officer SM Golam Kibria, also expressed shock at the filing of the GD.

Chehlam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Chehlam of Saleha Biswas, mother of Manikganj Correspondent of The Daily Star Zahangir Shah, will be held at Bawtha Govt Primary School in the town after Johr prayers today.

Relatives, well wishers and friends are requested to attend the programme.

Saleha Biswas passed away on December 22.

RMG workers go berserk

10 hurt by factory guards

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Garment workers of two factories at Ishwardi Export Processing Zone (EPZ) yesterday went on berserk in protest of sacking without notice.

The workers of china owned factories 'Roshita Knitting and Ware Limited' (RKL) and 'Megha Textile Ltd' became violent when security guards beat up some workers leaving 10 injured while they were holding a demonstration at the factories premises at about 9:00am.

Being informed police from Ishwardi police station and Rapid Action Battalion from Pabna rushed the spot and took the situation under control.

Leaders of workers association and authorities of the factories sat on a compromise meeting at noon. After the meeting the factory owners called shut production for two days.

"The production will be resuming on

Thursday as per decision in the meeting," said Md Rashedul Haque, assistant superintendent of police in Ishwardi circle.

Despite several try over cell phone, responsible personnel of the factories could not be contacted.

According to a leader of workers association at the EPZ, the two factories sacked at least 50 workers in the last few days.

"The authorities of the companies cut Tk 1400 from wages each month. We do not get our leisure bonus. Although 17 days holidays allotted for a year to each worker but we have got just 14 days holiday last year. Even we do not get the salary on the annual holidays," said Md Helal Uddin, president of the workers association.

"If any worker protested it he was sacked" he said.

"We have put 22 point demands at meeting," he added.



A policeman aims a shotgun at Jamaat-e-Islami activists during clashes at Hatim Khan area of Rajshahi city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR

Normalcy at Sust demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The pro-BNP teachers at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology yesterday handed over a memorandum to the vice chancellor demanding normalcy back on the campus.

They also demanded a neutral probe into the recent incidents at the university and security for the teachers, students, and employees.

Sust Teachers Association Vice President Dr Ahmed Kabir Chowdhury and General Secretary Dr Mozammel Haque led the group of teachers to the VC Prof Md Saleh Uddin.

Tension has been prevailing at the university since January 11 when Bangladesh Chhatra League men drove leaders and workers of Islami Chhatra Shibir out of the halls.

On January 15, the Shibir men called an indefinite strike on the campus demanding withdrawal of cases filed against them for vandalism and violence.

Only to deepen the tension, a group of unknown motor bikers threw crackers near Shah Paran and Bangabandhu halls and fired two shots on the campus Saturday night.

As presence of students is low due to a volatile Sust campus, the vice chancellor sat down with groups of teachers for talks on the existing campus situation on Sunday. He sought cooperation from all concerned for ensuring peaceful atmosphere at the university.

Proctor Himadri Shekhar Roy yesterday said the situation is becoming normal with different departments started taking examinations while presence in classes is on the rise.

Earlier, the university had suspended examinations till January 26. Though some departments started holding examinations from January 28, the number of examinees was very low.

Faruque, Shaban DUJ president, secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Omar Faruque of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha and Shaban Mahmud of Bangladesh Protidin were elected president and general secretary respectively of Dhaka Union of Journalists yesterday for a two-year term.

Faruque secured 717 votes while his nearest rival Jakaria Kajal bagged 506 votes. Shaban got 1,071 votes against 209 votes received by his nearest rival Rahman Mustafiz.

Other officer bearers are - Tarun Tapan Chakrabarti (vice president), Abdul Majid (joint secretary), Md Mafizul Islam (treasurer), Shohel Haider Chowdhury (organising secretary), Gazi Jahirul Islam (publicity secretary), GM Masud Dhali (sports and cultural secretary), Mir Afroz Zaman (public welfare secretary) and Khandkar Mozammel Haque (office secretary).

Elected members are Amiya Ghatok Pulak, Nazmul Haq Saikat, Solimullah Selim, Shanaz Begum, Sharmin Rahman Soma, Azizur Rahim Pieu, Kishore Kumar Sarkar, Abul Kalam and Alhaj Zahirul Huq.

20 'bombs' recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police last evening recovered 20 identical tape-wrapped objects, suspected to be bombs, inside a paper box from a spot between Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and National Sports Council in the city.

Detective Branch (DB) Senior Assistant Commissioner Sanwar Hossain, also a bomb expert, said they were not sure whether those were bombs.

Deputy Commissioner of Motijheel division Anwar Hossain said, on information, police on duty in the area recovered the objects around 6:00pm.

80pc household water can be recycled: Experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eighty percent of water discarded from households can be recycled for reuse, in toilets for example, helping to meet the city's increased demand in the future, said speakers at a seminary yesterday.

International Training Network (ITN) of Buet and WBB Trust organised the seminar, "Complete use of water: expectations and duties" in the city's Jatiya Press Club.

Of the current demand, only 20 percent is used for drinking and cooking while the rest for household, said Prof Mafizur Rahman of ITN.

Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan said 87 percent of the supply water comes from underground sources while the rest comes from the surface.

Former chief engineer of Department of Public Health Engineering Amin Uddin Ahmed emphasised provisions for new housing projects to keep groundwater recharging facilities.

Cancel deal on Rampal power plant

Demands Oil, Gas committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports has demanded cancellation of the deal signed with India to build a 1,320-megawatt coal-fired power plant at Rampal in Bagerhat on Sunday, saying this will put the Sundarbans and adjacent rivers at risks of severe pollution.

The committee said at a meeting in the city yesterday the agreement was signed despite reasonable opposition from the experts and locals, said a press release.

The government also ignored the need of environmental assessment that was required before approval of the site for such plant, said the leaders of the committee.

"The Sundarbans is not only an asset of

Bangladesh, but also of the world. The agreement has put the forest in danger. We, therefore, condemn the deal and demand more scrutiny on the prices, site selection, environment and other facilities," the committee added.

The committee also said in the name of public-private partnership, the government was leaving the charge of running the terminal of Chittagong Port to the private sector. This was actually widening the path for the local and international conspiracies being hatched on the port, the committee said.

The committee announced a rally towards the Parliament at 3:00pm on February 15 demanding formation of a law banning export of mineral resources of the country.

Dutch-Bangla organises plastic surgery camp

METRO DESK

Under Smile-Brighter programme, Dutch-Bangla Bank has held a plastic surgery operation campaign on the bank's own cost at the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), Savar, Dhaka for the poor cleft-lipped children to bring back the endearing smile on their faces.

The three-day operation campaign ended on January 27, says a press release.

A total of 36 boys and girls were operated by a plastic surgery team headed by eminent plastic surgeon, Dr Sharif Hasan. KS Tabrez, managing director of Dutch-Bangla Bank, visited the operation camp and inquired about the operated cleft-lipped patients at the hospital.

Sydur Rahman, chairman; Md Shafiq-ul-Islam, executive director; and Dr ATM Abdur Razzak, head of Medical Care of the CRP; and speech and language therapists Stephen Jhoan and Stephen Jennet were present at that time.