



As the New Year and Eid-ul-Fitr approaching, youths, especially, the young girls, throng different shops at New Market for buying greeting cards. — Star photo

### Body formed to investigate power system loss

A meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry was held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with its chairman Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah in the chair, reports BSS.

It discussed the ways to control "system loss" of electricity. A four-member sub-committee was also formed in the meeting to investigate the causes of the system loss and other irregularities.

Headed by AB Tajul Islam, the committee will submit a report after the investigation. Other members of the committee are A K M Shamim Osman, Abdul Mukit Khan and Mahabubur Rahman.

The meeting also reviewed the measures undertaken to ensure smooth supply of electricity and fuel during the next irrigation season. It stressed the need for taking effective measures to ensure continuation of irrigation activities during the season.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam attended the meeting.

### Call to boycott SA Khaleque

National Awami Party (Bhashani-Rouf) yesterday urged all political parties to boycott SA Khaleque of Moulvibazar saying he created an embarrassing situation for both Awami League and the BNP by his political somersaults on December 24, reports BSS.

In a statement, NAP President Abdur Rouf Ahmed also blasted BNP for its false and imaginary "propaganda" to tarnish the image of Awami League and the DGFI by issuing statements in the newspapers.

The NAP president branded SA Khaleque as an "opportunist" and a symbol of political turncoat and urged the countrymen to remain alert against such "hypocrites".

He said the people of the country watched SA Khaleque joining the Awami League on television screen. But he conveniently changed colour to tarnish the image of the party.

### Road accident Traffic police killed in city

By Staff Correspondent

A traffic police on duty was crushed under wheels of a speeding autorickshaw at Mauchak area in the city yesterday morning.

Police identified the victim as Mosharrar Hossain, 33, a constable of traffic division. The incident took place at about 7-30 am when a speeding autorickshaw hit the traffic constable. The vehicle soon sped away.

He was first sent to Rajbargh Police Line Hospital. As his condition deteriorated, he was later rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending physicians declared him dead.

A case has been filed with Ramna police in this connection.

### Arms recovered, one arrested

SATKHIRA, Dec 30: Kalaroa thana police recovered on shutter gun with five live bullets and arrested one person in this connection from Jughkhal village near Kalaroa thana on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off Kalaroa thana police, led by OC Hashem Khan, raided the house of one Robiul Islam of village Jughkhal and recovered one shutter gun with five live bullets from the house.

Police arrested Robiul Islam in this connection. A case was filed with Kalaroa thana.

### Dev work of 175 edn institutions completed

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 30: Facilities Department completed the development work of 175 educational institutions in 13 thanas of the district in the 1997-98 fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the institutions are: Five in Astagram thana, five in Itna, twenty-one in Katiadi, fifteen in Karimganj, fifteen in Kuliachar, seven in Tarail, ten in Nikli, twenty-six in Pakundia, seventeen in Bajitpur, fourteen in Bhairab, nine in Mithaman, twelve in Hossainpur thanas and nineteen in Sadar thana.

### BOUTA office bearers

Prof Abdul Awal Khan of the School of Business and Management, Prof Muhammad Saifur Rahman (School of Science and Technology), joint secretary — Ashfaq Hussain (SS HL), treasurer — Dr Kaji Muhammad Galib Ahsan (School of Business) and secretary for research, publication and cultural affairs — Jobeda Akhter (Open School).

The members are: Sufia Begum, Muhammad Rahman (School of Business), Muhammad Anwarul Islam, Syeda Ifteara Khanam and Irin Farzana.

## ODS consumption rate growing faster Aerosol industry main user of ozone depleting substance

Consumption of ozone depleting substances (ODSs), still well below the allowable limit, is growing at a fast rate, with the aerosol sector alone commanding three-quarters of total ODS use in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

According to surveys of Department of Environment (DOE), halon, carbon tetrachloride, methylochloroform and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are among the ODSs being imported and used in the country.

Besides aerosol spray industry, the refrigeration and air-conditioning servicing sector, ice cream factory, cold storage and mobile freezing vans are the main users of ODSs.

In 1995, Bangladesh imported 328.2 metric tons of ODSs and used 305.8 tons while in 1996, the import rose to 690.5 tons of which 687.6 tons were used.

