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## A rare eagle lands at Dhaka Zoo

By Shehab Ahmed

The huge bird, an unidentified brownish black eagle, rests on a wooden platform at the birds' enclosure at the Dhaka Zoo since it was brought from Narsingdi more than a week ago.

None at Panchdona village in Narsingdi knew from where it came. They trapped the majestic bird with bamboo poles and fishing nets on the wetlands on December 11.

Someone thought that it should not be killed and informed the local administration. In a quick feat of wisdom,

the administration thought that it should be sent to the Dhaka Zoo.

When the bird was brought to the zoo, vets there were shocked to see its condition. Bruised and beaten, the bird was in a trauma, also having diarrhoea.

"Now it has started regaining strength, having found a mate—a black eagle—in whose nest we have kept it", Dr Iqbal, the zoo's vet said.

"We have given it some sulphur drugs and vitamins initially", Rafiqul Islam, chief of the bird section said.

But none could identify the species of the eagle. Zoo officials could not say whether it will be freed or will have to spend the rest of its life in the cage.

It is hostile to humans and keeps back from visitors, making it difficult to be snapped.



Star photo: Sk. Enamul Haq

## Aricha ferries falter at falling water level

By Staff Correspondent

Ferry service at Aricha ghat, one of the busiest river ports in the country, may close anytime as water level in both the Jamuna and Padma rivers is falling alarmingly, officials said yesterday.

Water level fell by at least one and a half feet in last one week and if the downturn is any indication, then there are bad days ahead. Ferries have to zigzag through the water in a bid to avoid the shoals.

Water level as of yesterday morning was fathomed at little over seven feet at the point of Aricha ghat. It was more than 11 feet about a month ago.

Ferry movement at Daulatdia and Pratapur ghat also faces low water problem.

Pratapur ferry ghat was shifted from Nagarbari early this month due to fall in water level while the narrow channel

of Daulatdia is being kept in operation by constant dredging at its point of entry.

According to the Aricha office of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), at least six ferries hit shoals in last two weeks and were stranded for hours disrupting ferry service.

The deputy manager of BIWTC Shahabuddin said, "We were in better position this time last year. Ferries had minimum risks plying the routes but this year they had to take half the usual load while operating."

"By March water level is expected to fall by at least five feet. But we are prepared to face the worst."

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) continued dredging at some worst-affected areas but some ferry operators at Aricha ghat

said yesterday that dredging is being done in an unplanned way and that it is not sufficient either. However, relevant BIWTA officials claimed they are doing their best to keep the river routes in operation.

Meantime, continued fall in the water level forced BIWTA to resort to a new one-way passage to facilitate ferry service. The passage is roughly 400 feet wide.

Ferry service in Aricha-Daulatdia ghat is operating with "great caution", according to people who crossed over to Aricha from Daulatdia said.

Hundreds of vehicles including passenger buses and trucks heading towards southwestern districts from the capital have to cross Aricha.

A total of 16 ferries are now operating in two routes from Aricha.

## Comes again admission ordeal

City schools continue to cause panic parenting

By Reaz Ahmad and Mustak Hossain

Students and their anxious guardians thronged city schools yesterday, the last day of procuring and submitting admission forms at all government high schools in the city.

As the year draws to an end, parents are having a hard time like in past years in confirming a berth for their wards in any of the 'good educational institutions' for the ensuing year.

Admission tests for classes I to IX in all the 24 government high schools will be held from December 26 through to December 28.

Admission seekers had to negotiate through the notorious Dhaka traffic that aggravated further yesterday causing the formation of big queues of vehicles along main city thoroughfares.

Admission tests at the Government Laboratory High School at Dhanmondi is billed for December 26. Against 240 seats in Class-I, as many as 2,135 admission forms were

sold till yesterday noon. This school sold 215 more forms for aspirants who would vie for the 24 seats available for Class-VI. There are no vacant seats for academic year 2000 in any other class in the Govt. Laboratory School.

