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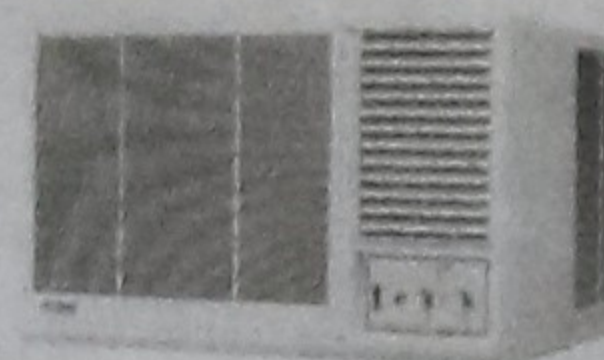
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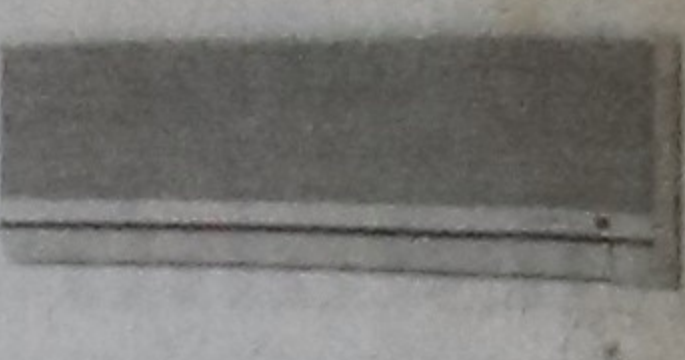
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SEC draws the line for auditors

Firms violating int'l standard to be blacklisted

By M Shamsur Rahman

Auditors not following international standards will be barred from auditing accounts of publicly traded companies, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has decided.

Accounts and audits must be drawn in line with the international accounting practices, a board meeting of the SEC observed on Monday. Any firm, if detected to have violated these, would be blacklisted and disqualified from auditing publicly traded companies.

However, the meeting decided to give the errant auditor a hearing to explain his position before any such action is taken.

Different institutions, including the capital market watchdog, have frequently raised objections about the standard of audit reports, complaining non-compliance with internationally practised norms and nuances.

Audit reports and balance sheets of many listed companies, approved at their annual general meetings, were found to have been tailored to suit the needs of the sponsors and deprive shareholders of dividends, one SEC official said.

The SEC has filed at least 12 such complaints against different audit firms to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), he said. "The ICAB in one instance suspended one of its member for one year."

However, there has been little improvement in the overall situation, he commented.

An amendment to the Securities and Exchange Rules 1987 has made it mandatory for any listed company to have its audited balance sheets prepared in accordance with the International Accounting Standard (IAS).

The SEC has also made it a rule that the financial statements of a listed company will have to be audited by a partnership firm of chartered accountants having a minimum experience of seven years.

"Such a move has been taken to bridge the gap between the management of the publicly traded companies and its shareholders," a senior SEC official said. "The stakeholder of the company gets to know about

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Singer Noor Jehan dead

KARACHI, Dec 23: Pakistani legendary singer Noor Jehan, known as the country's melody queen, died here today at the age of 75 after a protracted illness, her family said.

"She had a heart attack which proved fatal," Meena Shah, one of the family members, told AFP, adding that the veteran singer died at home.

The news of her death was received with deep grief by the film industry and fans throughout the country.

"A legend has died," said senior television and film actor Talat Hussain.

"She rose to the dizzying heights of music and dominated the stage for decades," Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf said in a condolence statement.

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Chokila Iyer India's first woman FS

NEW DELHI, Dec 23: India's ambassador to Ireland was named as the new foreign secretary today, becoming the first woman to occupy the position, reports AP.

Chokila Iyer will succeed Lalit Mansingh, the current foreign secretary who will now be India's ambassador to the United States, a Foreign Office statement said.

Both Iyer and Mansingh will take up their positions early next year, it said.

