

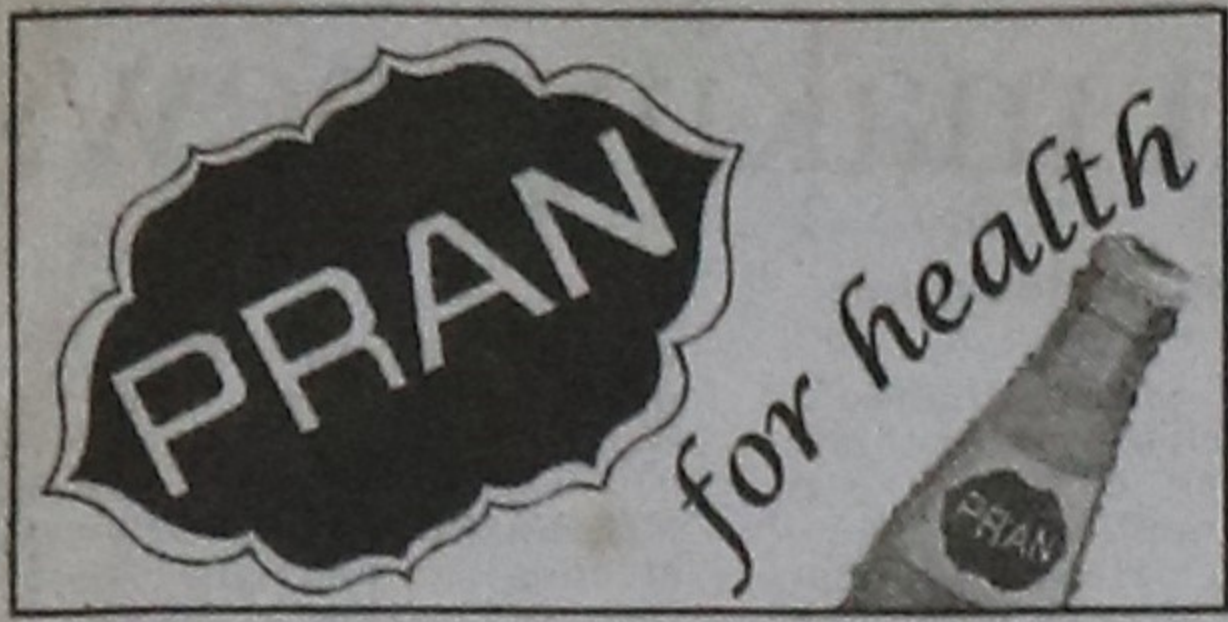
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Today's issue
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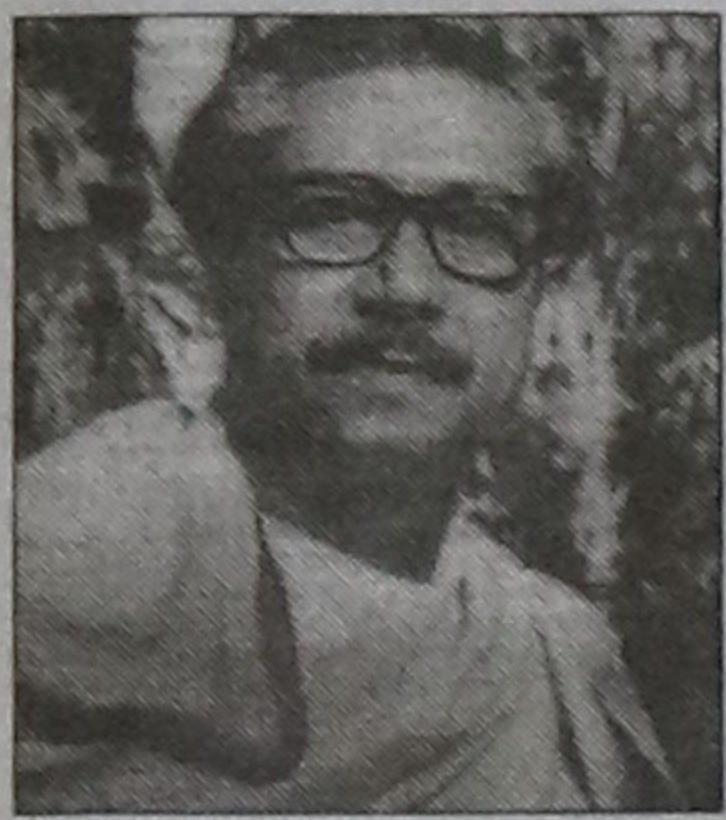
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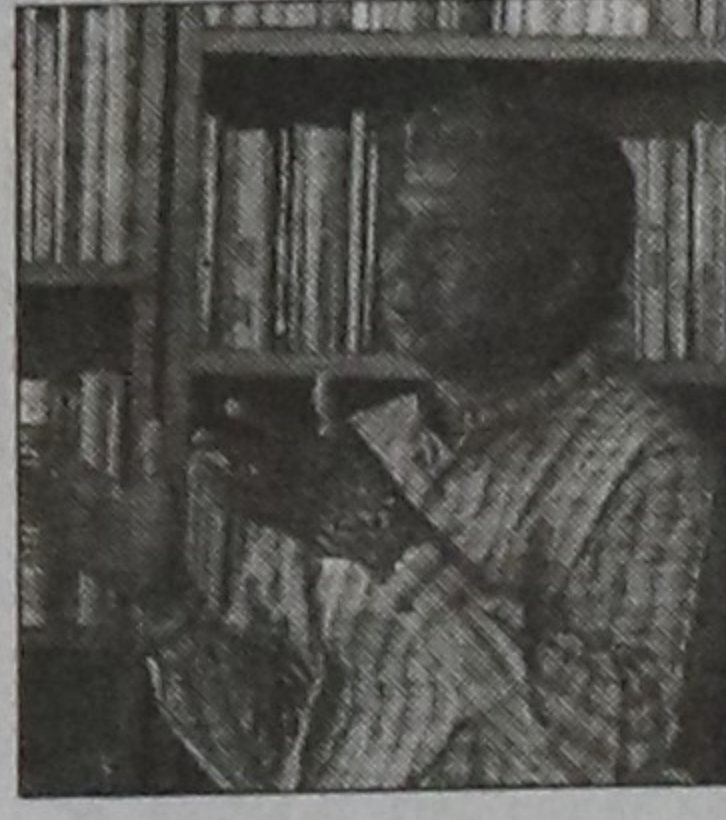
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The Daily Star



