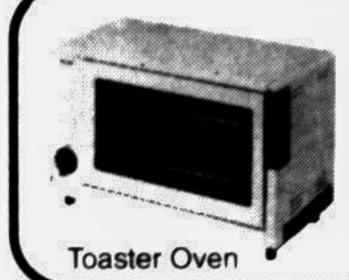
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Pubali Bank

CBA postpones

proposed strike

Union, the CBA in the bank,

has postponed its proposed

strike beginning today, reports

following discussion among

State Minister for Labour and

Manpower M A Mannan, the

CBA leaders and the bank offi-

cials at the official residence of

the state minister yesterday

evening, said an official hand-

retary M Ahsan Ali Sarkar,

Pubali Bank Managing Director

Quamrul Huda, Labour Director

M A S Talukdar, chief inspector

of Factories and Establish-

ments Abdus Samad, Employ-

ees' Union president Kamal

Uddin Ahmed, secretary gen-

eral Abul Kashem and other

central leaders were present.

mony here today.

witnesses said

the chair.

them," they said.

hill tracts region.

Jote function

From page 1

cultural function continued

amidst provocation and bomb

blasts by the anti-accord ac-

tivists in the tiny hill town.

atre actors Asaduzzaman Noor

and Khaled Khan, Samonnoy

Committee convenor Syed

Hasan Imam and journalist

Shahriar Kabir addressed the

deputy commissioner Moham-

mad Ismail and Awami League

leader Jahedul Alam also spoke

at the meeting, with Jote gen-

eral secretary Golam Quddus in

belling the peace agreement

against human rights and be-

yond Constitution are not the

real friends of the common

people. "Remain alert about

people to identify the anti-peace

elements and continue peace

and harmony among the tribals

and the Bangalees living in the

hari High School ground con-

tinued amid a series of bomb

blasts around the venue by the

anti-accord activists. Police

caught two of the trouble mak-

Alam, Kalpana Lala, Quddus

Bayati, Bipul Bhattacharya and

Faqir Shahabuddin rendered

songs while Ahkamulla recited.

RU students go on

rampage in JMB

protected area

of students of Rajshahi Univer-

sity, who came to visit the Ja-

muna Bridge, ransacked the

Customs and Excise office in

the protected area today, re-

attack at around 6 pm as they

were prevented from visiting

the protected area on the JMB

Sujan Sheikh, 25, a security

The angry students picked up

The students launched the

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 26: A group

Later singers Khorshed

The function at Khagrach-

They also called upon the

The speakers said those la-

Kalparanjan Chakma MP

Popular television and the-

The rally and the subsequent

Labour and Manpower Sec-

The decision was announced

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Down to Earth

Boom of Shopping Malls

By ASM Nurunnabi

The city's skyline is fast changing with the currently operating boom in building activities pertaining to highrise apartments, commercial and non-commercial complexes in a large part of new areas. This is a new phase of our urban development. Closely associated with the on-going building boom is the new phenomenon of growth of extravagant multistoried shopping complexes in all important areas of the city. such as Hatirpool, Elephant Road, Kakrail, Shantinagar. Maghbazar as well as in posh areas like Gulshan, Banani and These new developments are

said to be the product of emergence of new concepts arising from open market economic policies and wider horizon in commercial fields made possible in the present satellite age. As a result, by and large, the consumer psychology is found to be changing significantly. Of course, this change has been mainly brought about by an enrichment in quality and wide range of varied products, both imported and indigenous kind.

Now, what are the main reasons for the present trend of fast growing sophisticated shopping centres? The big investments that are made in building up these facilities may have come from various sources, such as bank loans, advances made by parties interested in allotment of commercial space in prime locations, remittances from abroad from parties interested in lucrative investments either as owners or partners. Another big question is how far the various businesses set up in such high-pro-

file commercial establishments yield reasonable economic returns. The present picture in this behalf does not seem to be

beauty products, imitation jewellery, home decoration items, food and beverage, though imported from the same source countries, carry different price tags at different establishments. It is obvious that customers at shops in posh areas belong mostly to a stratum of society with considerable financial clout. To them such differences in prices may not matter much. But it is a reality that there are many other customers, not accustomed to freestyle spending, yet eager to get the right quality products at the right price, might feel choosy about their selection in the face of such price differences. The prevailing situation of high price levels in selected shopping areas of the city is much like parallels to be found in Ginza area of Tokyo, Oxford Circus area of London or Fifth Avenue

