

Announcement
We are delighted to announce that our special correspondent will be covering the first Grand Slam tennis tournament of the year from Melbourne, Australia. Watch out for The Daily Star special on the Australian Open and ask your hawk for a copy of The Daily Star everyday.

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Polish and Pak buyers dominate Ctg tea auction
DSE price index shoots up by 90 points Page 6,7

DSE MARKET	
DSE price index	1933.67 (+4.38%)
Market capital Tk	14017.36cr
Transactions in volume	147088
Transactions in value Tk	4.73 cr
CSE MARKET	
CSE price index	841.69(-1.07%)
Market capital Tk	10778.77 cr
Transactions in volume	89085
Transactions in value Tk	215901.55

NEWS BRIEFS
JS session adjourned till 11 am Sunday
The Parliament session was adjourned till 11 am Sunday. Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury announced the adjournment at 1.32 pm yesterday just after President Shahabuddin Ahmed ended his speech at the inaugural session of the House, reports UNB.

PM greets army officers, jawans
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has congratulated the officers and jawans of all ranks in the Bangladesh Army for the successful and brave operation conducted by them in rescuing some persons who were kidnapped on November 29 last year, according to an ISPR press release yesterday. In a letter addressed to the Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Mahabubur Rahman the Prime Minister congratulated all those who were involved in the operation on December 17 last year led by Lt Colonel Mia Muhammad Joiful Abedin, reports BSS.

One falls from 8th floor, dies
By DMC Correspondent
Anwar, 20, a resident of Green Road in the city died as he fell from the eighth floor of a building on Tuesday night. He was rushed to the DMCH, where the doctors declared him dead. Hospital sources said, Police, however, could not confirm it.

Nat'l arts exhibition concludes today
By Staff Correspondent
The three-week long 12th National Fine Arts Exhibition concludes at the Shilpakala Academy Gallery in the city today. The exhibition was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 27, 1996.

Sehri, Ifar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Ifar
6	16	—	5:37
7	17	5:20	5:38
8	18	5:20	5:36

Lack of political acumen coupled with administrative shortsightedness created a climate of uncertainty among the people of Tangail, who have been virtually made hostage to the whims of certain individuals. People are at the mercy of an administration that retains anti-people attitude in much of its practice, and of certain individuals who are acting like 'war lords' of medieval period. An invisible boundary demarcates the areas of control of the rival groups, and toll collected from trade and commerce of private individuals and money extorted from the contracts of government run development projects provide funds for these terrorist groups. The top notchers of the identified trouble makers on one side are the brothers of Abdul Kader Siddiky and Abdul Latif Siddiky, MPs of the ruling party and on the other side the nephews of Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, the joint secretary of the Awami League, who is reportedly also backed by Abdul Mannan MP. It is evident that the administration failed to nip these as-

President thanks AL, BNP for settling dispute

Continuation of democratic process a farz for all

By Staff Correspondent



President Shahabuddin addressing Jatiya Sangsad.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed expressed his satisfaction finding both the sides present in the House during his first speech in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

"Personally, I'm very happy that both the ruling party and the Opposition are here. I would like to convey my special thanks to you, Mr Speaker for bringing the two sides together after two months by mediating a successful dialogue... I also personally thank the ruling party and the Opposition for settling their disputes", said the President before delivering a 28-page written address to the House.

"It's a farz (obligatory) task

for both the sides in the House to help continue the democratic process in the country", he told Parliament that went into its first session of the year yesterday morning.

In his speech, President Shahabuddin noted that time had come to work unitedly to change the lot of the people. "The whole nation is eagerly looking at this Parliament... I sincerely believe, this House would lead the nation to face the challenges of the 21st century and materialise Bangabandhu's dream of a Sonar Bangla," he said.

Paying deep respect to the great leader of the country's War of Liberation Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and also to those who embraced martyrdom in the war, the President highlighted the present government's steps in various fields and said, "This government has a long way to go... It will have to prepare the nation to face the challenges of the 21st century."

