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Government is running its non-formal mass education programme in 75 thanas at a cost of Taka 107.39cr, Jamiruddin Sircar tells Jatiya Sangsad

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STOCK MARKET

Table with 2 columns: Index, Value. DSE Index: 819.74 (-0.08%), Market capitalization Tk: 39.59 billion, Turnover in volume: 166500, Turnover in value Tk: 66.70 million

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NEWS BRIEFS

DU female students' rally today

Female resident students of the Dhaka University demanding immediate repeal of its 'sunset rule' will hold a rally on the campus today. The female students of Bangladesh-Kuwait-Maitree Hall announced the programme at a rally yesterday evening. They will also submit a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed to press their demand, reports UNB.

BCL (B-K) council begins today

By Staff Correspondent A two-day central council of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (B-K) will begin today. Begum Ashrafunnesa, mother of late Colonel Taher, Bir Uttam, will inaugurate the council at the Aparajeo Bangla premises of the Dhaka University at 11 am today. The inaugural function will be followed by a discussion to be held at TSC auditorium at 11:30 am.

Tk 106.44 cr remitted in Jan

Bangladeshis living abroad remitted Tk 106.44 crore 51 thousand and 714 through foreign money orders during the month of January. The money is equivalent to 7,21,825.15 Pound Sterling and 28,89,184.40 US dollars sent home through 18,938 Foreign Money Orders (FMO), said an official handout, reports UNB.

Shri, Iftar Timings

Table with 4 columns: Day, Date, Shri, Iftar. Ram: 7, 8, 5:31, 5:53; Feb: 8, 9, 5:16, 5:53; Shri: 9, 10, 5:15, 5:54

Rao expels arch-rival Arjun from party

NEW DELHI, Feb 7: Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao today expelled his most bitter critic from the governing Congress party, sharpening a public feud in the party just days before state legislative elections, report AP, Reuter.

The expulsion of Arjun Singh, who had been considered the party's No 2, heightened the risks of a split, especially if Congress fares badly in the six state elections. Singh may then be in a position to unseat Rao.

Singh has been 'expelled from the Congress Party for six years for anti-party activities,' said K Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, the chairman of the party's disciplinary committee.

Prime Minister Rao later met Sonia Gandhi. The two are understood to have discussed the expulsion and the latest situation in the party.

Singh, reacting to his expulsion from party, said tonight he had no intention to cause a split in the party or float a new one and declared

that the issues raised by him would now be decided in the 'people's court.'

Addressing a press confer-



Arjun Singh

ence at his residence soon after returning from Bombay, Singh said 'I am neither floating any new party, nor splitting the Congress party. I have

no intention to cause a split.'

'There is no question of my being out of the party,' he said adding 'I am a Congress worker, a Congressman.'

Asked whether he would challenge his expulsion, Singh observed 'political matters are not decided in a court of law. It can only be decided by the court of Congressmen and the court of the people.'

Saying he was neither 'dispirited' nor 'disheartened' by the action, Singh made it clear that he would continue with his journeys to different parts of the country after February 14, when there will be a break of a month after a two-day parliament session.

Singh is leaving for Rewa tomorrow and then visit Varanasi before returning to the capital on February 11.

He said 'some people feel that they have expelled me from their presence and they are welcome to feel that way. But if anyone feels that I have been expelled from the ranks See Page 12 Col 4

JS session may linger till mid-March

By Staff Correspondent

The current session of Parliament is likely to stagger to avoid another session in April before the budget session, a well-informed Parliament source said.

The Business Advisory Committee is contemplating lingering this session till mid-March through several long adjournments, a high official told The Daily Star.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali also discussed the matter with the Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

'A final decision is yet to be taken,' the official, however, added.

According to constitutional provisions, a session should be convened within 60 days after the end of the previous session.

The Business Advisory Committee at a meeting after the summoning of the current 18th session had decided to continue it till the beginning of the month of Ramadan.

