



MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE
 WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF
 ITALIAN CARRARA, PERLATO SICILIA,
 BOTTICINO, INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,
 MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE
 OF DIFFERENT TYPES.
NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.
 199, TEJGAON (A), DHAKA.
 TEL : 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM : 861985

Announcement

The popular feature 'Dhaka Day by Day' which of late had become irregular due to space constraint will henceforth be published on Page-4 with effect from tomorrow.

Inside Today

Article

Politics Must Change

Column: Window on Asia by Shahed Latif

Turkey — Entering 1997

Column: The Horizon This Week by Arshad-uz Zaman Page 4

Focus

National diagnostic network: A milestone in healthcare services; Choice of school for children Page 5

International

Israel, PA on verge of accord over autonomy to Hebron

Sudan mobilises troops as rebels attack border towns Page 8

Business

12 private commercial banks make profits in '96

Trading at DSE comes almost to a standstill Pages 6,7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1839.37 (-3.22%)
Market capital Tk 13333.79cr
Transactions in volume 19923
Transactions in value Tk 4711777

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 861.48 (-4.25%)
Market capital Tk 11032.16 cr
Transactions in volume 16110
Transactions in value Tk 5599960

NEWS BRIEFS

JPPP meets today

By Staff Correspondent
A meeting of the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party (JPPP) will be held today at its Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan office in the afternoon, a party source said.

Yusuf's surprise visit to DMCH

Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf made a surprise visit to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Dental College Hospital yesterday. During the visit, the minister expressed his dissatisfaction at the absence of the doctors and nurses. Yusuf first visited the Dental College Hospital and found no doctors and nurses on duty there. During his visit to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, the minister did not find the doctors and nurses listed in the duty rosters, reports BSS.

2 soldiers shot dead in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Jan 13: Muslim militants shot dead two soldiers and injured four others in an overnight ambush in the northern Indian state of Kashmir, the United News of India said today. It said the attackers, armed with automatic weapons, ambushed an army patrol late Sunday night in the Buchpora suburbs of the state's summer capital, Srinagar, reports AFP.

US businessman jailed in China

SHANGHAI, Jan 13: A Chinese court sentenced a US businessman today to 10 years in jail for smuggling garbage, fined him 500,000 yuan (60,000 dollars) and ordered him to be deported, the official Xinhua news agency said. William Ping Chen had confessed to charges of smuggling banned goods, including 238 tonnes of garbage and a small amount of waste medical items, between July and December 1995, Xinhua said, reports Reuters.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
4	14	—	5:35
5	15	5:20	5:36
6	16	5:20	5:37

AL-BNP dialogue at Speaker's chamber today

By Nazmul Ashraf and Reaz Ahmad

The much-talked-about dialogue between the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP will be held at 11 am today at the Speaker's Jatiya Sangsad chamber. Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday evening. The Speaker further said that he had finalised the schedule for the dialogue after consulting both the sides' while meeting a three-member ruling party delegation at his chamber earlier in the morning. Communicating the schedule to Deputy Leader of Opposition in parliament Prof Badruddoza Choudhury, the Speaker also requested the BNP leader to name his party representatives for the dialogue. In reply to a question, Hu-

mayun Rashid Chowdhury said, "I'm optimistic about a positive outcome of the scheduled dialogue as both the sides appear very sincere in resolving the stalemate in parliament. He also hoped that the talks, to be mediated by him, would result in the participation of all parties in the parliament session beginning tomorrow. My job will be to assist, in an impartial manner, in ironing out the differences between the two sides and facilitate smooth holding of the talks to end the impasse in parliament," he observed. Referring to his talks with Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina on the issue, the Speaker said, "The PM is keen to see that the Oppo-

sition takes part in the deliberations of the House to make the proceedings lively and meaningful." Asked about his hour-long meeting with the ruling party representatives yesterday, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury further said, "... They seemed very eager to meet their Opposition counterparts... I'm hopeful that both the sides would be able to find out ways and means for resolving the impasse." On the agenda of today's dialogue, he said the talks would mainly concentrate on 'free and fair coverage' of Sangsad proceedings by the BTV and proportionate representation of the Opposition in various parliamentary bodies. Other issues See Page 12 Col 4



The DIT street at Narayanganj during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

Fifty hurt during hartal at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 13: At least 50 people, including eight policemen, were injured when police used batons and fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets during sporadic clashes with BNP supporters who called an 8-hour hartal in the town protesting killing of a Jubo Dal leader on Sunday. Of the injured persons, 14 were admitted to Narayanganj General Hospital and different local clinics. They included Abdur Razzak (25), Saidul Alam (30) and Monir (20), all bullet-hit.

