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Greetings

Merry Christmas

তভ বডদিন

Christian community . a

Christmas

today

By Staff Correspondent

The Christian community in

Happy Christmas.

The Belly Rer wishes the

Article

**NATO Shifts Atten**tion to Third World and Former USSR?

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### International

China warns Clinton not to link trade issue with human rights Page 5

### Magazine

Kumarkhali-Luminaries of Glorious Past, Those old days of Jagannath College, My World by SM Ali Pages 8, 9

Supplement



A two-page supplement on Christmas Pages 10, 11

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Dhaka Day by Day



'Nakshi Kanthas' with Refreshing Patterns Page 3

### **NEWS BRIEFS**

#### IU team meets Khaleda

A delegation of the Syndicate members and teachers. of Islamic University led by Vice-Chancellor Professor Muhammad Abdul Hamid called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her secretariat here yesterday evening. During the meeting the Prime Minister advised the university authorities to take appropriate steps for the restoration of congenial academic atmosphere, reports BSS.

### Zillur visits **B** Chowdhury

General Secretary of Bangladesh Awami League Zillur Rahman visited Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, who is under treatment at Suhrawardy Hospital here Wednesday night. Rahman enquired about the condition of health of Chowdhury. The Awami League leader also visited Tabibur Rahman Sardar MP who is now under treatment in the same hospital, reports BSS.

#### Water Transport Fed calls off strike

Bangladesh Coasters Own ers Association and Bangladesh Oil Tankers Owners Association in a joint statement said that Bangladesh Water Transport Sramik Federation had withdrawn its on-going strike on the fourth day yesterday. reports BSS.

#### 586 more Rohingyas return home

From Our Correspondent COX'S BAZAR, Dec 24: Some 586 more Rohingya refugees of 118 families were sent back to Myanmar this morning. With this the total number of repatriated Rohingyas stand at 4985.

## Inside Today PM urged to halt "involuntary" repatriation

POUSH 11, 1399 BS,

# UNHCR accuses Dhaka of forcing Rohingyas to go

The United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees.

Sadako Ogata, appealed Wed-

nesday to Prime Minister

Begum Khaleda Zia to take all

steps to halt the "coerced re-

turn" of the Myanmar refugees

to their homeland, according

to a press release available

to the Bangladesh government

that her organisation would

pull out of the refugee man-

agement process if the latter

did not review its repatriation

from Geneva where the UN

body is headquartered accused

the government of not letting

UNHCR officials interview the

she can to promote voluntary

repairiation and protect and

assist refugees, but she will be

forced to reassess her role if

her mandate cannot be carried

out satisfactorily", the state-

"Mrs Ogata wishes to do all

Rohingya returnees privately.

The statement released

Ogata issued a veiled threat

ment said. "In past weeks, UNHCR has witnessed the involuntary repatriation of Myanmar refugees - incidents that have been confirmed by other independent sources as well. More than 4000 people have reportedly returned to Myanmar from Bangladesh, many of whom were never interviewed by UNHCR", the press release

The UNHCR statement, giving a reminder to the government that Bangladesh pledged its "strict adherence to the , principle of voluntary repatriation", said, "UNHCR has been prevented from conducting private interviews to ascertain whether those returning are

indeed doing so voluntarily". . "Furthermore, UNHCR has been denied free and unhindered access to the refugee camps. It is therefore unable to carry out its protection mandate, nor can it effectively monitor the relief program."

The statement also accused Bangladesh of not willing to comply with UNHCR suggestions in this regard.

"UNHCR has been holding intensive negotiations with senior Bangladesh government officials in an effort to ensure that minimum international standards of protection are applied so that UNHCR can discharge its mandate. However the Bangladesh Government has so far been unwilling to change its existing practices," the press release added.

The statement also spoke of the High Commissioner's "deep concern" about the security situation in the refugee camps where "beatings, violence, demonstrations and other incidents" had taken place resulting in deaths.

The statement reiterated that "the High Commissioner is continuing her efforts to obtain access to returnee areas in Myanmar."

### Stranded **Pakistanis** preparing to return

Star Report

A symbolic repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis is set to take place December 30, official sources and SPGRC leaders said yesterday.

A batch of 50 refugee famil lies is to be flown to their cherished homeland on the day to honour the commitment of Pakistan government that the process of taking 3000 families initially - of a total 2.38,000 people - will start by December.

Islamabad made the pledge during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's August 9-11 trip to Pakistan. The commitment was reaffirmed by Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif in Dhaka December 12.

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Golam Haider Wyne, is expected to come to Dhaka probably a day ahead of the flight to oversee the token repatriation. Official sources in Dhaka however said yesterday that Wyne's visit was yet to be finalised formally.

The Pakistani leader whose province would be home to the returnees is likely to return the next day taking along the refugees.

The 50 families consisting of 282 members have been selected from the Adamjeenagar camp. They will be driven straight to the airport with all formalities such as customs See Page 12 Col 4



A Christmas tree in a city hotel yesterday.

