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DSE MARKET

DSE price index	825.20 (+2.25%)
Market capital Tk	8288.10 cr
Transactions in volume	230000
Transactions in value Tk	1.36 cr

Weekend Magazine

Druk Yul: Frozen Melody of the Valleys; Dinner with a General; Mama Mia, It's Memphis; with Living; Teens and Twenties; Rising Stars and Travel and Tourism Pages 13-16

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Season of Meena Bazaars Page 3

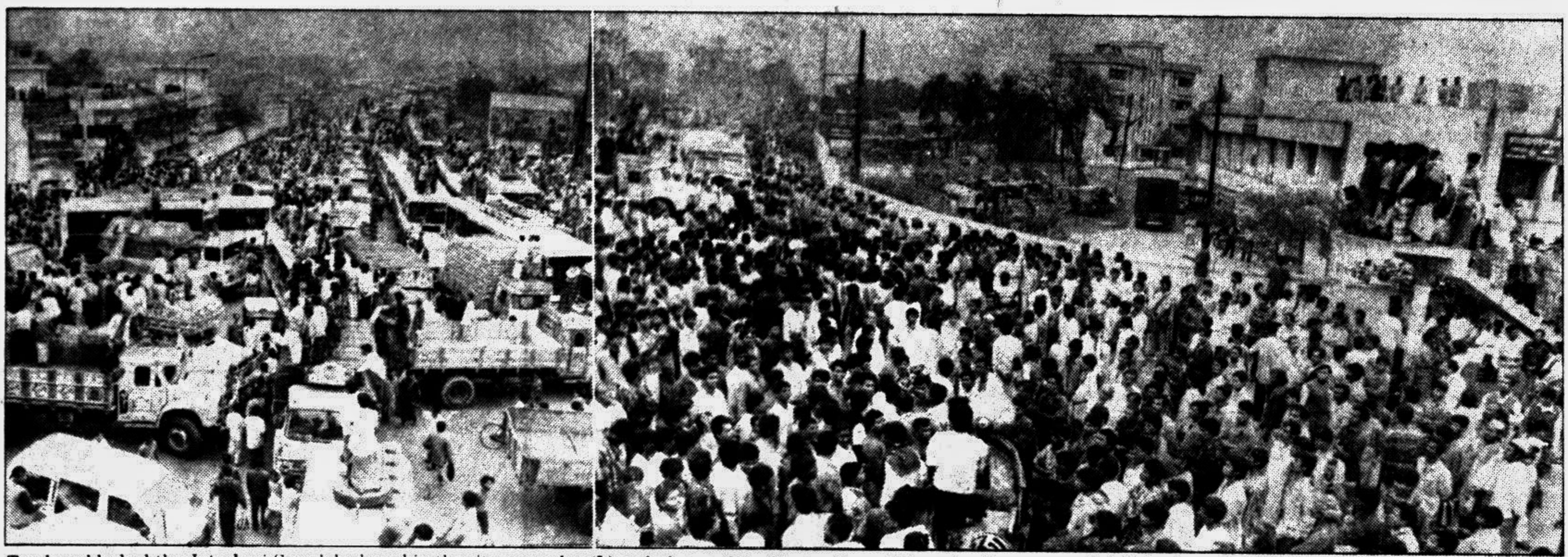
NEWS BRIEFS

Human chain
By Staff Correspondent
The Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad yesterday afternoon formed human chain in front of the Bangabhaban demanding the President's initiative in ending the political stalemate.
It was followed by a rally which was addressed by its president Ahd Raja, and leaders Ershad Uddin Ahmed, Nazmul Islam Lucky, MA Khan and others.

22 arms recovered
Law enforcing agencies recovered 22 firearms, 54 ammunition and 194 explosives till morning yesterday, the 15th day of the country-wide hunt for illegal arms. According to the Election Commission Law and Coordination Cell, during the period 548 people were detained on various charges, including possession of illegal arms, reports UNB.

Garments workers stage sit-in
National Garments Workers' Federation yesterday staged an hour-long sit-in demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club protesting the lock-out of a garment unit in the city. Workers of different garments factories, including that of Titas Apparel, which was locked out by the management, took part in the sit-in from 11 am. said a press release, reports UNB.

Truckers gherao PS, cut off road link for 5 hrs



Truckers blocked the Jatrabari-Sayedabad road in the city yesterday (L) and gheraoed the Demra thana (R) protesting arrest of their leader Lutfor Rahman. — Star photo

Road communication between the capital and the eastern region of the country was disrupted for over five hours yesterday as truckers gheraoed Demra Police Station and put up road barricades from Sayedabad to Jatrabari Crossing following arrest of a Transport Union leader on charge of possessing illegal arms.

