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Lest We Forget

Notice
 Our regular feature Dhaka Day by Day has been held over for today due to unavoidable circumstances. It will, however, appear tomorrow. The inconvenience is regretted.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Clarke calls on Khaleda Zia
 The visiting British Home Minister Kenneth Clarke called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. During the meeting the British Minister apprised the Prime Minister of the bilateral talks he had with his Bangladesh counterpart Abdul Matin Chowdhury, other ministers and high officials, reports BSS.

Hasina's tour programme
 Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will go to Brahmanbaria, Habiganj, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj on a two-day organisational tour on January 7 and 8. She will address public meetings in Brahmanbaria, Habiganj, Srimangal and Moulvibazar on January 7 and in Sunamganj on January 8, reports UNB.

'Zummakantha' first issue proscribed
 The government has proscribed the first issue (Nov 20/92) of 'Zummakantha' published under the auspices of hill literature forum, according to an official handout here yesterday, reports BSS.

Writ to stop namaz in Ayodhya dismissed

Curfew clamped as police, Muslim marchers clash

NEW DELHI, Dec 31: Authorities clamped an indefinite curfew on a north Indian town today after Muslims marching to offer prayers at the site of a demolished mosque clashed with police, domestic news agencies reported, says Reuter.
 They said a group of Muslim youths turned violent after they were beaten back by mounted police in Faizabad town, some seven km (four miles) from the disputed site in Ayodhya, centre of vicious

Hindu-Muslim riots earlier this month.
 The Press Trust of India (PTI) said nearly 1,000 Muslim devotees who gathered at a mosque in town courted arrest after they were barred from marching to Ayodhya.
 The United News of India (UNI) said police fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd of about 2,000 Muslims and added that several people were injured. It did not give details.
 The Ayodhya site, where militant Hindus pulled down

an ancient mosque on December 6, triggering a wave of sectarian violence across India, is sacred to both Hindus and Muslims. Some 1,200 people died in the religious riots.
 PTI from Lucknow says, the Naib Imam of Delhi Jame Masjid Syed Ahmed Bukhari left here for Ayodhya to offer Namaz at the disputed site.
 He told PTI shortly before his departure that though his entry in Ayodhya has been banned, he would go ahead

with his scheduled programme and defy the prohibitory orders.
 "Offering of namaz is a fundamental right of a Muslim," Bukhari said adding that "it was strange that the other community has been allowed darshan at the site while minorities were being prevented from performing namaz."
 "If offering of namaz is illegal, then the demolition of the mosque and darshan is also illegal," he said.
 See Page 12 Col 6

Political asylum to continue

Britain to help combat drug trafficking

By Staff Correspondent
 Britain is ready to help Bangladesh enhance its capability to combat drug trafficking, visiting British Home Minister, Kenneth Clark said yesterday.
 Expressing serious concern over the sharp rise in international drug trafficking, he said that the issue came up during the meeting with his Bangladesh counterpart Abdul Matin Chowdhury and that they had discussed the ways the two governments could cooperate to deal with it.
 Clarke also said that his country would continue to extend asylum to those facing

political and religious persecution.
 Replying to a question on the recent changes brought in British asylum laws, somewhat restricting the scope, he said, "We would continue to give political asylum. That remains sacrosanct."
 He said that in the last few years there had been a sudden increase in the number of those seeking asylum.
 Addressing a press conference at the state guest house, Meghna, the British Minister hoped that the misunderstandings between the Bangladesh and
 See Page 12 Col 1



Let the smile as bright as its surroundings persist throughout the year—1993. — Star photo

Cost of living up by 14.6 pc

By Staff Correspondent
 Prices of essentials during the 1992 increased 6.29 per cent in Dhaka city, according to a Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) report.
 In the same period, the cost of living increased by 14.60 per cent. The CAB report also said that the prices of essentials had increased 7.58 per cent in 1991.
 In 1992, costs of fish, cloth, house rent and water had increased the highest.
 Fish prices increased 16.15 per cent, cloth 14.53 per cent, house rent 13.43 per cent and water 14.86 per cent.
 UNB adds: The CAB report

was based on a comparative study of prices of essential commodities on December 31 and the corresponding day in 1991.
 The price of powdered milk also rose sharply over 15 per cent though the cow milk rate remained comparatively static.
 Price of different kinds of pulses like lentil, gram, mug and kheshari increased by 12.27 per cent.
 Price of industrial and imported goods made steady rises. Prices of agricultural commodities like rice, vegetable and spices, however, showed a downward trend.

