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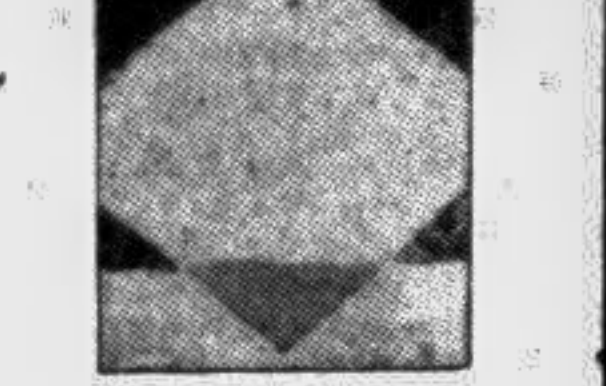
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NEWS BRIEFS

BDR, BSF flag meet held

CHUADANGA, Dec 24: A flag meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was held here on Thursday. It discussed the measures towards curbing smuggling and checking rampant dacoity in the border areas. They also exchanged views on the "Push-in" issue, reports UNB.

Dhamrai college closed sine die

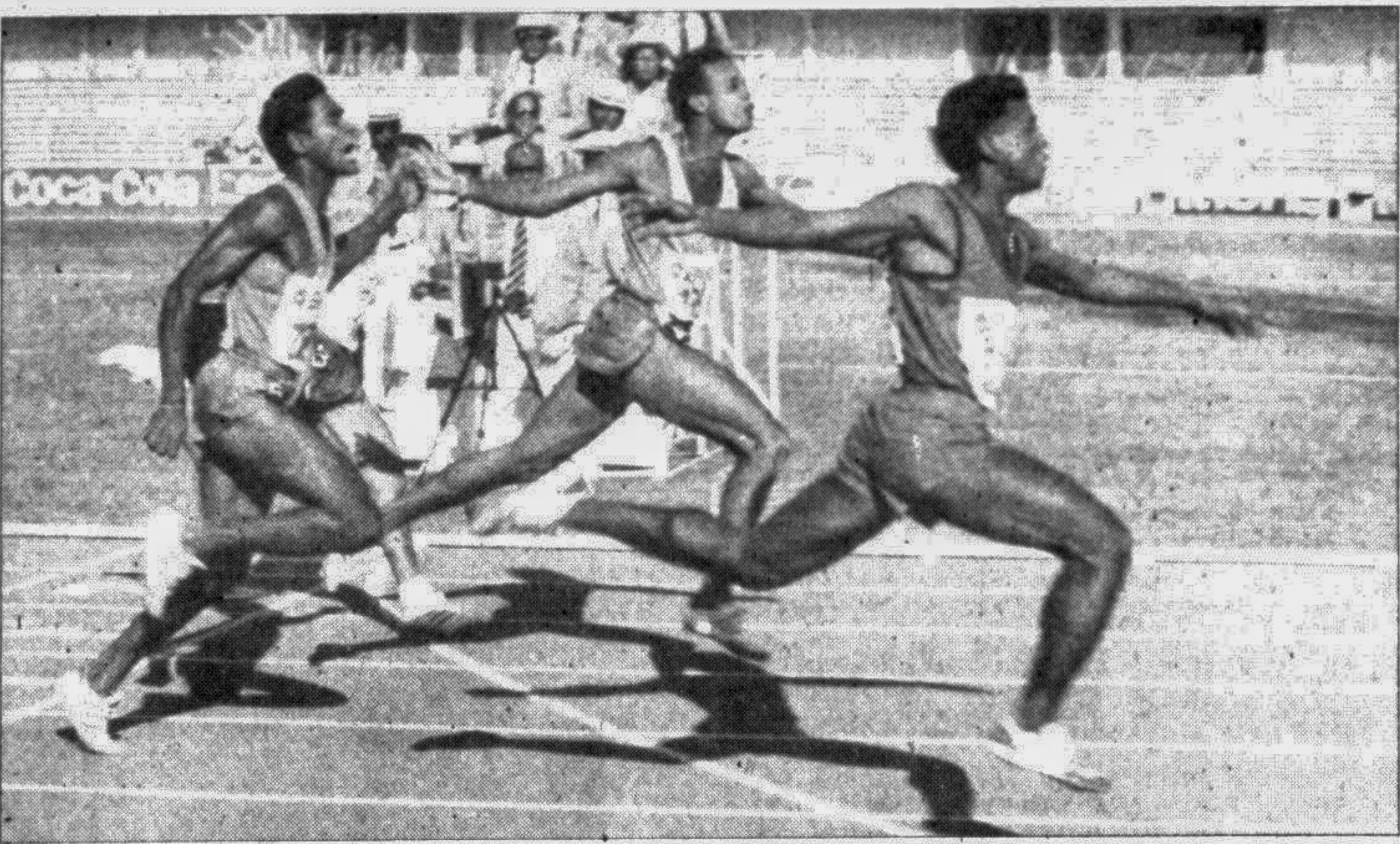
SAVAR, Dec 24: The Dhamrai Government College was closed sine die today following a clash between two rival groups on the campus that left nine students injured. Tension mounted on the college campus as the candidate of the Jatiya Party-backed Jatiya Chhatra Samaj won the VP post in the students' union election on December 18, reports UNB.

