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Rajuk enlists engs, firms to draw up bldg plans

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk has enlisted some 800 engineers, architects and draftsmen and 212 consultancy firms who would be the only authorised persons and organisations to draw up and initially approve city building plans before seeking final approval from Rajuk, sources concerned said.

The decision to enlist the 'qualified persons' was taken recently following widespread reports that majority of the city's buildings were faulty structures due to 'lapses in the initial planning'. Earlier, anyone claiming to be 'slightly associated' with drawing up building plans could do so for structural safety.

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1869.83 (-1.39%)
Market capital Tk 13599.20cr
Transactions in volume 177648
Transactions in value Tk 4.73 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 809.94 (-3.46%)
Market capital Tk 10372.22 cr
Transactions in volume 52455
Transactions in value Tk 10964672

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
10	20	—	5:40
11	21	5:20	5:40
12	22	5:20	5:41

Shake-up in SEC: 2 members replaced

Star Report

The government has removed two members of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Alamgir Kabir and Dr Shabubul Alam, yesterday.

They have been replaced by Faizuddin Ahmed, Managing Director of the House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC), and Emdadul Huq, former member of National Board of Revenue (NBR), officials said.

The long awaited shake-up in the SEC, the watchdog of the country's capital market, announced by Finance Minister S A M S Kibria late last month, came after orders for their removal reached the Finance Ministry late yesterday from the Prime Minister's office.

The two members were given

the marching orders yesterday afternoon and they handed over charge to their successors at the same time, SEC sources said.

They were under contract for three years with the SEC since it was constituted. Their contract ran out in November. But they were given extension for another year.

Earlier, Nawsher Ali, executive director of the SEC, was transferred to the Ministry of Establishment.

The overhauling of the SEC was announced by the Finance Minister in the wake of the upheavals in the stock markets in late November.

As the finance minister pledged to reorganise the SEC with new members, the SEC

also formed an enquiry committee to probe the reported scam fuelling the unusual boom in the stock markets.

The four-member committee headed by Prof Amirul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University, began sifting through the files of the SEC and the two stock exchanges to probe the allegations.

In a bid to unlock the mystery of the unusual ups and downs in the market, said to have been tailored by certain people who kept it under their thumb, the probe committee is looking into the records of both the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) and Chittagong Stock Exchange.

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Abahani's central defender Mamun (R) tries to keep PIA centre-forward Kamran Ashraf at bay during their clash in the invitational international tournament at the Hockey Stadium yesterday. PIA won 3-2.

Clinton wants to make today's inaugural speech memorable

WASHINGTON, Jan 19: President Bill Clinton worked with pen, pad and tape recorder, searching for an inaugural address theme that will catch in the nation's memory. Supporters swarmed into a frigid capital to celebrate with fireworks and some leftover macarena, reports AP.

The three-day observation of the 53rd inauguration in US history began with Washington and its visitors in a festive but tempered mood.

Democrats had reason to celebrate the first re-election of a Democratic president since Franklin D Roosevelt and polls putting Clinton's popularity at its highest level since his first inauguration.

