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| DSE MARKET | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| DSE price index | 2375.37 |
| Market capital Tk | 16965.24 cr |
| Transactions in volume | 102007 |
| Transactions in value Tk | 3.57 cr |
| CSE MARKET | |
| CSE price index | 1198.58 |
| Market capital Tk | 14548.25 cr |
| Transactions in volume | 12730 |
| Transactions in value Tk | 3620767.50 |

NEWS BRIEFS

Mild quake
in Rangpur
 RANGPUR, Dec 23: A mild earthquake shook the district town and its adjoining areas at around 3:40 pm today. According to local met office, the tremor lasted about five seconds. However, no casualty or damage was reported, reports UNB.

4 shops, 12 tempos
gutted
 Twelve tempos and four shops were gutted in a fire at a garage at South Jatrabari early yesterday. Fire brigade sources said the blaze started at about 3:10 am at the garage. Firefighters from Postogola rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control. Cause of the fire could not be known immediately, reports UNB.

Dacoity at
apartment house
 A dacoity was committed at an apartment house at Shyamoli in the city yesterday. According to Mohammadpur police, a group of armed dacoits entered into the apartment of Aminur Rahman at Ring Road at around 4:30 pm. The dacoits tied hands and legs of the inmates of the house at gunpoint and looted cash and valuables worth about Taka three lakh, reports BSS.

BCL leader stabbed
in Barisal
 From Our Correspondent
 BARISAL, Dec 23: One student leader was stabbed here this evening. He was hospitalised in a critical condition. Witnesses said Moazzem Hossain Chinnu, 24, a leader of BCL town committee, was stabbed by some youths belong to a political party.

Hartal at Gaibandha
 From Our Correspondent
 GAIBANDHA, Dec 23: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was enforced by the Balashi River Port Movement and Implementation Committee here today to press home its 15-point demand. The demands include shifting the Teestamukhghat from Fulchhari to Balashi, erecting railway track from Trimohini station to Balashi and setting up an oil depot at Balashi. All kinds of vehicles went off the roads and educational institutions, shops and business houses remained closed.

NU (Hons) results
today
 The results of Honours examinations 1994 under the National University will be published today, reports UNB. A university press release yesterday said the results of Honours part-1, 2 and 3 and first, second and third year Honours were being published in due course of time.

Reform package underway

DSE management to be separated from Council

By Shehab Ahmed and Inam Ahmed

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is planning a string of measures including reorganisation of the Dhaka Stock Exchange Council and separation of DSE management from the Council.

The reform package includes restructuring of the SEC that was set up as a 'regulatory watchdog' for the capital market in 1994 in the wake of a boom in the nascent market, an authoritative source told The Daily Star.

"We are planning both short

and long term reforms that would further strengthen and stabilise the Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges," he said.

The SEC, currently manned by only 11 persons, is hiring new hands, some deputed from the government, and consultants to bolster its operation.

It has already sought help from the World Bank (WB) which recently provided a consultant for a short-term to help redesign the SEC.

The WB is expected to pro-

vide a long-term technical assistance to further strengthen the SEC and help formulate required policies and laws for regulation of the capital market, the source said.

The SEC is planning to develop further the capital market with diversified equity instruments, sound bond market and 'over the counter' trading system for smooth business.

"But these are long-term measures. We have taken short-term steps to reform and stabilize the market," he said.

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Clash near Jessore jail: 12 hurt

Cases against 152 prisoners filed

JESSORE, Dec 23: Authorities of Jessore Central Jail and local police have filed five separate cases against more than 150 prisoners on various charges following the jail-revolt incidents, reports UNB.

A huge quantity of lethal weapons and several firearms, recovered from the jail during the Sunday's pre-dawn operation, were deposited to Kotwali police today, official sources said.

Three trucks were used to carry the recovered weapons — two pipe-guns, a country-made revolver, bow and arrow, spear, axe, knife, 'kirich' and 'ramdao' — from the central jail.

Police said the jailor filed three cases against the inmates accusing them of rebellion, killing a mate inside the prison and damaging public property.

Sub-inspector Enayet of Kotwali thana filed another two cases charging the prisoners with killing a police constable and carrying illegal arms inside the jail.

Of some 2700 inmates in the Jessore central jail, a total of 152 prisoners, mainly convicts,

were named as accused, police said.

Meanwhile, all the BDR personnel and 75 per cent of police forces, deployed to guard the jail, were withdrawn today and sent to their respective stations in the adjacent districts.

In a backlash today, some 500 people, including local people and relatives of the prisoners, locked in a clash with police outside the jail for about an hour, beginning 11 am.

