

সাদা সিমেন্ট, মোজাইক, সিংক ও পাডল
আকর্ষণীয় ও কমমূল্যে
সাদা সিমেন্ট: জাপান, মালয়েশিয়া
মোজাইক চিপস: পাকিস্তান, চায়না, ভারত
কিচেন সিলিং স্পেন, সুইজারল্যান্ড
মোজাইক, পাডল: ইন্দোনেশিয়া
মোজাইক ও ব্র্যাকন মোজাইক: পাকিস্তান ও মালয়েশিয়া
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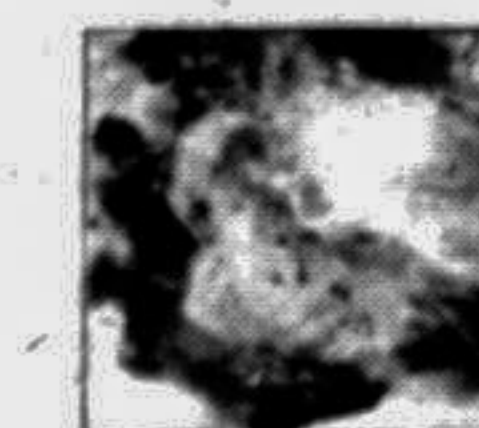
STOCK MARKET
DSE Index 810.72 (+0.08%)
Market capitalization Tk 35.15 billion
Turnover in volume 41,458
Turnover in value Tk 7.92 million

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NEWS BRIEFS

Service extended

By Staff Correspondent

The government has extended the service of Mohiuddin Ahmed on contract for a period of one year recently. Mohiuddin Ahmed, now serving as the senior most Additional Foreign Secretary, was also ambassador to Senegal and Deputy High Commissioner in London.

Pope ends Lanka tour

COLOMBO, Jan 21: Pope John Paul II left Sri Lanka to day ending a 11-day visit that also took him to the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Australia. The 74-year-old pontiff was seen off at the Colombo International Airport by Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, and as was expected, the Buddhist clergy kept away from the official departure ceremony, reports AFP.

Shops gutted in Muladi

BARISAL, Jan 21: A devastating fire burnt 14 shops on Friday in village Dumurtali of Muladi thana of the district. The loss is estimated to be about Tk 4 lakh. The cause of the fire could not be known. The fire broke out at mid-night and quickly spread to the adjoining houses, reports BSS.

Oxford Mission centenary opens

BARISAL, Jan 21: A two-day centenary programme of the Oxford Mission began at the Oxford Mission Complex here today. British High Commissioner Peter J Fowler inaugurated the programme as chief guest with Chairman of centenary celebration, committee Wright Rev BD Mondal in the chair, reports UNB.

Data error had lowered July-Sept export earning by \$278m

By Staff Correspondent

A recompilation of the country's export earning figures for the first quarter of the current fiscal revealed an astounding error which lowered the actual figure by 277.84 million US dollars.

Addressing a press conference in the city yesterday, Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam blamed the error on the data collection system of the Customs Department.

He revealed that the readjusted export earnings stood at 910.39 million dollars during the July-September period of 1994-95 or 32.55 per cent higher than that for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

"We have identified the error in the earlier data collected from the Chittagong Customs daily list records," Islam told newsmen at the Padma State Guest House. He expressed optimism that the revised annual export earning

target of 3.1 billion dollars would be exceeded.

An earlier compilation by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) for the July-September period showed the export earning to be only 632.55 million dollars, indicating a 20 per cent shortfall in the projected target.

The minister said that the decision to recheck the earlier data collected from the daily list of the Chittagong Customs, the primary source for the EPB export figures, was taken as it did not match with the data provided by the US customs on ready-made garment exports to that country and also with the increased volume of back-to-back letters of credit (LCs) recorded during the period by the Bangladesh Bank.

It was also found that the data taken from the Customs daily list (CDL) did not even match with their own export free registration (EFR) re-

ports. "We have identified the error which was possibly due to the ongoing switchover to a computerised data entry system at the Chittagong Customs."

