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STOCK MARKET

DSE price index	809.80 (+1.01%)
Market capital Tk	50.23 billion
Transactions in volume	187438
Transactions in value Tk	30.07 million

PM avoids questions on caretaker issue Solution appears elusive

By Nazmul Ashraf

Chances of a peaceful solution to the persisting political crisis on the issue of an interim government for holding the next general elections are slim as both the government and the agitating Opposition are apparently inching towards a confrontation.

This is evident from the latest developments in the opposing political camps.

While most of the ruling BNP stalwarts were yet to arrive at a "consensus solution", others were disavowing any compromise with the Opposition.

On the other hand, the Opposition was learnt to have been taking all-out preparations to force the government to accept its demand, through further agitations like hartals.

The Prime Minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia was continuing exchange of views with her senior party colleagues on measures to be taken after her proposed resignation 30 days ahead of the next general elections.

Asked about her plans on the issue, Begum Zia told some reporters at the Parliament lobby last night, "Presently we are working on the matter and, as I told you earlier, you will come to know everything in due time."

Slowly approaching elevator while leaving the House, the Prime Minister simply smiled at the reporters when asked to comment on the Opposition-called 72-hour hartal from Saturday across the country.

Do you reject Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's latest formula for a caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice? she was asked. In response, Begum Zia was seen smiling as she entered elevator.

According to authoritative sources, the BNP was "desperately" searching for a solution, in line with the Opposition demand, within the framework of the Constitution.

However, several cabinet ministers, while talking to this correspondent last night, acknowledged that they were yet to find any compromise formula.

On the reported options for an interim government with the president heading it — in each case — the BNP leaders said neither of them was covered under the Constitution.

Meanwhile, a top-ranking AL leader told The Daily Star last night they were determined not to give any concession to the government. "We'll carry forward the current agitation to its peak by mid-October and are getting prepared for general elections in December this year", he said seeking anonymity.

The AL leader further disclosed that they were planning to stage a 72-hour hartal from Saturday across the country.

Major opposition political parties staged demonstrations and brought out processions throughout the country yesterday as part of their agitation programme aimed at immediate dissolution of the present Parliament and elections under a caretaker government.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami had earlier announced the programmes on September 6.

Yesterday's identical programmes of demonstrations and processions by the three parties were aimed at drumming up support for their proposed three-day hartal from Saturday.

Awami League held a rally in the city yesterday in support of its 72-hour hartal. — Star photo



Post-operation infection Eyes of 12 removed in Islamia Hospital

By Mizan Ali

Eyes of at least 12 patients were removed. Some reputed eye specialists in other hospitals when contacted, however, opined that "The root cause for such mass-scale infection may be use of fungal infected surgical equipment and accessories".

A vernacular national daily also reported last month that eyes of 25 patients who had cataract operations at the Islamia Eye Hospital were removed due to fungal infection.

The Daily Star during its recent week-long investigation interviewed doctors, nurses, patients and their attendants in the hospital. This correspondent met Rashida Begum (50), Abdul Awal (60), Mohammad Muniruddin (65), Banasa Begum (65) and Swarawati Das (55) and some other patients who were removed due to fungal infection.

Director of the hospital, Dr Mustafizur Rahman, when contacted neither denied nor acknowledged this but said infection was the cause of removal of eyes. Explaining, he blamed weather conditions and carelessness of the patients for infection, completely ruling out any responsibility of the authorities for the loss of eyes.

He said "694 cataract operations were done in the hospital during July-August. In some cases eyes had to be removed due to fungal infection as there is no treatment available for them." He could not say eyes of how many patients were removed.

The Indian Air Force jet that crashed in northern Bangladesh recently was a Mig-21 aircraft. It was learnt yesterday.

Officials of the Home and Foreign ministries confirmed that the Indians, when asked about details of the crashed fighter, informed after some time about the type of the aircraft and explained that it crashed while on a training mission.

Part of the wreckage of the Mig-21 is expected to be carted off to India by road today. A team of Indian officials is due to arrive at the crash site today to supervise its removal. Earlier another group headed by an Indian Group Captain came on Tuesday by road and left the same day after making a detailed study. Members of the Bangladesh Air Force are learnt to be carrying out search for the wreckage.

