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DSE MARKET
 DSE price index 822.52 (+0.09%)
 Market capital Tk 5919.81 cr
 Transactions in volume 96401
 Transactions in value Tk 1.81 cr

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NEWS BRIEFS

PM visits Faria
 Prime Minister Begum Khajeda Zia yesterday visited critically injured Faria Khan, second daughter of Prime Minister's Special Envoy M Morshed Khan, at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city. Faria was injured in a road accident at Kawla on Airport Road in the early hours of Friday. Her husband Mahmudul Huq Mithu, 30, died on the spot as their car hit a roadside electric pole at Kawla, reports BSS.

BCL calls hartal in Rajshahi today
 From Our Correspondent
 RAJSHAHI, Jan 13: Awami League backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has called a half-day hartal in Rajshahi city tomorrow protesting the killing of its leader Saiful Islam. Saiful, general secretary of BCL, Motihar thana unit and a student of Rajshahi University, was killed by some unidentified miscreants at Binodpur Bazar Friday evening.

Confce on Aga Khan Award
 A conference on the Aga Khan Award for Architecture will be held at the Winter Garden of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel tomorrow at 4 pm. Internationally reputed architect and member of the Master Jury for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture Mehmet Doruk Pamir will present at the conference, reports UNB.

New Pak army chief
 ISLAMABAD, Jan 13: General Jehangir Karamat was sworn in as chief of army staff of Pakistan at the general headquarters in Rawalpindi today. Karamat, the 12th Pakistani chief of army staff, succeeds General Abdul Waheed who retired Friday, reports Xinhua.

Amendment to 1972 Order soon Bangladesh Bank to be given more autonomy

By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

The government is planning a total overhaul of the central bank, replacing the Bangladesh Bank Order '72 to improve its supervisory role and to enact new legislations to tackle the problem of bad loans, according to well-placed sources in the finance ministry.

"We will incorporate new provisions in the existing Order to ensure autonomy of the central bank," said a top finance ministry official preferring anonymity.

"For example, the Governor is now being appointed under a clause stating his appointment is valid until further order. Members of the executive branch hold a lion share of the central bank's Board. Such a situation hampers independent decision making and maintenance of a sound monetary management policy, he added.

"We are now working to redefine the existing provisions under the Order and add new provisions which are being followed in the neighbouring countries to ensure autonomy of the central bank," he maintained. "We are thinking of fixing a definite term for the Governor and incorporating professional loan analysis," notes the working paper.

A three member high level legal reform group comprising finance secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Banking Secretary Dr. Shamsul Huda and Law Secretary Mirza Asaduzzaman Al Faruk has already been formed to review the current laws relating to financial system.

Another ten-member group — comprising representatives of the central bank, World Bank, IMF, ADB, USAID and FSRP — will review and assess options for



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina leading a street march yesterday in the city demanding resignation of the Prime Minister for holding polls under a caretaker government. — Star photo

BNP sheltering terrorists to win polls: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the ruling BNP was sheltering terrorists to win the next parliamentary election with their help.

"Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury recently distributed 17,000 arms among the members of Jatyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jubo Dal in Dhaka. JCD members also got licence for 1,000 arms," alleged Hasina while addressing a rally at Baridhara Nutan Bazar after a *padayatra* (march) from Mohakhali in the city organised by her party.

The *padayatra* was organised to press its demands for immediate resignation of the Prime Minister, holding of elections under a caretaker government, security in public life and arresting the price hike of essentials.

Hasina led the march, participated by a few thousand party activists and supporters carrying festoons and banners.

Starting from Mohakhali rail gate, the marchers paraded through the Airport Road, Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani and Gulshan Circle 2 chanting full-throated anti-government slogans. She also made a brief speech before the march started.

The AL leader came down heavily on the on-going arms recovery drive alleging that it was targeted to harass the Opposition leaders and workers.

"The Home Minister had said in the Parliament that there were over one lakh illegal arms in the country. I want to know where those arms have gone," the former Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament said.

