First with the news,
The Daily Star
Best with the views

The Daily Star

VOL. V NO. 19 REGD. NO. DA 781 | MAGH 20, 1401 BS, | DHAKA THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1995 | RAMADAN 1, 1415 HIJRI | 12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 5.00

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 I/A, DHAKA.
TEL : 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM : 861985

Inside Today

Article

Pakistan's Commercial Capital Caught in the Crossfire
by Ayesha Khan
Page 4

International

Arab-Israel summit in Cairo opens today

Lifting of arms ban will do little for Bosnians : Rose
Page 5

Business

Steps taken to stabilise food prices, minister tells JS

Japan targets India as biggest foreign investor by 2000
Pages 6, 7

STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	835.49 (+0.12%)
Market capitalisation Tk	40.35 billion
Turnover in volume	74,087
Turnover in value Tk	12.55 million

Women On The Move

War, Violence and Disintegration of Family; A Story of Two Sisters; What does the Beijing Conference mean to Bangladeshi Women?
Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Looking important, the man does odd job
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Hartal observed

CHITTAGONG, Feb 1: A half-day hartal called by pro Awami League Chhatra League in northern part of the district was observed peacefully today. The Chhatra League enforced the hartal in Fatikchhari, Hathazari, Rauzan and Rangunia thanas to protest the killings of its two leaders, Md Ali Abdullah and Dr Nirod Baran, allegedly by NDP and Shibir activists on January 28, reports UNB.

3 die in road accident

JHENIDAH, Feb 1: Three people of a bridal party were killed and seven, including the bride and bridegroom, injured seriously when a truck rammed the autorickshaw they were riding on the Jhenidah-Kushtia road this evening. The dead were identified as Badruddin, 40, Ahmed, 48, and Fotik, 42. All three died on the spot, reports UNB.

One killed in Khulna blast

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 1: A rickshawpuller named Yasin Ali, 35, was killed in bomb blast on Tuesday midnight at Bagmara main road under Kotwali thana. Police said two hand bombs were burled at one Abdul Mannan who was going home by the rickshaw which the deceased was driving.

Sehri, Iftar Timings

Ram	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
1	2	—	5.49
2	3	5.18	5.49
3	4	5.17	5.50

Appeal by new and outgoing CJs

Amend Constitution for separation of judiciary

By Staff Correspondent

Both the newly appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and his predecessor yesterday appealed in unison for constitutional amendments to ensure the separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of government and to guarantee independence of the judiciary.

Chief Justice M H Rahman and the man he succeeded yesterday former Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed were speaking at a joint reception and farewell accorded to them by the Supreme Court Bar Association at the court premises.

Referring to the current political impasse, the former chief justice also urged the political parties to resolve the problems themselves and not to involve the Supreme Court in it. "Please don't come to our courts with your political problems," he said.

"The judiciary is not totally independent," Justice Shahabuddin said while pointing out that the constitutional provisions in Articles 116 and 109, relating to the judiciary, contradict each other in that one places the authority to promote and discipline subordinate judges with the President and the other places the authority to supervise and control the subordinate courts with the Supreme Court.

"Until Article 116 is amended people will never think that the judiciary is independent," he asserted. "The constitutional provisions (relating to the judiciary) should be reverted to the earlier state, as in the 1972 Constitution."

Chief Justice Rahman also concurred. "There is great ambivalence in the minds of our lawmakers about the place of the Supreme Court in the

See Page 12 Col 3

President Abdur Rahman Biswas administered the oath of office to the new Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman at a simple ceremony at Bangabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

Habibur Rahman takes oath as Chief Justice

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday administered the oath of office to new Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was present at the simple ceremony at Bangabhaban where President Biswas administered the oath of office to Justice Rahman.

The function was also attended by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, former president Justice A M Sayem, cabinet ministers, judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, state ministers, judges of the High Court Division, deputy ministers, chiefs of the three services, Attorney General, senior layers, high officials and elite of the city.

Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman is Bangladesh's eighth Chief Justice. He succeeded Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Jahanara Begum visiting a book stall at the Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy yesterday. — Star photo

Ekushey book fair opens

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday hoped that the spirit of *Amar Ekushey* would help consolidate national unity and encourage peaceful coexistence of all.

"Let book be our permanent companion," the Prime Minister said while inaugurating a month long *Ekushey* programme and *Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela* '95 book fair in the Bangla Academy premises in the city yesterday.

"I believe the ideals of *Ekushey* which symbolises fundamental rights, democratic values, tolerance and peaceful coexistence will be reflected in our national life," Begum Zia said.

About the significance of the book fair, the Prime Minister said "This fair is not merely a commercial arrangement one. It has deep rooted cultural value."

The inaugural session was presided over by State Minister for Cultural Affairs prof Jahanara Begum. Director General of Bangla Academy Prof Harun-ur-Rashid gave an welcome address.

The Prime Minister noted that her government had formulated a national book policy giving emphasis on publication of books of attractive children's books international standard and export of Bangladeshi books and publication of research based and Bangladeshi culture oriented books in foreign language is another feature of the policy she said, adding this would project the nation and the country abroad.

