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NEWS BRIEFS

Samad Azad greets Albright

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has congratulated Mrs Madeline Albright on his appointment as the Secretary of State of the United States, an official press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

Fire at Walsow Tower

By Staff Correspondent
Fire broke out at the ground floor of Walsow Tower on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Bangla Motor in the city yesterday afternoon. The fire, which started around 1:40 pm, burnt some 15 bundles of papers stored in a room of the high-rise apartment building, fire service and police sources said. No casualty was reported. The origin of the fire could not be known immediately.

One allegedly abducted in city

By Staff Correspondent
A group of people allegedly kidnapped one Ali Akbar Fakir, of Kamrangirchar under Lalbagh thana, from the city's old quarters early yesterday. Fakir, aged about 55, was reportedly abducted from his residence at Nijambagh, Kamrangirchar, at around 2 am. Police recorded a case in this connection and launched a hunt for him in the area.

Ctg AL leader's condition worsens

By Staff Correspondent
The condition of Chittagong city Awami League leader Sekander Hayat Khan turned critical yesterday at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city where doctors had shifted him to the intensive care unit. Khan was admitted to the CMH with bullet wounds on Nov 18. He underwent surgery two days later. He was shot by a gang of toll-collectors in his office in Chittagong when he refused to pay them.

Building collapses in Surat, 40 trapped

NEW DELHI, Dec 6: At least 40 labourers were believed to be trapped under a building which collapsed in western India today, the Press Trust of India reported. The building, which was under construction, collapsed in the town of Surat in Gujarat state, the news agency said, says Reuters.

Woman freedom fighters, artistes honoured



Woman freedom fighters trained in Gobra Camp and woman artistes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra were accorded a reception in the city yesterday on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Victory Day.

'AL firm to protect democratic rights'

Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad Hanif yesterday said all political parties are free to carry on their political activities without any interference during the Awami League government, reports UNB.
"Being a democratic party, Awami League is determined to protect the democratic rights of all irrespective of opinion and belief," he told a rally in front of the party central office in the afternoon.

The city Awami League organised the rally in observance of the "Democracy Day", marking the sixth anniversary of the ouster of autocrat Ershad.
"We had ousted Ershad, but it does not mean they (Jatiya Party) will not be able to exercise their political activities," said Hanif, who is also the president of city Awami League.

He added: "We believe in democracy and so do we believe that everyone has the right to do politics as he wishes."

He criticised the previous BNP government for "not allowing Jatiya Party to hold meetings" in the capital during first

three years of BNP government.
"This was not democracy," Hanif said blasting BNP who, he alleged, had disrupted the activities of Awami League during the Ziaur Rahman's rule following the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Referring to BNP's pre-condition that 500 of its workers must be released before it returns to parliament, the Awami League leader advised the main opposition party to submit a list of such arrested people.
"If there is a single person arrested only for his political affiliation and without any specific charge, the government will release him," he said echoing the Prime Minister.

Hanif said Awami League is determined to institutionalise democracy in the country as it "does not believe in the politics of bullet, nor in capturing power through the back door."

But conspiracy that continued for last 21 years against Awami League has been launched again, he alleged and

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Calling Ershad autocrat is distorting history: JP

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju yesterday said that those who call Ershad an autocrat are actually distorting history.
He was speaking at a discussion meeting organised to mark the "Constitution Protection Day" observed by the Jatiya Party across the country yesterday.

The JP central committee at the discussion, held at its central office in the city, observed that December 6 would remain important in the history of the country as the then president HM Ershad had protected the Constitution by handing over power peacefully on this day in 1990.

"In 1982 the then president Abdus Sattar handed over power to Ershad by admitting his own failure. Ershad was compelled to lead the nation by imposing martial law," Anwar Hossain Manju observed.

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25th V-Day

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) accorded a reception to the women freedom fighters who were trained in the Gobra camp and the artistes of the then Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra at the Shahbag Crossing in the city yesterday in observance of the Silver Jubilee of the Victory Day.

A total of 39 freedom fighters of the Gobra camp and 18 artistes of the Betar Kendra were present at the function.