But the newness and unchecked promise of four years ago were absent, and be-

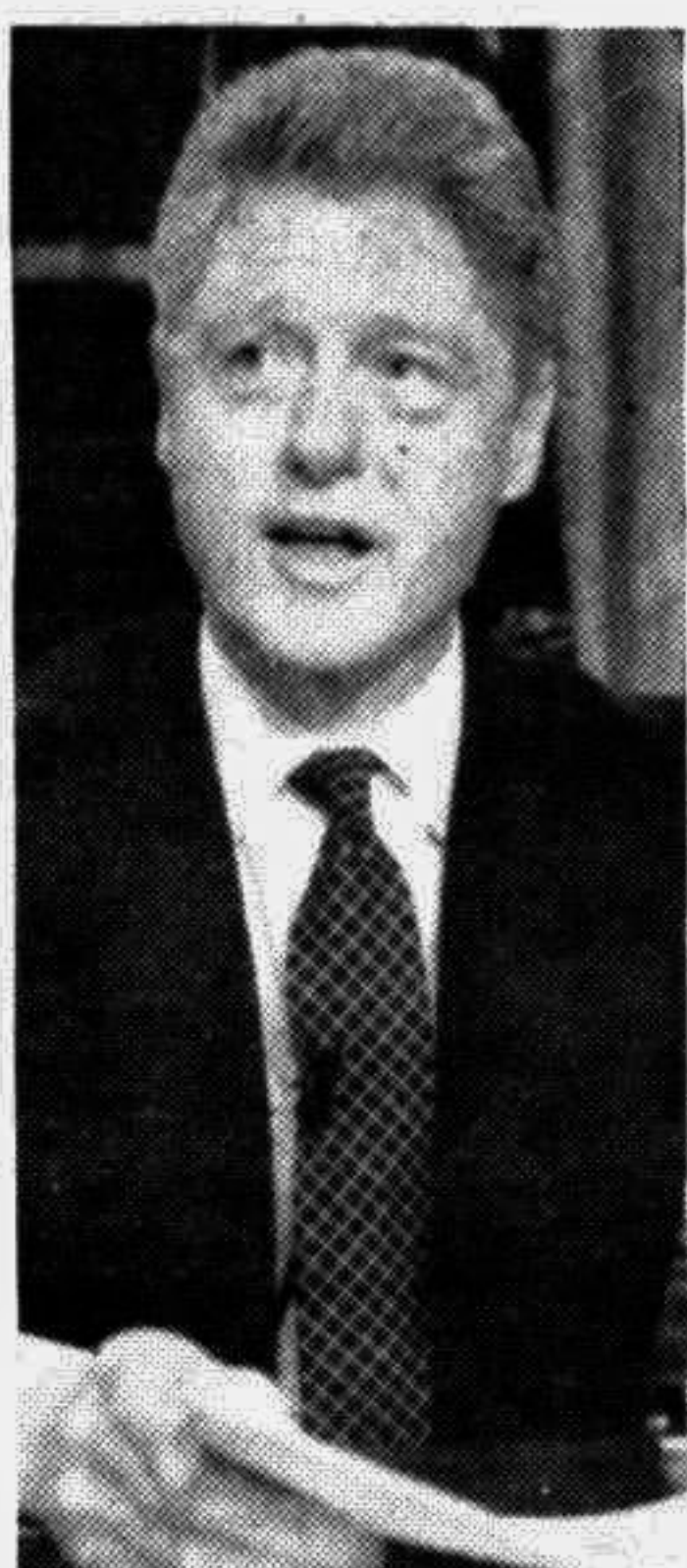
tween Clinton and his goals stood a Republican Congress with ideas of its own.

Still, for the moment, partisanship was set aside. The capital looked glorious. Banners and bunting flicked in the breezes. Tomorrow's swearing-in of Clinton and Vice President Al Gore promised to occur in weather that's crisp, clear and free of snow — better than usual.

"It's freezing cold," shivered an inaugural visitor from San Francisco, Jenne Bierhart, a school teacher. That didn't keep her from trooping to Pennsylvania Avenue to take photos of the White House. "I'm just happy to be here," she said.

As workers hoisted the presidential seal over the inaugural parade reviewing stand in front of the White House, two dozen anti-abortion activists marched past carrying giant couple posters of aborted fetuses and a banner calling them "the children of Hillary's village." Next Wednesday marks the 24th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that ruled American women have a right to abortion.

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Financial Loan Court (Amend) Bill placed

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria introduced the Financial Loan Court (Amendment) Bill, 1997 in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday seeking amendments to the Financial Loan Court Act, 1990.

The printed objective of the Bill said it was necessary to amend the Act to bring about dynamism in loan realisation activities of the banks and other financial institutions.

S A M S Kibria assured the House that the Bill would not create any negative impact on private sector initiatives.

A motion of vote of thanks on presidential speech was moved by Chief Whip of Parliament Abul Hasnat Abdullah while ruling party whip Abdus Shahid seconded the motion. A 20-hour discussion on the presidential speech is scheduled to be held before the adoption of the motion.

