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Notice

Today's issue of The Daily Star includes an additional eight-page bi-colour special supplement on 700 years of the Swiss Confederation.

NEWS BRIEFS

226 arrested in city

Police arrested 226 persons from different parts of Dhaka metropolis during the last 24 hours. The arrested persons were involved in various crimes, a police press release said Tuesday night. Besides, 20 toll extorters, masts and hijackers were rounded up from several areas in the capital during the last two days, reports BSS.

Germany to buy more jute goods

Germany will buy more jute and jute goods from Bangladesh during the current year. This was stated by Adviser to the German government on Jute Peter Klausen when he called on Jute Minister A S M Hannan Shah Tuesday at his office in Dhaka. Klausen requested the Jute Minister to remove some of the bottlenecks created by the previous government on export of jute and jute goods, reports BSS.

30 die in Soviet plane crash

MOSCOW, Nov 26 : A Soviet passenger plane crashed early Tuesday while landing at Bulgulma Airport near the Ural Mount with 30 people aboard. The Antonov-24 plane was flying from the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk to Bulgulma, west of the Urals, the Tass news agency said, reports AP.

Opportunity has come to prove our merit, skill: PM

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26 : Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called upon the people, irrespective of their positions, to work for the development of the country as well as for the welfare of the down-trodden, reports BSS.

"The long-cherished democratic system has been established in the country and under the changed circumstances, we have to make relentless efforts to improve the condition of the people", she declared.

Begum Zia was addressing the officers and troops of the Bangladesh Army at a ceremonial parade, marking the presentation of the national standard to the 'Charging Nine'

and the 'Durdharsha Dash', two battalions of the East Bengal Regiment, at the Shaheed M R Chowdhury Drill Square of the East Bengal Regiment Centre (EBRC) at Chittagong Cantonment here this morning.

Terming the Armed Forces as the golden harvest of our liberation struggle, the Prime Minister said they had discharged their duties and responsibilities time and again standing by the distressed people during the time of national calamities apart from protecting national independence and sovereignty.

She said the country's Armed Forces was a respected name in the International

arena. "The nation is proud of our Armed Forces", she said.

Begum Khaleda Zia handed over two national standards to the Charging Nine and the Durdharsha Dash as a mark of their meritorious services to the nation. The national standards are adorned with traditional military decorations along with Arabic inscriptions of the Holy Kalima-e-Tayeb.

The function was attended by ministers, members of parliament, chiefs of three services, diplomats and high civil and military officials.

The Prime Minister paid tributes to those who were responsible for raising the East Bengal Regiment including late

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Communications remain disrupted for second day

Jute workers announce fresh 72-hour barricade programme

Jute and textile workers announced a fresh 'all-out strike' and a 72-hour country-wide road and rail barricade from December 22 on Tuesday, the second day of their 48-hour programme that forced closure of schools and colleges and also other industrial units in some areas.

Train and bus services re-

sumed partially from Tuesday in some routes, but remained snapped at others disrupting communications much to the sufferings of people.

All educational institutions and 294 industrial units remained closed for two days in the industrial town of Tongi where club and road welding workers wearing red head-

bands held rallies and processions and squatted on tracks and roads.

Newspaper services to some northern and southern districts were suspended. A bus carrying newspapers was obstructed at Kanchpur point early morning Tuesday, damaged and forced to turn back.

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CARAVAN COMES TO A HALT: Three mile long queue of buses and trucks on Dhaka-Chittagong Road in the wake of jute and textile mills workers programme yesterday. — Star photo

Rajuk demolition drive from Dec 1

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) will go on with its demolition programme regarding constructions not approved by it from December 1.

Rajuk chairman, M Anwarul Alam, addressing a press conference at Rajuk Tuesday said the first five days of the demolition had been taken up as token programme to make people aware.

"But the programme will continue to make Dhaka a bet-

ter city," the Rajuk Chairman said.

The press conference was also addressed by two members of Rajuk, Lt Col (Retd) Nurul Haque and Abul Faraz Khan.

