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## 50 Bangladeshis sent to jail in West Bengal

RAIGANJ (West Bengal), Dec 22: Fifty Bangladeshis, including 12 children and 14 women, were remanded to jail custody today after they were arrested from a railway station in north Dinajpur district for entering the country illegally, police said, reports PTI.

District Police Superintendent D Sukul said the Bangladeshis, residents of Ramu police station area of Cox's Bazar district, were arrested from Dalingaon railway station last night. They did not have valid papers with them.

They told the police that a tout had assured them of jobs in Arabian countries and they crossed the Indo-Bangla border in order to go to Delhi.

Sukul said a case has been registered against the Bangladeshis at the Kailganj police station.

The Bangladeshis were produced at the court of the sub-divisional magistrate, Raiganj, who rejected their bail petitions and remanded them to jail custody for 14 days.

## Khoka BNP candidate for DCC Mayor

The Dhaka city BNP leaders have endorsed the candidature of Sadek Hossain Khoka in the Mayor election which is likely to be held early next year, reports UNB.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at a meeting yesterday formally proposed the name of Sadek Hossain Khoka as the party's Mayor candidate in the upcoming election.

The meeting at her official residence last night endorsed her proposal. It was attended by

See Page 12 Col 1

## Inside Today

### Article

## Searching for the Sen Factor in Governance

Column : The Outside  
Story  
by Sabir Mustafa  
Page 4

### Focus

My critic, my friend—a  
road to better  
governance  
Page 5

## Supplement

Supplement on the  
Anniversary of Birth of  
His Majesty the  
Emperor of Japan on  
Page 10 and top half  
of Page 11

## Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
3	23	5-13	5-21
4	24	5-13	5-21
5	25	5-14	5-22

## Gas crisis deepens as supply line in Turag damaged

By Special Correspondent

The gas crisis in the city was compounded as a boat hit and damaged the submerged 12 inch diameter gas line in the Turag river below Mirpur bridge yesterday morning, Titas Gas and Transmission Company (TGTC) sources said.

The boat, however, could not be traced.

The company is now getting 594 million cubic feet (mcf) of gas a day against the demand for 620 mcf, out of which domestic and industrial consumers in the city are receiving only 190 mcf, TGTC Managing Director Sekander Hayat told The Daily Star yesterday.

Already short in supply, the TGTC system came under in-

tense pressure with the beginning of the holy Ramadan.

Hayat said the peak demand with the beginning of this Ramadan exceeded last Ramadan's 200-210 mcf making it difficult for the company to keep pace with the gas stoves burning extra time at houses and restaurants and industries raising their output for Eid market.

The crisis was compounded by a faulty compressor at Kailashilla in Sylhet which pumped 18 mcf of gas into the Titas system. The compressor was repaired yesterday afternoon.

Besides, low pressure from Bakhraabad system that pumps

60 mcf also handicapped the TGTC, he said.

To meet the extra demand, the TGTC management sought more supplies from Sangu offshore gasfield operated by Cairn energy PLC which so far provided 60 mcf. Authorities have already permitted TGTC to increase its purchase from Cairn up to 100 mcf to meet the shortage in supply.

An emergency team started repairing the damaged gas line soon after. Despite the damage, gas flow at 50 per cent was maintained to continue the supply, the MD said.

At the same time, an alternative supply system is being commissioned for Hazaribagh

and parts of Mirpur in the western part of the city affected by the damage.

He hoped that the situation would be stabilised soon.

He said that the city's gas supply would be further stabilised when the third natural gas project is completed by the year 2000, work for which began two years ago.

Part of the project aims at rehabilitating the vintage distribution network of the Sixties and Seventies which is unable to bear extra load, Hayat said.

Besides, there would be 18 new regulator stations which would ensure even flow in the system, he added.

## JP's merger plan raises new hopes in opposition camp

By Nazmul Ashraf

Now finding problems with Awami League, the party he helped form government after the 1996 general elections, General Ershad has sailed for the opposition camp.

