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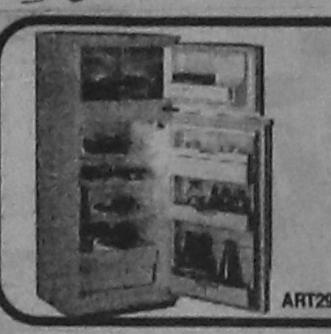
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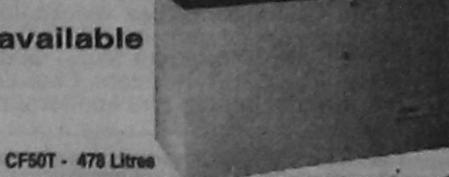
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Fire: Goalpara power units out of order

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 3: All six production units of Goalpara power station have gone out of order since Saturday as the 60megawatt unit of the Khulna Power Station (KPS) caught fire on Saturday night due to mechanical faults.

A source at KPS said it will take at least two weeks before to repair the damage. Fire broke out in the unit due to leakage in the insulator which the engineers and technicians could not detect earlier. The repair will cost over Tk 15 lakh, in addition to suspension of power

Sources said 110-megawatt unit also went out of order on Wednesday due to major mechanical breakdown.

GT and TG-35 are also two units of the KPS which PDB declared 'abandoned' few months ago. But its officials and employees

including the executive engineer are still drawing their salaries without working, the sources

One of the two bargemounted power plants of the KPS went out of order three years back. It is yet to be put into operation. Efforts are being made to shift this unit elsewhere in the country due to a lot of technical problems including that of docking, the sources said. The shifting will cost over Tk five crore, said an engineer at the KPS who is reportedly trying hard for keep the plant in Khulna.

Total load shedding in Khulna zone on Saturday was 50 megawatt. The national grid supplied 100 megawatt on Saturday. Load shedding may increase further if emergency measures are not taken to sort out the problems, said a source

Putin sacks Yeltsin's daughter

MOSCOW, Jan 3: Acting President Vladimir Putin made a symbolic break with the past Monday, sacking the scandaltainted daughter of former leader Boris Yeltsin as a Kremlin aide at the start of his first

full week in office, reports AFP. Putin signed a decree dismissing Tatyana Dyachenko as a senior presidential advisor and re-assigned Yeltsin's chief spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin to other duties.

100-yr-old baby!

COPENHAGEN, Jan 3: Denmark's first millennium baby, a girl, is already 100 years old, according to computer records, a newspaper reported here today, says AFP.

Denmark passed the bug hurdle comfortably after spending 30 billion kroner on readying computers to keep them glitch-free but not at Holback

hospital In a minor case of the dreaded by striking, a computer registe, ed the baby's birth as January 1, 1900, the newspa-

per BT reported. Jette Christiansen, the proud mother, was quoted as saying: "It was quite bizarre to see my daughter - a girl of 3,900 grams - down as a centenarian. But it doesn't make me any less

A hospital spokeswoman at Holbaek explained: The hospital takes credit for Denmark's first millennium baby. But it wasn't aware of the computer

problems. "Our equipment wasn't ready for the 2000 bug."

CU: 8 months

From page 1

were killed in a clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) on December 19. Following the incident, the university authority vacated all dormitories of the university and suspended all examinations till January 13. Protesting the killings. Shibir called an indefinite strike on the

campus amid the vacation. The scheduled vacations include 31 days for Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr in January, 18 days for Eid-ul-Azha in March and April, 31 days on account of rainy season in July, 15 days for Durga Puja and Autumn in October and again a monthlong Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr vacation beginning from December 14, 1999.

Movement of rickshaws was

normal. In many areas includ-

ing Malibagh, Moghbazar,

Farmgate, Gulistan and Mo-

hakhali, these created serious

minibuses and state-run BRTC

buses were seen plying on the

city streets during the hartal

hours. However, long distance

buses and trucks did not ply.

Trains, launches and steamers

Airport said some interna-

Sources at Zia International

Trading at Dhaka Stock Ex-

change (DSE) remained sus-

pended during the hartal. How-

ever, 'electronic trading' in for-

eign exchange market went on

private offices, business houses

tendance in government offices

tivists on the streets was negli-

address: dstar@bangla.net

Presence of pro-hartal ac-

and shops remained closed. At-

transactions in banks.

jams during the hartal.

operated as usual.

yesterday.

was thin.

