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Cabinet okays list of holidays

The Cabinet yesterday approved the list of holidays for the 2000 calendar year with 26 days of general holiday, reports UNB.

The holidays include 15 days of public holiday and 11 days of government holiday, sanctioned through executive orders.

Besides, the Cabinet endorsed provision for optional holidays for devotees of different religious faiths.

The Cabinet also congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Nobel Laureate Prof Amartya Sen on their obtaining honorary doctorate degrees from Dhaka University.

The regular meeting of the council of ministers was held at the Cabinet Room with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Fresh violence, another killed in Feni

FENI, Dec 20: Fresh violence in the district today killed another man at village Joypur in Chhagalnaiya thana, raising the death toll to six in last four days, reports UNB.

Three people were injured in the violence at noon after a day's respite on Sunday.

Three others were killed on Saturday and two on Friday during gunfight between Chhatra League and Chhatra Dal activists in Feni.

Police identified today's victim as Noorossalam alias Shahabuddin, 45.

They arrested one Fatema Begum in connection with today's violence, but declined to give details.

On Friday, Chhatra League See Page 12 Col 1

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Two Jostling Strands of Bangladesh Politics

 by M Rashiduzzaman
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Focus

 Opposition summit:
 What does it transpire?

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Sehri, Ifar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Ifar
12	21	-	5:20
13	22	5:12	5:20
14	23	5:13	5:21

Prayer Timings

December 21

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:08	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

Jailbreak at Sherpur: Prisoner shot dead

By Staff Correspondent

One convicted prisoner was shot dead and seven others were recaptured by police only two hours after they escaped from Sherpur jail breaking the gate yesterday morning.

Nine convicted prisoners disarmed a prison guard, looted three rifles and some 100 bullets from the armoury and escaped from the jail at 7:50 am, Sherpur DC M Noafel Mia told The Daily Star over telephone.

The looted arms and ammunition were also recovered but

one of the nine convicts — Badar Katiakhora of village in Sherpur — could not be caught, the DC said. Badar was serving 10 years' RI.

As the alarm bell was rung after the jailbreak, Sherpur SP Sheikh Nurul Anwar along with his personal guards chased them and recaptured seven of them from paddy fields at Namapara, 12 km south west of the town, the DC said. The fleeing convicts fired shots at police and local people who chased

them. Mujibur Rahman of Katiakhora village in Sherpur, who was serving seven years' RI, died on the spot when a bullet fired by police hit his abdomen.

The seven recaptured convicts are: Sharafat Ali, Saidul Islam, Sujon Dalu, Swapon, Soheli, Manik Karmaker and Mistry Razzak, all serving varying jail terms for murder and dacoity. They were admitted to Sherpur Sadar Hospital See page 11 col 8



A JCD activist under police fire after fellow activists in a procession exploded homemade bombs and damaged vehicles in Bijoy Nagar-Naya Paltan areas in the city yesterday. — Star photo

JCD activists go on rampage: Bombs exploded, vehicles damaged

By DU Correspondent

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), BNP's students' wing, went on the rampage and damaged at least 12 vehicles as police dispersed their procession at Bijoy Nagar crossing in the city yesterday by hurling tear gas shells and using batons.

The police action followed explosion of five home made bombs when the procession was going towards the BNP central office at Naya Paltan after a rally at Muktagacherra.

The rally was held to protest the police action on JCD activists in the city on Friday and demand release of party leaders including its president Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel and general secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, arrested on that day.

Police fired at least 10 tear gas shells and arrested four JCD activists — Mashur, Mamun, Nurul Alam Talukder and Khorsheed Alam — from the spot yesterday.

A pedestrian — Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan — injured in the bomb blasts, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, hospital sources said.

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Transshipment only if Delhi gives similar facilities, says Tofail

Star Report

Dhaka will consider allowing transshipment of Indian goods through Bangladesh only when Delhi is ready to reciprocate by providing similar facilities for Bangladesh goods, commerce and industry minister Tofail Ahmed said yesterday.

Tofail was speaking at the launching ceremony of the Bangladesh-India Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BICCI) in Calcutta, according to a BBC report last night.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the BICCI was signed in Dhaka last June during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Chief Minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu inaugurated the ceremony where FBCCI president Abdul Awal Minto, who was nominated chairman of

BICCI, and convenor of India-Bangladesh Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry Goury Prasad Goenka also spoke.

Responding to demands by Indian businessmen that Bangladesh provide transshipment facility through its territory, Tofail said Dhaka has formed a special task force on the issue and that the decision will be taken on the basis of the report.

