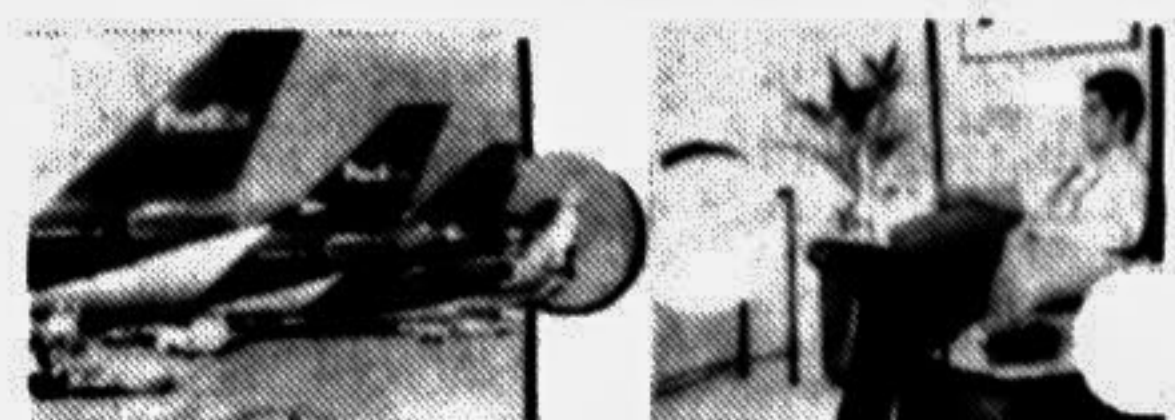


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Philips advertisement for sandwich maker and toaster. Includes Philips logo and slogan 'Let's make things better'.

Down to Earth City Rly Station in Sorry State

By ASM Nurunnabi

The Kamalapur Railway Station is the country's principal railway station. Covering about 157 acres of land, the station was commissioned on May 1, 1968. Though the main station building and the platform area appear quite clean, it is generally alleged that the station management and the standard of passenger service are far from satisfactory.

Dutch team due in city today

A four-member delegation of the Netherlands, headed by its Social Welfare and Employment Minister APW Melicut, will arrive in Dhaka today on a week-long visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

During their stay here the team members will call on the Prime Minister, the Commerce and Industries Minister, the State Minister for Labour and Manpower and the State Minister for Youth and Sports.

They will also visit Agar-gaon slum, Child Labour School at Kalabagan, Grameen Bank's project in Gazipur, BRAC Sreepur-Maona project, Marine Diesel Academy in Narayan-ganj, Chittagong EPZ and Sri-mongal Tea Garden.

NWD exchange opens at Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Dec 19: A new 100-line NWD telephone exchange was opened at Hasnabad in Roppura thana of the district today, reports UNB.

Local parliament member Raziuddin Ahmed Raju inaugurated the exchange by making a telephone call to Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim in Chittagong.

During the telephonic conversation, the Minister said the present government has taken steps to reach telephone service in the far-flung and remote areas of the country.

Sharif's man

From page 1 be more defamation of the judiciary and the judges than this, he said of another statement attributed to Tarar in the mass-circulation Urdu daily Jang.

Junejo based his ruling on a constitutional clause that bars any person from becoming a member of parliament if found "propagating any opinion, or acting in any manner, prejudicial to... the integrity or independence of the judiciary of Pakistan, or which defames or brings into ridicule the judiciary or the armed forces of Pakistan."

Benazir

From page 1 up by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to investigate corruption among politicians.

Chaudhury set the next hearing for January 14 after the courts reopen following a winter recess, the sources said.

Swiss authorities said in October they had blocked around 20 million Swiss francs (13.7 million dollars) in bank accounts belonging to Benazir, her husband Asif Ali Zardari and her mother Nusrat as well as the bank accounts of at least six companies.

Copies of the Swiss orders were produced before the court today, but neither Benazir, Nusrat, Zardari nor any counsel for them was present, the court sources said.