In his bid to prove himself a "real" opposition leader, the deposed President is now busy consolidating his party to fight against the two-and-a-half-year-old AL government.

Ershad has already made substantial progress in bringing his party's breakaway faction back to his fold and winning confidence of the BNP-led mainstream opposition parties.

But influential Jatiya Party (JP) leader Anwar Hossain Manju's being in the AL cabinet appears to be a major hurdle in Ershad's understanding with the mainstream Opposition, according to key negotiators.

Reciprocating to Ershad's December 15 call, followed by his anti-government rhetoric, the Kazi Zafar Ahmed-led JP

segment has meantime decided to return to the mainstream JP through holding a "unity council" likely to be held on December 28.

Leaders of both the factions are expected to attend the "unity council", to be followed by the Zafar-led JP's own council at the Diploma Engineers' Institution in the capital, sources said.

If the JP merger takes place as planned, a grand opposition coalition in terms of common anti-government programmes could emerge with BNP and Jamaat as other partners, political sources said.

In a two-day meet earlier this week, Zafar's JP has endorsed its merger with Ershad's. But the decision for integration is conditional, explained a top leader of this faction. Ershad will have to play the role of a "real" opposition leader and his party will have to participate in the BNP-led opposition parties' street agita-

tion simultaneously, if not from a common platform.

"Ershad has already been communicated of the conditions and he's agreed," said the JP leader and a former minister in the Ershad government. "We've also informed (the BNP chief) Khaleda Zia of our decision."

Yesterday, Ershad discussed the JP's reunification move at a meeting with his party stalwarts at his Baridhara office in the city. JP secretary general Nazim Rahman Manju was among those who participated in the talks.

"We hope to endorse the proposal for unifying the two JPs in our Presidium meeting due on December 26. Also the meeting is likely to request Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju to quit the AL government and put his full might in the street agitation, he told reporters, emerging

See Page 12 Col 8

## \$137m ADB loan for flood damage rehabilitation

Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide Bangladesh with 137 million dollar, equivalent to Tk 667.60 crore, as emergency assistance for Flood Damage Rehabilitation projects, reports APB.