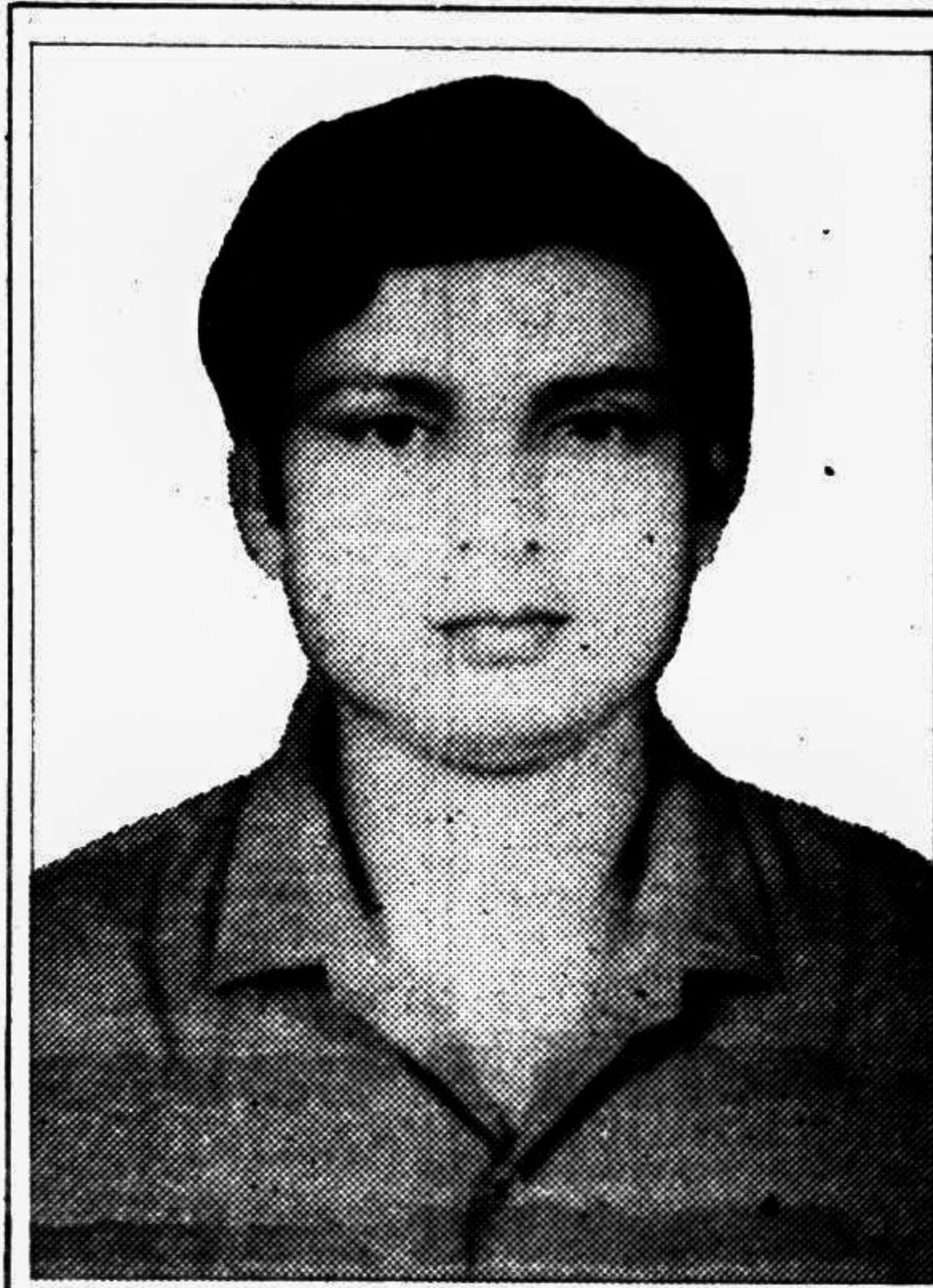
The Chairman said nearly 200 unauthorised shops and 'semi-pucca' buildings at Dharmundi, Sonargaon Road, Indira Road, Kalabagan, Motijheel, Arambag, Siddeswari (Nahar Market), Shantinagar and

unauthorised roadside shops from Kakrail to Malibag would be demolished under the five-day token programme.

He said that Rajuk would also evict nearly 300 slums at Uttara, Gulshan and Banani during their token demolition programme.

Replying to a question what action will be taken against the unauthorised government buildings, the Chairman said

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Milon Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The first death anniversary of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon will be observed today.

Dr Milon, joint secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), was shot dead at the TSC square in the Dhaka University campus on this day during the anti-autocracy movement last year.

His death gave momentum to the anti-Ershad movement which culminated into the ouster of the autocratic regime on December 6.