Headmistress of the Tejgaon Government Girls' High School, Begum Lutfa told The Daily Star that admission test in her school would be held on December 28.

A total of 1,028 forms were sold as against 290 available seats from Class-I to Class-IX in this school. However, of the total 290 vacant seats, 200 seats are in Class-I while there are only 90 seats available for the remaining eight classes.

Till yesterday, some 255 forms were sold at the Dhanmondi Government Girls' High School, where 170 seats are available only for Class-I.

Some 327 people collected forms for admission into Class-I at the 'School' branch of the

Government Science College at Farmgate. There are only 50 vacant seats here.

A teacher of Narinda Government High School, however, said that there were reasonably sufficient number of seats available for the year 2000 at the school to accommodate most of the admission-seekers. Some 153 forms were sold for 120 vacant seats in Class-I. Over 500 more seats are available in other classes of the school.

Admission tests at Viqarun-nisa Noon School were held on December 21.

Admission process into the Motijheel Ideal Non-Government High School, one of the most sought-after non-government high schools in the city, is yet to begin. An official of the school said that the school's two branches in the city would announce schedules for admission 'within a few days'.

## Armed terrorists trapped at DU

By DU Correspondent

Four alleged armed terrorists sustained serious injuries when the students and employees of Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University beat them up mercilessly in front of the hall yesterday.

Two on duty police personnel near the spot Sub-Inspector Alim and Mahmud, who tried to rescue the miscreants from the mob also received minor injuries.

One foreign made revolver, two motor bikes, three petrol bombs and one knife were recovered from their possession, police said.

The injured were identified as Hanif, 20 son of Anwar of in Shariatpur, Razzak, 22, son of Mannan, of Moulviganj, Milan, son of Saiful Haq, of

Barisal and Liton, whose identity could not be known immediately. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital under police custody.

According to witnesses, students and employees of Jagannath Hall swooped on the terrorists immediately after they reached at the hall gate at around 3 pm and hurled abusive words at each other.

The terrorists numbering six came in two groups from the Palashi and on board two motor-bikes and one auto-rickshaw, sources said.

Police identified the gangs as the members of "Five Star" group led by Iqbal Hossain Apu and "Kala" Sentu and the other gang Shamim group led by Shamim Ahmed popularly known as "pichhi" (little) Shamim were fighting to establish supremacy at the Nagar Bhaban.

The members of two gangs accused each other of extortion in city areas and got locked in an altercation. Police personnel with the help of students and employees of the hall chased them and managed to arrest three.

The remaining three fled after shooting blank shots from the spot. Police, however, chased them and arrested one along with a revolver and three petrol bombs.

## Kader Siddique to name it

By Staff Correspondent

Kader Siddique has been 'empowered' to choose the name of the political party he is scheduled to float following a convention at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the city today, said a press release issued yesterday.

The new party will be floated from a convention beginning at 10 am today. Dr Kamal Hossain will be present as the chief guest at the first session of the convention.

An emergency meeting of the Convention Preparatory Committee was held in the city yesterday with its convenor Fazlur Rahman in the chair, the press release added.

## Weekly holiday for zoo residents!

The Task Force on National Zoo yesterday suggested introduction of weekly holiday for the National Zoo animals at Mirpur, reports BSS.

The recommendation was made at a Task Force meeting at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock with joint secretary Syed Golum Kibria in the chair.

The meeting recommended that visitors' hours should be rescheduled from 8 am to 5 pm. It also decided to equip the zoo officers with necessary skills and training to build a zoo befitting for the coming millennium.

## Bangladeshis protest poor package in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Dec 23: Some 170 Bangladeshi labourers demonstrated for back pay and better living conditions, a Saudi newspaper reported today, says AP.

See page 11 col 8

## Pak SC orders interest-free economy by 2001

ISLAMABAD, Dec 23: Pakistan's Supreme Court today declared "riba" or interest, is un-Islamic and told the country's government to introduce an interest-free economic system by the year 2001, the official APP news agency said, report agencies.