Truck drivers blocked the road at around 10 in the morning demanding release of Lutfor Rahman, president of the Pagla unit of Bangladesh Inter-district Truck Drivers Association and also of Dhaka Road Transport Coordination Council. This created a serious dislocation in traffic movement in the

city and cut off road link with Chittagong, Sylhet, Comilla and Noakhali districts.

Earlier, in a combined operation under the current illegal arms recovery drive, police and armed forces personnel raided the residence of Lutfor Rahman, also Labour Secretary of the city unit of Awami League and Chairman of Shyampur Union Parishad.

Demra police said they raided Rahman's residence at Shyampur near the city at 5 am, recovered a machete and a sword from there and arrested him and two others.

The two others are Rahman's younger brother Rubel and Shamsheer Ali, a member of the Union Parishad.

The truckers agitated for Rahman's release but all the three arrested persons were produced in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court at 3 pm, Demra police said.

Earlier, talking to this correspondent on the spot, General Secretary of Demra thana AL Safar Ali and Abdul Khaleq, a transport union leader, denied police claim of recovering sharp weapons from Lutfor Rahman's residence.

The road from Sayedabad to Jatrabari was cleared for traffic at around 3 pm as police drove away the agitating transport workers.

Diana's 'yes' to divorce

LONDON, Jan 4. Princess Diana has finally agreed to divorce Prince Charles, according to a newspaper report Wednesday night, reports AP.

The Daily Express said she has told close advisers she now reluctantly accepts her marriage to Charles is over.

Thursday's issue of the London tabloid, available Wednesday night, said she will hold talks with her legal advisers next week and quoted an unidentified close source saying: "you can expect moves toward a divorce to begin in earnest after Diana's meeting."

"She has a lot of confidence in them and they have always advised her not to rush into anything but to let them (Charles' legal team) come to us. That is the little she has been taking but now everyone accepts they have come to the end of the road and decisions have to be taken."

Charles and Diana separated in 1992 after 11 years of marriage and the birth of sons Prince William, 13, and Prince Harry, 11.

Charles' mother, Queen Elizabeth II, wrote to Charles and Diana last month urging them to divorce soon. Charles agreed but Diana has made no reported reply to the queen.

A Daily Express rival, the Daily Mirror, on Monday carried a similar but less detailed report, quoting See Page 8 Col 8



Diana: Back to London from Barbuda yesterday. — AFP photo

Raushan apologises on behalf of Ershad

By Staff Correspondent

Begum Raushan Ershad yesterday apologised to the people on behalf of her husband and deposed President HM Ershad for 'any wrongdoing' during his rule.

On behalf of my husband, I beg pardon from the people for his wrong doing, if any, during his presidency. Raushan said at a public meeting at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque. This was Raushan's first such apology since the fall of the Ershad regime in 1990.

Raushan also demanded Ershad's release to participate See Page 8 Col 8

Arms recovery Why no combing at varsity halls, asks Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday raised question as to why arms recovery drive had not yet been launched in residential halls of universities to recover illegal arms.

She also said that no Opposition leader, worker or their family members should be subject to harassment during the arms recovery drive.

The AL president was addressed See Page 8 Col 2

LDF won't go to polls minus major parties

By Staff Correspondent

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday said that it would not take part in the elections unless the major opposition parties joined the race.

The LDF decision followed a meeting with the Awami League at its Dhanmondi office with AL Chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The meeting discussed the Opposition stand on the election issue and said that no meaningful polls could be held without a caretaker government.

An AL statement after the meeting said that the frequent changes in the election schedule were irritating but a BNP ploy to kill time.

The AL-LDF meeting took place after the January 2 statement of BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder who said that BNP would join the polls under an advisory council headed by the President only if the LDF, Gano Forum and Jamaat-e-Islami agreed to contest.

The LDF also held a meeting with the Gano Forum leaders later in the afternoon.

LDF leader and Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon yesterday met the Chief Election

29 more BNP nominations

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) announced the names of candidates for 29 of the remaining 30 seats of Parliament to contest the February 7 election, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who earlier stood in four seats, has been nominated for another constituency, Feni 2.

She will also contest the polls from Feni-1 which she finally represented in the 5th Parliament after returning from five seats in the 1991 elections.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz got Panchagarh-1 constituency knocking out Education Minister Jamiruddin Sirar. State Minister for Finance Mojibor Rahman was nominated from Bogra-6.