The foreign secretary is the top bureaucrat in India's ministry of external affairs.

Young man murdered in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 23: A young man was stabbed and then shot dead at about 12:30 pm today in front of former prime minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed's Dole Khola Road residence under Khulna thana.

According to witnesses and police, some unidentified young men dragged the young man down from a rickshaw. They fired a shot in his head after stabbing him in the chest.

He died on the spot.

The motive behind the murder could not be known. He was killed in front of a large number of people and shops, witnesses said.

Police recovered a sum of Tk 2,700 from the purse found in the pocket of the victim's trouser. It was not a murder for mugging, police said.

Police said the victim is not a resident of Khulna city. He was followed by killers. A minor boy who could identify one of the killers has been kidnapped from the place of occurrence.

Identity of the kidnapped boy could not be known till writing of this report.

Moratorium on student politics in Sylhet extended again

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 23: Moratorium on student politics in Sylhet has been extended for another three months from January next year.

It was decided unanimously at a meeting of the All Party Steering Committee, Sylhet this afternoon.

The meeting was presided over by the district BNP President MA Haque. District Awami League president Syed Abu Nosor Advocate and General Secretary ANM Shafiqul Haque, District Jatiya

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Homeward bound ... that travelling on the roof of a passenger bus could spell tragedy for themselves and their families is a consideration completely overwhelmed by their desire to be at home with their loved ones during the Eid festivities.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Mamata sparks off fresh spate of speculations

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Dec 23: Fire-brand Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee has once again touched off intense speculations in the Indian political grapevine. The federal minister, conspicuous by her absence at the lift party hosted by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, somehow managed time to turn up at the one thrown by Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Possible implications of her presence at Sonia's lift party after skipping a similar one arranged by the Indian PM and BJP president Bangaru Laxman despite the fact that her party is a constituent of the NDA government against the backdrop of strained Mamata-Vajpayee relations were not lost on political observers.

Trinamool Congress, along with two other key allies of the Vajpayee government, has made no bones about its displeasure over Vajpayee's recent remarks on construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya. The three have been unambiguous in expressing their unhappiness about the Prime Minister's controversial comments.

Reports have it that a section of Trinamool Congress is in favour of the party dissociating from the BJP-led ruling coalition ahead of fresh assembly elections in West Bengal in which the stakes for the party's very survival are very high.

The controversial remarks aside, what appears to have further strained the BJP-Trinamool relations is that

Vajpayee, while addressing the parliamentary wing of BJP a few days ago, called upon the allies to exercise restraint when expressing views about the saffron party. The allies, in turn, responded by saying BJP itself should refrain from airing its own views about controversial topics on which NDA coalition partners do not see

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Khondker Monirul Alam (left) and Swapan Kumar Saha

Press Club polls: Monir, Swapan reelected

Khondker Monirul Alam and Swapan Kumar Saha have been reelected President and General Secretary of the Jatiya Press Club for a two-year term, reports UNB.

Alam (Holiday) defeated Muhammad Shafiqul Rahman of Ittefaq and Swapan Kumar Saha (BSS) defeated Badul Alam of Financial Express in the election held on Friday, according to the results announced by Chief Election Commissioner Tajul Islam yesterday.

The other elected office-bearers are Senior Vice-President Md Nurul Huda (BSS), Vice-President Bakhtiar Rana (UNB), Joint Secretaries Kamal Uddin Sabuj (BSS) and Abdur Rahman Khan (Independent), and Treasurer Abdul Baten (Ittefaq).

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Forensic report on rape victim: Directive to take action against three docs

PANCHAGARH, Dec 23: The Home Ministry has directed to take action against three doctors who conducted forensic examination of a rape victim and reportedly issued motivated report getting perks from the criminal, reports UNB.

The move for action against Dr Selim Reza, Dr Komila Kanta Roy and Dr Ruhul Amin was directed in a notification signed by Ruhul Amin Siddiqui, Assistant Secretary of Home Ministry, referring to a memorandum from President's office.

