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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 2450.59
Market capital Tk 17720.00cr
Transactions in volume 227515
Transactions in value Tk 9.7cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 1163.30
Market capital Tk 14226.08cr
Transactions in volume 32180
Transactions in value Tk 9946232.50

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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina greets Shawkat Osman

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted noted novelist Shawkat Osman sending him a bouquet on the occasion of his 81st birthday. The Prime Minister wished him good health and hoped that the writer would continue his writing in favour of democracy and humanity. Later, Shawkat Osman presented a greetings card to the Prime Minister when she was present at the Central Public Library auditorium to inaugurate the fifth International Short and Alternative Film Festival yesterday evening, reports UNB.

Reception to new British envoy

Commonwealth Journalists Association, Bangladesh (CJA.B) held a reception in Dhaka yesterday in honour of the new British High Commissioner, David Walker. Communications Minister Anwar Hossain, Attorney General Barrister KS Nabi, diplomats, editors of national newspapers and elite attended the reception. The function at a local hotel was addressed by David Walker, CJA.B President Hassan Shahriar and its Secretary General Farid Hossain, reports UNB.

Cold wave claims 13 in N-districts

LALMONIRHAT, Jan 2: The shivering cold wave that has been prevailing in five northern districts has so far claimed 13 lives in greater Rangpur and Panchagarh districts, unofficial sources said. Of them five people died in Rangpur, two each in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, one in Nilphamari and three in Panchagarh. Local sources said distressed people are passing their days in miserable condition as they do not have any winter clothes to cope with the cold, reports UNB.

One robbed of Tk 31000 in city

A shopowner of Gazipur was robbed of Tk 31,000 near Joykuli Mandir in the city yesterday. Police and hospital sources said Mohamud Alul Hossain, 25, of Sripur in Gazipur district was robbed and robbed in the afternoon. He came to Dhaka to buy goods for his shop. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), reports BSS.

Body to look into leather sector problems Green signal for LNG, crude oil export

The export-promotion task force yesterday endorsed a government proposal for exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) and crude oil, reports UNB.

The task force's green signal for LNG and crude export followed a recent proposal from the Energy Ministry which suggested the export under the terms of the model production-sharing contract (PSC) in the export policy.

Donors, the World Bank in particular, favour export of gas, arguing that the country is rich in natural gas reserve and opening up of gas export would encourage more overseas investment in the energy sector.

The task force on export in a meeting yesterday took stock of the country's export perfor-

mance and also discussed the problems relating to expansion of exports of readymade garments, and leather and leather products.

It formed a six-member committee to suggest ways of development of the leather sector.

The meeting also asked the banking division, finance division and the Bangladesh Bank authorities to solve the problems of the readymade garment and leather sectors immediately.

Chaired by Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, the meeting attended by officials and representatives of the private sector, was held in the conference room of the commerce ministry.

A detailed discussion took place on the bright prospect of export of leather and leather products. Tofael said there is a tremendous scope for flourishing the sector by taking coordinated steps to solve the long-standing problems.

Bangladesh can earn a huge amount of foreign exchange from the sector which will also create vast employment opportunities, the minister told the meeting.

The six-member committee formed in the meeting will look into the problems of leather sector development and make recommendations for removing the barriers to enabling the sector to earn increased foreign currency.

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SEC may impose lock-in on sponsor-directors

By Shehab Ahmed and Inam Ahmed

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is planning to impose lock-in on the sponsor-directors of companies from off-loading their shares for certain period, barring them from sucking the honey-pot in the event of a bull run in the capital market, sources in the SEC said.

The procedures are also likely to be applied to the promoters of 'greenfield' companies in the backdrop of recent upheavals in the market, they added.

The measures are part of the reforms of capital market as planned by the SEC which came

under pressure from the authorities and the people to bring more transparency in the market, where millions of taka changed hands under alleged manipulations and underhand deals.

