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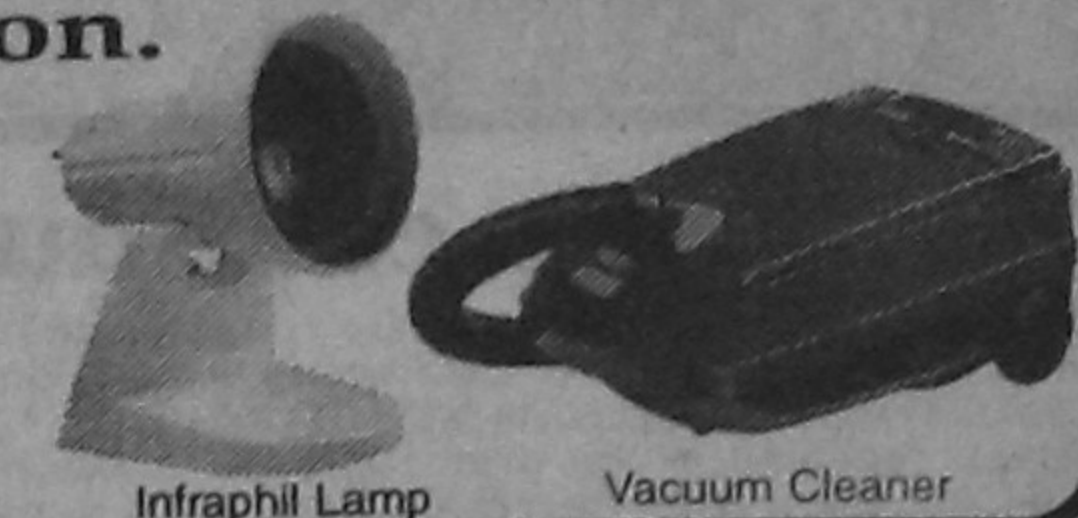
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Cold wave claims 13 lives in 5 dists

Cold wave sweeping the country for last three days claimed lives of 13 people in Manikganj, Thakurgaon, Barisal, Bagerhat and Chittagong districts yesterday reports UNB. The dead were identified as Aleya Begum, 45, wife of Abdul Barez of Railway Colony in Bagerhat town, Abdul Hamid, 55, a vendor of Thakurgaon Road, Boidunnesa, 60, wife of Molluzzidin at Moheshpur village in Sadar thana of Thakurgaon, Kamla Bibi of Shatghar village in Shibabai thana of Manikganj district, Arshad Ali, 80, and Arman Mollah, 85, of Barguna Sadar thana, Mahmuda, 55, Shafulul Islam, 60, and Firoza, 55, of Sitakunda thana and Delwar, 55, Nurunabi, 45, and Shahidul Haq, 50, of Mirsarai thana of Chittagong district. The cold wave continued to disrupt movement of all modes of vehicles in land, air and water routes yesterday causing severe trouble to the homebound people. Biman sources said foggy skies disrupted arrival of at least seven flights, including one Biman Bangladesh Airlines aircraft from Abudhabi to Dhaka that had to be diverted to Yangon in Myanmar. Another Biman flight in Dhaka-Dubai-London route that couldn't take off on schedule at 3:45PM on Tuesday because of fog clouds left Dhaka at 8:45am yesterday. Most river transport reached their destinations 3-6 hours behind schedules and many ran aground on shoals, according to reports. A met office source said temperature fell significantly with the mercury hurtling down to 6.9 degree Celsius at the lowest at Ishwardi. The low temperature is expected to prevail over the country in next 24 hours and thick fog may occur over Rajshahi division and the river basins elsewhere over the country, said met office. Slight fall in night temperature is expected over Rajshahi, Khulna and Dhaka divisions during the period, it said in its regular report.