6 hit by bullets in separate incidents

By DMC Correspondent

Six persons received bullet injuries in separate incidents of violence in the city yesterday. Akhter Hossain alias Babu, 32, reportedly a manpower agent, received severe injuries when an armed gang of five persons fired several shots in his legs at Fakirerpool under Motijheel thana at noon. He was under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. See Page 12 Col 7

'Women need to be more active in politics'

By Staff Correspondent

Increased participation of women in the political process is the answer to the problem of empowerment of women in the country. This was observed by some former and present women members of parliament and activists of women's movement at a seminar on Women in Parliaments, Their Participation and Related Issues in the city yesterday. Tasmina Hossain MP of Jatiya Party, Khaleda Khanam MP and Segufa Yasmin MP of Awami League, former BNP MPs Sigma Huda and Maleka Begum, Ms Zamil of Awami League, Rawshan Ara Hena and Shamsun Nahar Ahsanullah addressed the seminar. Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury and former secretary Monjurul Karim also addressed the seminar sponsored by the UNDP. Describing their experience in parliament, most of the present and former women MPs said that those who became legislators on the reserve quota for women suffered from inferiority complex. Some of them observed that their male counter-

Int'l hockey tourney from today

Sports Reporter

An invitational international hockey tournament, organised by Bangladesh Hockey Federation to mark the opening of its newly laid synthetic turf at the Hockey Stadium, will begin this afternoon. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will unveil a plaque at the renovated Hockey Stadium and will formally inaugurate the eight-day meet as chief guest. A total of five teams including two local giants Mo-

2 Nagas held with pistols

By Staff Correspondent

Two Indian nationals reportedly from Nagaland, were arrested in the city yesterday morning. Sang Yu Jamir, 20, and Sony, 21, were held when they were roaming in a rickshaw around the Moghbazar rail crossing at about 6:30 am, police said. Ramna police said, two pistols were also recovered from their possession. The details about how, why and when the Nagas entered Bangladesh could not be known immediately.

Bomb hurled at cable TV office in city

By Staff Correspondent

A control room of a cable TV network was gutted when an armed gang allegedly hurled a petrol bomb inside its office at Dhanmondi residential area in the city yesterday afternoon. The owner of the Comtech Cable Network on Road No. 7A claimed that a large quantity of cables, amplifiers and other accessories worth about Tk 15 lakh were burnt in the fire that originated from the bomb blast at about 2:30 pm. The owner alleged that his business became a target of business rivals as the network was gaining public confidence through efficient services since its inception in 1993. Some anonymous callers had been threatening over telephone for some time and asking the network operators to stop all business activities. Following the threats, the owner lodged a general diary with Dhanmondi thana, he said. The gang of about seven unidentified armed men came in a microbus to the control See Page 12 Col 7

JS goes into session tomorrow

Parliament goes into session tomorrow, reports UNB. This will be the third session of the seventh Parliament and first one in the new year. President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is due to address the House when, it sits at 11 am. The cabinet has already approved the President's speech. The last session of the Jatiya Sangsad, elected in the June 12 polls, began on November 1 and was prorogued on November 20. Opposition BNP has been abstaining from attending the session since November 10 to press its 10-point demands submitted to the Speaker. The demands include ensuring neutrality of the Speaker, release of political detainees and end to "repression" on BNP leaders and workers, and equitable coverage on the state-run radio and television.

Ban on rallies, processions around JS

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has imposed a ban on holding rallies, processions and demonstrations, and carrying any firearms, explosives or any harmful things in the areas adjacent to the Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan and some other city roads from 12 midnight today, reports UNB.