It is apparent that the real estate developers in the city have been taking advantage of the current trend of building multi-storied shopping complexes. These shopping complexes with modern facilities enable customers to find all their requirements in one place. The early trend setters in modern shopping were the Eastern Plaza at Hatirpool and the Century Arcade at Maghbazar where escalators and central air-conditioning facilities were first introduced. Soon after, more and more multi-sto-

ried commercial complexes came up. Anchor Tower and Nahar Garden Plaza on Sonargaon Road are other recent examples of modern highrise commercial building. Karnaphuli Garden City being built at Kakrail is said to be the most recent example of an ultra-modern

The real problem of these high-rise shopping complexes is the one of parking. In most of these complexes there is inadequate space for car parking for the customers. As a result, acute traffic jams are created in front of these premises throughout the day. The main hazard is that, in case of fires in these congested areas, the fire fighters will be hard put to reach these places with their vehicles.

In contrast with the picture of growing highrise shopping complexes, there is the burgeoning growth of shops at all places in the city-lanes, by-lanes, streets and boulevards. As a result, the city of nearly nine million people is now virtually littered with shops of various descriptions. Although there are indications that the purchasing power of the people has not grown by a significant degree, the number of shops keeps

Economists wonder whether the steady growth of shops and shopping complexes has any rationale linked to the strength of the economy. Leaving aside this debatable issue, the present reality is that the shopping malls of the city are opening up a specific trend in the real estate sector of the country inasmuch as they are reflections of inexorable modernisation.

3 die after drinking liquor in Feni

FENI, Dec 26: The death toll rose to three as another young man died of poisoning at the Sadar Hospital here today fol-lowing drinking of country-

Muhammad, 27, of village Silonia. Two others, who died on Thursday, were Ekramul Huq Ekram, 28, and M Ibrahim,

Police said on Wednesday night, a group of young supporters of a chairman-elect consumed the liquor at Company Bazar in Sonua union within a short time, all of them fell sick.

CEC goes to Munshiganj

By Staff Correspondent Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena will visit some polling centres in Munshigani today, 19th day of the on-going Union Parishad elections across the country. **Election Commission sources**

Inter-city trains to run on

inter-city trains of Bangladesh Railway eastern and western zones will now run on the weekly holiday from December 27 to January 10 for the convenience of the passengers, a railway press release said here tonight, reports BSS.

DUTA polls From page 1

ing for the posts from the White

The other candidates of the Blue Panel are - R I M Aminur Rashid of Physics (vice president). Dr Habibur Rahman of Marketing (treasurer), Dr Abu Sara Shamsur Rouf of Phar-

Blue Panel are - Prof Ajoy Kumar Das of Applied Physics Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury of Management, Prof A T M Nurur Rahman of Bengali, Prof A B M Mahmood of History, Prof S M Immamul Haq of Soil Science, Kazi Afroj Jahan Ara of the Institute of Education and Research, Prof Kazi Salamatullah of the Institute of Food and Nutrition, Prof Md Nurul Islam of Statistics, Prof Md Shahadat Ali of Zoology

Candidates of the White Panel are - Rashidul Hasan of Marketing (vice president), Prof Rahim B Talukdar of the Institute of Business Studies (treasurer), and Dr Yousuf Kabir of Bio-Chemistry (joint secre-

White Panel are - Prof Abdul Kalam Monzoor Morshed of Bengali, Prof U A B Razia Akter Banu of Political Science, Dr A K M Nazrul Islam of Botany, Dr A K M Sirajul Islam Khan of Micro-Biology, Prof Kamal Ahasan Chowdhury of Sociology, Dr Md Abul Kaiser of the Institute of Fine Arts, Md Khalilur Rahman of Statistics and Saidur Rahman of Bengali.

Biman From page 1

before it met with the accident in Sylhet. "Such extension is not unusual. Civil Aviation Authorities had cleared it after

mestic sector, having its cascading effect on the international routes, the Biman had to engage its long-hauls to service the domestic and regional

But pressing the DC-10s or Airbuses could not free it from the logiam in the schedule. compounded by heavy fog since

Wednesday because of the fog, which blanketed the city and its suburbs, including the airport. This made the flight landing or take-offs difficult, meteorologists said. The fog clouded the vision on

Thursday too. Though lesser in intensity, it had its toll on the Biman officials said they

had to reschedule the flights yesterday while some had been delayed. Six international and four domestic flights were either de-

added.

The airliner ran its skeleton sengers from London.