"People's life cannot be secured if an alleged killer gets bail within hours of arrest," she said referring to the recent killing of a businessman in Gulshan in the city.

She alleged that the ruling BNP was not conceding to the peoples' demand for holding elections under a caretaker government as "their lust for power and making money is yet to end." "People will not cast vote if the election is held without the participation of opposition parties."

Hasina alleged that the voters list was made in a planned manner to rig the polls.

"The ruling BNP is trying to allure some political parties to the coming election, she said adding "BNP government is also requesting deposed president Ershad to go polls."

"We want elections in a terrorism-free environment. We want terrorism-free Bangladesh. This is why we have demanded at least three elections under a neutral non-party caretaker government," she added.

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BNP rejects demand for written proposal

By Nazmul Ashraf

The ruling BNP will continue its efforts to reach an agreement with the Opposition for holding parliamentary election but "will not yield to pressure to go for extra-constitutional measures."

This was observed at an emergency meeting of the BNP policy planners with the Prime Minister and party chief Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair yesterday.

The nearly two-hour meeting, held at the PM's Tejgaon office in the afternoon, was attended by most of the BNP Standing Committee members and the ministers negotiating with the Opposition. The meeting discussed the Opposition's demand for a written proposal from the BNP on formation of an advisory council, the party's preparation for the polls and the latest political developments.

According to meeting sources, the party policy planners felt that the Opposition's demand for exchange of written proposals despite a series of talks on the proposed advisory council was a "ploy to kill time and to drag the BNP out of the Constitution." The BNP should strictly adhere to the Constitution, they viewed.

The meeting also resolved that the BNP should go to the polls even if the major opposition parties remained firm on their 'unconstitutional' demand.

Later in the evening BNP secretary general Abdus Salam Talukdar told some reporters at his Bailey Road official residence that his party would not send in written proposals for the polls and

Businessman stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A businessman was stabbed to death by son of unidentified youngmen at Mazar Road in Mirpur yesterday night.

Dewan Abul Kalam Pasha Opu, 25, received stab injuries in his lower abdomen. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Relatives alleged that three youngmen riding on an auto-rickshaw waylaid him while he was on the way to his residence at Mazar Road.

The group stabbed him on his abdomen and fled the scene immediately.

The body of Opu, a resident of 5/A Second colony of the area, was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

When contacted, Mirpur Thana confirmed the incident but could not provide

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Only 22 lakh voter ID cards distributed

By Morshed Ali Khan

Only 22 lakh voter ID cards were distributed till December 31 last, an official of the Election Commission (EC) said yesterday.

Some EC officials now fear that it might take up to two years to provide every voter in the country with an identity card.

The time of the Taka 180 crore ID card project expires in June this year.

Lack of proper planning and experience and the 'adverse' political situation in the country have delayed the issuance of the voters' ID cards, the officials said.

Talking to The Daily Star, an EC official, on condition of anonymity, said that it would take much longer than anticipated to finish the process because of various problems.

Under the EC Bill passed by the Parliament, every eligible voter must be provided with an ID card before holding of any general elections. It was reported that due to the inability to provide the ID cards in time the EC would soon seek amendments to the law.

The official noted that in the first week of October last year some 64 local firms were awarded with the work of printing, processing and delivering some 5 crore 60 lakh ID cards to the voters.

"At that point, the EC told us that we had until December 15 — about ten weeks — to complete the whole process," said Mozammel Babu of the Information Systems Group, the firm which is at present responsible for issuance of at least 2.5 crore ID cards.

Representatives of some of the firms alleged that the EC contained many errors and that many firms had to send the voters' list back to the EC for rectification.

The EC later assigned district commissioners (DCs) to do the job and predicted that the whole correction

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Gulshan thana OC transferred

By Staff Correspondent

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Gulshan Thana, Abdur Razzaq, was transferred yesterday following public protests in the area after the January 7 killing of a local businessman in a shoot out between two groups of people.

