

CHT accord BNP may seek President's intervention

By Staff Correspondent
BNP lawmakers are scheduled to march through the city thoroughfares today, wearing black badges and carrying black flags, to protest the CHT accord.
BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad is expected to lead the march, scheduled to start at 10 am from her Minto Road official residence.
The march aims at triggering protests and 'resistance' across the country against the black accord," said a BNP statement issued last night.
After parading the city streets, the Opposition lawmakers are due to move towards the Bangabhaban where a small group of party MPs will meet.
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48-hr hartal called in CHT from today

BANDARBAN, Dec 20: Parbatya Sarbadaliya Oikya Parishad (PSOP) will enforce a 48-hour hartal from tomorrow in the three hill districts demanding annulment of the peace accord, reports UNB.
In support of the hartal, the PSOP brought out a procession in Bandarban town. The procession was led by Oikya Parishad leader Mohammad Kamal Uddin.
Earlier, dawn-to-dusk hartals were enforced in three hill districts of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban on December 10 and 11.

Transit, SAGQ to dominate FM's talks in Kathmandu

By Staff Correspondent
The issues of Bangladesh-Nepal transit and the progress of South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ) are likely to dominate the talks during the two-day visit of Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad to Nepal.
Azad leaves for the Himalayan kingdom on Monday at the invitation of his counterpart Kamal Thapa, according to diplomatic sources.
Nepal is learnt to be very keen about making the newly opened road transit route through Bangladesh operational. Ever since its formal inauguration, only three Nepalese container trucks could use the route.
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Border villagers host traffickers As night falls, 'guests' start arriving

By Morshed Ali Khan back from Benapole, Jessore

Almost every house along the Benapole border has hand-some provisions for accommodating a number of paying guests. It may be a hut or an attractive pucca structure. And inside, the owners proudly display large rest areas including temporary beds, etc and cooking utensils, glasses, bowls — an indication of how many guests they can put up at a time and on short notice.

The house owners may be elderly men or women. They cater to hundreds of people travelling to India without passport. In the darkness, the clients are

simply led through the border and into India, a few yards away while in the distance BDR personnel in their makeshift outposts stand guard. Locally the travellers are known as dhurs.

During the day, these 'houses' near the border are empty, and look abandoned. But as night falls these village houses bubble with life. Women light up their cookers to prepare meals for the 'guests' who suddenly arrive, and keep on arriving throughout the night. They mingle with the occupants, have food and then wait for the

agents or ghat men to turn up. A ghat is a designated point from where the crossing into India takes place. It is owned by a member of the syndicate that is in charge of the operation in this particular village.

From the Benapole customs and immigration checkpoint upto the Isamati river, about two kilometres in the west, dhurs make a substantial contribution to the economy of this area known as Geatipara. Each dhur passing through a ghat ends up paying upto Tk 500 for the service.
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One of the BDR outposts in Geatipara area. There are only 20 outposts for 140 km-long border in Jessore.
— Star photo by Morshed Ali Khan

Some bank branches also have CBAs!

Star Report

The government has extended the time for submission of the report of the task force on activities of trade unions in the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) by three months.
A five-member team headed by Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank Ibrahim Khaleel is currently looking into the activities of the collective bargaining agents (CBAs) of the NCBs.

The task force report was supposed to be submitted by October 30. The Finance Ministry, after a long delay, extended the time till February 28.
The task force had distributed written questionnaires among the trade union leaders and interviewed all the managing directors of the NCBs and other officials.

According to sources, the task force discovered that contrary to law, there are CBAs in the branches of the banks. The law says, CBA should be in the head office, and there can not be any separate CBA in the branch offices.

The task force members have also found that managers of the banks branches often hold meetings with CBAs in their branches which have no

legal standing.
One member of the task force told The Daily Star that it would be more important and difficult to implement the report of the task force, rather than preparing it.
"This is because the report may suggest some drastic measures to stop the draconian activities of the trade unions. Unless the government has enough political will to streamline the banking sector, it would be impossible to implement the recommendations," said the source.

Court rooms being set up at HC for new judges

By Staff Correspondent
Government has asked the Law Commission (LC) and the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) to vacate the premises of the old High Court building immediately for setting up of court rooms for judges, according to sources in the Ministry of Works.

Work for setting up the court rooms will begin as room as the
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Changing colour of BJP

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: India's Hindu nationalists, within striking distance of power, said today people of different faiths had nothing to fear from them, reports Reuter.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), tipped to emerge as the largest single group in elections next spring, has been accused by rivals of a deep-seated prejudice against India's 120 million Muslims.
But in Bhubaneswar, capital of the eastern state of Orissa where BJP leaders gathered for an election strategy session, the party signalled it was keen to dispel those suspicions.
"We pledge to build a society free of fear and hunger... where the genuine social and economic problems of the minority communities shall be taken care of by a responsive and responsible state," a political resolution released by the party's elite national executive said.