The aerosol industry alone uses 520 tons of CFCs, one of the substances responsible for depleting the ozone layer in the atmosphere.

Environment officials and economists at a workshop in the city yesterday felt the urgency of evolving a policy and institutional framework to expedite the ODS phase out, which is mandatory for Bangladesh as one of the 156 countries to subscribe to the Montreal Protocol.

Speaking at the workshop at Sonargaon Hotel in the morning, they expressed concern

over the harmful impact of the depletion of ozone layer in the stratosphere and its economic, human health and environmental implications.

Department of Environment (DOE) organised the workshop on "Draft Report on Phase Out of ODSs in Bangladesh: Economic Implications and Policy Issues."

Senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Debapriya Bhattacharya was the key-note speaker at the working session.

Addressing the inaugural session, Environment Secretary Syed Marghub Mursheed stressed the need for specific policy to control import and use of ODSs. Bangladesh will have to reduce the use of some ODSs, including CFCs by 2010, and some others by the year 2015 and 2040.

He said the Ozone Cell, formed by the government, conducted survey to assess the consumption of ODSs in '95 and '96, and the survey for '97 is also on the final stage.

DOE Director general AR Khan said a project is under implementation to make aerosol sector CFC-free. On completion of the project in 2000, the use of ODSs in Bangladesh will reduce by 75 per cent, the DG hoped.

National Project Director of ODS Phase-Out Project of DOE Abdus Sobhan also spoke on the occasion.

In his keynote paper, Debapriya Bhattacharya said per capita ODS consumption has increased from approximately 1.82 grams in 1992 to about 5.64 grams in 1996, recording a growth rate of 76.92 per cent per annum in Bangladesh.

He said the trend rate of ODS consumption growth in aerosol sector was more than 126 per cent during 1992-96 period. However, in spite of this high growth rate, the ODS consumption level here remains far below the allowed ceiling of 33 grams.

ODS import to Bangladesh rose by 40 per cent per year, from 262.7 tons in 1992 to 690.5 tons in 1996, he pointed out, stressing the need for strengthening the monitoring of ODS import and consumption.

Bhattacharya estimated that the sectoral incremental costs of ODS phase out in Bangladesh would be 318.54 million US dollar whereas the incremental costs for institutional measures would be around 370,000 dollar.

He argued that the country should more actively use fiscal policy instruments for reducing the incremental costs of ODS phase-out.

Children who won the painting competition on the occasion of September 16 International Ozone Day this year, were given prizes at the function.

Ahmad Rafiq Bin Habib, 6, a student of Udayan Bidyalaya and son of engineer Habibul Alam, won the first prize.

### Eight hurt in clashes at Babubazar

By Staff Correspondent

At least eight people, including three teenagers, were injured in a series of clashes between two rival groups of local hoodlums at Babubazar under Lalbagh thana in the city yesterday.

The injured are identified as Hasina Begum, 30, Saifullah, 45, Arif, 12, Jipu, 12, Humayun, 34, Solayman, 32, Shentu, 12 and Rehana, 24.

Hospital sources quoting the relatives of the injured said the clash started in the morning at around 7 am. Two groups of miscreants of Kamrangirchar and Shaheednagar locked into a clash and hurled several bombs over establishing supremacy in the area. Hasina Begum received injuries and she was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The groups again locked into a clash in the evening and exploded several crackers to create panic in the area in which many received injuries. They were sent to the DMCH.

When contacted, Lalbagh police admitted of the incident but said no complaint was filed with the thana.

### Illegal passports, bombs recovered: Nine arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested nine people and recovered bombs and 126 illegal passports from their possession in separate incidents in the city in two days.

Acting on a tip-off, DB police raided different parts of Segun Bagicha and Bijnayagar area and arrested one Mohammad Kazal on charge of selling phensidyl on Tuesday evening. He was charged in three cases, police said.

In another raid, Badda thana police arrested four dacoits of an inter-district gang on Tuesday night. They are Bilal Hossain, Sukur Ali, Anjum Ali and Sadek.

Hazaribagh police arrested two persons — Solayman and Kanchan alias Liton — from near the Ganakuti Sweeper Colony on Tuesday evening and recovered a dagger, a sword and 25 bombs from their possession.

