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Train service with Sylhet resumes today

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Dec 26: Bangladesh Railway will resume operation of passenger trains between Sylhet and rest of the country tomorrow after suspension for 10 days. BR sources said the decision was taken after getting clearance from US company Occidental, engaged in exploration at Magurchhara gas field. Train service to end from Sylhet was first suspended on June 15 this year because of a fire and explosion at the gas field located between Srimangal and Bhanugachh stations. Occidental allowed the BR to operate passenger trains after more than five months on November 26. Since then, the company asked the BR to suspend operation of trains several times, lastly on December 17 for the 8th time. Operation of trains remained suspended for 18 days from November 26 till today (December 26), railway sources said.

Three BCL activists shot dead in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 26: One leader and two activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the ruling party's student wing, were shot dead by assailants in Chandgaon residential area of the city this evening, police and party sources said. The dead were identified as Enamul Haq, commonroom secretary of M E S College Students Union, Abul Monsur, a student of the college and Shahidul Alam Khan, a former student of the college. Shahidul Alam had returned from the Middle East recently. Police said the armed assailants came in a numberless white station wagon and opened brush-fire when the three were

passing through a road at B-Block in the area on a motorcycle at about 5-15 pm. The assailants then fled the area in the same car. Enamul Haq died on a private clinic and Shahidul Alam Khan at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Police could not say immediately anything about the cause of the killing and who were responsible for it. But BCL leaders blamed the Nasir Bahini, backed by Islami Chhatra Shibir, for the killing. Shibir denied the charge. Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Asraful Huda said a drive has been

launched to arrest the killers. Immediately after the incident, BCL activists and supporters brought out processions at different parts of the city protesting the killing and put up a barricade on the Chandgaon road blocking movement of vehicles, police and witnesses said. They also blasted cocktails creating panic in the entire Chandgaon area and some other parts of the city. The barricade was later removed by police. A large number of policemen were deployed at some vulnerable places in the city as a tense situation prevailed. UNB adds: After the killing, See Page 12 Col 5

Gunshots on DU campus.

By Staff Correspondent

At least 12 shots were fired near the Laboratory School on the Dhaka University campus creating panic among people present at a re-union function at the school yesterday evening. Campus sources said two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were locked in a chase and counter-chase before the firing at about 7 pm. None was, however, injured in the firing. The incident occurred as rival BCL factions allegedly wanted to gain control of an entrance of the school where a musical band show was arranged on the occasion of re-union of former students. When contacted, Ramna police said police were conducting a raid at Mohsin Hall and Zahurul Haque Hall following the incident. They arrested one person, said to be an outsider, from Mohsin Hall till the filing of this report at 10:30 last night.

Growth Quadrangle to study project papers next month

By M Anwarul Haq

The concept of South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ) is expected to get a new buoyancy when foreign secretaries of the four countries meet in Kathmandu on January 6 to present specific project papers, according to diplomatic sources. The project papers will explain in detail the type of development activities that can be undertaken within the canvas of the South Asian Growth Quadrangle. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, the four countries involved in the concept of sub-regional co-operation within the ambit of SAARC, have already earmarked six areas for possible co-operation. These areas are: utilisation of natural resources and energy, multi-

modal transportation, tourism, trade and investment and environment. Bangladesh is preparing project papers on two areas, harnessing natural resources and energy. Bhutan has undertaken the task of making a project paper on environment, while Nepal is making a study on multi-modal transportation and on tourism. India, is expected to submit a project paper on trade and investment. Earlier, these four countries charted out six key areas of co-operation and decided among themselves the sectors they would like to actively participate in. They took upon the task of identifying at least one project which will be beneficial to all the four countries and could

be taken up for more feasibility studies. The project papers are expected to identify 'at least one model mega project' in each of the six sectors which could, in future, be implemented. After the project papers are presented, those would be vetted by the Standing Committee of SAARC. The technical and financial aspects of the proposed projects are also expected to be examined by the Standing Committee, composed of foreign secretaries. The upcoming Kathmandu meeting would be presided by the Foreign Secretary of Nepal Murari Raj Sharma. Bangladesh would be represented by its foreign secretary Mustafizur Rahman. See Page 12 Col 8