Eight of the nine persons arrested in connection with the murder were again taken on three days' remand yesterday, police said.

Detective police yesterday held Nurul Islam, car driver of Enroq Thakur, who was also arrested for complicity in the murder but released on bail. The release of Thakur had sparked the protests in which people of the area gheraoed the Gulshan thana and clashed with police on January 8.

Shamsul Alam, owner of Hotel Plaza in Baridhara, was shot dead during the shootout over possession of the ground floor of a house on Road No 72 at Gulshan.

Changes in DU admission test system likely

By Aminul Islam Sazal

The existing method of the admission tests for the first year honours courses under four units of the Dhaka University is likely to be modified, official sources said.

For students appearing in the admission test under Ka (Science and Biological Science Faculty) and Gha (Combined) units, the candidates will require a minimum of 1300 marks in their SSC and HSC examinations. The candidates for Kha (Arts and Social Science faculty) and Ga (Commerce faculty) units will require 1100 marks. Last year, the minimum required marks for appearing in the admission tests were 1200 and 1000 respectively.

In preparing the final merit list, six per cent of total marks of HSC examinations and four per cent of total marks of SSC examinations of each candidate will be counted.

According to a decision of the General Admission Committee (GAC) of the Dhaka University, the admission tests under the four units for the new session will begin on March 15.

The admission tests of Arts and Social Science faculties (Kha unit) will be held on March 22 while the tests of Commerce faculty (Ga unit) and Science and Biological Science faculties (Ka unit) will be held on March 21 and 29 respectively. The test of combined group (Gha unit) will be held on March 15.

According to a source, the total marks of written test under Kha unit will be 100, of which 25 will be for Bengali, 25 for English and 50 for objective type general knowledge (Bangladesh and international affairs).

In Gha unit Multiple

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Textile workers block road at Tongi for 3-hr

TONGI, Jan 13: Hundreds of vehicles bound for Dhaka and Gazipur were stranded for three hours as state-sector textile workers demonstrated on the highway here this afternoon for salaries, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said several thousand workers of Meghna, Monnu, Olympia, Zenat and Saatrong textile mills staged demonstration near the station road crossing demanding immediate payment of their three months' arrear salaries.

During the demonstration from 2 pm to 5 pm, a meeting was held with local BNP leader Salahuddin Sarkar in the chair. The labour leaders threatened stronger agitation if their demands were not met immediately.

DCC to set up spl cell to protect architectural heritage

By Staff Correspondent

The Mayor of Dhaka city, Mohammad Hanif has said he will take the initiative for the creation of a special cell in the City Corporation to protect and preserve the architectural heritage of the city.

The DCC Mayor was addressing the opening ceremony of a two-day international seminar on "Future of the Past: Architectural Heritage of Dhaka," yesterday at the auditorium of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Hanif also pledged that the conservation of old and historic buildings of Dhaka will be an active factor in any planning decision involving the City Corporation in the future.

"The growing commercial and economic pressures in Dhaka city have caused many buildings of historical importance, and some bearing architectural heritage, to be demolished, altered or neglected," Hanif said, adding that the proposed special cell would be charged with identifying and enlisting such buildings for conservation.

The organiser of the seminar, the Department of Architecture, BUET has already started work in that direction, informed Prof M Shahjahan, Vice-Chancellor of BUET.

"They have documented the characteristic features of about 20 structures in the old part of the city, producing drawings and photographs," Prof Shahjahan said.

The VC urged the government to immediately initiate the conservation process in at least two or three of the documented buildings.

He particularly mentioned Ruplal House and Rebat Mahan Das House, two fine examples of 19th century architecture, as requiring immediate attention.

The ceremony was also addressed by Prof Meer Mobashsher Ali, Mahbubur Rahman and Shahidul Ameen, or the Department of Architecture, BUET.