About a dozen people were wounded, none seriously though, as police charged batons and tear gas shells to bring the mob under control. Later, visitors of 30 prisoners were allowed to see their kins.

In the evening, 16 prisoners, including 13 under special mercy, were set free from the jail on the occasion of Victory Day while three came out in normal procedure.

No untoward incident was reported inside the jail during the day although an uneasy calm was prevailing with all the prisoners kept in their lock-ups.

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Grant for victims

PM praises united role of parties

JESSORE, Dec 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today expressed deep sorrow at the loss of lives in Jessore jail and announced Tk 50,000 as lump sum grant for each of the families of the prisoners killed in Sunday's police operation, reports UNB.

She also announced a donation of Tk 100,000 for the policeman who was also killed during the crackdown on the prisoners in revolt.

The Prime Minister, who flew in here to attend a function at the Bangladesh Air Force Academy, met with representatives of different political parties, lawyers and journalists at the office of the Deputy Commissioner this afternoon to take stock of the overall situation.

Highly praising the united role of the political parties during the jail crisis, the Prime Minister urged them to keep up this spirit and cooperate with the government in building the country's economy.

She said the authorities were compelled to go for action fearing more casualties after jail inmates clashed with one another.

The government tried its

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News Analysis

Corruption, long neglect triggered Jessore jail revolt

By Mizan Ali, back from Jessore

An appalling living condition and rampant corruption providing comfort for money triggered the recent six-day rebellion led by certain hardened inmates of the Jessore Central Jail where the authorities used massive force to crush it.

But a close look into the backgrounds reveals a sordid tale of long neglect that also shook other prisons focusing urgent attention to better prison management.

The basic issues like medieval jail code, colonial-era management and sub-human living condition for prisoners and the question of amnesty continued to linger, casting a long shadow over the future of prison management in the country, human rights groups, relations of prisoners and prison sources said.

When prisoners took control of the Jessore Jail it had its snowballing effect in jails in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Tangail and Barisal, the prison authorities trying to clumsily manage to avert the jail rioting and keep the prisoners under batons and boots for the time being with the borrowed strength of the Home Ministry's array of forces, and in case of Tangail, Kader Siddiky BU and MP.

The prisoners have been tamed but there are no guarantee that they will not repeat the

rioting in future unless authorities pay attention to reforms that had been proposed sixteen years ago by a government appointed commission, the sources said.

What happened in the morning of the Victory Day this year answers a number of questions behind the prisoners' upheaval at Jessore.

The prisoners were denied improved food on the occasion of the Victory Day during the breakfast, usually served on special days. They were also re-

portedly assaulted by the prison personnel, sparking the agitation.

But the authorities were not caught unprepared as there had been sufficient intelligence reports about seething discontent being stoked up by a section of inmates, maintaining close liaison with each other on a reported withdrawal of remission of sentence of certain categories of convicts.

The speculation about a general amnesty being granted was fuelled by a mass circulated newspaper, reporting on November 19 that ten thousand prisoners would be freed on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of victory in the War of Liberation.

Cancellation of the remission of sentence for a section of prisoners by the caretaker government of Habibur Rahman, which was earlier awarded by the caretaker administration of Shahabuddin Ahmed, had already created a sense of deprivation among prisoners of the Jessore Central Jail, the sources said.

Building the agitation on demand for better food, a section of prisoners, at about 6:00 am on December 16, forced prison guards out of the jail premises and took control of the barracks, the source said. The development was immedi-

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Relatives waiting for news of their kin yesterday after police wrested back control of Jessore Central Jail on Sunday. —Star photo by Sk Enamul Huq

Kerb marketmen threaten sit-in from Sunday

Angered by sharp fall in stock prices for the last few days, the kerb market traders yesterday announced new agitational programme to realise an 11-point demand, including the resignation of the finance minister, reports UNB.

They would allow trading on the floor of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) for next three working days and begin an indefinite sit-in demonstration from Sunday, keeping the bourse under lock and key.

The DSE again witnessed a heavy sell pressure yesterday — but without buyer in the bearish market — pulling down the benchmark price index for the fifth consecutive day.

The benchmark All Share Price Index of the country's premier bourse plummeted by

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CHT talks resume this morning

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 23: The peace talks between the government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), adjourned on December 21, will resume at 10 am tomorrow at Khagrachhari Circuit House, official sources said.

The dialogue aimed at finding out a political solution to the two-decade-old problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Tomorrow's meeting is likely to discuss the five-point demand of Shantibahini, sources said.