Dyachenko, the ex-president's favourite daughter and chief image-maker, played a key role in Yeltsin's 1996 reelection campaign and had come to epitomise the power of a tight-knit group of Kremlin aides over the country.

Reputedly the "gatekeeper" who controlled access to the man who ruled Russia for the past eight years until his shock resignation Friday, Dyachenko has been credited with helping engineer the dismissals of several premiers.

"It was inevitable. A new man, a new entourage, and new close advisors," Yakushkin told Echo Moscow radio. The former Yeltsin aide said he had himself seen Dyachenko "tidy her desk and collect her things" from her Kremlin office.

Dyachenko, who turns 40 later this month, embodied what Russian media derisively refers to as "The Family," a close-knit cabal of shadowy figures, unelected and unaccountable to parliament, who pull strings behind the scenes.

The group also includes billionaire businessman Boris Berezovsky, oil magnate Boris Abramovich, ex-Kremlin chief of staff Valentin Yumashev and the current holder of that post, Alexander Voloshin.

TSC incident

From page 1

rights organisations have asked the government to post a reward for information leading to the attackers' arrests.

Alina Khan, a member of the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights, said photographs of the attack printed in several newspapers should be widely publicised along with a reward.

The society is also conducting its own investigation into

the attack, said Khan. UNB adds: AYBI Siddiqui, the inspector general of police, told UNB that they did not consider the attack "a silly matter. We took the matter as a serious one and a directive has been given to find out the culprits immediately.

Police official also expressed their embarrassment over "irresponsible" comments made by the officer-in-charge, who showed little sympathy with the victim of the attack that reportedly took place in the presence of police.

Several lawyers and police officials said an investigation wasn't necessary, since many national dailies published photographs of the attack.

gible and virtually there was no

leaders Abdul Matin Chowd-

hury, Maj Gen (Retd) ZA Khan.

Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed

MP, Amanullah Aman MP,

and Abdus Salam brought out

processions twice from the

party central office at Naya Pal-

tan. The processions passed

through Kakrail, Bijoynagar

and Fakirerpool areas. A rally was also held in front of the

lowed the processions.

Witnesses said helmeted po-

Activists of Jatiya Party,

Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami

Oikya Jote were not seen on the

eral anti-hartal processions in

AL's main procession brought

out from Bangabandhu Avenue

paraded different streets. Party

leader and State Minister Mo-

fazzel Hossain Chowdhury

Maya led the procession.

Supporters of the ruling

BNP activists led by party

picketing during the hartal.

6-hr hartal observed

Many auto-tempos, Shamsul Alam Praminik MP

tional flights changed schedule lice and DB police closely fol-

as usual. There were limited Awami League brought out sev-

Educational institutions, the city during the shutdown.

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party office.

city streets.

Ananda Mohan College vice principal's office ransacked

30 injured as

gang fires on

rivals in city

By Staff Correspondent

jured when an armed gang at-

tacked their rivals at Din Mo-

hammed colony at Bhashantek

admitted to the Dhaka Medical

College Hospital (DMCH) with

were: Zakir Hossain, Sarwar,

Ahmed, Iftekhar Hossain Rumi,

Hakim, Habibur Rahman,

Yusuf Ali, Shorab and Baser

witnesses said a gang of armed

youths led by Bipu and Gias

suddenly attacked Zakir at his

residence at Din Mohammed

colony in Kafrul area at about 9

conflict with the gang over

playing cricket match few days

also hit with a machet when he

several locals who came to see

what was happening. Some

were admitted to a clinic, while

others waited to be sent to

said that their boss went to the

spot but they cant comment on

the incident until they are back.

When contacted Kafrul police

DMCH, hospital sources said.

came to help Zakir.

The attack was a sequel to a

Zakir's cousin Sarwar was

The gang opened fire, hitting

Hospital sources quoting

Of the injured, nine were

Those admitted to the DMCH

in the city last night.

bullet injuries.

At least 30 people were in-

MYMENSINGH, Jan 3: A section of honours students of Ananda Mohan College ransacked the office of the viceprincipal of the college today at about 11-30 am to realise their demand for deferring examination date, reports BSS.

The agitated students also brought out a procession and paraded main road of the town.

