

# The Daily Star

**PRAN**  
Natural Mineral Water  
100% Germ free  
Ozone Treated

**LEASE FINANCING**  
Are You Looking For Financial Assistance In

- Capital Machinery
- Heavy Construction Equipment
- Medical Equipment
- Marine Transport
- Generator & Boiler
- Vehicle like Luxury Buses, Microbuses, Trucks, Tractors
- Cargo Carriers, Pick-Up, Cars
- Lifts/Elevators
- Air Conditioning Plants

**PHOENIX LEASING COMPANY LTD.**  
Shadinata Bhaban (1st fl) 88, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka  
Phone: 9569007 (Auto Calling) Fax: 9567787  
Agrabad Branch, R.M. House, 31 Agrabad C/A, Ctg. Ph: 710089, Fax: 710086

## Ctg port: No headway in first day's meetings

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Jan 8: The State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya today held a series of meetings with the leaders of trade unions at Chittagong port Rest House to resolve the dispute over implementation of incentive scheme for dock workers, meeting sources said.

The minister held separate meetings with labour leaders, port and dock CBA leaders, and the representatives of stevedores from 11 am to 3-30 pm, but no decision was made, meeting sources added.

The minister will also hold meetings with port users and other leaders of the port tomorrow to resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, the matter of incentive scheme was sent to the Law Ministry three days ago to review its legal side, sources said.

As a result, the implementation of incentive scheme may be delayed though it was earlier postponed till January 15 in the face of opposition from port users, the sources added.

On December 25, an agreement was signed between the government and the leaders of dock workers on introduction of an incentive scheme.

As per the deal, the dock workers will get maximum 25 per cent of their wages as incentive based on their performance.

## Road accidents kill five in Comilla

COMILLA, Jan 8: Five people were killed and two injured in two road accidents in the district early today, reports UNB.

Police said three people, riding a motorbike, were killed when a night-coach from opposite direction hit them at Temohoni in Sadar thana at 1.30 am.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Yasin, 35, Selim, 25, and Abul Kalam, 27. All hailed from Laksham thana.

In another accident, two people were killed and two others injured when two trucks collided on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Burichang thana.

The accident occurred at Koprail at 6 am, leaving Abdul Mannan, 30, the driver of a truck, dead on the spot. The other victim, Shafiqur Rahman, 35, died on way to hospital.

Separate cases were filed with police.

## Inside Today

**Article**  
PN Haksar: Tribute to an Honourable Man  
by Rehman Sobhan  
Page 4

**Star Literature**  
Profile: Angus Nilson: A contributor of lasting value to English novel; Book: Indian media not highlighting women issues; and Fiction: Despair at the door  
Pages 6 & 7

**Business**  
Raw jute exports down 50pc  
Strong yen may deal blow to Asian economic recovery  
Pages 8, 9

**Prayer Timings**  
January 9

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-19	5-24
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-32	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

**KING'S**  
Soyabean Oil  
Perfect oil for your delicious food

**Shri, Iftar timings**

Ramadan	Jan	Shri	Iftar
20	9	—	5-32
21	10	5-19	5-33
22	11	5-19	5-33

# Where has the money gone?

By Gobinda Bar

The country suffered a loss of Tk 1482 crore due to corruption, malpractice and irregularities in 12 overseas branches of the Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) from 1972 to 1996.

A special audit conducted by the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General says the huge money was 'irregularly spent, misused or it remained unrealised as bad debt due to irregularities by bank officials.'

The audit report, which was submitted to the President and later presented before the Parliament in November, includes only 'serious' irregularities and damages that were not resolved through discussion with the authorities concerned. These audit objections do not

give a complete picture of the real situation as the report was prepared only by examining selected transactions,' the report said.

It said that 702 audit objections involving Tk 1481.92 crore from 1972 to June 1996 remained unresolved. 'The objections have remained unresolved creating ground for further irregularities and disorders.'

At Abu Dhabi branch of Janata Bank, 89 audit objections during 1974 to '96 involving Tk 804.25 crore remained unresolved.