Savar TEO manhandled

SAVAR, Dec 24: Unidentified miscreants roughed up the Savar Thana Education Officer near the Jorepuli Bridge on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway today. Witnesses said Giasuddin was beaten up by five young men armed with pistol and hockey sticks when he was going to Dhaka by a bus. The local people rescued the TEO and sent him to the Thana Health Complex with serious injuries, reports UNB.

3 Sarbaharamen held in Barisal

BARISAL, Dec 24: Police have arrested three people from Gaurnadi Bilgram Bazar here for their alleged involvement with the outlawed Sarbahara Party. Local people caught Ainal Chowdhury, 33, Aslam Sikder, 24, and Jalal Mridha, 25 from the area, reports UNB.



Bimal Chandra Tarafdar of Bangladesh pictured a split second before breasting the tape to become the fastest man of the South Asian region. He clocked a record 10.61 seconds to win the men's 100m sprint gold of the Sixth SAF Games at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. The top favourite S S A Dissanyake (middle) and GS Zoysa of Sri Lanka, who became second and third respectively, are also seen.

Bangladesh's Bimal fastest man



KV Damayanthi Darsha of Sri Lanka dashing to finish first in the women's 100m of the Sixth SAF Games at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. She won the gold medal in a time of 14.78 seconds.

Sports Reporter

Twenty-one-year-old Bimal Chandra Tarafdar has more than made up for the sense of loss and frustration of hosts Bangladesh in the Sixth SAF Games. The young BKSP student was oriented as the fastest man of South Asia yesterday.

Not only he won the gold in the men's 100m sprint, the dark, strong man from Dhamrai has set a new SAF record, clocking 10.61 seconds. It was the end of a glorious pattern set by Mizanur Rahman Qarar, the BKSP swimmer who set the first new record of the Sixth SAF Games Tuesday.

The women's 100m saw a predictable culmination as Sri Lanka's 18-year-old sprinter Damayanthi Darsha retained her status as the fastest woman of South Asia. It was actually a double crown for the sprint queen since she had earlier won the 200m gold on Thursday.

But India sustained the pattern in the medals table, taking their collection to 80, including 36 golds. Twenty silver and a similar number of bronzes have also been accrued by their athletes and swimmers so far. Sri Lanka remained at the second position with a haul of 52 medals. Besides 17 golds they also got 15 silvers and 20 bronzes.



drowned in a pool of despair by the poor performance of their footballers, added two more golds to their tally by virtue of the virtuoso performances of Bimal and swimmer Mukhlesur Rahman.

MEDALS TABLE

The medals table after Friday's competitions in the Sixth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games: (Tabulate under gold, silver, bronze and total).

	G	S	B	Total
India	36	22	22	80
Sri Lanka	17	15	20	52
Bangladesh	8	12	17	37
Pakistan	2	10	13	25
Nepal	0	4	9	13
Bhutan	0	0	0	0
Maldives	0	0	0	0

Stocks scandal Indian Finance Minister quits

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: India's finance minister and architect of its free-market reforms resigned Friday, under criticism for failing to check a massive stock scandal, reports AP. Manmohan Singh said it was up to Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao whether to accept the resignation, and he would remain in office until Rao decides. "I gave the resignation after a lot of contemplation and deliberation. I gave it a lot of thought," Singh said after returning home from a one-hour meeting with Rao at the prime minister's official residence. If Singh's resignation is accepted it would set back the still-incomplete liberalisation programme. A former economics professor and bureaucrat, he was a political figure who commanded wide respect inside and outside the government. Singh was faulted by a par-

liamentary committee for failing to supervise the Bombay stock exchange while banks were illegally siphoning more than \$1 billion into the market for speculation. "Until the resignation is accepted I will continue to work," said Singh, visibly upset and sweating in the chill night air as he spoke to reporters. Chief Government spokesman S Narendra said Singh handed his resignation to Rao on Thursday, two days after the committee's report was released. Singh said his resignation would not affect India's reform programme, which he credited to Rao. "Individuals don't matter," he said. "I am just a small cog in this." The securities scandal was investigated for 17 months by a 30-member panel of legislators, which concluded that Singh must be held accountable to