Abdul Awal Minto supported the views of the minister and demanded free entrance of Bangladesh goods to the north-eastern states of India. He stressed the need for India to invest in Bangladesh and increase in trade volume between the two countries.

Indian businessmen said that the initiative to reduce trade gap between the two coun-

tries should be taken at the government level. The trade between the two countries is heavily tilted in favour of India.

They also underscored the need for maximum withdrawal of duty on Bangladesh goods to India.

UNB reports from Calcutta: Tofail urged Indian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh even to meet demand of India's consumers through buyback system.

See page 11 col 6

Thus spake the Gopal at DCC

By Staff Correspondent

"How many stars are there in the sky?" asked a pensive king to Gopal, the legendary court clown.

Gopal thought for a moment before replying, "There must be twenty lakh five thousand and fifty, my lord. If you disbelieve me, please count them. You may punish me if the number is wrong."

A similar situation arose at the office of a top official of the Revenue Department at the Dhaka City Corporation. Asked about the number of rickshaws in the city, the Revenue Officer flatly replied, "There are 88 thousand seven hundred and something" rickshaws in the city.

When he was told that according to Dhaka Metropolitan Police there are more than six lakh rickshaws in the city, the DCC official coolly replied,

"As far as we are concerned there are only 88 thousand seven hundred and something rickshaws in the city. If you disbelieve me why don't you start counting?"

Y2K: Biman plans test flight Jan 1

All aircraft of Bangladesh Biman will be hovering in the skies of the country in the early hours of January 1, 2000 to check if the planes are really immune to Y2K hazards, reports UNB.

"Repeated examinations showed all the aircraft year-digit accommodating. But none could be cent per cent confirmed unless and until those fly in a day of the year," said an expert.

The expert, who is looking into the Y2K compliance of the national flag carrier, however, informed that the test flight would have only technical personnel on board.

"Don't worry. No flight will crash even if any trouble is found in their systems," he said, adding an aircraft could collapse if only fuel supply is disturbed.

But, he hastened to add that the fuel supply system of Biman's aircraft is not computerised or run by microchip. Rather it is a mechanical one.

See page 11 col 6

Time to watch full moon

By Special Correspondent

The moon will come nearest to the earth tomorrow, first time since 1912 and the last time before 2052, evoking keen interest among the astronomers and star-gazers in Bangladesh.

It will be a 'full moon' which will last for 22.18 hours, triggering an upsurge in high and low tide, bringing the moon and the sun along a close parallel, a phenomena that is taking place after 133 years, Bangladesh Astronomical Association (BAA) sources said.

To watch the spectacle, the BAA has arranged an observation camp at the playground of See page 11 col 6

BNP sees no meaning in Speaker's letter

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP, in its initial reaction, has found "meaningless" the Speaker's letter requesting Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia to attend the parliament's "millennium session", party sources said.

The session begins January 1, when the President will make his customary New Year address.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury yesterday sent the letter, delivered at her office at Jatiya Sangsad at 1pm. Khaleda

had a meeting with senior party colleagues at her Minto Road official residence and told reporters that she would send a reply to the Speaker.

The sources said the BNP leaders found it "meaningless".

"The language suggests it has been written by somebody subservient to the government," said acting secretary general Abdullah Al Noman emerging along with Khaleda from the meeting.

"It does not give any mes-

sage. We know that the President has called parliament into session. Now the Speaker is just telling us to attend it," Noman said and added the Speaker failed to mention the burning issues.

At the meeting, the BNP leaders saw no relevance of the letter to the current issues that had kept them out of parliament for two consecutive sessions since late June. "It doesn't say anything about our de-

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Chandrika back home, secured by 3 rings of commandos

COLOMBO, Dec 20: President Chandrika Kumaratunga was shifted from a hospital to her barricaded home today, hours after police intelligence reports spoke of a likely second assassination attempt against her, reports AP.

Mrs Kumaratunga left the private hospital after receiving treatment for facial and eye injuries from shrapnel inflicted by a suicide bomb that went off at her campaign rally Saturday night.

Voting today

"Yes, she has been shifted to her home. Beyond this I am not going to say anything," said Ariya Rubasinghe, the director of the government's Information Department.

Earlier, police officials said they had intelligence that more suicide bombers were still in Colombo.

A total of 33 people were killed and 180 wounded by two suicide bombers at separate campaign rallies by Mrs Kumaratunga and by the largest opposition party.