The readjusted export earning figures are based on the EFR records of the Customs Department.

The Member (Customs) of the National Board of Revenue, Khwaja Golam Sarwar, acknowledged the error in the original Customs data. "The Customs daily list data is not always reliable as not much emphasis is placed on it because exports does not involve any duty collection, the export free registration data is more reliable," he added.

The Deputy Governor of the Bangladesh Bank, Mahbubul Amin Khan, also corroborated the readjusted export earning figures saying that it matches with the indicators recorded by the central bank.

Commerce Secretary A H Mofazzal Karim hoped that the error would not recur once the computerised data entry system is fully installed at the Chittagong Customs, which handles nearly 80 per cent of the country's exports.

According to the readjusted figures released yesterday, almost all major export sectors, including ready-made garments, leather, frozen foods, jute goods and tea, met the projected earning targets during the three months period.

However, earnings from raw jute, tea, handicrafts, farm products and other primary products were lower than that of the corresponding period of last year.

The first quarter export price index rose by 4.44 per cent and the export volume increased by 28.11 per cent above that of the same period of 1993-94. The price index See Page 12 Col 8

Ordinance being drafted to streamline medical services

By Reaz Ahmad

An ordinance is likely to be promulgated to streamline the medical services in the country.

The draft of the proposed ordinance — The Medical Practice, Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance — was now being finalised, said a Health Directorate source involved in the process.

The source, preferring anonymity, said the draft would be sent to the Health Ministry for approval within a month or two.

The proposed ordinance is aimed at standardising fees of doctors, charges of different medical services and private practice by government doctors and fixing the minimum salary of doctors working in private medical hospitals and clinics.

The proposed ordinance is likely to put a ban on publicity

and canvassing for medicine on the streets. It may contain a prohibition that no government doctors will be allowed to practise in more than two private clinics or hospitals.

Health Minister Kamal Hossain, on many occasions in the past, had said that government doctors' private practice would not be totally prohibited. A Health Directorate official told the Daily Star that the new ordinance was not designed to prohibit private practice, but to restrict it to some extent so that a healthy private medical sector could emerge.

Taking advantage of the present system, many government doctors were now engaged in consultancy with as many as 20 private clinics even, the official noted.

Once the proposed ordinance comes into force, each See Page 12 Col 1



Dilip, Saira due today

By Staff Correspondent

Legendary Indian film actor Dilip Kumar (Yusuf Khan) accompanied by his actress wife Saira Banu arrives in the city today on a week-long visit to Bangladesh.

The Dilip Kumar Reception Committee will accord a reception to the couple at a local hotel on January 24.

A K A Feroz Noon and Anisul Haq convenor and secretary respectively of the committee requested admirers to be present at Zia International Airport this noon to See Page 12 Col 8

Jute, cotton mills workers call 72-hr strike from today

Jute and cotton mills workers will enforce a 72-hour strike and road-rail barricade from today as their negotiation with the government failed yesterday, reports UNB.

Separate meetings of trade union leaders with Jute Minister A S M Hannan Shah and State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan held at the BJMC Bhawan and in the board room of Textile Ministry yesterday failed to settle the workers' demands due to, what the strike sponsors called, intransigence of the See Page 12 Col 4

Ctg Chamber's call to withdraw hartals

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 21: The Board of Directors of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called for withdrawing the opposition's hartal programme on January 24 and 25 for smooth holding of the 'Bangladesh investment conference' in the capital.

The call was made at an emergency Board meeting held here today with its acting president Sarwar Jamal Nazim in the chair. The directors expressed grave concern over the frequent calls of hartal which they said, create disastrous consequences for the national economy.

CPB office set ablaze in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Jan 21: A group of people set fire to the local office of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) this afternoon after a number of clashes between some musallis and CPB men, reports UNB.

The clash began when a group of musallis of Ganglarpur Mosque, reportedly manhandled a CPB activist, who was giving announcement for tomorrow's conference of the party at Town Hall auditorium. The CPB man was speaking through a loudspeaker.