- Star photo

BNP peasants' rally at Chuadanga

### Govt plans to reduce agri input prices:PM

CHUADANGA, Dec 24: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said the government has innebed a patiencide a and increase production in all sectors, reports UNB.

"You have to increase production in fields and factories to make the country self-reliant", she said addressing a mammoth peasant rally at Chuadanga town football ground this afternoon. It was organised by Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal - the peasants' wing of the BNP.

She told the rally that the government has been considering prices of agricultural inputs can be reduced.

Begum Zia assured that the BNP government is pledgebound to solve the problems of the farmers, workers and the teeming millions.

Mentioning the bumper production of paddy this season, the Prime Minister urged

the farmers to keep up the increasing output to make the country self-reliant. The improvement of the

of the peasantry will help strengthen the national econonly, she pointed out and assured all-out cooperation to the farmers in this regard. -The Prime Minfster ex-

pressed her firm belief that the present government will be able to retrieve the country from the economic ruins caused by nine years of auto--cratic and corrupt rule.

She asserted that the people of the country are willing to work but vested quarters are creating indiscipline.

The government has adopted the anti-terrorism bill to take action against extortionists, safeguard public properly and ensure peace and discipline in national life.

The Prime Minister asked her audience for three times if See Page 12 Col 4

### JP Secy Gen arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Khaledur Rahman Tito, Secretary General of Jatiya Party was arrested and charged under newly enacted antiterrorism act Thursday when he along with some of his partymen tried to enter into the "scaled" party office "

Kawran Bazar. Following the arrest, a group of agitated JP supporters demonstrated and damaged a number of vehicles near the party office at around 4-30 pm. witnesses said adding that police resorted to batoncharge to disperse the JP men.

Former state minister for Labour and Manpower Tito went to the office to hold a press conference although the office was under lock and key since December 16.

Police said that they acted at the request of the landlord who served a notice to JP to vacate the house at 47, Kawran Bazar and also sought police help to evict the tenant.

Before entering into the office defying police guard. Tito told more than a hundred sup-See Page 12 Col 1

### Ayodhya tense again as BJP demands worship at temple

AYODHYA, India, Dec 24: Tension is brewing again in Ayodhya, the focus of an orgy of Hindu-Muslim violence earlier this month, over a makeshift temple built by Hindu militants on the debris of a

celebration of the college.

mosque, reports Reuter. Hindu holy men and priests have threatened to launch a demonstration from Saturday if authorities do not allow public worship at the temple, which many flindus' say marks the birthplace of the revered Hindu god-king Lord Rama.

"The holy men will not take the ban ( on worship) lying down," said Paramhans Das, a senior priest in the town. " Can the government quote any other instance of the followers of a particular religion being deprived from offering prayers in their shrine?

On December 6, Hindu militants razed a 16th century mosque built on the spot, setting off a chain of religious riots over the rest of India in which at least 1,200 people were killed.

Paramilitary police ejected the militants. from the shrine on December 8. By then, however, they had built a small platform on the debris on which idols of Rama were placed.

The police have now set up coils of barbed wire around the area and entry to the shrine is barred to all but a solitary Hindu priest who is allowed to perform rituals. Armed po-

licemen guard the area round-

Jagannath College students brought out a colourful procession in city yesterday on the occasion of the centenary

the-clock. Local officials, who say the decision on public worship will have to come from Delhi, say they are apprehensive about the proposed agitation by the Hindu holy men.

The police are under strict orders to guard the shrine and a confrontation with priests could lead to a resurgence of violence across the country, said one officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

AFP reports: India voiced its unhappiness today over a resolution adopted at a conference of Gulf countries held in Abu Dhabi condemning the razing of an ancient mosque in India.

### 2850 illegal shopowners evicted from Kawran Bazar

— Star photo

Star Report

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Thursday dismantled about 2850 illegal shops from the Kawran Bazar area.

A team of 200 policemen. six officials along with three city magistrates, 200 DCC staff and 15 officials alongwith at least five trucks, a bull dozer and other vehicles raided the Kawran Bazar at about 12 noon.

Serving a one hour notice, the authority evicted about 2000 footpath shopowners from the four acre Kawran Bazar area. Among them 700 roadside retailers and 150 wholesale shops were dismantled, DCC sources informed.

See Page 12 Col 7

### Incompetent BNP govt should quit: Hasina

MANIKGANJ, Dec 24 Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina today charged the BNP government with failure in ensuring security to the people and said "this incompetent" government should quit, reports UNB.

The party in power brought disaster in diplomacy, economy, religion and social sectors, increasing the misery of the people and bringing national sovereignty at stake, she alleged while addressing a big rally at Kalikhola here this afternoon.

Hasina, who came here to see for herself the damage caused by unrest following the demolition of Babri Mosque in India, vehemently criticised government laxity in ensuring security to life and property of

the minorities in the aftermath of the Ayodhya incident.