The areas are: from Old Airport upto Bangla Motor crossing of the Mymensingh Road, from the western end of Bangla Motor Link Road upto SAARC Fountain crossing of Sonargaon Road, from the eastern end of Panthapath upto Farm Gate via Green Road crossing, from Sheymoli Cinema upto Dhanmondi Road No 16 (Old 27) crossing of Mirpur Road. The areas also include: from Agargaon Link Road upto Rokeya Sarani crossing via Shishu Meia, from Rokeya Sarani crossing upto Bijoyn Sarani Parjatan crossing via Old 9th Division crossing, from the eastern end of Indira Road upto the western end of Manik Miah Avenue, and the restricted areas of the Jatiya Sangsad complex and all roads and lanes within its boundary. The ban will remain effective till the prorogation of the third session of the parliament.

Source of 'black money' invested in industries won't be questioned

By Nurul Kabir

The cabinet yesterday resolved that the source of 'black money', if invested in the industrial sector, would not be questioned by the government for the next three years, sources close to some cabinet members told The Daily Star last night. The cabinet also approved a proposal that the investment in the productive sector would be tax-free for a certain period, the sources added. Details about the decision was not known immediately as the cabinet members preferred to keep mum on the decisions. During the meeting, an influential minister wanted to know as to how the cabinet decisions, or even the items on the agenda of the meetings were being leaked to the press, the sources said. The minister is learnt to have warned his cabinet colleagues by citing some instances where some British ministers had lost their jobs due to the leakage of information about the proceedings of cabinet meetings to the press. The minister concerned reportedly succeeded in convincing the Prime Minister to ask the Cabinet Secretary to prepare and submit a report on how the proceedings of the cabinet meetings, or items on the agenda, were disclosed to certain journalists. Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the cabinet meeting yesterday rejected a proposed amendment to the Building Construction Act, 1952 on the grounds that it had sought certain provisions, relevant only to the government-owned buildings but discriminatory against the interest of the general public. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself opposed the idea of the discriminatory provision, sources concerned told this correspondent. The cabinet meeting, held at the PM's office, also discussed a proposed power conservation policy of the government, but sent it back to the ministry concerned for further scrutiny on the grounds that it was faulty, meeting sources said.

Proposal for 'efficiency unit' being redrafted

By Shehab Ahmed

The Ministry of Establishment is redrafting a proposal for setting up of an 'efficiency unit' at the Prime Minister's office (PMO) to help improve administrative efficiency. According to highly placed sources the proposal was sent to the Prime Minister's office in September for approval. But it was returned late last month with a note saying 'there is no need at the moment for such a unit as the administration officials under the present set up are efficient'. The sources alleged that certain bureaucrats in the PM's office felt that such a unit would undermine their authority and they lobbied for smothering the idea mooted in 1993 following an UNDP study on better governance. The study was conducted to prepare suggestions for administrative reforms. After a series of meetings with the UNDP and Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of Britain, the government set up a committee consisting of four secretaries. Later, the committee was enlarged with another secretary and it drafted a report recommending setting up of an 'efficiency unit' at PM's office, the sources pointed out. The donors so also encouraged such a unit to bring about administrative reforms. The ODA, after negotiations with the government, agreed to provide financial support in this regard. A consultant from the ODA also came to Bangladesh to help prepare a model of the proposed efficiency unit. But the political impasse in See Page 12 Col 3

City water-logging may persist due to legal battle against WASA

By Staff Correspondent

Despite Dhaka WASA's massive drive to clean up the storm sewerage to keep the city free of water-logging in the coming rainy season, WASA officials fear that the problem might persist as two of the storm sewerage encroachers have moved to higher courts against the WASA. The drive was launched recently to clean up the city's 170-kilometre long storm sewerage to rid the city of water-logging. But the officials said that two main storm sewerage points on the Segunbagicha canal, one at Fakirerpool and the other at Bijoynagar, still remained encroached. "In November last we won a case against the encroachers in a lower court and moved with our workforce to build the sewerage. But the encroachers moved to a higher court forcing us to stop the work," said an official of the WASA. The work could not be started again until a verdict was given by the court and it might take a long time, he added. The WASA, in view of widespread water-logging in the city last year, managed to reach an understanding with two mosque committees who had been encroaching upon the Segunbagicha canal at two other points — one at Fakirerpool and the other near Notre Dame College. "In both cases, we had to pay adequate compensation," an WASA source said. "Now the encroacher of the Segunbagicha canal at Bijoynagar is challenging our official records and maps, claiming that the canal flowed from the southern side of her land," the source added. See Page 12 Col 8

