

**24 HOURS PICK-UP!**

Call: 9565114, 9883927 and 8827771 at Dhaka.

**FedEx Express**  
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.  
Licensee of Federal Express Corporation  
we live to deliver

**Hattrick Gift Offer - 1 Philips 3 Gifts!!!**

Applicable for any model of TV/DVD/Home Theatre/Audio.

**Guaranteed Gifts in Scratch Card!!**  
Whirlpool Microwave Oven, Philips DVD Audio System, Magnavox DVD Player, Philips Toaster, Philips Dry Iron, Philips Electric Shaver, Philips Facial Aromatherapy, Philips Hair Dryer, Philips Sandwich Maker, Jacket, Parker pen set & many other attractive Gifts.

Monthly Raffle Draw

**Bangkok**  
Air tickets & other attractive Gifts.

Final Raffle Draw

**Bali Singapore Kuala Lumpur**  
Air tickets and other attractive Gifts.

Is Still Running ... 2nd Monthly Raffle Draw Result: 10th January, 2005

TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS Tel: Dhaka: 8110163, 9882192, 9896285, 9569613, Ctg.: 653758, 637669, Khulna: 720304, 723695, Bogra: 66215 & to all authorized dealers.

**Rab finds arms factory in Moheshkhali**

UNB, Chittagong  
Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) unearthed an illegal arms factory at Purba Fakirganj village in Moheshkhali upazila and seized firearms and weapon making materials early yesterday.  
The Rab men raided the house of Nurul Huq, said to be a BNP activist, at 4:00am and found the factory behind his poultry farm. Nurul Huq fled the house sensing presence of the elite force.  
The seized arms include seven guns, two SBBL guns, one BBL gun, two 303 rifles and four axes.  
Rab raided the house following a confidential statement of Nurul Huq's brother Jalal Ahmed who was arrested on Sunday.  
Sources said Jalal is a Jubo Dal Leader and listed criminal. A case was filed with Moheshkhali police under Arms Act.

**BID TO MAKE OPERATIONS DYNAMIC  
Armed Forces Div wants major changes in rules**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Armed Forces Division has proposed massive amendment to its rules and regulations and formulation of new rules in a bid to bring more dynamism in its operations.  
It has proposed amendment to 46 rules and regulations of the army, navy and air force, terming them backdated and irrelevant, sources said quoting a bill submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry yesterday.  
The parliamentary body asked the Armed Forces Division to submit a detailed amendment proposal

Earlier, the division had sent a few proposals to the Ministry of Defence, but did not submit to the committee.  
The division has proposed amendment to the existing rules and regulations related to recruitment, retirement, pension and allowances of the members of the forces, procurement policy and War Book, the Defence of Bangladesh Ordinance, and Defence of Bangladesh Rules.  
It has also proposed formulation of a comprehensive policy for the defence purchase under the waiver of the Public Procurement

Regulation, 2003.  
The parliamentary standing committee yesterday took up the proposals and decided to discuss them in detail at its next meeting.  
"We've noticed at previous meetings that some rules and regulations of the armed forces have become outdated. The forces have initiated the process for an update on them," Committee Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Mahubur Rahman told reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.  
Lawmakers of the main opposition Awami League (AL) who are

**UK state minister for foreign affairs due today**

BSS, Dhaka  
Douglas Alexander, state minister for foreign affairs of the United Kingdom (UK), arrives in Dhaka today on a one-day official visit.  
He will be accompanied by director for South Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Tom Phillips, said a press release yesterday.  
Douglas will meet Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan and Adviser for Foreign Affairs Reza Rahman.  
They will discuss the bilateral relations, including ways and means, to further boost cooperation between the two countries.

**FFs yet to receive vowed cash help**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighters (FFs) from the Defence Services and their families are yet to get state honorarium, although a proposal in this regard got the PM's nod more than two years ago, as the finance ministry objected to the initiative.  
The parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry yesterday reviewed the tangle among the ministries of finance, defence, home, and Liberation War Affairs on the matter and asked them to initiate steps to pay honorarium to the FFs from the armed forces.

The House body pointed out that the FFs from the armed forces are living in financial crisis as the benefits they get after retirement are not sufficient.  
The committee also asked the four ministries to amend the definition of freedom fighters for payment of remuneration to them and their families.  
About the definition of freedom fighters, the Presidential Order 1972 said, "Freedom fighter means any person who had served as a member of any force engaged in the war of liberation but shall not include members of the Defence Services or

**India complete whitewash**

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

India took only four balls on the fourth morning of the second and final Test to complete a 2-0 whitewash of Bangladesh with an innings and 83-run victory at the MA Aziz Stadium here yesterday.  
Resuming on 118-9 and needing another 89 runs to make the visitors bat again, Bangladesh's second innings ended within minutes when overnight batsman Talha Jubair was caught at long-on by Irfan Pathan off Harbhajan Singh.  
The Bangladesh tail-ender had smashed a six against the off-spinner to reach his highest Test score of 31 before falling in that over trying to repeat the same shot.  
India won the first Test at Dhaka 5

**PINNING HOPES ON POTATO**



Cultivators plant potato seeds in a cropland in Munshiganj recently. Growers are eyeing a bumper potato production in the wake of the Aman crop failure caused by the devastating floods.

