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STOCK MARKET
DSE Index 940.52 (+0.25%)
Market capitalization Tk 40.59 billion
Turnover in volume 22,767
Turnover in value Tk 6.00 million
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Yeltsin's order goes unheeded

Dudayev's palace hit in air attack

GROZNY, Jan 5: Russian warplanes bombed the presidential palace in Grozny today, less than a day after President Boris Yeltsin ordered a halt to air attacks on the Chechen capital, reports AP.
Russian fighter jets and helicopters also buzzed other regions in the breakaway republic, and intensive fighting was heard near villages west of Grozny on the sixth day of Yeltsin's bungled offensive to quash the republic's independence drive.
The palace of Chechen President Dzhokar Dudayev in the centre of Grozny was hit by at least one rocket, touching off a fire in the upper stories of the tall concrete building, according to Western journalists who witnessed the attack.
It was the most serious attack since Yeltsin promised Wednesday to halt the aerial assault.
In Moscow, the press service of the Russian government said heavy fighting had taken place around the railway station in Grozny. The government said Russian troops had repulsed rebel attacks and killed about 100 Chechen fighters.
There was no word on Russian losses, and throughout the war Moscow has exaggerated its claims of killing the rebels.

19 countries to take part in trade fair

Star Report

Some 64 foreign firms from 19 countries are expected to participate in the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF '95) beginning tomorrow.
Organised by the Commerce Ministry, 132 local firms are also going to participate in the two-week-long fair, the first of its kind in the country. To be held on 15 hectares of land at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the fair as the chief guest at 3:30 pm. Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam will be the special guest on the occasion.
Preparations for the fair are nearly complete, said Shaheedullah, chief coordinator of the fair. "The last minute preparations are also progressing very well."
The fair will remain open
See Page 8 Col 7

Each thana to have permanent Election Commission office

A high-powered inter-ministerial meeting yesterday took measures for expeditiously preparing databased voters' list and issuing identity cards to the voters in preparation for smooth holding of next general elections, reports UNB.
The meeting was informed that the Finance Ministry had already sanctioned Tk 266 crore for undertaking the gigantic task of collecting databased information for computer and issuance of laminated identity cards with laser-printed photographs to approximately 55 million eligible voters of the country.
In order to expedite the entire process, said an official announcement, the meeting decided that there would be a permanent office of the Election Commission in each thana headed by a Thana Election Officer (TEO).
The meeting directed the Establishment Division to issue notification for the creation of posts in this regard forthwith and to immediately make arrangements for good, proper and adequate space for such offices at thana level.
At present the TEO will be manned by the officials of various departments at the thana level as no fresh recruitment is possible in view of the time constraint.
However, such officials of the TEO office will be placed under the control of the Election Commission and will only be accountable to the EC for their activities.
A three-member secretaries committee was also constituted.
See Page 8 Col 2

Efforts on to solve political impasse

By Nazmul Ashraf
Efforts are still on for an amicable solution to the persisting political impasse to avert an apprehended confrontation between the opposing political camps following the en masse resignation of 14 Opposition lawmakers.
According to political circles, fresh contacts at different levels between the ruling party and the Opposition have been established by a number of personalities representing both the sides and also by a few others from a third camp over the last few days. None of the moves, however, yielded any concrete result until yesterday.
Of the fresh moves, the one by Dhaka City mayor

Corruption case

Ex-minister, one other sued

The Rajshahi District Anti-Corruption Bureau filed a case with Rajpara thana against former minister of state for industries, Meshbauddin Ahmed (Bablu) for causing financial loss of Tk 12,14,048 to Rajshahi District Council in 1990, reports BSS.
The case in brief was that the auction of the Godagari Ghat under the Rajshahi District Council was held in March 6 of 1990 when former minister of state for industries and parliament member Meshbauddin Ahmed was the chairman of the District Council.
One Shish Muhammad became the highest bidder in that auction with Tk 38,10,000. Meshbauddin Ahmed allowed time to the bidder violating government rule.
See Page 8 Col 7



Two days before its opening, workers giving final touches to the main entrance of the Dhaka International Trade Fair '95 at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday. — Star photo