Jubo League leader killed in gunfight

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 13: A Jubo League leader was killed and seven others were wounded in a gunbattle between two rival groups of the ruling party's youth wing over control of the Roosevelt Jetty and its surrounding business centres in Khalsipur today. Police said Shahidul Islam, 30, a vice-president of Khulna City Jubo League, died on the See Page 12 Col 1

Kerb marketmen stage sit-in, DSE trading cut short

By Staff Correspondent

Agitating kerb market traders staged a sit-in in front of the Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday forcing closure of floor trading within an hour. Several hundred out-market traders gathered near the DSE building in the morning and prevented anyone from entering the building since 10 am. They also staged demonstrations in the area and held rallies protesting the massive fall in share prices of most issues. The agitating kerb market traders also chanted slogans against the government, finance minister and 'corrupt' DSE members demanding See Page 12 Col 8

Fire at ship in Ctg: 4 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 13: A private lightening vessel MV Peropuz, anchored in Karnaphuli river at Banglabazar ghat, suddenly caught fire this evening, police said. Four crew of the vessel received burn-injuries in the fire and they were admitted into Chittagong Medical College Hospital for treatment. The injured crew were identified as Abdul Khaleque, Shahidul Islam, Sarwar Hossain and Delwar Hossain respectively. The cement carrying vessel caught fire at around 7:30 pm while it was taking fuel, police said. Fire brigade personnel rushed to the spot immediately and brought the fire under control.

Strict enforcement of rules at ZIA from Feb 1

By Masud Arif

The authorities of Zia International Airport (ZIA) have taken a number of measures to make the airport 'trouble-free' and improve its overall standard. The measures, to be effective from February 1, will be strictly enforced, according to highly placed official sources at the ZIA. The whole terminal building except a designated portion in the departure lounge will be made a non-smoking area. Passengers will be required to exchange foreign currency only from the authorised banks. Unauthorised exchange of currency will be a punishable offence for both the passenger and the dealer. Unnecessary blowing of horn, littering, spitting, jaywalking will also be treated as punishable offence. Meanwhile, mobile court See Page 12 Col 4

5 govt offices ransacked in B'baria

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 13: A gang of thieves ransacked five government offices here today, police said. The offices of the TNO, AC (Land), PIO and the District Fisheries Office were ransacked reportedly by a gang of thieves early in the morning. Besides, Tk 15,000 was stolen from the Livestock office, police said. None was arrested in this connection till tonight, police added. The fire reportedly originated from an electric short circuit at a grocery at about 11:15 pm. Twelve shops and 19 houses were gutted. The local people extinguished the fire. The injured were identified as Krishna, 30, Manik Saha, 25, Pran Pal, 30, Fatik, 32, Ashis, 35, Rafiq, 25 and Monoranjan, 42. Krishna was admitted to Patuakhali General Hospital in a critical condition. Ahmed Humayun granted bail A division bench of the High Court Division granted anticipatory bail to Syed Mohiuddin Ahmed Humayun, former Editor of the Daily Bangla, reports UNB. The division bench, comprising Justice Mahmud Amin Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Jainul Abedin, granted him the bail in connection with the recent inquiry carried out by the Bureau of Anti-corruption regarding the use of newsprint, appointment of newsmen and publication of an international edition of the Daily Bangla. Barrister Abdur Razzak moved the petition for his anticipatory bail. See Page 12 Col 4



A cable TV network centre in the city's Dhanmondi area was damaged in a fire after a petrol bomb was hurled there by some unidentified persons yesterday. — Star photo