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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 2362.52
Market capital Tk 17083.40cr
Transactions in volume 151521
Transactions in value Tk 6.79 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 1159.96
Market capital Tk 14188.52 cr
Transactions in volume 30260
Transactions in value Tk 9372645

NEWS BRIEFS

Agri census begins tomorrow

The third 20-day agriculture census of the country begins tomorrow with a view to covering two crore of rural households. This was said at a press conference yesterday organised by the Bureau of Statistics. The census which is being conducted after every 10 years, will gather information about the area of land, land use, land ownership, pattern crop land, number of cattle and agriculture manpower, reports BSS.

11 shops gutted in Khulna

From Our Correspondent
KHULNA, Jan 4: Eleven shops were gutted in a fire here on Thursday night.

Property worth over Tk 20 lakh was damaged reportedly. Police said the fire originated from an electric short circuit in a shop 'Mamun Electronics' at Mongla near main road. The blaze was extinguished by firemen of the Mongla port Authority in two hours. One person was injured in the fire accident.

Rocket shell found in city

By Staff Correspondent

A rocket shell was found during a ground breaking work for an under construction building at Uttara in the city Friday afternoon. The shell of around five feet in length was dead, police said adding the construction workers found it during digging at Road No 6 of Sector Five.

Trader robbed of Tk 1.66 lakh

COXS BAZAR, Jan 4: Terrorists robbed a local trader of Tk 1.66 lakh in the town's Tekapara area today, leaving the victim severely wounded.

Sadar police said Subhash Chandra Pal was robbed in the morning on his way to local bus stand to go to Chittagong for buying goods and commodities. The gang also beat up the trader mercilessly, reports UNB.

Woman crushed under wheels

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 4: A woman — Anjuara, 25 — was crushed under the wheels of a microbus at 5 pm today on Khulna Mongla highway under Rupsha thana. Police seized the microbus but its driver managed to escape. The deceased was an employee of Chabi Fish Trading Company of Khulna city.

4 young men shot dead in Jessore

JESSORE, Jan 4: Four young men were gunned down at a bus stand in Jhikorgachha thana in the district in broad daylight today, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Abdul Jalil, 38, the ringleader of an organised gang styled 'Jalil bahini', Khasruzzaman, 32, and Ansar Ali, 30, of Mahidia village and Abbas Ali, 35, of Malancha village in the Sadar thana.

Witnesses said a group of gunmen got down from a Benapole-bound local bus at Lawjari bus stand, 15 km off Jessore town, where the members

of 'Jalil bahini' were chatting at 1 pm.

The gunmen, wearing lungi and wrapper, sprayed bullets on the four from a close range leaving them dead. Earlier, they blasted a bomb to disperse the gathering.

Local people said at least 25 shots were fired during the operation. The alleged dacoits got bullets in their chest, head and stomach.

The gunmen, who were suspected by police as the opponents of the 'Jalil bahini', were seen marching towards Jessore

after the shooting.

Police said the victims had been wanted long for killing, looting and unleashing terrorism in the area. Several cases had been lodged against them in Jessore and Jhikorgachha thanas.

Police recovered Tk 2,500 and a walkie-talkie from the possession of Abdul Jalil, who reportedly was a gang leader.

The bodies were sent to the Jessore Sadar Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Jhikorgachha thana in this regard.

Ramadan

KSA may deport non-Muslims for public eating

RIYADH, Jan 4: The Interior Ministry has issued its annual warning that non-Muslims could face deportation if they are caught eating or drinking in public during the Ramadan month of fasting, newspapers reported today, says AP.

Muslims abstain from food and drink from dawn till dusk during the holy month, which starts next week. The exact date will be determined by the sighting of the new moon.

The ministry warned non-Muslims that if they are caught drinking, eating or smoking in public they face punishments including termination of their

See Page 12 Col 6

Arms drop in Purulia

Six foreigners appear in court

NEW DELHI, Jan 4: Six foreigners appeared in court in Calcutta on Friday over a mystery arms drop in eastern India which sent alarm bells ringing over the country's air defence system, officials said, reports AFP.

Five Latvian crew members of a Russian-origin Antonov-26 and a British mercenary named Peter Bleach appeared on charges of sedition and violating the India Arms Act. Sedition is punishable by death in India.

In the December 1995 incident, the Antonov dropped 250 AK-56 assault rifles, Chinese origin, pistols, rocket launchers, antitank grenades, 20,000 rounds of ammunition and electronic warfare equipment over the city of Purulia, near Calcutta. It is still unclear who the arms were intended for.

