



The Daily Star

Today's issue
20 pages

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15 days to the
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Traffic jam on all major streets

By Special Correspondent
The city experienced another bout of traffic jam yesterday on the eve of a three-day holiday—a public holiday on the Victory Day today followed by two-day weekend.

Chaos was the order of the day on all major streets and also on the narrow streets and alleyways in the old part of the city.

When one street was clogged with traffic, many others had its impact, resulting in the mess.

The city's traffic managers apparently gave up, allowing all kinds of vehicles to make their own way through the jam.

At the intersection of Road No 5 in Dhanmondi, a traffic constable looked helpless while

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Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of Victory Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

Inside Today

Victory Day Special

Victory Day's Call: Change Our Political Culture

by Mahfuz Anam
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Supplement

Today's 20-page issue of The Daily Star contains a 4-page supplement on "Victory Day" on Pages 17 to 20

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
7	16	—	5-18
8	17	5:09	5-18
9	18	5:10	5-18

Prayer Timings

December 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-8	5-17
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-42	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-22
Tarabi	7-00	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Nation celebrates V-Day today



This young woman is all smiles as she holds high the national flag on the eve of Victory Day. But no one really knows what happiness victory has actually brought for her or for her children 28 years after the independence.

By Staff Correspondent

The nation today celebrates with festivity and vivacity its victory in the War of Independence 28 years ago.

Homage will be paid on the day -- Victory Day-- to three million martyrs of the nine-month war against Pakistani occupation forces in 1971. The nation will gratefully recall their supreme sacrifice to liberate the motherland and pledge afresh to materialise their lofty ideals and dreams.

Observance of the Day has a special significance this year as more and more killing grounds are being detected and the remains and artefacts of many martyrs recovered from those spots.

Besides, the Martyred Intellectuals' Mausoleum at Rayerbazar in the city was opened only two days back. It has been built at the site where many leading intellectuals of the country were killed by the occupation forces and their local collaborators at the fag end of the war.

In a message on the eve of the Victory Day, President Shahabuddin called for greater unity saying, the prime need of the hour was to forge unity on important national issues and create favourable social atmosphere to ensure uninterrupted peace and development for the welfare of the people.

He said the untold sufferings of the people and supreme sacrifices of the valiant freedom fighters during the nine-month war of liberation are recorded

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BGMEA chief tells The Daily Star

Buyers move to other countries due to political instability

By Rafiq Hasan

Foreign garment buyers are entertaining offers from other countries due to political instability in the country, says the president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

"I can give you a number of examples of buyers who were scheduled to come to Bangladesh to place orders or discuss future imports, but changed their plans when they heard news of political activities, such as a countrywide hartal," Anisur Rahman Sinha told the Daily Star after Monday's hartal.

Sinha said the party that did not call hartals for the sake of

the nation would be remembered by the people forever.

The businessmen would also be grateful to leaders willing to compromise in the discussion, he added.

"The political parties are fighting without considering the interests of the people and businessmen," said Sinha. "We have pleaded with them several times to save the sector, but nobody paid any attention to our suffering. We are going to make similar drive again very soon."

However, Sinha refused to say whether he has asked to meet with the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition to resolve the crisis.

"We are going to meet them

very soon," reiterated Sinha. "Economic issues should get priority over every other issue between the political parties."

Sinha said many garments factories operate during hartal, but they face trouble importing and exporting goods when the ports and customs offices are closed. There are almost 80 ships waiting to load or unload goods at Chittagong port, he added.

Sinha said garment exports are down and unlikely to reach this year's target.

"The garments business has become much competitive now because neighbouring countries entering the sector," said Sinha. "China is Bangladesh's main competitor because it has its own fabrics, raw materials and a cheap labour force."

"Bangladeshi traders have to import everything, which affects their competitiveness."

Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand are also starting to

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Ctg doctors call off strike

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Dec 15: Doctors at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital and Chittagong General Hospital called off their strike this evening.

The strike was withdrawn following appeals made by Chittagong City Corporation Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury and leaders of different professional groups, the general secretary of BMA, Chittagong Unit, Dr Sirajul Islam.

Doctors at the two hospitals went on strike demanding arrest of the terrorists who assaulted Chittagong Medical College Professor Dr Nilkanta Bhattacharya on December 6.

Earlier, the striking doctors brought out a silent procession in the city at 11 am and held an anti-terrorism rally at Shaheed Minar.

Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury, who attended the rally as chief guest, assured the doctors of taking steps for arresting the terrorists.

Chaired by BMA, Chittagong unit president Dr LA Kaderi, the rally was addressed by Dr Nurjahan Bhuiyan, Dr Nur Nabi, Obaidul Huq, Nur Safa and others.

First touch of cool air

By Special Correspondent
Temperature has started falling and the real bite of winter is not far off, meteorologists said yesterday.

"Yes, there is a falling trend, in two to three days the normal winter is going to set in," a meteorologist at Dhaka's Met Office told The Star last night.

City dwellers felt the first touch of cool air and the advent of the winter yesterday with the minimum temperature dropping to 15 degree Celsius. But the day's minimum of 10.4 C was recorded at Satkhira.

