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Cold spell likely to continue for a few more days

By Staff Correspondent
A moderate cold spell now sweeping the country is likely to continue for some more days before waning gradually when the south-westerly winds from the bay add moisture content to help the mercury rise again.

Meteorological office sources last night said, the weather will continue to remain a bit cold for a few more days with the chilly winds lashing the people.

It's the cold wind from Siberia that is keeping the mercury down for the past five days, a weather expert said. But he denied the official BSS news agency's report on Jan 21 that the mercury had gone below four degree Celsius.

He said, the lowest ever temperature during the current cold spell was recorded at Sriraman-
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Draft bill on separation of judiciary presented 11 constitutional changes, body headed by CJ suggested

By Mizan Ali
A draft bill on separation of judiciary, prepared by a government-appointed expert committee, was presented to the Minister for Law and Justice yesterday, suggesting 11 amendments to the Constitution and formation of a Judicial Commission for appointment of Supreme Court Judges.

The draft bill has been titled the Fourteenth Amendment Act, 1997 of the Constitution. It will be placed before the cabinet and after necessary changes it will be tabled in Parliament, according to official sources.

Law Secretary Aminullah, who headed the nine-member committee on Separation of Judiciary submitted the draft bill to Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru along with a report of the committee. A copy of the draft bill was available to The Daily Star.

The draft bill suggests amendments to Articles 95, 96, 98, 99, 107, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116 and the Fourth Schedule and insertion of a new Article, 95A, in the Constitution providing for formation of a Judicial Commission.

The bill suggests that Clauses (1) and (2) of Article 95 be substituted.

The proposed amendments read: "(1) The Chief Justice shall be appointed by the President and other judges shall be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Judicial Commission.
(2) A person shall not be qualified for appointment as a judge, unless he is a citizen of Bangladesh, and—
(a) has, for not less than ten years, been an advocate of the Supreme Court; or
(b) has, for not less than ten years, held judicial office including the office of a district judge for not less than three years in the territory of Bangladesh.

The proposed Article 95A says: "There shall be a Judicial Commission for making recommendation for appointment to the office of Judge of the Supreme Court."
The Commission will comprise the Chief Justice, the Minister for Law and Justice, a Judge of the Supreme Court to be nominated by the Chief Justice, the Attorney General and the chairman of the Public Service Commission, it says. The Chief Justice will be the chairman of the Commission.
Parliament shall, by law, prescribe the procedure for selection of and recommendation of qualified persons for appointment to the office of a judge.
The draft bill suggests substitution of Article 96 of the Constitution which deals with the tenure of judges.

The suggestions are as follows: (1) A Judge shall hold his office until he attains the age of sixty-five years.
(2) A judge shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed pursuant to a resolution of parliament supported by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of parliament, on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
(3) Parliament shall, by law, make provisions to prescribe the procedure in relation to a resolution under Clause (2) and for investigation and proof of the misbehaviour or incapacity of a judge, and prescribe a Code of Conduct to be observed by the judges.
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Faults at Power plants, gas crisis causing load shedding

By Staff Correspondent
The port town of Narayan-ganj remained without electricity for the whole day yesterday. Similar situation was reported from Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and other districts.

The heavy load shedding began when three units of Ashu-ganj power plant tripped one after another Tuesday evening. The trip was caused by a fault in a boiler, the sources said.

Engineers of the BPDB were working round-the-clock to restore the power generation while the government has taken action to partially restart the 60 MW Sikkalaha power unit and a 40 MW hydro electricity unit in Kaptai.

The 60 MW Sikkalaha plant was undergoing maintenance from August 1995. Now partial operation of this plant would allow a generation of 40 MW power. The 40 MW unit at Kaptai was also undergoing full maintenance.

Due to depletion of gas in the Bakhrabad gas field, which exclusively feeds the Chittagong region, a number of gas-based power plants including the 210 MW Rajan power plant have remained shut for months.

"There had already been an on-going load shedding of 300 MW due to the gas crisis," a BPDB source said. "Under the current circumstances the authorities have decided to reduce gas supply to some other gas-based factories."

The Rajan power plant could not be restarted as the Bakhrabad gas field is unable to supply the required 21 million cubic feet of gas everyday.