Different political and socio-cultural organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to observe the day as 'Dr Milon Day'.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will lay the foundation stone of 'Dr Milon auditorium' at the Dhaka Medical College to-

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Court summons Obhi, Niru and five others

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka has summoned seven student activists including Niru, Obhi and Sajal, and has asked them to appear before the court in 10 days.

An advertisement published in a mass-circulation Bangla daily Monday listed the names of the seven student activists, now absconding, who are accused in a murder case filed with Ramna thana.

Ramna police said the absconders were being looked

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Bush pledges help to develop democratic institutions

WASHINGTON, Nov 26 : The US President George Bush has congratulated Bangladesh on its successful transition to parliamentary form of government and warmly felicitated President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports BSS.

President Bush was accepting the letter of credence from the new Bangladesh ambassador to the United States, Abul Ahsan, at a ceremony at the White House on Monday.

The US president warmly acknowledged the greetings of President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and conveyed them his highest regards.

"Our two countries have a long history of friendly relations and close cooperation," President Bush said and added that these relations have grown ever closer over the past year, due to the progress of democracy in Bangladesh.

President Bush recalled the mutual stand of the US and Bangladesh against aggression in the Persian Gulf, joint efforts to bring relief supplies and assistance to the devastated areas of Bangladesh after the terrible cyclone in April and looked forward to continued successful cooperation with the new ambassador and the new government.

Congratulating Bangladesh on its successful transition to a parliamentary form of government, President Bush said the free and fair elections which

Bangladesh held in February and September this year marked a historic step in the progress of democracy.

The United States stands ready to assist Bangladesh in the development of its democratic institutions as the new government begins to address the political and economic challenges it faces. We appreciate the new government's stand on respect for human rights, which is an important attribute of any democratic society, Bush said.

He said, "Bangladesh has made solid progress on its economic reform programme inspite of the difficulties it experienced as a result of the Persian Gulf war and the cyclone last spring. The United States strongly supports Bangladesh's efforts to revitalize the private sector, make public sector functions more efficient, and attract greater domestic and foreign investment."

The United States also supports Bangladesh's goal of self-reliance through economic development and export promotion... in those areas where restrictions remain, let us both hope for a successful multilateral trade solution in the Uruguay Round, which will serve the cause of freer trade worldwide."

Bush re-emphasized his commitment to working with the Bangladesh President and Prime Minister towards the common goals of democracy, stability and economic development.

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Milon's dream yet to be materialised, says Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said that the name of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, who sacrificed his life during anti-autocracy movement would encourage the future generation to dedicate themselves to the greater cause of the nation.

In a statement on the eve of the first death anniversary of Dr Milon yesterday, the AL chief paid glowing tribute to him and said that time had come to see whether the dream of Dr Milon had been materialised. She said that the killers of Dr Milon were still at large.

She said that the commitments made in the Joint Declaration of the three major political alliances were yet to be fulfilled.

She said that even sitting in the opposition bench her party

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News analysis

Decks cleared for holding sixth SAARC summit

By Naveed Chowdhury

Decks for holding of the postponed sixth SAARC summit within the current year have virtually been cleared and the heads of government of the member-states have confirmed their attendance in the 'business-like' summit.

The King of Bhutan, whose inability to attend the summit scheduled to have started from November 7 at Colombo finally led to the calling off of the event, will now attend the conference.

The Foreign Minister of the Maldives, Fatah Jammal,

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Wangchuk to attend SAARC summit

Bhutanese King Jigme Singhe Wangchuk will attend the 6th SAARC summit if it is reconvened in Colombo probably next month, the Bhutanese Ambassador here Karma Dorjee confirmed Tuesday, reports UNB.

The summit meeting scheduled for Nov 7-9 in the Sri Lankan capital had to be postponed at the eleventh hour as the Monarch of the tiny Himalayan Kingdom expressed his inability to attend it due to domestic compulsion.

Fatah Jammal, special envoy of the current Chairman of SAARC, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of the Maldives visited Thimpu on Friday and discussed about holding of the postponed summit before the year is over.

During a brief stop-over here on his way back from the three SAARC capitals, Fatah Jammal who is also his country's foreign minister described his mission fruitful.

The stage is now clear for reconvening the stalled summit at least for one day in the last week of December, diplomatic sources said here.

The exact date for the summit is expected to be announced by the current Chairman from Male shortly.

We have to abide by Tinbigha lease-out: Basu

CALCUTTA, Nov 26 : The West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, today reiterated that the state government would have to abide by the international pact on the lease-out of Tinbigha to Bangladesh, reports PTI.