The PCJSS, the parent organisation of Shantibahini who have been fighting a bush war since 1976, is seeking autonomy and expulsion of Bengali settlers from the CHT.

PCJSS is expected to put forward the demands which include granting autonomy to the regional council in some 36 matters, changing the name of Chittagong Hill Tracts as Jummaland and identifying the illegal immigrants since 1947 and land settlement.

The government side at the meeting will be headed by the Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasnat Abdullah as Chairman of the 11-member national committee while the PCJSS by its chairman Jyotindra Bodhipriyo Larma alias Shantu Larma.

The five-member PCJSS team will be flown by helicopter from Dudukchhari to the meeting venue, the sources said.

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Indo-Bangla jt body on Ganges water-sharing meets today

By Staff Correspondent

The first meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Committee (JC), which will decide the modalities of joint monitoring of Ganges water, begins in the capital today, official sources said.

Joint monitoring of the flow of the Ganges is expected to begin on January 1, which also marks the beginning of the five-month long dry season.

The meeting of the joint Committee spread over several sessions is expected to last two days.

The Joint Committee has been constituted as per provision of the 30-year water accord between the two countries signed on December 12.

BB Char, member of the Indian Joint Rivers Commission, arrived yesterday to lead his side. A representative of the India High Commission in Dhaka is due to join the Indian team at the meeting of the Joint Committee.

Bangladesh has already constituted a three-member team representing it at the Joint Committee, headed by Lutfur Rahman, member of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC). The other two members are Khalilur Rahman, Director of JRC and Towhidul Anwar Khan

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Cabinet okays proposal for agri census '97

The Cabinet yesterday approved the proposal for the Agriculture Census 1997, reports UNB.

The approval was given at a meeting of the Cabinet held with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair at her office.

The Cabinet also endorsed the government holiday list for the year 1997, said an official announcement.

In the meeting, the Cabinet greeted the Prime Minister for signing the Ganges water sharing treaty between Bangladesh and India on December 12.

The Prime Minister thanked the ministers and high officials of the ministries concerned for their role in signing the treaty.

Procession protesting case against Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of workers of the opposition BNP paraded the city streets yesterday protesting the filing of a 'false corruption case' against party chief and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The projectionists chanted slogans warning of massive street agitations unless the case was withdrawn immediately.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed a case with Ramna police on Saturday accusing Be-

gun Zia and former home minister Abdul Matin Choudhury of appointing police officials by misusing powers, cancelling a list of selected candidates, during BNP rule.

BNP central committee also announced last night that a procession would be brought out from in front of the party central office at Naya Paltan in the city at 3:30 pm today to protest the 'conspiratorial case' against Begum Zia, repression on BNP activists and 'killings' at the Jessore jail, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement urged all party workers, supporters and members of the public to join the procession.

Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal convenor Khurshid Jahan Haq, MP, in a statement, urged all female members of the party to take part in the procession.

The BNP chief is scheduled to return home from Saudi Arabia tomorrow at 10 am.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday termed the case against the party chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad 'arranged, motivated, absolutely ridiculous and a ploy to tarnish the image of Begum Zia and her party'.

"If the present rulers had the minimum idea about the authority and powers of an elected chief executive of the state, they would not have ridiculed themselves by doing so," the BNP sec-

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Newsprint worth Tk 8cr lying unsold in KNM

KHULNA, Dec 23: Over three thousand metric tons of newsprint worth over Taka eight crore of Khulna Newsprint Mills is lying unsold as dealers and newspaper offices are not lifting their quotas, reports BSS.

According to concerned sources, newsprint of KNM has been facing tough competition from the imported white newsprint while the mill has also stopped exporting its products to some neighbouring countries including Nepal.

The sources said the price of Khulna newsprint is Tk 27,000 per metric ton for dealers and about Tk 20,000 for newspapers, while the price of imported white newsprint is Tk 19,000 per ton.

Khulna newsprint price is higher as the mill has to pay import duty for raw materials like pulps, chemicals and fur-

nace oil. KNM can reduce the price of its product if it is allowed to import raw materials without import duty, the sources added.

They pleaded for imposing duty on the import of newsprint in order to create opportunity for KNM for selling its product at home.

The sources further said that the KNM is heading towards problems because of stock-piling of the newsprint and it would be difficult for the mill to pay salary to its 3000 employees and workers.

Established in 1959, Khulna Newsprint Mills has reduced its daily production from 140 metric tons to below one hundred tons.

The sources also pleaded for modernisation of KNM for producing better quality newsprint.

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