During another raid on a travelling agency office at Mottijheel, police arrested Nasuddin alias Nasir and recovered 126 passports from his possession on Monday noon.

Separate cases have been lodged.

### Outlawed partymen kill 2 in Meherpur

MEHERPUR, Dec 30: Two young men were slaughtered allegedly by an outlawed partymen on Saturday in village Khuksha under Meherpur Sadar thana, reports BSS.

Factional conflict was reportedly the cause of this killing. The victims were identified as Nasim Raza, 30, of village Khuksha and Azmat Ali 30 of village Ramdaspur of the district.

According to police sources, the extremists forcibly took the victims to a barren field in village Khuksha and slaughtered them.

A case was filed with Sadar thana in this connection.

### Food procurement drive may not achieve target in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 30: The target of government food procurement drive may not be achieved in 13 thanas during the current season here, reports UNB.

The government price fixed for the purchase of foodgrains is lower than the existing market price.

Official sources said a target of purchasing 3,000 metric tons of rice and 1,000 metric tons of paddy has been fixed through nine purchasing centres during the current procurement drive in the district.

Meanwhile, the procurement drive has been launched on November 1. Since then up to December 26 the Food Department could not purchase a single kg of rice or paddy due to high price prevailing in the markets here.

The local farmers said they are not interested to supply their paddy or rice to the government purchasing centres as the selling price of paddy and rice in the local markets is higher than the government purchasing rate.

Aman paddy is being sold in different markets at Tk 8/9 per kg and rice at Tk 17.19 whereas the government rate is Tk 7.60 and Tk 12 respectively.

Besides, from the beginning of the harvesting season prices of new rice and paddy have been showing upward trend following the extensive damage of Aman crops by recent flood.

The local small and marginal farmers including the share-croppers urged the authority concerned to take immediate steps for proper food procurement policy in the district.

### Chehlum

The chehlum of Jebunessa Jahangir, wife of Saheed Lt Col Jahangir, will be held tomorrow at her 16 New Eskaton residence, reports BSS.

A *milad mahfil* will be held and prayers will be offered on the occasion after Asr prayers on the day.

Relatives and well-wishers of Ms Jebunessa have been requested to attend the *milad mahfil*.

### Two alleged criminals held

By Staff Correspondent

Police, after an exchange of gunshots, arrested two alleged criminals and recovered two sawed-off rifles from their possession at Kazipara area in the city yesterday evening.

The miscreants were identified as Masud Parvez and Monir Hossain Kiran.

According to Kafrul, police, a squad of police led by Office-in-Charge (OC) Abdur Rashid Sikder acting on a tip-off conducted a raid at East Kazipara.

But the miscreants, surmising the presence of police opened fire and tried to flee the scene.

During the encounter, police fired about 18 shots.

Later, police arrested two of the miscreants, who took shelter in a house at Kazipara Matbarbari Pukur ghat area.

Police interrogating the arrested persons to nab other accused and seized arms used during the attack.

### 421 mt foodgrains for food for works programmes

BANDARBAN, Dec 30: A total of 421 metric tons of foodgrains have been allocated for maintenance of rural roads under Test Relief and Food for Works programme during the current fiscal year here, reports UNB.

Official sources said some 152 schemes have already been implemented under the Test Relief programme in the district.

Besides, another 28 schemes will be completed under the Kabikha project by next June here.

Meanwhile, two union parishad chairmen of Thanachhi and Lama thanas have been barred from distribution of relief materials following the complaints of irregularities in distribution of VGF cards.

Further investigation against them is on, the sources added.

### 11 arrested in Sylhet

SYLHET, Dec 30: Police in separate raids on Friday and Sunday arrested 11 people here, reports UNB.

Kotwali police nabbed five people from a hotel at Jail road in the town.

The arrested were identified as Ibrahim Ali, Imamuddin, Shamsul Haq, Majed Ali and Helaluddin. They were wanted in connection with dacoity, theft and other criminal cases, on Sunday.

On Friday, police arrested Mintoo, Wahid, Shaesta Mia and Fatim from Milachhara and Chanpur village in Fenchuganj thana. They were wanted in connection with a woman repression case.