A copy of the notice was given to victim Farida Yasmin's father Mohammad Shafi Ahmed who is the President of Sadar Upazila BNP.

Family sources said Farida, a worker of a non-government

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Liaison body meets today

The liaison committee of the BNP-led four-party alliance is scheduled to meet today to review the latest political situation, reports BSS.

It will chalk out agitation and mass contact programmes to intensify one-point movement.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Jatiya Party Secretary General Nazim Rahman Manju, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahid and IQJ Secretary General Mufti Fazlul Haque Amin are expected to attend the meeting.

They are likely to discuss some common strategies to compel the government to hand over power to the caretaker government by early next year.



General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman handed over the command of Bangladesh Army to Major General M Harun-ar-Rashid at the Army Headquarters yesterday.

— ISPR photo

Expert tells roundtable in city

Govt seems indifferent to arsenic problem

By Staff Correspondent

Experts at a dialogue in the city yesterday identified arsenic contamination of groundwater as the number one health hazard in the country and underscored the need for adopting a national strategy for mitigating the problem.

United efforts by the government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and donors are needed to face the challenge of arsenic contamination, to which 8.5 crore people are exposed, they said.

The dialogue on 'Mitigation of Arsenic Problem in Bangladesh', held at a city hotel, was organised by the Daily Prothom Alo in cooperation with Unicef.

"At least 85 million people of the country are affected by arsenic, a silent killer, and one in ten has the possibility of developing cancer from the poisoning," Dr. Kazi Kamruzzaman, Chairman of Dhaka Community Hospital (DCH) said.

He regretted that medical education policy makers are yet to include arsenic in the syllabus for medical education in the country.

He criticised the government for not including the problem in its 3.3 billion dollar Health and Population Sector Programme (HSP) and the donors for their non-specific programmes to tackle it.

"While the UK government is providing subsidy to farmers for mad cow disease, we are receiving foreign loan for arsenic problem," The government does not feel any urgency to mitigate the problem, he said.

To grab the local market, foreign companies are active in the field to test their products on our people without prior laboratory test, he pointed out.

He also proposed creation of ministry to deal with the problem.

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10 shot as AL, BNP clash in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Dec 23: At least 10 people were injured by bullets in a gunfight between the activists of ruling Awami League and opposition BNP at Dasherhat in Sonagazi upazila yesterday evening.

Local people said that the clash erupted when BNP men attacked Awami League activists at Dasherhat at about 4 pm. The Awami League men also launched counter attack.

Of the injured, Abu Sufian, Jafar, Jashim, Israfil and Sufian were admitted to Feni and Sonagazi hospital while the rest treated at a local clinic.

Smaller parties trying to make their presence felt

By Nazmul Ashraf

While the major political parties are busy working out ambitious strategies to fare well in the next general election, the smaller ones have a simple mission to make their presence felt on the political front.

Breaking its long silence in the political domain, the alliance of 11 left and left-leaning parties has, of late, opted to go for a hartal, a sort of agitation programme that is fast losing its effectiveness among the public.

Whether such kind of agitation

would have the desired impact on the people is anybody's guess considering the fact that the bigger opposition parties have so far failed to use the mode of agitation effectively against the government of Awami League.

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal announced for February 1 next year is the toughest form of agitation the 11-party alliance has ever taken up. In an unusual move, the alliance has called the hartal 43 days before

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এইডস আপনার জীবন, আপনার পরিবার এমন কি পুরো সমাজকে ধ্বংস করে দিতে পারে
এইডস কী?