At Dubai branch of the bank, 58 objections on 'irregularities' involving Tk 10.76 crore during 1976-96 remained unresolved.

See Page 12 Col 6



As plainclothes policemen swoop on muggers near the Supreme Court compound in the city yesterday, a desperate wife pleads for release of her husband, picked up on charge of snatching. The police drive has been launched as incidents of mugging have become rampant in the city with the Eid festival nearing. In this series of snaps (from left to right), the woman tries to prevent police from taking her husband into the police van, then begs to a plainclothesman and lastly stands in the way of the vehicle.

## Int'l terrorist held in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 8: Detective police, on receipt of a fax message from Interpol, arrested a terrorist of a secret organisation named 'Freedom in Bangladesh' in a pre-dawn raid at Chawkbazar, Bahattarpool in the city today.

Police said Syed Md Nurul Absar, 44, was arrested at 3 am from his residence for alleged involvement in smuggling of arms and explosive materials.

Police said Absar had gone to Libya a number of times to take 'special training' on arms and explosives.

In June last year, he had travelled to an East European country and purchased a consignment of automatic weapons and explosives the destination of which was Bangladesh, police said.

Absar returned to Bangladesh in September last year and was again trying to go abroad with a different passport, police added.

Interpol, the body of police across the world, in an urgent fax message had informed Bangladesh police of Nurul Absar and his underground organisation, equipped with sophisticated firearms.

Police said that the arrested terrorist had taken initiatives to do subversive activities in important installations which could put at stake the country's sovereignty and internal security.

He was produced in court today. The court placed him on seven days' remand for interrogation.

Legal measures will be taken against him after a joint interrogation by different intelligence agencies in Dhaka, police said.

Absar hailed from village Swarupbhata of Rangunia thana of the district.

## Gold worth Tk 22 lakh seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent  
Gold worth about Tk 22 lakh was seized at Zia International Airport yesterday.

A customs surveillance team seized the gold in bars from a suitcase that reached ZIA by a Biman flight from Dubai via Chittagong at about 11-30 a.m., customs sources said.

## The deadly bacteria

By DMC correspondent

Ninety per cent of the adult population and 80 per cent of the children under five in the country are infected with Helicobacter Pylori, a bacteria responsible for recurrent peptic ulcer and also stomach cancer.

However, symptoms may remain dormant in the infected adults for long, leading gastroenterologists told a seminar in the city yesterday.

Prof. Niklaus Gyr of the University of Basle, Switzerland, said 15 million people in Bangladesh are suffering from peptic ulcer and related diseases.

The seminar on 'Management of Peptic Ulcer - What is New?' was organised by Bangladesh Gastroenterology Society and sponsored by Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited.

The experts emphasised 'awareness and immediate action' to contain the bacteria which can cause deadly diseases.

They said 60 per cent of the world population are infected with the bacteria that affects people from the very childhood.

'The organism will persist lifelong unless eradicated,' said Prof. Mahmud Hasan, general secretary of BGS.

See Page 12 Col 1

## Code of conduct for RU students

By Staff Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 8: The Rajshahi University authorities have relaxed restrictions on political activities of student organisations but announced a code of conduct, reports APB.

As per the code of conduct, signed by Proctor Prof. Mokhelesur Rahman, each student body will be allowed to bring out processions or hold rallies on the campus twice a week.

Chhatra League will be allowed to hold meetings or bring out processions on Saturday and Wednesday, Chhatra Dal on Sunday and Thursday, Chhatra Union on Sunday and Tuesday, Chhatra Mitr on Saturday and Monday, Chhatra League (CL) on Monday and Wednesday, Chhatra Front on Monday and Wednesday, Chhatra Samaj on Sunday and Tuesday and Chhatra Shibir on Tuesday and Thursday.

Student bodies will have to take permission from the university authorities for rallies that can be held only at the university Shahid Minar, TSC, the Shabash Bangladesh compound, under the mango tree on the northern side of the administrative building and at Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium.

