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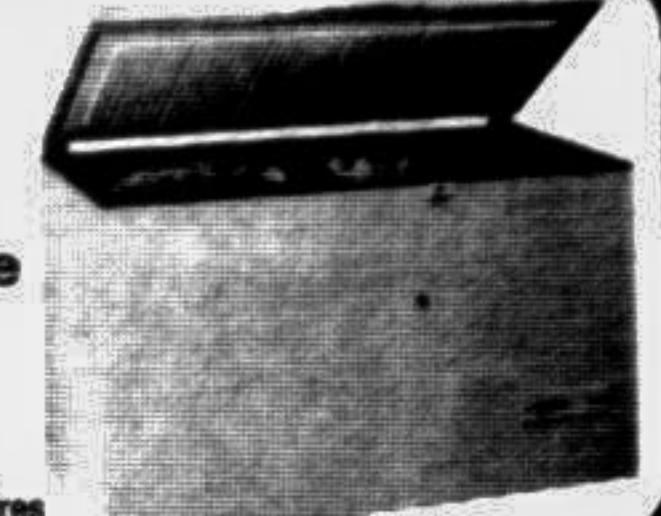
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Lankan team due today to visit CHT

KHAGRACHHARI, Dec 25: A 15-member delegation from Sri Lanka arrives in Dhaka today on a tour of the three hill districts following the historic CHT peace agreement, reports APB.

The team led by minister for social services Bertie Premalal Dissanayake, during its two-day stay in CHT, will gather experiences on the post-peace accord situation in the hill districts for its possible application in bringing peace in the strife-torn Sri Lanka.

The delegation comprises members of parliament, monks, peace campaigners and journalists.

The team will meet PCJSS chief Santa Larma, tribal leaders Upendra Lal Chakma, Hangshadha Chakma, educated section of the tribal communities and leaders of Bangalee Krishak-Sramik Kalyan Parishad and Adibashi Bangalee Sangsad.

It will visit Dighinala where tribal refugees from India have been rehabilitated.

The Sri Lankan team will also discuss various aspects of the peace accord and the on-going process of its implementation with the senior army officers there.

On conclusion of the visit, they will hold a press conference at Khagraghbari Circuit House Sunday evening.

10 hurt as dock workers clash at Ctg Port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 25: At least ten persons were injured in a clash between two rival groups of dock workers in front of the booking office at Chittagong Port this evening, police and port sources said.

The clash erupted at one stage of alteration between the two groups of registered and unregistered dock workers at 5 pm over payment of incentive money, police said.

During the clash, both the groups chased each other.

Police immediately rushed to the spot and dispersed the clashing groups.

Maid allegedly commits suicide

A maid allegedly committed suicide at her employer's residence in the city's Shahjahanpur area yesterday, reports APB.

Police and hospital sources said Lipi, 17, of village Velgua in Shibganj thana of Bogra district allegedly committed suicide at her employer's 501, North Shahjahanpur residence in the early hours of yesterday.

Quoting the FIR, police said Lipi had gone to bed after taking sheri at about 2 am. But in the morning, the family members found her dead in the kitchen.

Being informed, Motijheel police rushed to the scene and recovered the body. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Motijheel thana registered an unnatural death case.

Bin Laden's call to kill Britons, Americans

CAIRO, Dec 25: The Muslim militant Osama Bin Laden has urged Muslims to kill Americans and Britons for supporting their armed forces' attacks on Iraq, according to an interview with an Arabic newspaper, reports AP.

The British and the Americans loudly declared their support for their leaders' decision to attack Iraq, "Bin Laden said in today's edition of the newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat.

This made it "the duty of Muslims to confront, fight and kill (Britons and Americans)," Bin Laden said. "And anything that can be taken from them by force is the rightful prize of Muslims."

Religious rights

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Addressing the gathering, Hasing said the main teaching of all religions is humanity and love for mankind.

She said "Love to humanity ... Islam also speaks of doing maximum good to the people."

The Prime Minister expressed her gratitude to the Christian community for their role during the recent devastating flood. With united efforts of all sections of society, the nation could successfully overcome the situation, she said.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman incorporated secularism in the Constitution to ensure religious freedom for all sections of society, she said, adding that the Awami League manifesto also upholds secularism.

Archbishop Michael Rozario and Bishop B B Mandal also spoke on the occasion. Reverend Michael Susamoy Das conducted a prayer after the function.

## Down to Earth

### Is it really a shoppers' paradise?

By A S M Nurunnabi

In a shopper's mind, an impression has gradually formed itself that in the Dhaka city there is a place named Bangabazar where consumer items like summer and winter dresses, children's wear, sarees and many other consumer items are available at cheap prices.

At one stage in recent past, this impression grew to such an extent that Bangabazar became a by-word for buying consumer goods on the cheap, and as such it enjoyed high popularity as a shopping centre.

There have been several factors for bringing Bangabazar into the lime-light. Foremost among them has been the rapid growth of garments industry in and around the city producing various types of apparels for exports to various countries.

Such garments industries using modern equipment for large-scale production of various kinds of garments gave a boost to the economy by earning substantial foreign exchange and providing employment to a large volume of women force.

The labour cost in such industries has been comparatively low. An incentive for fast growth of these industries has also been provided by liberal imports of foreign-made fabrics which have played an important part in producing garments of good quality. This, coupled with cheap labour, has helped production of garments of various kinds at low costs.

In course of production of such large volumes of garments manufactured according to specifications of foreign buyers, there has also appeared a good quantity of defective items of garments which are not accepted by foreign buyers. These defects may not be conspicuous in many cases but the foreign

buyers tend to be very meticulous in accepting garment items before export.