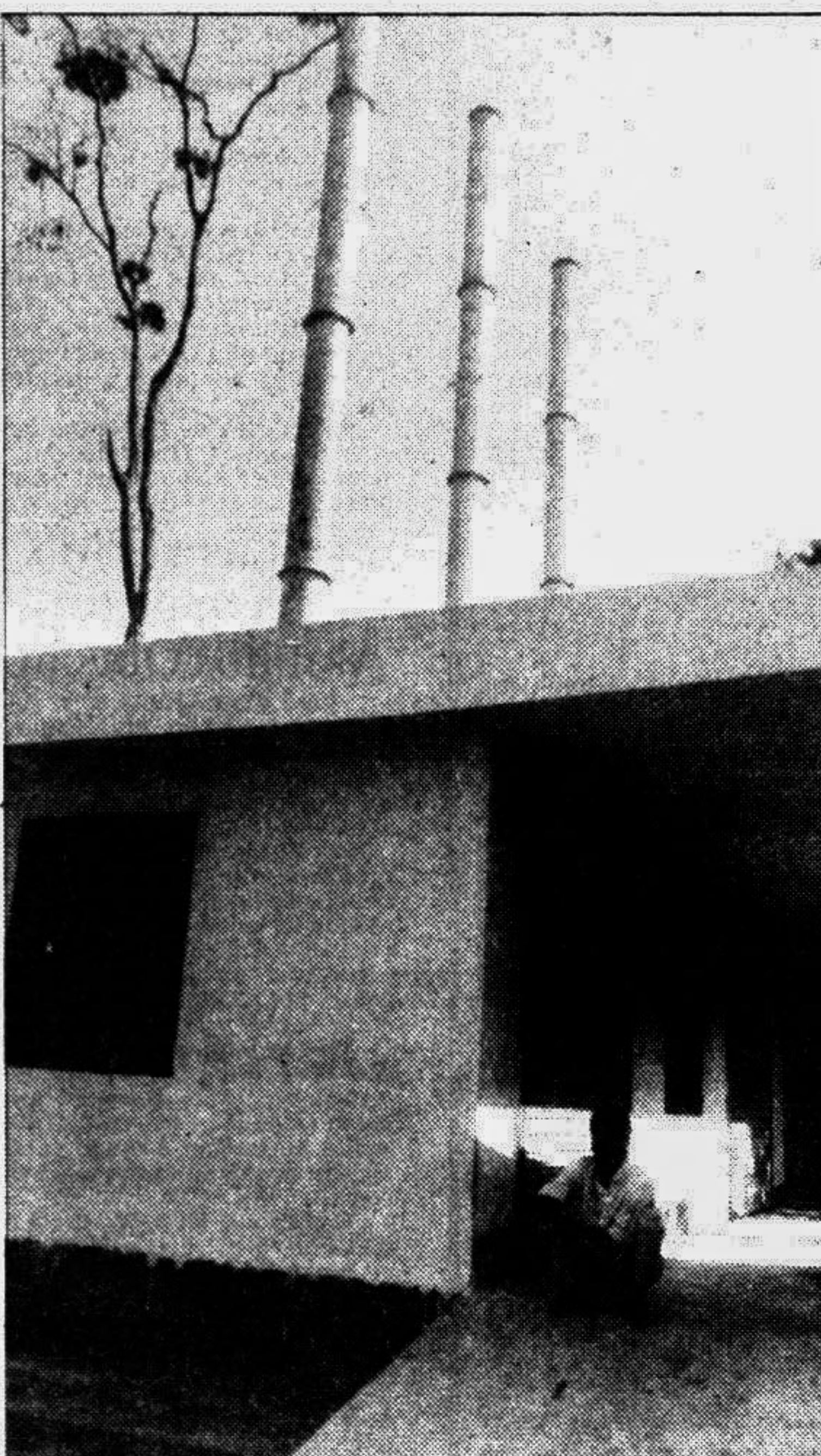
The loan will be utilised in repairing roads and railways and rural infrastructure damaged by the recent devastating floods, development of irrigation, flood control and water supply and drainage system in the urban areas.

Of the total assistance, 104 million dollar is fresh loan while 33 million dollar would be provided from an additional fund for various projects under the ADB.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the Philippines Rezaul Hossain and ADB President Mitsuo Sato signed an agreement to this effect on behalf of their respective sides at the Bank's headquarters in Manila yesterday.

The interest-free loan bearing yearly one per cent service charge, is repayable in 40 years with a 10-year grace period, said an official release.

## Deadly ways of disposing hospital waste



Unfriendly

These three exhaust pipes discharge into the air the fume from burnt medical waste generated by the 800-bed Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The Daily Star has learnt that the devices recently installed are the ones discarded in developed countries because they do more damage to environment and human health.

— Star photo

By Naimul Haq

The government has installed medical waste disposal devices that can cause deadly diseases including cancer, international environment groups warn.

The authorities have recently purchased five incinerators for the country's two biggest hospitals -- three for Dhaka Medical College Hospital and two for Chittagong.

The Daily Star has found these incinerators are based on technology already discarded in the West for being "highly environment polluting". The international groups have corroborated this paper's findings.

"Unfortunately, something discarded in developed countries has found its market in a developing nation like Bangladesh," says a Greenpeace International official.

Many environmental groups including the Greenpeace and the US-based Health Care Without Harm have pointed out that the developing nations are now witnessing a new form of toxic trade disguised as environmentally beneficial technology transfer.

"Incineration is a polluting technology. It creates the illusion that the problem has been solved, when we have simply distributed highly toxic substances into the environment and endangered our health," said Madeleine Cobbing, a UK-based Greenpeace International worker against toxics and also a co-ordinator for its campaign on PVC.

The chief executive of the company that supplied the devices also admitted that those were harmful to human health.

