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# The Daily Star

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VOL. V NO. 14 REGD. NO. DA 781

MAGH 15, 1401 BS,

DHAKA SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 1995

SHABAN 26, 1415 HIJRI

12 PAGES PRICE TAKA 5.00

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## Economy grows despite political uncertainty

By Sohel Manzur

With a very low inflation rate, good current account balance and a formidable reserve of foreign exchange, the country's economy is taking off despite uncertainty in politics, analysts say.

The economy, which is growing by a modest five per cent, is now in a most advantageous position with a national savings rate of 10 per cent compared to only six per cent in the 1980s, they say.

However, the investment rate is yet to pick up from the stagnated 12 per cent of the GDP, although the recent figures of import components provided by NBR chief Dr Akbar Ali Khan projected signs of significant improvement in the investment situation.

Dr Khan said qualitative changes have been made in the import components with the reduction in the import of finished goods during the first five months of the current fiscal despite the fact that overall imports have increased.

During the time, contributions of raw materials and cap-

ital goods to the overall imports increased to 18 and 25 per cent respectively from 16 and 20 per cent, while that of finished goods declined to 17 per cent from 20 per cent, the NBR chairman said.

Chairman of the Economics Department of Dhaka University Prof Wahid Uddin Mahmud says that with the current level of domestic savings and foreign aid availability, it has been already possible for the country to attain an investment rate well above 16 per cent of the GDP without creating any undue macro-economic strength.

"Such a boost in investment would lay the ground for a sustained economic growth through further resource mobilisation," said Prof Mahmud, who was also an adviser of the interim government of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Bangladesh, having an inflation rate of only around four per cent, has created a balance of Tk 1394 crore (348.5 million US dollars) in its current account in fiscal 1993-94,

compared to only Tk 150 crore (37.5 million dollars) in the 1992-93 fiscal.

Prof Mahmud also says that significant improvements have been made in the budgetary position of the government, too, as reflected in the rising revenues and better control of current expenditure. But the apparently comfortable resource position of the government was also partly due to its inability to raise the level of public development expenditure, he points out.

Awami League leader Matia Chowdhury feels the achievements on the economic front were of the people, not the government's.

"In a free market economy, very few roles remain for the government, which include establishing rule of law, developing infrastructures and removing other bottlenecks," she said. The government has completely failed to do so, she added.

The law and order situation is now totally frustrating  
See Page 12 Col 1



The recipients of the National Film Awards 92-93 for best actor and best actress, from (L) Alamgir (92), Dolly Zahur (92), Raisul Islam Asad (93) and Champa (93) at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## BNP playing games over MPs' resignation: AL

Bangladesh Awami League yesterday asked the government to dissolve Parliament immediately and announce new election under a caretaker government to overcome the current political crisis, reports UNB.

A meeting of the party's presidium chaired by Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the BNP government of ignoring the Constitution and making undesirable delay over the resignation of opposition MPs. In a resolution, the meeting said the Prime Minister's lust for power has created crisis in the country. If the government tries to hang on power ignoring the reality, the crisis will be further deepened. The consequence of which would be dangerous and the government would be held responsible for it.

The resolution said the government has lost its legitimacy with the resignation of opposition MPs. The ruling BNP is now playing games with the Opposition resignation to kill time for implementing its political design.

On Wednesday's by-elections, the meeting said, the people rejected the farcical voting as the Opposition boy-

cotted the elections under the BNP. It said even 10 per cent voters did not turn up to the polling centres.

It alleged that the ruling party killed one person and rigged the elections although the Opposition did not take part in it. The rigging and violence in the four by-elections again proved that free and fair election is not possible under this government.

The meeting urged the people to make success the non stop 48-hour hartal from March 12 to press the demand for resignation of the BNP government and formation of a caretaker government to hold

**AL padajatra in city today**  
The Awami League will organise a padajatra in the city today to press for resignation of the government, dissolution of Parliament and fresh elections under a neutral caretaker government, reports UNB.

The party chief Sheikh Hasina will lead the march after attending a rally in front of the Shyamoli Cinema at 3:00 pm.  
See Page 12 Col 1

## Jute and textile workers' 4-day fresh programme from Feb 12

By Staff Correspondent

The workers of jute and textile sectors yesterday announced a fresh agitation programme which includes railroad barricade and work stoppage from February 12 to 15.

The programme was announced at a convention held at the CPB office in the city.

Trade union leaders of the two sectors said the barricade would be enforced from 8 am to 2 pm on all the four days and the strike would continue without any break.

The jute and textile workers are in a movement to press their demands which include an official declaration on implementation of the mid-1992 government-trade bodies accord. Their fresh action programme also includes rallies in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka and in Khulna on January 31 and in Chittagong on January 30.