Millennium Special



On the occasion of the new century and the new millennium The Daily Star honours Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prof Mohammed Yunus as the **TWO MOST IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES of Bangladesh**. In honouring them we attempt to create a bridge between the past and the future. Bangabandhu clearly stands out as the greatest leader of the past but for whose life long sacrifice, indomitable courage and boundless love for the people we would not have gained our freedom and independence in 1971. In honouring Prof. Yunus The Daily Star looks ahead. In him, we see the most clearly enunciated ideas which can help build a future of prosperity and dignity for our teeming millions. Unlike normal theories, Yunus's ideas have already been implemented not only in Bangladesh but in all parts of the world including the developed countries. We express our ardent hope that the government leaders and politicians will give due importance to his ideas and adopt them in our national effort to eliminate poverty. See our eight-page Millennium Special.

Yeltsin goes

Russia gets new leader in Vladimir Putin

MOSCOW, Dec 31: President Boris Yeltsin announced on national television today that he had resigned and presidential elections will be held within 90 days to replace him, reports AP. The announcement caught Russia by total surprise, and is likely to launch the country into yet another political crisis as parties scramble for unexpected presidential elections. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the country's most popular politician, immediately took control of the government and will serve as acting president until the elections. Looking pale and grim in a speech on national television, the 68-year-old Yeltsin said it was time for him to go. He asked Russians to forgive him for his mistakes and failing to realise their dreams after the fall of the Soviet Union. "Today, on the last day of the outgoing century, I resign," said Yeltsin, speaking in front of a gaily-decorated New Year's tree and a blue, red and white Russian flag with a golden Russian eagle. "I am stepping down ahead of term. I understand that I must do it and Russia must enter the new millennium with new politicians, with new faces, with new intelligent, strong, energetic people, and we who have been in power for many years must go," Yeltsin said. It was yet another unexpected move by Yeltsin, who has presided over Russia through eight tumultuous, often chaotic years. His attempts to build a market economy were deeply flawed by corruption and incompetence, and he became widely disliked by most Russians. Looking emotional, Yeltsin asked several times for forgiveness for not solving Russia's problems. "I beg your forgiveness for having failed to jump in one leap from the gray, stagnant, totalitarian past to the clear, rich and civilized future," he said. "I am leaving, I've done what See page 11 col 6"



Out



In



Time ticks on
The silhouette of two young women, hand in hand, who saunter along the sea beach not merely to bid farewell to the last sunset of the millennium but also to, as it were, wake up to the next day's sun-rise.
— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Welcome Millennium Sun

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh joins the rest of the world in stepping into a new millennium today and greeting a new dawn for the mankind. Fireworks and blast of crackers heralded the day when the clock struck zero hours last night. Revellers joined the celebrations in many places in the city, welcoming the new year. Emergency workers in utilities like power, water, gas, telephones, hospitals, clinics, airports were on high alert to guard against the Y2K glitch in the event of a computer failure.