"The incinerators do emit toxic smoke," said managing director of Technotrade International, which imported the incinerators for the government.

"But I am not concerned about the environment. It is the government that asked for the incinerators. I am merely supplying the devices as per specification in the tender," he said.

In London, British company Technol Ltd has confirmed sale of the five incinerators to the government.

See Page 12 Col 3

## 12 killed, 45 hurt as truck rams bus in Comilla

By Staff Correspondent

At least 21 people were killed and 73 injured in seven road accidents across the country yesterday.

The accidents occurred in Comilla, Gazipur, Sirajganj, Jessore and in Dhaka city.

Our Comilla Correspondent adds: At least 12 people were killed and 45 wounded when a bus and a truck collided on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday.

The accident took place when a truck from opposite direction hit a Chittagong-bound coach from Dhaka and the bus fell into a roadside ditch at Padua near Choudhagram thana at about 1:15 pm.

Bus driver Mintu Mia, 40, of Pathor village in Kachua thana of Chandpur district and 7 unidentified passengers died on the spot. Three other injured passengers died on way to

Choudhagram thana health complex and one to Feni Hospital. Their identity also could not be known.

Of the injured, Zakir, 22, Shafique Mia, 25, Lavli, 10, Mannan, 40, Rasel, 15, Haau, 15, and Nannu, 45, were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital, three to Feni Hospital and one was taken to Choudhagram health complex.

The driver of the truck managed to flee.

The bodies were brought to Comilla Medical Hospital morgue. A case was filed with Choudhagram thana.

UNB from Gazipur adds: Two people, one of them an engineer, were killed and nine others injured in a road accident on Tongi-Ashulia road near Tongi bridge yesterday.

The accident took place at about 10 am when a Tongi-

bound truck rammed a maxi-

bound for Savar.

The dead were identified as Shafique Ahmed, 30, of Uttara thana in Dhaka and Rahim Molla, 55, of Iswardi thana in Pabna. They died on the spot.

A Sirajganj report says, three passengers of a Pabna-bound bus from Dhaka were killed and 19 others wounded at Paddhari in Ullahpara thana on Nagarbari-Bogra highway.

Police said the accident occurred when the driver of the bus lost control of the steering and fell into a roadside ditch at 7 pm.

Two persons died on the spot.

The injured persons were admitted to clinics where one succumbed to his injuries. But the identity of the victims could not be ascertained.

See Page 12 Col 6

## Road linking Dhaka, Colombo, Kathmandu proposed

Nepal has proposed direct road links between Dhaka-Colombo-Kathmandu for expanding and boosting trade and commerce in the region, reports APB.

Nepalese Ambassador in Dhaka Madhu Raman Acharya made the proposal when he called on LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman at his office here yesterday.

The Nepalese ambassador said the proposed highway would considerably reduce the existing road distance between Dhaka-Kathmandu.

Besides, it will act as a catalyst in accelerating trade, commerce and investment between Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, said an official release.

## RAJUK COMMERCIAL PLOT RE-AUCTION NOTICE

This is for information of all intending Bangladeshi nationals that a most suitable Commercial Plot more or less 4 (four) Bigha having road facilities on two sides by Dhaka Mymensingh Road (Comprising Plot No 34c 36c 38c & 40 on poet Farrukh Sharani and Plot No 61c 63c 65 & 67 on Airport Road) in Nikunja Noth, Dhaka will be allotted for 99 years lease on open auction for constructing of a Hotel of International Standard.

Prescribed application form with terms and conditions may be obtained from Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank, Rajuk Bhaban Branch, Dhaka on payment of Tk 5,000.00 (Taka five thousand) only in cash (non-refundable) from 24-12-98 to 10-1-99 during office hours and will be received by the Director (Estate) from intending persons up to 1.00 PM on 12-1-99.

Pay Order/Bank Draft for an amount of Tk 50,00,000/- (Taka fifty lakh) only in favour of Chairman, Rajuk must be furnished with the application.