Some CPB supporters retaliated when angry musallis attacked See Page 12 Col 4

7 Bangladeshi envoys to attend investment confce

By Staff Correspondent

Seven Bangladesh ambassadors and high commissioners have been asked by the government to attend the forthcoming Bangladesh Investment Conference being held in Dhaka on January 24 and 25.

"The participation will be a rewarding experience for the mission chiefs and would enable them to carry back the investment information for dissemination in the countries they are posted," a highly placed government official said yesterday.

The envoys to Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Pakistan and India have been invited to join the conference.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina flanked by party leaders Abdul Jabir (L) and Abdul Razzak (R) leading a procession yesterday in the city protesting price-hike of essentials. — Star photo

Resignation: Speaker's ruling likely Tuesday

Star Report

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali is likely to give his ruling on the resignation of 147 opposition MPs in the coming session of Parliament, which begins tomorrow.

"He may give his ruling on Tuesday as there is presidential speech on the opening day," a source close to the Speaker told The Daily Star yesterday.

The issue of resignation and the ruling on the Speaker by the High Court may be discussed in the session, the source further said.

A High Court bench, in a ruling on Wednesday, asked the Speaker and the Secretary of Parliament to show cause why action should not be taken as required under the Constitution on the resignation letters of the 147 opposition MPs.

The same bench, in a separate rule, also asked the leaders of three major parliamentary parties, to show cause why the mass resignation would not be declared illegal. The court asked for reply within seven days and also asked the Speaker to restrain from giving any decision in 10 days.

One source hinted that the Speaker is going to declare the resignation letters 'invalid' as

those were not properly written. "The Speaker found faults in almost every letter," he added.

The source, who is a top leader of the ruling BNP, said the Speaker had prepared a lengthy ruling, substantiated by his findings and legal interpretations.

Shaikh Razzak Ali also confirmed that his decision was ready.

Move for contempt of court charge against Speaker

Moudud Ahmed may move the High Court today for drawing up contempt of court proceedings against the Speaker and the Parliament Secretary for serving notices upon the Opposition MPs to attend the next Parliament session, reports UNB.

K S Nabi, Bar at Law, and Abdul Razzak, Bar at Law are also expected to file similar petitions at the same High Court division bench which requested the Speaker not to pass any opinion for 10 days regarding the resignation letters of 147 MPs.

See Page 12 Col 3

AL procession protesting price hike

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina led a procession in the capital yesterday protesting the government's failure to check unusual price-hike of essential commodities, reports UNB.

The procession started from Bangabandhu Avenue and ended at Mouchak in Malibagh with thousands of protesters shouting anti-government slogans while parading the streets.

"Bring down prices of rice, pulses and salt. Quit power. Give election," chanted the processionists.

The demonstration was part of the countrywide protests organised by the Awami League against unabated price spiral of essentials.

The three major opposition parties — the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — have called for a half-day hartal in capital Dhaka on January 24 to protest the price-hikes.

Earlier, addressing a party rally at Bangabandhu Avenue, Hasina blamed the government's mismanagement for the price-hike of essentials, including rice, lentil, edible oil, salt and paper, that has been causing untold sufferings to the commonman.

See Page 12 Col 6

Village police to get 2 festival bonuses every yr

The Prime Minister yesterday announced two festival bonuses of Tk 500 and Tk 350 each for Dafaeders and Mahalladars engaged in guarding villages, reports UNB.

Begum Khaleda Zia made the announcement amidst cheers from several thousand village guards at a grand conference of the Bangladesh Village Police Employees' Union at the National Parade Square in the morning.

The announcement is seen as a milestone in the 125-year history of the Village Police Force. The Village Police Act was passed for the first time in the Subcontinent in 1870, raising the village guards.

Addressing the conference, the Prime Minister said her government had increased the salaries of Dafaeder and Mahallader from Tk 220 to Tk 1,000 and Tk 200 to Tk 700 respectively.