Begum Zia underlined the

See Page 12 Col 1

JS disposes of HC ruling issue

By Staff Correspondent

The question of general discussion in Parliament on the High Court ruling on the Speaker regarding resignations of 147 opposition MPs was disposed of by the House yesterday since the treasury bench members declined to discuss it.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali allowed Nurul Islam Moni to speak on his notice submitted earlier for a general discussion on the jurisdiction of the court — whether it is empowered to issue a rule on the Speaker on the resignations of MPs.

"I think there is no barrier to allowing the honourable member to speak on the matter according to the Rules of Procedure although the law minister had earlier raised objection," Razzak Ali said.

"But the honourable member should keep in mind that his speech should not hurt any judge or disturb the process of the case. You will just speak on the jurisdiction of the court," the Speaker said.

He came to the House after a brief adjournment of the session by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni. The session resumed yesterday at 4 pm, one hour behind schedule, due to lack of quorum.

Four bills were tabled on the day.

The decision on whether the House would discuss the issue of HC ruling was kept pending, since Monday's session in which the treasury bench was sharply divided over it. One group including ruling

See Page 12 Col 7

No major delimitation of constituencies

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday published the preliminary list of 300 parliamentary constituencies without any major delimitation of those.

"We have prepared the draft list of the constituencies and invited claims, objections and suggestions by March 6," said an EC official.

He said public hearings will also take place at least at 10 different places in the country to settle the objections or claims before preparation of the final list which, he said, will not take more than three months.

Fresh delimitation of constituencies is mandatory after a census for the purpose of Parliament elections.

According to the Delimitation of Constituencies Ordinance, 1976 — the constituencies shall be delimited, having regard to administrative convenience, that each constituency is a compact area and in doing so there shall be due regard as far as practicable, to the distribution of population

See Page 12 Col 8

First day of Ramadan today

By Staff Correspondent

Ramadan, the month of fasting for the Muslims in the country, begins today.

On the eve of the holy month President Abdur Rahman Biswas called upon all to maintain the sanctity of Ramadan as it always inspired people for self-purification.

In a separate message, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia greeted the countrymen and the Muslim Ummah on the occasion of Ramadan and sought divine blessings for their welfare. The teachings of Ramadan would be the basis for the overall development of the country, she said.

In another message, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, urged the people, irrespective of their religions to maintain the sanctity and dignity of the month. She also called upon the businessmen to keep the prices of essentials within the purchasing capacity of common people.

State Deptt report

Dhaka denying fundamental rights

By Lamis Hossain

"The government continues to restrict or deny many fundamental rights," according to the US Department of State 1994 country report on human rights practice in Bangladesh released last night.

The report also observes that the government continues to use national security laws to detain political opponents and other citizens without formal charge. It notes that the government rarely convicts those responsible for torture or causing unlawful death in police custody.

On the other hand, the report says there were "fewer violent incidents in the Chittagong hill tracts than in the past." Also, "there were no significant instances of intercommunal violence in 1994." The government took substantial steps in 1994 to curb abuse and intimidation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh camps, according to the report. It points out that the judiciary of Bangladesh, especially at the higher levels, displays a great degree of independence.

Every year the Department of State prepares reports on each country in the world.

The report on Bangladesh is

See Page 12 Col 4

Hearing of writs on MPs' resignation begins

Supreme Court Correspondent

The hearing of the two writ petitions regarding the *en masse* resignation of 147 opposition members of parliament began yesterday before a three-man bench of the High Court.

The special bench comprising Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq and Justice Md Abdul Karim was constituted by the Chief Justice on January 29 upon applications filed by opposition leaders Sheikh Hasina, Moudud Ahmed and Matiur Rahman Nizami, all respondents in the writs.

The writs were filed by Towhiq Hossain and Alauddin Khaled, challenging the validity of the MPs' resignations and the Speaker's delay in disposing of the resignation letters respectively.

The special bench was scheduled to take up the writs for hearing at 10:30 am, but it was delayed because of the traditional felicitation programme for the new Chief Justice M H Rahman earlier in the morning.

As hearing began at 2 pm Advocate Moksudur Rahman, the counsel for petitioner Towfiq Hossain prayed for two weeks time to prepare a reply to the three affidavit in-oppo-

See Page 12 Col 1

Arjun Singh arrested

NEW DELHI, Feb 1: Police arrested Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's top political rival Arjun Singh for violating an order that bans assembly of more than five people in Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh state today, reports AP.

Singh, who has quit cabinet and challenged Rao's leadership, was leading a political march to demand the ouster of the Uttar Pradesh government.

United News of India (UNI) said hundred others were also arrested, but did not give a figure. Singh, former human resources minister, and others were taken to a police station and were likely to be released without any charges.

Rural telecom system opens

SINGAIR (Manikganj), Feb 1: Rural telecommunication facilities began in the country today when Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated the modern telecommunication arrangement here this afternoon, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister started the rural telecommunication by making a call from here to President Abdur Rahman Biswas in Dhaka.

