

WORLD FAMOUS
 Beautiful Kitchen Sinks by
DIETHELM SWITZERLAND
 Local Agent & Distributor
Ronny International
 • 1, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka
 Phone 416105, 833617
 • 3, Municipal Shopping Complex,
 Noor Ahmed Road, Chittagong

The Daily Star

MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE
 WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF
 ITALIAN CARRARA, PERLATO SICILIA,
 BOTTICINO, INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,
 MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE
 OF DIFFERENT TYPES.
NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.
 199, TEJGAON 1/A, DHAKA.
 TEL: 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM: 961965

VOL. IV NO. 338 REGD. NO. DA 781

POUSH 19, 1401 BS,

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 2, 1995

RAJAB 28, 1415 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 5.00

Inside Today

Article

Blockade, Siege, Strike—and the Consumer

Column: Along My Way
 by S B Chaudhuri
 Page 4

International

Indian cabinet reshuffle may be delayed

Rabani discusses transfer of power
 Page 5

Business

Rao unveils new economic policies this week

China to wage trade war if US imposes sanctions
 Pages 6, 7

STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	838.42 (+0.85%)
Market capitalisation Tk	40.50 billion
Turnover in volume	38,517
Turnover in value Tk	5.17 million

Development

Decentralisation and Development: The Bangladesh Experiences; Disappearance of Wetlands; Capitalism for the Poor; Sainath Chronicles the Path of Good Intentions
 Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



The Tokai as Guru
 Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

SSC exams from Apr 20

The Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSC) under the four education boards will begin on April 20, an official handout said last night, reports BSS.

PM inaugurates SMRC today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) in the city at 10:30 am today. The centre has been set up at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department at Agargaon. Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman will attend the function as special guest, reports UNB.

Fresh DU exams schedule

The examinations of Dhaka University under the traditional system, scheduled for 10 am and 1:30 pm on January 2, 3 and 4, will now begin at 2:30 pm. Besides, the schedule of the second year BSc (Honours) examinations of 1993, which was due to be held on January 3, has been changed. Under the revised timing, the examinations scheduled to begin from 9 am will now be held on January 4 from 2:30 pm while the examinations scheduled for 1:30 pm will be held from 2:30 pm on the same date (January 3), said a DU press release. The schedule and place of other examinations will remain unchanged.

Hotel fire kills 5

ANTWERP (BELGIUM), Jan 1: Five people were killed and about 80 injured, some critically, when a hotel in the Belgian town of Antwerp caught fire during a New Year party, police said today, reports Reuter.

Prime Minister addresses nation

Opposition urged to return to constitutional politics

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated her call to the Opposition to return to the healthy process of constitutional and democratic politics, reports BSS.

In her address to the nation, simultaneously broadcast by television and radio, on the first day of the new year, the Prime Minister said that it was the responsibility of both the government and the Opposition to uphold the hard-earned democratic process and the Constitution.

Conveying her New Year's greetings to the people the Prime Minister said "We neither had any dearth of sincerity in the past nor is there any now to settle matters over which the elected representa-

tive of the people in the Opposition left Parliament."

The Prime Minister said, "There is nothing we did not do, within the constitutional framework, that they wanted."

While reiterating her clarification call to the Opposition to return to constitutional politics, the Prime Minister said that she firmly believed there was still time to reach a solution.

Any of the sides that moved away from its responsibility to uphold the Constitution and the democratic political process, she said, would remain accountable to the people.

"I hope the Opposition would realise this fact," Begum Zia said.

The Prime Minister said, "Our people want peace, they

want education for their sons and daughters, the common working people want the guarantee of livelihood, the people want security of business and trade."

Giving an account of the government's efforts to find a solution, Begum Zia said, "To uphold the democratic process as well as to keep up the process of development we have initiated—we have, despite being an elected government, gone a step further than the Opposition to propose that I and my government will resign from the responsibility of running the government at the end of the term and 30 days ahead of the next general elections. We have done this in the interest of a solution."

"But it is unfortunate that they did not agree to even this proposal of ours," Begum Zia said.