But the session was prolonged because of the High See Page 12 Col 7

Writ filed with political motive, court told

By Supreme Court Correspondent

Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed, submitting on his own behalf before a special bench of the High Court yesterday, said that the writ petition against the en masse resignation by opposition MPs, in which he has been named as one of the respondents, was filed with a motive to confuse the people by creating a political crisis.

Referring to the speech of former Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at his farewell reception last week, Barrister Moudud said, 'Political issues should not be brought to the court.'

The fifth day's hearing on the writ relating to the resignation of 147 opposition members of Parliament on December 28 also saw Barrister K S Nabl, counsel for Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, concluding his submission.

Analogous hearing on two writs relating to the resignations continues before the special bench comprising Justice A M Mahmudur Rahman, Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq and Justice Md Abdul Karim. In the first writ, one Tawfiq Hos-

sain has challenged the validity of the en bloc resignations while the Speaker's delay in disposing of the resignation letters has also been challenged by one Alauddin Khaled in the other writ.

Barrister Moudud who opposed the maintainability of the writ challenging the MPs' resignations, said that the petition was arising out of an exclusive political issue which cannot be entertained by the court.

He mentioned that petitioner Tawfiq Hossain is an active supporter of the ruling party and had filed the writ at the instigation of his party.

He further argued that the petitioner cannot be an aggrieved party and only a member of Parliament may be aggrieved to file such a writ.

Moudud also described the appearance of the Speaker before the court as 'mysterious' since he made his appearance through his lawyer after the lapse of a considerable period of time.

Moudud further submitted See Page 12 Col 8

LCs for 7 lakh tonnes of food opened so far

Letters of credit (LCs) to import over seven lakh tonnes of foodgrain under private initiative have been opened till now, a meeting was informed yesterday, reports BSS.

Food Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, chairing a meeting with the importers of foodgrain, said the government has taken all necessary steps for food import through private sector.

LCs have been opened to import about 4.75 lakh tonnes of rice and 2.5 lakh tonnes of wheat, the meeting was told, according to an official source.

Citing incentives to the private sector, Bhuiyan said the duty on rice import has been See Page 12 Col 6

Time limit for CHT polls extended until Jan '97

The time limit for holding elections to the three hill district local government councils of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban have been extended further by two years, till the first week of January, 1997, according to three amendment Bills passed by the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

The extension was made to facilitate the Bangladesh tribal refugees to take part in the elections after their return home from Tripura state in India and their rehabilitation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Parliament approved the amendment Bills giving legal cover to the ordinances which will come into force from January 1, 1995.

With the current extension, the time limit of local council polls in the three hill districts was extended four times by Parliament totalling four years and six months. Earlier, extensions were made during the session in 1992 and the eighth See Page 12 Col 2

New Foreign Secy joins Mar 7

By Staff Correspondent

Outgoing Foreign Secretary Mullah R Osmany, the High Commissioner-designate to Canada, is now scheduled to leave Dhaka tomorrow for Ottawa to take up his new assignment.

According to earlier plans he was to have left today.

Farooq Sobhan, named to succeed Osmany at the Foreign Office, will join his new position on March 7, it was learnt yesterday. CM Shaif Sami is expected to replace Sobhan in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, Mohiuddin Ahmed, the senior-most Additional Foreign Secretary, will serve as the acting Foreign Secretary in between.

Another source said Major General Amin Ahmed Chowdhury will be appointed as the country's ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

His services were earlier placed under deputation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Bangladesh embassy in Oman, which is now functioning at the level of Charge d'Affaires (CDA), will be upgraded to the ambassadorial position with the appointment of Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, sources informed.

2 die in blast at Satkhira shrimp farm

From Our Correspondent SATKHIRA, Feb 7: Two persons were killed and another was wounded in a bomb explosion at a shrimp cultivating project at Shimulbaria under Sadar thana here in the small hours today.

