

MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE
 WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF
 ITALIAN CARRARA PERLATO SICILIA
 BOITICINO INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN
 MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE
 OF DIFFERENT TYPES
NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.
 199, TEJGAON 1/A, DHAKA
 TEL: 605957, 807363 SHOW ROOM 861985

The Daily Star

JUICE
JAM
PICKLE
KETCHUP
SHERBET

STQ

PRAN for Health **STQ**

SQUASH
VINEGAR
KEWRA-
WATER
ROSE-
WATER

VOL. VI NO. 50 REGD. NO. DA 781 PHALGUN 23 1402 BS, DHAKA WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 1996 SHAWAL 15, 1416 HIJRI 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 5.00

World Cup Cricket Quiz 1
Winners!
 Page 11

Inside Today

Article
Crisis to Conflict
 by Manzoor Hossain
 Page 4

Focus
 15 February Election: It has created more problems than it has solved: Reviewing the aftermath
 Page 5

International
 Leftist parties plan to censure govt in Lok Sabha for Hawala scam
 Clinton proposes \$ 242.6b military budget for '97
 Page 8

Business
 US faces tough decisions on trade with China
 ASEM unlikely to bring immediate flurry of new business to Asia
 Pages 6,7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index	790.89 (+0.17%)
Market capital Tk	9182.39 cr
Transactions in volume	129228
Transactions in value Tk	2.59 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index	401.19 (-0.41%)
Market capital Tk	2442.10 cr
Transactions in volume	6880
Transactions in value Tk	1464001

Metropolitan
Dhaka Day by Day
 The Hindi Fever
 Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS
12 killed in Colombia landslide
 BOGOTA, Mar 5: At least 12 people, most of them children, were killed today in a landslide in central Colombia triggered by recent heavy rains in the area, police said. Several people were also missing after a wave of mud and rocks came crashing down before dawn on a cluster of houses perched at the foot of a mountain in Armenia, capital of central Quindio province, police added, reports Reuters.

LDF convention postponed
 The national convention of the left Democratic Front (LDF) scheduled for Thursday has been postponed due to a hartal called by the opposition. The LDF at an emergency meeting yesterday also postponed its district representatives' conference scheduled to be held at the Engineers' Institute on the day, said a press release, reports UNB.

Rafiq visits Orbis
 Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia visited Orbis, a mobile eye hospital at Zia International Airport yesterday. Just after arrival at the airport after attending the SAARC Housing Ministers Conference in Colombo from February 28 to March 2, the Minister went to Orbis and visited the operation theatre there, reports BSS.

Five injured in N'ganj blast
 From Our Correspondent
 NARAYANGANJ Mar 5: Five persons were seriously injured in a blast while they were making bombs in a house near Tolaram College in the town yesterday afternoon.

PM's letter to Hasina for talks on non-party govt

Prime Minister and Chairperson of the ruling BNP Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday wrote a letter to Awami League President Sheikh Hasina inviting her to sit for a dialogue on the proposed non-party government for holding all future general elections. BNP Joint Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "The letter was delivered at the Gulshan residence of AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman at 10.45 pm. When contacted over telephone last night, Zillur's wife, Ivy Rahman, said she received the PM's letter from BNP Office Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan as her husband was not at home at that time. Replying to a question, Ivy Rahman, who is chief of the

Mahila Awami League, said she would have contacts with her husband this morning on the matter and added that if suggested by him she would forward the letter to Sheikh Hasina sometime today. Earlier in the evening, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who is Minister for Food and Agriculture, told the regular press briefing at his Bailey Road residence that the letter was addressed to the AL chief and former Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina and was signed by the Prime Minister and BNP chief. He, however, declined to divulge the contents of the letter copies of which, he said, would be made available to the press after it reached Sheikh Hasina.