The Prime Minister said that the people were now vocal against activities directed against peace, discipline and development.

"In this situation I declare with all determination that to uphold democracy and the constitutional process we shall try our utmost," she said.

She said people had expected something positive from her speech for solving the crisis.

"Her speech has again plunged the nation into the abyss of frustration," he said.

The AL general secretary added that the speech had left no room for the Awami League

but to launch a vigorous campaign to realise its demands.

"Except the new year's greetings, there is nothing new for the people in Begum Zia's speech," observed Mohammad Nasim, the former Opposition chief whip who resigned Wednesday.

The address of the Prime Minister would not help improve the situation, he said.

The only solution to the present crisis lies in dissolution of Parliament and fresh elections under a neutral, caretaker government, as outlined by the Opposition on December 28, Nasim added.

Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed said Begum Zia's speech would further deepen the political crisis and step up violence and confrontation in the country.

Giving his immediate reaction to The Daily Star, Moudud said, Begum Zia has neither See Page 12 Col 6

Nothing new in PM's address: Opposition

Star Report

Opposition leaders expressed their deep dismay and frustration at Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's address to the nation yesterday, saying it would further aggravate the present political crisis.

There was nothing new which could give a new sense of direction towards resolving the crisis, they said giving immediate reactions to the PM's address to the nation.

"Begum Zia's speech was only a repetition of what she has been saying for the last few days," commented Zillur Rahman, General Secretary of the Awami League.

He said people had expected something positive from her speech for solving the crisis.

"Her speech has again plunged the nation into the abyss of frustration," he said.

The AL general secretary added that the speech had left no room for the Awami League

8-hour hartals in city from today to Wednesday

By Staff Correspondent

Three major opposition political parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — have called half-day hartals in the capital from today, 6 am to 2pm everyday, till Wednesday.

The hartals have been called to press their demands for dissolution of Parliament, resignation of the government and general elections under a caretaker administration.

On Wednesday (December 28), 147 opposition MPs of the 330-member Fifth Parliament resigned as the government did not accept their demands.

Ambulances, vehicles of Fire Brigade, newspapers and journalists, medicine and food shops would remain out of the purview of the hartal, party sources said.

In a statement, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, who was Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, urged the city dwellers to make the hartals successful. See Page 12 Col 6



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia waving to the students at the 16th founding anniversary function of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal at the Shabbagh square in the city yesterday. (From left) Energy Minister Khandokar Mosharrar Hossain, BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Salam Talukdar, JCD President Fazlul Haq Milon and Nazimuddin Ziam are seen applauding. — Star photo

Khaleda praises JCD role

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the students, especially the members of her party's student front — the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) — to devote themselves to studies, working alongside as vanguards of democracy, independence and sovereignty.

"The students have always fought against injustice and repression and remained vigilant against the anti-independence forces. I believe they would continue their sacred duties in the days to come," she told a discussion meeting on the Dhaka University campus, held in observance of the JCD's 16th founding anniversary.

The JCD played a pioneering role in the anti-autocracy See Page 12 Col 3



Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman addressing an extended meeting of the Dhaka City committee of the party at the party central office yesterday. — Star photo

Heavy rush at city banks

By Staff Correspondent

It was a busy day for the bankers yesterday.

Reopening after three days of threatened disruption because of the Opposition's call for hartals, there was a mad rush of people seeking to draw money.

Although withdrawals on the first of every month is usually heavy because of salaries and other payments, yesterday's rush was aggravated because there was a half day hartal Thursday followed by Saturday's bank holiday with Friday in between. Besides, the opposition's fresh hartal programme for today, tomorrow and Wednesday prompted people to complete their bank transactions in double haste. See Page 12 Col 6

FBCCI calls confce on political crisis

By Staff Correspondent

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) will hold a conference of businessmen on January 10 to decide their role in the context of the present political situation.

The first session of the conference would be participated by the heads of all the 58 chambers and 132 associations in the country, while the second by the general body members of the FBCCI.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the executive body of the federation held yesterday at the FBCCI conference hall with its President, Salman F Rahman in the chair.

