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STOCK MARKET

DSE price index	793.72 (+0.42%)
Market capital Tk	49.24 billion
Transactions in volume	247697
Transactions in value Tk	33.25 million

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Simple pleasures
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NEWS BRIEFS

3 foreign fishing trawlers seized

CHITTAGONG, Sept 9: Bangladesh Navy ship Shaheed Ruhul Amin on Friday apprehended three more foreign fishing trawlers off the Fairway Buoy, south of the Sundarbans, and arrested all the 64 crew on board. The trawlers were engaged in catching fish well inside the fisheries waters of Bangladesh. All the arrested persons were handed over to the police, reports UNB.

Arms manufacturing workshop unearthed

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Sept 9: Panchlaish police today unearthed an arms manufacturing workshop in the city and seized some arms and manufacturing equipment. Four persons were also arrested allegedly for manufacturing revolver and LG in the Nipun Techno trade workshop located at OR Nizam road. The arrested are Tusar Kanti Chowdhury, Suman Barua, Milan and Obaidul Huq respectively.

2 Indian vessels on China visit

SHANGHAI, Sept 9: An Indian missile escort vessels and a coastal escort ship are in Shanghai for a three-day visit, the first by the Indian Navy since 1958, a newspaper reported today. The Liberation Daily reported that Chinese Navy Commander Admiral Zhang Lianzhong and Shanghai Naval Base Vice Commander Rear Admiral Xiao Dewan greeted the vessels on their arrival Friday in Shanghai, China's largest port, reports AFP.

Interim govt issue PM starts discussion with party colleagues

By Nazmul Ashraf

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has started discussions with her senior party colleagues on the formation of an interim government in line with her offer to resign 30 days ahead of the next general elections, competent sources in the party said.

The discussions on the issue began Friday as the Prime Minister recently renewed her offer for resignation against the backdrop of fresh opposition agitation for a

non-party caretaker government for holding the next elections.

On her return from Beijing late last week, Begum Zia discussed with senior BNP leaders including Prof Badruddoza Choudhury, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Dr Khandakar Mosharrar Hossain and Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at first on Friday and again yesterday with Salam Talukdar and some others the formation of an interim government if she and her cabinet

colleagues resign.

Earlier, Salam Talukdar and other BNP leaders told the press that they were willing to resume talks with the agitating opposition on how the affairs of the government would be run if the present government resigns.

Meanwhile, Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, at a press conference recently, proposed formation of a '1991-style' caretaker government headed by the Chief

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Fire set to housewife's body for dowry

By Staff Correspondent

A housewife was sprayed with inflammable substance and fire was set to her body for dowry at her in-law's house, her relatives claimed here yesterday.

Rahela Khatun Etti 22, is now fighting for life at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The incident occurred at Khalishpur, Khulna on September 2. Etti was first admitted to a private clinic in Khulna with serious burn injuries, brought to the Holy Family Hospital here on September 6 and then transferred to the DMCH yesterday.

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AL council to review agitation strategy

By Staff Correspondent

The special council session of the Awami League tomorrow will review the latest political situation and the party strategy to realise the demand for a caretaker government for holding the next general elections.

Party chief Sheikh Hasina is expected to give the party councilors from across the country guidelines for integrating the grassroots people to the agitation and for the next general elections, a central leader of the party told The Daily Star yesterday.

The special council session will also review Sheikh Hasina's formula for a caretaker government headed by

the Chief Justice to conduct the next general elections and the ruling BNP's response to it.

A proposal for extension of the tenure of the present central committee by one year will be made at the council session.

A meeting of the AL presidium with Sheikh Hasina in the chair last night discussed the proposal for extension of the tenure and some amendments to the party policies on education, health, economy etc. The presidium will also meet today.

Meanwhile, all preparations are complete for holding

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Dhaka, Tehran to bolster ties

Bangladesh and Iran have agreed to bolster bilateral relations through active cooperation under the Joint Commission in various fields, including trade, manpower employment, investment, joint venture and shipping, reports UNB.

The agreement was reached at official talks between the two countries at the state Guest House Meghna. The first round of talks was held on Thursday while the second and the final round yesterday.

The talks covered the entire gamut of bilateral relations. It dealt with 24 subjects, including introduction of air services between Dhaka and Tehran and anti-narcotic measures.

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Intensify 'oust govt' agitation: Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on the people to intensify "oust government" agitation and realise the demand for caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice, reports UNB.

