

FedEx
Federal Express

 Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.
Licensee Of Federal Express Corporation
Tel # 9565114; Fax # 9565112

CHITTAGONG

 Hotel Hawaii Building
39, Agrabad C.A., Chittagong
Tel # 712127 Fax# 710106

CEPZ

 Ctg. Export Processing Zone
Old Admin Building
Halishahar, Chittagong
Tel # 740108 Fax# 710106

KHULNA

 K.D.A Building
Khan A. Sabur Road, Khulna
Tel # 725008 Fax# 731932


Let's make things better

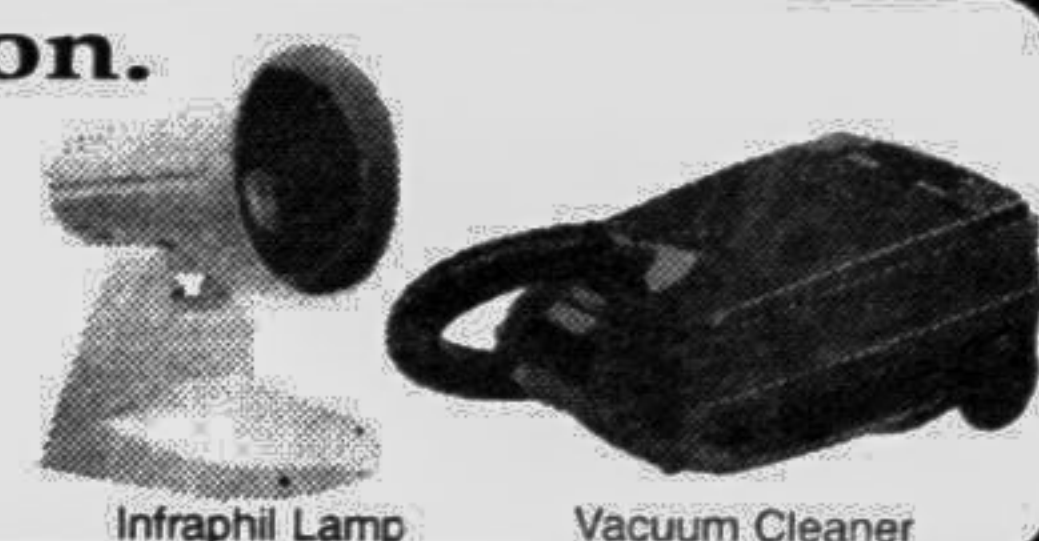
PHILIPS

Ideal gift for any occasion.

 -Instalment facility available
only for purchases above Tk. 7,500

Transcom Electronics Limited

Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets.

 Dhaka: 815307-10 Ctg.: 716353, 723578 Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215
Visit your nearest Philips Display Centre today


Infraphil Lamp

Vacuum Cleaner

Good governance tops NGOs' new year agenda

As the country has been passing through a confrontational political situation since independence, belying people's aspiration for proper administration, good governance will be a key issue for NGOs early next century, reports UNB.

The old issues for early new century, ADAB Chairperson Qazi Faruque Ahmed says, are poverty, population, health, literacy, human rights, environment, women empowerment and natural calamity.

Former chairperson of the ADAB, Khushi Kabir, however, sees participation of the poor and women in policymaking at grassroots level as the key factor in carrying through NGO movement for ultimate success.

"Only micro-credits and service-oriented programmes are not enough. Power should not be centralised only within certain people and quarters," she says.

For ensuring good governance through a secular approach with equality for women, a good political culture in and among the political parties is a prerequisite, they think.

"Politics in Bangladesh is not guided by principles or ideology but by money, muscle and misuse of religion," says Qazi

Faruque.

So says the president of country's leading NGO, Proshika, which had a direct confrontation with fundamentalists in Brahmanbaria.

"We hope political parties and their leaders will clean themselves and induct patriotic people in the forefront," he says. "This is not only the hope of the citizens. People in the next century will be more decisive to sweep out the bad elements by ballot."

Mentioning 73 per cent turnout in the 1996 elections, he said it should rise to high eighties. Local government bodies should also be strong and empowered in the first decade of the coming century.

Qazi Faruque says at present there is a positive trend in women's empowerment in the country and this will become even stronger in the years to come.

"In the first couple of years of the new century, we hope, women will be elected directly to parliament from reserved seats."

He termed religion-based family laws discriminatory to women and against the Constitution. Based on uniform family code, secular family laws should be enacted at the earliest

in the 21st century.

Both Qazi Faruque Ahmed and Khushi Kabir opined that the war criminals should be put to trial in the first years of the new century. "We want to see a secular Bangladesh. For this trial of war criminals is a must. If the Europeans can do it after many years of Second World War, why not we in Bangladesh?" questioned Khushi Kabir.