In another raid on the same day, police caught two muggers — Abdur Rahman and Jahangir Hossain — red-handed from Sarakar ghat in Jaintapur thana. They were sent to jail hjat.

### Gazetted Officers' Hostel Welfare Assoc executives

A S Mahmud and Sheikh Mohammad Billal Hossain were elected president and General Secretary of the Gazetted Officers' Hostel Welfare Association respectively for 1999-2000, reports BSS.

The biennial election of the 17-member Executive Committee of the Association was held recently at its Green Road office here, a press release said yesterday.

The other office-bearers are: vice presidents — Abdur Razzaque and Dr Nazmul Alam Khan; assistant general secretaries — Samar Kumar Ghosh and A K M Ashraf Haque; finance secretary — Zahurul Islam; publicity secretary — Anjali Rani Chakrabarti, cultural and sports secretary — Swapan Kumar Sarker, social welfare secretary — Ohidul Islam and office secretary — Altaf Hossain.

The members are: Ms Amin, Amulya Kumar Deb Nath, Abdul Berek, Abdus Samad, Anwar Hossain and Habibur Rahman.

### Shiblinga stolen

RAJSHAHI, Dec 30: A 200 year-old Shiblinga was stolen from a Kali Mandir adjacent to the Central Jail in the city in the early hours of yesterday, police said, reports APB.

The burglars entered the temple by breaking open the door and took away the 3-foot long idol.

A case has been filed with Rajpara thana.

### Action against extortionists on Aricha road soon

MANIKGANJ, Dec 30: A joint meeting of district administration and transport owners yesterday decided to take steps against illegal extortion from goods-carrying trucks plying Dhaka-Aricha highway, reports APB.

Sources said an organised gang of miscreants had been extorting Tk 320 to Tk 520 from each truck at different points on the highway, and thus illegally realising about Tk 5 lakh per month.

The decision to crack down on extortionists came after several incidents of road blockade, clash and demonstration occurred on the highway in recent times protesting against extortion, sources said.

The meeting, attended by officials of local administration and truck owners and workers, was held at the DC office here with Deputy Commissioner Abdur Razzak presiding.

The local administration took the step following a directive from the Home Minister who was approached by Truck Owners Association seeking his cooperation in curbing extortion on the highway.

Police Superintendent Helal Uddin, president of the Truck Owners Association Khabirul Alam Chowdhury, general secretary Monayem Khan and leader of Truck Workers Association Khabirul Alam were present at the meeting.

### Shaheed Minar becomes safe haven for anti-socials

The Central Shaheed Minar premises has become a safe haven for anti-social elements, reports UNB.

Also considered a den for drug addicts and professional blood donors, it has now become a launching pad for floating sex workers and muggers.

Everything has gone away at this sacred ground in absence of a regular lighting system in and around the Shaheed Minar premises. Also, there is no boundary wall to protect the premises from trespassers, nor there is proper security.

Even the saplings are not immune from attacks by the anti-social elements.

"Shimul" saplings planted by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina beside the Shaheed Minar are no longer there. These were damaged by trespassers.

"Except on Amar Ekushey, Victory Day and Independence Day, none comes to see what is happening in the Shaheed Minar," alleged its aggrieved caretaker, Ashraf Hossain Bisha.

Bisha, a Class IV employee of the Public Works Department, seems frustrated as none came in rescue despite his repeated appeals to ensure the sanctity of the Shaheed Minar.

He said he sent letters to all concerned, including the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and the Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University, urging for help to maintain the sanctity of the monument.

Bisha said that he also lodged general diaries (GDs) with Ramna thana informing them about everything happening at the Shaheed Minar premises. But still there is no sign of any permanent security measures.

"Sammitla Sangskritik Jote general secretary Golam Qudus informed me that there'll be a boundary wall. I don't know when?" he said with deep frustration.

### BCL factions to merge into one unit

Various factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League, who believe in "scientific socialism," will merge into one unit aimed at launching an effective student movement for greater national interest, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (Chhatra Karim), BCL (Swapan Anwar) and BCL (Kader-Haider) groups will unite together through a press conference at the DUCSU Cafeteria today noon, said a press release.

Former and present student leaders, activists and supporters of the three groups will attend the conference.