Encroachment on Turag: DCC serves notice

By Special Correspondent The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has served a notice upon the lessee of the landing ghat (pier) on the south bank of the Turag river, asking him to explain why he had expanded the jetty upon the river bed. DCC sources said. The DCC notice followed a Daily Star report on December 31, 1999 on the encroachment on the river by the lessee, changing the river's course and threatening the Mirpur bridge. Since he had taken lease to facilitate the unloading of construction materials, he had expanded his landing ghat, encroaching upon the river bed, DCC officials confirmed. The Daily Star report after conducting their own probe. We conducted an investigation and found that the lessee had violated the agreement. The investigation was ordered in the wake of the report and subsequently the lessee was served with a notice on Sunday. He has been given seven days to reply, a DCC official said. The lessee was not available for comment. His lease is due to expire in June this year, the DCC official said.



An under-construction building collapsed at Rayer Bazar in the city injuring five people yesterday.

Incidents of mugging on rise in city

By Staff Correspondent Incidents of mugging on the roads leading to different city markets in broad daylight were on the rise for the last few days, with snatchers taking advantage of brisk Eid shopping, said victims and witnesses. A gang of young men snatched a handbag from a couple, containing about Tk 10,000 in cash, and ran away near the entrance of Dhaka New Market at about 11:30 am yesterday, alleged a neighbour of the victim. Incidents of mugging near Science Laboratory crossing, Elephant Road, Malibagh, Mouchak, Naya Paltan and other shopping centres of the city were also reported from over the last few days. According to a resident of Elephant Road, the muggers were operating along the roads surrounding the markets for snatching as additional policemen have been deployed in front of the city markets. Jalal Khan, a peon of The Daily Star, was mugged on a road in front of the shopping centre at city's Sobhanbagh area Sunday afternoon. The incident took place when Jalal was returning to his Bijli Mahalla residence by a tricycle rickshaw after drawing nearly Tk 9,000 package of his salary and Eid bonus from The Daily Star office. A senior official of DMP Southern Zone told The Daily Star last night that there was no noteworthy incident of mugging in his zone within the last few days and a minimum number of complaints had been filed with police in this regard. When asked why they did not inform police of the incidents, a number of victims said, pointing out that they knew that it would not make any difference. "I know I am not going to get my money back, anyway" - said one of victims echoing the sentiment of most of his compatriots. An additional force of about one hundred policemen have been deployed at New Market, Gausia and Elephant Road areas in view of the brisk Eid shopping. They are preventing crimes and controlling traffic movement at those areas, the official said, on condition of anonymity. The DMP Commissioner, however, was not available for comment last night.

DU expels

From page 1 tim and her companion. Statements of the two were essential to ascertain innocence of the three persons who claimed to have rescued the victim on that night, police said. Police also sent out teams to arrest Russel sources said. Russel's appearance is similar to that of a man trying to grab the victim. Mamun, Mukhtar and Taher claimed that they went to police voluntarily to help them. SB officials, however, said police are verifying their activities on that night. UNB adds: As per the Home Minister's directive, the investigators also examined the role of police during the incident. Sources said some police personnel already gave verbal statements to the higher authorities.

Village doctor beaten to death

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Jan 5: A village quack was beaten to death allegedly by the husband of a patient here today. The dead was identified as Dr Ashraf Islam, 50, of village Malikpur under Kaliganj thana. Dr Ashraf was beaten allegedly by one Nausher and his brother at a local bazar. He died on his way to hospital, police said. The doctor came under the wrath of Nausher as he failed to cure the latter's wife from prolonged illness. Further details could not be known immediately.

Husband of NGO worker allegedly commits suicide

By Staff Correspondent Husband of the NGO worker, found dead in her Hazaribagh residence Tuesday morning, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the early hours of yesterday. The dead, identified as Bachchu Mian, 30, a resident of Bhagalpur under Hazaribagh thana in the city, allegedly committed suicide by taking acid after death of her seven-month pregnant wife, police and hospital sources said. Police were suspecting that both Bachchu Mian and his wife Sweety Mustari, committed suicide over a family feud. Meanwhile, hospital sources said that Sweety was tortured to death over dowry. Bachchu took acid on Tuesday evening. He was rushed to DMCH in a critical condition. He succumbed at about 3 am yesterday. Police picked up Bachchu's mother in connection with the death of Sweety on Tuesday. Later she was released, police said. The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Cross-country tour

From page 1 meetings, public rallies and participate in mass contact programmes. The team leaders have been assigned to cover the areas, other than their own. Another joint secretary Mozaffar Hossain Paltu will head a team for Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur and Nilphamari. Azur Rahman, also a joint secretary, will head the team to visit Bogra, Sirajganj, Pabna, Natore and Joypurhat. Home Minister Mohammad Nasim will lead his team to Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna. Agriculture Minister Matia Choudhury will go with her team to Rajshahi city and district Chapainawabganj and Naogaon. Mayor of Dhaka city Mohammad Hanif will lead his team to Sunamganj, Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Habiganj.