Violence marks polls

(Top) Voters run for cover after rival groups began fighting at UCEP School polling

centre and (above) people queue to cast their votes at Doctor Khastagir Girls' School

Hug escaped unburt. When asked later, Hug said 10 to 12 per cent votes were cast in Boxirhat ward as most voters stayed indoors due to intermittent bomb explosions.

During a visit to Dewan Bazar ward office centre at 10 am, Presiding Officer Abdul Hannan said that 450 votes were cast there against 4027 Both male and female voters were seen queuing to cast vote, braving the 'curfew hartal and bomb scare.

One Namita Biswas told this correspondent, "I have come to cast my vote. This is my right. I necessary, I will die to establish my right.

Another voter, Rina Chowdhury, standing in the same queue echoed the same senti-

Monjurul Alam, Presiding Officer at a centre at Kadam Mobarak said till 10-30 am, 450

votes were cast out of 2030. "I did not expect such a turnout at such a panicky situation" he said. But during another visit to the centre at 3 pm a large number of 'cadres' were seen in and around the polling

booths. A total of 1299 votes were cast out of 2031 till that time, officials there said. On the other hand, only 30 votes were cast till noon at Kazem Ali School centre, one kilometer from the Kadam Mo-

barak centre, sources there At a government school centre located within a stone's

throw from Kazem Ali School only 32 votes were cast till 12-

Cancel polls From page 1

The BNP secretary general announced that the opposition parties have decided not to announce fresh programmes before the Eid festival. But they are planning to build up a mass movement through announcing tougher programme, one after another after the Eid.

BNP leaders Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, Anwar Zahid Amanullah Aman MP and Abdus Salam were present at the press briefing.

No voter was seen till noon From page 1

at a centre at Little Flower Kindergarten. Premises of

many other centres gave a deserted look. Zahir Uddin, a government official when asked said, "I did not go to the polling centre to

cast my vote out of fear." Many other residents echoed the same sentiment. Chittagong turned into a ghost city amid a panicky situation as the Opposition enforced a 48-hour 'curfew hartal'. Most of the people stayed in-

-Courtesy: Prothom Alo

doors, vehicles except few ricskshaws stayed off the roads and shops and markets remained closed.

Dr David Carter new British HC to Bangladesh

Newly appointed British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dr David Carter. CVO, arrives in the city on January 19 to take over his new assignment, reports UNB.

David Carter replaces David Walker, CMG, CVO, who leaves Dhaka on retirement on January 7 serving for three years in Bangladesh.

Dr Carter comes to Dhaka

just having finished a posting in New Delhi where he was minister and Deputy Head of Mission from 1996, said a British High Commission press release in the city yesterday.

He joined the British Diplo matic Service in 1970 and has served in Ghana, the Philippines, Zambia, South Africa and latterly India, together with a number of UK postings with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London.

He is married with one son and one daughter, and his areas of interest include travelling. music, reading and walking. Dr Carter has a BA Jt Hons

from the University of Wales and a PhD from Durham Uni

Declare Pakistan a terrorist state

Vajpayee urges US, others

NEW DELHI, Jan 3: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee urged major nations of the world today to declare neighbouring Pakistan a terrorist state, saying his government would work toward that objective and hoped the United States would spearhead it, reports AP.

Vajpayee said the government had information making it clear that the eight-day Indian Airlines hijacking that ended Dec 31, with one passenger stabbed to death, was an "integral part of the Pakistan backed campaign of terrorism."

However, Vajpayee provided no details on the information India says it has of Pakistani involvement.

Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told a press conference on Saturday that the hijackers - masked throughout the event - were Pakistanis and that they had fled to Pakistan after India traded three prisoners suspected of terrorism for the lives of the 155 hostages. Pakistan has denied Indian

allegations that it is a terrorist state and backed the hijackers. It has said the hijackers did not come to Pakistan and would be arrested if they did.

Chatting with reporters dur-

ing a visit to a science congress at the University of Pune in southwestern India, Vajpayee said. "Pakistan's active and sustained role in fomenting terrorism in India is now too obvious to be overlooked by the international community.

"India, therefore, strongly urges major nations of the world to declare Pakistan a terrorist state," he said. "Our government will work systematically toward this objective.

"I hope the United States would take an initiative in this regard," he added.

See also page 5

Vajpayee said it appeared during the hostage crisis that the Taliban movement that controls most of Afghanistan, where the plane eventually landed, had been helpful.