In the four-page document around which the BJP will build its campaign for the 1998
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JU buses resume plying

By JU Correspondent
Buses of Jahangirnagar University (JU) resumed plying between the city and the campus yesterday following discussions among the university authorities, police and leaders of transport workers.

JU buses stopped plying on December 12 when transport workers attacked one bus at Aminbazar on the previous day, leaving at least 50 students injured.
OC of the Savar thana Nabi Hossain, told this correspondent over telephone last night leaders of transport workers assured him that no untoward incident would take place if JU buses started plying to and from the city through Aminbazar.

President of Aminbazar Truck Workers' Association Jamil Ahmed, General Secretary of Gabbali Bus Workers' Association
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14 succumb to cold bites in two days

By Special Correspondent

At least 14 people died due to cold in different areas of the country in the last two days.

The mercury began dipping with the cool air blowing from the north from Friday.
Four persons died yesterday. An unidentified person was found dead at Daudkandi and three others — all elderly people — succumbed to bites of winter at Kaziur thana of Sirajganj and in the char areas of Gaibandha, according to reports received in the city.

Ten persons died in the northern districts on Friday.

As the cold wind blew from the north, a veil of mist kept the horizon clouded most of the day in the city yesterday.

The haze which hung over the city in the morning and afternoon turned grey with pollutant smoke from auto-rick-

shaws, buses and trucks. It cleared later in the day, returning at night to muck the city streets.

Many of the street people lit fire from the rubbish to stave off the cold but found sleeping on the pavements tough.

Meteorologists said the night temperature would fall further in the next couple of days.

The minimum temperature of 10 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga. It averaged 11 to 13.2 degrees Celsius elsewhere in the country, including the city.

Director of the Met Office, Sajedur Rahman, however, said it cannot be described as a cold wave.
"The north-eastern mon-
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Many BNP lawmakers disown statement demanding polls

Contradiction and confusion have surfaced among the top brass of main opposition BNP over the press statement by some of the party MPs seeking immediate election to parliament, reports UNB.

A statement was issued on Friday in the name of 50 MPs of BNP, strongly protesting the CHT accord and observing that an immediate election has become necessary to overcome the present situation.
When contacted, a number of lawmakers shown as signatories, expressed their utter surprise about the statement and said they knew nothing about it.

"I've just seen it this morning in the newspapers... I can't understand how my name appeared as a signatory to the statement," said Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf.

He said possibly many of the signatories did not know about this statement beforehand.
Amanullah Aman told the new agency in the evening that

he has just arrived in the capital from his constituency. "I can't say anything about it, but there is a clear instruction from the party that a member will own any statement issued by the party," he said.

Similar ignorance about the statement was expressed by two other MPs — Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed and Maj (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman — who, however, were not signatories to it.

Standing Committee member Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed told the news agency over phone from Chittagong that he has been demanding for a mid-term elections for last six months, but "I don't know about the Friday's press statement."

Maj (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman said, "We don't know anything about it. Probably, it was the same group which has intruded into the party from different places and are now trying to split the BNP."

Sources said the issue of new election was not even raised at the BNP standing committee

meeting held at 29 Minto Road on Thursday with party Chairperson Begum Khaleida Zia in the chair.

A top leader of BNP, who asked not to be named, said, "The party has not yet contemplated over the question of new election to the parliament... possibly, these enthusiastic people, who issued the statement, want to become leaders."

When contacted, Advocate Mahabubur Rahman, who issued the statement, hesitated to comment, but said, "I will give you a reply tomorrow (Monday)... I am one of the signatories and I own it fully."

He said, "I didn't say about a fresh poll, rather I've said mandate is necessary and answer to this vital issue is an immediate election. I did not say anything new, I have just complied with what the BNP leadership has
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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star is pleased to announce a conference of young professionals and entrepreneurs between 25-35 years of age at 3:30 pm on Sunday, 28 December, 1997, at the British Council Auditorium, 5 Fuller Road, Nilkhet, Dhaka.

The conference will provide an opportunity for the young to express their views about the future, their respective professions and the problems faced by young professionals and entrepreneurs.

Those interested to participate in this conference are requested to please contact Mr. Rafi Hossain at The Daily Star office, for further details. Tel Nos: 500092-4 & 863036, between 5-7 pm.

One killed, 20 hurt in polls violence

By Staff Correspondent

One person was killed and 20 others were injured in the election violence in Comilla and polling were cancelled in six centres across the country on the 13th day of the ongoing Union Parishad election yesterday.

The person was killed and 20 others were injured in clashes during the elections in Daudkandi thana of Comilla district, according to UNB.

The clash occurred between
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BGMEA seeks PM's intervention in resolving crisis at Ctg port

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association has sought prime Minister's personal intervention in resolving the crisis at the Chittagong port, reports UNB.
President of BGMEA Mostafa Golam Quddus in a statement yesterday requested all concerned to take necessary steps so that any further stand-
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