



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

'VIOLINISTS CHITTAGONG'

A musical soiree commemorates
Ustad Priya Gopal Gupta

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NOT 'IN ANY MANNER'

China warns the US it's opposed to any
country meeting Dalai Lama

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Pakistani diplomat withdrawn

The move comes after Dhaka contacts Islamabad as intelligence finds his involvement in terror funding, setting up fake currency network

STAR REPORT

A Pakistani diplomat was withdrawn from Bangladesh on Saturday after intelligence dug out his involvement in terror financing and currency forgery racket.

Mohammad Mazhar Khan, attaché at the consular section of Pakistan high commission in Dhaka, was also an agent of his country's secret service ISI, foreign ministry officials said.

He had set up a wide network of producing and distributing fake Indian currency, they added.

An intelligence report said Mazhar in collaboration with some colleagues at the high commission used to channel the money earned through his currency scam to Hizb ut-Tahir, Ansarullah Bangla Team and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Mazhar left Dhaka with his family after the foreign ministry, instead of going for



Mazhar Khan

harsher measures like deportation, asked Islamabad to withdraw the diplomat in a week, officials said.

Contacted, a senior diplomat at the Pakistan high commission said, "We have nothing to say on the matter. Whatever response would come would be from our foreign affairs spokesperson."

A top official at the foreign ministry yesterday confirmed that the Pak high commission notified them of Mazhar leaving Dhaka on January 31 and surrendering the diplomatic identification card.

However, many in the foreign office question why a diplomat found involved in such grave crimes was let go without being expelled or declared persona non grata.

Mazhar came under intelligence radar following the confessional statement by Mujibur Rahman, a Bangladeshi citizen who told a Dhaka court that the Pak

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Workers try to repair the damaged tracks and salvage a derailed train after rail communications between Chittagong and the rest of the country got snapped due to sabotage by suspected pickets in Mirsarai yesterday.

PHOTO:
ANURUP KANTI DAS

Trains attacked again

Suspected blockaders remove clips of tracks causing derailment in Ctg, throw petrol bombs at train in Gazipur; two more killed in arson attacks

STAR REPORT

Yet again, rail becomes the target of saboteurs.

A train derailed in Mirsarai of Chittagong yesterday as alleged blockaders removed fishplates and clips from tracks, while another train came under petrol bomb attack in Gazipur. At least 14 passengers were hurt in the two incidents.

Because of the Mirsarai incident, rail links between Chittagong and other parts of the country remained suspended for around 11 hours.

Since the BNP-led 20-party alliance announced a non-

stop blockade on January 5, derailments took place in Comilla, Joypurhat, Moulvibazar and Brahmanbaria, leading to a near-collapse of train schedules. The railway is still struggling to fix the schedules.

In Gazipur, four youths hurled two petrol bombs at Jamalpur Commuter Express when it reached near Sreepur Railway Station from Dhaka around 5:30pm, said witnesses.

As one of the bombs exploded, passengers Md Hossain and Kazim Uddin suffered burns. Two others -- Afaz Uddin and Mofiz Uddin -- were hurt as they jumped from the running train.

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Khaleda sued for 'murder' of 42 people

Court orders probe into charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked Gulshan police to investigate the charges against Khaleda Zia and three others in connection with the killing of 42 people during the non-stop blockade enforced by the BNP-led alliance.

It also asked police to

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NEWS ANALYSIS

REOPENING OF SAUDI LABOUR MARKET

Good opportunity, big responsibility

PORIMOL PALMA

Saudi Arabia's decision to reopen its labour market for Bangladesh is a landmark development in overseas employment that has dwindled drastically over the past six years.

This progress comes after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Expatriates' Welfare Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain paid a number of visits to the Kingdom, the largest labour market for Bangladesh.

Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that the decision was

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Another major gold haul

61kg found concealed inside aircraft's body; Biman men's link evident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In yet another major haul, customs intelligence yesterday seized 61 kg gold from a Biman aircraft at Shahjalal International Airport.

Tipped off, a team of customs intelligence started a search inside the aircraft for smuggled gold after the Dubai-Dhaka flight via Chittagong -- BG 048 -- touched down at 8:30am. They recovered 485 gold bars worth around Tk 30 crore from special chambers of the plane.

The flight surprisingly landed at the Dhaka airport two hours ahead of schedule. The search continued for six

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485

gold bars,

114

gold chains hidden
inside mirror panel of toilet,
life jacket



Smugglers within

Intelligence report says 272 Biman officials, staff involved, 30 syndicates active

SHARIFUL ISLAM, WASIM BIN HABIB and
PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

At least 272 Biman officials and staff are involved in gold smuggling through three international airports of Bangladesh, according to an intelligence report.

Thirty syndicates are behind the crime. Several staffers of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh are also a party to it.

The Biman employees include five pilots,

four co-pilots, 25 cabin crews, 15 flight stewards, five chief pursers, three flight pursers and seven junior pursers, said the report, obtained by The Daily Star.

An intelligence agency submitted the report to the Prime Minister's Office recently. It was forwarded to the home ministry on December 18, asking the ministry to take action against those involved.

The report said 44 officials, including two

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The journey begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers will get their first taste of match-conditions in Australia ahead of the World Cup today when they play their first unofficial practice match against Australia XI at the Allan Border ground in Brisbane.

The match however, for the country's cricket fans, is expected to whiz by as by the time the country wakes up in the morning and gets ready to go about their daily duties, the match will be in its last stages. The game will begin at 5 AM Bangladesh time.

Since landing in Brisbane nine days ago for pre-World Cup conditioning camp, the Tigers, under the guidance of coach

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Hemanta Vincent Biswas, centre, is the toast of his teammates after his sublime goal against Sri Lanka that gave Bangladesh a 1-0 win and a passage into the semifinal of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup football tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Story on Page 15

PHOTO:
FIROZ AHMED

Farmer killed in BSF firing

Indian border forces open fire as Bangladeshi farmers protest assault of woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Members of Indian Border Security Force shot dead a Bangladeshi farmer and injured another when the farmers protested BSF men's assault on their wives at Birampur upazila in Dinajpur yesterday.

The dead is Nazrul Islam, 35, son of Abdul Goni of Chapra village in the upazila. BSF members also took away his body to Indian territory.

The injured is Shahedur Rahman, 34. He received bullets in his left leg and was undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College and Hospital. Doctors said his condition was critical.

Locals and relatives of the victims said Nazrul along with other farmers were working in the field close to the border yesterday morning. Around 9:00am, their wives brought them breakfast in the field.

Suddenly the BSF men entered Bangladesh territory and started assaulting the women. As their husbands protested, the BSF members beat them up. Three more BSF men then came in and opened fire on the farmers, killing Nazrul on the spot and injuring Shahedur.

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