Benazir, sacked as prime minister in November, 1996, on charges of corruption and misuse, has denied allegation she siphoned off millions of dollars during her tenure as prime minister.

She went to court in her home province of Sindh in October to challenge the petition from Sharif's investigation department.

Swiss media reports have put the total amount at more than 80 million dollars.

All 104 feared killed as SilkAir jet crashes

JAKARTA, Dec 19: A Singapore-owned SilkAir jet carrying 104 people crashed on the Indonesian island of Sumatra today, the airline said. All aboard were feared dead, reports AP.

Flight MI-185 left Jakarta's Soekarno Hatta Airport for Singapore, but lost contact with air traffic controllers and went down eight kilometers north of Palembang in Sumatra, SilkAir said in Singapore. The airline said it got confirmation of the crash from Indonesian officials. The plane was carrying 97 passengers and seven crew members.

An Indonesian search and rescue official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said it was feared some of the Boeing 737-300 may have gone down in the sea.

SilkAir said a Fokker 50 plane was sent to the location where the plane was last heard from and spotted the wreckage. The wreckage was sighted at the village of Parit 12, Makati Jaya, a swampy coastal area also known as Pulau Payung that can only be reached by boat, the official Antara news agency reported.

A search-and-rescue team of three craft, including a C-130 and two Super Pumas, quickly arrived at the scene.

The state-owned TVRI network said that a soldier found several passports in the wreckage, including one belonging to an American and another to a Malaysian.

There were probably no survivors, the director general of air transportation, Zainuddin Sikado, was quoted as saying by Antara.

SilkAir was set up in 1975 as the holiday operator arm of Singapore Airlines. It was originally called Tradewinds and changed names in 1992 to SilkAir. It flies to 21 business and leisure destinations in Asia.

It said this is the first Singapore Airlines or SilkAir plane to go crash. Today's crash was the second major commercial jetliner accident on the island of Sumatra in three months.

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Gunshots, blasts rock Jamal Khan road area in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 19: Gunshots and bomb blasts rocked the entire Jamal Khan and Momin road areas this evening while traffic movement came to a halt for sometime, witnesses said.

Police said no casualty was reported. JCD alleged that some rival activists had attacked its function by exploding bombs.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

City BNP meets today

An emergency meeting of the Dhaka city BNP will be held at the party's central office at 4 pm today, reports UNB.

All members of the city convening committee, thana committee presidents, general secretaries and convenors, and the BNP-backed ward commissioners have been requested to attend the meeting.

BIMSTEC

From page 1 Four countries of the South Asian region formally launched the grouping to act as a bridge between the Indian Ocean Rim countries for expansion of trade and investment and for acting as an economic link between South-East Asia and Southern Asia. The organisation was launched in the Thai capital on June 6 this year.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury will leave for Bangkok tomorrow to participate in the two-day ministerial level deliberations.

BNP MPs

From page 1 Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia at 10 am.

Opposition Chief Whip Khondakar Delwar Hossain has urged all BNP MPs to be present at the Minto Road residence by 9:30 am.

Earlier on Thursday, BNP in its standing body meeting decided to launch an all-out movement to resist the "black agreement" signed by the government on the Chittagong Hill Tracts issue, according to UNB.

The main opposition also sounded a note of warning to the government for its "bid to formulate new repressive black laws to suppress the opposition."

It called upon the government to give up such a plan and urged the people to remain alert. "No evil attempt to foil the hard-earned democracy and democratic rights will be allowed to succeed," the meeting said in a resolution.

The BNP standing committee expressed concern over the price-hike of essentials, deterioration of law and order, violence in the ongoing UP elections and the failure of the government to tackle the situation.

AL workers attack BNP office in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 19: Awami League activists allegedly attacked the district BNP office here today as a sequel to Thursday's clashes between the two rival parties, reports UNB.

The AL activists also exploded bombs during the attack at about 5 pm. At least seven people were injured.

The injured were admitted to the local hospital. Armed police have been deployed in front of the BNP office.

A clash between the two rival parties occurred on Thursday when BNP activists made an attack on the former general secretary of the district AL. At least 40 people were injured in the clash.

