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DSE MARKET
DSE price index 842.74 (+0.16%)
Market capital Tk 5394.30 cr
Transactions in volume 1.73 lakh
Transactions in value Tk 2.54 cr

CSE MARKET
CSE price index 421.77 (+0.12%)
Market capital Tk 2298.57 cr
Transactions in volume 915
Transactions in value Tk 1.27 lakh



Smoke billowing up from the Bangabazar market of the city as firefighters trying to extinguish the devastating fire yesterday morning. — Star photo

Bangabazar gutted

By Staff Correspondent

A devastating fire, the biggest in the city in recent times, destroyed the whole area of Bangabazar, country's largest clothing market yesterday, causing an estimated property damage of Taka 100 crore.

No death was reported either by police, fire fighters or Medical College Hospital sources but some shop owners suspected that there might have been some casualties as scores of workers were trapped in the fire.

Till late last night, fire fighters were continuing their operation and were yet to search through the debris.

Army, BDR and hundreds of policemen were deployed in the area to help the fire fighters and resist the wave of hundreds of mourners and onlookers. Twenty-eight units of the Fire Service, the total strength of the city and of Narayanganj, were not even enough to fight the inferno.

Originating from a yet unknown source at around 7 am, the flames soon engulfed the whole area, heavily congested with at least 2,500 shops and stalls in the four makeshift wood-tin structured markets there, near Fulbaria, barely 20 feet away from the headquarters of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The blaze rose up to 200 feet while the thick black smoke could be seen from miles away. As the news spread, lakhs of people from different parts of the city started pouring into the area posing another hazard for the firefighters. This was the 43rd incident of fire in the city during the current month, according to Fire Service sources.

The fire was somehow tamed by noon.

At least ten people were injured in the blaze. Of them, five — Abdus Sattar, 25, Solaiman, 35, Masud Rana, 27, Siraj, 25, Nurul Islam, a fire fighter — were released after first aid at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, sources there said.

The loss of goods was initially estimated at not less than of Taka 100 crore. Leaders of the associations shop owners in the four affected markets in a joint statement however claimed

Election schedule EC likely to wait few more days

By Nazmul Ashraf

The Election Commission (EC) is preferring to delay announcing the schedule for the general elections to enable the major political parties to come to an understanding.

The move was prompted by Sunday's telephone conversation between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and AL Chief Sheikh Hasina, said an EC official.

"The EC authorities are willing to see the results of the two top leaders' latest move to resolve the political crisis before announcing the election schedule, although a tentative date has been finalised," the official said adding that January 9 was being considered as a possible date.

Asked about the announcement of the election schedule, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice A K M Sadek told The Daily Star last night, "Watch (for the date). We won't take much time since February 22 is the deadline (to complete the polls) ... We're planning to conduct the elections before the Ramadan (that begins on January 21 or 22)."

The CEC, however, declined to comment on the proposed date of January 9 for the next general elections.

Asked if the delay for announcing the schedule was for a compromise between the ruling and the opposition parties, Justice Sadek said, See Page 12 Col 2

Merrill meets Khaleda

US Ambassador David N Merrill called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Tejgaon office yesterday and conferred with her for over an hour, reports UNB.

Diplomatic sources said the ambassador had lengthy talks with the Prime Minister on the current political crisis.

The meeting between Merrill and Begum Zia is seen as very significant against the backdrop of fast-changing political scenario.

The American envoy had also met Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on November 23, a day before the parliament was dissolved.

The sources said Western diplomats were eager to see an end to the 20-month-old government-opposition standoff over the caretaker government issue through participation of all political parties in the upcoming hustings.

Most resigning MPs yet to return red passports

Star Report

Only 65 of the 147 Opposition MPs who had resigned in December last have surrendered their diplomatic passports to date, according to informed sources.

Awami League chief and former Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Sheikh Hasina, is among the former Opposition MPs who have yet to return their diplomatic (red) passports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for cancellation, the sources revealed.