Bangladesh Biman, which grounded all its aircraft since 6 p.m. yesterday was scheduled to run a check on all its computer-run operations at mid-night. All planes are expected to remain grounded until 7 a.m. today. British Airways, Malaysian Airlines and Singapore Airlines cancelled their flights to Dhaka yesterday. Others rescheduled their flights to avoid any hiccup on air traffic control radars at Zia International Airport.

However, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh said that there was nothing to fear as it's radars would function as usual. Flights would be guided manually to avoid any possible problem. Police was on high alert to prevent any untoward incident during the celebrations in the city and its outskirts. A large number of people ignoring cold joined the celebrations, enjoying concerts and parties in city hotels, students' parties.

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Curtain falls on hijack drama

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan, Dec 31: All hostages on an Indian Airlines plane walked to freedom today in an apparently peaceful end to their ordeal after India agreed to free three Kashmiri militants, reports Reuter. The week-long drama that spanned five countries and cost one life ended when five gunmen disappeared into the

southern Afghan city of Kandahar and more than 150 hostages got their liberty. **NEW DELHI, Dec 31: The first of two planes bringing back 155 hostages after their week-long hijacking ordeal ended in New Delhi late today, Press Trust of India said, reports Reuter.**

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswanti Singh later said the hijackers had been given 10 hours to leave Afghanistan. "We have given the hijackers 10 hours to leave for wherever they want to go," Singh told reporters at Kandahar airport. The masked hijackers, who stabbed a newly married man to death for removing his blind-

See page 11 col 6

A Millennium Newborn



We are also newborn in the banking arena and have just waded through the twilight of the last millennium. Thanks to the dedicated talents steering it and the discerning customers, we have the privilege to enjoy dealing with.

Share with us the new sun, bear with us the new challenge

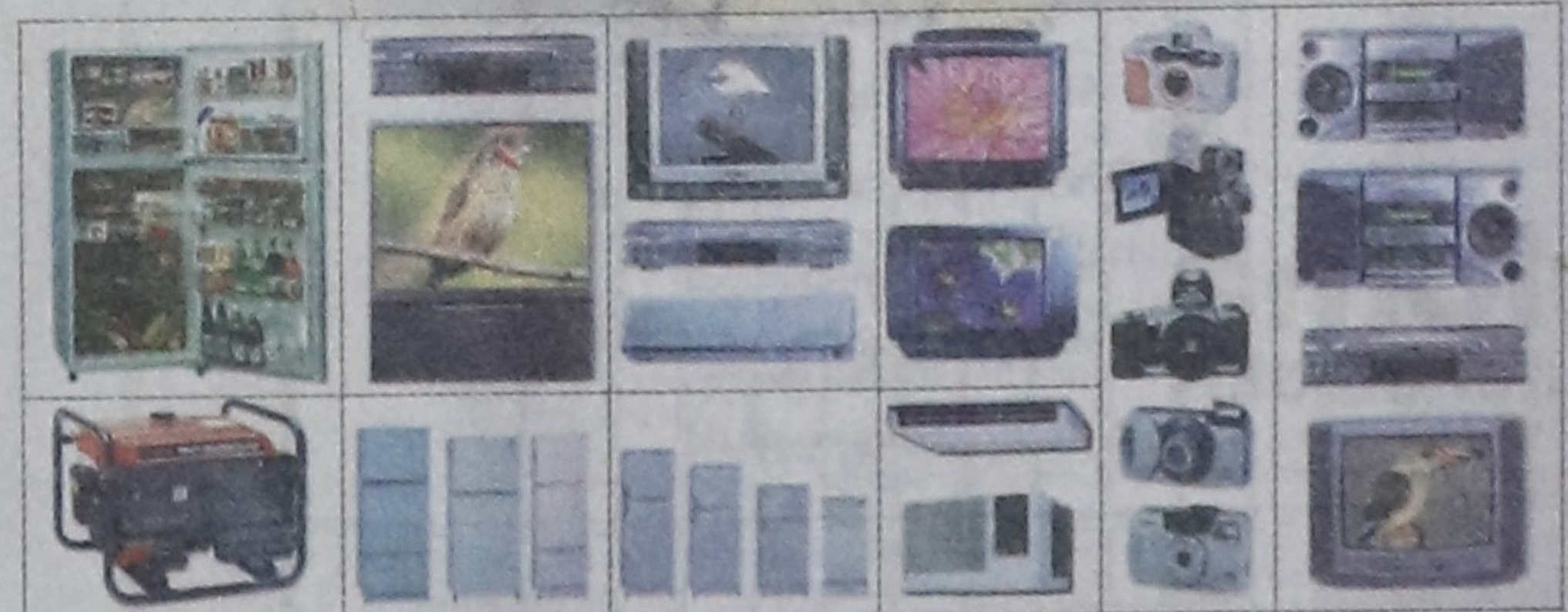
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