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Chaired by BNP chief and ment to force it to step down.

heard conflicting suggestions on toral alliance also came up for

early election.

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Possible strategies for the

planned agitation and an elec-

discussion against the backdrop

of the ruling party's plan for an

The meeting also stressed the

need for strengthening organisa-

tional activities of the party and

PM apprises President of her 3-nation

Euro-tour Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon to apprise him of

her official visit to three European

nations, reports UNB. The Prime Minister, who recently visited Italy, Germany and Switzerland, termed her discussion with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder as "very

The German Chancellor has supported my proposal for dutyand quota-free access of Bangladeshi products to the European market," she told the

President. Hasina also apprised the President that Italian Prime Minister Guiliano Amato had proposed to sign an agreement so that Bangladeshi people could go to

Italy and work legally. President Shahabuddin appreciated her successful visit to the three European countries and said trips would help widen bilateral relations with the nations.

Hemayet goes scot-free

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader Hemayet Hossain who opened fire during a clash with shop owners in Nilkhet area adjacent to Dhaka University campus on December 14 is still moving freely in the city.

One person was killed and several were injured when BCL leaders and activists clashed with shop owners following the High Court's split verdict in Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Sources concerned said that the BCL leader went into hiding for several days since his photograph was published in some newspapers on December 15. But now he is seen here and there. even doing Eid shopping at New

BCL insiders said police could not arrest him because of pressure from influential leaders of the ruling Awami League. Some top leaders of the ruling party's student front are also trying to save him.

Police however said they were looking for the culprit since his photograph was published in nwspapers.

Photograph of the young man brandishing arms was identified as that of Hemayet Hossain. general secretary of Ziaur Rahman Hall unit of BCL. The incident created sharp reaction See page 11col 2

-Inside Today-Article

The US Presidential Election and its Impacts

Column: Panorama By Dilara Choudhury Page 4

Business

Ctg Chamber for speeding up quota transfer advice process OPEC output cut on the cards

US economic slump may create new trade tension with Japan

Pages 6 7 & 8

Maghrib

Esha

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	Sur	Rises	Sun Sets
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Dec 24	6-	37 am	
-		Tin	nings
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4-00

5-22

7-30



5-14

7-00

Sehri, Iftar timings					
Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	lftar		
26	23	5-18	5-21		
27	24	5-13	5-21		
28	25	5-14	5-22		

SPGRC leaders sending abroad BNP fails to make headway 'fake stranded Pakistanis'?

Case against 7, three including Naseem Khan 'absconding'

By Raziur Rahman

Overcrowded launches leave terminal

under the nose of spl security teams

Top leaders of the Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC are allegedly involved in sending people abroad by issuing falsified documents that certify them as stranded Pakistanis.

Sources said the SPGRC leaders and their accomplices took large amounts of money from people in exchange for issuing false identity certificates. Many people have already travelled to Sweden, France, Germany, Italy and the USA and sought political asylum in those countries posing as stranded Pakistanis by using these fake certifi-

cates, they said. A Daily Star investigation found that anyone could 'buy' such a certificate for a specified amount of money from the city's 'Geneva Camp' the headquarters of the SPGRC.

Documents available with The Daily Star show that the SPGRC leaders have sent people abroad using these fake identity certificates These leaders have connections with an official of a USA based international organisation that deals with refugees from different parts of

Police are investigating the allegations against the committee leaders after Shajahan Talukdar, a retired soldier who lives in the city's Pallabi area, filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on October 30 accusing them of swindling Tk 5.4 lakh from him.

The case accuses seven people, including the SPGRC chief patron Naseem Khan and his two sons Mahmood Khan and Harunur Rashid of masterminding the scheme. Presently, the Detective Branch (DB) is

investigating the case.

A DB official told The Daily Star that Naseem Khan, Mahmood Khan and Morshed, another accused, have been absconding since the case was filed. Mahmood Khan is the assistant secretary general of the SPGRC.

Harunur Rashid and three other accused were granted bail by the CMM's Court after they surrendered before the court on November 27

Some other victims have already recorded their statements before | issues" the DB where they alleged that following assurances from Naseem Khan, they gave Mahmud Khan money for sending their relatives

Tuhin Khan, a businessman of the city's Mirpur area, alleged that the SPGRC leaders had taken a total of Tk 1.45 lakh from him promising to send his younger brothers abroad.

Sources said that the SPGRC leaders even cheated a number of people of their own community. Munna and Javed are two such stranded Pakistanis who allegedly lost their money after giving money to Mahmood Khan.

