

MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE
 WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF
 ITALIAN CARRARA, PERLATO SICILIA,
 BOTTICINO, INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,
 MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE
 OF DIFFERENT TYPES
NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.
 199, TEJGAON 1/A, DHAKA
 TEL: 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM: 861985

Cash 24hr
 Standard Chartered
 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 5.00

Inside Today
Article

ASEAN and SAARC: Are They Comparable?
 Column: Window on Asia
 by Shahed Latif
 Page 4

Focus

Fundamentalist fervour deters development; Integrated education for the blind; and Code of conduct for vice-chancellors in India
 Page 5



Star sports exclusive
 Interview with captain of Indian cricket team Mohammed Azharuddin tomorrow

International

Afghan govt declares truce during Ramadan
 Russia accused of blatant violation of int'l law in Chechnya
 Page 8

Business

Living conditions upward in LDCs, World Bank report says
 US republicans search for way to avoid new govt shutdown
 Pages 6, 7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index	770.27 (+3.67%)
Market capital Tk	6018.19 cr
Transactions in volume	134160
Transactions in value Tk	254 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index	300.00 (+1.11%)
Market capital Tk	2403.18 cr
Transactions in volume	1770
Transactions in value Tk	4185

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day
 Now What About Benglish?
 Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Pakundia AL secy arrested
 KISHOREGANJ, Jan 23: A local Awami League leader was detained today by the law enforcing agencies conducting a country-wide drive for illegal arms ahead of the parliament election. Police said Md Rafiqul Islam Renu, General Secretary of Pakundia thana AL unit, was picked up from his village home at Morura along with a 'ramdao', reports UNB.

37 arms recovered
 Law-enforcing agencies recovered 37 firearms, 111 rounds of bullet and 13 explosives from different parts of the country till yesterday morning, the 34th day of illegal arms recovery hunt. According to Law and Order Coordination Cell of Election Commission, they also arrested 283 people on various charges including illegal possession of arms, reports UNB.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ram	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
1	24	—	5:43 pm
4	25	5:19 am	5:43 pm
5	26	5:19 am	5:44 pm

'Constitution can't be violated just for political settlement'

Help hold elections to save democracy: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the people and all political parties to extend their cooperation in holding the coming parliamentary elections peacefully for the sake of democracy and the people, reports BSS.

In an address to the nation over Radio and Television, she said there was no alternative to holding elections within the stipulated time to maintain the constitutional continuity.

Explaining the necessity of holding elections to maintain the constitutional process, the Prime Minister urged the people to participate in the coming Jatiya Sangsad polls by placing the country and democracy above party affiliations.

She said during the

month of Ramadan it is comparatively difficult to carry out election campaign and to cast votes as well but it has become obligatory for us to hold elections during the month to maintain the constitutional continuity. She expressed the hope that the people would bear the unavoidable difficulty of participating in the elections during the month of Ramadan.

Describing the coming elections as the election for continuing democratic process, the Prime Minister said that an atmosphere would be created through the coming polls to ensure the participation of all political parties in the future elections. "Our sincere efforts will continue towards that end," she added.

The Prime Minister said that constitutional rule and democracy could be jeopardised if the elections to the Jatiya Sangsad were not held in due time as per the Constitution.

The situation which may put the Constitutional rule and democracy at stake cannot be desirable to any patriotic citizen of the country, she said.

The Prime Minister urged the people to elect their representatives according to their choice.

She said that the government has been extending full cooperation to the Election Commission to hold free and fair polls and assured that it would continue to do so.

The Prime Minister said See Page 12 col 8



Report till midnight

365 withdraw nominations

Star Report

At least 365 candidates withdrew their candidature from different constituencies across the country on the last day yesterday for withdrawal of nomination papers for the February 15 parliamentary elections, according to sources in the Election Commission (EC).

The total figure of withdrawal was not available till filing this report at 12 last night.

Those who withdrew their candidature were either independents or from smaller parties.

Some 1987 candidates had filed nomination papers to the Election Commission for contesting in 300 constituencies till January 17. Some 83 nomination papers were rejected by the EC during scrutiny on the next day.