"We have dreamt of a prosperous and happy Bangladesh over the decades. But a vast majority of the people are still living below the poverty line at a time when the nation celebrates the Silver Jubilee of Independence. This is not at all glorious for the nation," he added. "It's time to initiate See Page 12 Col 3

Speaker reads out 4-pt accord, BNP enters parliament

By Staff Correspondent

The Seventh Jatiya Sangsad went into its third session yesterday with the legislators of Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party returning to the House, ending a two-month long parliamentary hiatus.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed addressed the House with members of both the Treasury and the Opposition benches present.

The BNP which abstained from attending the Sangsad proceedings since the second session went back to the House following a four-point agreement reached with the ruling Awami League on Tuesday.

BNP legislators entered the House, led by Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, following a formal call from Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury who had read out the four-point agreement to the

AL, Jatiya Party and Jamaat MPs already taking their seats. The speaker who had mediated a dialogue between the leaders of AL and BNP that resulted in the four-point accord, congratulated both sides for resolving the stalemate through an 'open discussion.'

Calling upon the BNP lawmakers, who assembled in parliament lobbies, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury said: "I particularly congratulate the BNP that it has agreed to return to the House."

Earlier, narrating the four-point agreement, the Speaker said parliament proceedings would be broadcast over Radio and Television objectively. Chief Whip of Parliament and Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament would monitor it and they, if necessary, would discuss the issue with him, he

added. Chowdhury further said that Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim would take necessary steps for constituting the parliamentary standing committees on various ministries following discussions with the Chief Whip of parliament and the opposition Chief Whip.

Subject to investigation, the government would take immediate steps regarding charges against the BNP leaders and activists, the Chair said.

He further said that the two whips would remain in constant touch with each other as regards the business of the House and they would keep the Speaker informed of the related matters time to time.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul See Page 12 Col 1

ALPP meeting Hasina's call to improve law & order further

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister and Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought "wholehearted" cooperation from her party's lawmakers in the government's "relentless" efforts to further improve law and order in the country.

She was addressing a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP), held at the Sangsad Bhaban before the House went into its first session of the year at 11 am.

Meeting sources told this correspondent that Sheikh Hasina briefed the party legislators about some recent developments in various fields and urged them to play a more active role in parliament.

Sheikh Hasina, also Leader of the ALPP, expressed satisfaction that the dialogue between AL and opposition BNP pro-

Build up strong bases in city wards, Ershad asks partymen

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad has asked the rank and file of his party to establish their dominance over the politics in Dhaka as it is the 'nerve centre' of national life.

"I want you to build up strong bases in all 90 wards under 16 thanas of Dhaka city, so that we can dominate the future politics," he told the leaders and workers of the city JP and 'its front organisations yesterday.

There is no scope for confusion or difference of opinion among us in nationalist politics. The aim of our politics is very clear. Inshallah, we shall make the country's independence meaningful for our people through their socio-economic emancipation, the deposed president said.

The city JP leaders and workers met Ershad for an exchange of ideas on various issues See Page 12 Col 7

5 killed, 30 hurt in Pabna road accident

By Staff Correspondent

PABNA, Jan 15: At least five people were killed and 30 injured when a night coach from Kurigram skidded off Bogra-Nagarbari highway and plunged into a ditch full of water tonight, reports UNB.

Police apprehend the death toll may double as the sunken bus could not be salvaged till 11 pm.

The accident occurred at about 9.30 pm as the Dhaka-bound bus with about 52 passengers skidded off the road at village Barat in Shattha thana amidst deep fog.

Police recovered five bodies and continued their efforts to salvage the ill-fated bus.

Another report says, a young man was run over by a speeding minibus at Mahadebpur bus stand in Shibhalaya thana of Manikganj district See Page 12 Col 7



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu takes the telephone from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's hand to thank US President Bill Clinton for his role in brokering the agreement.

Arafat, Netanyahu strike deal

Palestinian rule extended to Hebron

EREZ CROSSING (Gaza Strip), Jan 15: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat struck a landmark deal today, extending Palestinian rule to the flashpoint West Bank city of Hebron and beyond, report agencies.

The agreement wrung out after three months of arduous negotiations, marked the first concrete progress in the peace process since Netanyahu's right-wing government came to power in June pledging to make Israel's security its top priority.

