

The Daily Star

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PASSING OF AN ICON

Suchitra Mitra passes away to live on in Tagore songs. **PAGE 11**

RETHINKING RETAIL BANKING

Banks are coming up with new, customised services to meet consumer needs. **PAGE B8**

MUGHAL MAGNIFICENCE

Star Lifestyle looks back at Dhaka's Mughal heritage.

LATEST WIKILEAKS

Hasina gave condition for Boeing deal

AFP, Washington
Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina demanded landing rights for the country's national carrier at New York's John F Kennedy International Airport as a condition for a Boeing deal, newly released diplomatic cables show.

The cables, obtained by the New York Times from **SEE PAGE 19 COL 1** MORE ON PAGE 6

BNP to face Jamaat in 39 municipalities

STAFF REPORTER

Pro-Jamaat-e-Islami mayoral candidates are set to contest against candidates backed by its main ally BNP in 39 municipalities across the country in the upcoming elections to be started on January 12.

Jamaat's decision came against the backdrop of its ally's decision to provide support for only 5 Jamaat backed candidates. **SEE PAGE 19 COL 7**



PHOTO: INTERNET

Ramendra Narayan Roy, the prince of Bhawal Estate.

A KINGDOM of neglect

MORSHED ALI KHAN and PINAKI ROY

The famous Bhawal king's riverside palace at Nolgolla, Mitford is in ruins. Every corner of the estate holds a makeshift shack that houses everything from family quarters to dirty recycling factories and warehouses. The solid roots of a banyan tree drape through the walls engulfing half of the palace exterior. But inside, the rickety steel columns, huge wooden doors, marble tiles and well-curved arches still bear testimony to one of the most controversial zamindars in our history.

From the mid-17th to the early 19th centuries, the Bhawal Rajas of Gazipur owned 30,421 acres of land, an army of elephants, horses and zoos, fleets of cars and scores of palaces. At that time, the annual income of the Bhawals was on average Tk 10 lakh.

The most intriguing part of the story, though, is



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

The palace of Bhawal Raja in Old Dhaka, deserving to be a heritage site, is on the verge of ruin.

the reappearance of the last of the Bhawal kings, Kumar Ramendra Narayan, 12 years after his "death".

In one January evening in 1921, the municipal workers just lit the kerosene streetlights on the Buckland Bandh, a beautiful promenade by the Buriganga river. Lights from merchants' tall sailing ships anchored at Chhoto Katra reflected on the Buriganga waters and slowly mingled with the waves. A sadhu (saint), clad in a dhoti with his rucksack hanging from his shoulder, slowly walked to seek shelter for the night. His long hair and beard blended finely with his unusual fair skin and tall physique.

The next morning a crowd of walkers gathered round the Hindi-speaking sadhu. News of his arrival and his curious resemblance with the last of the Bhawal kings, the late Kumar Ramendra

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SC won't send rep to JS body meet

Decides CJ at meeting; asks all judges to submit wealth report

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque at a meeting with all High Court judges yesterday decided not to send any representatives from the Supreme Court to any parliamentary bodies.

Meeting sources say all the judges opined that the judiciary as per the

Constitution is an independent organ of the state and the Supreme Court is also an independent institution.

So the SC is not liable to send any representative to the parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, the judges argued.

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TIB documents 'incomplete'

SC asks for more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday sent a letter to the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) saying the corruption watchdog's survey report involving the judiciary is "unclear" and "incomplete."

The apex court asked the organisation to turn in to the SC the survey questionnaire and responses from households, said court officials.

A TIB household survey report last month showed that the judiciary is the most corrupt service sector in the

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BNP to back trial of 'real war criminals'

Says Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night said her party wants the war crimes trial to happen, and will cooperate with the government if actual war criminals are tried.

"We will extend support if the government holds trial of the actual war criminals instead of

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ISPs call off strike

Cable removal stopped for now

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internet service providers have called off today's one-hour strike on government assurance that no more overhead cables would be removed in the city until sufficient logistic

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Cold, fog disrupt life

STAR REPORT

A mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping through nine districts including Dhaka causing disruption in ferry services and intensifying sufferings of the poor.

An official at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday said

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CHARGE DROPPING AGAINST 5 Murder charges finally revived

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Six days after withdrawing charges against five of the 10 accused in a robbery and murder case, a Dhaka court yesterday revived the charges and decided to continue trial of all the accused.

The court also fixed January 9 for hearing on the case. On the home ministry's recommendation, the Speedy Trial Tribunal-2 on December 28 withdrew the charges against five considering those "politically motivated" and meant for "harassment".

The order triggered mixed reaction and criticism from different sections of people, and both electronic and print media carried reports on the issue.

Against this backdrop, the home ministry on December 29 changed its earlier decision and recommended reviving the charges.