The EC got the total number of withdrawal of nomination papers from Sylhet, Rajshahi and Barisal divisions while reports were still pouring in from Khulna, Chittagong and Dhaka Divisions, sources in the EC said.

In Sylhet division, 19 candidates have withdrawn their candidature. The number is 30 in Barisal division and 73 in Rajshahi division.

The 'incomplete' numbers are 110 in Dhaka division, 65 in Khulna and 68 in Chittagong division.

In Chittagong district, 27 candidates withdrew their nomination papers in 15 constituencies leaving 52 others to contest. The withdrawal has left Oli Ahmed uncontested in Chittagong-13 and Chittagong-14. Golam Akbar Khandker in Chittagong-6, Morshed Khan in Chittagong-10, Wahidul Alam See Page 12 col 7

PM, Speaker, 8 ministers

among 42 uncontested

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali and at least eight ministers are among the 42 BNP leaders who have no rivals in their constituencies in the ensuing parliamentary elections.

The Prime Minister is the lone candidate in Bogra-7. She is contesting from five constituencies.

Shaikh Razzak Ali is the lone candidate in Khulna-6 following withdrawal of nomination paper by Sheikh Lutfor Rahman of Muslim League. Razzak Ali is also contesting from Khulna-2 constituency.

Yesterday was the last day for withdrawal of nomination papers.

The other BNP leaders who are the lone candidates in their constituencies include Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman, LGRD Minister Salam Talukder, Law Minister Mirza Golam Haliz, Home Minister Matin See Page 12 col 7

Eyewash to justify polls: Opposition



Police trying to put out fire in an autorickshaw during rampage by Opposition activists protesting the Prime Minister's address to the nation yesterday evening. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

The Opposition rejected Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's address to the nation over radio and television yesterday saying that she evaded her political responsibilities by justifying the holding of parliamentary elections on February 15.

A joint meeting of the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami last night said the PM's speech was full of 'contradictions and lies' which proved that she did not want a solution to the political impasse.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, AL Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim said the PM told the nation that an unelected person could not replace an elected representative. He said "How could she expect that a solution could be reached without taking into account our demand for a caretaker government?"

The Prime Minister herself said on several occasions that she would not go beyond the Constitution, the meeting recalled. Then under which provision of the Constitution a neutral advisory council See Page 12 Col 3

Hartal called as PM due today

BNP clashes with AL, Jamaat in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 23: At least 25 persons were injured when the activists of BNP clashed with the workers of Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami here this afternoon.

The injured included Sylhet Pourashava chairman and secretary, town Awami League Badaruddin Kamran, central Awami League leader Dewan Farid Gazi.

The half-an-hour clash took place at about 3:30 p.m. when a procession of the district BNP welcoming the Prime Minister's visit to Sylhet tomorrow was proceeding towards the Southban point, where Awami League was holding a public meeting protesting the scheduled visit.

Several crackers exploded and at least four rounds of gunshots were fired. About eight private cars and jeeps were damaged and burnt by the agitating activists. They also ransacked a number of shops.

The activists of the Jamaat-e-Islami, who were also holding a rally at the nearby Poura point to protest the visit, joined the clash.

Police lobbed teargas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the rampaging activists.

The activists also ransacked the Sonali Bank building and some other private houses and shops in the area.

Abdus Samad Azad and other leaders of Awami League blamed the BNP for 'attack on the peaceful meeting at a press conference called in the afternoon. They also called upon the people to observe dawn-to-dusk hartal in Sylhet tomorrow.

Central assistant secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid in another press conference also accused the BNP and its front organisations of foiling the peaceful programmes of the opposition parties. See Page 12 Col 4

Doctors' strike

Patients leaving DMCH

By DMCH Correspondent

Twenty-five patients left the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on the fourth day yesterday of the DMCH doctors' indefinite strike.

The doctors, at a meeting yesterday, decided to continue their strike. Emergency treatment will, however, remain exempted from the strike programme, they said.

Eighty-seven patients of different wards were released yesterday.

Patients coming to the hospital for treatment were returning disappointed.