Licence for VCP introduced, VCR, TV fees raised

The annual licence fee for television and VCR used at residential premises and the commercial licence fees for the same items have been raised with effect from January 1, 1993, reports BSS.
 At the same time licence fee has also been introduced for Video Cassette Player and satellite television receiver sets with effect from the same date.
 The annual licence fee for black and white television has now been refixed at Taka 200, Taka 400 for colour television and Taka 750 for VCR.
 The annual licence fee for Video Cassette Player has been fixed at Taka 500, while the annual fee for single connection of satellite television remains the same.
 See Page 12 Col 3

Malaysia's new visa rules effective from today

By Staff Correspondent
 The new visa regulations for Bangladeshis to enter Malaysia will be enforced from today.
 Under the new rules, Bangladesh citizens will have to obtain visas in advance and need Malaysian sponsors for the purpose. The Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka will issue visa after approval from the authorities in Kuala Lumpur.
 The Malaysian High Commission sources, however, informed that some modification in the new regulations have been made to facilitate visit of Bangladesh diplomats and government officials.
 According to modified rules, the High Commission will issue visa to diplomats and officials without prior approval of the authorities in Kuala Lumpur. Others, holding ordinary passports shall however, obtain visas only after necessary approval from the Malaysian capital.
 The new visa regulations of Malaysia for the citizens of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka came into effect since December 16, but remained relaxed until yesterday, during which Bangladesh citizens were issued visas on arrival in Malaysia.

Compulsory free primary education from today

By Staff Correspondent
 Compulsory free primary education will be introduced in all schools throughout the country from today, reports BSS.
 This was decided at a high level meeting in Dhaka yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.
 The meeting reviewed the progress of compulsory primary education and expressed satisfaction over the performance during the current year.
 Expressing satisfaction over the progress of compulsory primary education programme during 1992 the Prime Minister called for turning it into a social movement.
 The meeting was told that mass awareness had been created at various levels including district, thana and ward.
 Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Education Minister Jamir Uddin Sreer, Planning

Minister Zahir Uddin Khan, State Minister for Education Principal Yunus Khan, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister K M Rabbani, and additional Secretary in charge of Primary and Mass Education Division were present.
 The compulsory free primary education was introduced in 68 thanas in 64 districts on January 1, 1992.
 The meeting was told quoting a UNICEF survey report that the performance in 30 per cent school-area was 100 per cent successful as all the children of school going age were attending schools. It was further informed that the performance in the remaining areas was 91 per cent successful.
 The meeting also expressed satisfaction over the performance of mass literacy programme.
 See Page 12 Col 8

Banks now have substantial liquidity: Saifur

The commercial banks are expected to step up their lending programmes to activate the country's economy, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman has said, reports UNB.
 "The banks have now got substantial liquidity... there should not be any problem in expanding lending," he told a group of senior journalists during an informal exchange of views on Wednesday.
 He said as part of their efforts to expand lending operation, some banks have already reduced interest rates to encourage commercial borrowers.
 Rahman said the Sonali and Janata banks have already announced cut in their lending rates while other banks are expected to follow them.
 The Finance Minister said banks have been asked to provide liquidity support to the agriculture sector. "We are encouraging the agro-sector." He said free import of fertilizers, pesticides and seeds will be allowed in the private sector.
 He said banks have been asked to "be creative and promotional" in their approach and competitive in their operation.
 On the investment situation, Saifur Rahman said in recent months more than Tk.500 crores had either been invested or in the process of

investment in the industrial sector. Nearly 55 per cent of it was going for rehabilitating the closed or sick industries.
 "I am hopeful of a good private investment in the coming months," Rahman said optimistically, adding that environment for investment was important.
 He underlined the need for "co-operational politics instead of confrontational politics" to bolster private investment. He also stressed the need for good labour-management relations and a quiet labour front for promoting investment.
 Rahman said it was not fair to blame the Finance Ministry for any setback in the economy

whose over-all improvement is dependent on a number of other ministries.
 Rahman said there has been "substantial improvement" in the power sector which was in bad shapes as a result of system loss and other problems.
 He said despite the World Bank restrictions on credit for the power sector, some development programmes in the sector will go ahead with the help of internal resources to the tune of Tk.300 crore.
 Replying to a question, Rahman said tied conditionalities imposed by the donors sometimes hampered procurement of materials and implementation of projects.