See Page 12 col 5

Nasim at Bhorer Kagoj Roundtable

AL holds 'formal talks' with BNP by Jan 15

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling Awami League will hold 'formal talks' with the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) before January 15 for resolving the 'political impasse' arising out of the latter's abstaining from attending Jatiya Sangsad session.

This was disclosed by Telecommunications Minister and Organising Secretary of the ruling party, Mohammad Nasim at a Roundtable on the Jatiya Sangsad and its Business' organised by the daily Bhorer Kagoj yesterday afternoon.

"We shall hold formal talks with the BNP to resolve the present political impasse before the JS goes into next session," Nasim said, expressing optimism about its outcome. The JS is scheduled to meet on January 15.

The Bhorer Kagoj authorities invited the leaders of AL, BNP, Jatiya Party and some experts on the subject. But BNP leaders, barring the party's standing committee member Saifur Rahman, did not turn up. The editor of the daily, however, informed the audience that they did not attend the roundtable deliberately for 'political' reasons. "A strong admirer of the Kagoj, Saifur Rahman joined the discussion in his personal capacity," said the editor, Matur Rahman, who moderated the dialogue.

Referring to the impasse, Saifur Rahman said, "We have to find out the reasons why the fifth Parliament could not function after three years, and once again why the present Sangsad is not working only six months after it had been constituted." He felt that a 'refined political culture' was a prerequisite for effective functioning of

'I know to work like an ox'

NEW DELHI, Jan 4: Indian prime minister HD Deve Gowda today compared himself to an ox to claim he was not lazy as portrayed by some newspapers, reports AFP.

"I am a workaholic," he told a meeting of civil servants in the southern city of Bangalore. "I know to work like an ox."

Deve Gowda, 63, who calls himself "a humble farmer," has often been photographed by newspapers dozing at official meetings.

The prime minister said the media was not doing justice to him. "I am not a sleeping prime minister," the United News of India (UNI) quoted him as saying. "Most of the time I am deep in thought about various welfare programmes for the people."

Warm welcome awaits Gowda

The Indo-Bangla summit in Dhaka tomorrow will try to find a formula for quick repatriation of Bangladesh's tribal refugees crammed in camps in Tripura, officials said, reports UNB.

Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, who arrives in Dhaka tomorrow morning on a two-day official visit, will hold talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina in the evening.

The visit is taking place at the invitation of the Bangladesh Prime Minister, who will greet Gowda at the airport.

Meanwhile, all preparations have been finalised to accord warm welcome to the Indian Prime Minister. Bangladesh Air Force jets will escort the special aircraft carrying the VIP and members of his entourage from the entry of See Page 12 Col 2

Water level falls 'as dry soil starts absorption'

PABNA, Jan 4: The water level of the Padma registered a five-centimetre fall at the Hardinge Bridge point during the last 24 hours, reports UNB.

The quantum of water flowing through the river here reduced by 4,684 cusecs during the period.

Officials today recorded 7.12 metre water level and a flow of 75,176 cusecs of water.

However, the flow and level of water were more than the previous two years—1995 and 1996.

The flow of water at the Hardinge Bridge point was 68,985 cusecs in 1996 and 59,395 cusecs in 1995.

Officials said the water level came down due to absorption of water by dry soil in the river basin during the lean season.

Govt forces BNP to take to streets: Mannan Bhuiyan

By Staff Correspondent

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP yesterday alleged that the government forced his party to take to the streets by 'making the parliament ineffective and barring the Opposition from carrying out its duties.'

He was addressing a meeting of ward commissioners of the city belonging to BNP at the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in preparation for the party's January 7 public meeting in the city.

The BNP leader called the government 'fascist, anti-people and undemocratic,' and said, "there is no alternative to agitation to protest the government's activities, opposed to the interests of the people and the country." The BNP is pledged to protect the country's independence and sovereignty, democracy and fundamental rights of the people, he said.

BNP city unit convenor Sa- See Page 12 Col 7

Sit-in on link road near Kamalapur

By Staff Correspondent

Several hundred people from Muga, Sabujbagh and adjoining areas staged a sit-in on the Muga-Kamalapur link road near Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday protesting the plan to close the road for expansion of an Inland Container Depot (ICD) of Bangladesh Railway (BR).

The local people brought out a procession demanding that the BR authorities hand over the said road on railway land to Dhaka City Corporation.

The ICD expansion work remains suspended since December 24 when the local people forced the contractors and labourers to stop the work.