"The grim power situation will not improve overnight. But the BPDB is trying hard to bring down the level of load shedding to a maximum of 100 MW during this season," the source pointed out.

Last year, an energy ministry study had predicted a power shortfall of 450 MW during peak hours from the winter and onwards.

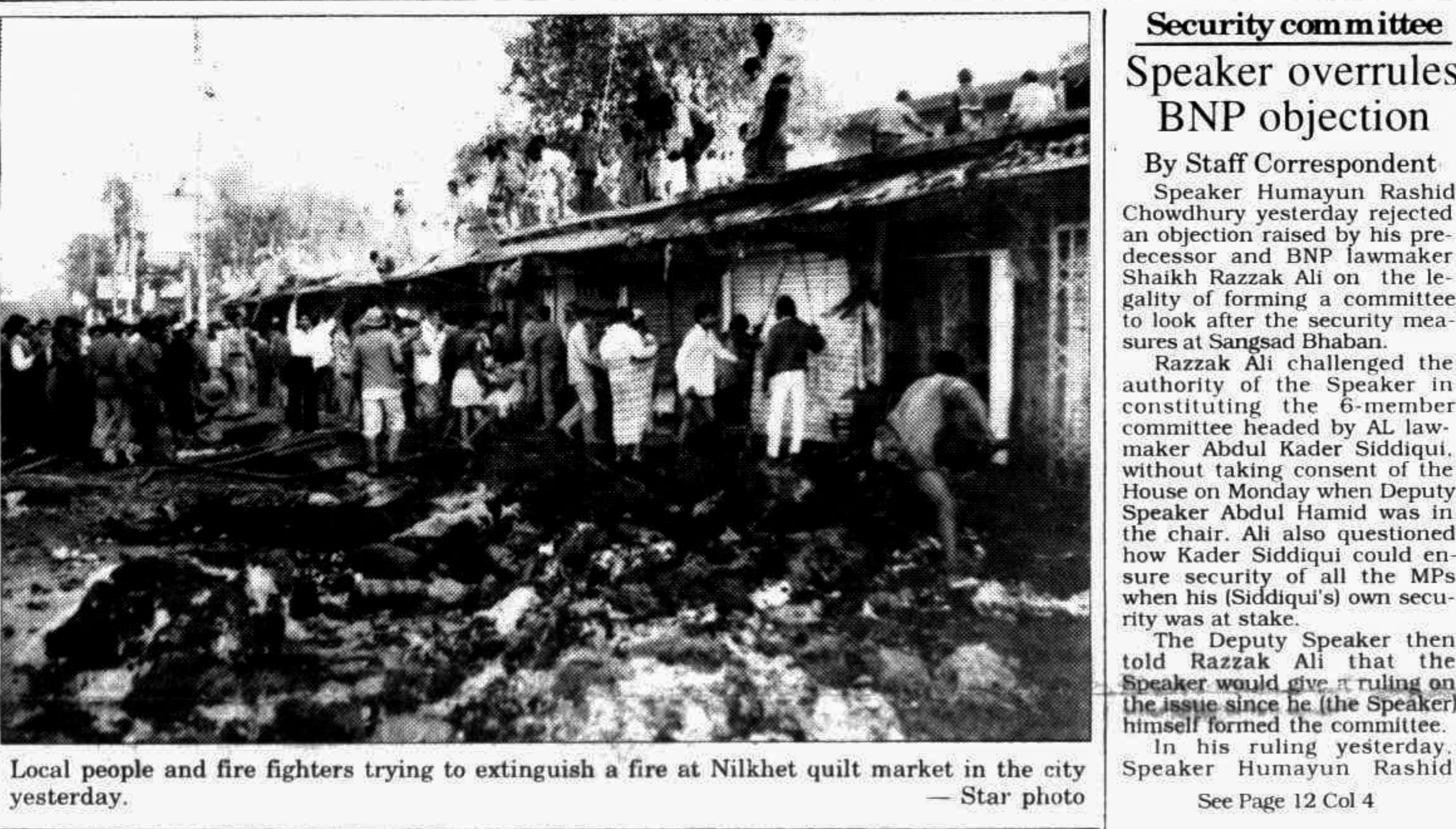
PAC scrutinises 5 reports of Works Ministry

By Nurul Kabir
The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Jatiya Sangsad at its meeting yesterday detected that some construction materials of the Public Works Department were stolen from a PWD warehouse in 1987 due to negligence of two superintendent engineers of the department, PAC sources said.