Omar Gani M E S College. But organising secretary of the Mahanagar Awami League Dr Afsarul Amin and City Jubo But it had to abort its flights League leader Mamunur Rashid to Chittagong and Sayedpur because of lack of passengers, they

Netherlands ready to help develop CHT The Netherlands is ready to

provide assistance for the development of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, but a farewell to arms in the area should be ensured first, a Dutch minister has said, reports UNB.

A BNP procession in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of the CHT accord.

The agreement on the CHT "offers new potential for intensifying Dutch cooperation with Bangladesh for the development of the region," said A P W Melkert, the Dutch Minister for Social Welfare and Employ-

Addressing a press confer-



APW Melkert ence in the city yesterday at the end of his week-long visit, he said his government would consider assistance for the hill tracts region to help Dhaka tap the economic potential there.

"But it should be ensured first that no more armed struggle is continuing there," Melkert said, disclosing the Dutch government's willingness to finance development projects in the hill districts.

From page 1

leather factories and shrimp

hatcheries without valid visas.

about some restaurants and

bars in the city's Gulshan and

Banani areas, where chefs and

bearers from a neighbouring

country are being employed.

These cafes and drinking estab-

lishments are entertaining top

most business and political

The BOI recently published

an advertisement in some

dailies asking newcomers and

other aliens to report immedi-

ately to the authorities for work

NSI, at a meeting recently,

observed that some of the for-

eigners may be involved in in-

telligence work. It decided to

carry out an investigation into

Daily Star that the agency

brought the issue to the knowl-

edge of the Ministry of Home

to expel anyone found working

foreigners who had come here

for a particular consultancy or

on assignments are extending

their visas and carrying on

working on one pretext or an-

sued work permits to 190 for-

eigners during July-November

of the current fiscal 1997-98

and renewed those for 95 others.

According to BOI statistics, it

issued 622 work permits in

1996-97 and renewed for an-

other 285. In 1995-96, the fig-

ures were 476 and 242 respec-

and to seek working visas after

"Many are coming to renew

BOI sources said they had is-

without permission," he said.

"We would urge the ministry

Sources said many of the

An NSI official told The

leaders of the city.

permits.

the matter.

Affairs recently.

NSI is specially worried

He avoided a direct reply on

Aliens: Work permit

a question about the current ag itation following the CHT treaty, but observed that stepping up of economic development in the CHT region is a pre-

requisite for a lasting peace

Star photo

there. Melkert, who arrived in Dhaka on December 20, also spelled out his country's priority in future assistance for socio-economic sectors in Bangladesh.

He said they have intention to provide development assistance in the fields of basic education, health, and water sector which include flood control. land reclamation and drinking water supply.

"During our meeting with the government here, we have expressed our preparedness to look for concrete projects and programmes," said Melkert, who had words of praise about the existing ties between the two countries.

"We want to emphasise that the Dutch government is of the opinion that the relation between the Netherlands and Bangladesh during the last 26 years has been very useful indeed," he said.

Melkert highly appreciated Bangladesh's effort to eliminate child labour from its readymade garment industry. He said the subject is important because the International Labour Organisation is going to discuss the Convention of Elimination of Child Labour next year.

He said that two inspectors from Bangladesh would be trained in the Netherlands next year to look after the "core labour standard" in the industrial sector in Bangladesh.

we made the announcement," a

senior BOI official told The

Daily Star. BOI cancelled work

permits of 4-5 foreigners in the

last three months as security

intelligence found their move-

Reunion of Edward

College ex-students

held

former students of Pabna Ed-

ward College yesterday said the

college played a pivotal role in

enlightening the students be-

longing to the northern region,

Speakers at a reunion of

ments suspicious.

reports BSS.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has said his party can join the parlia-

"Let the accord be scrapped first, then we can go to parliament to discuss the specific issue of the CHT," he told UNB yesterday.

ahead with our programmes."

In reply to a question, Bhuiyan outright rejected the possibility of BNP's returning to the coming winter session of parliament, saying "there has not been any change in the situation and we'll stick to our earlier stand.

Port officials said due to

The situation in the port is improving. Deputy Traffic Manager (Operation) Kazi Abdul Momen told UNB.

Some 13 ships berthed at the inside jetty and 17 others are waiting at the outer anchorage. he said adding that less time is

now taken in the loading and The traffic manager said

there will be no waiting of the

SAGQ project

From page 1 Nepal is now the overall co-

The college was a unique institution which nourished, socialised and taught thousands of students for almost a hundred years. The teachers were remarkably honest and sincere they had caring eye and personal touch for almost every student, they recalled.