Tk 7.95 lakh snatched in Ctg

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Jan 5: Armed miscreants snatched Tk 7.95 lakh from three officials of a Korean company at Customs House crossing under Bandar thana yesterday. The officials of Pacific Zipper Company in CEPZ came under attack when they were returning to the company by an autorickshaw after drawing the amount of money from Agrabad branch of Grindlays Bank at around 3.15 pm. A gang of about five miscreants riding on motorcycles intercepted the autorickshaw when it reached Customs House crossing and snatched the money from the officials at gunpoint. A case was filed with Bandar thana in this connection, but none was arrested till filing of this report at 7-30 pm today.

Sad stories from NU

From page 1 business to buy. About 100,000 students have received their admit cards as yet. Nothing goes right in our schools, colleges and universities, I have seen it for years," said one angry parent, who came with his helpless daughter to the NU campus in Gazipur. Indeed, thousands of students across the country were caught off guard. "Once more they have been left to suffer this year because of the authorities' indifference," said the parent, speaking on condition of anonymity. The NU would not open until January 18, only six days before the examination starts. "Our nerves will be tested till then. But who cares," fumed a student yesterday. Very recently, the BA (pass) examinees went through a similar situation. Students were seen scrambling for their admit cards in city colleges even the day before they were to sit for their examinations. While university officials privately admit their mismanagement, nothing has changed. "It was the same story when Dhaka and other universities used to administer the examinations. The National University, the very purpose of which was to straighten out the messy affair, hasn't changed anything," said one NU official. Senior NU officials, available, would not say anything. After repeated attempts, the vice-chancellor and the controller of examinations could not be reached for comment. In most colleges, student counseling doesn't simply exist. "There aren't many teachers around to ask for assistance," said a frustrated examinee from the Eden College to The Daily Star. "Those of us going to a NU-affiliated college are faced with peculiar circumstances. We are taught mostly by guest teachers from either Dhaka or Jahangirnagar University who wouldn't care if the courses are done in time or not," said a Lalmatia College student. One can imagine that things are far worse in colleges outside the capital. "In most cases, the whole process is just a farce. You're a good teacher if you allow the students to resort to the whatever means needed to pass the examinations. Whether a teacher is regular in his/her classes is immaterial," said a government college teacher from Comilla. "I have seen it

5 alleged muggers beaten up in city

By Staff Correspondent Five alleged muggers were beaten up by a section of local people in the city's Moghbazar area last night, according to local police. Two knives were recovered from their possession, local people said adding, the five had been mugging innocent people near the Wireless crossing for the last few days.

Adulterated

From page 1 "We don't have a method to detect adulterated food," said a trader, who requested anonymity. "How can we say it is adulterated unless we open each packaging container? It's really beyond our control. Adulteration originates at the supplier." Butter, powder milk, sugar and flour and atta, especially in containers or polythene bags, are also adulterated. Some packages exhibiting the Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution seal also contained adulterated items. Unregistered containers use the seal to gain the public's confidence. "It is a major problem we are trying to address," said a BSTI official. "We have a monitoring team inspecting markets for adulterated food, but the problem is out of control. "It is not carried out by one or two groups but hundreds and thousands are involved."

22 of a family massacred in Peru

LIMA, Jan 5: Unknown assailants wielding pistols and rifles shot dead 22 members of a Peruvian family, most of them children, after a possible family feud over land in a remote village in the central Andes, authorities said today, reports Reuters. Javier Fonseca, a municipal spokesman in the region, said, "It could be about vengeance over land rights." Police on Tuesday discovered the bodies of the Caqui family, including seven adults and 15 children, many shot in the head, in a village in Huanuco region, a centre for drug traffickers and where some Marxist Shining Path rebels operate.