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JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP lawmakers cheered Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury as she began her deliberations in the House yesterday saying "Aauzu-billahi Minash Shaitanir Razeem. Bismillahir Rahmaanir Rahim."

BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam commented, "after long 21 years, Awami League has started upholding the constitution by uttering Bismillah." In reply, Motia Chowdhury said, "Every Muslim says Bismillah before starting any job... We've been doing so silently, not on the microphone... We're also well aware of the practices of those who have been publicly uttering Bismillah and performing the Hajj frequently."

Later, several legislators of the ruling party also started their speeches with Bismillah.

AL chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently advised her party lawmakers to start their deliberations with Bismillah.

"It's good to be excited... But it's not proper to get excited in the House."

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Ganges flow

Dhaka receives data of joint monitoring

By Staff Correspondent

The government yesterday received the first set of data of joint monitoring of water flow at three points of the Ganges river in India, official sources said.

The data provides the record of water released by India at Farakka for the first 10-day cycle — January 1-10. The figures were received under confidential cover forwarded through the office of the Bangladesh High Commission in Calcutta.

The data set has been logged by the Bangladesh monitors posted below the Farakka point, the Feeder Canal and the Farakka Navigation Lock.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Water Resources Secretary Dr Shamsul Huda said, the data so far received "was satisfactory and reflected the indicative quantum due to be discharged for the period."

India was due to release 67,516 cusecs of water for the first ten-day cycle.

For the second cycle, which began January 11 and will end today (Jan 20), the water discharge from Farakka for Bangladesh is supposed to be 57,673 cusecs.

Motia warns in Jatiya Sangsad Fertiliser dealers playing foul will lose licence

By Staff Correspondent

Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that fertiliser dealers would be canceled if any foul play was proved.

The minister was replying to a number of starred questions and supplementaries raised by lawmakers in the House.

When some opposition MPs raised questions about alleged misrepresentation in district level committees, formed to scrutinise fertiliser dealership, Begum Motia Chowdhury assured the House that Minister for Commerce and Industries Tofael Ahmed would definitely look into the matter. Tofael was

not present in the House then. Answering a question from BNP legislator Prof Shahidul Islam, the Agriculture Minister said, Tk 211 crore subsidy is being given this year for importing fertiliser.

She said, a set of suggestions for utilisation of Tk 100 crore budgetary allocation for agri-subsidy has been placed before the Finance Division and once the report is adopted, the areas where the money will be channelled can be determined.

About fertiliser pricing the minister said BOC sells fertiliser to dealers at factory prices — urea Tk 186.25 per bag and TSP Tk. 343 per bag.

Motia Chowdhury, however, clarified that in a market economy fertiliser price is determined by market forces as per demand and supply. She added that fertiliser price varies from one area to other depending on carrying costs and communication facilities.

Replying to a supplementary from Shahidul Islam, the minister said government could meet only 15 per cent of total domestic demand for TSP.

When BNP lawmaker and former food and agriculture minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan wanted to know the difference between the previous

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PM for consensus on economic issues

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government wants political consensus on the economic issues for smooth functioning of the economy, reports UNB.

"We want consensus on economic agenda for rapid economic growth and development, for restoring confidence of the investors," she told the newly-elected executives of the FBCCI.

A 27-member team of the executive committee of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), led by its president Yusuf Abdullah Harun, met the prime minister at her Parliament office.

Addressing the business leaders, Hasina said the target of the government is the economic development of the country. "We want to establish a self-reliant Bangladesh and we want cooperation from all sides towards that goal," she said.

Awami League formed a government of national consensus to ensure participation of all in the development process, she said adding, "We invited all parties to join the consensus

government for the development of the nation."

About restoring congenial law-and-order situation, the prime minister said the government was trying its best to maintain peace and stability and for this reason cooperation of all is needed.

She said the government was giving all decisions very fast and trying hard for the progress of the nation. The government is taking rapid steps in different sectors to facilitate business and investment, she added.