Processions or rallies can be held at other locations.

See Page 12 Col 6

## Jalalabad Gasfield Production likely to start next week

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Jan 8: The Jalalabad Gasfield is expected to start production from mid-January, said a high official of the Occidental. It will be the first major success of the US company in Bangladesh.

Gonzalo A Ruiz, Field Manager of Occidental in Sylhet, informed The Daily Star Wednesday that the drilling of three new wells - JB No 2, JB No 3 and JB No 4, had already been completed while work over and development of another well - JB No 1 - had also been done by the company. All these four wells are ready for production, he said.

Test production in all the wells began November 19 last year and continued for weeks with a view to weighing their ability to deliver gas. The approximate reserve in the four wells of Jalalabad Gasfield is about one trillion cubic feet, Ruiz said, adding the company is expecting to continue its gas production from the field for 15 years.

He further informed that the gas produced in the Jalalabad Gasfield would be taken to the processing plant, installed in a nearby area and after processing, the dry gas will be sent to the Kailashtila area in Golapganj thana for supplying it to the National Grid.

Final testing of the 15-kilometre pipeline between Kailashtila and the processing plant is going on and is expected to be completed within days. A Swedish company 'Kvaerner' installed the plant in Alurata area, about four kilometres off Sylhet town.

Meanwhile, Maxwell Engineering, the pipeline installation sub-contractor, has requested the people living within 20 metre areas on both sides of the pipeline to keep alert during the test transmission of gas from the processing plant to Kailashtila. The condensate is being sent to Kailashtila through another pipeline.

If everything goes well, the Occidental will be able to supply about 100 million cubic feet gas per day (mcmd) to the National Grid from Jalalabad Gasfield. Production in the JB No 1 and JB No 2 will begin mid-January while JB No 3 and JB No 4 will start production from mid-February, Ruiz said adding the company is also preparing to start drilling of another well, JB No 5, at a nearby location soon.

## Find alternative to hartal, urge business leaders

Top leaders of the country's business community yesterday expressed grave concern over the threat by some Opposition political parties to go for continuous hartals after the Ramadan, reports BSS.

They called upon the government to show restraint and the opposition parties, which are giving clear indication to opt for continuous hartals after the Eid-ul-Fitr, to behave responsibly in the interest of un-hindered economic progress.

The leaders observed that a tranquil society is equally essential at the moment to give democracy an institutional shape.

In separate interviews with BSS, the presidents of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA), Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) strongly opposed the use of hartal as a political weapon. They urged the political parties to find out an alternative to hartals and politics of destruction.

FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo said that any future negative political programme would seriously hurt the economy.

See Page 11

## Senators search for common ground to avoid a partisan trial

WASHINGTON, Jan 8: After swearing to judge President Bill Clinton fairly and impartially, senators from both parties gathered today for an extraordinary private meeting aimed at working out a framework for the impeachment trial. 'We're close,' Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle said as he arrived, reports AP.

Republicans and Democrats walked together into the Old Senate Chamber, the scene of many great debates in the first half of the 19th century, in a show of bipartisanship as both sides tried to keep the proceedings from dissolving into partisan sniping.

Majority Leader Trent Lott and Daschle, each with his own plans for a trial, invited rank-and-file members to the room that was the Senate's chamber between 1810 and 1859. Extra chairs had to be brought in - there weren't a hundred senators when the chamber was in use.

An attempt to hold the same meeting in the Old Senate Chamber collapsed Thursday, after partisan rancor broke out only moments after Clinton was formally made a defendant in the first presidential impeachment trial since the Andrew Johnson case in 1868. The primary cause of the rupture was a dispute over the need for witnesses, which Republicans favor and Democrats oppose.

Republicans on Thursday had scheduled votes on their proposed ground rules and also on a Democratic alternative. With a 55-45 advantage, the Republicans would have won the fight, but at the price of setting a partisan tone that might never be overcome in the proceedings.