The Gobra camp was the only training camp for women freedom fighters, set up by the Bangladesh government in exile near Calcutta during the Liberation War.

The freedom fighters and the artistes were presented with crests and certificates. Begun Sajeda Chowdhury MP who was director of the Gobra training camp, distributed the crests among the women freedom fighters. Famous singer Dr Sanjida Khatun distributed

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No 'political' promotion or appointment: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the civil servants to work with sincerity and devotion for improving the lot of the people, reports BSS.

She said proper implementation of the policies and development programmes of the government by the civil servants would help us raise the standard of living similar to the neighbouring countries.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the newly constructed head office building of the Bangladesh Administrative Service Association at New Eskaton in the city.

A Samad, also spoken on the occasion. Cabinet ministers, state minister and secretaries attended the function.

Sheikh Hasina said as a conscious, educated and talented section of society, the civil servants had a responsible role to play to ameliorate the condition of the commonman. "You must stand by the people and leave a stamp of your patriotism by serving their cause," she said.

The Prime Minister said during the last 21 years after the killing of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country, which had lagged behind in all sectors along with the slide in democratic management.

She said a large number of the civil servants had played a significant role in the Mujibnagar government during the War of Liberation. Many of them had also participated in the war directly, many sacrificed their lives and many became crippled, she said. "I remember all of the with gratitude," she added.

She emphatically said her government would not give any appointment or promotion to the public servant on the basis of political allegiance. Merit and efficiency will be the only basis of assessment and this process would continue, she added.

She further said that initiative would also be taken to maintain consistency with other cadres in the case of promotion.

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Severe cyclone hits Andhra coast

MADRAS, Dec 6: A 'rogue' cyclone hit the southeastern coast of India today, after hovering at sea for two days and triggering an exodus by hundreds of thousands of people, officials said, reports AFP.

Winds packing speeds of up to 80 kilometers per hour followed by lashing rains pounded the southern city of Madras and nearby Chengalpattu district, a government spokesman said.

The Cyclone Warning Centre said the storm, packing winds of 90 kilometers per hour, also hit the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

There has been no casualty so far, the spokesman said in Madras. The heavy rains are expected to last for another two hours.

A fire brigade official said

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Police fire on rioters in Hyderabad: 1 killed, 7 hurt

HYDERABAD, Dec 6: Hindus and Muslims hurled rocks and burned vehicles Friday in a southern city on the anniversary of the demolition of a mosque and police fired gun shots to disperse the crowd, killing one person and injuring seven others, reports AP.

Many others, including eight policemen, were injured in the stone throwing in Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh state, which has a large Muslim population.

The attacks came on the fourth anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Mosque in the northern city of Ayodhya. Hindu radicals supporting a rightwing political party tore down the 400-year-old mosque in 1992, claiming it

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Book traders call strike Dec 10

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers Association (BBPSA) has called a country-wide strike of the publishers and sellers on December 10 demanding withdrawal of the decision to change the covers of the textbooks of class VI, IX and X.

The call for strike was given at a special meeting of the association held yesterday at the Jubilee Public School and College in the city.

The association also threatened that book sellers would go on an indefinite strike if its demand was not fulfilled even after the December 10 strike.

Leaders of the association said that the authorities had decided to change the covers though there would be no

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Houses, shops gutted in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Dec 6: A fire that broke out at Kalama Bazar, East Bakalia of Chittagong, here last night completely gutted ten shops, six houses and two poultry farms, reports BSS.

Fire service and police sources said today that the fire originated at 2 pm and lasted for half an hour. Six fire units worked to extinguish the fire.

The extent of damage could not be ascertained immediately, the service sources said.

Share market: Some economists contradict Kibria's views

Star Report

Some leading economists have termed the current downward trend in the stock market an obvious crash, contradicting Finance Minister SAMS Kibria's contention that it was a 'natural correction'.
Out of four economists interviewed by The Daily Star, three said that the slide in the share market was a 'clear cut crash' while one shared the view of the Finance Minister.