Convener of Patkal Sangram Parishad Abul Bashar, who chaired the convention, said their agitations would continue regardless of the 'repressive' situation.  
See Page 12 Col 8



## Most card-phones in city out of order

By Staff Correspondent

Many of the card-phones in the capital are either out of order or have been tampered with by vandals.

At the busy Kamalapur railway station, six out of ten card-phones were out of order when The Daily Star correspondent visited these facilities yesterday. An attendant at the nine booth, stall told The Daily Star that the maintenance engineer usually drops in every day. The stall at the Kamalapur  
See Page 12 Col 7

## Nat'l Film Awards '92, '93 distributed

### Filmdom needs creativity for survival: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said films can play an important role in educating the people through creating social awareness, reports UNB.

"We want a rich filmdom, the canvas of which will reflect the literature, culture, values, history, tradition, liberation war, independence, soil and true life of the people of Bangladesh," she said stressing the need for untied efforts of all to achieve the goal.

The Prime Minister was addressing the National Film Awards 1992, 1993 function at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the evening.

As many as 22 awards were given for 1992. The 'Sankha Neel Karagar' received the best film award while Alamgir got the best actor's and Dolly Zahur the best actress' awards. For 1993, 23 awards were given. The 'Padma Nadir Maghi' was ranked the best film which Raisul Islam Asad adjudged the best actor and Gulshan Ara Champa the best actress.

The function telecast live was attended by ministers, MPs, eminent artistes of Bangladesh film industry and

visiting matinee idol of India Dilip Kumar.

Begum Zia in her address lamented that our films are yet to attain the claim of keeping its head high for individuality. "It's hurting but true that we have made very little progress in the past few decades," she said.

Recalling the potentialities of making healthy, entertaining  
See Page 12 Col 7

## Recipients of awards

Forty five film personalities received national awards for 1992 and 1993 last night, reports UNB.

The recipients for 1992 are: Best film — Shankhanil Karagar, best script — Humayun Ahmed (Shankhanil Karagar), best director — Matin Rahman (Andha Biswas), best actor — Alamgir (Andha Biswas), best actress — Dolly Zahur (Shankhanil Karagar), best side actor — Mizu Ahmed (Trash), best side actress — Anwara (Radha Krishna), best music director — Alam Khan (Dinkal), best picture editor — Saiful Islam.  
See Page 12 Col 7

## Pabna bus mishap: Six more bodies recovered

PABNA, Jan 27: The death-toll in Thursday's bus accident in Sathia rose to 22 as rescue workers today recovered six more bodies from the river Ichhamoti, reports UNB.

The six were identified as Nur Ali, 51, of Belkuchi, Sirajganj, Afsar Ali Molla, 57, of Rajganj, Sirajganj, Rahima Khatun, 40, of Dhunot, Bogra, Halim Bepari, 51, of Madhupur, Pabna, Mizanur Rahman, 28, of Ramdhanbari, Sirajganj, and Afzal, 25, of Bettil.  
See Page 12 Col 8

## Bank murder: 3 confess

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police said yesterday that security guard Azizur Rahman of Sonali Bank Corporate Branch in the city was strangled on January 13 early in the morning and the miscreants then tried to break open the vault of the bank for the next 12 hours, but they failed. This was disclosed by the three persons arrested Thursday for their alleged involvement in the failed dacoity bid and the murder of the security guard, a DB official said. Two of the arrested persons — Dinar and Quayum — were placed on the police remand.  
See Page 12 Col 1

## 10 hurt as nurses clash at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

Two rival groups of nurses clashed in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) premises yesterday that left at least 10 of them injured.

The clash took place between the diploma student nurses and attendant nurses. The attendant nurses work in hospitals after having a six-month training at an institute in Pabna. Sources in the Diploma Nurses Institute said while they study for four years, attendant nurses enjoy the same positions with them. The clash began when a group allegedly comprising outsiders and some attendant nurses attacked a meeting of the diploma student nurses near the institute in the DMCH premises around noon. Earlier, the diploma nurses  
See Page 12 Col 5

## 3 killed as bus, truck collide in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27:

Three persons were killed and 15 others injured when a bus collided with a loaded truck at Barkatia on Dhaka-Chittagong highway here this afternoon, reports BSS. Police and hospital sources said the three died on the spot when an Ashuqanj bound bus collided with a loaded truck which was coming from opposite direction. Of the injured, eight passengers were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital. The conditions of the two were stated to be critical. The dead were not identified immediately, the sources said.



Grim facade of a city shopping mall. — Star photo

## Bitter experiences at city malls

By Masud Hasan Khan

During the Eid shopping frenzy in the month of Ramadan last year, Jasmine Siddiqui, a housewife of the city's Shohjahanpur area fainted at the Gausia shopping complex.