The president was slightly injured in the face that required surgery around one eye. Among the dead was Colombo's police chief and a journalist working for a local television station.

Mrs Kumaratunga was shifted to Temple Tress, her of-

See also Page-9



President Chandrika Kumaratunga (C) poses with her children Yasodara (L) and Vimukti (R) in her home, after she was discharged from hospital yesterday. — AFP photo

ficial residence. The compound, is secured by three rings of security commandos who shelter behind bunkers all the time.

The government has said the presidential election would proceed as scheduled tomorrow, in a vote that will determine how Sri Lanka will try to end the 16-year conflict with Tamil rebels that already has claimed more than 61,000 lives.

A report on the TamilNet web site said the suicide bomber who tried to kill Mrs Kumaratunga was identified as a woman employee of the Colombo municipal council.

But an official from the Criminal Investigation Department said the female

See page 11 col 6

Two murder cases Shikdar, 25 others chargesheeted

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 18: Ershad Shikdar and 25 others were chargesheeted on Sunday and today two murder cases.

Chargesheet in the Siraj murder case was submitted today accusing eleven people. In the case filed with Khulna thana on September 5, 1997, Shikdar has been named as principal accused. There are 23 prosecution witnesses. Siraj

was hacked to death on October 2, 1997, allegedly by Shikdar at the Skid Ghat.

In the charge sheet submitted on Sunday, Shikdar and 14 others were accused of 'triple murder' on May 27, 1998. Insaf, Kamal and Khaleque were murdered at Skid Ghat allegedly for opposing drug trafficking.

A case accusing nine people See page 11 col 6

Shibir calls hartal in Ctg today

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 20: The Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in greater Chittagong tomorrow protesting killing of its two leaders at Chittagong University (CU) yesterday.

The janaza for Abdul Rahim and Mahmudul Hasan was held at the Laldighi Maidan ground this afternoon. City BNP president Mir'Mohammad Nasir Uddin, city Jamaat ameer Principal Md Abu Taher, city JP president Jahangir Alam, Oikya Jote leader Mufti Mohammad

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Southeast Bank Limited Head Office, Dhaka

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board of Directors and Management of Southeast Bank Limited express their profound gratitude to the Almighty for successful subscription in the IPO of the Bank. The Company takes great pleasure in announcing that the applications for Shares have been over subscribed against Public Offering of Taka 5.00 crore.

The Management of the Company express their deep gratitude to the valued investors for their overwhelming support & confidence reposed on the Company.

The Management also gratefully acknowledges the co-operation extended and services rendered by Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd. (DSE), Chittagong Stock Exchange Ltd. (CSE), Underwriters, Bankers to the Issue Manager to the Issue and others.

Probe into alleged torture of JCD leaders ordered

By Court Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court yesterday ordered judicial inquiry into the alleged torture of JCD president Habibun Nabi Sohel. Its general secretary Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu and some other leaders in police custody on Friday.

The order followed filing of a complaint case against Additional Deputy Commissioner (East) Golam Morshed, OC of Motijheel thana Mohammad Hanif and OC of Ramna thana Mohammed Rafiqul Islam for their alleged involvement in the torture.

The case was filed by Mohammed Ali.

The complainant alleged See page 11 col 8

Convention

Siddique invites all parties but one

By Staff Correspondent
 Dissident Awami League leader Kader Siddique yesterday met with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and invited her to attend the December 24 convention called with the objective to float a new political party.

The convention will be held at city's Engineers' Institute in which Dr Kamal Hossain will be present as chief guest.

"I am going to float a new political party through the con-

See Page 12 Col 5

বর্ষ শেষে ব্যাংক গ্রাহকদের করণীয়

বাংলাদেশের ব্যাংকিং খাত Y2K সমস্যামুক্ত। তবুও সতর্কতামূলক ব্যবস্থা নেবার জন্য পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে যে, ব্যাংকের সাধারণ রীতি অনুযায়ী বছরের শেষ কর্মদিবস অস্ত্রে সকল গ্রাহক-হিসাবের স্থিতি লিখিত রাখতে হবে। কম্পিউটার বিহীন শাখায় এটি একটি স্বাভাবিক প্রক্রিয়া। কম্পিউটার ব্যবহারকারী শাখায় গ্রাহক হিসাবের স্থিতির প্রিন্ট-আউট রাখতে হবে। এটি হবে এ বছরের বার্ষিক সমাপনী প্রক্রিয়ার অবশ্য করণীয় একটি কাজ।

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বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

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