The All Share Price Index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange started sliding down steadily from its peak of over 3627 points in mid-November and closed Thursday last at 2667 points. The Finance Minister had said that he would have considered it alarming if the point went below 1500 points. But some economists believe al

ready an inevitable crash has taken place.

Prof Abu Ahmed of Dhaka University said that a fall in the index by about 1,000 points within two weeks should be considered as 'more than a crash'. The crash could not be felt due to imposition of the circuit breaker on the prices of the shares," he said.

Ahmed, also the president of Share Investors' Forum, said, that the circuit breaker was a 'saline' to check unusual fluctuation in price of shares. Many small investors lost almost 70 per cent of their invested money, he said.

He suggested the government to come forward immediately with massive reforms of the stock exchanges, separating the managements and brokers

from trading. If reforms measures are not taken, frequent fluctuation of prices of shares will be repeated, he observed.

Mahbub Ahmed, a teacher of Accounting Department of Dhaka University observed that it was 'absolutely a crash'.
But the crash is not visible because there is a circuit breaker which keeps ups and downs in share prices within five per cent in a day, he said. Otherwise, the All Share Price Index would have experienced massive fall, he said.

Mahbub Ahmed also chairman of a securities company said that the government should have handled the stock market move efficiently.

As the government is following a free economic policy this

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11-pt demand Kerb marketmen to place memo to PM Monday

By Staff Correspondent

Kerb market share traders, under the banner of a newly formed organisation, yesterday declared that they would submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister on Monday demanding government's initiative for bringing back normalcy in the country's stock markets.

They put forward a 11-point demand at a press conference and said they will march towards the Prime Minister's office from in front of the DSE building at 11 am to hand over the memorandum.

M Islam Jahangir, general secretary of the Out Market Share Traders Association addressed the press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club. Other leaders of the association

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Preferential treatment should go: MCCI

By Staff Correspondent

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) has suggested that Bangladesh, in the upcoming ministerial level meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), should plead for implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreement and removal of 'preferential positions' in sectors like textiles and clothing, leather and footwear.

The five-day WTO meeting begins in Singapore on Monday. About 110 ministers of

WTO meet begins Monday

commerce and foreign trade of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are expected to attend the meeting. Out of 48 LDCs, 19 are members of the WTO.

The moral of 'preferential positions' is crucial because between 1970 and 1990, the number of workers in textile, clothing and footwear sectors in Bangladesh increased by 416 per cent because of the 'shift in the production capacity and

terms of trade, inadequate flow of investments etc.

"Now that quotas and preferential treatments will start to be phased out under the Uruguay Round Agreement, it is important to ensure that its (Bangladesh) interest are protected for the larger benefits of millions of people engaged in these sector," the editorial said.

The Bangladesh team at the meeting will have a crucial role in highlighting the dilemmas and difficulties of the LDCs, and

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SHARIF CHOWDHURY

This is for general information that the Proprietor/Owner of M/s Bengal Trading Company, Tokyo Mr. Sharif Chowdhury, S/o late Abul Hayat Chowdhury, House No. 103, Kalabagan 2nd Lane, Dhanmondi, Dhaka (photograph shown above) was appointed as General Sales Agent of Biman Bangladesh Airlines in Japan but fraudulently, violating all terms and conditions of agreement, he has misappropriated the sale proceeds of Biman tickets worth of Tk. 11, 46, 74, 809.00 (Taka eleven crore forty-six lacs seventy-four thousand and eight hundred nine) without depositing the same in Biman Fund. Now he is absconding closing down his all trade and business in Japan. For misappropriation of this huge Biman fund, a case has been filed with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka against Mr. Sharif Chowdhury No. C.R. 2780/96.

Anybody providing specific information with regards to the whereabouts of Sharif Chowdhury home or abroad, will be awarded Tk. 25,000.00 (Taka twenty-five thousand) or a free ticket of Biman for Dhaka-Singapore-Dhaka sector.

Please send any information on the above to Bangladesh and Biman Offices abroad or to the Law Enforcing Agencies of Bangladesh or to the General Manager (Security), Biman Bhawan, Motiheel, Dhaka Telephone: 9558627, 9560151-90 (2391).

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