Meanwhile, the leader of the road closure resistance committee, Shahajuddin Sarker, told The Daily Star last night that a delegation of the local See Page 12 Col 7



An aerial tussle between Malaysia Red defender Amar Jusoh (No 13) and Russian Cosmos Club forward Shagorav during their Bangabandhu Cup Group D engagement at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

—Star photo by Anisur Rahman

GPSPA with British co Cabinet likely to take up draft tomorrow

By Sharier Khan

A draft Gas Purchase Sales Agreement (GPSPA) with a British company, Cairn Plc, for sale of gas from the Sangu-1 gas field in the Bay of Bengal is likely to be placed before the cabinet on Monday for approval, according to competent sources in the energy ministry.

If approved, Petrobangla may sign the agreement with the British company during the visit of British Prime Minister John Major to Bangladesh, beginning on January 10.

The Cairn, together with a US company, Brown and Roots, is now developing the Sangu-1 gas field and will supply at least 160 million cubic feet (mmcf) gas to the Bakhrabad Gas Systems in Chittagong daily from the second quarter of next year, the sources said.

The GPSPA will outline how much gas will be produced by

the gas field developer and at what price it will sell the gas to the government.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken initiatives for fast progress in finalising various documents and agreements which will enable foreign private companies to develop gas fields," a source said requesting anonymity.

Former US defence secretary Dick Cheney, chief of the US company Haliburton, the parent company of Brown and Roots and the chief of Cairn are also scheduled to come to Dhaka next week in connection with signing of the agreement, the source said.

Earlier in November, the government approved another GPSPA with another US company, Occidental. This company will soon begin drilling See Page 12 Col 8

Burglary at SEC office remains a mystery

Star Report

What the 'thieves' were searching for at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) ten days ago remains a mystery as police is yet to make a breakthrough in the case.

Some unidentified elements, apparently professionals, broke into the 16th floor office of the SEC at the Jibon Bima Corporation Tower at Motijheel on the night of December 24, 1996.

They scoured through files and documents, breaking open the lockers in three chambers housing the office of a deputy director who deals with company affairs, the administrative section and the information section, a complaint lodged with police by the SEC said.

Police said the incident bore the mark of professionals, obviously looking for something other than mundane things like money or valuables as they broke through a space between the lift and the ceiling of the 16th floor.

They left papers and documents strewn around, but took away a telephone set so that the

Death of Sylhet JCD activist sparks violent protest: 20 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 4: Some 20 persons were injured when police lobbed teargas shells to disperse the activists of the JCD here today. They were protesting the death of an activist of the party who succumbed to his injuries at the Sylhet M A G Osmany Medical College Hospital at about 2:30 am.

The JCD activists went on the rampage damaging the office room of the principal and other rooms of the medical college.

Meanwhile, Md Shahjahan, sub-inspector of police and subedar Sirajul Islam have been put under suspension for their failure in properly handling the situation. See Page 12 col 5

Another setback for Cosmos Club

Sports Reporter

Pre-tournament favourites Cosmos Club of Moscow suffered yet another setback in the Bangabandhu Cup when Malaysia Red held them to a 1-1 draw at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday afternoon.

In the day's lone encounter, Cosmos striker Gladishev put his side ahead in the 27th minute while Shanmugam levelled the margin for Malaysia Red in the 45th minute.

With this draw, Cosmos' hopes for a semifinal berth from Group D were almost shattered as they finished their first round with only two points from two matches. The group championship will, however, be decided tomorrow when Mukti-joddha Sangsad and Malaysia Red face each other in their last group clash as both teams have collected one point each.

Ujung Pandang Football Club of Indonesia will take on Eastern All Star Club of Thailand in today's first match at 4 pm while local giants Abahani Krira Chakra will meet Calcutta Mohammedan Sporting Club in the next match at 6 pm.

Transport strike called in Tangail today

From Our Correspondent

TANGAIL, Jan 4: A transport strike called by the 'District Transport Owners' Association' will begin today.

The transport owners said they have called the strike for an indefinite period demanding unconditional release of Azad Siddiqui, younger brother of Kader Siddiqui.

Meanwhile, the police have arrested three other 'terrorists' of the Azad-Murad group. They are Ghora Biplab, 28, Collins, 23 and Habil, 25, police said.

Police also arrested one Zinnah on Friday. According to the police, they were wanted in connection with many cases.

On December 31, Murad See Page 12 Col 3

2 children killed in wall collapse

By Staff Correspondent

Two children were killed and at least three persons injured when a wall of a house collapsed at Kalunagar road under Lalbagh thana in the city yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Kabir Hossain, 5, son of Arif Miah, and Najma Begum, 7, daughter of Nurul Islam of Kalunagar road at Hazaribagh. The wall of an old tin-shed house collapsed on them at about 9 am, police said. Both of them were the children of day-labourers.