The auction will be held at 11.00 AM on 14-1-99 in the conference room (3rd floor) of Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka.

Chairman

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha

Dhaka

GD-1056

## Human chain at DU to protest sexual abuse

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University students yesterday formed a human chain protesting sexual harassment of female students allegedly by a section of their teachers.

The chain, starting from the Aparajeya Bangla on the campus at noon, was organised by students united under the banner of "Students' Protesting Sexual Harassment".

The students demanded exemplary punishment to the teachers accused of sexually assaulting female students of the university. They also demanded making public immediately all the probe committee reports on sexual abuses by teachers so far.

They urged the authorities to frame a code of conduct to prevent sexual assaults in future

and inclusion of a female student in the fact finding committee probing the allegation against an international relations teacher for sexual harassment.

A student of public administration complained to the Vice Chancellor on November 30 that Prof. Shahiduzzaman of International Relations had sexually harassed her in his room on November 29.

Meanwhile, the DU Paribesh Parishad at a meeting with the vice-chancellor in the chair yesterday decided to ask the probe committee to complete its job in the next 15 days, a DU press release said.

The Parishad in a resolution asked all the aggrieved students

See Page 12 Col 1

## Nat'l water policy announced

The first ever National Water Policy was announced yesterday aiming at ensuring optimal development and management of water resources, reports UNB.

Announcing the policy at a press conference, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said it would benefit both individual and the society at large. Extensive damage has already been caused in absence of a policy, he said.

Giving an outline of the policy, Water Resources Secretary Dr A T M Shamsul Huda said the objective of the policy is to address issues related to the harnessing and development of surface water and ground water and management of these re-

sources in an efficient and equitable manner.

Objectives are also to ensure the availability of water to all elements of the society, decentralisation of the management of water resources and to develop a legal and regulatory environment.

To address these issues the Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO) will delineate the hydrological regions for planning the development of their water resources and the WARPO will prepare and periodically update a National Water Management Plan (NWMP).

Under the policy, the government through its agencies will undertake comprehensive

See Page 12 Col 4

## Smuggled goods flood Ctg port area

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 22: The outer anchorage of Chittagong Port has turned into an 'open market' of smuggled goods dropped from foreign cargo vessels due to lax anti-smuggling drive, sources said.

Some feeder vessels operating between Chittagong and Singapore regularly and some other foreign cargo ships calling at the port are engaged in bringing smuggled goods which are sold to their identified

clients waiting at the outer anchorage in mechanised boats.

About 100 mechanised boats carry those smuggled goods — particularly foreign contraband cigarettes, electronic items, crockeries and gold to convenient points on the shore for despatch to the city and other parts of the country, the sources said.

The smuggled goods reach the city through different routes in Patenga coastal area. Mura-

light, Chandgao, Malumghat, Anwara, Patiya, Cox's Bazar and other areas.

Smuggled goods are also brought aboard some scrapships which arrive here from foreign ports.

Anti-smuggling team of Chittagong Customs House hardly go for patrolling at the outer anchorage or raids in Patenga coastal areas where unloading of smuggled goods from mechanised boats is a regular

scene, the sources mentioned.

Talking to this correspondent, Commissioner of Chittagong Customs House Abul Kasem said "Our anti-smuggling team go for patrolling on receipt of specific information, but no routine patrol was possible as it needs huge fuel cost against our two patrol boats."

"On the other hand, we don't have shallow patrol boats for which we already wrote to the

See Page 12 Col 2

## National Export Trophy for the Year 1997-98

It is for information of all concerned that for greater participation of country's leading exporters for the selection of National Export Trophy for the year 1997-98 the authorities have been pleased to extend the date of submission of application for above purpose from 20th December '98 to 31st December '98.

2. Application in prescribed form duly filled in must reach the undersigned on or before 31st December, 98. For further information, Export Promotion Bureau may please be contacted.

Major (Rtd) A K M Nizamul Alam  
Director (Commodities-1)

GD-1058