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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 877.42 (+0.10%)
Market capital Tk 5614.96 cr
Transactions in volume 181621
Transactions in value Tk 5.29 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 426.41 (+0.0094%)
Market capital Tk 2155.60 cr
Transactions in volume 850
Transactions in value Tk 1.35 lakh

NEWS BRIEFS

Speaker hosts dinner

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali hosted a farewell dinner in honour of members of Parliament at Parliament club last night. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Ministers, Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Pannu, BNP MPs, Editors and journalists of national dailies and news agencies attended the dinner, reports UNB.

FFs' rally Nov 29

By Staff Correspondent

A grand rally of freedom fighters will be held at 2 pm on November 29 at the Shapla Square in the city. The Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad will organise the rally which will be attended by the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, says a press release.

Salam Talukdar returns

The secretary general of BNP and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar returned home yesterday after a month-and-a-half-long treatment in the UK and the USA, reports BSS.

Police museum

The first police museum of the country was inaugurated yesterday at the police headquarters in the city. Inspector General of Police A S M Shahjahan inaugurated the museum and expressed the hope that the museum would play a significant role in preserving the history and glorious activities of the police force, reports BSS.

Diarrhoea claims 15 in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Nov 19: Diarrhoea so far claimed 15 lives and attacked more than 500 people in five thanas of the district till November 10, unofficial sources said, reports UNB.

BADC chairman promoted

By Staff Correspondent

An officer of the BCS (Agriculture) Cadre and Chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), Md Shahidul Islam was promoted to the post of Secretary and made Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Establishment Ministry, said a PID handout last night.

Jamaa Islamiyya in Cairo claims responsibility

15 killed as massive blast wrecks Egyptian embassy in Pakistan



A Pakistani bomb-disposal squad and police examine the site of a bomb blast at the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

ISLAMABAD, Nov 19: Fifteen people were killed and scores injured today in a powerful bomb attack that devastated the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad, police said, reports AFP.

Responsibility for the bomb was claimed in Cairo by the armed Islamic militant group Jamaa Islamiyya which has been behind a wave of attacks on Egyptian interests.

ISLAMABAD, Nov 19: A suicide bomber blasted his way into the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad to set off the explosion, Pakistani officials said, reports Reuters.

The bomb left a huge crater in front of the embassy in the heavily guarded diplomatic district of the Pakistan capital.

Troops cordoned off the building as a large crane and other equipment was brought in to lift concrete blocks and find other victims.

Most of the casualties were embassy staff but the

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Fierce gunfight over tender in N'ganj: 100 injured

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 19: Over one hundred people including two policemen were injured, 17 with bullets when activists of Jubo League and Jatiya Party fought a series of gunfight with those of BNP in the town today over purchase of tender schedule.

Of the bullet-hit persons, condition of four was critical. Mizzul, 29, a Jubo League leader was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries in the chest and abdomen. Three others Manik, 24, a Chhatra League worker and pedestrians Mofizul, 18, and Jobeda Khatun, 30, were admitted to local hospitals.

According to witnesses, the rival groups exchanged at least 1000 shots and exploded numerous hand bombs during the clash that spread to Chashara, Isdair, Mazdair, Jamtala, Missionpara, Golachipa and President Road areas of the town.

Police fired 4 gun shots, 44 rubber bullets and lobbed tear gas shells to quell the gun fight, SP of Narayanganj Mujibur Rahman told newsmen later. Two platoons of armed police and reserve police have been deployed, the SP said.

Narayanganj-Dhaka and Narayanganj-Demra roads were closed to traffic till about 3 pm. Students remained inside campuses, shopkeepers downed shutters and streets were a desolate look during the clashes.

Witnesses said, the fight ensured after a Chhatra League worker, Nazrul Islam, was manhandled allegedly by BNP activists when he went to the office of the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) at Isdair at around noon to purchase a tender schedule.

Nazrul then went to the Government Tolaram College and informed his associates about the incident. Soon after, Awami League and Jatiya Party activists from the college rushed to Isdair and violent clashes started between the AL, JP on one side and the BNP on the other.

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NOTICE

Read the special supplement on The Daily Star Roundtable on Priority Agenda for '96: Options and Challenges, pages 13-16

Khaleda seeks vote for BNP in next JS polls

DIMLA (Nilphamari), Nov 19: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today urged the people to vote for BNP in next election to maintain the present trend of development, reports UNB.

"Sheaf of Paddy" symbolises peace, development and progress, she said of her party's traditional election symbol, and asked them to continue their support to BNP.

Begum Zia was addressing a public meeting at Dimla Rani Brindarini government High School ground in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister

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Gas price may be fixed at commercial rate

By Inam Ahmed and Sharier Khan

The Gas Pricing Committee is likely to submit its report with recommendations next month for fixing gas price at a commercial rate, according to a well-placed source in the Ministry of Energy.