Edwardians and faculty members of the college took part in a lively four-hour-long discussion at the first convention and reunion organised by the former students at the Engineers' Institution auditorium

in the city. Edwardians Telecommuni cations Minister Mohammad Nasim and State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed who were present as special

guests, reminisced about their campus life. Mohammad Nasim said, "We want to refurbish the college to regain its past glory and heritage. We want to reform the institution as one of the best national educational institutions

which will be famous for fairness, faithfulness and discipline," he said.

that the first phase, involving identification of projects for possible implementation, would be completed within a year. However, this is likely to be delayed.

The idea of sub regional cooperation which was first mooted by Bangladesh at the SAARC foreign ministers meeting in Delhi in December last year was finally given a conceptual shape at the meeting of for-

countries. The first meeting of the four mally endorsed the idea was held at Katmandu on April 4

Although the idea of

immediate opposition from Pakistan and Sri Lanka, both the countries withdrew their objection and agreed at the last SAARC summit in Male in May last to allow projects to be undertaken on a sub-regional basis within the ambit of the seven-nation SAARC on the basis of consensus.

A fire broke out at a garments factory at Rayerbazar in the city yesterday. 3 killed, 15 hurt in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

clinics.

the bus.

Medical College Hospital. Oth-

ers took first aid from nearby

minibus overturned when it hit

the road island at about 2pm.

Local people rushed to the spot

and helped the passengers to get

out of the vehicle. Police seized

Padma rises

From page 1

about six feet that he never saw

in his last 18 years in service.

"But it helps in running the fer-

the Pump House of the North

Bengal Paper Mills, which

needs 1200 tons of water every

hour just for its operation, said

the rise in water level also came

was a nightmare for us during

the last few years, but we're now

getting that without any

labour," he said, adding that the

mill had to spend Tk 15-20 lakh

to procure water from one

faced closure during last four

Department said the flow of

Padma at the Hardinge Bridge

point was 175,000 cusecs today.

up from 75,141 cusecs on the

day a year back. The river rose

by about five feet this year, he

years due to shortage of water.

Karim said the mill often

A source at the Hydrology

"Procurement of the water

as a blessing to them.

kilometre away.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Rezaul Karim, an official at

Police said the speeding

Three people were killed and 15 others injured in separate road accidents yesterday and the day before.

Three people, including two policemen, were killed and five others injured in a road accident at Monoharpur under Jibonnagar thana in Chuadanga on Thursday night, according to

The deceased were identified as constables Abul Hossain, 45. and Iman Ali, 50, and tempo driver Rabiul Haq, 35. Police said the accident oc-

curred when a Chuadangabound bus collided head-on with a Jibonnagar-bound tempo, in which a police patrol party was returning to the thana headquarters at midnight.

the injured, ASI Mustafizur Rahman, was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with critical condition.

Other injured constables are Okalat, 27, Maruf, 40, Saidur Rahman, 35, and Jahangir, 45. The bodies were sent hospi-

tal for autopsy. Police seized the bus and a case was filed with Jibonnagar thana in this connection.

In the capital city, at least ten people, including a woman were wounded when a minibus overturned on the Manik Mia Avenue yesterday afternoon.

Of the injured, three were identified as Sufia, 27, Lucky, 3, and Abdur Razzak, 40. They were admitted to the Dhaka

and Email address: dstar@bangla.net

garments factory

city yesterday.

fire broke out in a store room of the garments factory. Apparels World Ltd, housed at the second floor of a four-storey building on Tali Office Road at about 12:30 pm.

yesterday none was inside during the fire. The origin of the fire could not be known immediately. A news agency report said that the factory was closed

Three units of Fire Brigade put out the fire in about forty minutes.

Reports on army misleading, motivated'

UNB.

In a statement released by ISPR yesterday, it said a total discipline is prevailing in the army, and its most important 'joint winter exercise' is going on with much enthusiasm.

tivities of the army were taking place under the existing laws of the State and the rules of army. The clarification came following some 'misleading and

A fire broke out at a garments factory at Rayerbazar under Dhanmondi thana in the

As the factory was closed for a long time.

A general diary was filed with Dhanmondi thana in connection with the incident.

The Army Headquarters has dismissed as misleading and motivated some sensitive and provocative reports like the army chain of command may breakdown or the resignation of three Major Generals, reports

motivated' press reports.