### Road accidents kill 430 in four years

MYMENSINGH, Dec 30: Some 430 people died and 600 others were injured in road accidents in the district during the last four years, reports UNB.

According to BRTA, 142 people died and 300 others were injured in the current year while 108 were killed and 149 injured in 1997, 100 were killed and 87 sustained wounds in '96 and 80 died and 100 were injured in '95.

But the unofficial sources claimed the casualty was much higher.

Over the 500 mishaps occurred during the period, most of these took place on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, the sources said.

### New convening body of Demra BNP

A new convening committee of BNP Demra unit was formed yesterday dissolving the previous one, reports UNB.

The committee was formed at the directive of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia with ward commissioner Nabiullah Nabi as its convenor.

### Child killed in Chandpur

CHANDPUR, Dec 30: A child was killed and 50 people were injured when local people went berserk at Govindi village in sadar thana following a boat capsized in the river Meghna, reports UNB.

The angry mob also gouged out the eyes of a young man identified as Babul Bari (30) and burnt his 6-month-old child to death.

Witnesses said a group of 5,000 villagers went on rampage after a boat capsized in the river on Monday that left three fishermen drowned.

They said the angry villagers also kidnapped four people and looted 24 houses before setting them on fire, leaving 200 people homeless.

Deputy Commissioner Rezaul Karim, Police Super AKM Shahidul Haque and other officials visited the spot.

### Dev work of 175 edn institutions completed

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According to official sources, the institutions are: Five in Astagram thana, five in Itna, twenty-one in Katiadi, fifteen in Karimganj, fifteen in Kuliachar, seven in Tarail, ten in Nikli, twenty-six in Pakundia, seventeen in Bajitpur, fourteen in Bhairab, nine in Mithaman, twelve in Hossainpur thanas and nineteen in Sadar thana.

### Govt urged to set up university in Munshiganj

The Greater Dhaka District 'Karmajibi samity' has reiterated its demand for setting up of a university under the name of Atish Dipankar in Munshiganj district, reports BSS.

At a meeting held in the city on Tuesday with the Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Dr Yazuddin Ahmed in the chair, the Samity urged the government to take immediate steps for redressing the sufferings of the people by solving water-logging problem from many unions of Raipura thana under Narasingdi district.

Post and Telecommunications Secretary S D Khan, Managing Director of Jiban Bima Corporation, Khurshed Ansar Khan, Managing Director of the Film Development Corporation (FDC), Ziauddin Ahmed, Dr Nilufar Karim, Alauddin Ahmed and Asaduzzaman spoke at the meeting.

The meeting also urged the concerned authorities to develop road communication network in the remote water-logged unions of the district.

In another resolution, the meeting demanded for construction of a bridge at Muktarpur connecting Munshiganj with Narayanganj.

### Death anniversary of Munajatuddin observed

RANGPUR, Dec 30: The third death anniversary of the journalist Munajatuddin was observed here on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Local press club organised various programmes to mark the day which included placing of wreaths at his grave at Munshipara, and *milad mahfil* and a discussion at the press club.

The speakers at the discussion meeting paid rich tribute to the memory of late journalist and recalled his contribution to journalism.

Besides, a *milad mahfil* was also held at the residence of Munajat Uddin at Lalkuti. A large number of people from all strata attended the *mahfil*.

Meanwhile, 'Munajatuddin Memorial Award '98' will be given to five eminent personalities for their outstanding contribution in their respective fields.

This was decided at a meeting of the executive committee of the local Press Club held on Monday with club President Sadrul Alam Dulu in the chair.

The selected persons for the award are: Dr Rezaul Haq (Education), M Nurul Islam (Literature and Culture), Mozammel Hoque (Journalism), AKM Nazmul Hoque Montu (Sports) and Shah Mohammad Salek (Posthumous) for social service. The Club has introduced the award in 1996.

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### Bulu laid to rest

FENI, Dec 30: Moazzem Hossain Bulu, senior photojournalist of the Bangladesh Observer, was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Dharmapur village in Chhagalnaiya thana today, reports APB.

Earlier, a second *namaj-e-janaza* was held at Feni Press Club, where local journalists paid tributes and placed wreaths on the coffin.