The opposition MPs resigned en masse on December 28, 1994 after the failure of talks with the ruling party lawmakers on a caretaker government formula for holding general elections. The seats were subsequently declared vacant on June 20, last.

In addition, 49 of the MPs who had resigned are yet to vacate the allotted accommodations at the MP hostels.

All elected members of parliament and their spouses were issued with diplomatic passports by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of special privileges accorded to MPs.

According to a high official at the Parliament Secretariat, letters requesting the surrender of diplomatic passports and other privileges, such as free travel passes issued by the Secretariat and accommodation at the MP hostels were sent out to the opposition MPs as soon as their seats were declared vacant.

Similar letters are in the process of being prepared for the ruling party MPs, whose seats have fallen vacant following the general elections.

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Opposition urges PM to resign

Leaders of the mainstream opposition yesterday urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to resign and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government to conduct the next parliamentary polls, reports UNB.

The call came from a meeting of the strategists of the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami held last night at the residence of Awami League president member Abdus Samad Azad, sources close to the meeting said.

The meeting called upon the government to accept the opposition demand for a caretaker government avoiding any confrontation.

It said the Opposition would resist any elections under a party government and decided to launch continuous agitation from December 7 with road, rail and waterways blockade.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Biman flight to Barisal from Dec 3
By Staff Correspondent
Biman Bangladesh Airlines will start operating a weekly flight to Barisal divisional town from December 3 next. Initially, Biman will operate a regular once-a-week flight on every Sunday departing Dhaka at 8:40 am and returning to the capital at 10:20 am. The one-way fare on this route has been fixed at Tk 600 per passenger.

UK trade team due in Ctg today
From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Nov 27: The 24-member British trade team now visiting Bangladesh is scheduled to arrive in Chittagong tomorrow, official sources said. The trade mission headed by Peter Lee will hold a meeting with members of Chittagong Chamber at 4 pm tomorrow.

One killed in clash over fishing
From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Nov 27: One person was killed and 35 others were injured in a clash over fishing in the river Pini near Inatganj cluster village under Nabiganj thana of Habiganj district yesterday. The injured had been admitted different hospitals. The deceased is Chaitanya Namasudra, 50.

Bhola JP office ransacked
From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Nov 27: The Jatiya Party office at Tulatali Bazar of Bhola has been ransacked allegedly by some ruling party activists last night. Witegesses said the BNP activists attacked the office when thana JP workers were in a meeting. At least seven JP workers were injured in the incident.

47 drowned in Haiti
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Nov 27: Forty-seven people drowned when their boat capsized during a storm in the waters near Port-De-Paix in north-west Haiti over the weekend, local radio reported today, said AFP.

Life's labour lost

By Staff Correspondent

Most of them rose from the footpaths of the city to own a shop inside the Bangabazar, which became a dream of late for any of the city's thousands of vendors as the market turned into an extremely lucrative trade centre.

With the devastating fire taking its toll, many shop-owners and workers cried openly outside the bazar as all their life's assets burnt to ashes.

"I was once a street vendor in the Gulistan area, now everything that I had accumulated over the years is gone," lamented Sohel, 28, who owned a small stall in the market. He not only lost goods worth roughly Taka 100 crore.

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A businessman wailing after the fire which gutted his shop at Bangabazar yesterday. — Star photo

Drilling for Barapukuria coal from next month

By Govinda Shil

The Barapukuria Coal Mine Company is going to drill "freeze holes" to sink two shafts through which coal will be extracted and mine workers will enter and come out of the mine.

Construction of "rig foundation," the initial surface base work for drilling "freeze holes" has started. Drilling work for the holes will begin next month, a high official of the Petrobangla told this correspondent. Some imported equipment for the drilling has already reached the port, he said.

Shaft-sinking is a major task in developing any underground mine like the Barapukuria Coal Mine and it requires most sophisticated technology, the official said.

During the sinking process, the underground water table where the shafts would be constructed, will be frozen so that inundation of water into the mine can be checked and valuable equipment kept safe, he added.

