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The Daily Star

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Day or Night
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A New Year's Gift for Our Readers

Live from the Internet!

Starting tomorrow, The Daily Star will open the world to its readers.

In a special forum entitled **"Live from the Internet,"** you, the readers of The Daily Star, will be able to discuss—via the "Information Superhighway"—important issues facing this country with Bangladeshis and other Internet users around the globe.

See "Live from the Internet" tomorrow on Page 5 and learn how you can participate.

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New Year Special

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Ruling party, Opposition meet at Merrill's residence

BNP considering interim govt led by neutral person

By Nazmul Ashraf

The idea of an interim government headed by a neutral person for holding the next general elections is being 'considered' at the highest level of the ruling BNP, The Daily Star learnt from well-placed party sources late last night.

"The idea may be accepted in principle, subject to two conditions," a top BNP leader indicated.

The issue was discussed at a formal meeting between the top negotiators of the ruling BNP and the Opposition in the presence of US Ambassador in Dhaka David N Merrill at his residence yesterday afternoon.

Earlier, in the morning, Merrill also had a meeting with the Awami League and Jatiya Party negotiators at the same venue.

According to meeting sources, the two conditions put forward by the BNP are: the head of the proposed interim government would have no executive powers and the elections must be held within the constitutional deadline of February 21.

On the other hand, the Opposition insisted that the chief of the interim administration should have executive powers and that the elections be held 90 days after the resignation of the Prime Minister, the sources added.

Later, at night, the BNP negotiators met party chief and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Tejgaon office and briefed her on the latest developments. Details of the meeting were not available.

The AL negotiators also apprised party chief Sheikh Hasina of the outcome of the negotiations.

Meanwhile, the three major opposition parties — the AL, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami are scheduled to meet today to discuss the new developments.

The ruling party-Opposition meeting was attended by LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar, Information and Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam and Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan of the BNP, Amir Hossain Amu and Tofael Ahmed of the AL, and Anwar Hossain Manju of the JP. Merrill was present at the meeting as a facilitator.

Earlier, in the morning, Merrill met Amu and Abdur Razzak of the AL and Manju of the JP.

Bid to remove structural weakness

Risk-based capital adequacy system for banks

By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

The government is going to introduce a risk-weighted capital adequacy system for the commercial banks replacing the existing liability-based adequacy system, a move welcomed by the banks.

The move initiated by the Bangladesh Bank and approved by the Finance Ministry this week is aimed at removing the structural weakness in the banking sector now due to the continued slide in the quality of banks' assets.

Under the new system, banks will be required to maintain eight per cent of their risk-weighted assets as capital adequacy, according to official sources.

The major variables which will determine the risk are: cash in hand and in banks excepting banks abroad, money at call and at short notice, foreign currency balances held, export and other foreign bills, foreign investment, import and inland bills, and advances.

The main objective of maintaining capital adequacy is to minimise risk of the banks during crisis period. But, the central bank now

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Greetings

The Daily Star
wishes its valued readers, well-wishers, patrons and advertisers a Happy New Year

Welcome '96

Star Report

Welcome 1996. With the first ray of a bright new sun in the eastern horizon, we turn another leaf is our lives.

The passing year has been made unique as it adds one extra second to the last minute of 1995.

The world community celebrates the Gregorian new year with renewed pledge to make the Mother Earth more peaceful and more glorious with more room to accommodate the have-nots.

The celebrations were kicked off with exchange of new year greetings and pleasantries, feasts, parties and explosions of life crack-

See Page 12 Col 1

Army joins arms recovery drive today

Army will join police and BDR in the on-going country-wide drive to recover unauthorised arms from today at the instruction of the EC, reports UNB.

The police have recovered some 735 firearms and a huge quantity of ammunition since the drive began on December 21, but the Election Commission has expressed its dissatisfaction over their performance.

The deployment of Army was decided at a meeting between the CEC and the chiefs of Army, Navy, Air Force and BDR on Saturday.

The CEC ordered the law enforcing agencies to recover illegal arms, apprehend terrorists, coin collectors and criminals before the February 7 polls.

Army has short-cut its winter exercise to assist the Election Commission in recovering illegal arms and maintaining law and order during the electioneering period, sources said.

Meanwhile, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Justice AKM Sadeque yesterday directed local-level police administration to take stern action against anyone who violates electoral rules and regulations.

He was addressing the concluding session of a training workshop on 'Electoral Crimes, Misconduct and its Prevention' organised for the OCs (Officer-in-charge) at the Electoral Training Institute in the city's Mohammadpur area.

The CEC said the role of the local law enforcing agencies is very significant in the maintenance of law and order during polls.

"They should remain neutral in discharging their duties, with courage, rising beyond any influence," he said and urged them to maintain an atmosphere conducive to holding elections in a free and fair manner.

Sounding a note of warn-

See Page 12 Col 6

Hasina urges Armed Forces to remain neutral

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the members of the Armed Forces to carry out the hunt for illegal arms and arms holders by maintaining neutrality and rising above political opinions, reports UNB.

Expressing concern at the deteriorating law and order in the country, she said

See Page 12 Col 7

Collection of date juice, a common sight in rural Bangladesh in the winter. — PID photo

$ 2.88 lakh UN compensation for Kuwait-Iraq returnees

The government has received for the first time 287,500 US dollars as compensation recently from the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) for 68 repatriated Bangladeshis victimised during the war between Iraq and Kuwait, reports BSS.

Labour and Manpower Minister Mir Shawkat Ali yesterday formally handed over

See Page 12 Col 8

"Lady of Light" Poet Sufia Kamal The Daily Star Woman of The Year.