The northern districts also saw the mercury going down to 11.5 C at Chuadanga, 11.8 C at Rajshahi, 11.6 C at Tangail, 12.2 C at Dinajpur, 12.6 C at Syedpur, 12.5 C at Rangpur, 12.5 C at Bogra, Barisal had 12 C, Jessore 12.2 C, Khulna 12.5 C, Bhola 12.5 C, Faridpur 12.6 C, and Chittagong 17.2 C.

The meteorologist said that a mild cold wave is likely to blow across the southwest, northwest and northeast soon.

A cold wave is expected to sweep the country later in December, he said adding that it would be normal winter this season.

DRU programme to save Buriganga

By Staff Correspondent
Speakers yesterday unanimously called for concerted efforts to save Buriganga River from encroachment and pollution.

The call came on the heels of the "Save Buriganga Boat Race" ceremony, organised by Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU), an organisation of reporters based in the capital.

The boat race, first of its kind, was organised to create awareness among people to stop

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Khaleda demands judicial inquiry

PM assures probe into Brig Ashfaq's death

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday assured family members of Brigadier Shabab Ashfaq of proper inquiry into the reported unnatural death of the army officer, reports UNB.

She gave the assurance when the widow of Ashfaq, his son and daughter called on her at Ganobhaban yesterday evening.

The Prime Minister consoled them and expressed her heartfelt sympathy for the bereaved family.

Late Ashfaq's brother, Farooq Ashfaq, also a Brigadier, was present during the meeting.

Brigadier Ashfaq, Commander of Bandarban Army

Brigade, was found dead in the Chittagong Cantonment rest house on November 8.

Officials said he committed suicide triggering his gun.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia has demanded judicial probe into the death of Brigadier Ashfaq.

In a statement yesterday, she said the "unnatural" and "tragic" death of Sabab Ashfaq may adversely affect the morale in the rank and file of the army.

Khaleda Zia said though the authorities in their initial ex-

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Brigadier Ashfaq

Irregularities in trade, industry PARC for watchdog body by primary stakeholders

The Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC) is considering recommending formation of a watchdog body by primary stakeholders to report on irregularities and lapses that hinder trade and industry in the country, report agencies.

PARC chairman ATM Shamsul Haque said this while exchanging views with the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(FBCCI) leaders at FBCCI auditorium in the city yesterday. Haque said there should be consensus on key national issues related to trade and industry so that the private sector could play its due role as the engine of development of the country.

He said the government has so far approved and taken steps to implement three of the 27 recommendations put forward by PARC. The rest of the rec-

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Move to bring normalcy at Shahjalal varsity

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 15: Situation in the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology is becoming normal with resumption of administrative work today. Academic activities will resume soon, said an official of the university.

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Notice



Mukti Kotha, a film by Tareq and Catherine Masud, the makers of Mukti Gan, is a rare document that projects a different aspect of war — one that is close to being lost in the abyss of apathy and neglect. Mukti Kotha is about people in the villages and mofussils, those whose experience of the Liberation movement is more real than any middle class urbanite's. Mukti Kotha is also a film about the experiences of a group of young people who go all over Bangladesh showing the film (Mukti Gan).

On account of a newspaper holiday on Thursday, December 16, there will be no issue of the paper on Friday. So the Star Weekend Magazine will be going out on Saturday (18-12-99). — SWM



১৬ই ডিসেম্বর
মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনায়
আমাদের দেশ গড়ার অঙ্গীকার

অগ্রণী ব্যাংক
দেশ ও জাতির সেবায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ

No plan to build Ram temple: Indian FM

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: India's central government has no plans to build a temple on the debris of a demolished mosque, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh said today, reports AFP.

"It is not a part of the government's agenda and it is not a part of the BJP's agenda," Singh told the upper house of the parliament.

His statement came after the temple-mosque row dominated parliament for the third successive day, with the opposition pressing for the ouster of three ministers of the Hindu nationalist BJP, for their role in the razing of the Babri Mosque seven years ago.

Hindu zealots linked to BJP say they are determined to build a multi-million-dollar temple for the Hindu warrior God Rama in Ayodhya.

Congress leader Suresh

Pachauri said the opposition wanted an assurance from the government that it would not seek an adjournment of hearing of the court case on the demolition set for next week.

Defending the government, BJP parliamentarian M Venkaiah Naidu said the government would not interfere in the court as "it has never interfered in the process of law."

Pachauri demanded the resignations of the three federal ministers of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's BJP party and was joined in the demand by other opposition parties.

Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani, Human Resource Minister Murli Manohar Joshi and Minister of State for Tourism Uma Bharati, all hardline Hindu nationalists, are among

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Drug admn fails to cut medicine prices

By Mustak Hossain

The drug administration's pricing committee met last week for the first time since June 1997 but it failed to reduce the country's high drug prices.

The country's drug policy was intended to make cheap medicine available to all, but prices haven't changed since 1997, despite a 40 per cent drop in the cost of raw materials.

There are 117 drugs and medicines under the administration's jurisdiction. Roughly 80 to 85 of those are available in the market.

The government gave the country's drug manufacturers tax breaks on raw materials in

the 1999/2000 budget but prices remain high, said a source.

People are switching to medicine imported from India to avoid the high prices.

"Indian medicine entered the country's medicine market because the committee didn't act," said another source. "People are getting the same brand from the same company at a lower price."

Another reason behind the influx of foreign medicine are advertisements on satellite television channels. Bangladesh Television can't broadcast drug ads under the country's drug policy, said the source.

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