The doctors at the DMCH went on an indefinite strike Saturday following alleged attack on doctors on duty by one Dipu, who runs an unauthorised pharmacy in the hospital premises.

The agitating doctors were now demanding removal of such 'illegal' pharmacies and arrest of the 'terrorist' involved in the attack on doctors.

The doctors held a protest See Page 12 Col 1

Vehicles set on fire, damaged in protest

By Staff Correspondent

At least three motor vehicles were set on fire and 25 others damaged partially as alleged activists of Chhatra League went on rampage in Gulistan, Purana Paltan and Dhaka University areas in an instant protest to the Prime Minister's address to the nation yesterday evening.

Police lobbed at least 10 tear gas shells at the Banga bandhu Avenue and from in front of the TSC of Dhaka University to quell the violence. Two persons were picked up from the Banga bandhu Avenue area, Mouljee police said.

Two vehicles were torched and at least 15 were damaged in Bangabandhu Avenue, Gulistan and Paltan areas at around 7:30 pm.

Our Dhaka University correspondent reports AL backed Chhatra League torched a private car in front of the Dhaka University Snacks (DUS) near the TSC. The driver of the vehicle, however, put out the fire.

The BCL activists also damaged at least ten vehicles in the TSC area. Police lobbed at least four tear gas shells in the area to bring the situation under control.

Tender for 100 IWT/A pontoons

World Bank wants re-evaluation of BSEC bid

Star Report

The World Bank is insisting that the government re-evaluate the validity of the state owned Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation's (BSEC) bid for building 100 pontoons under the Bank financed IWT 3 project as the BSEC lacks financial autonomy, according to sources concerned.

The government had floated a tender early last year inviting bids for making inland pontoons at a cost of seven million dollars and in response to that the BSEC came up as the lowest bidder.

The Ministry of Shipping and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) are insisting that BSEC should do the work as the lowest bidder and they have technical capability.

But the WB said that BSEC cannot qualify for the work as the corporation is not financially autonomous.

The Bank referred to its Procurement guideline that says "Government-owned enterprises in the borrower's country may participate only if they can establish that they are legally and financially autonomous."

But BSEC is suffering continuous losses over the last few years and is subsidised by the government. In 1994-95 its losses stood at about 16.6 million dollars and in 1993-94, the losses totalled about 26.4 million dollars.

Meanwhile the WB in a letter to the Shipping Ministry on December 5, said "IDA still reconfirms its request for re-evaluation with BSEC's bid considered non-responsive."

The Ministry is yet to respond to the letter, sources said. Meanwhile, the Bank has termed the progress of IWT-3 project 'unsatisfactory'.

Another faxed message from the Bank to the Ministry says "BSEC's bid indicated that their financial capacity is overextended and they have been supported by massive injection of government funds. Furthermore, BSEC is highly leveraged (70 per cent) and would be unable to borrow on its own without government guarantees."

The message also said "Insistence to award the contract to BSEC despite its financial situation is not acceptable."

See Page 12 col 6

Experts suggest regular dredging in Aricha routes

ARICHA, Jan 23: Dredging and river training experts today underlined the need for regular and continuous dredging to maintain navigability of different channels of the Aricha-Nagarbari-Daulatdia river routes, reports BSS.

Since it is not possible to create and maintain permanent channels in these river routes due to frequent changes in the courses of the river Jamuna and massive siltation, adequate dredging is a must to ensure smooth ferry services in the important routes, they observed.

"This was observed at a meeting of the experts while visiting the channels of these routes," State Minister for Shipping Shajahan Siraj presided over the meeting.

The participants in the meeting suggested to immediately procure some dredgers to carry out the regular dredging programme. They emphasised the need for taking short-term river training programme to maintain navigability of the river channels.

The meeting discussed in detail the present condition and courses of the river Jamuna and expressed satisfaction at the measures taken by the BIWTA to maintain navigability of the routes.