The committee asked the authorities concerned to realise the value of the stolen materials from the engineers, the sources added.

The PAC meeting held at the Sangsad Bhawan with its chief S M Akram in the chair scrutinised five out of 28 reports of the Works Ministry covering the period between July 1987 and June 1988.

The first meeting of the JS body held last month decided that initially it would meet four times a month to 'untangle the backlog of works'. The committee was formed during the last session of Parliament.
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Local people and fire fighters trying to extinguish a fire at Nilkhet quilt market in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Kibria replies to BNP allegations Stock market slide a 'large correction'

By Staff Correspondent
Opposition MPs yesterday accused the government of damaging the capital market, but the finance minister claimed the current slide in the market is only a 'large correction', reports UNB.

The lawmakers belonging to main opposition BNP blasted the government, blaming it for willfully allowing 'black marketeers and profiteers' to manipulate the stock market.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria denied the allegations and claimed that provocation by a section of political parties was behind the recent volatile situation in the kerb market.

"It's very unfortunate... they are trying to gain political advantage using the kerb market traders", he said, calling upon all not to use those investors for their own political interest. "Let them do their own business," he said.

He also denied that some Tk 500 crore was taken away from the Dhaka and Chittagong bourses and said he had no knowledge about any involvement of foreign traders with the recent ups and downs in the stock market.

The minister viewed that the current situation in the share market can be considered as a large correction instead of a crash. He attributed the recent ups in the market to ignorance of the investors about risk factor as well as their over enthusiasm.

The noisy scene ensued as Mirza Azam of the ruling party asked the minister about the recent 'crash' in the share market.

"As Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid went for the next question after three supplementaries on the question the BNP lawmakers sprang to their feet," he said.

Knitwear export Team leaves on Sunday to join meet on GSP

By Staff Correspondent
A six-member delegation led by Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed leaves for Brussels on Sunday to attend a crucial meeting on Generalised System of Preference (GSP) for Bangladeshi exports of knitwear to the European Union.

The meeting, beginning at the Belgian capital on Monday will consider, among other issues, alleged abuse of GSP facilities, reports UNB.

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Asian Highway 80pc work done by BNP govt: Mannan Bhuiyan

By Nazmul Ashraf
BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday called upon the patriotic people, particularly the followers of Maulana Bhasani, to raise their voice against the plot to make Bangladesh a vassal state of India, reports UNB.

He was addressing a discussion meeting at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium, organised by the Bhasani Sangsad marking the day Moulana Bhasani returned home from India in 1972 after the nine-month Liberation War.

Bhuiyan said Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani was the first leader who demanded self-rule for the then East Pakistan and soon after achieving independence from Pakistani rule, he realised that Bangladesh would find itself in the clutches of India.

"India knew that Bhasani will protest any bid against the country's interest. He (Bhasani) wanted our liberation war to be conducted standing on own feet. That's why he was kept confined in India during the war and barred from leading the nation," he said.

The BNP leader said the Farakka problem was created as the post-independence

Awami League government gave permission to India to commission the Farakka Barrage.

"Now another Awami League government has sold out the country's interest in the name of Ganges waters-sharing treaty," he alleged.

"We also want the Asian Highway, and we have completed 80 per cent work of our portion of the highway," said Bhuiyan, a former minister of the previous BNP government.

He said the route is being changed in the interest of India and the present Bangladesh government has already agreed to this.

He said the government is "shamelessly pursuing a subservient policy."

Referring to a four-nation sub-regional grouping within the SAARC, Bhuiyan said the present Prime Minister has agreed to join the group consulting only with India, not with the other two members. "It seems Nepal and Bhutan have nothing to say."

He expressed surprise at the inclusion of Nepal in the sub-regional grouping, when, despite its importance, the Himalayan kingdom was not

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'Artificial' fertiliser crisis AL MPs criticise govt for poor handling

By Reaz Ahmad
Some ruling party lawmakers yesterday criticised the government for the "dismal" situation in marketing and distribution of fertilizer throughout the country.