With NGOs like BRAC, Grameen Bank and Proshika joining the IT sector, Faruque says in the next years, Bangladesh could be an active player in the information technology revolution, which is sweeping the whole world.

As poverty recorded a modest decline in the last decade of the 20th century, coming down from 59 to 49 per cent, they think in the first decade of 21st century, it should come down to around 10 per cent.

In the first decade of the new century, population growth rate should decline to 0.5 per cent from 1.7 per cent now and population should stabilize at 20 crore by 2020, they say.

Country's literacy rate is now 56, rising from 26 per cent in the decade of 1970s. The NGOs hope that the literacy rate will rise over 90 per cent by the year 2010.

Sanitation coverage is around 46 per cent and this is expected to rise above 90 per cent by the end of first decade of the new century. Child immunization coverage is expected cent per cent from 75 per cent now.

Presently, there is massive tree planting movement in the country. In the next 10 years all the deforested reserve forest areas, roads, embankments, railway tracks should be fully covered with trees.

The NGOs, specially working in the environment sector, think air pollution in major cities, including the capital Dhaka, should be reduced by 80 per cent of its present magnitude.



Breaking the bar

Overloaded trucks are not supposed to ply Dhaka's streets until after 7 pm for safety reasons. But this load of bamboo seems to have evaded police. — Star photo

Card phone cadres

You could pay with your life at city booths

By Mustak Hossain

Threats and intimidation await residents at over half of the city's card phones, complaints of gangsters and student activists who now control the booths.

Over 200 of the city's 431 card phones are controlled by gangsters and cadres, while 30 per cent of Dhaka's card phones are out-of-order, said sources.

Sources said students from Mohsin Hall at Dhaka University have taken over the second booth across from New Market's gate.

Shafik, the president of Mohsin Hall unit of the ruling party's Bangladesh Chhatra League, allegedly runs the booth.

There is nobody here to answer your question," said a young man selling cards outside the booth. "Please ask our leader Shafik Bhai."

Earlier, local goons stabbed Delwar, a TESIS employee on duty at an Azimur booth, and stole Tk 28,000 from him.

A case was filed with the Lalbagh police, but four months have passed and no arrests have been made.

One caller was physically assaulted Tuesday night when he tried to use the phone without the cadres permission.

The victim said he complained to the sergeant on duty at the New Market crossing, but he didn't take any action.

A TESIS official said they've lodged a complaint with police about the cadres, insisting it's

their responsibility to maintain law and order at the booths.

In addition to the gangsters and cadres, the card phones are falling into a state of disrepair.

Since 1992, 1,381 card phones, which are operated by TESIS, have been installed across the country by the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board.

Urmat, an Italian company, own the tender for the analogue phone sets, while Total Tel. Urmat's local agent, has been maintaining phones.

A TESIS official claimed that only 17 phones are out-of-order.

However, about 300 hand sets have been stolen or damaged in the last few years by impatient callers who attack the phones when the won't return their cards.

"A vested quarter have been damaging card phone sets, lines and booths for a long time in order to increase their fax-phone businesses," said a source with the Telephone Shilpa Sangstha.

An spot-check revealed that ten of 15 card phones at the Azimur booths were out-of-order.

Sources said a Total Tel manpower shortage and a jump in the price of spare parts are to blame for the lack of proper maintenance.

The Urmat sets started to malfunction because most only have a five-year life span, said TESIS sources.

Siddique vows to go ahead with Paltan plan

By Staff Correspondent

Kader Siddique yesterday said he will go ahead with his planned 'protest meeting' at Paltan Maidan in the city today despite the authority's refusal to let him use the ground for the rally.

"We will hold our meeting today as per our earlier announcement. I hope good sense will prevail upon the government and they will behave," Siddique told The Daily Star last night.

The authorities denied permission to use the ground saying that it was already booked for a sports event, he said quoting from a letter sent to him by the National Sports Council (NSC).

"If the meeting is prevented at the venue, it will be held somewhere nearby," Siddique said.

He said he had sought permission on Monday. He claimed that the Paltan Maidan was not booked earlier for any programme today.

When contacted Minister of State for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs and Chairman of NSC Obaidul Kader said permission for the rally was sought late.

Siddique should have sought the permission at least one week ahead of the programme, he said.

Siddique called the meeting at Paltan to protest felling of his Friday's convention at the Institution of Engineers where

See page 11 col 3

Indians divert Muhuri river

By Staff Correspondent

Indians have changed the direction of flow of the river Muhuri, by setting up spans in violation of the border guideline, causing serious erosion on the Bangladesh side, officials alleged.

Due to serious erosion of the river some 79 acres of land emerged as char (shoals) areas on the river Muhuri, of which India has already occupied a sizeable chunk.

At least 59 skirmishes took place between the two side, in nine phases, as India continued its policy of encroachment of the newly emerged land during more than the last two decades. At least five people were killed during these clashes, locals said.