Normally by a healthy person who was never known to suffer from claustrophobia, Mrs Siddique felt choked in the hot and suffocating environment of the market and blacked out.

Her worried companions, trying desperately to help her regain consciousness, wanted to mop her face with some water.

Unfortunately for them, she fell sick at a crowded corner on the second floor where there was not enough water available. They managed to get only half a jug full from one of the shops.

Later, with the help of some salesmen they had to carry her all the way down where there was some fresh air before she felt better.

Now, if you were a woman and shopping alone and had fainted or collapsed in similar fashion, what would have happened to you?

"I still shudder when I recall the incident," said Jasmine Siddiqui. Thank God, my younger brother and a sister were with me, she said.

Fainting, choking, feeling giddy coupled with the usual harassment of buyers by persistent vendors, salesmen, thieves, pickpockets are common in the capital's marketplaces where everyday shoppers encounter some bitter experiences they can never quite forget. The condition of some 90

odd markets in Dhaka, both kutchabazars and so called supermarkets, without exception is an epitome of poor planning, insensitive management and abject lack of minimum facilities.

Check by jowl shops, continuous jostling, sometimes intentional, rancid atmosphere, traffic congestions, lack of public toilets, and no place for refreshment are some of the more acute problems that the city dwellers have been suffering from for long and, curiously enough, have begun to live with it.

This is not what we want during shopping," said Mohammad Kamruzzaman, a resident of Kamranghata.

About the civic amenities provided in the marketplaces, especially those designed and  
See Page 12 Col 4

## Lankan peace talks deadlocked over land route with Jaffna

From Waruna Karunatilake

COLOMBO, Jan 27: The peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil separatist rebel group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are deadlocked over the opening of a land route connecting the rebel stronghold of Jaffna Peninsula and the northern mainland and the government finalised a package of extensive devolution of powers to end the 11-year old separatist war.

The government has been pushing the rebels to start the all important negotiations on a political package but the rebels say they will only start talks on this once there is agreement on the land route and the economic embargo on the rebel-held north is lifted. Once

there is agreement on the land route and the economic embargo is lifted, talks on a political settlement can start immediately, Tamil Chelvam, head of the LTTE's political wing, said before the last round of talks were held in Jaffna.

The government offered to open the main Jaffna-Colombo road which goes through a large military camp at Elephant Pass and also through another military camp in Pooeruv. The army said it would pull out its positions 500-metre away from the road and not check those using the roads. The rebels, however, insist that one of the roads be opened and the army camp be

totally withdrawn. The government so far has refused to accept this. The LTTE has a problem here. They collect about 20 million rupees a month as taxes on the boats that are currently used by people to cross the Jaffna lagoon to get to the mainland. If a road is open they will lose this revenue, a senior army officer said.

The government is now offering to pull back the forward defence lines of the camp a further 500 metres saying it is the final offer. The next round of talks will be held only after the LTTE responds to this offer. "If the LTTE drags its feet on negotiating a political package we will slow down the reconstruction and rehabilitation

programme in the North," President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga said at a recent news conference. The army says that if they pull out the camp it would give rebels unlimited access to the eastern theatre of operations allowing the rebels to infiltrate large numbers of cadres and weapons into the area which mostly now under military control. "We lost a lot of men clearing the east of the rebels after they re-started the war in 1990. We don't want to be in a position like it all over again. We can consider pulling out if there is progress in the talks and real chance for peace," a senior military officer said.

However, the peace negotiators made major progress

on the second major issue that had to be resolved before political talks could begin. The government is to lift the ban on 22 more items while the rebels want five more items added to the list. "We are now negotiating on these five items which are ball bearings, barbed wire, petrol diesel and chemicals, motor cycle spare parts and items made of lead. We can come to a settlement on that," Rajan Asirwarden, one of the government negotiators said. The economic embargo on the rebel stronghold of the northern province was imposed in June 1990 when the rebels broke off 18 months of peace talks with then president late Ranasinghe Premadasa and re-started the war.

The new government of President Kumaratunga lifted the ban on 15 items soon after winning the election as a gesture of goodwill to open peace talks. The two sides also finalised plans for the 900-million-dollar reconstruction and rehabilitation programme for the northern province. However, on the positive side, the ceasefire that came into effect on January 8 is holding without any major violations by either side. The ceasefire is holding well and all the monitoring committees are in place. Deputy Minister for Defence and Minister for Irrigation Colonel Anurudha Ratwatia said. "It is clear from the current  
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## BNP activist shot dead in Kushtia

KUSHTIA, Jan 27: A man was shot dead by some unidentified miscreants at Chourang in Kumarkhali thana of the district today. The victim, was identified as Sadaruddin Khan, executive member of district BNP, reports UNB.