Lawyers should know techniques of advocacy: CJ

Chief Justice ATM Afzal yesterday emphasised on improving the techniques of advocacy to develop professional skills of the lawyers, reports UNB.

To become a good lawyer, it is not enough to know the law only — one has to know the technique and methods as well, he told a function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

Bangladesh Bar Council and the Australian Bar Association jointly organised the function — certificate awarding ceremony of 'Intensive Trial Advocacy Workshop' and the 4th founding anniversary of Continuing Legal Education Programme (CLEP).

The five-day workshop on trial advocacy concluded yesterday.

20 injured

From page 1 College Gate area at about 8 am. The agitated supporters of the defeated chairman candidate tried to resist police and hurled bricks at them. They also overturned a police van.

Police used batons and opened fire on the demonstrators. However, none was arrested in this connection till filing of this report.

Team in Pabna to detect arsenic contamination

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Dec 19: A high-powered team led by Dr Bakar N Kabir of the World Bank today visited Hatigara village under Bera Pourasava of Pabna district to conduct survey on arsenic contamination in tubewell waters.

The team will conduct similar survey in 203 villages under 50 thanas of 23 districts as part of its three-month-long programme.

During today's visit, the team members made on the spot test and found arsenic contamination in tubewell waters of different houses.

Arsenic contamination in tubewell waters of this village was detected six months back after conducting a primary test jointly by Dhaka Community Hospital, Public Health Engineering Department and Directorate of Health.

Several persons with skin diseases caused by drinking arsenic polluted water were also found in the village.

While talking to The Daily Star, the team leader Dr Bakar N Kabir disclosed that tubewell waters in many unions and villages under Bera thana are found containing arsenic within permissible level.

The other members of the team were Dr Deepak Batlacharya, Chief of Water and Sanitation Section of UNICEF; Mike McCarthy, First Secretary, Engineering Adviser, DFID, British High Commission; Mofazzal Haque, National Field Programme Officer, WHO; Zahuril Haque, Superintendent Engineer, Department of Public Health Engineering, Rajshahi; Miss Lamia Karim, Raice University, America; GP Sarkar, Senior chemist, WHO; Abus Sattar, chemist, Department of Public Health Engineering and Prof Quazi Kamruzzaman, Chairman of Dhaka Community Hospital.

The family members of Bimal Dutta, also a senior journalist, yesterday appealed to the home minister to immediately look into the matter and save their lives and property from the constant threat.

In a statement, they said that the terrorist group through a fake document tried to grab their property forcibly on December 13.

The terrorist group is also threatening that they would occupy the lands by killing all members of Bimal Dutta's family.

The land owners filed a case with the Second Sub-Judge's Court in Pabna which served an interim injunction in this regard, the statement added.

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Train service

From page 1 left Sylhet station at 5:55 am on Wednesday.

None knows when such a situation will end, an official said.

Train service to and from Sylhet was first suspended on June 15 this year after the huge explosion and fire at Magurchara gas field, located between Srimangal and Bhanugachha stations.

Occidental allowed the BR to operate trains after more than five months, on November 26. Since then, as asked by Occidental, train service was suspended eight times for a total of 11 days. Railway sources pointed out.



State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed with the winners of Lux-Anyadin Eid Fashion Competition at a city hotel yesterday. — Star photo

Random use of toxic pesticides contaminating surface water

Uncontrolled use of toxic chemical pesticides is severely contaminating the country's surface water, said a survey report, according to BSS.

The survey on the surface water quality of Bangladesh was conducted by the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC).

It said the presence of the residues of toxic chemical pesticides including lindane, dieldrin, DDT in the surface water samples indicated that there is no regulatory control over the use of hazardous pesticides.

The samples were tested at the laboratory of Institute of Food and Radiation Biology (IFRB), Savar, the lone modern and sophisticated establishment of the BAEC.

The surface water samples were collected from different regions of the country especially from beels of Gaibandha, 'nigor' of Comilla and Begumganj beel of Noakhali.

