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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 825.00 (+0.7%)
Market capital Tk 5280.42 cr
Transactions in volume 130504
Transactions in value Tk 2.31
CSE MARKET

CSE price index 408.05
Market capital Tk 2452.80 cr
Transactions in volume 334310
Transactions in value Tk 3.34

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NEWS BRIEFS

Terrorist held

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: Police, after a chase and exchange of fire caught an alleged terrorist along with a cut-rifle and some ammunition from Shapura area under Boalkhali thana yesterday. Acting on confessing of the arrested man, Giasuddin Manik, police recovered three more rifles along with ammunition from his house and pond.

61 arms recovered

Law enforcing agencies recovered 61 firearms, 71 rounds of ammunition and 934 explosives yesterday. In the combing operation conducted by police, army and BDR forces ahead of national elections, 202 people were also rounded for possessing illegal arms and on other charges, reports UNB.

Fire at trade fair

By Staff Correspondent

A fire broke out at a stall at the Dhaka International Trade Fair near Bijoy Sarani at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city early yesterday. The blaze originated from an electric short circuit in the stall at about 4:10 am, fire service sources said. The extent of damage could not be known immediately. The fire brigade unit in the fair venue extinguished the flames, sources added.

Appointment

Walid Islam has been appointed secretary of the newly created Roads and Railway Division, an official handout said here Saturday. The government earlier merged the Roads and Highways Division and the Railway Division under the Ministry of Communications into Roads and Railway Division reports BSS.

48-hr countrywide hartal begins

By Staff Correspondent

An Opposition-called 48-hour countrywide hartal begins this morning to press for holding elections under a caretaker government.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami earlier called the two-day hartal, coinciding with the last date for filing of nomination papers and the date for their scrutiny rescheduled by the Election Commission on January 2.

Left Democratic Front (LDF) will also observe a dawn-to-dusk general strike today on the same issue.

The Opposition is going ahead with its agitation programme against the backdrop of a series of backstage parleys over the last few days to resolve the lingering political crisis.

She made a call for the

people to strengthen the ongoing movement for establishing their right to food and franchise as the ruling BNP went ahead with the election process without resolving the political crisis over the caretaker issue.

Hasina said BNP government's lust for power was pushing the country towards constitutional crisis. "The longer the Prime Minister will hold on to power the worse the political crisis will be," she said.

The opposition leader observed that the prevailing political problems could be resolved only through resignation of the Prime Minister and holding election under a neutral caretaker government.

Khaleda files nomination papers for 2 Feni JS seats

FENI, Jan 7: Nomination papers of BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia for two Feni constituencies were submitted today, officials here said, reports UNB.

The nomination of Begum Zia for Feni-1 constituency was submitted to the District Election Officer by the Prime Minister's brother, Maj (rtd) Sayeed Iskander.

President of Bangladesh Manpower Exporters' Association and Greater Noakhali District Association Mosharraf Hossain filed her nomination for Feni-2 constituency on behalf of Begum Zia.

In the fifth parliamentary election in 1991, Begum Zia was elected from Feni-1 and four other seats. She is also contesting the coming parliament election from five seats -- two in Feni and one each in Rajshahi, Bogra and Sirajganj.

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42 hurt as rivals clash in Barisal

By Staff Correspondent

Rival BNP factions, protesting party nominations, clashed in Barisal yesterday leaving at least 42 people injured and enforced hartal at Sherpur and at Ullapara in Sirajganj district the day before.

At Rajbari, the district BNP brought out a protest procession and in Rajshahi the party's district unit has decided to refrain from campaigning in three constituencies.

Our staff correspondent reports from Barisal: At least 42 people including two fire fighters were injured, five critically, as supporters of BNP nominee Ehteshamul Huq and former party MP in the last Parliament, Mojibul Rahman Sarwar were locked

in a 3-hour clash at Nothurababu bus terminal during which some shops were torched.

Ehteshamul Huq, nominated for Bakerganj 5, is the son of President Abdur Rahman Biswas.

At least five shops were gutted and 12 buses and three ticket counters damaged as the rival groups fought running battles, exchanged brickbats indiscriminately and went on rampaging.

Brat Chandra Biswas, 44, station chief and fireman Abdur Rahman, 28, of Bawali Fire Station were among the injured.

Critically injured Dulal, 42, office secretary of Barisal
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Cabinet okays import, export Hajj policies

The cabinet Saturday approved the country's export and import policies for the years 1995-97, said an official announcement, reports UNB.

A meeting of the cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, also endorsed the Haj Policy for 1996.

A proposal for amending the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority Ordinance 1985 was also approved by the cabinet.

Ministers and state ministers in charge of different ministries attended the meeting in the cabinet room of the Prime Minister's secretariat.

Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the PM and secretaries concerned were also present.

43 pc increase in import bills

By Staff Correspondent

The country's import bills surged to 2269 million US dollars during the July-October period of this fiscal year, a 43 per cent increase over the same period's imports in 1994-95, according to the Bangladesh Bank statistics.

The first quarter import figure includes 229 million dollars for import of rice and wheat as against 38 million dollars during the corresponding period of last fiscal.

Imports under all the heads excepting industrial raw materials registered significant jump during the period.

Against a 619 million dollars import of industrial raw materials during July-October of last fiscal, 767 million dollars were imported during the same period this fiscal.

