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STOCK MARKET

DSE price index	775.46 (-0.23%)
Market capital Tk	48.03 billion
Transactions in volume	42324
Transactions in value Tk	7.87 million

Weekend Magazine

A Trip to Disneyland; A Museum for Fairgrounds; Gulbulistan; Asian Diary; Recalling the Past; Tribute to Stephen Spender; A Novel Effort; Viewing Video Pages 9, 10 & 11

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NEWS BRIEFS

Pabna AL leader joins BNP

From Our Correspondent
PABNA, Aug 24: District Awami League leader and Pabna Pourashava chairman Advocate Sheikh Shahidullah Bachehu joined BNP today along with several hundred workers. The BNP, pourashava unit, organised a function at the local Banamahi Institute to accord a reception to the new comers.

Cultural team off to London

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahannara Begum left Wednesday night for London leading a 23-member cultural delegation to a cultural festival in the United Kingdom. The eight-day long festival began yesterday at the British capital, besides in London the delegation will perform cultural programmes in Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow, reports BSS.

2 foreign trawlers apprehended

CHITTAGONG, Aug 24: Bangladesh navy ship Umar Farooq apprehended two foreign trawlers from near the St Martin's island today. The navy ship apprehended the trawlers which had been engaged in poaching inside Bangladesh waters and arrested 29 crew members, an ISPR press release said, reports BSS.

PLO, Israel sign accord Sunday

CAIRO, Aug 24: Israel and the PLO will sign an agreement transferring more civilian powers to the Palestinians at a ceremony in Cairo on Sunday, Egyptian Foreign Ministry officials said today, reports AFP.

Jordan's veiled threat to snap ties with Iraq

AMMAN, Aug 24: King Hussein of Jordan signalled a sharp shift in relations with Iraq on Wednesday, accusing Saddam Hussein of deceit and heaping abuse and suffering on the Iraqi people, reports AP.
In a 45-minute speech on state television, King Hussein threw his weight behind Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamel al-Majid, Saddam's son-in-law and former close aide who defected to Jordan on August 8 and has called for the Iraqi leader's overthrow.
Without criticizing Saddam by name, the King's speech seemed to be a warning that he could sever ties with Iraq if it continues with policies he considers harmful to Jordan and the Arab world.
The king stopped short of severing relations with Baghdad and said he will not close Jordan's border with Iraq.
He said that al-Majid had opened his eyes to the true nature of the Baghdad regime, considered one of the most repressive in the region, which Jordan has supported for years.
The last few days and my

meetings with brother Hussein Kamel have helped remove the cloud that has been obscuring our vision for a long time," the king declared.
The monarch said he was dismayed to learn from al-Majid that Saddam had planned to attack Kuwait and Kuwait City, Aug 24: The last of 1,400 US troops arrived here today for war games aimed at deterring Saddam from attacking Kuwait, a US army spokesman said, reports AFP.
Saudi Arabia.
He said he had also been upset that the Iraqi leadership had repeatedly deceived him.
King Hussein said that the Iraqi people's suffering stemmed not just from the devastating UN trade sanctions imposed on that country after Saddam invaded Kuwait in August 1990, but also from the practices that have deprived Iraqi citizens of the most basic human rights.
"My brother, Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamel, and his fam-

ily have removed the ambiguity and provided an insight into the real situation, suffering and pain in Iraq," he said.
His remarks fell short of calling for Saddam's ouster.
The king's remarks could irritate Jordan's predominantly Palestinian population, which overwhelmingly supported the Iraqi leader for his anti-Israeli rhetoric during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis over Kuwait.
The king reiterated his call for democratic reforms in Iraq, saying he hopes would like to see a balanced and real pluralism in Iraq.
King Hussein, whose Hashemite cousin King Faisal II ruled Iraq until he and his family were slaughtered in a 1958 coup that ended the monarchy, stressed that he nurtures no ambitions to regain his family's sovereignty over Jordan's eastern neighbour.
The monarch, who granted asylum to Al-Majid, Saddam's son-in-law, praised the Iraqi defector, who he said is seeking a new dawn for his homeland.
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Bangladesh captain Altaf Hossain tries to fend off two English players while the visiting skipper Kevin Lindsey (7) looks on during the opening match of the 6th Commonwealth Youth Handball Championship at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium yesterday. The hosts pulled off a dramatic 21-17 win over the defending champions. (Details on Page 7)

— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Move to free 50 out of 3000 detainees