Parties counting political points

By Asiuzzaman
A week after the resignation episode of the 'opposition members of Parliament, the major actors in the drama are still counting their 'political points' as confusion continues to prevail in the country's political arena.
Each party appears to think that they have gained while despondency prevails among the general people about the future of our democratic experiment.
However, some political observers feel that the Jatiya Party looks like having scored the maximum points from the sequence of political developments over the past several months, which climaxed on December 28 with the Opposition MPs tendering their resignations to the Speaker.
Observers believe that baring the JP members, most of the other mainstream Opposition members wanted a solution of the nine-month old impasse. For most of the MPs of the Awami League and the Jamaat, all other issues became secondary once Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia eventually conceded to their demand to step down 30 days before the next elections.
The JP is happy to the extent that, along with other major opposition parties, it was able to create a situation for the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which they faced for long nine years.
The JP believes that it would get more parliamentary seats and their position would be strengthened if a fresh election is held shortly, the observers maintained.
As things developed, ever since the boycott of Parliament by the Opposition began in March, the Opposition demand boiled down to one issue — would or would not the PM quit during the period of next elections.
The BNP was earlier very adamant that they would abide by the Constitution and would not accept any formula that involved the PM, who is also the party chief. The opposition parties insisted that elections would never be fair under a party government and a neutral caretaker government was a must during elections.
Because of the inflexible

'Country needs strong naval force'

CHITTAGONG, Jan 5: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here today that the government had been continuing its efforts for the modernisation as well as expansion of the navy in view of the country's geographical location and the defence system, reports BSS.
Addressing the passing out parade marking the commissioning of a batch of midshipmen of the Bangladesh Navy at the Naval Academy parade ground at Patenga here this morning, the Prime Minister underscored the importance of a strong naval force for the coastal country like Bangladesh.
The nation's future development, Begum Zia said, was largely dependent on the protection of resources spreading over the country's forty thousand square miles maritime area.
The Prime Minister said a new ship was added recently to the country's existing naval fleet.
Besides this, five minesweepers will soon join the naval fleet, she added. Necessary equipment are being procured to equip a re-

Economy has become stronger, says PM

CHANDINA (Comilla), Jan 5: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today expressed her confidence that in future Bangladesh might not depend on foreign assistance if the present trend of development is maintained unhindered, reports BSS.
"The Bangladesh economy has become stronger the per capita income has increased, employment opportunities have been created and the poverty level reduced. The size of the annual development programme (ADP) has been raised to Taka 11,500 crore in the current fiscal (1994-95) compared with mere Taka 5,000 crore in the fiscal 1989-90," she said.
The Prime Minister was addressing a mammoth public meeting at Chandina High School ground here under Comilla district this afternoon.
BNP Chairperson Begum Zia said that in nearly four years her democratic government has fulfilled all its election pledges as well as improved the living standards of the peasants, government employees and all other segments of the population, it is now working for further improving the lot of the teeming millions.
She said the present government has brought the national economy back on the right track of development and prosperity after it had been ruined during the autocratic regime.
Mentioning that Bangladesh is now financing 38 per cent of its ADP compared with less than zero per cent during the last fiscal of the autocratic regime, the Prime Minister expressed optimism that if disruptive activities were stopped and peace maintained, Bangladesh would soon stand on its feet by further acceleration.
See Page 8 Col 4

Arab states agree to fight fundamentalism

TUNIS, Jan 5: Arab interior ministers from North Africa to the Gulf have agreed at a meeting in Tunis to join ranks in their fight against growing Muslim fundamentalist violence, Egypt's minister said today, reports Reuters.
"This is a great success. We have an alliance of all states against terrorist groups," Interior Minister Hassan El-Ali told reporters after a night meeting.
"All members are convinced that terrorism is a danger for all and agree to fight its leaders wherever they are, including abroad, and their financing," he added.
Ali said the 18 ministers — from Morocco in northwest Africa to the oil-rich Gulf states — had adopted an Egyptian working paper to serve as a basis for a 'code of conduct to fight terrorism'.
The agreement, to be drafted by a special committee including all members, will be binding on all states and must be adopted before the end of 1995, he said.
He predicted that fundamentalist-led violence would spread into 'several other Arab countries' this year.
"This is not a speculation. We have confirmed information on that... we cannot unveil which countries are targeted for the sake of the general interest," Ali said.
The council of Arab interior ministers also agreed to consider fundamentalists acts as 'crimes and not as political acts as it was previously viewed by some countries'.
The Egyptian proposal provides for intelligence cooperation between Arab states on the fundamentalists' networks, activities, financing, refugees and arms.
It also calls for cooperation between security services on combat techniques and how to protect airports, ports, railway stations and public places.
The proposals demand that all members deny the fundamentalists refuge or access, for whatever reasons, or any kind of training, protection for financing.
It also calls for a reinforcement of cooperation in the hunt for wanted fundamentalists, but does not explicitly say they must be extradited.
Tunisia has also presented proposals for the adoption of a convention binding to all states and calling for the handover of wanted Muslim fundamentalists.
Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt have in the past accused the Sudanese government and Iran of encouraging fundamentalist movements by housing their leaders and training their militants.
Eighteen countries were represented at a ministerial level at the meeting — Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Sudan, Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Yemen.
The Palestine Liberation Organisation, Qatar and Somalia were also represented.