Import of consumer goods including foodgrains stood at 311 million dollars during the quarter as against 132 million dollars in the same

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Amu, Shamsul meet again

By Staff Correspondent

Top negotiators of the ruling BNP and the opposition Awami League held another round of formal talks on Saturday.

The two sides, however, did not make much progress regarding the formation of an advisory council to hold the general elections.

The deadline for filing nomination papers for the upcoming polls is scheduled to expire at 5 pm today.

Another round of talks between Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu and Information and Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam was held at the latter's Hare Road official residence Saturday evening.

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Garments factory night guard found dead

By DMCH Correspondent

A night guard of a garments factory at Mirpur in the city was found dead inside the factory building yesterday morning.

Police from Mirpur thana recovered the body of Rafiqul, 30, night guard of the Dhaka Taj Garments Ltd at around noon yesterday, and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

The cause of the death could not be known immediately.

Police sources said that no marks of injuries were found in his body. However, hospital sources said that injuries were found in the neck of the body.

Tk 9.20 lakh looted in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: Unidentified gunmen took away Taka 9.20,000 along with a microbus in a heist at the premises of a garments factory at Mhedibag in the heart of the city yesterday, police and witnesses said.

As the microbus came in front of the factory, the gunmen forced the staff inside to get down at gun point and took away the microbus and the money kept in two bags, police said.

The miscreants blasted cocktails while fleeing.

The money was withdrawn from bank for payment of salary, sources in the factory said.

Police recovered the microbus from in front of Nasrabad Girls' College today but could trace neither the miscreants nor the money.

India goes to polls in Apr

officials said the polls were likely to be held in the first half of the month.

Rao has said for sometime the favoured elections just one or two months before the end of the government's five-year term in office in June, and he has repeatedly indicated he would opt for an April vote.

Opposition parties have been pressing for an earlier vote either in February or March.

Rao said there were 'no differences' between his Congress (I) Party government and the autonomous

Election Commission over the holding of the polls to the 545-house parliament.

The Election Commission is expected to make a formal announcement about the elections in February or March. Rao, 74, became Prime Minister after the Congress finished on top in the last hustings held in May-June 1991.

The upcoming polls are widely expected to result in a hung parliament, with the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) determined to provide stiff fight to the Congress.

Election Commission over the holding of the polls to the 545-house parliament.

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The good news is that at least we're going to have a document on the table that Republicans can evaluate, said John Kasich, Chairman of the House of Representatives' Budget Committee.

Republicans criticised the proposal as containing too much spending and actually increasing taxes, rather than reducing them.

But they conceded that the Congressional Budget Office believes it would eliminate federal deficits by 2002. Under legislation Congress approved Friday that will immediately reopen the government -- at least until Jan 26.

The government has been partially closed since Dec 16 as Clinton and the opposition Republicans, who control Congress, haggled over how

to balance the budget.

Republican leaders said Clinton's embrace of the plan was crucial because it would help clarify how close to a sweeping budget deal the two sides might be.

The good news is that at least we're going to have a document on the table that Republicans can evaluate, said John Kasich, Chairman of the House of Representatives' Budget Committee.

According to Democrats, the Clinton plan would cut taxes over seven years by 87 billion dollars, well below the Republican's 240 billion dollars proposal. It would extract savings of 154 billion dollars from public health care programmes, about half what Republicans want, plus an additional 295 billion dollars from other domestic programmes -- about 75 per cent of the Republican proposal.

The two Republicans said the proposal, originally written by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, would spend 400 to 500 billion

dollars more than Republicans have proposed through 2002. They also said it would not do enough to revamp public health care, welfare and other social programs Republicans want to overhaul.

Of all the budgets presented, this is the most liberal of all, said Domenici.

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Another feature of Clinton's new plan would be government

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Secret bid to silence Saudi dissident in Britain

London-based Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), which has pursued virulent scorn on the Saudi regime -- has eight days to appeal a deportation order which the government had issued under pressure from Riyadh and from British defence firms facing losses worth billions of dollars in Saudi contracts.

The Guardian said the leaked memo, dated September 6, 1995, also reveals that Britain passed to Saudi Arabia secret intelligence on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to appease Saudi anger over Al-Masaari's activities in London.

In his memo, Vickers' boss Colin Chandler -- formerly head of arms exports at the Ministry of Defence -- describes a conversation with Dick Evans, chief executive of British Aerospace (BAS), who reported 'anxiety in the CIA' and 'their counterparts in this country' about the impact of Al-Masaari's campaign against the Saudi royal family, the Guardian said.

The CIA was becoming 'much more interested' in

the Al-Masaari case, Evans told his opposite number at Vickers, and was in 'some dialogue' over the issue with British intelligence, the paper added.

It said the memo goes on to record Chandler and Evans jointly proposing that Britain try to 'offset some of the Saudi criticism of us' by inviting Saddam Hussein's son-in-law -- who defected to Jordan last August -- to Britain and then feeding some of the intelligence back to the kingdom (Saudi Arabia).

The Guardian added the memo said this had 'earned us many plaudits.'

The Independent newspaper reported Saturday that Green is a non-executive director of Vickers, which is bidding against French and

British companies for the Saudi market. The paper said Green is now appointed British ambassador to Saudi Arabia -- who told him that a British delegation had already taken place in Amman and '