"Workers and employees have a vital role in making the current mass movement a success," she said while addressing the newly elected leaders of the Jatiya Samik League, a front organisation of the Awami League.

Samik League leaders met the Awami League chief at the Dhanmandi office of the party.

Another report says: More than 300 lawyers of the Supreme Court yesterday extended their support to Hasina's modality of a neutral caretaker government

In a joint statement, the lawyers said election under a neutral caretaker government is the only way to resolve the current political impasse.

Students damage vehicles in protest

By Staff Correspondent

A group of students set ablaze a motor cycle of a police sergeant and damaged at least 20 vehicles during a rampage in front of the Dhaka College yesterday morning, protesting the newly introduced admission system.

At one stage the students clashed with police and pelted stones at them. Witnesses said that police lobbed tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

The agitated students blocked the busy Mirpur road in front of the college, creating severe traffic congestion in the area for about an hour from around 11 am.

The students demanded cancellation of the admission system based on the total marks obtained in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations.

Meanwhile, more than one hundred students from different colleges in the city held a demonstration at the Dhaka College premises, organised by the SSC-HSC Examinees Action Council.

Later, they brought out a procession to press home their demand.

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Slum dwellers collecting drinking water with the help of a rubber pipe fitted with a WASA pipe in a city area.
 — Star photo by Amran Hossain.

Bank rate raised by 0.25 per cent

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday raised the bank rate by 0.25 per cent, what a senior banker said, containing inflationary pressure growing out of fast-expanding credit to the private sector, reports UNB.

The central bank also raised the lowest rate of interest on savings account and fixed deposit by 0.50 per cent in both cases.

The interest upturns, which came after downward revisions several times since financial reforms started in early 90s, were given effect yesterday, according to a Bangladesh Bank announcement.

Bank rate, scaled down to almost half in a series of cuts in recent years, was raised to 5.75 per cent from 5.50 per cent.

The lowest rate of interest on savings account was raised to 5 per cent from 4.5

per cent, and on fixed deposit to 5.5 from 5 per cent.

When asked, a Bangladesh Bank official requesting anonymity, told UNB that the bank rate was increased to contain the inflationary pressure being increasingly put by fast-growing lending to private sector.

According to the latest official figure, credit to the private sector rose by more than Tk 5,000 crore in last one year. Gross credit to the private sector on August 9 last stood at Tk 26,254 crore from Tk 21,040 crore just a year back.

The Bangladesh Bank official said major part of the credit was going to projects having 'long gestation period,' giving a spur to inflation.

"We wanted to keep the credit expansion within manageable limit and thus control inflation," he said.

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Vatican critical of draft platform of action at Beijing confce

BEIJING, Sept 9: The Vatican today accused critics of opposing human dignity, motherhood and the traditional family. The critics shot back that the Catholic church is trying to restrict women's rights.

Fiercely exchanges between the Vatican and women's activists highlighted some of the issues in dispute at the UN women's conference, which is drafting an agenda to promote women's equality heading into the 21st century.

Taking center stage for

the first time, the Vatican singled out the European Union for trying "to undermine the pillars of the human rights tradition" in the platform of action being drafted by delegates from 189 countries.

It accused the EU and other unspecified governments of removing all references to religion, morals, ethics and spirituality, except where religion is associated with intolerance or extremism. It also accused negotiators of attempting to eliminate parental rights.

"I don't agree at all," said the head of the Spanish social affairs ministry's Marina Subirats, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency. "In Beijing we are working for human rights and for the rights of women to be considered as human rights."

Behind the confrontation is a debate over words. "The issue is that there are a lot of words that were proposed in the documents as substitutes for human

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No-confidence against Adhikari postponed again

KATHMANDU, Sept 9: An opposition vote of no-confidence against the ruling communist party has been postponed until Sunday, a Nepal parliamentary source said today, reports AFP.

Nepal's opposition parties were expecting to vote against the ruling Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) coalition today, but Speaker Ram Chandra Paudyal postponed the session after talking to doctors treating Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari.

Adhikari's doctors have told him to rest after breaking his shoulder in a helicopter crash last month.

City businessman robbed of Tk 3.6 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

A businessman was robbed of Taka 3.6 lakh at Shyampur under Demra thana in the city yesterday afternoon.