The state minister for law told The Daily Star on that day it was a mistake to recommend withdrawal of the charges, and the government has taken steps to ensure that the five are also tried.

In such a situation, the tribunal changed its decision of withdrawing the charges.

Kaniz Akhter Nasrina Khanam, judge (in charge) of the

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TENDER INFLUENCE AL lawmaker 'assaults' WDB engineer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Awami League lawmaker Manirul Islam Moni allegedly assaulted an engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) here yesterday over a tender process of the office.

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BANDARBAN MUTINY 35 BDR men jailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

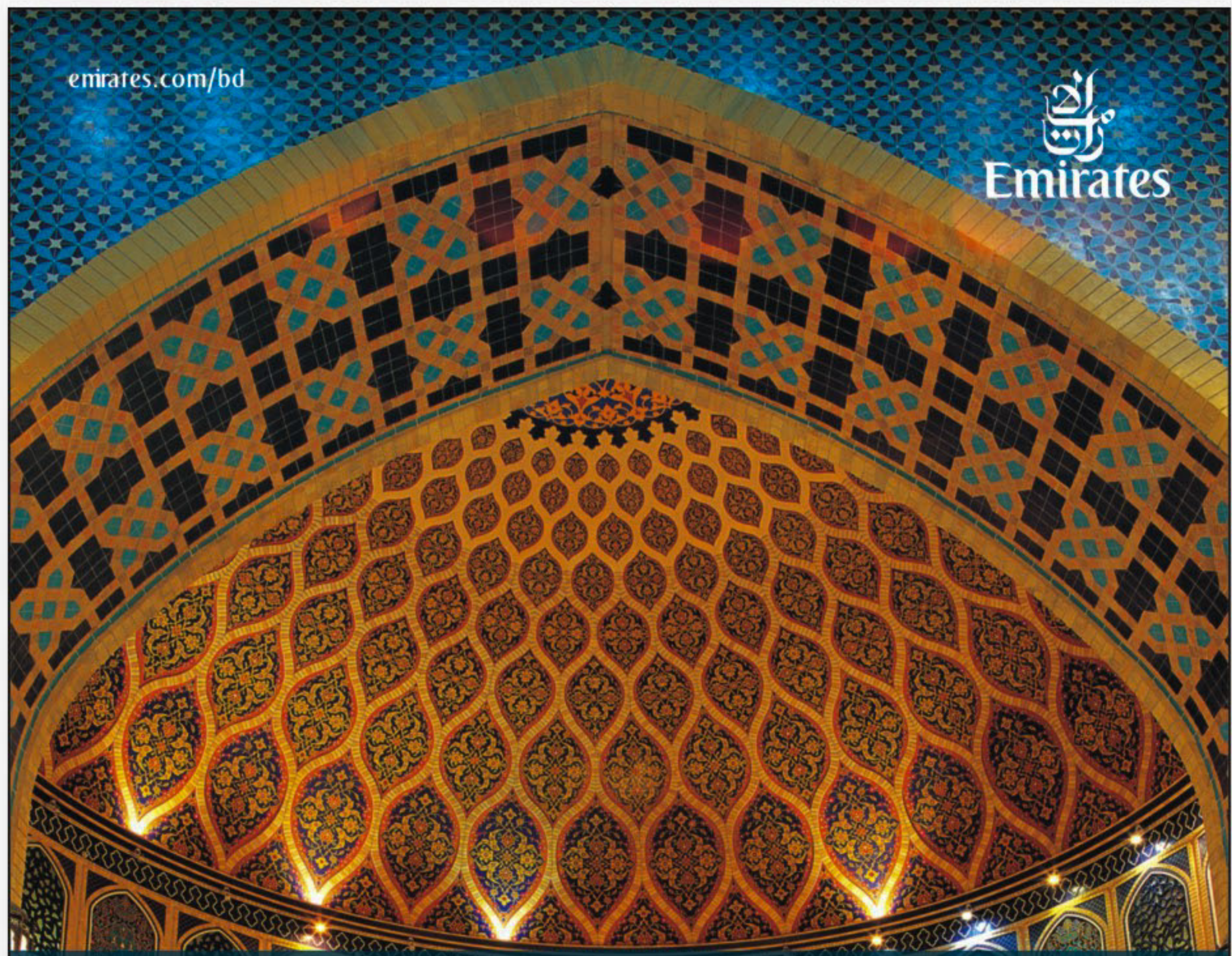
A BDR special court yesterday sentenced 35 BDR jawans of 15 Rifles Battalion of Naikkhangchhari in Bandarban to different terms of rigorous imprisonment for their involvement

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Two street children sleep in a makeshift enclosure made with sacks of onions, trying to save themselves from last night's biting cold at Karwan Bazar in the capital.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL



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