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Crashed IAF jet identified as Mig-21

Diplomatic Correspondent

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Awami League brought out a procession in the city yesterday in support of its 72-hour hartal. — Star photo

Opposition stages processions, rallies

By Staff Correspondent

Major opposition political parties staged demonstrations and brought out processions throughout the country yesterday as part of their agitation programme aimed at immediate dissolution of the present Parliament and elections under a caretaker government.

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Awami League held a rally in the city yesterday in support of its 72-hour hartal. — Star photo

Tea output falls by over 21 pc

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Sept 13: The country's tea output declined by over 21 per cent during the first seven months of this year compared to that of the corresponding period of 1994.

According to official reports, the 150 tea gardens in the country produced 18.5 million kilograms of tea during the January-July period of 1995, down from 23.6 million recorded during the corresponding period of 1994, showing a decline by 5.1 million kgs.

Tea Board officials and growers attributed the fall in production to severe draught that ravaged most of the tea plantations this year.

Though there was monsoonic rains in recent months but the sequel of draught that affected the gardens until May this year, continued to push down the overall production, said Nasiruddin Bahadur, president of Chittagong chapter of the Bangladesh Tea Growers Association.

He said tea production dropped by at least 25 per cent in most of the gardens.

Consequently, tea output may be much behind the target this year, he added.

Bangladesh targeted to produce 20 million kgs of tea this year.

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Dinajpur rally protests PM's remarks

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, Sept 13: An all party rally here has protested the Prime Minister for her remarks during her visit to Dinajpur yesterday that the attacks on the local Press Club and newspaper offices were the work of "terrorists".

The rally, held at the Bahadur Bazar square today, also demanded the local woman MP Khurshid Jahani Huq as "persona non grata" in Dinajpur.

The people of Dinajpur had attacked the local press club, newspaper offices, police stations and other government offices after the rape and killing of Yasmin.

The speakers at the rally demanded the Prime Minister to resign.

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NEWS BRIEFS

PM shocked at death of Omani DPM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed profound shock at the death of Deputy Prime Minister of Oman in a road accident. In a message to Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al-Said of Oman, she said: "We have learnt with deepest shock the news of the death of Qais Bin Abdul Munim Al-Zawawi, Deputy Prime Minister, in a road accident on September 11, 1995. We pray to the almighty to give strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss," reports BSS.

2 Bills passed in JS

Two bills were passed and another was introduced in Parliament yesterday. The Companies Profits (Workers Participation) (Amendment) Bill 1995 and the Bank Company (Amendment) Bill 1995 were passed without any discussion. The Special Security Force (Amendment) Bill 1995 was introduced in the House by Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam, reports UNB.

Shamsul's new assignment

Minister for Commerce and Information M Shamsul Islam will discharge all functions of the Prime Minister's Secretariat related to parliamentary affairs during the 21st session of Parliament in absence of Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Abdus Salam Talukder, an official handout said last night, reports BSS.

Weather

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind may occur at a few places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and one and two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Country's highest temperature 34.9 degrees Celsius was recorded at Bogra and the lowest 24.7 degrees at Srimongal yesterday.

Sun sets today at 6.04 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.45 am.

Govt considering termination of contract with Sheraton

By Rashed Mahmud Titumir

The government is now considering termination of its contract with the operating company of Hotel Sheraton, the Sheraton Overseas Management Corporation (SOMC).

The decision was prompted as the hotel is incurring huge losses almost every year under the present management.

The SOMC was offered three options by the management board, out of which, it opted for termination of the contract. We were forced to consider this extreme measure owing to the huge losses, now being subsidised by the government," Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism told The Daily Star.

He is currently holding the chairmanship of the management board of the government-owned holding company, Bangladesh Services Limited (BSL), the parent company of the hotel.

Following its board meeting, held on August 30, the BSL offered three options to the SOMC: renegotiation of the contract; franchise agreement; and termination of the contract.

The State Minister said SOMC in a letter addressed to the BSL earlier this month, opted for withdrawal of its operation within a month.

Asked how the government would respond if the SOMC makes a compensation claim as per the management contract with it is for 30 years, the state minister said, "We are now soliciting opinion from the legal advisers in this issue."

The Boston-based ITT Sheraton hotel chain of the USA took over the management of the hotel in 1984.

Earlier it was managed by the US based Intercontinental International hotel chain since it was set up in the late 60s.