It said a four-judge bench of the Islamic country's top court issued the ruling in Lahore, holding "the riba against the saying of the holy prophet Muhammad (SM) and Quran and Sunnah" (traditions of the prophet).

In a 1,000-page judgement the Supreme Court today said charging interest was against Islamic teachings, a decision that seems certain to require sweeping changes to this poor country's banking system.

The lengthy judgement also called on the government to renegotiate the international loans. Pakistan is heavily in-

debted to the International Monetary Fund as well as commercial lending institutions.

Pakistan has negotiated a 1.6 billion dollar loan package from the IMF and owes another more than 3 billion dollar to commercial lending institutions and donor countries.

According to the judgement "serious efforts shall be made by the federal government to relieve the burden of foreign debt as soon as possible and to renegotiate the existing loans."

It goes on to say that "serious efforts should also be made to structure future borrowings if necessary on the basis of Islamic modes of financing."

The judgement, which was released after the Karachi Stock Exchange and banking institutions in Pakistan closed for the day, said eight specific laws governing interest payments would have to be revoked no

later than March 30, 2000.

The judgement allows for staggered changes. Other laws will have to be changed by June 30, 2000 and still others by June 30, 2001.

That means by June 30, 2001 Pakistan's economy should be interest free, according to the state-run news agency Associated Press of Pakistan.

"Any amount big or small over the principle in a contract of loan or debt is riba and is prohibited by the Holy Koran regardless of whether the loan is taken for the purpose of consumption or for some production activity," said the judgement which was handed down by Shariat Appellate bench of the Supreme Court.

There was no immediate comment from Pakistan's army-led government or leading financial institutions in the country.



Lehenga lure

Each costs 70,000 taka, yet eight of the 10 on sale have already been sold at a boutique in the city.

— Star photo: Amran Hossain

## BGMEA's millennium gift

Maiden fashion school takes off Jan 1

By Rafiq Hasan

Bangladesh's first fashion school will make the country's garment manufacturing sector more professional and competitive, says the institute's chairman.

Harun-Ar-Rashid said the BGMEA Institute of Fashion and Technology, which opens in Uttara on Jan. 1, 2000, will provide well-trained, efficient and professional manpower to over 3,000 garments factories.

The institute will also help factories improve the quality of their garments and replace their expensive, foreign employees, making their products more competitive in the global marketplace, he said.

The institute will provide short and long-term programs, including a two year undergraduate degree as well as one-year and six-month diplomas.

The undergraduate degree in garments technology, manufacturing and pattern cutting will

follow the curriculum of Nottingham Trent University, UK.

The one-year diploma will focus on merchandising and marketing and will be implemented by India's National Institute of Fashion and Technology.

The six-month diploma on quality control and mid-level management will be conducted by Sri Lanka's Phoenix College of Clothing Technology.

The institute will charge Tk 30,000 a semester for the two-year undergraduate program and 40,000 a semester for the one-year diploma. Applicants will need an HSC or equivalent to enter the undergraduate program, while a bachelor degree in any discipline will be required for the diploma.

Dr. Ena Brown, an associate professor with fashion and textile department at Nottingham Trent University, will serve as

the institute's principal, while Dr. Azhar-Ud-Din, the former pro-vice chancellor of Rajshahi university, will serve as the vice-principal.

Two senior teachers of the Phoenix College of Clothing Technology, Sri Lanka and one from National Institute of Fashion and Technology will join the institute next February to teach the undergraduate and diploma programs.

Eleven graduates with at least five years of practical experience as production managers or in quality control will be sent to Phoenix College for a six-week training course before they join the institute as instructors.

The association provided Tk 1.74 crore, while the ministry of finance and the World Bank provided Tk 6.50 crore and Tk seven crore in grants, respectively.

## All-party committees outlined

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has finalised the structure of the All-party Action Council at union, ward, thana, district and city levels to intensify the current one-point movement.