India is now in possession of about 24.5 acres of land near the disputed area, while Bangladesh possess 2.5 acres.

But 52 acres of land were described as 'disputed' since 1974 and the right of possession over the land could not be settled even after 44 rounds of meeting between the two sides.

People of the area along the Bangladesh border complained that they are invariably forced to leave their homes when clashes between BDR and BSF break out along the borders.

The clashes mainly occur when the Indians encroach the borders and make attempts to cultivate land in the disputed

area. The border between Tripura state and greater Comilla and Noakhali districts was demarcated as per Chakla Rawsharabad in 1947. But in this area India insisted on following the midstream of the Muhuri river as the border line.

Confusion arose on the finding of the midstream point of the river, which kept changing its direction towards Bangladesh side, as a result of which the border dispute remain unresolved.

The 45th flag meeting between Comilla Sector Com-

See page 11 col 8

Raja Bhai arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested Raja Mohammad Bhai, brother of Aziz Mohammad Bhai, from Motijheel yesterday morning for his alleged involvement with the defunct satellite television channel ATV.

Raja Bhai was picked up by police after his brother mentioned his name during an earlier interrogation.

Aziz Mohammad Bhai was arrested earlier for his alleged involvement with passing 'secret information' in the name of ATV programmes.

APPEAL FOR HELP

RAHMAT-E-ALAM ISLAM MISSION
-the largest Orphanage of the Country.

On the occasion of Holy Ramadan- an appeal to you to donate your Jakaat, Fitra, donations etc. to **RAHMAT-E-ALAM ISLAM MISSION** for the support of over 1200 Numbers of Orphans, Miskins & Heirless people.

Account No. 000145, Agrani Bank, Farmgate Branch.

Please Contact:

 1 Railgate, Tejgaon, Dhaka., Phone: 9119309, 9112281
Rajabari Branch Phone: 8912927

Alhaj Miah Md. Golam Kibria

General Secretary.

DHAKA BANK

L I M I T E D

PROFOUND GRATITUDE

Dhaka Bank Limited announces with great pleasure that the Public Issue of Shares of the bank which was closed on 28th December, 1999 received tremendous public support and has been over subscribed. The Board of Directors and Management take this opportunity to express their profound gratitude to the investors for their overwhelming support and confidence reposed on the bank. The Board of Directors and Management also acknowledge with gratitude co-operation extended to the bank by:-

Securities & Exchange Commission
Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd.
Chittagong Stock Exchange Ltd.
Underwriters, Bankers to the issue
Manager to the Issue

More textbook officers sued for corruption

In a crackdown against corrupt officials of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), the Bureau of Anti Corruption yesterday filed two more criminal cases, reports UNB.

With the latest cases against seven officials, five cases were lodged for alleged corruption of about Tk 14 crore in the NCTB that determines secondary school curriculum and publishes textbooks.

Officials said the Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed two cases with Motijheel thana yesterday accusing seven incumbent and former officials of the NCTB for causing financial loss of more

See page 11 col 8

Crackers hurled at residence of Prof Zafar Iqbal

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 29: Three crackers were hurled at the residence of Prof Zafar Iqbal, Dean, Faculty of Computer Engineering of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology this morning, an official said.

Three unidentified young men came to the campus at about 6:30 am and hurled the crackers at the building in which Prof Zafar Iqbal lives. Some doors and windows of the building were damaged the blasts. The youths, however, managed to escape.

President and General Secretary of the Shahjalal University Teachers' Association in a joint statement have condemned the incident. They also demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits responsible.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 8616772-4, Commercial: 8616771, Fax No: 88-02-8613035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net

Laxmipur dist comes under digital phone network

LAXMIPUR, Dec 29: As Laxmipur district came under digital telephone network today, the government announced plans for bringing a revolutionary change in country's telecommunications through the import of more modern phone technologies, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the 1000-line Laxmipur Digital Telephone Exchange by talking over phone from her office in Dhaka to Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim at this end.

The new modern digital exchange upgraded the 500-line analogue exchange here. The project was entirely financed by the government.