Basu, however, told newsmen here that the state's chief secretary, N Krishnamurthy, was leaving for Delhi tomorrow to apprise the union home secretary of some 'our suggestions' on the modalities of the lease out. "We are awaiting the outcome of the official-level meeting," the Chief Minister said.

Earlier, Basu held a prolonged meeting with Kamal Guha, a former minister of Forward Bloc, a constituent of the ruling front, who is spearheading the movement in Coochbehar district in protest against the lease-out. Besides Basu and Guha, the state's information minister, Buddhadev Bhattacharjee and the state's home secretary were present at the meeting.

Sikh militants free Romanian envoy

NEW DELHI, Nov 26 : Romanian diplomat Liviu Radu, released by Sikh militants in Punjab after a seven-week abduction which sparked a huge manhunt, took a train and taxi home today following an "interesting and novel experience," reports Reuter.

A constable at the police barrier outside his house told the envoy to show his identity card before letting him in.

Radu, looking fit, told reporters he was put on a slow train in Punjab, the northern state where Sikhs are fighting for a homeland, on Monday night.

He arrived in Delhi after a 12-hour journey and took a taxi home from the railway station.

Radu, 53, said he was held in Delhi and in villages in Punjab. "It was a very interesting and novel experience. It is a facet of India I hadn't seen. Now I can say my knowledge is complete."

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Philippines takes control of Clark Air Base

CLARK AIR BASE, Nov 26 : The Philippines took control today of what used to be the largest American air base overseas but said it did not have the money to operate the volcano-ravaged facility, reports Reuter.

The American flag was pulled down for the last time over Clark Air Base, ending its 90-year role as a US Cavalry outpost and later as a major logistic hub that played a vital role in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Philippines Defence Secretary General Renato de Villa said the turnover marked a new start for the Philippines, which now becomes solely re-

sponsible for its own air defence.

But Air Force chief General Loven Abdia told reporters the heavily indebted country did not have the money to run the former headquarters of the US 13th Air Force.

"We'll just have to lock it up. It costs a lot of money to maintain. The United States needed 97 million dollars a year to maintain Clark. We don't have that kind of money," he said.

The Philippines' overall defence budget amounts to only 933 million dollars this year. Most of this goes on soldiers' salaries and buying weapons.

The United States decided

to abandon Clark after the eruption of the nearby Mount Pinatubo volcano in June made it unusable.

It will also withdraw from Subic Naval Base, 60 km (40 miles) to the west, within three years, after the Philippine Senate rejected a new 10-year pact.

Global defence cuts and the ending of the Cold War meant it was not worth the large cost to rebuild Clark after Pinatubo wrecked the base in one of the century's biggest eruptions.

The US 13th Air Force, based at Clark, has been transferred to the US Pacific territory of Guam and other func-

tions of the base have been shifted to Alaska or to units in other parts of Asia, US officials said.

Despite reductions in its regional force levels, the United States pledged to continue helping to maintain peace and stability in Asia.

"The Cold War that has defined our lives and the security interests of our nations for nearly half a century has come to an end... (but) we know that the job of national security has not ended," said Ambassador Frank Wisner.

"The Philippines can count on the United States to maintain its shield of defence over the shores of Asia. America will

not abandon its interests and ties to the nations of the area," he said during the handover ceremony.

The symbolic golden key to Clark was presented to Philippine Armed Forces chief General Lisandro Abadja by General Jimmy Adams, Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Air Force.

After the US flag was lowered for the last time over the 50,000-acre (20,000-hectare) base, the final contingent of 245 American troops marched past.

"We will leave Clark with more than a little bit of sorrow," said Adams during the

ceremony. "We truly intend to be good neighbours and close allies."

Clark, which started as a US Cavalry outpost in 1901 and became an airfield in 1919, provided air cover as far west as the coast of Africa and the Arabian Sea.

Fears that Pinatubo would go on emitting ash for several years, making jet flights dangerous, forced the United States to abandon Clark, with buildings and equipment being turned over to the Philippine government.

The eruption has made the Philippines scrap plans to turn Clark into an international airport.

Four injured as Shantibahini men fire on sleeping villagers

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26 : Four people, including two women, received serious wounds when the outlawed Shantibahini gunmen sprayed bullets on them at a remote village in Rangamat district early today.

Officials said the gunmen also set ablaze 10 thatched houses at the village near Blachhari, 20 kilometers off Rangamat town.