The dead were identified as Azizul Haq, 28, of village Shimulbaria and Abul Hussain, 30, of village Matiadanga under Sadar thana. The injured Shamsur Rahman, 35, of village Alipur of the same thana, was admitted to the local health centre.

Police sources said, Hafizul Islam, owner of the Shimulbaria bara gher, a shrimp project, lodged a case with Devhata thana this morning alleging that some 20 to 25 armed men attacked his farm with bombs at 1 am today resulting in deaths of the two.

However, the owners of a nearby shrimp project alleged that the accident occurred when a bomb went off accidentally while the staff of the Shimulbaria bara gher were engaged in making bombs with an ulterior motive of attacking their project.



Representatives of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association met Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar was present. — PID photo

Nurses threaten 3-day strike to press demand

By Staff Correspondent

Class Four employees and nurses in government hospitals of the country ended their 48-hour strike yesterday, but held out a threat of a three-day strike soon to press their demand for cancelling the Centre for Management Excellence and Quality Assurance programme (CMEQA).

The hospital staff, urging the authorities to accept the demand by February 12, said they would be refraining from their duties again for 72 hours from the morning of February 13.

See Page 12 Col 6

Jute, textile workers reject owners' call

By Staff Correspondent

The leaders of jute, spinning and textile mills workers unions yesterday criticised the owners and expressed their firm determination to go ahead with their agitation programmes.

Earlier in a joint meeting on Monday, the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association, the See Page 12 Col 6

IFES may help proposed polling institute

Star Report

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a Washington-based organisation, is likely to assist the Pilot Election Training Institute, planned to be set up in Dhaka.

The Election Commission (EC) has already decided to establish the institute to provide training to polling personnel and also to political activists for developing the country's electoral process. A project concept paper (PCP) is now being finalised by the authorities.

Ms Linda Edgeworth, a consultant to the IFES, who concluded her two-week visit to Bangladesh Monday, discussed with the officials the possible areas where her organisation can cooperate with the EC.

Talking to The Daily Star before leaving Dhaka for home, Ms Edgeworth said she will strongly recommend the IFES provides all possible help and technical assistance to the proposed training institute.

'Such an institute will certainly help develop the electoral system in Bangladesh and will also remain an example to be followed by other countries of the region,' said Ms Edgeworth, who was the first representative of the IFES to

visit Bangladesh on an assessment mission.

The IFES is a non-profit foundation dedicated to providing assistance in monitoring, supporting and strengthening the mechanics of the election process in the emerging democracies.

The foundation, supported by donor agencies like the USAID, has worked in about 70 countries since its establishment in 1987.

During her stay in Bangladesh, Ms Edgeworth met the Chief Election Commissioner, high officials of the EC, leaders of major political parties including the BNP, the Awami League and the Jatiya Party, constitutional experts, some NGOs and local representatives of international donor agencies.

She also visited Tongi, where the EC has a pilot project under which identity cards will be issued to voters in the municipal polls.

Expressing her impression on the Bangladesh visit, Ms Edgeworth said scope exists for improving and strengthening the electoral process here.

'If invited, the IFES is ready to work here as observer during future elections,' she said.

PM seeks support of all in solving campus problems

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday sought support of all, including teachers, in resolving national problems, reports UNB.

She made the appeal when a delegation of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Associations (FBU-TA) met her at the Prime Minister's office in the afternoon.

'Let us all perform our responsibilities from respective positions,' she said adding, 'it is possible to resolve any national problems if a democratic government is in power.'

Referring to campus vio-

See Page 12 Col 3

Schoolboy dies in student-employee clash at BAU

MYMENSINGH, Feb 7: A schoolboy was shot dead during an armed clash today between the students and employees of Bangladesh Agriculture University, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Gazur Rahman, 15, an SSC examinee of KB School and son of Abdul Mazid, a BAU employee, died on the spot as a bullet struck him near the dairy farm on the See Page 12 Col 1

Israeli, PLO leaders resume peace talks

CAIRO, Feb 7: Israeli and PLO negotiators on Tuesday resumed peace talks, halted for more than two weeks by violent attacks on Israelis by radical Islamic opponents of the peace process, reports AP.