The price of natural gas needs to be increased by at least 50 per cent in phases in the next 10 years to bring it at par with the international rate, Committee sources said.

The pricing will be based on the price of furnace oil in the Singapore market and it will eliminate subsidy from the sector.

The high-level pricing committee was formed last month with the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister in the chair against the backdrop of opening up private investment in the gas and power sectors.

The necessity of 'rationalising the pricing' has become urgent as the present tariff has "no economic basis," a committee source said.

Moreover, when private explorers will discover and develop gas, question will arise regarding the rate at which they will sell it to the government, he pointed out.

"This is why this pricing committee has been formed to determine a transparent pricing formula," said a well placed Energy Ministry source.

The Committee members — secretaries of the ministries of Energy, Finance, Economic Relations Division, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Planning Ministry and a teacher of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology recently visited the US and Pakistan as part of a study for the project.

The Committee is currently studying the gas price structures of some countries including India, Pakistan, Mexico, Thailand, South Africa, sources said.

Presently prices of natural gas are fixed at eight levels, which include prices for the power sector, consumer sector, industrial sector and domestic sector.

Since 1910, only 54 wells have been drilled in the country so far of these 18 wells had reserves of nearly 10 trillion cubic feet. This is considered as a high ratio of achievement, one source said.

"But our need for more energy requires more explorations for gas reserves calling for huge investment. Bangladesh does not have that much of investment. Therefore, the government

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Only polls under caretaker govt to solve crisis, says Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia could solve the current political crisis only by going for dissolution of Parliament and for general elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Addressing a group of her party's district level leaders at the party central office in the city, Hasina said the people had realised that no election could be neutral under this government.

"All sections of the people and major political parties, except the BNP, want elections under a caretaker government," the AL chief claimed.

Criticising the policies of the BNP government, Hasina said that the present rulers had not only created a crisis in the country but also tarnished its image by pursuing a subservient foreign policy.

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Impasse: No solution yet in sight

By Nazmul Ashraf

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's repeated call to the opposition leaders, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in particular, for a dialogue to resolve the 20-month-old political impasse is unlikely to yield a positive result unless either of the two top national leaders or both agree to move from their present stands, sources concerned pointed out.

Latest developments in both the camps show that Hasina is firm not to sit for any dialogue unless Begum Zia accepts in principle the concept of a caretaker government and the PM also is not likely to concede to the Opposition leader's demand.

Against this backdrop, both the leaders are reportedly planning to go by their respective decisions, apparently raising fears of confrontation in the political arena.

Most of the BNP stalwarts are contemplating holding of the next polls under an interim cabinet, within the ambit of the Constitution, by ensuring maximum Opposition participation in it, some others in the ruling party are for bringing all the major political parties in the election process to make the polls more acceptable to all concerned, both at home and abroad.

Nevertheless, the top notchers in the BNP are known to be doing their best to reach a consensus with the major opposition parties by implementing the 'five plus five formula' for an interim government with a BNP lawmaker heading it. For this, by-polls would be required to have the members of the interim cabinet elected.

The PM had earlier called upon the Opposition to resolve the crisis by joining the by-polls to the vacated Parliament seats. Later, her party's acting Secretary Gen-

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22,445 selected for 17th BCS written test

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 22,445 candidates, who participated in the preliminary test of the 17th batch of BCS cadre service held on September 15, have been provisionally selected for the written test.

Results on pages 7-9

according to a press release issued by the Public Service Commission Secretariat yesterday.

The written examination is likely to be held in the last week of February 1996. The date and time of the examination will be notified through newspapers and the admit cards will be sent to the candidates by mail.

Tough emigration law drafted

By Reaz Ahmad

A stringent emigration law to check fraudulent practices by unscrupulous manpower recruiting agencies is in the offing, according to high-level official sources.

A draft law, with provision for 14 years imprisonment for emigration forgeries, has already been prepared and will be put forward for Cabinet approval soon.

The proposed law styled as 'The Emigration and Overseas Employment Ordinance 1995' was drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Manpower.

The draft, which contains provisions in amended form of the Emigration Ordinance of 1962 as well as some new provisions, was included in the agenda of a recent meeting of the Cabinet. But, it did not come up for discussion due to the absence of the minister concerned, said an official of the ministry.

According to the sources, the proposed law was aimed at debarring 'illegal activities' like — willfully cheating a person in the name of sending him or her abroad and forging travel and employment documents, visa, work permits or appointment letter, taking money from someone for sending him or her abroad without having permission of the appropriate authorities.

Inducing or compelling a person to go abroad and such other crimes will also fall under the 'illegal activities,' according to the draft law.