The action council for Dhaka city is expected to be announced within a couple of days. Meantime, the four parties have submitted their re-

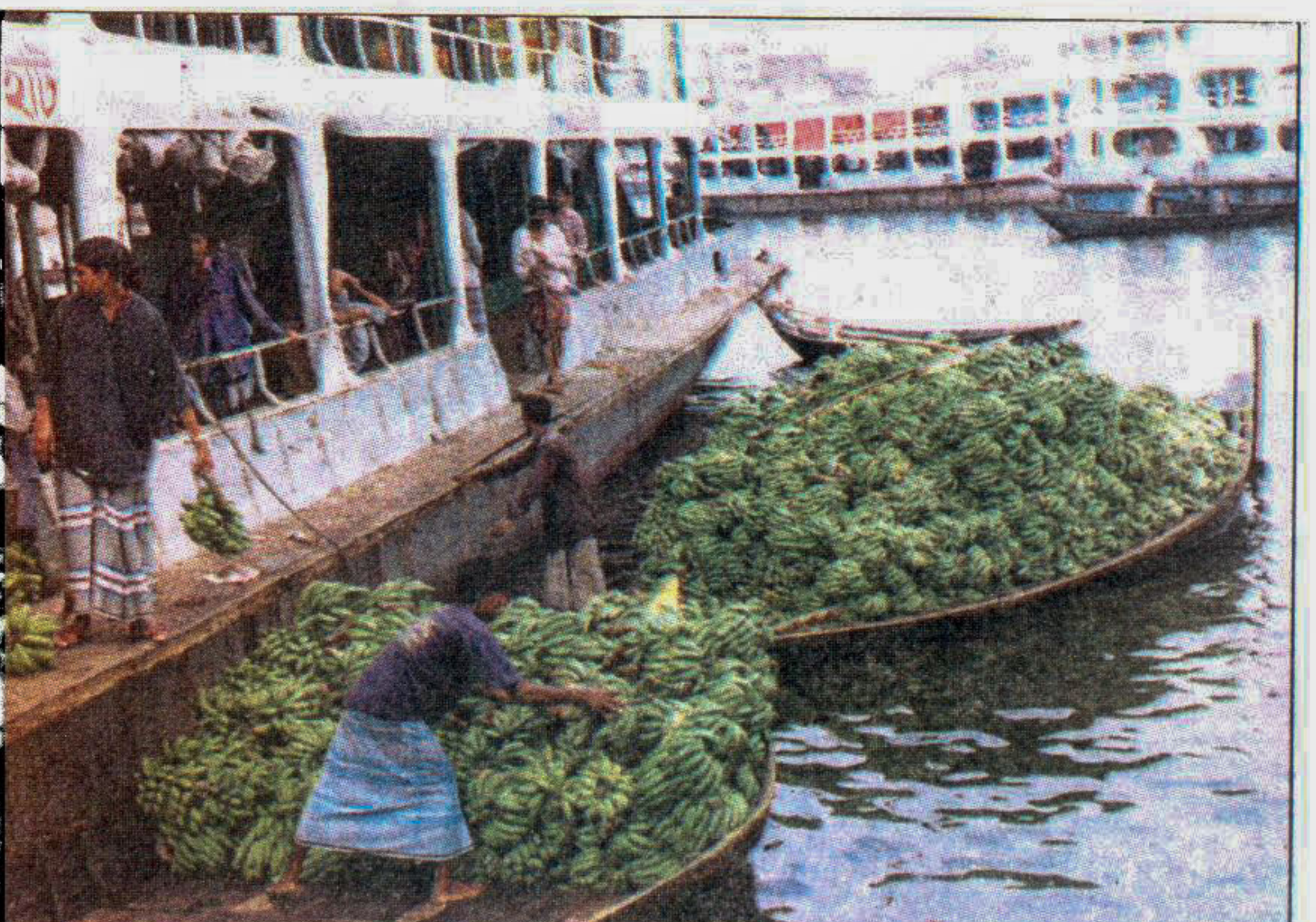
spective party lists to the Liaison Committee for the scheduled announcement.