"So we have tried to develop a better understanding with them," Vajpayee said. "However, it also looks that they seemed to have sympathy for the hijack-Vajpayee's comments were

part of a series of strong statements by Indian leaders against Pakistan in the wake of the hijacking, which began Dec 24 on a flight from Katmandu, Nepal to New Delhi.

The statements have not been accompanied by any proof that can be independently veri-

On Sunday, National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra appeared on television to say Pakistan had links with the five men who hijacked the Airbus A-300 jetliner.

He told independent Star TV that Indian intelligence intercepted several radio conversations between militant groups in Kashmir that confirmed Pakistan's involvement.

Mishra claimed that in one of the messages intercepted by New Delhi - a discussion between members of two different separatist organizations - one man asked why the other had condemned the hijacking, saying that the hijackers were acting on the instructions of Pak-

Meanwhile, Pakistan said today it had no news on the whereabouts of the hijackers and three militants who disappeared after the hijack drama. Interior Minister Moinuddin

Haider also described as "very irresponsible" Indian allegations that the hijackers were Pakistani nationals who had crossed back into the country.

Cancel CCC polls: Khaleda

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia asked the government to immediately revoke the "farcical" election to Chittagong City Corporation, showing respect to the opinion of the people, re-

"By successfully observing half-day hartal countrywide, the countrymen expressed their real support to the issue of revoking the CCC polls," she said in a post-hartal statement yes-The BNP chairperson alleged

the government, in its bid to retain state power by strengthening its foundations, tried to hold the CCC poll massing police. BDR, Army and 400 magistrates, alongside the ruling party leaders, activists and armed cadres at the port city. "But the voters rejected the

election as the government held it unilaterally ignoring the Election Commission advice and keeping the opposition parties out of the contest," she

The former prime minister reminded the ruling quarters that no government in the past could hold on to power holding such farcical elections leaving out the opposition parties as well as the people.

Ban on wine shops on some religious occasions

The government has im posed ban on selling and serving of wines at all wine shops of the country on some religious occasions, reports UNB. The restrictions were im

posed to maintain the sanctity of the days, an official handout said yesterday. According to the announcement, all wine shops, bars and

clubs of the country will remain closed from Wednesday evening to Thursday evening on the occasion of the holy Shab-e-The other occasions when the shops, bars and clubs wil

remain closed this year are: from April 16 evening to April 17 evening (Muharram), from evening of June 15 to evening of June 16 (Eid-e-Miladunnabi) from November 12 evening to November 13 evening (Shab-e-Barat) and from evening of December 24 to evening of Decem ber 25 (Shab-e-Qadar), and the entire month of Ramadan.

But the restrictions will not be applicable for those hotels, clubs and bars of international standard, where only the foreigners drink wine.

BNP-JP dispute

From page 1

top opposition leaders had recently asked the liaison committee to complete formation of the action committees without further delay, opposition sources said. Meanwhile, BNP itself is

also divided on the question as to who would head the action committee in the capital. One group prefers city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, while former Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury is the choice of the other group. according to BNP source. In this backdrop, the liaison committee is expected to meet

again in a day or two in its bid to resolve the dispute. "We are not likely to go for launching the planned action committees before the Eid, even if the disputes are settled in the next liaison meeting," an influential member of the committee

told The Daily Star last night. As per earlier decision, fermation of the action committee was to be completed by December last year.

Thick fog, severe cold

fined people to their residences and makeshift shelters.

Road and river traffic was very thin due to poor visibility. Motor vehicles had to keep headlights on during the day. But the fog blanket made it impossible for traffic at night.

ferred to stay at home. Those who came outside were seen lighting fire. Poor homeless people were found wearing clothes made from jute bags. The sun was not visible today until 1:30 pm.

said about 150 people, mostly children were admitted to genthe chilling cold.

Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat. Gaibandha and Nilpoor people.

that blinding fog and severe cold waves from the north are likely to grip the country twice this month.

and poor inhabitants in the vulnerable areas are likely to suffer most. Deputy Director of Storm

hammad Akram Hossain told the news agency vesterday that Sreemongal in Sylhet division; Dinajpur, Syedpur and Rangpur in Rajshahi division; Sitakunda and Comilla in Chittagong division; Mymensingh and Tangail in Dhaka division; Satkhira and Chuadanga in Khulna division and Bhola and