CFTC postpones scheduled meet for second time

CHITTAGONG, Dec 26: The Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee, a Singapore based organisation of shipowners, postponed its scheduled meeting for the second time today, reports UNB. The meeting, first scheduled on December 22, was shifted for today. Earlier, the CFTC has threatened to impose surcharge on all Chittagong-bound ships claiming unusual traffic congestion at the port. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) faxed a letter to the CFTC on December 21 requesting it not to impose the surcharge, saying that the congestion was temporary and the situation would improve shortly. See Page 12 Col 8



A new overbridge is being constructed across Kamalapur railway station in the city. — Star photo by Sheikh Enamul Haq

Dilemma delays D-check of Biman's F-28

By Shehab Ahmed and Masud Arif

Bangladesh Biman is yet to decide where to send its Fokker-28 aircraft, grounded since Sunday, for a major check. Powerful quarters have been trying to get the checking, known as D-check, done by the respective foreign companies represented by them. Civil Aviation sources said. Their 'pressure' has so far delayed a decision in this regard. Biman's managers will sit on Monday to decide where to send the aircraft for the D-check, the Netherlands where it was built 16 years ago or elsewhere. The other F-28, now sitting like a lame duck on a wetland in Sylhet after crash-landing there on Monday night, was also scheduled to go for D-check in two months time, the sources pointed out.

Both the F-28s had a D-check in 1990, before they ended 10 thousand hours of flying. Earlier, the Fokker manual mentioned that either 10 years or 10 thousand flying hours were enough to send the planes on hangar for D-check. But the latest manual set the requirement as 12 years or 12 thousand hours of flying, Biman engineers said. The F-28 that crash-landed had an extension of 100 hours to have both D-check and C-check at a time. This was to avoid two weeks of grounding, only for C-check, which is mandatory after 6000 hours. D-check was scheduled in March next. It flew for about 40 hours, out of the extended 100 hours. See Page 12 Col 4

Shantibahini collecting tolls forcibly, alleges BNP team

A BNP delegation which visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts has said uncertainty and anger of the CHT people caused by the 'black accord' may take a serious turn at any time, reports UNB. The delegation comprising Alamgir Kabir MP, Jaiul Abedin Faruq MP, Salauddin Ahmed MP, Nadim Mostafa MP and Rafiqul Islam Bakul MP met with BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and narrated their experience. They had extensive tour of different areas of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban, talked to the local people and addressed meetings there. They alleged that Shantibahini members were collecting tolls forcibly, disrupting harmony between tribals and non-tribals. The delegation said that the armed cadres of Shantibahini took positions at different points following the withdrawal of Guimara camp in Manikchhari. See Page 12 Col 5

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DUTA polls tomorrow Clear sign of a political bout

By DU Correspondent

Election of the executive committee of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) for the year 1998 will be held tomorrow. The pro-Awami League Blue Panel and the pro-BNP White Panel are contesting for the 15 posts of the executive committee. As the Left Leaning Pink Panel and the pro-Jamaat White Panel are not contesting the polls this year, it has, in fact, turned into a fight between the Blue Panel and the White Panel, sources at the university said. Candidates of both the panels are now busy in door to door campaign among teachers. A sharp political division

among the teachers of the DU likely to mark this year's DUTA election, the sources said. They also said that most of the supporters of the Pink Panel would cast their votes for candidates of the pro-Awami League Blue Panel and those of the Jamaat-backed White Panel for the pro-BNP White Panel candidates. Incumbent president and general secretary of DUTA, Prof Mostafa Chowdhury of Political Science Department and Hosen Monsur of Geology have been nominated for the same posts from the Blue Panel. Prof A F M Yousof Haider of Physics Department and Prof Nazrul Islam of Psychology are contesting. See Page 12 Col 4

Beds in front of JS notice office!