It was also the first time a leader of Israel's right signed an accord with Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation and

agreed to hand over territory which many Jews consider the biblical lands of Israel.

The agreement has been signed a few minutes ago by (negotiators) Dan Shomron and Saeb Erekat. Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak told reporters at the Erez Crossing.

PLO officials said under the agreement Israeli troops would withdraw from 80 per cent of Hebron with 10 days. They said a formal ceremony would be held on Friday with European, Arab and American participation.

Bazak said the deal would be brought before Israel's cabinet for approval later today. See Page 12 Col 7

Oil, gas exploration in Bay Production sharing deal with US co next week

By Sharier Khan

The government is likely to sign a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) with a US company, Rexwood Oakland, next week for exploration of gas and oil in the Bay of Bengal near the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf-St Martins Island region, official sources said.

The government is also likely to sign a separate PSC with another US company, UMIC, in the last week of this month for hydrocarbon exploration in the Bay, off the Sunderbans, the sources added.

Rexwood Oakland had initially the PSC for exploration of hydrocarbon in block numbers 17 and 18 and UMIC in block 21 six months ago following two years of negotiations on unsolicited terms.

With the signing of these

agreements, the last of the 'open negotiations' for hydrocarbon exploration will conclude.

The 'open negotiation' for exploration of hydrocarbon in 24 blocks in the country was initiated in 1992 through a roundtable conference held in Houston, USA to attract foreign oil companies for hydrocarbon exploration in the country. It resulted in signing of over 20 Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) between some oil companies and the government.

The government signed PSCs with the British-Dutch joint venture Cairn Plc and Holland Sea Search for exploration in blocks 15 and 16 and with the US company Occidental for blocks 12, 13 and 14.

The remaining blocks will See Page 12 Col 8

Bail prayer of Raqibul Huda turned down

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 15: The bail prayer of former commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Mirza Raqibul Huda was rejected by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court today.

Huda was arrested by Gulshan police Tuesday evening after a warrant was issued against him by the CMM's Court. He was brought to Dhaka under police escort this morning and produced before the court in the afternoon.

Huda was arrested in connection with the mass-killing at Laldighi maidan on January 24, 1988.

UNB adds: The court of CMM, AKM Kamal Uddin shifted the sensational Laldighi mass-killing case, filed by Advocate Shahidul Huda, to Chit-

tagong District and Sessions Judge's Court.

Moving the bail petition, lawyers of the accused argued that section 144 was imposed on that day in the areas adjacent to Laldighi Maidan at the directive of higher authority.

They said police fired on the crowd when they broke the section 144, but Huda, the then CMM Commissioner, who was sick that day, did not give the firing order.

The lawyers appealed for granting bail to Huda, as he was sick and the case was bailable. But the magistrate ruled out the appeal as no medical report was produced before the court.

Opposing the bail petition, the lawyers of the plaintiff said Huda was the key player in the See Page 12 Col 2

PM tells editors Evaluate my govt's success & failure

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her government's resolve to build the country facing all odds and sought cooperation of all in this regard, reports UNB.

"Knowing fully well about risks, I want to work... I want to build the country. I have faced threat on my life several times since 1981," she said while exchanging views with the editors of Dhaka-based dailies and news agencies at Ganobhaban yesterday afternoon.

Hasina discussed in range over the Ganges water-sharing treaty, sub-regional cooperation, law-and-order situation, parliamentary affairs and other issues.

She said the people would judge successes as well as failures of her six-month-old government. "I myself can't judge my success or achievements... See Page 12 Col 1

Joint monitoring at Hardinge Bridge begins tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Joint monitoring of availability of Ganges water at Hardinge Bridge point will begin tomorrow, sources concerned said.

Two Indian engineers who arrived here yesterday will reach the Hardinge Bridge point today for the monitoring.

With the commencement of data recording by the Indian team, the task of joint monitoring, stipulated in the recently concluded Bangladesh-India water accord, will begin.