She was also critical of the activities of Jamaat-e-Islami and its recent meeting in India with BJP leaders responsible for razing the Babri Mosque.

"Jamaat and BJP had secret entente behind the demolition of Babri Mosque and outbreak of religious strife, " the Awami League chief told the meeting.

Hasina, also chairperson of the All-Party Committee for communal harmony, demanded arrest of those involved in disturbing communal amity, looting, arson and destruction of the property of innocent people.

Though the government refrains from looking after the minorities affected by the vio-Sec Page 12 Col 6

### DCs confce concludes Ensure proper use of anti-terrorism act, SPA: Matin

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday called upon the Deputy Commissioners to play effective role in maintaining law and order and to take stringent measures against terrorists, hijackers, illegal toll collectors and other criminals irrespective of their political and social identity, reports BSS.

He instructed the Deputy Commissioners to discharge their responsibilities for ensuring discipline, development and democracy.

Narrating the clear-cut difference between the Anti-terrorism Act, 1992 and the Special Powers Act, 4974, he urged the DCs to ensure See Page 12 Col 4

### DUTA polls postponed

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) elections were postponed yesterday shortly after polling started at the University Club.

The postponement came following detection of the omission of a candidate's name from the ballot paper.

The name of Dr. Muhammed Mohabbat Khan, Professor of the Department of Public Administration, nominated from the Blue Panel for the post of a member was missing in the ballot sheet. Meanwhile, the DUTA at a

working committee meeting

See Page 12 Col 3

#### Palestinian deportees fast as bizarre standoff drags on MARJ AL-ZOHOUR (Lebadysentery among men who lief agencies to help the men defying a UN Security Council statement to the meeting that men's welfare? "We think it is the respon-

non), Dec 24: More than 400 Palestinians, deported by Isracl and refused entry by Lebanon, on Thursday entered their second week trapped in a freezing no man's land, out of . water and fasting to preserve dwindling foodstocks, reports

As two more men were hospitalized in Lebanon and temperatures plunged to below zero, raising the number of casualties to four, the deportees appealed to international organizations. They need food, water and heating fuel for their makeshift tent camp.

Lebanon refuses to allow re-

and there was no sign that Israel was about to relent on its refusal to allow in supplies. · The Palestinians remain

huddled in a rocky, snow-covered no-man's land between. Israel's self-designated security zone in South Lebanon and territory controlled by the Lebanese government. The bizarre standoff dragged on, plunging US-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace talks in jeopardy.

Abdul Aziz Rantisi, a Gaza Strip physician and the deported people's spokesman said the camp ran out of drinking water Wednesday night. He claimed several cases of

drank from a stream. Rantisi said they were fasting from dawn-to-dusk to save food, which now consists on a small quantity of potatoes and vermicelli.

In Jerusalem, an Israeli government official said the Jewish state had been asked by the International Committee of the Red Cross to allow aid for the deportees to be shipped through the security zone. The official, speaking on

condition of anonymity, said

Israel has not yet decided on

what it will do. But he reiter-

ated Israel's assertion that it is

no longer responsible for the

sibility of Lebanon to supply them with water and food," he UN envoy James Jonah was due to arrive in Israel on

of Palestinians.

Saturday to resolve the im-In Cairo, PLO chief Yasser Arafat urged today Arab participants in the Middle East peace talks to adopt a firm stand against Israel's expulsion

Before joining the Arab meeting, the Palestine Liberation Organization leader also called on the United Nations to put Israel in its place for

resolution ordering it to take back the deportees. "We (the Palestinians) are

taking up the Israeli challenge by intensifying the Intifada (uprising) but can the Security Council do the same, Arafat told journalists after a meeting with Arab League leaders. Arafat asked Arab countries

to provide urgent aid to Palestinians in the occupied territories before joining the meeting of foreign ministers of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan -involved in the peace talks - and

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa said in an opening

Arabs must adopt a common stand to confront what he said were the difficult etreumstances in the region after the expulsions.

Another report says, Palestinians in the Baqua refugee camp staged a three-hour general strike Thursday to protest Israel's, deportation:

When the strike ended camp representatives circulated copies of a memorandum delivered to the UN Office in Amman and addressed to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Chali.

#### Bangladesh, as elsewhere in the world, will celebrate Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ today.

Evening masses were held yesterday at different churches in the city and around the country. Churches and homes were colorfully illuminated and adorned with the traditional Christmas trec.

The Christmas rituals began with the devotees attending midnight mass in churches. A joyous mood prevailed among members of the Christian community as cakes were cut amid the singing of Christmas Carols.

in the capital, masses were held at the St. Mary's Cathedral in Kakrail, Holy Cross Church at Loxmibazar, Holy Rosary Church at Tejgaon, National Major Seminary at Banani, St Christmas Church at Assad Gate and the Kafrul Catholic Church. Christmas day masses will also be held in these churches today.

Both Bangladesh Radio and Television will broadcast special programmes to mark the

See Page 12 Col 6