The meeting expressed grave concern over the present political situation and its effect on the economy.

According to sources, the meeting also formed a five-member-committee to estimate the extent of losses incurred by the business community and the economy as a whole because of the political unrest.

The committee will prepare a report for discussion at the conference.

The report may also suggest an action plan for the businessmen to combat the situa-

tion arising out of the political impasse and programmes like hartals and sieges, the sources said.

In an earlier meeting in November last year, the executive body of the FBCCI proposed to hold a meeting of the political parties to apprise them of the impact of political unrest on trade and commerce and also to help resolve the crisis through discussions.

However, that initiative fell through because of reservations expressed by the ruling party about the agenda and format.

A top businessman, who is also a member of the FBCCI executive body, talking to The Daily Star last night, said the businessmen are the first victims of political unrest.

"When political programmes like hartals and strikes are called, the losses incurred by the businessmen are enormous," he said. "It is unfortunate that despite repeated appeals by the FBCCI, the political parties have failed to resolve the crisis," he said.

"Now, the businessmen would decide their fate," the business leader said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Douglas Hurd due tomorrow

Douglas Hurd, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of Britain, arrives in the city tomorrow on a three-day visit to Bangladesh on the first leg of his tour of the sub continent, reports UNB.

He will be accompanied by his wife lady Judy Hurd during the visit at the invitation of Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, officials said.

Hurd will hold official talks with his Bangladesh counterpart ASM Mostafizur Rahman, covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and international issues of common concern.

The British Foreign Minister will also tour India and Pakistan.

His visit is billed important as Britain is showing fresh interest in the South Asian region at the end of the cold war.

The two ministers are likely to find ways of expanding economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

During the visit, the two countries are expected to sign two agreements on British economic assistance to projects in communication and energy sectors of Bangladesh.

Youths go wild during New Year's eve

By Staff Correspondent

For some youngsters, celebrating the New Year's eve on the night of December 31 in the capital meant smashing window screens of private cars, exploding crackers and harassing the party goers.

While men and women of all ages rushed to colourful and milling parties at the posh Gulshan, Banani and Dhanmondi areas in their cars around midnight, many youths were seen having their fun on the streets.

They were seen crowding the intersections, gate crashing private parties and hurling beer bottles at the commuters.

In certain areas, some of them stoned passing cars as jubilation turned wild and many roads were strewn with broken glass from smashed windshields.

Sounds of frequent cracker blasts around midnight from different corners in the capital left most party-going people confused as they could not decide whether those noises were intended for celebration or spreading panic.

Like every year, special police contingents had been de-

If constitutional amendment is called for Opposition may consider withdrawing resignations

By Asiuazzaman

The opposition parties may consider withdrawing the resignation letters of their MPs if the question of any constitutional amendment arises with regard to implementing their demands, a senior Opposition leader said yesterday.

"We never wanted an early death of the Fifth Parliament. The ruling party has forced us to resign. Legally, there is no way to withdraw the resignation letters."

"Our decision can only be reviewed if the necessity of a constitutional amendment arises to hold a free and fair election," the source, and Awami League leader, said on condition of anonymity.

The leader, who was one of the four Opposition negotiators during the dialogue brokered by Sir Ninian Stephen, said "The idea is still very much my own, but it may be discussed in the Opposition forum."

He said that most of the opposition leaders and MPs sincerely wanted an honourable solution to the nine-month old political impasse and the opposition parties shifted from their original position like the ruling party.

However, he said, he was

not very optimistic about the latest moves because the situation has become highly complicated following the submission of the resignation letters.

The Opposition MPs should not return merely to enjoy their privileges in Parliament," he commented.

He admitted that the opposition's latest demand for forming an advisory council under the President needs constitutional amendment.

In a related development, one Opposition leader has initiated a last ditch bid to salvage the country from a course of political confrontation and chaos.

The leader, not a member of parliament yet holding a key public office, held several rounds of telephonic conversation with a ruling party MP regarding the present situation.

Informed sources said the high profile Opposition politician, along with a ruling party MP, last night left for an undisclosed destination for talks. Details of the move were not known.

When contacted over telephone, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar said See Page 12 Col 5

Nominations filed for by-polls in 4 JS seats

Four BNP nominees and 11 independent candidates yesterday submitted nomination papers for the by-elections in four vacant Jatiya Sangsad constituencies to be held on January 25. Election Commission sources told BSS.

In JS-59 Natore-3 constituency, which had fallen vacant at the death of Jamaat MP Mohammad Abu Bakar, three persons filed nominations. They are Kazi Golam Morshed of the BNP and Mohammad Nazrul Islam (independent) and Mohammad Abdul Jalil (independent).

In JS-126 Bagerganj-6 five persons submitted nomination papers. They are: Mohammad Abdur Rashid Khan of the BNP and four independent candidates. See Page 12 Col 3

Fresh diplomatic move underway to resume Chakma repatriation

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Jan 1: A fresh diplomatic move is reportedly underway to resume the stalled repatriation of Chakma refugees from the Tripura state of India.

According to highly placed sources, the move came following the reported instruction of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to the minister concerned to contact the central government of India through the diplomatic channel for restarting the repatriation process.

The third phase of repatriation has remained suspended for the past five months due to lack of proper response from the concerned quarters of the two countries, the sources said.

Earlier, 5195 Chakma refugees, belonging to 1027 families, returned to their homes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts during the 1st and the 2nd phase of repatriation.

Of them, 379 families came back in the 1st phase between February 15 and 22, 1994 while 648 families returned in the 2nd phase last July.

The repatriation of tribal refugees began as per the tripartite agreement signed by the governments of India and Bangladesh and the Chakma Refugees Welfare Association.

The returnees were rehabilitated with financial help and relief materials provided by the government. Meanwhile, some 40 See Page 12 Col 8

Chechen presidential palace captured, claims Moscow

MOSCOW, Jan 1: Russian troops took control of Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev's presidential palace, his main headquarters, in the Chechen capital Grozny today, the Russian government's press service said, reports Reuter. AP Spokesman Valentin Sergeyev, contacted by telephone, said the palace was surrounded but did not make clear if Russian troops had entered it or if any Chechen fighters remained inside.

"Taking control of the presidential palace does not necessarily mean occupying it," Sergeyev said. "It is encircled and under control." He said he was seeking further details.

There was no immediate word on the whereabouts of President Dudayev, or confirmation that the Russians had stormed his building.

The Russians acknowledged meeting with ferocious resistance in parts of the break-away capital, and Chechen

fighters denied that Kremlin forces had taken control of key facilities.

Earlier in the day, a group of visiting Russian lawmakers reported seeing burned Russian tanks littering the square and the charred bodies of many soldiers inside.

It was the second day of fierce clashes inside Grozny as Russia's three-week-old offensive appeared to be climaxing in a final battle to control the capital of the secessionist, mostly Muslim republic.

The ITAR-Tass news agency this afternoon carried a statement by the Russian government press service saying federal troops controlled Dudayev's headquarters building, other administrative facilities, residential areas, the railway station and a refinery, where it said a fire had been extinguished.

Huge plumes of black smoke that reached several

hundred meters into the air covered central Grozny like fog and made it hard to discern which side controlled what.

Hundreds of Chechen defenders scurried through the nearby mud-splattered streets, mostly armed with Kalashnikov automatic rifles, hunting rifles and a few grenades.

As they ran, ducking behind buildings, they occasionally shouted "Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar! (God is great)."

A large area of the city centre was a devastated ghost town, populated only by the fighters racing through the streets.

More buildings were said to be destroyed in bombing attacks overnight, and almost all of those still standing had their windows broken or blown out. A few markets remained open around the outskirts, where tenacious merchants peddled chocolates, drinks and other items.



A general view of one of the neighbourhoods of Grozny in fire after several bombardments by Russian warplanes Saturday. Russian troops yesterday launched a massive ground and air attack on the Chechen capital, blazing their way to the city centre in heavy fighting, but failing to take control of the city. — AFP photo