Khepupara in Barisal division are likely to be affected if severe cold spells sweep the country. Drivers of long distance ve-

hicles and marine vessels have

complained that most of the

luxury coaches, lorries and mo-

tor launches are not equipped

with special fog lights to avoid

collision in major rivers and

vailing over northern Indian

states. The ridge should pene-

trate into Bangladesh territory

while at the same time easterly

trough should retreat up to the

south of the Bay of Bengal for

any significant fall of ground

temperature," he said. Hossain

denied that jets are dominating

the mid-level of troposphere

and added that the jets (wind

speed 60 miles per hour) are

staying at around 30,000 feet

above the mean sea level which

should descend up to 18,000 feet

to change the dynamics of win-

Quoting some records of the

"Sub-tropical ridge is pre-

In Sirajganj, people pre-

The civil surgeon's office

eral hospital and other private clinics with pneumonia and respiratory problems owing to District administrations of

phamari have distributed warm clothes and blankets among BSS reports: Weather experts in the capital yesterday warned

The communications system

Warning Centre (SWC) Mo-

lowest registered temperature, he said mercury dropped to 2.8 degrees Celsius on February 4, 1968 at Sreemongal, 3.6 degrees Celsius on January 27, 1964 at Ishwardi, 3.9 degrees on January 1, 1955 at Dinajpur and 4.1 degrees Celsius on January 18.

1964 at Faridpur.

Referring to the first three days of this year, Met Office officials said the situation in Sreemongal deteriorated. The lowest temperature there was 8.2 degrees Celsius on January 1, 2000 and 6.8 degrees Celsius on January 2 and 3.

The lowest minimum temperature in the previous year recorded 5.4 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga on January 11.

Accused abducted from court

premises in Barisal BARISAL, Jan 3: A group of

armed terrorists today abducted an accused in an arms case and his brother from the premises of District and Sessions Judge's Court at noon today, reports UNB. Witnesses said Swapan

Sarkar, 24, and two other accused in the arms case appeared before the second Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court. The armed men snatched away Swapan and his brother from the guard as they came out of the court. Witnesses said the armed

complices, terrorists of the Kotwali police said they did not receive any complaint

men were Parvez and his ac-

about the incident till 6 pm. Swapan hailed from Bakerganj thana of the district.

Garment exporters

From page 1 to celebrations, such as Christmas and New Year's Eve,

and year end garment quotas in the United States and Canada. Anisul Haq, the managing director of the Mohammadi Group, a leading ready made garment exporter, said the cost

of instability is staggering. "A one day hartal in Chittagong costs garment exporters about Tk 200 crore, while factories lose about Tk 50 crore." said Haq. "When Chittagong Port is closed during a hartal it creates a garment stockpile worth about Tk 150 crore."

Haq said at least 15 per cent of the stockpile will be sent by air, which is not cost effective. It costs less than 40 cents to send 1-kilogram of goods by ship, compared to \$3 to \$3.50 by

Cabinet

From page 1 The 1988 law provided for district bodies comprising nonelected people. But following adoption of the 12th amendment to the Constitution in 1991, the local bodies have to be run by elected representatives.

However, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who chaired the Cabinet meeting asked the local government ministry to prepare the bill 'in the least possible time', meeting sources

Once prepared, the bill would go to the ministry of law for vetting and later to the Cabinet again for final approval. According to Cabinet sources, the government is serious about getting the bill passed in par-

liament 'very soon'. Water talks

From page 1

feeder canal, the navigation lock and the point below Farakka barrage.

According to data received in Dhaka yesterday, the present flow of water from Farakka has been "more than adequate." On January 1, 1.03,000 cusec

of water were released at Farakka while 1,05,000 cusec were measured at Hardinge Bridge point. On January 2, 1,06,000 cusec were released at Farakka and 1,04,000 cusec was recorded at Hardinge Bridge point.

The water accord entered its

fourth lean season this year. Except in 1997, the first dry season following the water treaty, there has been "satisfactory discharge of Ganges water as stipulated in the Indo- . Bangladesh water treaty", said a source in the water resources ministry. However, a Joint Scientific Committee of Bangladesh and India engaged in studying the reasons of the water shortfall that year is still to submit its report.

Taiwan's independent lawmaker Lo Fu-chu (C) grabs Chien Hsi-chieh of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party in a brawl at parliament yesterday as Lin Ming-yi of the ruling Kuomintang looks on. Both Lo and Lin chased Chien after they accused him of - AFP photo alleged groundless vitriol.