Cold spell loosens grip

The bite of the cold wave from the Himalayan region which gripped the country for last four days has weakened to a tolerable level as the mercury rose by one to three degree Celsius on an average, reports BSS.
Minimum temperature in the northern region which experienced severe cold for the last four days recorded between 8 to 9 degrees Celsius yesterday.
The coastal areas of the country however, are still having relatively warmer day temperature than the northern parts with minimum temperature registered between 10 to 11.5 degrees Celsius and maximum between 26 degrees to 27 degrees Celsius.
The lowest temperature of the country at 5.2 degrees Celsius was recorded at Srimangal in Sylhet district and the highest at 28.2 degrees Celsius at Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district.
The minimum temperature during the last 24 hours in the capital city was recorded at 8.5 degrees Celsius and the maximum at 26.8 degrees Celsius.
See Page 8 Col 3

Salman calls for rock-solid unity of businessmen

FBCCI chief Salman F Rahman last night cautioned that the economy was threatened with a serious slump because of the staggering political uncertainty, reports UNB.
"Still, the impact is not much, but if the slide starts, it will be severe. Recovery will then be an arduous job," said the president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at a reception.
"Saying that the fate of the economy is hanging in the balance because of the political crisis, Rahman reiterated that the business community would continue to insist on the political leadership for a solution.
He appealed for rock-solid unity of the business community in putting effective pressure on the political leadership for a business-friendly atmosphere.
"The business community is the worst sufferer in the situation. All efforts of the private sector will prove futile unless there is a congenial and enabling climate."
See Page 8 Col 3

11th National Art Exhibition opens today

By Staff Correspondent
The three-week long Eleventh National Art Exhibition 1995 will begin today at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy premises.
Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali is scheduled to inaugurate the show at 4 pm today and distribute awards to the best artists.
State Minister for Cultural Affairs Jahanara Begum and Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry Md Mokhlesur Rahman will be present on the occasion.
Eminent artist Mansur-Ul-Karim has been awarded the See Page 8 Col 8

5 killed in Feni road mishap

FENI, Jan 5: At least five people were killed and three others injured when a truck fell into a roadside ditch at Samtira Hat, 14 km off the town, on Dhaka-Chittagong highway today, reports UNB.
Police said the accident occurred when the over loaded Dhaka-bound truck skidded off the road as the driver lost control of the vehicle at about 10 am.
All the victims were travelling on the truck, and died instantly as the truck and goods fell upon them. The identity of the victims could not be known immediately.
The injured were admitted to the local clinics.
The driver and helper of the truck managed to flee the scene after the accident.

42 shops gutted in Chandpur

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT
CHANDPUR, Jan 5: A devastating fire that swept through 42 shops gutted goods worth Tk one crore in Rahimanagar Bazar under Kachua thana Wednesday.
Thirty people suffered burn injuries in the blaze. The cause of the fire could not be ascertained.
Fire service from Chandpur and Hajiganj took four hours to extinguish the blaze.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Your favourite newspaper, The Daily Star, will enter its 5th year of publication on 14th January 1995. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the patrons, supporters, advertisers, and most of all to our readers, for making us the most popular English language newspaper in the country.

To be able to serve you better in 1995, we need your suggestions.

Please tell to us, in 300 to 400 words, what about our paper you find most useful, and suggest what areas we should concentrate on during 1995. Please attach a passport size photograph along with your comments, as we intend to publish a selected number of responses.

Last date for receiving your reply send us your suggestion 11th January 1995. Help us to serve you better.

The Daily Star
— Trying to serve its readers better

NEWS BRIEFS

Time-limit for CHT polls extended
The government has extended the time-limit of elections to the local government councils of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban hill districts by two years from January 5, 1995 to January 5, 1997, said an official handout in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

Hasina thanks guests
Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday thanked the guests including the President, Prime Minister, Ministers, diplomats and partymen for attending her daughter's marriage ceremony. She requested all to pray for peace and happiness of the newly-wed couple, reports UNB.

Postage stamps on trade fair
Bangladesh Post Office will issue a set of two commemorative postage stamps of Tk four and Tk six denomination tomorrow on the occasion of the Dhaka International Trade Fair '95. A first day cover, valid Tk six will be issued and a special canceller will also be used, reports UNB.