এইডস একটি মারাত্মক রোগ - এ রোগে মৃত্যু অবধারিত

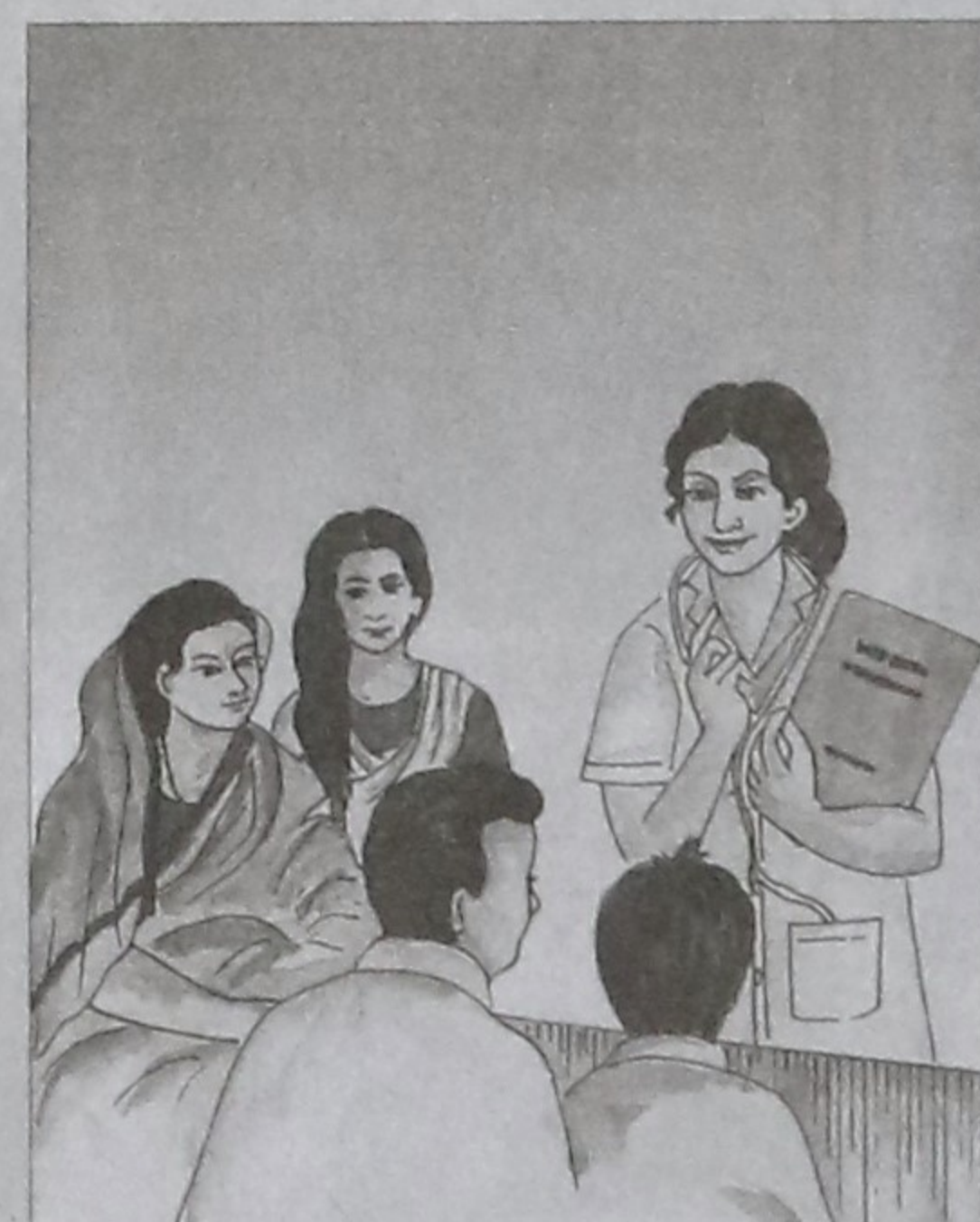
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☐ অন্যের ব্যবহার করা

☐ ইনজেকশনের সূঁচ বা সিরিঞ্জ জীবাণুমুক্ত না করে ব্যবহার করলে

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এইডস থেকে বাঁচার উপায়

☐ স্বামী বা স্ত্রী ছাড়া অন্য নারী বা পুরুষের সাথে দৈহিক মিলন থেকে বিরত থাকা

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam