

## Smuggled goods worth Tk 18 lakh recovered in Comilla

BDR jawans recovered a huge quantity of smuggled goods worth about Tk 18 lakh in a week-long drive at different parts of Comilla district from December 23, reports UNB.

The BDR men seized Indian saree worth about Tk 16 lakh from Dighir Bazar in Debdabbar thana.

They also recovered sugar, salt, sweater, muffer, timber, liquor and ganja from the areas, including Borodeshia Bazar, Bibir Bazar, Borobazar, Kasba, Nayanpur, Saldanadi and Gangasagar.

### Obituary

Dr Saleha Khatun, wife of late Shahabuddin Ahmed died in the city yesterday morning at the residence of her elder daughter Shireen Ahmed. She was 71. She was the eldest daughter-in-law of late principal Jalaluddin Ahmed, reports BSS.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held on December 6 at Uttara Mosque at Sector 7, Road No 1. She will be buried at the Azimpur graveyard.

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LIMITED SEATS

### Japanese envoy calls on PM

The Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Yoshikazu Kaneko, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence at Ganobhaban yesterday morning, reports BSS.

They discussed matters of mutual interest.

Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman was present on the occasion.

### UNIC organises cartoon competition

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the UN Information Service (UNIC) in Dhaka will organise a cartoon competition, reports BSS.

The aim of the competition is to hold an exhibition and a book. The main exhibition will be located at ESCAP's headquarters in Bangkok, while all entries will be copied and circulated around the region, a UN Information Centre press release said yesterday.

The competition will feature Asia-Pacific region's most eminent professional cartoonist. The cartoons (A3 size) should be based on social and economic issues of ESCAP.

Such themes may include the environment, poverty alleviation, trade, transport and development. The number of entries per cartoonist is unlimited. Three winners will be selected for prizes by a panel of judges.

The deadline for receiving cartoons at the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Dhaka is January 15. Participants are requested to contact UNIC, House 60, Road 11A, Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka for details of the competition rules and entry forms.

### BNP workers urged to step up organisational activities

City BNP convenor Sadeq Hossain Khoka, MP, has urged the party workers to step up organisational activities in the month of Ramadan to mobilise public opinion against the agreement on the CHT, reports UNB.

Addressing a joint meeting of city BNP at the party central office yesterday, Khoka said hundreds of BNP leaders and workers, including four commissioners, are now being tortured in prisons.

He called upon all to respond to the call of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia to join the movement to oust the present "fascist government" and establish a people's government.

The meeting expressed concern at the price hike of essential commodities in the holy month of Ramadan.

It has addressed, among others, Begum Selima Rahman, Mirza Abbas, Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan, Salahuddin Ahmed, Kazi Abu Bashir and Ekhlas Uddin Mollah.

### Little Theatre School invites applications

Little Theatre School, a theatre training programme for the juvenile, has invited applications for a number of seats in its first year of training, reports UNB.

The school, an initiative of Dhaka Little Theatre, will receive applications from children of 8 to 15 years of age.

Interested applicants are advised to be present for a test at Mahila Samity, Baily Road at 10 am on January 9, said a press release.



Serious traffic jam, especially during office hours, on the Khilgaon Railway Crossing Road is a common sight. Traffic jam has taken a serious turn due to closure of vehicular movement through Kamalapur-Mugda link road. The photograph was taken yesterday.

— Star photo

## Economic crisis in SE Asia forcing Bangladeshis out of jobs

A serious economic crisis in the Southeast Asian region appears to be a setback for Bangladesh's manpower export, but Dhaka is still unaware that how many Bangladeshis are going to lose their jobs.

Officials at the Labour and Manpower Ministry are sure that some Bangladeshis, now working in the region, mainly in Malaysia, will be axed from their jobs, but they are yet unable to say what will be the result.

"We'll contact the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur in a day or two to know the exact position of Bangladeshi workers there," Labour and Manpower Minister M A Mannan told UNB yesterday.

Expatriate Bangladeshi workers remitted about 1389.55 million US dollars, equivalent to Tk 6074.34 crore, during the January-November period of

1997 through legal channel. They are also believed to have sent a huge amount through illegal channel.

News reports from the Malaysian capital suggest that about one million migrant labourers, mostly from Indonesia, would lose their jobs in Malaysia due to the economic crisis that gripped the entire region.

About 250,000 Bangladeshi are now working legally in Malaysia, one of the lucrative manpower markets for Bangladesh. Thousands of others are also staying in the Southeast Asian country illegally, sources said.

South Korea, where a few thousand Bangladeshis went to earn a relatively higher income, is also facing an economic crisis which is more severe than Malaysia, and is likely to shed most of its foreign workers.

The illegal workers are going to be the first victim of the crises, the officials in Dhaka said.

The Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur wrote a letter to the Manpower Ministry informing that about 10,000 Bangladeshis have become illegal there and they should be taken back to the country.