The draft law provides for

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Full-fledged 5th Wage Board for journalists, employees soon

The full-fledged fifth Wage Board for the journalists, press workers and general employees of the newspapers and news agencies will be announced shortly, a PID handout said yesterday, reports BSS.

The government has already appointed retired Justice Anwarul Haq Chowdhury as chairman of the Wage Board.

All formalities in constituting the full-fledged board and implementation of its award are in the process, the handout said.

The government is holding discussion with all quarters in this regard, it said, adding that there should not be any misunderstanding on the good intentions of the government on the formation of a full-fledged Wage Board.



Rickshaws being lifted across the road island on the northern side Baitul Mukarram mosque as a dais was set up for a public meeting, blocking one side of the two-way road yesterday. — Star photo

Implementation of GATT accord

Non-tariff barriers for exports to OECD states will fall sharply

By Staff Correspondent

With the gradual implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreement, non-tariff barriers for Bangladesh's exports to the OECD countries would drastically fall to 11 per cent from the earlier 58 per cent — opening up a new horizon of trading.

According to a World Bank study, the South Asian economies would have ample opportunity to benefit from the post-Uruguay Round global market, but it would require bold steps by the governments.

The Uruguay Round improves market security for both exporters and importers, but South Asian countries must do more to adjust their domestic policies to the realities of the post-Round global environment," author of the study Nader Majid said. "There must be further liberalization and more integration with the both the region and the world."

The study — the Uruguay Round and South Asia: An Overview of the Impact and Opportunities — noted that for the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the Uruguay Round is estimated to generate almost 7 billion US dollars annually in income gains, increasing regional GDP by 2 per cent and real wages by 2.5 per cent.

Tariff reductions by South Asia's trading partners will lower the average tariff on South Asia's exports to OECD countries by more than 2 per cent and on export to the developing countries by 8.5 per cent, the study, released by the World Bank yesterday, revealed.

The proportion of South Asian exports to the OECD

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30 rooms of SSMC hall ransacked

By Staff Correspondent

At least five students were injured and about 30 rooms of a hall of the Sir Salmullah Medical College (SSMC) were ransacked in a clash between two rival student groups yesterday afternoon.

The clash between the activists of pro-BNP Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Awami League backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) reportedly a sequel to their prior dispute.

In the clash several bombs were exploded. The JCD and BCL blamed each other for the incident.

Witnesses said, the clash began as some BCL workers tried to enter the hall who were forced out of their rooms allegedly by the JCD activist on October 26.

Encadrement of Judiciary HC rule on govt to show cause within 7 days

By SC Correspondent

The High Court Division yesterday issued a rule nisi on the government to show cause within seven days as to why encadrement of the judiciary as part of the Civil Service and applying the laws, rules, circulars and orders which are applicable to the government employees, should not be declared ultravires.

Upon a writ petition filed by 218 judges including district judges from different jurisdiction on behalf of the judges of the subordinate courts, the division bench of the HC, comprising Justice A M Mahmudur Rahman and Justice K M Hassan, also directed the government to show cause as to why a direction should not be given for framing a separate set of rules for the judicial service.

The court also directed the government to pay salary to the petitioners on the basis of the notice dated January 8, 1994 pending disposal of the rule.

The HC further ordered the government to show cause as to why the cancellation of the salary scale as was given for the sub-judges and Additional District Judges on that date should not be deemed.

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JP calls 8-hr hartal in city on Saturday

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party has called an eight-hour hartal in the city on November 25 to press its demand for shifting Ershad to a hospital for treatment.

The JP will also observe 'demonstration day' on November 21 to press the demand, according to a press release issued by JP secretary general Anwar Hussain Monju in here yesterday.

Monju called up the people to make the hartal and 'Demonstration Day' successful.

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HC directive for proper treatment of Ershad

By SC Correspondent

The High Court Division yesterday directed the government to arrange for proper treatment of former President HM Ershad as per the advice of the Medical Board subject to his safety and security.

"We are not happy with the order," said Khondker Mahub Hossain, chief Counsel of Ershad, immediately after pronouncement of the order.

Upon perusal of the latest medical report on Ershad's health-condition the division bench of the HC comprising Justice MM Hoque and

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India postpones construction along Tamabil border

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 19: The Indian BSF has agreed to postpone their attempt to construct the building adjacent to the 'no mans land' along Tamabil border.

The settlement was reached at the Sector Commander-level flag meeting held between the BDR and BSF yesterday.

Held at the Zilla Parishad resthouse at Najuri near Tamabil border, the flag meeting also discussed some other trans-frontier problems.

The BSF also agreed to withdraw its additional forces, which they deployed along the border following the dispute on October 25

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