Besides, Shipping Secretary Anwarul Islam, the meeting was attended by head of water resources engineering See Page 12 col 5



This boy — Moslem, 15 — was brutally tortured for eating only one egg at a Dhaka Medical College Hospital kitchen yesterday. — Star photo

Two ex-ROK presidents indicted for treason

SEOUL, Jan 23: Former Presidents Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-woo, already charged with bribery and insurrection, were indicted for treason today for alleged involvement in an army massacre of civilians nearly 16 years ago, reports AP.

The indictment wraps up a nearly two-month government investigation into the so-called 'Kwangju Massacre', in which hundreds of people were killed or injured.

However, it is not expected to close the book on one of South Korea's most divisive issues. A battle is being waged against law adopted in December to punish the two men on grounds that it is retroactive and thus unconstitutional.

Also indicted were six ex-army generals who helped brutally crush pro-democracy protests by hundreds of thousands of people in the southern city of Kwangju in 1980.

Three or four former army generals who now serve in the National Assembly also were expected to be arrested later, prosecution officials said.

After seizing power in a 1979 coup, Chun and Roh sent troops and tanks to bru-

See Page 12 col 8

Export earning from jute yarn, twine plummeted

Export earnings from jute yarn and twine plummeted in the first six months of current fiscal signalling a very critical period the industry is passing through, reports UNB.

According to the Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSA), export earnings from jute yarn and twine dropped to Tk 115.09 crore in July-December period from Tk 141 crore of same period of last year.

The income showed a fall of 18.44 per cent while the volume of export also decreased by 18.77 per cent during the first half of current fiscal (1995-96).

A total of 42,182 tons of products were exported in July-December period this year against 51,926 tons during the same period of last year, said a BJSA statement signed by its chairman Shabbir Yusuf yesterday.

Jute exporters and industrialists blamed the slump on price hike of raw jute caused by production shortfall and the prevailing political instability.

In such a situation the BJSA chairman has appealed to the government to take some urgent measures to protect the jute spinning industry that has become in-competitive in world market.

Bangladesh is losing fast its market of jute yarn to India which is providing adequate incentives to exporters to help them to be competitive, he said in the statement.

On the other hand, he said, the association repeatedly raised various problems of the industry to the Jute Ministry but none of those was resolved because of the ministry's 'non-cooperation' and "step motherly" attitudes.

The problems aggravated further as the government

recently withdrew the ban on export of raw jute through land route which resulted in price hike of the already high-priced raw jute in local market, Yusuf said.

The BJSA leader said the Bangladeshi exporters failed to compete with their Indian counterparts as they are getting external market assistance at the rate of 10 per cent against the FOB export bill of jute yarn.

"For this, the Bangladeshi exporters are selling out their products at a lesser price than the production costs," he said, disclosing that India has fixed target of jute yarn/twine export at 80,000 tons this year against last year's 61,000 tons.

While a production shortfall pushed the price of raw jute up by Tk 250 per maund, the withdrawal of ban on raw jute export through land route further increased the price for which the industry faced a serious threat to its existence.

The BJSA leader also demanded exemption from advance tax on source in exporting jute yarn and twine, rationalisation of the increase of stamp duty on bill of lading and introduction of special peak-hour rate of power for the export-oriented industries.

The 11th meeting of the task force formed to remove obstacles in export trade recommended the interest rate on working capital at 8.5 per cent, but it was yet to be implemented, he said.

The BJSA leader also demanded exemption from advance tax on source in exporting jute yarn and twine, rationalisation of the increase of stamp duty on bill of lading and introduction of special peak-hour rate of power for the export-oriented industries.

The exporters in India, said Yusuf, get a 6 per cent rebate on the interest of 13.5 per cent for working capital while the scheduled banks in Bangladesh raised the rate of interest for working capital

5 arrested for selling text books in city

Police in a special drive in the city's Bangla Bazar area arrested five people and seized a good number of text books yesterday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip off, police arrested the book traders — Sunil Kanti Ray, Md Aslam, Md Rahim, Abdul Mannan and Md Moslem Siddik — for selling the books sanctioned for free distribution.

Meanwhile, police rounded up 94 people, including wanted criminals, on various charges from different parts of the city in last 24 hours.

The arrested were produced before the court, said a DMP press release.