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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star
MAN OF THE YEAR 1996
 award goes to the **UNKNOWN MUKTIJODDHAS** but for whose patriotism and sacrifice we would not have been free and independent.
 Read the **MAN OF THE YEAR** story in our special 48-page year-end Star magazine to be published on Friday, January 3, 1997. It will contain overview articles on important national events.
 Don't miss the exciting year-end issue, and our tribute to the Unknown Muktiyoddhas.

Roundtable

Excerpts from the speeches of the participants in **The Daily Star Roundtable on 'How to Create a People-Friendly Legal System'** held in the city on Dec 28. **Page 6**

Lottery draw

The results of the lottery draw of public issues of The Meghna Vegetable Oil Industries on **Pages 8 & 9.**

Inside Today

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Signing of Hebron accord likely
Lankan troops mount fresh offensive against Tigers
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Business

Sonali Bank to revive Bikalpa scheme
Iran, Turkey considering joint oil pipeline
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NEWS BRIEFS

PM to open Int'l Short Film festival

The 5th International Short and Alternative Film Festival begins at the Central Public Library auditorium in city tomorrow. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the 9-day festival, said a press release of the Bangladesh Short Film Forum yesterday, reports UNB.

SC reopens tomorrow

By SC Correspondent
 The Supreme Court of Bangladesh reopens tomorrow after the winter vacation. Both the High Court and the Appellate divisions of the Supreme Court went on vacation on December 15. During the vacation, only a single bench comprising Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman sat on December 17-19 and 22-24 for hearing of the urgent matters.

Electronic goods stolen in city

By Staff Correspondent
 Electronic goods worth about Tk 1.5 lakh were reportedly stolen from a shop at Narinda under Sutrapur thana in the city early yesterday. Thieves broke open the gate of the shop, Paradise Electronics Works, at 73, Narinda, and took away the goods, said police. A case was filed.

Ganges water treaty takes effect today

By Staff Correspondent

Ganges water will flow down the Farakka Barrage to Bangladesh from today as per the 30-year water sharing treaty with India.
 The Ganges water sharing treaty was signed by the prime ministers of Bangladesh and India in New Delhi on December 12.
 Engineers of the two countries, under the auspices of the Joint Committee, will supervise the release and record the flow of the Ganges waters at four points from today. The points are the lower part of the Farakka Barrage, the Navigation Lock, the Feeder Canal on the Indian side and the Harding Bridge on the Bangladesh side.
 The Joint Committee has been constituted as per provision of the accord and it will be responsible for implementing the arrangements contained in the treaty.
 The Joint Committee in its first meeting in Dhaka on December 24 completed all necessary modalities and charted the terms of reference for the monitoring the release and flow of the Ganges water.
 A team of four Bangladeshi

engineers led by Azizul Haq reached Farakka yesterday to observe and record the discharge of the Ganges water at the lower point of Farakka Barrage, the Navigation Lock and the Feeder canal. Indian engineers are also learnt to be in place for the joint monitoring.
 An official of the Water Resources Ministry said yesterday that the Bangladesh engineers would record the discharge at those points and send the data weekly through the Deputy High Commissioner's Office in Calcutta.
 The Bangladesh monitors will be provided with transport and accommodation facilities by the Indian government while all other costs will be borne by the Bangladesh government.
 The Indian monitors who are due to be posted at Harding Bridge point are yet to come but sources said they are expected shortly.
 Meanwhile, the level of water recorded at Harding Bridge on December 29 was learnt to be 76.277 cusec. Water experts said the present water level "is satisfactory."
 Bangladesh is due to receive See Page 16 Col 5

Bangabandhu Cup soccer begins

The first ever Bangabandhu Cup Silver Jubilee of Independence Football Tournament began at the Dhaka National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.
 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the chief patron of the tournament, formally inaugurated the 11-day club level international meet at a colourful ceremony at 3.50 pm.
 Hundreds of multi-coloured balloons, four groups of pigeons, and a good number of flags of participating teams, soccer related bodies along with the national flag displayed all See Page 16 Col 7



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina waving at the spectators during the inaugural ceremony of the Bangabandhu Cup Football Tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

Abahani beat Malaysia in opening tie

Sports Reporter
 Abahani Krira Chakra were off to a sound start in the Bangabandhu Cup international football tournament, defeating Malaysia Blue 2-1 in the inaugural match at the floodlit Dhaka Stadium yesterday.
 The local giant led the first-half by two goals to nil with striker Sourav Raju and Tipu notching one apiece in quick succession. For the visitors, custodian Arman Omar pulled See Page 16 Col 6