Although the samples from the beel of Gaibandha show the presence of concentration of DDT is little less beyond the World Health Organisation (WHO) guide-line value while, the water samples from Begumganj beel are containing DDT residues beyond WHO guide-line level.

The WHO guideline value for DDT in water is 19 microgram per litre.

The residue of dieldrin found in the water samples of Gaibandha beel is 0.64 microgram per litre while residues of lindane are 0.231 and 0.547 microgram per litre.

The BAEC officials observed that the presence of the residues of extremely toxic pesticides in the surface water is a matter of grave concern.

MA Matin, the chief scientific officer of IFRB said determination of pesticides residues in water in a wider scale as well as regulatory vigilance are needed to protect water quality and environment.

Matin, who is also involved in analysing the water quality said laboratory infrastructure for monitoring residues requires to be recognised and expanded for safeguarding the water resources from pollution of toxic pesticides residues.

Trafficking From page 1 station in Bongaon, used for trafficking children and women from Bangladesh. "We hope Indian police have taken action," he said.

BAEC survey report

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About the fate of the children and women trafficked across the border, police and BDR officials said in most cases, their initial destination was Bombay. Syndicate leaders in Bombay then decide where and how these people could be exploited.

"The women are sold to brothels or rich people in Pakistan or in the Middle East and most of the children are smuggled to Abu Dhabi where they are sold to camel stables," said a senior police official.

"But the most dreadful thing happens when the international human organ traders set their eyes on them," he said.

While the law enforcing authorities ponder over the problem, the most notorious leader of the Jessore syndicate, Hasan, now remains at large. He is wanted by police on various charges including murder, child and women trafficking and smuggling. Local people said Hasan is the main leader of the syndicate in the area and nothing happens in the border without his knowledge and support.

The Professor also said some treaty rights were superseded by statutes. Most treaties with native tribes have some sort of Senate approval, he stated and added that the US Congress has the authority to supersede treaties.

Probe into Diana's death

Rees-Jones recalls nothing new

PARIS, Dec 19: Bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, the only survivor of the car crash that killed Princess Diana, met again today with a French judge in charge of the case. But he didn't recall any significant new details, AP quoting a source close to the investigation said.

Rees-Jones, 29, looked unsteady as he entered the Palais de Justice, trailed by dozens of photographers. His face was still heavily scarred from the Aug. 31 accident that killed Diana, her boyfriend Dodi Fayed, and their driver.

Investigators had been hoping that Rees-Jones, who has struggled with memory loss since the crash, could remember more of the events leading up to the accident. But a source close to the case said after the meeting that Rees-Jones couldn't remember anything else of significance.

"There is nothing new," the source told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. "He still doesn't remember the accident."

Rees-Jones's lawyer, Christian Curtill, said only that the two-hour meeting had "gone well" and that his client was "doing better physically." He said his client had told him to withhold further comment.

After the meeting, Rees-Jones, flanked by four bodyguards, was spirited through a back entrance to evade reporters. He rode in a convoy of two black Mercedes — rented, according to the drivers, from the same company from which Diana's Mercedes was rented.

He was whisked back to the airport, where he was taking a private plane back to England.

The bodyguard, who works for the Fayed family, has already met twice with French investigators — in September and early October. Since Oct. 3 he has been recuperating in Wales.

Opinion poll

From page 1 quences" so that people can use natural gas over a longer period of time.

About 88.8 per cent of the respondents think that ensuring a "safe minimum reserve" for Bangladesh is a "must" before export is allowed. Only 6.5 per cent of people interviewed were totally opposed to the idea of exporting gas or oil and only 4.7 per cent favoured export for quick economic gain.

Of the respondents, 89.9 per cent feel that the on-going negotiations with foreign oil companies must be transparent to avoid future controversies and complexities.

The poll was led by Prof Anum Nishat of BUET and Dr AK Enamul Haque of North South University.

Advertisement for 'Bijgan and Prayukti Pradarshani' (Science and Technology Exhibition). Includes details about the exhibition, dates, and contact information.