By Staff Correspondent
Some 3,000 Bangladeshis, who are passing their days in various detention camps in Malaysia, are least interested to come back home.
The Labour Secretary disclosed this at a press conference yesterday, adding the government freed 13 detainees this year and now trying to rescue 50 others immediately.
Dr Harunur Rashid told newsmen that the detainees, who became prey to recruitment forgeries and lost everything at home just to manage a job outside the country, now find their fate absolutely bleak.
"For the last one year, I myself pursued a Bangladeshi woman, detained in Malaysia, to return home. But, she pondered what will she do

Dhaka, KL sign agreement Manpower export now at official level only

By Staff Correspondent
All kinds of manpower export to Malaysia except maids and shop-assistants will be handled under a 'Govt to Govt' procedure as the Malaysian government recently decided to abolish the role of private agencies in recruiting manpower in that country.
Stating this at a press conference in the city yesterday, Dr Harunur Rashid, Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Manpower, said a 'note of understanding' was signed between Bangladesh and Malaysia on the 16th of this month and later on, the Malaysian government would sign a broad-based common agreement with all countries who supply manpower to that country.
Under the 'Govt to Govt' procedure, manpower recruiting will be dealt by the 'Foreign Workers Taskforce' of Malaysia and the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited' (BOESL) solely on behalf of the respective governments, said the Secretary at the conference held at the conference room of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.
Malaysian authorities in a decision on August 2 cancelled licences of the private recruiting agencies in that country and assigned a taskforce under the Ministry of Home Affairs of that country



Hosts beat champs in opening match

Sports Reporter
The sixth Commonwealth Youth Handball Championship got underway at the Mirpur indoor stadium in the city yesterday.
Finance Minister and chairman of the organising committee M Saifur Rahman, inaugurated the week-long meet.
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Local govt Bill to be placed in JS

By Nazmul Ashraf
The government is planning to enact laws for direct election of public representatives to run the Zila Parishads, the district-level local government bodies, well-placed sources said.
A bill dealing with, among other aspects, the composition and functions of the local government bodies, is expected to be placed in Parliament during its 21st session scheduled to begin on September 6, added the sources in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD).
When contacted last night, LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar confirmed that his ministry was preparing the bill for introducing it in the House during the coming session.
The minister further said that before the introduction of the bill, titled 'Local Government (Zila Parishad) (Amendments) Ordinance 1995', the special parliamentary committee concerned would submit its report.
The provision for direct elections to the local government bodies is being contemplated to meet the constitutional requirement of ensuring people's representation in every tier of the administration, one source said. The BNP government had earlier enacted necessary laws to provide for direct election of all the public representatives to run the country's four city corporations, he pointed out.
The treasury bench in the See Page 8 Col 4

Mali President due today

A red-carpet reception is awaiting President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali who arrives in Dhaka this morning on a three-day state visit, reports UNB.
The visit is taking place at the invitation of President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.
President Konare will be accompanied by his wife Madame Adame Ba Konare. His 15-member entourage will include Minister for Rural Development and Environment Modibo Traore.
Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam and Begum Shamsul Islam will receive the distinguished guests at the Zia International Airport as Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman is now abroad.
Airport formalities over, See Page 8 Col 8

China jails US human rights activist for spying

BEIJING, Aug 24: Chinese-American Harry Wu, who spent two decades in Chinese prison camps and documented their abuses, was convicted today of spying and leaking state secrets. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison, reports AP.
Unless the government decides to expel Wu immediately, the harsh sentence is sure to further damage China-US relations, already reeling from disputes over human rights, trade, nuclear proliferation and arms sales.
China said Wednesday that ties were at the lowest ebb since they were established in 1979.
The Wuhan Intermediate People's Court, which tried Wu, said he also would be expelled from China.
Under the law, Wu should serve his term before being expelled, a court spokesman who gave his name as Yang told The Associated Press. He spoke by telephone from Wuhan in Hubei province, about 1,100 kilometers south of Beijing.
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US human rights activist Harry Wu listens at his trial in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, in this photo shot from the Chinese state television evening newscast in Beijing yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Deans, Syndicate members of DU meet PM

The newly elected Deans of different faculties and Syndicate members of the Dhaka University yesterday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and discussed the university's academic activities, reports UNB.
During the meeting at the PM's office, Vice-Chancellor Prof Enajuddin Ahmed, who led the teachers' delegation, said the university will be freed from session jam in a year.
Prof Ahmed said session jam has already been reduced and academic atmosphere has improved in recent days. The educational environment will improve further if the teachers and guardians cooperate with the university authorities, he said.
Other members of the delegation sought the Prime Minister's help in increasing research facilities and prosecuting higher studies.
Begum Zia said her government attached topmost priority to the education sector and allocated a substantial portion of the national budget