'Govt has broken backbone of farmers'

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday warned the government that his party would soon build resistance instead of protesting the 'conspiracy' to run Parliament without Opposition, reports UNB.
 "The government has hatched a conspiracy so that the Opposition cannot return to Parliament. They did not hold any formal or informal discussion with us to resolve the crisis through meeting our demands," he said.
 The BNP leader was addressing a meeting organised on the occasion of 16th founding anniversary of the Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal, the peasant front of BNP, at the party central office in the evening.
 Bhuiyan said the BNP wants a democratic atmosphere in the country which was being destroyed by the ruling party and See Page 16 Col 1

AL, BNP soften stance

By Nazmul Ashraf
 Both the ruling Awami League and the major opposition party in the Jatiya Sangsad, BNP, have softened their stance, signalling a solution to the stalemate in the House caused by the latter's abstention from attending the session.
 Talking to The Daily Star last night, leaders of both the sides expressed their desire to resolve the main issues that created the stalemate. The BNP has been demanding what it calls neutrality of the Speaker in running the House and impartial coverage of the proceedings by the Bangladesh Television (BTV).
 The leaders also showed eagerness to ensure that Parliament sits with members of both the benches when its first session of the new year begins on January 15 next.
 BNP walked out of the House on November 10, the fourth working day of the last session to press its 10-point demand which include 'neutral' role of the Speaker and the BTV and halting 'repression' on its workers. Later, the party came down to only three demands — neutrality of the Speaker, fair coverage by the BTV and release of detained party workers.
 Asked if his party would initiate any fresh dialogue to bring BNP back to the House, Parliamentary Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister and AL leader Suranjit Sengupta said, "Hundred times... We're already in contact with them. The informal contacts are being established at all levels of the BNP."
 About the outcome of the contacts, Suranjit said, "We're getting positive response... We hope they will return to the Parliament and won't do any politics on the issue."
 The Awami League leader, however, declined to elaborate BNP Secretary General Abdul See Page 16 Col 3

JCD attacks Ctg BCL activists: 10 injured

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Dec 31: At least ten persons were injured in an attack by a group of armed activists on the Gasbaria college campus today, police and witnesses said.
 The victims were identified as the activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League. Of them, Jamir Uddin, was admitted to the Chittagong Medical college hospital with serious bullet injuries.
 Others were admitted to another hospital.
 Police said, a group of a pro-BNP Chhatra Dal activists armed with lethal weapons attacked the pro-Awami League BCL supporters on the campus at 11.15 am when the Principal was holding a meeting with some student leaders.
 The meeting was held to discuss ways of ensuring academic atmosphere on campus.
 During the clash, the students were seen running for safety as gunfire and explosion of crackers rocked the campus.
 The college has been closed till January 8.

Dist AL meet at Tangail cancelled

From Our Correspondent
 TANGAIL, Dec 31: A meeting of the Subject Committee of district Awami League, scheduled for January 4, was cancelled today due to 'conflict' among the leaders, according to party sources.
 The meeting of the Subject Committee was earlier fixed by the central committee of Awami League after the council session of the district unit of the party ended in a fiasco on December 7.
 According to sources in the party Chhatra League is divided into two groups. One of the groups is led by Azad Siddiky and Murad Siddiky, both younger brothers of Latif Siddiky and Kader Siddiky. The other is run by Rana and Bappi and is linked with AL leader Shamsur Rahman Khan and a party MP Abdul Mannan. Rana and Bappi are also nephews of Shamsur Rahman Khan.
 Police sources said at least 50 activists belonging to these See Page 16 Col 4

Shooting spree on BL College campus

KHULNA, Dec 31: Unidentified gunmen intruded into BL University College and went on a shoot-out creating panic among the students and teachers, reports UNB.
 College sources said a band of youths wearing lungi and half-pants swept into the campus through its main gate at 11.30 am, firing guns. They disappeared through another gate after firing some 20 to 25 gunshots in the air.
 During the shooting spree, the panicky students were seen running helter-skelter for safe shelter.
 The 18th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, will be observed today, reports UNB.
 To observe the day, the JCD will hold a meeting in front of Jatiya Press Club at 2 pm. BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to address the meeting.
 Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman and other BNP and JCD leaders will also speak on the occasion.
 JCD President Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie will preside over the meeting.