**Maoists offer talks to end bloodshed in Nepal**

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoist rebel leader offered hope yesterday of breaking a deadlock on talks to settle the kingdom's bloody insurgency that has killed more than 10,000 people since 1996.  
The rebel chief said Maoists were ready to meet political parties if it could lead to mediated talks with the king's representatives on the constitutional role of the monarchy and army.  
In a rare question and answer exchange, Purna Kumar Dahal, alias Prachand, denied to the Nepali-language daily Samacharpatra that he only wanted direct talks with the king, who is head of state and controls the Royal Nepalese Army.  
"We have never said we are ready to hold talks only with the king," Prachand said of efforts to end the bloodshed.  
The government has said if the rebels do not come to the negotiating table by January 13 it would press ahead with long-awaited parliamentary elections.  
The Maoists want any negotia-

tions to include their call for elections for an assembly to draft a new constitution that eventually envisages ousting the monarchy and setting up a communist state.  
They have threatened to sabotage any polls that are not held to elect a constituent assembly.  
A political solution could come from negotiations with fully mandated representatives of the king as head of the country and army, the Maoist leaders said.  
"What we said should not be misinterpreted," said Prachand, which means "fiery one".  
His comments coincide with a surge in violence, with 141 people including Maoists, soldiers and civilians killed in the past week, ahead of the government deadline for the rebels to resume peace talks.  
A strike called by a pro-Maoist group closed schools and slowed transport Monday in the Kathmandu valley.  
The rebels are battling to oust the constitutional monarchy led by King Gyanendra.  
King Gyanendra named Sher

Bahadur Deuba as premier in June with a mandate to hold peace talks with the rebels and stage general elections by mid-May in 2005.  
"Our policy mainly aims at forging solidarity with the political parties battling against anti-democratic forces and thereby compel the king to find a political way," Prachand said.  
However, he ruled out the possibility of holding talks with any representative of the king without pre-conditions.  
"We think it would be pointless to hold talks with anyone's representative without first agreeing on reliable and acceptable mediation or on widely acclaimed democratic procedures," he said.  
He also said he saw a bleak prospect of holding peace talks with the Deuba-led four-party coalition government.  
"As the Deuba-led government has done such things as increasing the budgetary appropriation of the feudal palace and enforced the Terrorist and Destructive Activities

**Crashed F28 salvaged**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 79-seater Fokker-28 aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines that skidded off the runway of Osmani International Airport in Sylhet on October 8 was salvaged yesterday afternoon.  
Flight engineers of Biman with the help of two heavy pushcarts towed the 12-tonne aircraft to a corner of the tarmac after 30 hours of efforts.  
"We have successfully moved the aircraft to the runway at 1:30pm," Biman maintenance division engineer Sairul Islam told The Daily Star.  
He said, "We had also attempted to tow the empty aircraft on Sunday morning but failed."  
The aircraft had skidded 150 feet off the runway after landing and finished stuck up in a canal with its nose buried five feet deep into its bank on the western end of the runway.  
Miraculously, none of the 79

**Grenade attack arrestee remanded**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

An arrestee in the August 21 grenade attacks case was remanded for two more days yesterday.  
The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday presented Pichchi Monir before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on completion of his five-day remand.  
The investigation officer (IO) in a fresh remand prayer told the court that Monir needs to be questioned further. The arrestee gave important information about the incident during the immediate past remand, he explained.  
After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Rafiqul Islam granted remand for two days.

**Ershad rules out poll alliance**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Muhammad Ershad yesterday announced that his party would not form an alliance with any other party to win the upcoming general elections.  
"We have strength enough to run alone in the electoral fray. We will not ally with any other party, nor will we go with others in seeking power," he said.  
The former president was exchanging views with journalists at Rajshahi Circuit House last evening.

**PBCP vows to avenge chief's killing in 'crossfire'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Janajuddha faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in a hand-written statement faxed to a Chuadanga daily on Saturday vowed to avenge what it said were planned killings in so-called crossfire of revolutionaries by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).  
The statement signed by one Abir Hossain on behalf of PBCP (Janajuddha) condemned and protested arrest and death in 'crossfire' of Mofakkar Hossain Chowdhury, general secretary of the Central Committee of PBCP (M-L).  
In the face of the Janajuddha threat, all police stations, outposts and camps in the south-western region have been put on alert.

**RMG export steps further simplified**

Processing stages reduced to 6 from 38 to save time and money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The documentation process for readymade garment exports at Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD) has been simplified to six stages from 38 stages, which is expected to save time and money of the exporters.  
The new measure would facilitate exporters getting Bangladesh Bank's "Export Form" immediately after the assessment of export documents. Earlier, the exporters had to wait for a month to get the form.  
"The government met a long-standing demand of the garment exporters through the decision," Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said in a

statement.  
Authorities apprised BGMEA President Anisul Huq of the government orders to this effect at a meeting at the Dhaka Customs House yesterday.  
The meeting decided that export information would be written down in the Customs Pass Book immediately after customs valuation of exports, a practice seen to expedite audit activities.  
It also decided that a committee with representatives from Dhaka Customs House, Biman Bangladesh Airlines and BGMEA would be formed to find out reasons for delayed clearing of RMG raw materials imported by air.  
The committee has been assigned to recommend remedies.

Prayer Timing		
December 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-27
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

**YEAR END SALE**

WIDE RANGE OF SUITS AND OFFICE SHIRTS

**SPECIAL CORPORATE PACKAGE**  
AVAIL OUR GROUP PURCHASE OFFER  
10% ADDITIONAL DISCOUNT ON 10 SUITS WITH 10 SHIRTS

**WESTECS®**

DHAKA - CHITTAGONG - SYLHET - MOULVI BAZAR