Reforms to dial WB loan in telecom sector

By A Special Correspondent
 Since the third telecommunication credit was signed more than a decade ago Bangladesh's telecom sector has not received any new investment fund from the World Bank. At present the only World Bank credit operational in the telecom sector is an emergency rehabilitation credit of \$11 million. This is part of a flood rehabilitation package drawn up in 1989. Although this is supposedly an emergency rehabilitation project, it took the government two years to get the project documents finalised. Even now procurement of equipment to repair telecommunications facilities damaged by natural calamities is only one-third complete. Completing an emergency rehabilitation project which was supposed to be a quick fix type of operation is not the only problem at hand for the Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTB). The board needs funds to invest but, key donor agencies are holding back their support. They want to come to an agreement with the government about a smaller role of the state monopoly in the telecom sector and then discuss possible financial support. Most of the last two years have been spent on deciding

what this smaller role shall be. Using funds provided by the Japanese government the World Bank conducted a study of the telecom sector. As the study progressed in three phases the government came to broad agreements with the World Bank about the areas of reform for the telephone sector. The agreed areas of reform include allowing a private operator to compete with BTB by providing basic telephone service; restructuring BTB itself; liberalising customer premises equipment, value added services; and other peripheral services; revision of tariffs and clear enunciation of the government's telecom policy. These agreements were followed by several steps to convince the donors about the government's commitment to reform the telecom sector. The Bangladesh Rural Telecom Authority (BRTA) is installing digital exchange at 199 thanas, private operations have been invited to operate in another 191 thanas, private companies are operating cellular system, radio trunking and paging. At the policy level the BTB ordinance of 1979 is being amended to separate regulatory functions from operations and a draft

Kabul, Tehran to join CIRDAP

By Special Correspondent
 The Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) will expand its area of activities and bring more countries into this Dhaka-based inter-governmental regional organisation. The governing council of the CIRDAP, which met in Dhaka recently, has decided to offer membership to more countries in the Asia-Pacific region while the existing member-countries have been requested to persuade their neighbours to join it. Dr Somporn Hanpongpanth, Director of the CIRDAP told this correspondent that Afghanistan and Iran have expressed interest to join the organisation for which formalities are now under process. Both the countries have already participated in some programmes of the CIRDAP, said the Director adding that a number of countries, including China, Myanmar, Bhutan and the Maldives, are also keen to involve themselves

with the activities of this organisation. The chief executive of the CIRDAP mentioned that his organisation was eager to expand its activities all over the Asia-Pacific region. Dr Somporn, a Thai citizen, who joined this organisation in 1986, took over as Director in July last year. The CIRDAP was established in July 1979 in Dhaka at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with support from other concerned UN bodies and donors. The prime objective of the organisation was integrated development of rural areas of the region through research, action research, training and information dissemination. The CIRDAP family has now 11 member-countries, which are: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

As regards future activities of the CIRDAP, Dr Somporn said that the governing council in its meeting held on 14-15 December approved 22 projects to be initiated during the 1994-95 biennium which will cost over 4.3 million US dollars. Since inception, the CIRDAP had initiated 153 projects of which 132 have been completed while 21 are under implementation. Most of these projects were for training and research in the field of rural development. Bangladesh has so far participated in 126 CIRDAP projects initiated in the country or abroad. Dr Somporn said that the CIRDAP has started implementing some action programmes like the setting up of intensive model villages in the member-countries. "Work on model villages, four each in Malaysia and Nepal, began this year which are expected to be completed by the end of 1994," he said.

Khatme Nabuwat's demand

By Staff Correspondent
 A congregation of Islamic leaders and scholars in the capital yesterday demanded the government announce the members of the Qadiani or Ahmadiya community a "non-Muslim minority" within two months and ban their activities in the country. It also demanded removal of the members of the Ahmadiya sect, better known as the Qadianis occupying key government positions. The International Majlis-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatme Nabuwat, Bangladesh, organised the rally at Manik Mia Avenue to press home its demands. Speaking at the rally, the Majlis leaders called for confiscation of all publications of the Ahmadiya sect. Maulana Fazlul Karim, a BNP member of Parliament, Ataur Rahman Khan, Maulana Obaidul Huq MP of the Islami Oikkya Jote, Abdus Sobhan MP and Maulana Delwar Hossain

Khulna mayor resigns, DCC chief ready

From Staff Correspondent
 KHULNA, Dec 24: Khulna City Corporation mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman formally resigned today to contest the mayoral election scheduled to be held on January 30. He resigned to ensure a free and fair election and for institutionalisation of democracy in the country, he told a press conference at the local press club this evening. He submitted the resignation letter to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) on Tuesday after filing his nomination paper as a ruling party candidate. He was appointed Mayor on May 17, 1991, along with two others in Dhaka and Rajshahi. The mayors of the Chittagong City Corporation, Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and the Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu resigned on Thursday. The mayor of the Dhaka City

Corporation Mirza Abbas, who is expected to be the BNP nominee in the DCC polls is likely to resign before filing the nomination paper on December 29. The BNP High Command, after an emergency meeting, asked the incumbent mayors to resign ahead of the polls to set an example and to meet the constitutional requirement. BSS adds: BNP nominated candidate for the post of Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu launched his campaign to win the support of the voters from 30 wards. Awami League candidate Abdul Matin Khan, Jatiya Party candidate Nurul Huda, Jamaat candidate Siddiqur Rahman and JSD, BSD, Workers Party and NAP supported independent candidate Siddiqur Rahman also launched their election campaign.