Sources said the Dhaka city unit action council is likely to be 101 members strong. Some other smaller parties like Jagpa, PNP and Democratic League will also be included in the council. There is also proposal of inclusion of some elite, social workers and prominent

personalities in the council.

BNP will lead the action council in almost all the units. There will be one convener, two joint convenors and one member secretary of the council.

Meanwhile, the alliance will issue a common letter to thana, district and city units of the parties from Sunday.

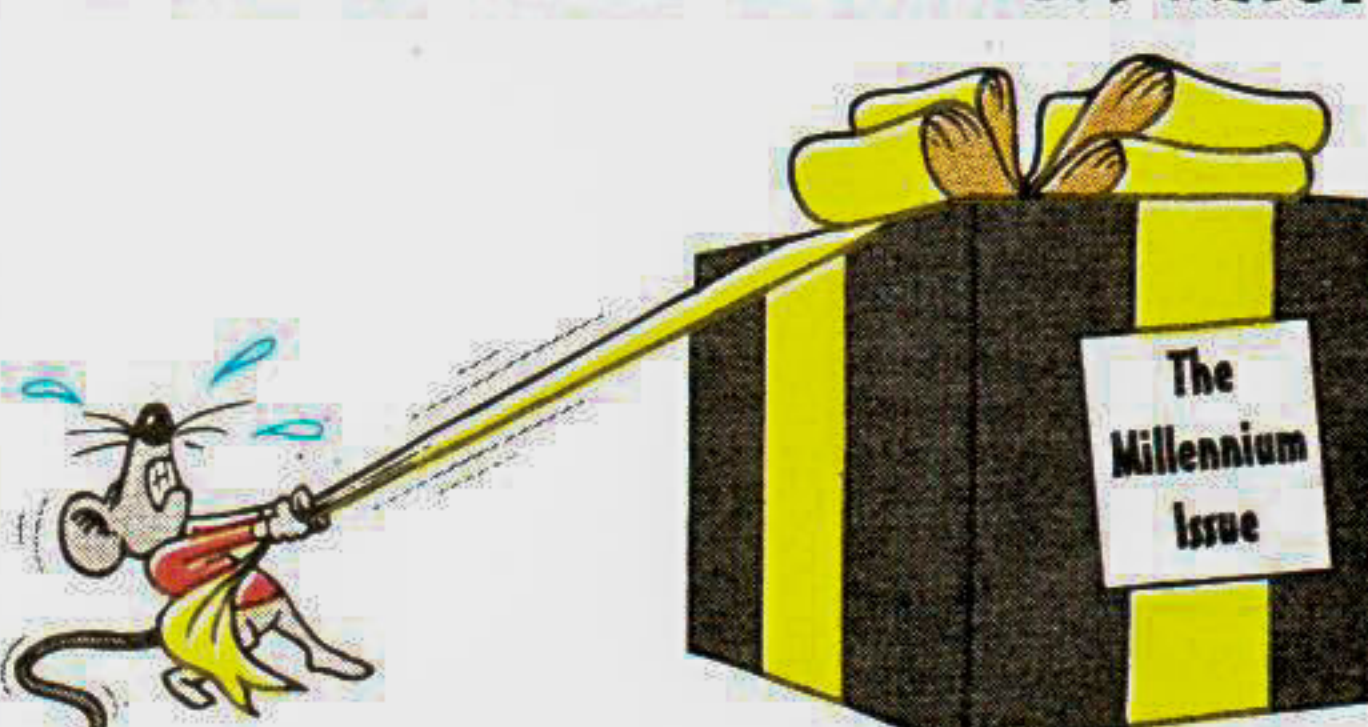


Banana boom

With increased supply from the southern region, price of banana has come down.

— Star photo: A K M Mohsin

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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