Autorickshaw passenger robbed in city

An autorickshaw passenger was robbed of Tk 55,000 in the city's Malibagh area last night. The victim, Yusuf Jamal Kajar, a contractor of Noakhali Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) told UNB that three muggers got into his taxi from in front of Ayesha Shopping Complex on his way to Rampura BTV Bhaban at about 8.30 pm. Kajar, who was going to BTV Bhaban to see his relative, a BTV News producer, hired the autorickshaw from Purana Paltan area. The miscreants forced the driver to move the vehicle towards Rampura and finally got off near Malibagh rail crossing after snatching away the money and a gold ring.

Shawal moon

From page 1 the Islamic Foundation tomorrow after Maghrib prayers. The Foundation has already asked all its district offices to check whether the moon is sighted and, if so, inform them immediately. "It takes time to confirm the news of a moon sighting because we have to confirm the authenticity of the information with the local authorities," said Moulana Abdul Awal, director general of the Islamic Foundation. Awal said the moon sighting confusion happens in every Muslim country before the Eid. According to the Hadith, holy Ramadan begins after the sighting of moon and it ends the same way. "We cannot fully rely on the information provided by Meteorological Department or any other source," said Awal. Bangladesh Astronomical Society sources said that the Shawal moon would appear on January 6, at 18:14 GMT (12:14 am local time on January 7). The moon will be too low to be visible on that day. Therefore it will be visible on Saturday, January 8. "At that time, the moon will lie in the constellation of Capricornus; so the moon will be seen at a bit of a south-west angle in the western sky," said a Society press release.

Sri Lanka

From page 1 minister's office. No senior officials were killed. The explosion damaged the outer walls of the building housing the office of Bandaranaike, mother of president Kumaratunga. Earlier police said the blast occurred outside the house, which is nearby. A dismembered leg lay 30 feet away from the blast site. Four bodies were found at one place, covered with sheet brought from the prime minister's office. Two other bodies were about 40 feet away from the other bodies. Pieces of human flesh and blood were found all over the place. "I saw the police people trying to search her," said Nimal Sirisena, a security guard at the Russian embassy, said of the suspected bomber. "She was resisting it and moments later, I heard a big bang," said Sirisena, wiping drops of blood that fell on him. Sri Lanka's junior defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, who is believed to a prime target for Tamil Tiger rebels, also has a state bungalow at the top of Flower Road. Local residents earlier expressed fears that his presence in the area could attract Tiger bombings. Ratwatte is the hands-on director of the government's military campaign against the Tigers in the island's north-east. President Kumaratunga herself escaped an assassination attempt last month during the presidential race. A suicide bomber set off explosives strapped to her body as Kumaratunga was getting into her car. She was injured in the right eye and doctors reportedly have said she may lose sight. That blast, at an election rally in downtown Colombo last month also left 26 people dead and more than 100 wounded.

Playing with

From page 1 Sagor-7. In a desperate bid to avoid collision, the huge passenger launch swerved left just to hit the three-decker Super-sonic on its rear. This sent the vessel on the path of Sagor-4, with fatal results. Sagor-4 hit the belly of Super-sonic with a loud bang. Sources concerned at Barisal said Super-sonic was badly damaged and four members of its crew were injured, two of them seriously. The two were admitted to Barisal Medical College Hospital. "Had there been the eid rush on board Super-sonic, casualties would be much higher," said a BIWTA official in Barisal quoting eyewitnesses. BIWTA officials at Sadarghat launch terminal in the city said they had no information about the accident. Neither Sagor-4 nor Sagor-7 of Howladar Navigation Co Ltd reported it to the authorities on arrival at Sadarghat. River port officials at Chandpur also said they did not know anything about the accident. Super-sonic came from Dhaka and halted at Chandpur before leaving for Barisal, they added.



Preparations are on for the main Eid congregation at the National Eidgah in the city.