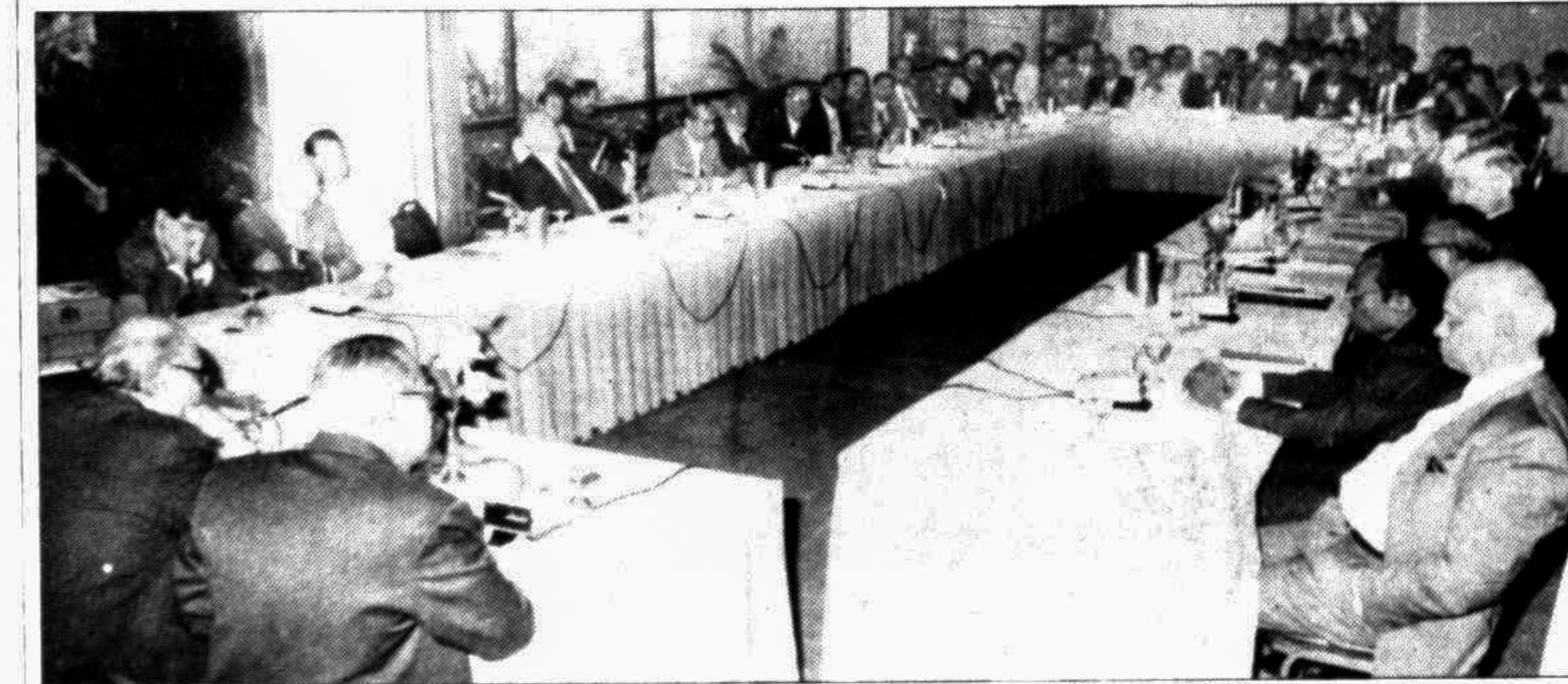
The injured persons who were taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) were released after treatment.

Akhteruzzaman Ilias dead

Eminent writer Akhteruzzaman Ilias died at a city hospital yesterday. He was 53, reports UNB.

Famous for both novel and story writing, Akhteruzzaman Ilias was a Professor of Bangla in Dhaka College and vice-president of Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir.

He earned fame for his novel 'Chiley Kothar Sipai' based on the perspective of 1969 Mass See Page 12 Col 1



MPs, business leaders and officials participating in a dialogue on Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) Project organised by ESCAP and CPD at a city hotel yesterday.

—Star photo

Rajuk Commercial Plot Auction Notice

Most ideally located Commercial-Cum-Residential Plot No. 46 of Sector No. 11, Sonargaon Janapath, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka measuring more or less 669.14 Sqr Metre (10 katha) will be allotted for 99 years lease on open auction.

Applications on prescribed form with terms and conditions to be obtained from Sonali Bank, Rajuk Bhaban Branch, Dhaka on payment of Tk 500/- (Taka five hundred) only in cash for each set (Non-refundable) and will be received by the Deputy Director (Estates) from the intending bidders up to 2.00 PM on 25.1.97.

The auction will be held on 26.1.97 in the Conference Room 3rd floor of the Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka at 10.00 AM.

Chairman

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