Public call offices were installed in eleven unions under Singair thana as part of the countrywide rural telecommunication arrangements, which is being implemented in private sector under an agreement between the government and the Bangladesh Rural

See Page 12 Col 6

No possibility of food crisis, says Khaleda

SINGAIR (Manikganj), Feb 1: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today assured the people that there are adequate food stocks in the country and there is no possibility of food crisis, reports UNB.

She blamed a section of corrupt people who became businessmen with the blessings of autocratic regime for trying to create a crisis. But they failed as sufficient food stocks are there in government godowns.

The Prime Minister warned of stern action against those indulging in malpractice depriving commonman of getting essentials at fair price.

"None will be allowed to create artificial crisis. If anyone tries to create crisis, legal action will be taken against him for the interest of the country," she said.

Begum Zia was addressing a huge public meeting at the Singair Pilot High School grounds here in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister told the gathering that the opposition parties wanted to weaken and destroy the hard-earned democracy and said they would have to bear the responsibility if democracy is jeopardised.

"They are not friends of democracy ... they are the enemies of democracy," she said and called upon the people to

See Page 12 Col 7

Oli in Tripura to expedite Chakma repatriation

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 1: A Bangladesh delegation headed by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed this morning left for Tripura in India through Ramgarh check post in Khagrachhari hill district in a bid to restart the stalled repatriation of Chakma refugees.

According to official source, the delegation crossed the Ramgarh border at 9:35 am and was scheduled to return Thursday (tomorrow) evening through the Akhaura border post.

The two-day visit came following an invitation from Tripura governor Romesh Bhandari, official sources said.

Oli Ahmed also the Con-

See Page 12 Col 3

Decision to lift restrictions on loans to share traders hailed

Star Report

Investors, brokers and bankers yesterday hailed the Bangladesh bank's decision to withdraw restriction on loans to the share traders against the listed securities, saying it would not only help remove the liquidity problem of the capital market, but also ease the excess liquidity problem of the banks.

According to the decision taken at a Board meeting of the Bangladesh Bank Tuesday, the share investors will be allowed to take 80 per cent of the face value of 40 per cent of the market value of their shares and debentures as loans from the commercial banks.

The borrowers will now have to give blank share transfer certificates to the lending banks as collateral. The interest rate will also be similar to that on other commercial lendings. The amount of total loan for one investor will not, however, exceed Tk five lakh, according to the decision.

Chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange Khurshid Alam, talking to The Daily Star said, "This is a good step. If the decision is implemented properly, the liquidity situation of the share market will improve."

He, however, said that before having the details of the central bank's circular, which is yet to be issued, it was difficult to say anything more. The outcome of the decision would largely depend on how the commercial banks implemented it, he added.

Leading global and regional fund managers, at the Euromoney international investment conference in Dhaka recently, identified low liquidity as the number one problem of the country's share market.

They said the liquidity problem of the market had been obstructing adequate inflow of foreign portfolio investments as the market lacked local counterpart funds for foreign investments.

Chairman of the Securities

See Page 12 Col 2

Steep rise in prices of essentials

By Reaz Ahmad

Prices of essentials, like every year, have registered a steep rise with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan.

The Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) yesterday reported an 8.74 per cent rise compared with the prices of essentials during the months of Ramadan last year.

Prices of fish, rice and *atta* flour registered the highest rise. Prices of fish increased by 31.16 per cent, rice 27.71 per cent and *atta* flour 16.64 per cent, the CAB study said.

According to market sources yesterday, prices of different varieties of pulses, oil, chick-peas and spices marked on an average a five to ten per cent rise.

Oil dealers at Moulvibazar largest wholesale market of the country told The Daily Star that no L/C was opened in the last two months for importing edible oil as the government had not yet lowered duties on oil in accordance with its commitment.

Chick-pea, which is widely consumed in the month of Ramadan, could not be harvested this year as almost the whole crop was destroyed in pest attack, traders said.

The wholesale and retail prices of some of the essentials in yesterday's market were: Soyabeen oil— Tk 46-50 per kilogram in wholesale market(WM) while it is being sold in retail market (RM) at Tk 50 per kg, mustered oil-Tk 46 per kg(WM) and Tk 56 per kg (RM), dalda-Tk 58 per kg (WM) and Tk 68 (RM), khesari pulse-Tk 12 per kg (WM) and Tk 16 (RM), Mashur pulse-Tk 32 per kg (WM) and Tk 36 (RM), *boot*(gram) pulse-Tk 26 per kg (WM) and Tk 30 (RM).

Prices of some spices largely consumed in Ramadan also went up. Cardamom was selling at Tk 415 to Tk 490 per kg (of various qualities), dried grape-Tk 60 per kg, cinnamon-Tk 178 per kg, black pepper-Tk 190 per kg. Besides, powdered khesari was selling at Tk 18 per kg, powdered gram at Tk 36, chickpea at Tk 30, *lachha shemai* (vermicelli's) at Tk 52 and local sugar at Tk 30, while sugar imported from India, Brazil

See Page 12 Col 2