Police said a gang of three unidentified persons attacked Siddique Ahmed Bhuiyan, Chairman of Bhuiyan Textile Processing Mills Ltd at Shampur, at about 4 pm and

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Shrimp culture affects agri output, study finds

By Mizan Ali

Unplanned shrimp culture, which expanded rapidly in the past few years, is adversely affecting livestock and agricultural production in the coastal areas of Khulna, reveals a study on 'impact of shrimp culture on natural environment in the coastal region.'

The study conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was sponsored by the World Bank.

Indrajit Roy, a member of the five-man team which conducted the study, said that the study covered "three polder areas situated in Paikgachha thana of Khulna district." Roy, who is a principal scientific officer at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), said that 100 respondents belonging to five categories of people — jotedars, rich farmers, middle class farmers and the landless — was selected for informal interviews, during the course of the study.

The findings reveal that the expansion of shrimp culture in rotation with rice is causing a downward trend of rice yield as higher level of salinity is left in the soil because of incomplete leaching

caused by inadequate monsoon rainfall or absence of drainage facilities for flushing salinity by fresh water.

"In certain sites in the shrimp culture areas, there is evidence of higher level of salinity which supports the view that shrimp farming in rice fields may render soil unfit for crop cultivation," Roy pointed out.

Because of shrimp farming, farmers are now forced to grow "only a few local species of rice" compared to "large number of local aman varieties" in the past, he said, justifying his contention. The production of HYV also decreased steadily in these areas, he added.

A wide range of fruit trees and other trees have also been affected in the shrimp culture areas. In some areas, betelnut, cocoanut, plamya palm and date palm trees grow but they do not bear any fruit, he added.

Apart from crops and vegetables, some kinds of grasses like *durba*, *baju* and *kaju* and aquatic plants like *thankuni* and *walanchashak* have become extinct since shrimp farming started. These grasses and aquatic weeds in the past served as

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Poor quality food at DU residential halls

By M M Aminul Islam

Residential halls of Dhaka University offer the students poor quality food in unhygienic conditions in dining halls, residents complained.

The students pay eight to ten taka per meal. They are bound to take the same food items day after day.

"We go to the dining hall just to fill our stomach any how," said a resident of Zahurul Haq hall. The food is prepared in such a manner that our tongue refuse to take. But we have to eat those."

"The atmosphere at most of the dining halls and canteens is very unhygienic. It is sometime difficult for us to eat the meals sitting in the dining room."

Dr Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Provost of the Zahurul Haq Hall told The Daily Star, "We have to increase the amount of subsidy to improve the

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Students taking meal at the dining hall of a DU hall.
 — Star photo

Congestion at Ctg port likely to persist

By Rashed Mahmud Titumir back from Chittagong

The mounting congestion of container traffic at Chittagong Port is likely to persist till the turn of this century, both officials and business circles apprehended.

"The actual growth of container traffic in the Chittagong Port has surpassed the capacity by a wide margin while the facilities in the port has not matched the growth in the traffic," said the acting chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), Captain Zahiruddin Mahmud.

Since 1985-86, container handling in the port has grown at an average rate of 19 per cent during the last 10 years while it jumped to 28 per cent during the last fiscal. The high rate of container traffic is expected to continue for a few more years due to increase in the country's export and import

trade, said the CPA officials. "The existing system of container service as well as containerised cargo handling within the port protected areas has already made it extremely difficult for it to cope with the demands," said a shipping agent.

When asked what steps the CPA has taken to combat the congestion, the acting chairman said that they had sent a technical assistance project proforma (TAPP), proposal to ease the existing congestion, to the Shipping Ministry for its approval.

The TAPP proposes to appoint a consultant for preparation of operational and layout plans, design, drawing, specification, tender documents and other relevant documents. After its examinations, it will be forwarded for the Planning

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8 killed, 31 hurt in road mishaps

At least eight people were killed and 31 others injured in three separate road accidents across the country yesterday and Friday night.

Our Correspondent from Pabna reports: Four people were killed and 16 injured when a truck smashed a bullock cart and then overturned on Pabna-Nagarbari road at Dulai Bazar, 24 miles from Pabna yesterday afternoon.

The dead were identified as Sultan Ahmed, 35, of Fulbari, Mymensingh; Ahmed Ali Pramanik, 38, of Jamtal, Sirajganj; Didar Ali Bepari, 26, of Daulatpur, Manikganj and Kabiruddin, 42, of Charabari, Tangail.

The injured were sent to the Santhia thana health complex and Pabna General Hospital.

The driver of the truck fled after the accident.

A case has been filed with the Sujanagar police.

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