They criticised the ministers concerned at a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) and demanded cancellation of dealership of those responsible for price hike and artificial crisis of fertilizer, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

The 90-minute close-door meeting was held at the Sangsad Bhawan with ALPP leader and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The sources said that Sheikh Hasina invited criticism from party lawmakers and then asked the two ministers concerned, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury, to speak.

Among others, party MPs, Prof Al Ashraf, Alhaj Mokbul Hossain, Muhibur Rahman Manik, Hafiz Majumder, Shamsul Haq, Saidul Haq, M A

Bari, Anisul Haq and Sharif Khasruzzaman spoke at the meeting. Sheikh Hasina asked the party MPs to give reports to the ministers concerned if there is any 'foul play' fertilizer distribution and assured them of "stern action".

"We have to make sure that farmers get fertilizer in time. No irregularities in this regard will be tolerated," she said and stressed the need for further activating the monitoring committees at the district level.

Some legislators demanded cancellation of dealership of "pro-BNP traders," saying "they may sabotage the distribution process".

A suggestion for giving dealership at union-level also came up. Tofael argued that there should not be any fresh dealership now as the peak season of fertilizer use is round the corner.

Sheikh Hasina, however, said a decision in this regard would be taken in March, the source said.

Some ALPP members said progress of development works
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JRC team visits Hardinge Bridge point today

PABNA, Jan 22: The chairman of Indo-Bangladesh Joint River Commission (JRC), S K Das will visit the Hardinge Bridge point of the River Ganges (Padma) tomorrow, reports UNB.

Two other JRC members — Partha Nandy and M S Gupta — will accompany him.

During the three-day visit, Das will observe the flow of the Padma at the Hardinge Bridge point for two days — January 24 and 25 (Friday-Saturday).

Violence, gherao by CBA leaders KAFCO may be shut, says management in complaint

(KASKU) confined the top management members on Sunday demanding 5 per cent profit participation for the 1995-96 financial year.

The KASKU leaders, along with over 100 militant activists, allegedly kept hostage 12 top management members, including the Managing Director for eight hours Sunday and forced them to sign a written promise for payment of 5 per cent profit participation.

However, the KAFCO management said during the 95-96 period, the company had incurred a loss of Tk 427.423 million. The management said one factor for the loss in 95-96 year was the fact that interest was payable on borrowings from the financial year.

Through the use of violence and threats of personal injury, extracted under duress, a written undertaking that KAFCO would pay each of the approximately 300 non-management

Chinese team leaves for home MOUs on pvt sector investment in power, tourism & dev of port

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury saw him off at the airport.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Xujiang was present.

Chongwu, who led a high powered trade delegation here, referred to his meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other Bangladesh leaders, and said that a broad based understanding in the field of trade and economic cooperation had been developed between the two countries.

The Governor appreciated the measures undertaken by the government to attract foreign investors. "Policy and incentives for foreign investors are nice and attractive," he said.

He hoped that structural facilities for foreign investment here would be further improved. "We look forward to exchanging views on expanding areas of cooperation in future," Chongwu said.

The Chinese leader thanked Bangladesh government for the warm hospitality extended to him and members of his delegation during the visit.

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index	1875.76 (+0.06%)
Market capital Tk	13642.36cr
Transactions in volume	174154
Transactions in value	Tk 4.42 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index	782.93 (+1.76%)
Market capital Tk	10026.28 cr
Transactions in volume	37430
Transactions in value	Tk 7008630

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
13	23	—	5:42
14	24	5:19	5:43
15	25	5:19	5:43



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Pete survives a scare

MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Top seed American Pete Sampras survived a torrid time against Albert Costa of Spain during his quarterfinal match at the Australian Open here today. re-pot agencies.

Sampras had to dig deep into his reserves before overcoming the plucky Spaniard 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 3-6 and 6-2.

Earlier, Swiss teenager Martina Hingis moved into the semifinals with an impressive straight sets victory over Romania's Irina Spirla.

The 16-year-old fourth seed, who is aiming to become the youngest winner of a Grand Slam title in the Open era, overcame a hesitant start to beat Spirla 7-5, 6-2 in just 70 minutes.

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