A good part of such rejected items find their way into various retailing outlets. Bangabazar happens to be one of the major outlets in the city for such goods. This, however, does not imply that all the various items of garments sold at Bangabazar are defective in one way or other. But the point is that even in cases of defects, they happen to be so inconspicuous and subtle that it may not be possible for many consumers to detect them. In most cases, it is usual for sellers to demand low prices for their goods.

Even for garments with minor defects or without defects, there is a tendency among the sellers at Bangabazar, as observed by many shoppers, to demand a high price initially for any item. The bargaining game is one important aspect of shopping at Bangabazar.

It is very essential that the sellers are not allowed a long rope in the bargaining game. The buyer also needs to be proficient in hard bargaining before clinching a deal. Otherwise he is likely to be a loser.

Another aspect which a buyer needs to be cautious about is that sometimes second-hand clothes are sought to be passed off as new ones at Bangabazar and prices are demanded accordingly.

This phenomenon has been observed to be common in view of large-scale imports of old clothes from some foreign countries. The condition of some of the imported old clothes is such that they almost look like new and this helps the dishonest shopkeepers to cheat the shoppers.

Some of these factors go to affect the image of Bangabazar

as a cheap place for shopping. There are some other factors which do not help in maintaining that image. Observers have noted that a similar shopping centre is gradually coming up on the first floor of the extended part of the city's New Market where the ruling prices are comparable to those at Bangabazar.

Of course, the notion of fixed price does not prevail here as elsewhere in many places in the city. As a result, a shopper needs to have adequate bargaining ability at this place also. Besides this, city dwellers observe a large concentration of street hawkers around Baitul Mokarram and GPO areas who deal in various kinds of garments at prices comparable to those at Bangabazar.

Whatever distinction Bangabazar might have acquired as an attractive place for shopping at convenient prices has been eroded considerably by environmental factors like heavy assemblage of customers in the narrow lanes of existing shops at the bazar and difficulties of access to that area on account of existence of a terminal for buses plying on suburban routes.

The bottom line is that on account of substantial growth of garment industry, garments of various descriptions are available at affordable prices at particular locations in the city, besides Bangabazar.

Of course, the proclivity for engaging in bargaining game is present at most of such places. However, by and large, the general impression of Bangabazar as a shoppers' paradise has been much watered down lately on account of other competitive factors, some of which have been outlined above.

The X-mas celebration includes special prayers at all churches of the country, signing of Christmas Carol, visit to the friends houses, wishes from Santa Claus with gifts and cakes for children, decoration of houses and churches with the X-mas trees, family reunions and feasts.

Thousands of devotees gathered in all churches across the country in the early hours of yesterday and prayed for peace and prosperity of the country.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has expressed concern at the press reports in the last few days regarding involvement of DU teachers in various immoral activities.

The DUTA stand on this issue is that punitive actions would be taken against those found guilty through investigation, a DUTA press release said yesterday.

DUTA condemned such "malicious campaign" when investigation into the allegations is in progress and urged all to refrain from this.

VC blames

From Page 1

tivated allegations against him.

He said the female student centring whom the allegation was made had submitted a rejoinder to the chairman of the department that she did not lodge any complaint.

Talking to this correspondent at the TSC yesterday evening, he threatened to teach the outsiders a lesson.

Meantime, the "Students Protesting Sexual Harassment" will bring out a procession on the DU campus at 11 am today with the participants wearing mask.

It may be recalled here that some female teachers of the university had met with the Vice-chancellor recently to know about the action being taken concerning the allegation by a female student of public administration against Prof Shahiduzzaman of International Relations.

Dock workers

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With the implementation of the incentive scheme for some 5000 dock workers and 1500 staff of the port, the wages of the workers will enhance by 25 per cent while the productivity of the port will also increase by 40 per cent, officials of the Chittagong Port said.

Petrobangla

From Page 1

The effective exchange rate in Bangladesh is also determined on the basis of a currency basket containing 15 currencies, he pointed out.

The source further said, "Usually unmanned gasfield operations are safe where there is more than one field in the same area and there are some supervisors. Ultimately human intervention is important. But in Sangu, Cairn or its partner Brown and Roots do not keep full time supervisors. Although Petrobangla is the owner of the gasfield, it also does not have a full time official supervisor."

Petrobangla is now questing the technical skill of Cairn's partner Brown and Roots which helped develop the Sangu field and set up the gas processing plant at Chilimpur.

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Although the new euro currency will be introduced on January 1, its transaction by Bangladeshi banks will be allowed only after a thorough study, central bank officials said here yesterday, reports APB.

"We have nothing to hurry," said Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Mohammad Farashuddin when his attention was drawn to reports that the banks would start transactions in the euro as soon as it is introduced.

The central bank officials said the banks, both local and foreign, would be allowed to make transactions in the new European single currency upon recommendations by an expert committee which is studying the matter.

A five-member committee, headed by BB Deputy Governor Dr Mohammad Sohrab Uddin, is studying the matter in details and is expected to come up with recommendations by Wednesday.

The committee formed with bankers and private sector representatives is examining the

possible impact of the new euro money on Bangladesh's external trade, the officials said.

Almost 45 per cent of Bangladesh's exports go to the European Union (EU) countries.

The BB Governor said since taka is pegged to the US dollar, the banks operating in the country would not immediately require to handle transactions in the new currency.

Besides, the euro would be available for business transactions from next January and the currency notes are coming only after three years from 2000. "It will give us the necessary time to adjust," Dr Farashuddin said.

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