

Inside Today

Article

A Flawed Judge-  
ment

Column: Between the  
Lines  
by Kuldip Nayar  
Page 4

International

Canadian premier  
urges India to sign  
NPT

Lankan army planning  
fresh offensive against  
Tigers  
Page 5

Business

Japan to give Tk 22 cr  
for 15 cyclone shelters  
Page 6

DSE MARKET

DSE price index 823.41 (-0.01%)  
Market capital Tk 5306.56 cr  
Transactions in volume 74084  
Transactions in value Tk 1.36 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 407.54 (0.02%)  
Market capital Tk 2450 cr  
Transactions in volume 2340  
Transactions in value Tk 3 lakh

Weekend  
Magazine

2nd Asia-Pacific Co-  
mmunity Development  
Camp; Kindergartens  
Push Back the Linguis-  
tic Philistines; and  
25th Anniversary of  
JU; Teens and Twen-  
ties, Rising Stars, and  
Travel and Tourism

Pages 9-16

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Life After Banga  
Bazar  
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

34 arms recovered,

408 arrested

Law enforcing agencies recovered 34 fire arms, 276 bullets and 13 explosives yesterday, the 22nd day of the countrywide drives for illegal arms. According to Law and Order Coordination Cell of the Election Commission, during the period the law enforcing agencies arrested 408 people on various charges, including possession of illegal arms, reports UNB.

BAU holidays  
extended

The Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) authorities extended the holidays upto February 28 considering the situation prevailing on the campus. This will include Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr holidays. The decision was taken at a high level meeting under the chairmanship of the BAU Vice-Chancellor, reports BSS.

Poultry farm  
gutted

CHITTAGONG, Jan 11: A poultry farm was gutted in a fire at Ghattek in Rangunia thana of the district early today. Farm sources said at least 1,400 hens were burnt in the fire that occurred at about 1 am. It is suspected to be an act of arson by rivals of the owner of the poultry. M A Bashir, reports UNB.

160 fundamentalists  
held in Egypt

MINYA, Egypt, Jan 11: Police have arrested 160 Islamic fundamentalists accused of providing arms to militant gunmen after a sweep of trouble spots in southern Egypt, police sources said today, reports AFP.

Privatisation of NCBs

# Rupali by June this yr, Agrani, Janata by '98

By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

The government is planning to privatise Rupali Bank, a nationalised commercial bank (NCB) this year and two other NCBs — Agrani and Janata by 1998.

Agrani Bank will be divested by 1997 and Janata Bank in 1998, according to a government plan for the development of the financial sector.

Privatisation of the NCBs, a long standing issue under the donor-financed structural reform programme, will be made under the planned 744 million US dollar Financial Sector Development Project (FSDP).

According to a govern-

ment estimate, Rupali Bank's privatisation will cost 50 million dollars while the other two NCBs restructuring will involve 160 million dollars.

Rupali is scheduled to be divested by June, 1996. "It may be delayed by few months due to political considerations, but it will certainly be privatised by end of December," confirmed an official source.

"We have already identified one hundred branches of Rupali Bank which are incurring continuous losses during the last three years and have no prospect of making profit in the future. These will be closed down before the bank

See Page 8 Col 3

is privatised," said a senior Finance Ministry official in charge of Banking Policy.

"Auditors have been appointed to apprise the net worth of the bank. This is a vital issue for selling the bank."

However, the World Bank recommended that at least 200 branches of Rupali be shut down before it is privatised.

Rupali Bank has 518 branches including one overseas. With 6368 employees and officials, it made a loss of Taka 35 lakh in 1994. Its paid-up capital is Taka 125 crore.

The BNP leader, asking not to be named, said his party might agree to the Opposition position proposal provided

See Page 8 Col 6

See Page 8 Col 6



A trader carrying date juice to a market amid thick fog yesterday morning at a village on the outskirts of the city.

— Star photo

# Troops encircle Chechens holding 100 hostages

Alexander Mikhailov, a spokesman for the Federal Security Service.

The convoy of 11 buses and two trucks was stopped Wednesday at the village of Pervomayskaya, a cluster of a few dozen houses located near the Chechen border in Dagestan, a neighbouring republic.

Talks failed to break the deadlock between the rebels who say they will shoot their captives if they are not guaranteed safe passage and the Russians who insist they re-

The Chechens had earlier released up to 3,000 hostages seized Tuesday in the Dagestani city of Kizlyar.

**Napalm Chechens'**

MOSCOW, Jan 11: Chechen rebels today started executing hostages they were holding in the Dagestani border village, Moscow Echo radio reported, quoting Russian interior ministry spokesman Leonid Golovnev, reports AFP.

lease the hostages before crossing into Chechnya.

Russian troops advanced in dozens of armoured vehicles and trucks towed up heavy artillery. The rebels were apparently reluctant to give up the hostages, fearing a Russian attack once their human shield was removed.

"These bandits must be eliminated," said Maj Gen

See Page 8 Col 8

where the rebels holed up in a hospital and demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from their homeland.

Many of the hostages the rebels took with them were women and children, who waved white flags outside the windows of the buses and begged the Russians not to shoot.

The rebels took food and drink with them when they left the hospital. Conditions were miserable, however, with a strong wind blowing across the snowy steppe and the temperature at minus 5 Celsius.

Dagestani authorities also provided food for the hostages, but the Russians turned back officials of the International Red Cross seeking to deliver medicine, food and blankets to the captives.

"We heard the hostages are in bad shape and need medicine," said Pierre Zuffray of the International Red Cross.