Lott pulled back from the brink and kept negotiating, deciding senators should 'keep calm and cool and dignified.' His move prompted Daschle to proclaim: 'I think there is some common ground.'

'We don't want the first vote to be a partisan vote, and it came very close to being one,' said Republican Sen. Sam Brownback.

Despite such hopeful statements, the two parties were unable to bridge the gap during the day - especially over the prospect that witnesses such as former White House intern Monica Lewinsky would testify about sex in the tradition-bound Senate.

Clinton is charged under two articles of impeachment, both questions about calling Ms. Lewinsky to testify about her sexual escapades with the president at the White House.

House prosecutors have failed to allay such concerns, despite expressing a willingness to avoid questions to witnesses on explicit sexual material.

At the White House, spokesman Joe Lockhart told reporters, 'We are convinced we can make a compelling case that will lead the United States Senate not to remove the president.'

The charges against Clinton were brought in the name of the House of Representatives and 'of the people of the United States of America.' But as every senator was aware as the trial opened, the articles were approved by a House that voted along mostly partisan lines.

'We are now jurors,' Stevens said. 'We don't want chaos.'

While the senators insisted it was solely their prerogative to run the trial, Lott and Republican Sen. Rick Santorum

related to his attempts to conceal his extramarital affair Ms. Lewinsky. One article charges the president with perjury before a federal court panel, the second with obstructing justice.

Republican Sen. Ted Stevens, echoed the thoughts of many Democratic senators, commenting he had 'serious questions' about calling Ms. Lewinsky to testify about her sexual escapades with the president at the White House.

House prosecutors have failed to allay such concerns, despite expressing a willingness to avoid questions to witnesses on explicit sexual material.

At the White House, spokesman Joe Lockhart told reporters, 'We are convinced we can make a compelling case that will lead the United States Senate not to remove the president.'

The charges against Clinton were brought in the name of the House of Representatives and 'of the people of the United States of America.' But as every senator was aware as the trial opened, the articles were approved by a House that voted along mostly partisan lines.

'We are now jurors,' Stevens said. 'We don't want chaos.'

While the senators insisted it was solely their prerogative to run the trial, Lott and Republican Sen. Rick Santorum

## SB charges Aziz Bhai with leaking out state secret

Business baron Aziz Mohammad Bhai, held on various charges, was grilled with a volley of questions on satellite channel ATV by Special Branch investigators on the first day of his police remand yesterday, reports UNB.

Sources close to the investigators said that the SB personnel, during the interrogation, charged him with leaking out state secrets in the name of sending recorded tapes for the ATV, now shut down.

Intelligence agencies got suspicious about the satellite channel after it telecast some programmes allegedly distorting history of the Liberation War.

The interrogation team of ASP Khalilur Rahman, who arrested Aziz Bhai, reportedly raised some proofs that the high-flying businessman was involved in leaking out secret information abroad.

They questioned him about his relations with some diplomats, specially some from the Middle Eastern countries, sources said.

The SB personnel also charged him with subversive acts as part of a 'deep-rooted conspiracy by certain quarters to destabilise the government'.

Aziz Mohammad Bhai denied all the allegations levelled against him, saying he had no relations with any political party, particularly those in the opposition.

Police said he was taken from Gulshan thana to the office of the City SB at about 1 pm and interrogated.

Earlier, two sub-inspectors of Gulshan thana interrogated him in connection with Sohail Chowdhury murder case. Film star Sohail was shot dead in front of Tramps Club at Banani on December 17.

In fact, he has been brought on police remand for two days in connection with Sohail Chowdhury murder and for another two days in connection with the death of film star Salman Shah, the sources said.

See Page 12 Col 8

**Rush for Your Copy**

The Daily Star

**Eid Fashion '99 CATALOGUE**

**Now**

An exciting catalogue for your latest fashion need

Let the Star Fashion '99 help express the best in you

Update Your Eid Fashion Wardrobe

The Daily Star Eid Fashion '99 CATALOGUE

For your copy please contact Circulation Department of The Daily Star, House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. Phone: 866771-4