While visiting the SPGRC headquarters at 'Geneva Camp' in the guise of a stranded Pakistani certificate buyer, this correspondent could not find any of the accused SPGRC personnel there. According to sources, the office now mostly remains closed after

See page 11 col 1

By Staff Correspondent

Launches and steamers over-

loaded with home-bound people

are leaving the city's Sadarghat

terminal despite deployment of

special teams comprising BIWTA

men and security personnel to

check this ahead of the Eid festi-

Tuesday.

The teams were deployed on

BIWTA Chairman Muhammad

Abdul Hug earlier told The Daily

Star that the teams would keep a

"round-the-clock vigil" to ensure

safety of passengers and to make

sure that no overloaded launch or

for accidents of river vessels in

different routes, killing hundreds

of people every year. The risk

increases during the two Eid

festivals Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-

said that the teams would scruti-

nise fitness, registration and

other relevant documents of

vessels leaving the terminal and

check safety and security

directed to keep adequate safety

that many vessels, especially the

multi-decked ones, were not at all

concerned about passenger

attitude by the authorities con-

cerned, launch owners are now

cashing in on the heavy rush of

home-bound people, belying their

commitments made at a recent

Bangladesh Launch Owners

Association (BLOA) recently held

a meeting on safety of passengers

dent Alhaj Kalimullah had

assured the BIWTA officials that

they would take necessary steps

and keep adequate life saving

instruments on board," a leader

of BLOA had said after the meet-

But the launch owners made

no mistake to take chance of the

rush of passengers and charge

fares almost double the normal

rates. Almost all the launches

and steamers which left the ter-

minal yesterday were loaded way

beyond their limit, exposing

See page 11 col 6

passengers to mortal risk.

"We will not allow overloading

to check overloading.

ing.

-- Star photo

At the meeting, BLOA Presi-

during the ensuing Eid-ul-Fitr.

Top officials of BIWTA and the

meeting with BIWTA officials.

Taking the advantage of a lax

equipment on board," he said.

"Launch owners have been

The BIWTA chairman admitted

arrangements on board.

The BIWTA chairman had also

Overloading is the main cause

steamer leaves the terminal.

in resolving disputed issues By Nazmul Ashraf Despite widespread speculation alliance, meeting sources paign while others emphasised tion, the main opposition BNP more on oust-government move-

Leader of the Opposition in par-

liament Khaleda Zia, the meeting

launching a tough street agita-

tion after the Eld, preparations

the Jatiya Sangsad and opposi-

The meeting was adjourned till

tion lawmakers' resignation.

yesterday failed to make any headway in resolving the growing discord in the opposition camp over its much talked about oustgovernment agitation after the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Leaders of the BNP-led four- for the next elections, return to party opposition alliance at a meeting on Tuesday also could not resolve the "contentious

An emergency meeting of BNP's highest decision-making body -the National Standing Committee -- had several hours of discussion on the disputed issues at the party's Banani office yesterday.

But no decision could be taken after lengthy deliberations that focused on the planned antigovernment agitation, preparation for the next general elections, resolving internecine conflicts in the party and its front organisations as well as the longunresolved issues in the opposi-

Two alleged terrorists, teenage girl shot in city

teenage girl were injured by bullets at Maghbazar and Agargaon-Taltola slum in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Police and hospital sources said one Javed, 27, and Abu Sayeed, 26, two accomplices of terrorist Subrata Bain were attacked by a group of terrorists near Maghbazar intersection at about 2 pm.

Both of them received two bullets each and fell on the

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Ramna police arrested them.

Police said there was a conflict between the two terrorist groups. Police lodged a case with Ramna thana in this connection.

In another incident, Monwara Begum, 18, daughter of Sekendar Ali of Agargaon-Taltola slum, was shot during a gunfight between two groups of Phensidyl traders

Police said the teenage girl

The girl was admitted to DMCH in a critical condition. Police said Monwara is a gar-

A case was registered with

Dacoity at a city house

By Staff Correspondent Dacoits looted gold ornaments, money in cash and other valuables from a house at 2/3 Naya Paltan in the city yesterday eve-

A gang of four armed dacoits rang the door bell of Barrister Shamsur Rahman's home on the

door, the dacoits entered the house and confined the inmates

in a room at gunpoint. gold ornaments worth Tk 70,000 and other valuables from the

police in this regard.

PET bottles would henceforth cost Tk. 40/-.

congratulated Global F

Two alleged terrorists and a

The attackers believed to be the supporters of Molla Masud, a former deputy of Subrata fired at Javed and Sayeed while they were returning home from Maghbazar Jame Mosque after Juma

Local people took them to

at about 11 am.

received two bullets in her belly and hand.

ment worker.