She said the government allocated Tk 16.50 crore for the village police force and also Tk 2.87 crore for their uniform in the current fiscal.

Deputy Commissioners have been instructed to ensure salary of the village policemen within the first week of every month, she told the function.

If any member of the community dies during discharge of duty, Begum Zia added, the See Page 12 Col 6

Student shot dead: DU closed on Jan 29

By DU Correspondent

Unidentified gunmen killed an MA final year student of Dhaka University on the campus yesterday afternoon.

Joydip Dutta Chowdhury Bappi, a student of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, was murdered in the Jagannath Hall premises. He was an activist of the pro-Awami League Chhatra League (S-P).

A resident of the Jagannath Hall, he died on the spot at about 3 pm when some armed

2 killed as mill workers clash in Joydevpur

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons were killed and at least 15 others injured in clashes between two groups of workers of the Quashem Cotton Mills in Joydevpur Friday night and Saturday morning.

The deceased were identified as Noor Md Kazi, 40, a mill worker and an activist of the pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and Amanullah, 26, an outsider.

Of the injured, Abul Hashem, 26, general secretary of the mill unit of the Sramik See Page 12 Col 5

hoodlums shot him in the chest near the Dr G C Dev Bhawan, better known as the North House.

Bappi, who hails from Barisal Sadar, was the only son of his parents. The cause of the killing could not be known immediately.

On October 27 last year, another leader of the BCL (S-P), Gazi Zakir Hossain, was also gunned down by some unidentified miscreants on the first floor of the North House. Zakir was an MA Final year student of Sociology department.

Hall sources said that after committing the murder yesterday, the gunmen fled away by the North gate of the Jagannath Hall.

Later, some of his friends took profusely bleeding Bappi to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Hundreds of students of the University rushed to the DMCH. The Vice Chancellor, the Chairman of the Journalism Department, the Provost, Proctor and senior teachers also visited the hospital.

The body was taken to the Jagannath Hall premises around 9 pm and later sent to Barisal.

Meanwhile Dhaka University will remain closed on See Page 12 Col 7

A look into Bangladesh Railway: Part-III Tracks, freight and traffic

By Morshed Ali Khan

In the northern region network of BR, the traffic is continually disrupted by the poor ferry services.

BIWTA, another white elephant of the country, has failed to play its due role as regards the rail-link with the North which is completely dependent on the ferry services. Jagannathganj ferry services have been closed forcing the train passengers to cross the Jamuna river on their own.

A high official of the Ministry of Communication's Railway Division said, "The BIWTA is supposed to meet the challenge but they are lacking in skill, efficiency and equipment."

With the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge project being implemented, the solution may

be in sight. But as usual, the authorities have showed reluctance to develop the railway, at least for the time being. The Position Paper on the project, published recently, failed to give much consideration to the railway related issue. The decision to defer the inclusion of a rail-track on the bridge to a later stage when operational improvements are achieved by Railway, has stirred up train-loving sentiments across the country. Labour and trade unions, various other organisations and the people of northern region in particular, have reacted sharply to the decision. A strong lobby is underway to persuade the authorities concerned to include a rail-track on the bridge from day

one.

Many at the decision-making level feel that the reaction could have been well justified if it had taken place on BR's widespread corruption, revenue leakage and ticketless travel. "Over the years," said a top government official, "the institution has eaten up huge government funds, yet nothing was done to stop the erosion. Now we stand at a point of no-return."

Wherever BR stands today, it enjoys the most sophisticated telecommunication system in the country. An Optical Fibre telephone system has been set up recently connecting every nook and corner of BR network on a fingertip. Costing Tk 120 crore and in- See Page 12 Col 3



Passengers eagerly await the arrival of Bangladesh Railway steamer at the Bahadurabad Ghat in Jamalpur. The so-called ferry service, between Bahadurabad Ghat and Phulchhari Ghat in Gaibandha on the opposite side of the river Jamuna, is almost always uncertain causing untold inconvenience to hundreds of train passengers. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin