

ANNOUNCEMENT



Today, The Daily Star introduces "Disney Time," a FULL-PAGE 4-colour cartoon series of Walt Disney characters of Mickey & his friends, including Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Daisy Duck, Goofy, Pluto, etc.

This 4-colour full-page cartoon series will be published EVERY FRIDAY on the last page of our Magazine Section. So, don't miss the fun!



Inside Today

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by M Amir-ul Islam
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2 new planets with life's supportable environments discovered
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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 818.87 (+0.34%)
Market capital Tk 5310.90 cr
Transactions in volume 85906
Transactions in value Tk 1.76 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 801.95 (+0.12%)
Market capital Tk 2420.97 cr
Transactions in volume 1920
Transactions in value Tk 46775.50 lakh

Weekend Magazine

The charm of Baldah Garden; The relevance of Tagore today; Glimpses of Africa; with Living, Travel and Tourism, Teens and Twenties and Rising Stars and a special-Disney Time
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NEWS BRIEFS

College teachers submit memo
By Staff Correspondent

Teachers of non-government colleges, under the auspices of the Bangladesh College Teachers' Association (BCTA), yesterday submitted memoranda on their 9-point demands to TNOs across the country, according to a press release. They also brought out rallies as part of their two month-long countrywide agitation programme to press home their demands.

34 arms seized

Law-enforcing agencies seized 34 firearms, 129 bullets and 23 explosives from different parts of the country yesterday, the 29th day of the nationwide arms recovery drive. They also arrested 342 people on various charges including possession of illegal arms. reports UNB

50 hurt during Opposition bid to gherao EC office

By Staff Correspondent

At least 50 people were injured, two with rubber bullets, and scores of vehicles were damaged in the capital yesterday as processionists belonging to the major opposition political parties defied a ban and tried to break police cordon on their way to gherao the Election Commission Secretariat.

Police swung into action to prevent the marchers from heading towards the EC Secretariat at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and picked up 32 opposition activists from Farmgate area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police had earlier imposed a 12-

hour ban on rallies, processions and gatherings in the areas around the EC Secretariat yesterday, the day for scrutiny of nomination papers for the ensuing parliamentary elections filed on the previous day.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami held separate rallies in the city and brought out processions as part of their nationwide programme of gherao of EC offices.

Police used water cannons and hurled tear gas shells to stop the slogan-chanting marchers from proceeding towards the Sher-e-Bangla

Nagar from the Panthapath area.

Dozens of vehicles were damaged by the processionists in various parts of the city.

A number of cars with their windscreens smashed were seen running for shelter at the Sonargaon Road.

On both sides of the Sonargaon Road, and at Hatirjheel and Katabon, shopkeepers pulled the shutters down in panic and hundreds of shoppers were seen stranded inside the Eastern Plaza, a city supermarket.

Streets were strewn with broken windscreens.

Awami League held a rally at the eastern end of the Panthapath where top party leaders briefly spoke.

Later, a procession from that area started marching towards the EC Secretariat, but it was halted by members of the law enforcement agencies at Farmgate.

Jatiya Party's procession, which started from the western end of the Panthapath, was intercepted by police near Dhanmondi Government Boys' High School.

Jamaat also brought out a procession after holding a rally at Moghbazar crossing.

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Hasina's call for non-cooperation



Awami League activists trying to remove barricades from the road near Farmgate on their way to gherao the Election Commission Secretariat in the city yesterday. (Below) Shoe shine boys duck for safety as police lob tear gas shells and pickets throw bombs. (Bottom) Some makeshift hawkers' shops at Farmgate set ablaze.

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for launching an 'all-out non-cooperation movement' against the BNP government and to thwart its attempt to hold a 'one-party farcical election'.

It is a misfortune for the nation that after killing the hard-earned democracy, the BNP is now going ahead with a blue-print election. Hasina, who pioneered the Opposition boycott of the polls told a party rally at Panthapath in the city before a planned gherao of the Election Commission Secretariat.

Not a single voter will exercise his franchise in the farcical polls. Hasina said and called upon the public servants and members of the law enforcement agencies to side with the people.

She accused Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of killing the hard-earned democracy and violating the Constitution on several counts.

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Khaleda begins polls campaign from Jan 24

By Nazmul Ashraf

Prime Minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia will start election campaign for her party with a visit to the mazar of Hazrat Shahjalal at Sylhet on January 24, said Nazrul Islam Khan, office secretary of the party.

The PM is also likely to address the nation over the radio and TV to explain her party's sincere efforts to end the political impasse, another top leader of the BNP said. The date is yet to be fixed, the BNP leader added.

The BNP will soon give instructions to the party can-

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Lawyers' call to boycott polls

By SC Correspondent

The Bangladesh Lawyers' Co-ordination Council yesterday urged the people not to take part in the coming parliament elections under a partition government.

In a protest gathering in front of the National Press Club, the leaders of the council also demanded removal of the 'puppet' chief election commissioner.

Earlier the council, headed by its president Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, brought out a procession from the Bangladesh

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People won't allow one-party polls: Mizan

Jatiya Party acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday asked Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to step down forthwith and rearrange election keeping 90 days time-limit, reports UNB.

"Otherwise," warned Mizan Chowdhury, "people will foil the blueprint of holding unilateral election to hang on to power."

Addressing a rally near Russel Square before a march towards the Election Commission in the afternoon, the

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Saifur blasts FBCCI for filing writ

Non-payment of loans is no fundamental right'

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday criticised the FBCCI for challenging the ordinance debarring the loan defaulters from contesting parliamentary elections.

"Debtors are running amok in the name of fundamental rights," he said. "Fundamental right is not to default creditor's money. This sort of situation can not be allowed," Saifur observed while inaugurating the Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL) the first ever such company in the country.

The finance minister stressed the need for legal support to check bad debt problem in the country.

"If law is not effective to enforce obligation and govern-

ment is not efficient, honest and responsive, the situation can not be changed," he said.

Without naming, the finance minister said that a defaulter with loans of crores of taka was showing thumb to banks.

He also stressed the need for rating of both the

borrowers and the banks.

"Borrowers' rating is

needed for security of the banks, and banks' rating is needed to judge their acceptability both nationally and internationally," he said.

Saifur said the reform programme was greatly af-

fected because of short-term political expediency.

"Politicians will not accept

reformists because they think

these will affect their votes," said Saifur. "This is a

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N T Rama Rao dead

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: N T

Rama Rao, one of India's top opposition leaders, died at the age of 73 today following a heart attack, dealing a crushing blow to the opposition's prospects in upcoming parliamentary polls, reports AFP.

The charismatic Rama

Rao, a former movie actor,

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If there is a will, there is still a way: Experts

By Sharier Khan and Aminul Islam Sajal

Haq. "But if the country wants a peaceful solution to avoid violence, there is always a way out."

He said if the major opposition parties and the ruling party reach a consensus, the President with his residual powers can seek the opinion of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and then he can take steps accordingly— "even if it is outside the purview of the Constitution".

"So far the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is concerned, the chapter of rescheduling of elections is closed," said former Attorney General Barrister Rafiqul

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even if the Constitution has to be violated in the greater interest of the nation, the court can condone the violation. Therefore, there would not be a constitutional crisis," said Rafiqul Haq.

He added that the opinion of the court could not be challenged since it was not a verdict and therefore, nobody was bound to abide by it.

The former attorney general referred to two cases under the principle of necessity—one during the Pakistani rule in 1957 (Tamizuddin case) and the

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Commentary

The Wolves are Smiling

By Mahfuz Anam

Seldom, if ever, has so much damage been done, to so many, by so few (paraphrasing Churchill's famous comment on RAF men).

A handful of people in the ruling and the opposition parties have held this country, and its vast multitude of poor people, hostage in a blind and reckless ambition to retain, (on one side) or to capture (on the other) political power in a shameful disregard of national interest. Whatever general interest there was in the political tug of war over the last two years, practically crippling our political and social life, there never was, even a remote desire that this conflict should jeopardize our national elections.

Not a single voter will exercise his franchise in the farcical polls. Hasina said and called upon the public servants and members of the law enforcement agencies to side with the people.

She accused Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of killing the hard-earned democracy and violating the Constitution on several counts.

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What we find infuriating is not only the fact that these

handful of people are playing with the future of our country and that of each of us, but also the casual way in which this catastrophe was brought about. One side said that "Come to talk first, and we will discuss everything". The other side said "Fix an agenda first, then we will come for talks" On this hair-splitting difference months and months of valuable time was lost. Would Heaven have failed if the BNP did give an "agenda" for talks. Similarly, what would have happened if the opposition did go for talks without an "agenda". They could have always walked out (something for which they have a lot of practice) if such talks were not fruitful. Wouldn't both such options been a thousand

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83 nomination papers rejected

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 83 nomination papers were rejected by the Election Commission after scrutiny yesterday.

The number may rise as the EC Secretariat here was receiving reports from its offices in districts till late last night, according to a source at the EC.

The papers were rejected for being incomplete, or 'defective' or because the candidate was found to be a bank loan defaulter, the sources said.

A total of 1,987 nomination papers were submitted for the 300 Jatiya Sangsad seats.

The candidates whose nomination papers have been rejected can still appeal against the decision. Therefore, till the day of withdrawal of nomination papers it cannot be said that they are out of the race, the EC source said. The last date for withdrawal of nomination papers in January 23.

The number of rejected nomination papers so far are 26 in Dhaka division, 10 in Sylhet, 11 in Khulna, 14 in Rajshahi, 16 in Chittagong and 6 in Barisal division.

Meanwhile, the number of constituencies with only one candidate each rose to 9 yesterday. The lone candi-

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Tamabil firing

Flag meet yields no results

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 18: The flag meeting between the Indian BSF and BDR ended today without any decision.

At the two-hour meeting from 1:30 pm held on the no-man's land, commanding officer, A K Sheat led the BSF team while Major S M A Jali led the BDR side.