Reunify Kashmir, demands JKLF

BRUSSELS, Dec 24: Kashmir should be reunified by India and Pakistan and placed under United Nations supervision pending a referendum on its future, jailed Kashmiri separatist leader Amanullah Khan said on Thursday, reports Reuter. Khan, Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was arrested in Brussels on October 18 on the basis of an international warrant issued by India in connection with several murders. He said Kashmir should be reunified after complete and simultaneous withdrawal of armed forces and civil personnel of both countries and put under UN control for five to 10 years. "After that period, the Kashmiri people should be able to determine, under UN supervision and without any external pressure or influence, whether the whole state should emerge

as a fully independent country or become part of Pakistan or of India," the letter said. Khan urged the international community, and especially the United States and European Community, to put pressure on India and Pakistan to solve the 47-year-old dispute on the basis of his proposal. He said other important Kashmiri organisations supported his idea. Khan's movement is fighting for independence of Kashmir, of which two-thirds is ruled by India and the rest by Pakistan. Police and hospital sources in Indian-ruled Kashmir say more than 45,000 people have been killed since the rebellion flared in late 1989.

Two of the three wars between India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947 have been fought over the Himalayan region. Khan said that all patriotic Kashmiri organisations, and his own in particular, "would resist with full force any solution of the Kashmir issue not based on the national aspirations and freely expressed will of Kashmiri people." Khan was on a Belgian government list of wanted persons. His presence in Belgium with a visa issued in Pakistan led to the recall of Belgium's ambassador to Pakistan for a "serious professional fault."

Tough laws against food adulteration soon

From Nurul Alam
 CHITTAGONG, Dec 24: The country's food laws are expected to be updated soon in a bid to prevent the preparation and open sale of sub-standard, unhygienic and inferior quality foodstuff, highly-placed sources said. In the backdrop of open sale of contaminated food items in most of the restaurants, hotels and road-side eating places in violation of the existing rules and ordinances, the authorities are planning to update the laws providing for drastic action against the sale of unhygienic food.

After being asked to submit their views in this respect the country's four city corporations placed their recommendations to the Food Ministry last month. The corporations, in their recommendations, have called for setting up food testing laboratories in major cities, updating the food laws, and creating public awareness about the hazards of sub-standard food. At present only one food testing laboratory is located at Mochhal in the capital which cannot serve the purpose of the rest of the country.

Greetings Merry Christmas

The Daily Star wishes the Christian community a Happy Christmas.



An X-mas tree at a city hotel.

Christmas today

By Staff Correspondent
 The Christian community in the country, as elsewhere in the world, will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ today. Amidst chilly winds, Christmas Eve festivities began in the city yesterday evening with Holy Masses held at different churches. Christmas stars were hung in the homes of the Christians and Christmas trees were illuminated. The Christian community made the chilly night cosy with evening parties by cutting cakes and enkindling Christmas Candles. Devotees singing carols went to the

Golan Azam may address party rally today

By Staff Correspondent
 Chief of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Golan Azam is likely to address a workers' rally today at the Golapbagh playground near Sayedabad in the city. This will be his first public appearance after he got back his citizenship following a judgement of the High Court. The final hearing of the citizenship case is, however, pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The city unit of the party has organised the conference in which Golan Azam will be the chief guest and Matur Rahman Nizam MP a special guest, party sources said. Their names were not, however, printed in the invitation cards.

Appoint people's rep as interim mayors: Prokrichi

By Staff Correspondent
 Leaders of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council yesterday demanded cancellation of appointments of those government officials who have taken over as Mayors of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. The Action Council at a meeting protested the appointments of the Divisional Commissioners as interim Mayors following the resignation of the city corporation chiefs ahead of the polls. The meeting called upon the government to appoint those people's representatives as interim Mayors who will not be directly involved in the election process.

Vote against BNP misrule: Mizan

Jatiya Party leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday urged the people to give their verdict against BNP's misrule and parliamentary autocracy in the ensuing city corporation elections, reports UNB. The BNP has introduced autocracy in the name of the parliamentary democracy. We are to fight against that and the city corporation election is an acid test for us," he told an extended meeting of the party's city unit in the afternoon. Former Mayor and Dhaka City JP president Col (Retd) M A Malek, who is the party nominee for the mayor election

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