Directors of certain companies went for off-loading their own shares allegedly jacking up their prices that gave them handsome dividends. They included some whose companies had no fundamentals, a few had even ceased production for a long time, the sources said.

A probe committee, headed by Vice-Chancellor of Jahangir

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PM asks LGED officials to take quick decision on projects

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has taken realistic steps in reorganising the local government framework, reports UNB.

She said the sources of income and institutional capability of the local government parishads would be strengthened on the basis of implementation of recommendations of the Local Government Commission.

Inaugurating the newly constructed Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) headquarters building at Agar-ganj in the morning, the Prime Minister said necessary steps would be taken to make the local governments self-reliant.

In this connection, she mentioned the government's deci-

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Blacklist in Betar goes

The present government has cancelled the blacklist of artists, litterateurs and commentators of Bangladesh Betar, reports UNB.

A good number of reputed artists, litterateurs and commentators were blacklisted in the radio during the Pakistan period and after the changeover of 1975 for political reasons, said an official handout yesterday.

"From now on there will be no restriction on artists and litterateurs or any blacklist in Bangladesh Betar due to political reasons," the handout said.

Ganges flow on rise

RAJSHAHI, Dec 2: Water discharge in the river Padma at Hardinge Bridge point was recorded at 79,364 cusecs today showing marginal increase of 323 cusecs over yesterday's level, hydrological experts of the Water Development Board said, reports BSS.

Water discharge at the Hardinge Bridge point was registered at 79,041 cusecs yesterday.

Bangladesh Water Development Board sources told the news agency that the flow of water in the Padma from Farakka end would take three to four more days for stabilisation of water level.

The sources said augmentation of water would increase with the continued flow of water from Farakka in accordance with the historic water treaty signed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart H D Deve Gowda on December 12 in New Delhi.

The sources said due to increased percolation rate caused

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Malaysia won't extend amnesty, to deport 1m immigrants

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 2: The government will not extend the amnesty for over one million illegal immigrants and is preparing to arrest and deport them, reports AP.

There will be no more extension of the three-month amnesty" Deputy Home Affairs Minister Ong-Ka Ting said.

The government will arrest and deport illegal immigrants who failed to take advantage of an amnesty that expired on Dec 31, immigration officials said today.

Because of the New Year's holiday, officials had yet to take action against those over-staying.

Officials estimate migrants account for 10 per cent of Malaysia's population of about 20 million. Of those, about half are illegal immigrants who have slipped in without work

permits or travel documents. Immigration officials said about 3,000 immigration officials, police and army personnel will go door to door nationwide in the crackdown, which they expect to start soon.

About 300,000 illegal workers employed by about 17,000 employers took advantage of the amnesty.

Malaysia's migrants come from 28 nations, some as far away as Nigeria. Most, however, come from Asian countries Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Burma, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and the Philippines.

Economic growth exceeding 8 per cent in each of the past eight years has resulted in a labour shortage.

The migrants come because of better wages and readily

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Launch dacoity on Jamuna: 20 passengers hurt

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 2: Pirates robbed launch passengers of their valuables in an attack that also left 20 people injured in the Jamuna-river route between Sirajganj and Bhuapur in Tangail today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said a gang of about 25 armed dacoits from a mechanised boat stormed the Sirajganj-bound launch about two and a half kilometre off the ghat in the evening.

The robbers beat up the passengers, looted valuables and cash and snatched all their belongings, including shoes and coats. Three of the injured were admitted to a local clinic.

The passengers claimed that valuables worth over Tk 4 lakh were looted.

Cases filed against 6 T&T staff for corruption

By Staff Correspondent

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption has charged five officials and an employee of the Telephones and Telegraph Board with misappropriating Tk 41 lakh.

According to bureau sources, more such cases are likely to be lodged shortly against other corrupt officials of the T&T Board.