JCD founding anniversary today

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Let this smile remain in the years to come. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Welcome 1997

By Staff Correspondent
 Welcome 1997. Happy New Year today.
 As the clock clicked 12 last night, the New Year began with hopes for a better future.
 Over 120 million people of Bangladesh join the world community in welcoming the New Year with renewed pledge to build a happier motherland and to make the Mother Earth more peaceful and glorious.
 The New Year's Eve celebrations were marked with exchange of greetings and pleasantries, feasts and parties. Fire works and explosion of crackers by revelers broke the silence as the clock struck zero hours.
 In the capital, people were in a jubilant mood, celebrating the first hours of the New Year. Many city dwellers were seen busy yesterday evening buying greeting cards and flowers for near and dear ones. Jubilant people were seen hoping from one family-party or social gathering to another last night.
 The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) fanned out in the city in 10 special teams to contain unruly revellers.
 The year that passed was marked with some historic events. In the world scenario, some positive developments took place in 1996. Peace has been restored in the Balkan, Middle East peace process continued and many countries saw advancement of democracy. See Page 16 Col 5

Greetings
 The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, well-wishers, patrons and advertisers a Happy New Year

There were some tragic events also. Peace remains a nightmare in trouble torn Afghanistan and Kashmir. Rwanda is in flames with the Hutus and the Tutsis fighting each other.
 In Bangladesh, some memorable events overshadowed many pangs and agony this year. The country witnessed peaceful transfer of power through a fair election, making another milestone in consolidating democracy and celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its victory in the War of Liberation See Page 16 Col 5

Unite to ensure prosperous future: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her good wishes to the people of the country on the eve of New Year's Day, reports BSS.
 In a message to the nation, the Prime Minister expressed her optimism that the New Year will bring peace and prosperity to the nation. She said in the light of experiences of the eventful 1996, we would be able to carry the nation forward in 1997.
 She called upon the people, irrespective of political ideology and belief, to join hands for carrying the nation forward and ensuring a prosperous future for the posterity.
 '97 to bring about a democratic atmosphere: Khaleda
 BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia called for a renewed pledge on the threshold of new year to protect country's independence and sovereignty and hoped 1997 would bring about a democratic and peaceful atmosphere in national life, reports UNB.
 "We are entering the new year on the brink of a total crisis in state and social life," she observed in a message on the eve of New Year's Day.
 Begum Zia conveyed her heartfelt greetings to countrymen, and wished them happiness and prosperity.
 She, however, noted with dissatisfaction that 1996 would be marked as a year of selling out the country's political independence as well as territorial sovereignty.
 The BNP chairperson accused the Awami League government of signing unequal and weak Ganges water-sharing treaty with India, giving its consent to allow India to use See Page 16 Col 4

Feni Jubo League leader shot dead

Jahangir Alam, 24, a Jubo League leader of Lemua Union of Feni Sadar thana was shot dead by a group of unidentified assailants on Monday night, reports BSS.
 According to police, the victim was shot dead by the miscreants near Terobaria Bazar while returning home from Lemua Bazar. He died on the spot.
 A case was registered with Feni Sadar thana, but no arrest was made till last night.
 Leaders of Feni district Jubo League condemned the killing and blamed the armed cadres of local BNP for the killing.
 It is said that four Jubo League leaders in different thanas of the district have been killed by miscreants in December 1996. But police failed to arrest the alleged killers.

মিডনাইট মান-২
 (একটি অত্যাধুনিক থাই-চাইনিজ রেস্টুরেন্ট)
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 খাবারের সাথে ১টি ফ্রী খাবার

59 bodies recovered
Bodos invited for peace talks

GUWAHATI, Dec 31: The government of the Indian state of Assam today invited tribal Bodo militants for peace talks after a passenger train was bombed here, killing scores of people, reports AFP.
 Rescuers so far recovered 59 bodies from the crowded train ripped apart by two bomb blasts. Reuters quoting authorities said today. They expected to find more victims in the twisted wreckage.
 But officials held out hope that fewer died than the 300 initially believed killed.
 Three of the train's 19 carriages — each crammed with up to 100 people leaving for the New Year holiday — were destroyed in the twin blasts after the train left Kokrajhar Station in Assam state for Delhi around 7 pm (1330 GMT) on Monday police said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which authorities blamed on Bodo tribal guerrillas who have waged a violent separatist struggle for nearly a decade.
 A police spokesman in Kokrajhar said none of the estimated 160 passengers in the two sleeper coaches which took the brunt of the explosions were believed to have survived.
 "It appeared that there were no survivors in the two coaches," he said.
 By mid-afternoon today 59 bodies had been recovered at the site of the attack in the town of Sensapani some 200km west of Guwahati, authorities said.
 Dozens of mutilated bodies, some of them children, lay on a soft rice paddy field near the tracks.

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