Bangladeshi and Indian monitors, under the auspices of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Committee, are already recording the release and flow of Ganges discharge at Farakka point, the Feeder canal and the

See Page 12 Col 7

DSE share price index marks rise

By Rafiq Hasan

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) share price index posted a mild recovery during the last two days of trading.

The DSE All Share Price Index rose to 1933.57 points yesterday adding 89.91 and 4.29 points on Tuesday and yesterday.

Prices of 80 issues gained and 9 suffered losses while two remained unchanged out of total of 91 traded issues yesterday.

As many as 1.47 lakh shares and debentures worth of Tk 4.73 crore changed hands.

The market capitalisation of the bourse also gained Tk 653.70 crore, reaching Tk 14017.36 crore yesterday from See Page 12 col 5

DB team leaves for Singapore to nab gold smugglers

A team of Detective Branch (DB) of police was sent to Singapore recently to arrest some alleged gold smugglers with the help of Interpol. A DB official told BSS yesterday.

The customs surveillance team at Zia International Airport (ZIA) seized 120 kilograms of smuggled gold worth about Taka 8 crore on September 18 last year in which these alleged smugglers are suspected to be involved.

The members of the detective branch will try to arrest Mohammad Mujibur Rahman, the suspected main trafficker and three of his accomplices, who are believed to be in Singapore since the smuggled gold was seized at ZIA.

The team members — Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Mohammad Nuruzzaman Miah and Assistant Commissioner (AC) Mohamud Humayun Kabir — are expected to return to Dhaka on Friday, an official said.



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Stich sent packing

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 15: Fifteen-seeded Michael Stich of Germany crashed out of the Australian Open after he lost to unseeded Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev in a titanic five-set tussle at the national Tennis Centre today, reports AP.

The former Wimbledon champion went down 6-4, 1-6, 2-6, 6-4 and 7-9 in a match that lasted over three hours.

Meanwhile, Britain's new hero Tim Henman and American Michael Chang set up the first major clash of the Open after their second round encounters. More on page 11

Terrorism, political clout combined to create Tangail situation

By Mizan Ali, back from Tangail

News Analysis

Lack of political acumen coupled with administrative shortsightedness created a climate of uncertainty among the people of Tangail, who have been virtually made hostage to the whims of certain individuals. People are at the mercy of an administration that retains anti-people attitude in much of its practice, and of certain individuals who are acting like 'war lords' of medieval period. An invisible boundary demarcates the areas of control of the rival groups, and toll collected from trade and commerce

of private individuals and money extorted from the contracts of government run development projects provide funds for these terrorist groups. The top notchers of the identified trouble makers on one side are the brothers of Abdul Kader Siddiky and Abdul Latif Siddiky, MPs of the ruling party and on the other side the nephews of Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, the joint secretary of the Awami League, who is reportedly also backed by Abdul Mannan MP. It is evident that the administration failed to nip these as-

piring terrorists in the bud for reasons that can be termed psychological weakness to some influential local families which were responsible for their harbouring. The list of top 21 terrorists, as prepared by the police, reveals that the domain of criminal activities has so far been reigned by a few families. Azad Siddiky and Murad Siddiky who are the ring lead-

ers of one group are brothers of Kader Siddiky and Latif Siddiky, both Awami League MPs. Rana, Bappi and Mukti, all brothers, are leading the other side. They are the nephews of Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, joint secretary of Awami League and are reportedly backed by Abdul Mannan, a party MP from Tangail Sadar. Both the groups have some enlisted terrorists who are

again brothers. Terrorism in Tangail apparently thrives on the unity or bondage among the brothers of a family. Now that the djinn is out of the bottle, the biggest challenge before the authority is to find a way to get it back there sooner than later. It has been reported in the press that during the raids in the last few weeks the administration failed to recover any weapon from the possession of the groups concerned. Besides police could arrest only three out of the 21 terrorists. The Deputy Commissioner

of the district also held responsible some 'unscrupulous officials' for leaking out information on raids prior to the operations. Was it because of this that Azad Siddiky, a man charged with 19 cases including two murder cases had to be put under detention for one month in Rajshahi Central Jail? Why the administration is shying away from trying an accused who has specific charges? The Awami League government, after taking over in last June, reiterated time and again See Page 12 Col 8