The officials against whom cases were lodged with the Ramna thana last Wednesday are: Golam Kibria, Administrative Officer holding the current charge of Assistant Director of the T&T Board, Sheikh Golam Sarwar, Assistant Engineer (Phones) Dhaka Sena Sadar, Mahfuzul Mannan, Divisional Engineer (PABX), Md Nazimuddin Promanik, Sub-divisional Engineer, Switch Room, Hedayetul Islam Khan, Sub-Assistant Engineer (Phones) and Zahiruddin, an MLSS.

It has been alleged that they misused their official position in making ISD telephone connections in Mohammodpur area under false identity.

Israel to open air force liaison office in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Jan 2: Visiting Israeli President Ezer Weizman said today his country would open an air force liaison office in New Delhi to boost ties with its Indian counterpart, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, reports Reuter.

It quoted Weizman, visiting a southern Indian air base, as saying the two countries had many things in common in aviation.

Indian newspapers have quoted Weizman as offering Israeli Kfir fighter planes to New Delhi during his visit which began on Sunday.

But an Israeli official told Reuters that India was not interested in the Kiris, saying they were too old for the Indian air force.

Student politics to remain suspended on IU campus till Jan 17

All student politics will remain suspended till January 17 on the Islamic University Campus at Kushtia, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of different student organisations with Vice-Chancellor Professor Mohamud Enamul Haque in the chair, a university press release said in Dhaka last night.

Representatives from different student organisations, deans of various faculties, proctors, provosts, law advisor and the students welfare advisor attended the meeting.

The press release said the decision for suspension of student politics was taken in view of the coming Honours and Masters examinations, admission tests, annual sports and cultural competitions and to keep the law and order normal on the campus.

Dhaka has all infrastructural support 25 countries for implementation of Asian Highway project

By M Anwarul Haq and Sharier Khan

Interview with ESCAP official

Bangladesh has almost all infrastructural support in place to open up its portion of the Asian Highway for international use from any day.

This was stated by Dr M Rahmatullah, Director of Transport, Communications and Tourism Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in an interview with The Daily Star.

Member states have lent strong support for the immediate operation of all stretches of the Asian Highway that provide a surface communication link among 25 countries, the ESCAP director added.

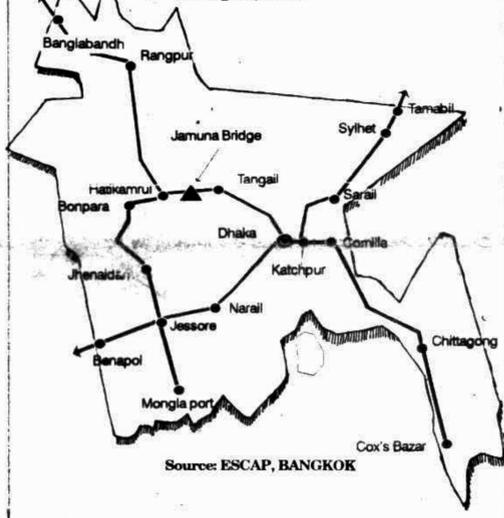
"It is now only a matter of political decision for Bangladesh to open up international traffic through the Asian Highway. If the government takes decision today, the door for increased regional co-operation and enhanced trading can be opened up immediately," he pointed out.

The previous government, he said, approved the routes for Asian Highway in Bangladesh last year. These routes have three check points with India which already exist. Through

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NEW ASIAN HIGHWAY ROUTES IN BANGLADESH

(Approved by the government
in August, 1995)



Source: ESCAP, BANGKOK

Muktijodha hold Cosmos, Calcutta MSC defeated

Sports Reporter

Calcutta Mohammedan Sporting Club suffered a humiliating 1-4 defeat at the hands of Malaysia Blue in one of the two matches of the Bangabandhu Cup invitational football tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Muktijodha Sangsad Krira Chakra, one of the three local outfits in the 12-team met, held the Cosmo Club of Russia to a goalless draw in the second match of the day.

The Malaysian side outplayed the Calcutta giants in every department, took an unassailable 3-0 lead at the breather. Adrian Shah struck twice while Nagarajan and Hoe Guan shared the other two for the winners.