From South Korea, about 4,000 Bangladeshis, who are overstaying there, would have to be repatriated as the authorities in Seoul would no longer allow them to work in the world's eleventh largest economy.



Post, Telecommunications, Housing and Works Minister Mohammad Nasim visited the under-construction permanent Hajj Camp at Ashkona at Uttara yesterday. — PID photo

### Salahuddin Quader Chy & his brother allege 'police harassment' on them

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury MP and his brother Gladuddin Quader Chowdhury MP have urged the Home Minister to stop what they said police harassment on them and their family members, reports UNB.

The two prominent BNP legislators submitted separate applications to Home Minister Rafigul Islam yesterday regarding "trespass" by police into their homes in Chittagong and Dhaka.

They alleged that police personnel "without any warrant of arrest or search warrant" had stormed their residences in last two weeks.

The BNP MPs said at least a dozen homes of their relatives had also been raided on the pretext of looking for them.

### 2 girl students killed in road accidents

Two girl students and a child were killed and 30 others injured in a road accident at Simulia under Mirpur thana in Bheramara on Saturday, reports BSS.

Police said the accident occurred at Simulia on Bheramara-Paona Road when a passenger bus from Kushthia collided head-on with a truck coming from opposite direction. Tuli and Popy, two students of Kushthia Polytechnic Institute died on the spot, while the unidentified child later succumbed to his injuries at Kushthia Sadar Hospital.

Twenty-two injured persons were admitted to Kushthia Sadar Hospital. The condition of other eight was stated to be critical.

A case was registered with Mirpur Thana in his connection.

### Khaleda greets Gen Than Shwe of Myanmar

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the Peace and Development Council of Myanmar on the eve of that country's national day, reports UNB.

The minister directed the BNP officials to evict the illegal occupants as soon as possible. She also advised them to speed up nationwide endeavours for protecting environmental fidelity.

The 77th auction of the 90-day treasury bill, the 68th auction of the 30-day and 180-day treasury bills and the 42nd auction of the one-year treasury bill were held yesterday.



President of the Bangladesh Diabetic Association Dr Wahid Uddin Ahmed addressing a press conference at the BIRDEM Hospital in the city yesterday.

## Metropolitan

## HERE and THERE

### Operator Unity Council

The country's cable operators held an emergency meeting in the city yesterday to discuss their business interest and problems, reports UNB.

They formed a new organisation — Bangladesh Operators Unity Council — to protect and promote their business, said a press release.

The council will specially deal with the operators problems relating to the pay channels such as ESPN, Zee Cinema and Star Movies.

Convenor of the council is Sohel Chowdhury, Joint Convenor K M Ahmed Raja and Khan Manzur Islam Palash.

### Leaders of Islamic countries greet PM

Leaders of different Islamic countries have felicitated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the people of Bangladesh on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadhan, reports BSS.

Iranian President Sayeed Mohammad Khatami in a message of greeting sent to the Prime Minister invoked the blessings of the Almighty Allah for her success and progress and prosperity of Bangladesh.

Emir of Qatar Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, heir apparent of the country Jasem Bin Hamad Al Thani and Qatari Prime Minister Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Thani in separate messages greeted Sheikh Hasina on the same occasion.

They wished good health and happiness of the prime minister and wellbeing of the people of Bangladesh.

### Habiganj incident

Seven families get Tk 50,000 each from PM's Fund

Families of the seven victims, who were killed in a police firing during a clash in Habiganj Sadar thana in December last, were given Tk 50,000 each from the Prime Minister's Fund, reports UNB.

Enamul Haq Mostafa Shabed, MP, handed over the money to the relatives of the deceased on behalf of the Prime Minister at a simple ceremony held at the Habiganj thana parishad yesterday morning.

Presided over by TNO Enamul Haq, the function was attended, among others, by Abu Leis M Munib Chowdhury MP, UP chairman Syed Ahmedul Haq and Yunus Chowdhury.

Jalal Mia, Tota Mia, Rakhesh Chandra Sutradhar, Siddique Ali, Abdul Latif, Abdul Aziz and Abdus Salam were killed in a police firing on two feuding groups at village Mosjahan in the thana on December 4.

Saidee accused of hurting religious faith of people

Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and Mukti Juddher Smriti Sangrakshan Kendra have accused Jamaat leader Maulana Delwar Hossain Saidee, MP, of hurting religious faiths of the people and the spirit of the Liberation War, reports UNB.

In a joint statement yesterday, central leaders of both the organisations thanked its Tangail district unit for foiling the meeting of "war criminal" Delwar Hossain Saidee at the district on Saturday.

They alleged that indecent remarks by Saidee against the pro-independence political parties, intellectuals and women at different parts of the country in the name of "wajid filfil" not only hurt the people's faiths, but also attacked the spirit of the Liberation War.

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