A BNP source, however, said that Begum Zia's letter contained her proposals for non-party government for holding all future elections and an invitation for talks to settle all matters relating to such a government and another general election. Asked on the Opposition's condition for fresh dialogue that the President should initiate it, Mannan Bhuiyan said, "We (leaders of the BNP and Opposition parties) had talks earlier and we ourselves want to resolve the political crisis through discussions". Replying to another question, he said some of the opposition leaders were released yesterday and others would be freed in phases. See Page 12 Col 3

Three Opposition leaders freed

The government yesterday released three top Opposition leaders were detained during the Opposition's non-cooperation programme last week. Tofael Ahmed, president member of Awami League, Mohammad Nasim, organising secretary of the same party, and Abdul Qader Mollah, public secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami, were released from separate jails. Arrested under the Special Powers Act, the political leaders were sent to jail each on a 30-day detention. However, JP secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju, Barrister Moudud Ahmed of the same party, and Matiya Chowdhury of the AL, who was picked up by police from the Bangladesh Secretariat during the non-cooperation programme, were still under detention. Opposition sources

Joint secretary general of the ruling BNP and Agriculture and Food Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan had announced on Monday that the detained Opposition leaders would be released in phases for creating an atmosphere congenial to dialogue. Tofael Ahmed, who was arrested on February 24, was released from Rajshahi jail at 12 noon. He returned to Dhaka by a Biman Bangladesh airlines flight on the same day. Mohammad Nasim, who was arrested on February 24, was released from Noakhali Jail. He was due in the capital late last night after holding a public meeting at Noakhali. Qader Mollah, arrested on February 27, was released from Dhaka Central Jail at about 12 noon. Jamaat leaders said, See Page 12 col 8



Khandakar Moshtaque dead
 Former President Khandakar Moshtaque Ahmed died of brain haemorrhage in Dhaka yesterday afternoon at a city clinic. He was 77, reports BSS. Moshtaque Ahmed was admitted to the hospital yesterday at 2 pm and expired at 2:30 pm, according to clinic sources. His namaz-e-jamaaza will be See Page 12 col 6



Visitors at a stall of the Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy premises which ends today. — Staff photo

Crucial closing encounters today
 Sports Reporter
 The statisticians will have a torrid time fixing who plays whom in the four quarterfinals of the Wills World Cup cricket at the end of the three group league matches being played at different venues of the sub-continent today, the concluding day of the preliminary round of the sixth version of the cricketing gala. At the tiny Pindi Stadium in Karachi, co-hosts Pakistan will take on New Zealand to decide who finish second from Group B behind South Africa. A win for the world champions will however enable a possible classic clash of the two sub-continental titans — Pakistan and India — with the latter playing their last Group A See Page 12 Col 3

Philips-DS Quiz-I Student wins first prize, cricketer 2nd
 Sports Reporter
 A student and a former national cricketer won the first and second prizes respectively in the lucky draw of The Daily Star-Philips World Cup Quiz No 1 held at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium yesterday. Muhammad Shariful Islam Beg, an eighteen-year old student from Shama Charan Roy Road, Mymensingh, won the first prize, a 21-inch Philips Powervision color television; while Jahangir Shah Badsah, a former national cricketer, won the second prize. See Page 12 Col 2

Business leaders' call Resolve crisis through dialogue immediately

Four leading trade and chamber bodies and the Dhaka Stock Exchange in a joint statement yesterday urged the political parties to resolve the present crisis immediately through dialogue. "Dialogue and discussions which are the tested means of resolving political conflicts are needed for resolution of the current crisis," said the statement. It was signed by president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Samson H Chowdhury, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Ali Hossain, president of Bangladesh Employers' Association Laila Rahman Kabir, president of Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry Matabul Jamil and chairman of Dhaka Stock Exchange Imtiaz Husain.