On the other, a suicidal act from Malaysian defender Amir enabled Mohammedans pulling

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Accept demands without delay, urges BNP

BNP leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has alleged that the government wants to turn parliament into a 'rubber-stamp body' in a planned way by keeping the largest opposition BNP outside the House, reports UNB.

"This situation cannot be allowed to continue," the BNP Secretary General said in his presidential address at a joint meeting of the BNP and its front organisations at the party's central office yesterday.

Reiterating his party's willingness to give the parliamentary democracy a solid foundation by making the parliament effective, the BNP leader urged the government to make it possible by accepting his party's demands immediately.

He said it has now been proved that the country's independence, sovereignty, democracy, education, culture and history, and the fundamental rights of the people are not safe in the hands of the Awami League government.

"It seems that the government has no headache over the problems of the country and its people. It's now busy to appease neighbouring India with subservient activities," the opposition lawmaker said.

"The ruling party with its six months of misrule has emerged as a fascist, undemocratic, autocratic and anti-people government."

Bhuiyan stressed the need for launching a united anti-government movement and said "nobody would be allowed to play a game with the country and the people."

He urged the nationalist, democratic and progressive political parties, individuals and organisations to take part in the future movement against the undemocratic, tyrannical and anti-people activities of the present government.

"Public life has been virtually paralysed due to the wrong policy, and undemocratic and

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100 shanties gutted in city, 200 in Ctg

By Staff Correspondent

Fire gutted over 100 shanties in the city and about 200 at Patharghata in Chittagong yesterday.

In Dhaka, fire broke out at a slum in Kalyanpur under Mirpur thana at about 5 pm and gutted over 200 houses. The fire soon engulfed the slum known as Pora Basti near Natun Bazar police and fire service sources said.

Fire brigade units from Mirpur, Mohammodpur and Kurmitola stations took about an hour to extinguish the blaze.

The cause of the fire could not be known immediately, said fire service sources. But police said they launched a drive to evict the slum dwellers at about 1.30 pm yesterday. Government officials were present during the eviction, police said.

Later in the afternoon, some slum dwellers were locked in a

clash with police and at one stage, they set fire to the houses which were not dismantled by police.

The small houses were made of bamboos and corrugated iron sheets where more than 15,000 people of low income groups resided, said a police officer.

However, some others said, the fire broke out from a cooker.

LNB adds: In Chittagong about 200 shanties at a slum predominantly inhabited by fishermen in Patharghata area were gutted in a devastating fire.

The flames originated from an electric short circuit at about 10.15 am and soon engulfed the adjoining slums well before the news reaching firemen.

However, six units of the fire brigade extinguished the blaze in more than an hour's fight.

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Disgruntled jail guards receive ration

Disgruntled wardens of Dhaka Central Jail, who earlier refused to take monthly ration Wednesday received their ration yesterday evening on intervention by government authorities, reports UNB.

Official sources said the 663 wardens of Dhaka, out of country's about 7,000, refused to take ration demanding increased ration like police and BDR. The family ration of the two forces has been increased to 40 per cent recently.

Following Wednesday's protest by the jail guards, top officials of the prison authority talked to high-level of the government.

The government, the sources said, assured the jail authorities that they would consider the demand of the wardens. The jail guards agreed to receive the ration yesterday evening as the officials carried the message of government consideration.

Villagers rescue kidnapped schoolgirl

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 2: Villagers rescued a school girl from deep forest in Ranu thana after she was abducted and gang-raped by miscreants today, reports UNB.

Local union parishad chairman said the villagers also caught two of the miscreants and kept them at the UP office. The victim was admitted to hospital in a critical condition.

Local people said, a four-member armed group kidnapped the 12-year-old girl while she was working at a green-pepper field with her parents and relatives at village Eidgar Barabil in the thana this morning.

They took the class-four student, daughter of a freedom fighter, into deep forest by a jeep and raped her. As the news spread, villagers went on a massive hunt in the forest and found the girl along with two of the kidnappers.

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