"We want to restore the image of the country abroad, we want to have a dignified place in the world. We don't want mercy from anyone else."

She said already the image of the country had been changing to the foreigners and they were showing keen interest to invest in different sectors of the country.

About the buying of laidoff industries by the business leaders, the prime minister said some of the buyers did not take care of those industries. Sometimes they took loan on those mills and factories but didn't

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Zia's policy resurrected Awami League: B Chy

Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said Awami League was resurrected through the restoration of multiparty democracy by President Ziaur Rahman, reports UNB.

"Otherwise, it would have remained as BAKSAL," he said while addressing a discussion organised by BNP marking the 61st birth anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman at the Minto Road residence of the

Leader of the Opposition. Prof Chowdhury said Shaheed Zia emerged as the deliverer of the nation when Awami League was leading the country on the path of ruination through its misuse in the post-liberation period.

"Nobody can erase the name of Zia from the country's history. Because, it is inscribed in the hearts of the people," he said.

The people will resist any effort to wipe out the name of Shaheed Zia."

Without naming anybody, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said the ruling Awami League would be destroyed by the Frankenstein it had created in a motive to pit against BNP.

The meeting was also addressed by senior BNP leaders Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Moudud

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Yasmin murder

4 witnesses submit depositions

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Jan 19: The hearing of the sensational Yasmin rape and murder case resumed in the Special Court, Rangpur today.

Four witnesses — all police personnel — submitted their depositions. The four witnesses are: Khondker Anwar Hossain, RI of Dinajpur police lines, Askar Ali, Sohrab Hossain and Ahsan Habib.

During cross examination by prosecution and defence lawyers, the witnesses gave detailed information on the rape and murder of Yasmin and the involvement of the three main accused.

The three main accused are, former ASI Moinul Haq, former constable Abdus Sattar and former police lines driver Amrita Barman.

With the submission of the depositions of the four witnesses, the number of witnesses who have so far given depositions in the case rose to 30. The total number of witnesses is 54.

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malaysia

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Coetzer knocks out Steffi

MELBOURNE, Jan 19: South African Amanda Coetzer knocked world number one Steffi Graf out of the Australian Open in straight sets here today, reports AFP.

Graf lost the fourth tie 6-2, 7-5. She made another poor start to lose the opening set and let a 4-0 lead slip in the second against the 12th seeded South African.

Coetzer will now play unseeded American Kimberly Po, who beat Atlanta Olympic champion and seventh seed Lindsay Davenport, 7-6, (15/13), 6-4.

Graf was treated by a trainer at the final changeover in the 88-minute match and had an ice pack placed on her neck as the players battled temperatures hovering around 38 Celsius.

Graf's demise, amid a large tally of 53 unforced errors, comes against the off-court pressures of her father, Peter Graf's trial on tax charges in Germany. A verdict was expected later this week.

Details on Page 10

People at risk may be much less than feared: WHO

Address arsenic problem with sufficient efforts, patience



Hands of an arsenic patient in Faridpur.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has expressed concern over reports of arsenic contamination in western Bangladesh and stressed analysing the situation in a comprehensive manner, reports UNB.

The problem has developed over a long period of time and it would take a good deal of efforts and patience to address it, said the WHO Representative in Bangladesh, Dr Wit Hardjotono, in a statement yesterday.

This is certainly a major public health issue, but it did not occur overnight."

Hardjotono said the extent of the problem was yet to be determined, and that the number of the people at risk could well be much less than figures of 30 or 50 million being quoted by some unofficial sources.

Current evidence suggests that it takes years of exposure to arsenic-contaminated water for people to develop symptoms of arsenicosis such as thickening of the skin, ulcers, cancers, etc. Such ailments can be

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- ৬ই জানুয়ারী হতে কৃষি শুমারী শুরু হয়েছে
- জানুয়ারী পর্যন্ত শুমারীর কাজ চলবে
- গণনাকারীগণকে সঠিক তথ্য দিন
- কৃষি শুমারীকে সফল করে তুলুন।