See New Year Special on Pages 16, 17.

28-pt charter of demand

Chittagong Mayor sets fresh deadline

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 31: Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury today set a fresh deadline — January 15 — for acceptance of his 28-point charter of demand for the development of Chittagong.

Earlier, the Mayor had set December 16 as the deadline for the government to accept the demands.

Addressing a press conference at the conference hall of the City Corporation, the Mayor said that they would go for "continuous programmes' in Chittagong from January 20 if the demands were not met by January 15. The deadline had been extended to give more time to the government to think over the demands made by him, he added.

"Otherwise, barricades will be put up to block the transportation of goods from Chittagong to other parts of the country from January 20," the Mayor said.

He referred to the postponement of today's pro-

See Page 12 Col 2

Police stops erection of stage for NGO rally

By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday stopped setting up of a stage for the NGO-sponsored rally scheduled to be held today at the Manik Mia Avenue in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The NGO workers started setting up the stage at 12 noon. Police intervened at around 2 pm on the pretext that the organisers of the rally did not obtain permission from the DC Traffic.

See Page 12 Col 3

Plot to overthrow Benazir govt

Trial of 4 Pak army officers begins

ISLAMABAD, Dec 31: Four senior Pakistani army officers arrested in September went on trial today before a court martial on charges of plotting to overthrow the civilian government and violating military discipline, reports AFP.

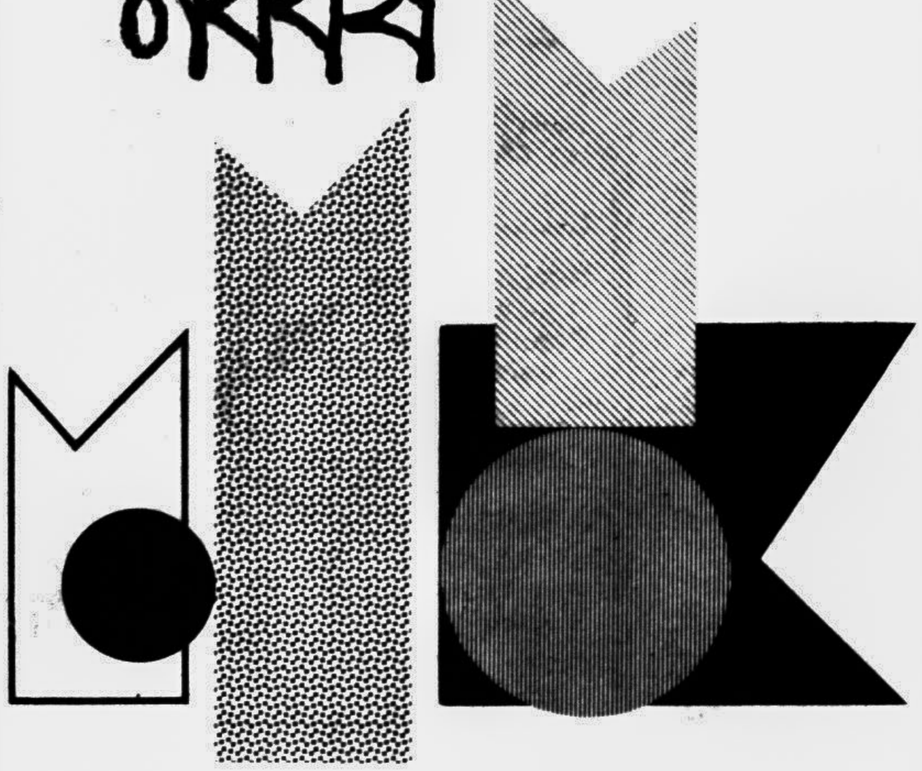
Official sources said the trial of the officers — Major General Zaheerul Islam Abassi, Brigadier Mustansar Billah, Colonel Mohammad Azad Minhas and Colonel Inayatullah Khan — began at Attock near here.

The trial, which is not open to public or press, is being conducted by a field general court martial headed by Major General Zahid Hasan. The court includes four other officers of brigadier and colonel rank.

The accused were formally

See Page 12 Col 1

স্বাগত ইংরেজী নববর্ষ



নববর্ষ – আমাদের সম্মানিত গ্রাহক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের জন্য সুখ ও সমৃদ্ধি বয়ে আনুক। সেই সাথে আমরা করছি উন্নত গ্রাহক সেবার অঙ্গীকার।

অগ্রণী ব্যাংক
দেশ ও জাতির সেবায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ একটি ব্যাংক

বিজ্ঞাপন (বা)-৩২৭৪৪ -৩০/১২/৯৫

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue
Dhaka

Notice

It has been reported in a few national newspapers that fresh announcement on the Pre-Shipment Inspection (PSI) system is in the offing and that the government could not reach high level final decision about change of PSI. It has also been reported that the honourable Finance Minister himself has opted for cancellation of this system. In this regard, it is hereby notified that no proposal to totally cancel the PSI/CRF system is under consideration of the government and the Finance Minister also has not made any statement against this system. In fact, he has not made any statement in this regard. Earlier, the decision to continue this system has time and again been stated on behalf of the National Board of Revenue in different meetings and the decision is still in force. In case of any difficulty with the CRF system, the government takes step to redress that through necessary adjustments. Therefore, importers, traders or general public have no reason to be anyway confused or worried about PSI or CRF. The Custom Houses concerned also have been given necessary instructions so that no confusion whatsoever is created in this regard at field level.

DFP-32915-30/12
G-08

National Board of Revenue

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