The negotiations were renewed following a summit last Thursday by the leaders of Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Jordan and Egypt. PLO chief Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel are scheduled to meet again Thursday.

Negotiators from both sides said they would work in the Cairo talks on reaching agreement on Palestinian elections as a step towards broadening the autonomy granted by the Israeli-PLO accord.

'We at this session will start writing, actually drafting the agreement,' chief Israeli negotiator Yoel Singer said as he entered the talks at a Cairo hotel. See Page 12 Col 1

Russian troops in Grozny show signs of frustration

BESLAN (Russia), Feb 7: With the military still bogged down in protracted war with Chechnya today, Russian troops are showing increasing signs of frustration, reports AP.

Grozny has not been captured, hundreds or thousands of their fellow soldiers have died, and the army has taken the brunt of the blame for a bloody offensive that has killed countless civilians.

Increasingly bitter by the turn of events, more and more soldiers and officers are openly criticising their commanders, some vowing to avenge their friends' deaths with more bloodshed.

Their comments reveal an army that is dangerously divided and rebellious. 'We are fighting here not for (President Boris) Yeltsin and (Defense Minister Pavel) Grachev. If I could, I would

shoot them myself,' said a marine major from Vladivostok who is based in Beslan. North Ossetia west of Chechnya. We are fighting for the honour of our army, for the honour of the marines.

He spoke to a reporter in an armoured personnel carrier on condition his name not be used. Others echoed his sentiments.

AFF from Moscow adds, A Russian officer is facing dismissal because he refused to send untrained and ill-equipped troops to the front in Chechnya, the Itar Tass news agency reported today.

Vladimir Ustushenko, an officer with the Russian special forces in the Volga region, refused to assume command of a battalion when he learned that the troops had not been trained in firing guns and that most of their vehicles had not

been fitted with radios, the agency said, citing the Volga sector press centre.

Meanwhile, Reuter adds: The Russian army is getting ready to pull most of its troops out of Chechnya, leaving Interior Ministry forces in control. Defence Ministry officials quoted by interfax news agency said today.

Interfax said a special commission had been set up to look at the logistics of withdrawing the soldiers. Moscow says its soldiers have completed their task of restoring 'constitutional order' in Chechnya although there is no sign of the fighting ending.

The agency said Interior Minister Victor Yerin, whose troops are as well armed as the army forces, was already on his way to the rebel region. But it did not set a date for the troops' departure.

Govt hospitals run short of foreign medicines

By Reaz Ahmad

Government hospitals and health complexes are running short of foreign medicines due to inadequate budgetary allocation, competent sources said.

Some taka eight crore was earmarked in the current budget (1994-95) for purchasing medicines not locally produced or available to meet the requirements of government hospitals and health complexes. But at the end of the first six months of the present fiscal, the allocation has proved inadequate to meet the ever-growing demands of the hospitals for foreign medicines.

According to official sources, the authorities concerned have recently sought an additional allocation of six crore taka for meeting the requirements during the remaining period of the current fiscal.

The Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD), which is re-

sponsible for supply and distribution of foreign drugs, is now facing acute fund crisis.

When asked, Col (ret'd) M K Barua, Director of Stores and Supplies, CMSD, said CMSD required more funds, but hastily added 'We managed to procure a good quantity of foreign medical items like cancer drugs and X-ray films, which are not produced locally with the grants provided by different donor countries and agencies like the WB, WHO and ADB.'

About the drug preservation facilities at the CMSD, the official said the first phase of a 81,000-sq feet drug depot was completed in 1992 with funds provided by the ADB. The second phase would start soon provided the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (NEC) gives its approval, he added. See Page 12 Col 7