"It is reassuring that the government has recognised the need for a fresh election, to be held under a neutral government," said the statement. "The country could have been spared from the current turmoil if this recognition was announced earlier," it noted. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's announcement for holding a fresh election under caretaker government may not be enough to resolve the prevailing crisis, but it provides a starting point for dialogue, said the business leaders. "On national issues of such serious importance, it is desirable that the correct direction should come from a process of dialogue and not from the decision of any one party," they said. "In fact, history is replete See Page 12 col 8

Hartal now tomorrow

The major opposition political parties have now called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal tomorrow, revising their earlier call for hartal today, in Dhaka and five adjoining districts. Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami in separate statements said they would observe the hartal tomorrow. The UNB reported late last night that the mainstream Opposition has revised its call for countrywide hartal tomorrow and said hartal will now be observed today in Dhaka and five adjoining districts. The Daily Star, however, could not confirm the report from sources concerned. rate press statements yesterday, said that the change was made to facilitate the return home of the devotees who attended the *Biswa Jhema* at Tongi. The three parties gave the hartal call to press their common demands for cancellation of the February 15 polls, resignation of the present government and holding of elections under a caretaker government See Page 12 Col 3

Next round of bidding for oil, gas exploration by July

Bangladesh expects to attract top international hydrocarbon exploration companies, after two consecutive gas reserve finds in the country, in the second round of international bidding for exploration by July this year. Preparations for the tender bidding of 15 exploration blocs in the US city of Houston and in London have already started, well-placed sources in the Energy Ministry said. The two recent strikes in Bhola and in the Bay of Bengal have already put Bangladesh in a position to attract the top five hydrocarbon explorers. The US Department of Energy is also likely to support if Bangladesh requests the big companies to participate in the bidding, the sources said. The World Bank (WB) had funded the first bidding for Bangladesh. The government may approach a multilateral donor agency for funding the bidding process this time, which will come as grants, the sources added. In the first round of bidding held in September 1993 in Houston, eight blocs out of the 23 exploration blocs had been put on the table.

Later, production sharing contracts (PSCs) were signed for five of the eight blocs and agreements were initiated for the other three. The new find, in Bloc-16 in the Bay of Bengal, the country's 19th gas field, shortly after another discovery in Bhola, expands the known hydrocarbon prospective area from the eastern region to the south and west of the country, an exploration expert observed. Following the first announcement of the find in the London Stock Exchange, the share price of Cairn Energy PLC of Scotland, a partner in Bloc-16 exploration, soared from 22p to 219p in a day, a source concerned pointed out. Moreover, the success rate of striking hydrocarbon reserve in Bangladesh was 40 per cent because only 53 wells were drilled since 1910 and 12.4 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves were confirmed until the two recent strikes, an Energy Ministry official noted. "In the bidding presentation, the international oil world will have many a query regarding oil exploration in Bangladesh even after they have our energy policy and other documents because exploration involves millions of dollars," a top official said. They will seek explanation on different aspects of the energy policy. The policy makers present in the bidding meeting will respond to these queries, he added. London has been selected for bidding since the headquarters of 'big league' companies are situated there while See Page 12 col 7

\$ 3m IFC loan guarantee for IDLC
 By Staff Correspondent
 The World Bank's private sector financing window, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), yesterday agreed to guarantee a local currency loan equivalent to three million US dollars for the Industrial Development Leasing Company limited (IDLC), according to a fax message received from Washington. The Dhaka-based leasing company, IDLC, will use the funds, channeled through Dhaka branch of ANZ Grindlays See Page 12 col 7

Cabinet okays amendment of Money Loan Court Act '90

The Cabinet yesterday approved amendment proposal of the Money Loan Court Act 1990, reports UNB. Proposal for Bangladesh's joining at the International Convention relating to copyright was also approved in the Cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Rly fails to achieve target by 29 pc

While the road transport sector is advancing fast with the private sector's aggressive participation, the state-run railway is fighting a losing battle for existence by retaining passengers and goods, reports UNB. Railway's passenger traffic has constantly been on the wane while the authorities are desperately trying to keep the volume of cargo intact. Official sources said a recent review meeting on the performance of railway exposed serious concern over the sagging business of the sector that continued to worsen the imbalance between revenue earning and expenditure. The meeting was worried at the dismal revenue earning situation of railway during the first four months of the current fiscal (July-Oct 1995) which fell short of the target by a big margin of 29 per cent. The revenue failed to match even with the earnings of the corresponding period of the last fiscal and dropped by 7 per cent. Sources admitted situation in the following months was no better and continued to deteriorate with declining 'traffic offer' as a result of frequent strikes and blockades as well