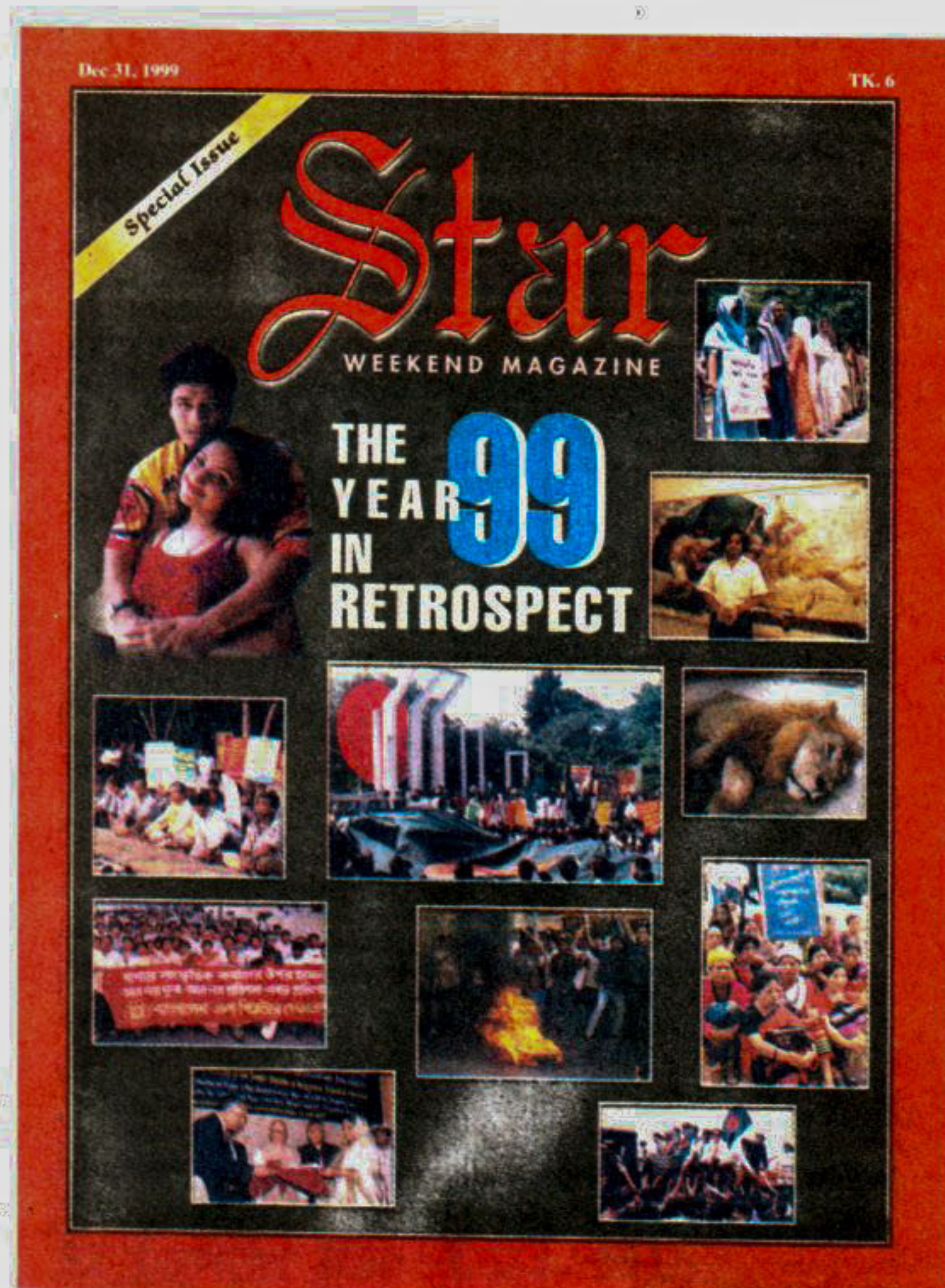
She said that with the digitalisation of Laxmipur exchange people would not only get improved and better telephone service but trade and commerce as well as socio-economic condition.

Laxmipur became the 25th district to be covered by digital telephone systems. Under government programme to digitalise telephone in all districts of the country, three more districts - Gazipur, Tangail and Kishoreganj - would come under this system next month.

Installation of digital exchange in 84 thanas with government's own finance would be completed by year 2001. Another 83 thanas would come under digital systems by 2001 under a separate project financed by the Chinese government.

Under a separate plan of the government, 3 lakh digital telephones would be installed under build-own-operate (BOO) basis.

Look out for this week's special yearend issue of The Daily Star magazine on Friday



The year 1999 is about to end and with it a century. What were the events that shaped the last year of the century? Star Weekend Magazine offers its valued readers The Year 1999 in Retrospect, a special pictorial issue documenting the major events of the year in politics, art, culture, business, environment, sports and so on. This Year End picture album containing 48 pages of colour and black and white pictures, will also look into the major crimes, arrivals and milestones of the year. Don't miss this special issue ready to hit the news stands on the New Year's Eve!

Introducing
OXY PORCELAIN
A New Millennium Product
from 1st January, 2000

Best Wishes for the
New Millennium

BENGAL FINE CERAMICS LTD.
H.H. Bhaban(2nd & 3rd Floor), 52/1 New Eskaton Road, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Phone: 9345174, 9343948, 404177, 8312538 Fax: 880-2-8314933, E-mail: bfc@bdmail.net