Mohammadpur thana in this connection.

first floor just after Iftar. When the inmates opened the

They took away Tk 30,000,

A case was filed with Motijheel

RIP likely to be revived Feasibility study soon on setting up plants for hydro-electricity

The government is going to conduct a feasibility study on the poten-

The RIP, undertaken in 1981, had identified 19 rivers for setting up of 19 small-scale plants for generation of an estimated 1,275 Kilowatt The Bangladesh Water Development Board has been asked to con-

duct the study, sources at Water Resources Ministry said. China is likely to provide financial assistance for the study, they hinted. The sources said though Bangladesh is a riverine country, possibility of hydro-electricity generation is limited but considering the ever-

Around 2000 MW of electricity is now generated in the country against a demand for 2400 MW. The country's lone hydro-electric unit Karnaphuli Hydro-electricity Project -- supplies some 230 MW of electricity to the National Grid.

An Executive Council of the RIP was formed look into the possibili-See page 11col 6

after the Eid, the sources said. discussed a post-Eid visit by the At the meeting, most of the party chief to northern districts. speakers spoke for intensifying However, it did not decide schedthe anti-government agitation ule for the visit. side by side with election cam-See page 11 col 2 The tall Virgin bottle now at a low price. An official press release from Global Beverages today announced that the price of the 1.5 litre Virgin The same product used to cost Tk. 45/-. This means a drastic price reduction of Tk. 5/-. Global Beverages is the company behind the popular soft drink Virgin. Virgin Drinks was established in the UK by Mr. Richard Branson, Mr. Branson, CEO of Virgin Drinks the consumers need in consumer. He hoped

mind and giving a co that the other Virgin on from this episode and he hoped they bal Beverages is the company behind the 1. Virgin Drinks was established in the Uk .i. Mr. Branson, CEO of Virgin Drinks cong erages for keeping the consumers need in m petitive price for the consumer. He hope nies learnt a lesson w suit. Global from this epis nk Virgin. Beverages Virgin cong mind : that th and he compa establi of Virg

ed in hoped pisode is the ks was I, CEO ng the for the consur lesson consur Global from t Virgin. Bevera Virgin anson. 'lobal Bev ng a vas EO the the sson lobal from irgin. Bever Virgin Hobal Bever ing a urgin comp

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competitive price for the consumers need in mina consumer. Virgin Drinks was established in the UK by Mr. Richard Branson, Mr. Branson, CEO of Virgin Drinks congratulated Global Beverages for keeping the consumers need in mind and giving a competitive price for the consumer. Grey. Global. 11, 2000

i was

Rush of flights cripples ZIA customs handling Customs checking system at Zia International helpless, unable to tackle such a huge rush. "All the flights, able to carry 280 to 320 passengers each, were packed as there is a rush of expatrilanded at the main gateway of the country within ates who are coming to the country to celebrate Eid,"

With the Eid-ul-Fitr just round the corner and people anxious to go home, there is an exodus from the

city that has filled public transports beyond capacity. People don't mind being herded on the deck of a

Airport virtually collapsed yesterday morning as seven flights carrying some 2,100 passengers only 100 minutes, reports UNB. Officials at the airport said seven flights from

steamer for a risky journey.

different countries landed at the ZIA between 8:10 am and 9:49 am. Another airplane with over 300 other passengers on board landed within another long time. The rush was still on when a Thai flight landed at

the ZIA at 12:24 pm, causing untold sufferings to hundreds of passengers and their friends and relatives who came to receive them. 'The airport is incapable of handling 2,400 passengers within three hours. So, it is not unnatural

that normal operations were disrupted," an official at the ZIA said. He informed that most of the flights were deferred from their original destination in view of foggy skies for three hours after journeying two days," said one that the airport has been witnessing for last few passenger coming from USA.

As soon as the flights started landing at the airport, the queues at immigration and customs immigration counters, conveyer belts and became longer and longer. The on-duty officials were

said an official at the Immigration. Passengers alleged their sufferings heightened as

the conveyer belt had some trouble during the rush hour and the luggage carrier did not work for quite a Some of the passengers termed the nonfunctioning of the conveyer belt for some time as

mysterious. But Airport officials dismissed the allegation and said they did their best. The officials at immigration, customs and unloading employees worked hard so that the passengers can come out at the earliest," said a senior official at the ZIA.

But many passengers said the earliest time was

three hours. "It's terrible. It's horrible. I had to wait

"What better can we do? We had to struggle to clear the rush of passengers with limited numbers of See page 11col 6

By Nazrul Islam

tial of hydro-electricity generation in the country and revive the River Identification Project (RIP) for this.

of hydro-electricity.

increasing demand for power, the scope should be utilised.

ties of setting up small-scale hydro-electricity units. But, the project gathered dust in the last 20 years due to various reasons.