as problems in ferry service. A senior railway official, giving an idea about strike-related losses, said the recent six-day ceaseless strike had cost railway Tk 5 crore in Northern zone alone. Passenger traffic of railway sharply dropped to 3,96,46,000 in the last fiscal (1994-95) from 4,45,15,000 in 1993-94. Revenue from cargo in 1994-95 slightly improved, but that too is facing threats due to growing interest towards less hazardous road sector. Railway sources said even various government departments, including the food department, was increasingly preferring the road sector to railway despite the latter being the cheaper mode. The beleaguered rail See Page 12 Col 4

BNP rally rescheduled for today

The ruling BNP has again rescheduled its planned public rally in the city from March 7 back to March 6 due to the shifting of the hartal date by the major opposition parties, coinciding with the rally, said Nazrul Islam, office secretary of the party, last night. However, the venue and time — Manik Mia Avenue at 3 pm — would remain unchanged, he said. Prime minister and the BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address the rally, planned to project her party's latest stand on the non-party government to hold future general elections and to mobilise public opinion against the Opposition's "destructive" activities. The second rescheduling of See Page 12 col 8

Israeli troops lay siege to West Bank



An Israeli soldier ties the hands of a Palestinian man in the West Bank refugee camp of Al Fawwaz, near Hebron, yesterday in the aftermath of a bombing campaign. The Israeli army arrested 19 people. — AFP/UNB photo

TEL AVIV, Mar 5: Undermining the Israel-PLO peace agreement even as he tries to save it, Prime Minister Shimon Peres sent troops to lay siege to hundreds of Palestinian villages and towns in the West Bank today, reports AP, Reuters. Before dawn, troops sealed the homes of 10 suspected members of the militant group Hamas. Soldiers shut the doors and windows of the houses of all but one of the four suicide bombers who have attacked Israel over the last nine days, killing 57 people and themselves. Thousands of troops erected barricades around more than 400 West Bank communities, confining Palestinian residents within. Fearing a siege, Palestinians stockpiled flour, oil and other staples. The Israeli army also said it was prohibiting Jewish settlers from employing West Bank Palestinians. "The IDF has imposed a closure on all the cities and villages and towns in the West Bank and within this framework, the exit of Arab residents is forbidden from their settlements," an army spokesman said. See Page 12 Col 5

DSE trading drops by 60pc in February

Trading at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) during February had come down to as low as about 40 per cent of that during the previous month. DSE sources said, due to political instability and agitation programmes of the major opposition parties trading at the stock exchange slowed down sharply last month. A total of 17,39,353 shares and debentures valued at Tk 2619,49,283 were traded last month while 41,48,472 shares and debentures worth Tk 64,61,98,089 were traded at DSE during January. Talking to The Daily Star, Imtiaz Husain, Chairman of the DSE, said the slow down was the result of management problem of the market coupled with less number of working days than usual due to general strikes, blockades and government holidays. Abu Ahmed, a Dhaka University teacher and a stock market analyst, noted that some foreign portfolio investors left with disappointment. See Page 12 col 7

RAJUK Commercial Plot
Corrigendum of Auction Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that the Auction date of Commercial-Cum-Residential Plot No 16, Road No 2, Sector No 3 and Plot No 7, Sector No 6 on Shahjalal Avenue at Uttara Commercial Area, Dhaka as per Auction Notice published on 15.2.96 in the Bangladesh Times, on 16.2.96 in the Dainik Bangla and on 20.2.96 in the Dainik Ittefaq has been refixed on 20.3.96 instead of 28.2.96 at 10.00 AM due to unavoidable circumstances. Application form will be received by the Deputy Director (Estates) from the intending bidders up to 2.00 pm of 19.3.96. It may be mentioned here that among the intending bidders those who have already purchased application form shall not need to purchase it afresh. All other terms and conditions as per previous Auction Notice shall remain unchanged.

Chairman
 DFP-4913-4/3 Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha, G-334 Dhaka