BCL activist shot dead at Rauzan

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Dec 31: One person was killed and five others injured in a gunbattle today between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and National Democratic Party (NDP) at Rauzan, 25 miles off the city.
 Emdadul Haq, 20, a BCL activist, received bullet injury during the eight-hour fight at Fakirtla Bazar of Yasinagar village in the morning. He succumbed to injury on way to hospital.
 The fight ensued following previous rivalry between the groups.

Communal harmony procession today

By Staff Correspondent
 The All-Party Communal Harmony Committee will organize a procession in the city today (Friday) in a move to restore communal harmony disturbed due to demolition of Babri Mosque in India.
 The procession is scheduled to start from the Bangabandhu Avenue at 4 pm which would parade major streets of the city, a committee press release said.
 The committee also urged to form its wings upto the union level and to hold rallies and processions on January 3, 1993. The committee would hold a rally at the Bangabandhu Avenue on that day, the press release said.

Hasina greets people

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina greeted the people from all walks of life on the occasion of happy new year, reports UNB.
 In a message on the new year's eve, she wished that 1993 would bring unimpeachable peace, progress and wellbeing to all, ending unhappiness, conflict and confrontation.
 The Awami League President said commencement of a new year is the occasion of taking a renewed vow for saving the nation from the hands of evil forces.

Crime and violence increased alarmingly in '92

By Farid Ahmed
 Crimes and violence in the capital as well as all over the country increased alarmingly in the year—1992.
 Even the government, despite the existing law, felt the necessity to introduce a special law to curb crimes and violence.
 According to statistics collected from newspaper reports, a total of 511 people were killed in different crime incidents of which 119 were murdered in the capital in 1992, which began with a double

murder at a former minister's house on January 1.
 Of the others, 384 people fell victim to reckless driving in the Dhaka metropolitan area which is covered under 14 police stations.
 A total of 127 people were found mysteriously dead during last 12 months in the city. Of the 127 victims 58 reportedly committed suicide.
 Besides a other crime incidents, extortions and muggings recorded a sharp increase. Of the total murders,

many were committed by muggers and extortionists.
 To curb such crime incidents, the government introduced the Anti-terrorism Act on September 14, 1992.
 Police also conducted special drives all over the country to check crime incidents. However, observers noted that all these measures had failed to a large extent.
 Even the VIPs were not spared by the muggers and extortionists. Some of the political

leaders, MPs and their wives fell victims to muggings and extortions.
 Police officers were also killed while on duty to nab miscreants. In several incidents, police officers were robbed of their cash, belongings, even their rifle, pistols, ammunition and motorbikes in the capital.
 Miscreants, on several occasions, attacked police, left them injured and snatched accused persons from police custody.
 On December 21, hundreds of people laid siege to Mirpur police station and forced police to release 14 persons arrested on the previous night in a special raid in connection with various charges.
 Observers and experts thought that unless the administration was impartial in enforcing the existing laws crime incidents could not be brought under control.
 In a daring attempt, Workers Party leader Rashed
 See Page 12 Col 4

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 In a daring attempt, Workers Party leader Rashed
 See Page 12 Col 4

Happy New Year

Greetings
 The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, well-wishers, patrons and advertisers a Happy New Year.
 See Page 12 Col 8

Religion-based politics ALPP discusses bill seeking ban tomorrow
 By Nazmul Ashraf
 The Awami League has initiated a joint move of all opposition parties excluding the Jamaat-e-Islami for the introduction of separate bills in the next session of parliament to ban fundamentalist politics in the country, competent sources said.
 The AL has already drafted its bill seeking ban on three fundamentalist parties — Jamaat-e-Islami, Freedom Party and the Hindu League, sources said adding that the draft bill would be placed for discussion at tomorrow's meeting of the AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP).
 The AL has meantime started talks on the proposed bill with its allies in parliament — the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Ganotantri Party, Jatiya Samantantrik Dal
 See Page 12 Col 8

Repatriation may start Jan 5, says SPGRC
 By Staff Correspondent
 Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC) chief patron Nasim Khan has deferred his earlier programme of self-immolation in a spirit of goodwill and mutual confidence, says a SPGRC press release.
 Lord Ennals, Chairman of Stranded Pakistanis Resettlement Project, London and S H Shareef, Secretary General of Pakistan Citizens' National Committee for Repatriation of Stranded Pakistanis have been assured by Anwar Kamal, High Commissioner for Pakistan in Bangladesh, that under the Resettlement Programme repatriation of the first batch of 3000 Pakistanis would probably take place on January 5 or 6 but not later than January 10, 1993, the press release added.

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