Business tycoon and Prime Minister's special envoy M Moshed Khan has been chosen for Chittagong-10 constituency, Sarwar Jamal Nizam, President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) for Chittagong-12 and indus-

URAA will cost Dhaka Tk 100 cr more a year

By R M Titumir and Sharier Khan

"Now, with the implementation of URAA, these countries will reduce subsidy on exports," the official said explaining why agricultural products will gradually become costlier in the international market.

The URAA will also open the markets of those countries for agricultural products but Bangladesh will not be able to utilise those markets as none of its agri-exports are competitive with those of the developed countries.

The study anticipates that the flow of food aid from donor countries will be reduced with a potential adverse impact on the country's development efforts as well as the balance of payment position.

Natural calamity has forced the country to import food worth US 476 million dollars in last fiscal year and 191 million dollars till now this fiscal threatening the balance of payment position.

Meanwhile, according to an independent study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, crop production has been stagnant since 1989-'90 and there are evidences that growth in crop yield has decelerated and 'factor productivity' declined drastically.

The study recommended all out efforts to increase agriculture production. This will alter the inelastic nature of supply of our agricultural products. Consequently we will be able to meet our domestic demand by replacing imports and increase our exports which is the best way to maximise benefits from the Uruguay Round."

There should be an authority to monitor output and price movement of various agricultural commodities and intervene in the market to stabilize prices and supply. See Page 8 Col 1

BNP factions in Ctg, Barisal call hartal

By Staff Correspondent

BNP factions in Barisal, Chittagong and Sirajganj have called hartals in Barisal town, Rangunia thana headquarters and Ullapara thana protesting the party nominations in their respective JS constituencies.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal reports: A faction of Barisal BNP has called a half-day hartal in Barisal town today demanding cancellation of the nomination of Dr. Ahtashemul Huq (Nasim Biswas) for Bakerganj-5 constituency.

They also demanded nomination of former MP Majibur Rahman Sarwar for contesting the forthcoming parliamentary election from that constituency.

The workers brought out a procession and held a rally in the town yesterday. They also announced other programmes beginning from Saturday.

However, Convenor of the Barisal district BNP, and chairman and commissioners of Barisal Pourashava and Union Parishads did not support the hartal call and other programmes.

UNB adds: Angry supporters of a faction of BNP in Rangunia thana in Chittagong, has called a day-long strike at the thana headquarters today protesting the party nomination of a candidate for Chittagong-7 constituency.

The strike programmes was announced at a rally held at Ichhakhali here, the headquarters of Rangunia thana, this afternoon.

Witnesses said angry supporters of BNP, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal brought out a procession and held really at Ichhakhali protesting nomination of Adil Hossain.

They threatened to resign en masse from the party if the nomination of Adil was not cancelled within 24 hours.

They also demanded nomination of Nurul Alam from See Page 8 Col 3

BNP, Opposition may resume back-stage parleys soon

By Nazmul Ashraf

Negotiators of the ruling BNP and the major opposition parties are likely to resume their back-stage parleys shortly for reaching a consensus on the proposed advisory council for holding the next general elections, sources involved in the negotiation process said.

Asked about BNP's latest position, Information and Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam said yesterday evening that they were still firm on their proposal for an advisory council under the President. The proposal was made on Sunday at the talks with the opposition.

See Page 8 Col 2

Merrill continues his efforts

Diplomatic maneuvering continued to bring the embroiled ruling and opposition parties across the table to break the current political stalemate over the modalities of a caretaker government, reports UNB.

Negotiators of ruling BNP and opposition parties fell apart on Tuesday on the question of structure and power of an advisory council to be headed by the President.

Political and diplomatic sources said US Ambassador David N Merrill yesterday had contacts with Commerce and Information Minister Shamsul Islam and Awami League Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu.

The two leaders are negotiating on behalf of the government and the opposition camps.

Although there was no contact between the two sides, diplomats were active to resume informal talks between the government and the opposition shortly.

Top ROK investor arrives today

A top Korean industrialist arrives in Dhaka today on a week-long visit to discuss ways for further strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries, reports UNB.

Kihak Sung, chairman of Bangladesh-Korean Economic Cooperation, will hold talks with officials of private and public organisations on expansion of bilateral economic cooperation, particularly increase of Korean investment in Bangladesh.

He will visit Chittagong to see the progress of the planned Export Processing Zone (EPZ) at Faudardhat exclusively for the Korean investors.

About 30 Korean companies are expected to set up industries in the new EPZ for which about 100 acres of land are being procured.

The EPZ is being set up under an agreement signed between the two countries during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to Seoul in May last year.

Kihak Sung is the chairman of a large South Korean industrial complex Youngone.

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