The shaft-sinking would require at least two years and would cost not less than Tk 200 crore. "If we can proceed properly, we expect the shafts would be constructed by the end of 1998," the Petrobangla official said.

Full-swing commercial extraction of coal might be started by the year 2000.

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48-hr barricade by jute, textile workers Dec 6

By Staff Correspondent

The workers and employees of the privately-owned jute and textile mills will enforce a 48-hour rail-road barricade from December 6 to press their demands including implementation of Wage Commission Award.

Abul Bashar, convener of Action Committee of Jute and Textile Mills Workers and Employees, announced the programme at a press conference yesterday.

The workers would also stage demonstrations, rallies and processions throughout the country on December 5, he said.

Their demands also include reopening of the closed

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Mob beats two to death suspecting them child-lifters

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, Nov 27: Two persons were killed and another was injured seriously when a mob beat them up suspecting them to be child-lifters at Dharmaganj in Fatullah thana here today.

The dead persons were identified as Abdur Rashid, 45, car driver and Akhter Hussain, 36, housekeeper of Solaiman Haider, an industrialist.

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15 years in jail without trial
By Staff Correspondent

An elderly mother of a man, who has been put behind bars for 15 years without trial, has at last sought assistance of a legal aid organization to free her son.

Sarwar, son of late Hatem Ali Howlader and Zarina Begum of Kukrail in Madaripur town, is serving imprisonment since September 12, 1981.

Shahbuddin, a brother of Sarwar, was murdered on November 21 in 1980 and

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DSE market capitalisation grows 5 times in 5 years

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) remained vibrant and maintained steady growth in trading and market capitalisation despite all political uncertainties during the last four and a half years.

This was revealed at a seminar on 'Investment Potentials in the Capital Market of Bangladesh' here yesterday organised to apprise the visiting British trade team of the capital market in Bangladesh.

"The DSE has proved to have enough strength to sustain political unrest," said the keynote paper on capital market vis a vis political uncertainties presented at the seminar.

Market capitalization of DSE increased five times from a mere 260 million US dollars in the last four and a half years sustaining different phases of political uncertainty in the country, it was revealed in the seminar.

The steadiness of the DSE index is probably the proof of market confidence in the economic fundamentals of the country as a whole, the paper presented by Abdul Muhith FCA said.

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Biman starts Ctg-ME direct flights tomorrow
From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Nov 27: All preparations are afoot to formally open direct air-link between Chittagong and the Middle Eastern countries from November 29, official sources said.

A DC-10 Bangladesh Biman flight carrying 244 passengers from Dubai and Doha of Qatar is scheduled to land at Chittagong airport at 10:25 am on November 29 to mark

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Businessmen to float political party soon
Some business barons have finalised steps to enter into politics, floating a party of their own shortly, reports UNB.

The new party is to be headed by Salman F Rahman, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI). The FBCCI chief is bent on running in the coming electoral fray.

The intention of Salman, who made no secret of his political ambition, were reinforced when he had an hour-long discussion with Chief

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Imam sacked for fatwa, asked to quit village
By Staff Correspondent

An Imam of a mosque, who had pronounced a fatwa against women at Mirretk village under Palthalia union in Savar thana, has been fired from his position and asked to leave the village immediately.

The decision was taken at a *Salish* (local court) comprising representatives of different women's organisations, the Thana Nirbahi Office said.

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In the name of Allah, the merciful

LONG LIVE BANGLADESH

Long Live Shaheed Zia Long Live Khaleda Zia

Under The Joint Auspices of Santhia, Bera thana And Poura BNP

On the Occasion of Joining BNP By Ex-State Minister

MAJOR (RETD) MANZUR QUADER

MAMMOTH PUBLIC MEETING

Venue : Santhia Football Ground, Pabna
Date : Wednesday, 29, November '95
Time : 2 PM

Chief Guest:

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Of The People's Republic of Bangladesh & Chairperson, BNP

BEGUM KHALEDA ZIA