The ISPR clarification also

said that all administrative ac-

Fire at 'closed'

By Staff Correspondent

Fire Brigade sources said the

Wednesday night. Visibility was reduced to 20 metres after 9-30 pm on

flight schedules yesterday.

layed or rescheduled. service in domestic routes by its ATP aircraft three times to Sylhet, including one special flight to deliver the transit pas-

In a joint statement, the about 60-70 rounds of gunshot were exchanged between two ri-Chittagong city AL leaders demanded immediate arrest of the val groups at Bahaddarhat and

tively.

are: city AL vice presidents Abul Kalam Sowdagar and Dr Syedur Rahman, and joint secretaries Mahtabuddin Chowdhury and Quazi Enamul Haq Danu.

S College Students Union leaders at a joint meeting in the evening at Nasirabad C&B

3 BCL activists gunned down Colony charged the anti-liberation forces with the killing of

> those responsible for the incident and threatened to launch a movement if the culprits are not brought to book immedi-

city BCL leader K B M Shahjahan.

6 electronically operated level

By Staff Correspondent Bangladesh Railway has in-

stalled six electronically operated 'level crossing gates' in the city replacing the age-old manually operated ones.

stalled at FDC gate, Maghbazar, Pragati Sharani and Malibagh at a cost of about Tk 25 lakh These were imported from India. Railway officials said. Two other gates are at Ma-

hakhali and Staff Road in

Cantonment area. These two 'have an updated technology for their operation', and cost about Tk 20 lakh. These were gifted by the Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES). The gates operate with the help of an electrical motor giv-

ing drive to a set of gears for opening and closing of those. The device also has a microprocessor controlled uninterrupted power supply (UPS) system of 3 KVA capacity as a back up. With this back up support at least 400 operations can be made in case of power failure, an official said.

When the electrical system fails the level crossing gates can be operated manually with a cranking handle. Remote control operation of these is also possible, he said.

BNP to discuss CHT issue in JS if accord is cancelled: Mannan

ment to discuss the CHT issue only after the accord is can-

When his attention was drawn to the Prime Minister's apparent rejection of the roundtable on the CHT. Bhuiyan said, "We will move

Asked whether they are awaiting the President's decision on the issue, he said, "Let the President take his decision ... we will pursue our own politics and programme."

CFTC From page 1

gradual easing of the congestion, the CFTC has again postponed their meeting which was scheduled in Singapore today.

unloading operations.

container ships from Sunday.

ordinator of the concept of South Asian Growth Quadran-

In earlier meetings of officials, the broad terms of reference (TOR), strategy, time frame and modalities were worked out basing on a 'Concept Paper' prepared by Nepal. This was approved at a meeting of foreign secretaries at Katmandu on

April 4 this year. It was the then envisaged

Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh Lok Bahadur Srestha talking to The Daily Star said, "Progress is not that fast as planned. It is likely that the first phase would require extended time. The time frame is also expected to be discussed at the Katmandu meeting."

eign secretaries of the four

foreign secretaries that forthis year.

quadrilateral cooperation faced

very clear For one thing, various con-

sumer items such as apparels,

of New York.

shopping mall.

made liquor, reports UNB. The latest victim is Nur

26, of the same village. About 20 people, who fell ill after drinking the same liquor. are now under treatment in the local hospital and private clin-

today

Some top officials of the EC will accompany him in observing the polling in some unions of the district.

weekly holiday CHITTAGONG, Dec 26: All

macy (joint secretary). Member candidates of the

and Prof Harun Kader M Yousuf of the Department of Bio-Chem-

Member candidates of the

necessary checking", a senior Biman engineer claimed. With the disarray in the do-

> guard of a Korean construction firm and left the place with their minibus. After the incident, several hundred people from nearby villages came out with lethal weapons and damaged some ve-

approach road.

ports UNB.

hicles near the Jamuna bridge project. Additional police forces were sent to the trouble spot.

From page 1

about 15 vehicles were damaged. Police suspected that the killings were sequel to a conflict between BCL units at the Commerce College and the

blamed Nasir Bahini of Fatikchhari and BNP for the killing in a "joint operation."

culprits and lamented deterioration of law and order that enabled the miscreants to escape after the incident from the busy area of the port city. Signatories to the statement

City Chhatra League and M E

three BCL leaders. They demanded arrest of

Presided over by Mahbubur Rahman Azim, the meeting was addressed by Mamunur Rashid Mamun, M É S College students union VP and GS Mahiuddin Chowdhury and Helal Akbar Chowdhury respectively, and

crossing gates installed in city Four of these have been in-