Experts critical of FAP final draft report

By Rashed Mahmud Titumir
Experts yesterday criticised the final draft of the Bangladesh Water and Flood Management Strategy (BWFMS), saying it hardly differed from the original version of the Flood Action Plan (FAP) and arguing that it would not benefit the nation.
Three experts who had been directly or indirectly involved in the framing of the FAP giving their reactions to The Daily Star on the final draft of BWFMS, termed it as an 'optical illusion', with little participation from the local implementing agencies in its formulation.
The experts — Prof Ainun Nishat, Prof Z U Chowdhury and Prof Shapan Adnan — observed that the strategy lacked people's participation.
The final draft, an outcome of a five-year 150 million US dollars FAP studies programme consisting a total of 11 main and 15 supporting studies, was presented at a meeting on Wednesday with the Prime Minister in the

Hasina for 'democratic political culture'

By Staff Correspondent
Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for establishing a "democratic political culture" in the country.
"We believe that this is possible only if general elections are held regularly under a neutral caretaker government during the next 15 or 20 years, the AL chief said.
Hasina said this while addressing a farewell luncheon hosted by herself in honour of the outgoing Egyptian Ambassador to Bangladesh Mohammed Kamal Emiljig and Mrs Laila Emiljig at a city restaurant.
The common man must be able to freely exercise their voting rights in an atmosphere free from violence, intimidation and abuse of official powers by the ruling party, she said.
Hasina also said "The Chief Election Commissioner has now taken an ill-judged step only to confirm our worst fears about his unsuitability to

Sonia blasts Rao govt for 'going slow' on Rajiv murder case

AMETHI (India), Aug 24: The widow of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi blasted the federal government here today for not speeding up investigations into her husband's 1991 assassination, reports AFP.
Sonia Gandhi told a 30,000-strong public meeting at her husband's old constituency of Amethi that the central government was going slow on the investigation.
"Even four years and three months later, the investigation into Rajiv Gandhi's assassination is slow" said the Italian-born Sonia, speaking in halting Hindi.
The comments were the first direct attack by the former premier's 48-year-old

widow on the government of Prime minister P V Narasimha Rao since he took office after Gandhi's assassination by a suicide bomber.
Sonia Gandhi's eight-minute speech and her criticism of the Rao government was greeted with thunderous applause and anti-government slogans at the massive gathering in Amethi, witnesses said.
Sonia Gandhi, who arrived here earlier today to open a medical camp, was accompanied by her daughter Priyanka who, however, did not speak at the rally.
Clad in a fawn-coloured saree, Sonia Gandhi in her speech laced with political overtones, described herself as a member of the famous

Nehru-Gandhi dynasty which had ruled India for more than four decades.
Her supporters repeatedly shouted slogans hailing Sonia Gandhi as a saviour of the country and the ruling Congress (I) party, the witnesses added.
She said members of the Gandhi family including prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and her late husband, Rajiv, lived and died for the country.
"The principles for which they sacrificed their lives are being put to the test today," said Sonia, who married Rajiv in 1968 when he was a airline pilot, in an apparent criticism of the 74-year-old Rao.
Congress activists de-

scribed Sonia Gandhi's speech as an indication that she was now been on a political career.
"I believe that Sonia Gandhi is interested in politics and will take to politics," said Arun Mallick, a Congress activist from New Delhi.
Her visit to Amethi has fuelled speculation that the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty was planning a political comeback.
Amethi, from where Rajiv Gandhi was twice elected to parliament, is now represented by Petroleum Minister Satish Sharma, a friend of the Gandhis who recently said he was ready to quit his seat for Sonia's son, Rahul.
Congress officials say the ruling party would be willing

to field Rahul from Amethi, a largely rural constituency in northern Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous which returns 85 MPs to the federal legislature — the Lok Sabha.
Sonia has repeatedly refused to be drawn into politics since her husband, who was prime minister from 1984 to 1989, was blown up by a suicide bomber while campaigning for elections.
But she wields enormous clout in the Congress, India's oldest political body, and its leaders vie to meet her at her secluded home in downtown New Delhi.
The few times Sonia has attended Congress meetings along with Rao, she has been cheered by party activists and



Sonia Gandhi

SAARC standing body meets in Delhi today

A two-day special session of the SAARC Standing Committee begins in New Delhi tomorrow to discuss measures for strengthening the role of its secretariat, reports UNB.
Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan was scheduled to leave for the Indian capital last night to attend the meeting whose agenda also include action programme for poverty alleviation and youth awards.
The SAARC Standing Committee, the third tier of the seven nation regional forum, comprises the Foreign Secretaries of all member countries.