Presenting a brief history of Dhaka, Prof Meer M Ali, the head of the department, pointed out that there was no legislation in the country for the protection of historic structures or sites.

The few buildings which have been conserved by the government, including the Ahsan Manzil and the Star Mosque, were due to the enlightenment view of some administrators and not due to a general policy," Prof Ali said.

The delegates participating in the seminar, including three from overseas, will present papers and deliberate over the two days to draw up a set of recommendations, which will be placed at a proper forum for implementation, the organisers said.

A number of administrators, policy-makers, town-planners and other professionals, as well as the delegates, attended the inaugural session.

The Mayor also inaugurated an exhibition of photographs, scaled drawings and models of historic edifices around the country, which is being held simultaneously on the BUET campus.

The seminar, jointly sponsored by the British Council, Ford Foundation, H A Timber Industries, Elite Paint, Concord Group, Sheltech and Pran Ltd, has been divided into four technical sessions.

On the opening day, case studies and papers on 'reuse, participation, tourism, tools and techniques' were presented in two sessions.

In a special presentation, Mehmet Doruk Pamir of Turkey and Waziri M Sudi of Kenya, showed slides of conservation projects in their homelands.

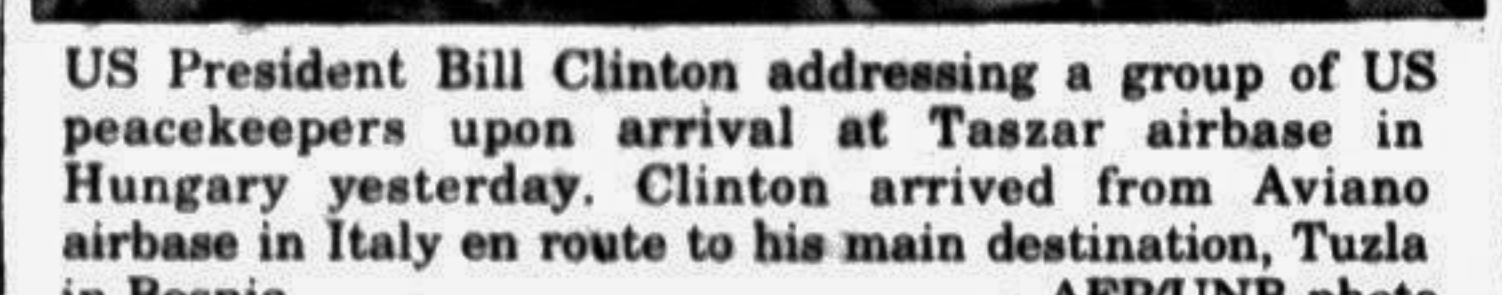
Clinton visits US base in Bosnia

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jan 13: President Bill Clinton arrived in Tuzla, northern Bosnia, today, after several hours of delays caused by bad weather, a White House official said, reports AFP.

Clinton flew into the US base in Tuzla at 1:30 pm (1330 gmt) from Tazsar in Hungary after falling early today to land at the base because of dense fog.

The presidential plane, a C-17 US military transport plane, touched down and taxied to the end of the runway at Tuzla, out of the view of hundreds of waiting journalists.

The president has first tried to fly into Tuzla from Aviano in Italy at 8:30 am and diverted to Tazsar where he told troops he was very, very proud of what they were doing for peace in Bosnia.



US President Bill Clinton addressing a group of US peacekeepers upon arrival at Tazsar airbase in Hungary yesterday. Clinton arrived from Aviano airbase in Italy en route to his main destination, Tuzla in Bosnia. — AFP/UNB photo

Economic cadre officers stage sit-in

The Bangladesh Civil Service (Economic) Officers Association staged a sit-in demonstration at Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday demanding removal of anomalies in their pay-scale, reports UNB.

Some 300 officers of the Planning Commission, Economic Relations Division, IME Division and different ministries and divisions participated in the three-hour sit-in in front of the Secretariat Clinic Bhaban.

The demonstrators later met with Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.