Star Report
Anybody passing by the notice office of the Saragad Bhaban will come across a scene: Five-six beds outside the room. Some MPs are the 'owners' of all these beds with mattresses, quilts and pillows and people close to them spend nights there, says an employee of the notice office. "The MP shahebs living in their hostels also come for some time every night," says a guard. "The possibility of summoning Jatiya Sangsad into session by the President 'soon' has prompted the enthusiastic legislators to occupy the place. Once the session is summoned the MPs will submit questions as well as notices regarding various problems in their constituencies. Usually, MPs get two weeks time for submitting questions and notices before Jatiya Sangsad goes into a session. According to rules, the Speaker disposes of the questions and notices on 'first come first serve' basis. Some MPs, therefore, take the trouble of spending nights on the carpeted floor outside the notice office to submit their questions and notices at the beginning, and thus make sure that their questions are answered, notices disposed of, even if the session is a very brief one."

BCS (Edn Cadre) members to wear black badges Monday

By Staff Correspondent
All teachers and officials belonging to the BCS General Education Cadre will wear black badges on December 29 to demonstrate their grievances over various issues. The decision was taken at a meeting of the executive committee of BCS General Education Association held at a college in the city yesterday, says a press release. The meeting resented that there was no government decision to upgrade posts of teachers belonging to Education Cadre although 329 posts of the Administration Cadre were upgraded. The meeting also expressed anguish at the transfer of the association's vice-president and general secretary. It resolved that fresh programmes would be taken up at the January 15 extended meeting of the association if the government fails to meet their demands by that time.

Aliens without work permit worry govt

By Gonvinda Shil
The government is concerned about more than 100 foreigners working in the country without any work permit from the relevant authorities. The Board of Investment (BOI) and Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authorities (BEPZA), which work under the Prime Minister's office, have been asked by the National Security Intelligence (NSI) recently to look into these cases and make an inquiry, sources at the BOI and NSI said. Many foreigners are thought to have been working in the country's export processing zones and industrial units like garments factories, steel mills. See Page 12 Col 6

Sanskritik Jote holds function at Khagrachhari amid bomb blasts

KHAGRACHHARI, Dec 26: Leading cultural personalities have continued their campaign in the hill districts against the 'propaganda designed to foil the CHT accord', reports UNB. As part of the campaign, Sammlita Sanskritik Jote, an umbrella organisation of cultural bodies, held a rally titled 'March for Peace and Harmony'. See Page 12 Col 5

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Khaleda addresses rally at Ramna Green today

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address a rally at 'Shotayun Angon' in Ramna Green at 3 pm today, reports UNB. The leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations have been requested to join the rally, said a press release.

Padma rises, raises their hopes

PABNA, Dec 26: The water level in the river Padma, which marked abnormal rise in last one week, has started falling, but people from surrounding areas are still rushing to the river bank to see a higher water flow, reports UNB. "This is unprecedented. I never saw such a high level of water in the river during my 10 years here," Zahidul Islam, who sells tea at the Paksey ferry terminal, told a group of visiting newsmen today. In the morning of December 18, I found that water came very near to my tea stall," he said. During this time last year, water level in the country's major river stood near span No. 8 of the Hardinge Railway Bridge. But this year, water touched the span No. 10. Local people said the water level started to rise from December 18 and continued till December 24. The water level started to fall on Thursday and today. The sudden rise of water level damaged standing crops on several thousand acres of land on the river banks. Shamsuddin, a farmer of Fakirabad village in Bheramara thana, is one of those who lost their crops. But he was not very unhappy even after the boro paddy on his five acres of land got damaged. "At last, we have got water," he said. The place under the Hardinge Bridge, where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held a public meeting on January 9 last year soon after the signing of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, went under water this year. Motiar Rahman, a khalashi at Paksey-Bheramara terminal, said the water level rose by See Page 12 Col 2

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