Officials in Dagestani said at least 40 people — some 17 rebels, 9 police officers and soldiers and 14 civilians — were killed in the raid on Kizlyar, and about 50 others were wounded.

See Page 8 Col 7

# Order to produce Faruque Thakur in court Jan 18

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) yesterday asked the bail bond sureties of Faruque Thakur, the main accused of Shamsul Alam killing, to produce him before the court on January 18.

Faruque Thakur was supposed to attend the court yesterday, but he did not report. His bail was granted on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, prosecution lawyer filed a petition in the court praying for cancellation of the bail and attachment of Faruque's property.

But CMM Shahiduddin Ahmed after hearing the petition ordered to produce the accused on the day.

## Killing of maid: Six arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday arrested six persons on charges of involvement in the killing of a maid, Fatema, in the city's Islampur area.

Fatema, 40, was shot dead during a shooting incident at a building at Islampur under Kotwali thana at around 2:30 pm, according to reports.

See Page 8 Col 7

# Manufacturing sector speeding up GDP growth'



— Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

The rapidly growing manufacturing sector is accelerating the country's economic growth rate, US Ambassador in Bangladesh David N Merrill observed yesterday.

"The manufacturing sector is growing rapidly and the GDP growth has been increasing with the expansion of markets for Bangladeshi products, as the entrepreneurs here are responding to opportunities to compete in the international arena," he said, while inaugurating the 3-day US Trade Show '96 at the Sheraton Hotel.

The American envoy praised Bangladesh's achievements in the economic field, but said much remains to be done to utilise the full potential for growth.

The recent economic reforms have helped build up a strong private sector in Bangladesh, which is playing a vital role in strengthening the economy, he added. "This progress has brought increased international stature for Bangladesh."

See Page 8 Col 7

# AL street march for PM's resignation tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League will stage street march tomorrow in the city demanding immediate resignation of the Prime Minister for holding polls under a caretaker government.

AL Chief Sheikh Hasina will lead the march which is scheduled to start at 3 pm from the Mahakali rail crossing.

Meanwhile, the negotiation between the ruling BNP and the opposition political parties is now focused on the issues of sending out written proposals to each other and a face-to-face meeting. Opposition sources hinted.

The main points of the backstage parleys were: who

would send out the written proposal first; whether the meeting be held before or after the Prime Minister's resignation; and what would be the power structure of the proposed advisory council.

Senior opposition leaders involved in the negotiation said.

In another development, workers party leaders Rashed Khan Menon and Haider Akbar Khan Rono yesterday called on AL president Sheikh Hasina and held an informal meeting at her residence.

Sources said that the hour-long meeting discussed the latest Opposition stance in the backstage parleys with

See Page 8 Col 8

# One killed as gunmen storm house in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 11: One person was shot dead when a group of unidentified gunmen attacked a house in the city's South Nalapara area this afternoon, witnesses and police said.

About six gunmen came in a microbus at around 1 pm and opened fire on the two-storey building owned by one Rathu Ba.

One Pranab Dewanji, 23, who sustained bullet wounds while he was reading a newspaper beside a window, died on the spot, witnesses said.

Sources said the gunmen, at one stage, stormed into the house and looked for one Rajib who returned from Dubai one month ago. But Rajib escaped the attack as he got out of the house through

See Page 8 Col 7

# Fire kills mother, 2 daughters in Khulna

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 11: A mother and her two children were burned alive in a devastating fire that gutted at least 15 thatched houses at a slum here on Wednesday night.

The fire reportedly originated from an earthen oven, and engulfed the Nabapalli Slum at Haji Ismail Link Road in Banarghati area, said the local police.

The victims were identified as Nazma, 30, wife of Abdul Hamid, a rickshaw puller, and her daughters Liza, 8, and Reena, 6. The bodies were sent to Khulna Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Fire fighters from Khalishpur rushed to the scene and took about half an hour to extinguish the blaze.

Local ward commissioner of the Khulna City Corporation said the fire caused an estimated loss of Tk 20 lakh.

# Pakistani jailed for gold smuggling

A special tribunal court here yesterday sentenced a Pakistani national, Shakir Ali Azmi, to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment in a gold smuggling case, reports UNB.

Court sources said the accused was fined Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer two years' more imprisonment.

According to prosecution, Shakir Ali Azmi was arrested with 1,040 tolas of gold as he arrived at the Zia International Airport by Emirates on September 28, 1992.

Azmi had failed to produce valid documents to the surveillance team. A case was registered with the Cantonment police.

Special Tribunal Judge Mohammad Azizul Hoque pronounced the judgement yesterday after examining 11 witnesses and hearing both sides during the trial.

# Hashimoto elected Japanese PM

TOKYO, Jan 11: Ryutaro Hashimoto was elected as Japan's 82nd Prime Minister today by a parliamentary majority from the ruling tripartite coalition in the lower house of representatives, reports AFP.

Hashimoto, 58, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the senior coalition member, was elected on 288 votes in the 511-seat house after the formal resignation of incumbent Tomiichi Murayama, head of the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

He also gained a majority in the upper house of councillors.

The LDP, SDP and junior member new party Sakigake have ruled in coalition since June 1994.

The coalition agreed at the weekend to continue under Hashimoto.

It was the first time the LDP has been in the Prime Minister's office since being toppled at the polls in mid-1993 after a string of scandals that ended 38 years of single party rule.

Hashimoto is Japan's 53rd Prime Minister since the end of World War II.

The opposition New Front

5 snatchers  
held in city