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Manzur murder case HC hearing on revision petition today

By SC Correspondent

The High Court hearing of the rule issued upon the government in the criminal revision petition filed by former President H M Ershad challenging the proceedings taken by the Dhaka Sessions Judge on August 16 in the Manzur murder case will be held today.

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Students ransack coaching centres

A group of students, demanding refund of their tuition fees, attacked and ransacked a coaching centre in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The students attacked the Shuvechchha Coaching Centre at Indira Road after the management of the centre refused to refund their fees they had paid earlier.

In a separate incident yesterday, trouble was also reported from the city's...

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B'baria killing Mofizul's body exhumed for 2nd autopsy

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Sept 13: The body of Mofizul Islam (32), was exhumed from grave today and sent to Comilla General Hospital for second autopsy.

He was killed allegedly by 4 policemen at midnight on August 29 near his village, Shastapur in Kashba.

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No new gas-based export-oriented fertiliser factory allowed

By Staff Correspondent

The National Energy Policy announced yesterday aimed at ensuring energy for sustainable economic growth so that the development activities in different sectors are not hindered by shortage of energy.

Addressing a press conference on the Energy Policy, approved by the Cabinet Monday, Energy Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain said that the policy encouraged private and public sector investment in the gas and oil sector.

According to the policy, the government will not allow setting up of any new export-oriented natural gas-based fertiliser factory in the future as the nation's gas reserve is likely to exhaust within the next 10 to 15 years.

However, as we are committed to the present export oriented fertiliser units to supply them a particular amount of gas, we shall continue the supply accordingly," the minister said.

Some 17 gas fields in the country has 9.96 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of recoverable gas reserves. In the last two years, the country consumed 0.48 TCF gas. Presently, the country's only 100 per cent export-oriented and the only private fertiliser factory Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company (KAFPCO) consumes around 62 million cubic feet of gas per day.

As the country would be needing an investment of around six billion US dollars in the next 10 years to develop the power sector only, the policy encourages public and private sector participation in the development and management in all the components of the energy sector.

The new Energy Policy comprises five components — Non-renewable energy policy, petroleum policy, renewable and rural energy policy, power policy and rural electrification policy.

The press conference was also attended by among...

See Page 12 Col 7

BNP govt betrayed all professionals, says Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the suffering of the people would accentuate with every passing day as long as this government remain in power and called for intensifying agitation to end its misrule, reports UNB.

"Our agitation is aimed at freeing the nation from the misrule of the government," she said while talking to a group of prominent doctors, engineers and agriculturists who called on her at the Dhanmondi office of her party in the afternoon.

Reiterating her demand for elections under a neutral caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice, she said...

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Flash floods in C'nawabganj

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 13: Flash floods inundated four unions of Chapainawabganj district during the last 24 hours following sudden rise in the water level of the river Padma.

The unions are Panka and Ujirpur of Shibganj thana and Narayanpur and Debinagar of the sadar thana.

Flood waters entered most villages of these unions damaging about 250 houses completely or partially.

More than 700 houses have so far been washed away by erosion of the Padma which was flowing 36 cm above the danger mark near Chapainawabganj.

75 die in Lankan military plane crash

COLOMBO, Sept 13: A transport aircraft ferrying troops to join an offensive against Tamil rebels ditched in the sea in stormy weather Wednesday, apparently killing all 75 people on board. It was the latest disaster for the small, ill-equipped air force that is expected to assume a bigger combat role in Sri Lanka's civil war.

The AN-32 which crashed off the west coast in bad weather, was one of three purchased from Ukraine in July to ferry troops and supplies to northern Sri Lanka, a region that is cut off by Tamil rebels.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Bangladesh Scouts, BUET, Youth Ministry, Dhaka City Corporation and The Daily Star will jointly organise a Citizens' Rally on "Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka" at 9 am on Friday, 15 September '95, at the Jatiya Press Club.

The rally will be participated by scouts, youth organisations, sports clubs, Rotary and Rotract Clubs, social and cultural organisations, journalists, eminent citizens, college and school students. The aim of the rally is to raise public awareness and motivate citizens to participate in the "Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka" campaign which scouts will organise and coordinate in every wards of Dhaka city.

We invite all citizens of Dhaka to join the "Citizens' Rally" tomorrow and help make our beloved city a better place to live in.

Let us unitedly raise the slogan: Dhaka is OUR city We will take care of it Ourselves