


JUICE
JAM
PICKLE
KETCHUP
SHERBET



SQUASH
VINEGAR
KEWRA -
WATER
ROSE -
WATER

PRAN for Health

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index	775.18 (-0.17%)
Market capital Tk	5051.18 cr
Transactions in volume	244116
Transactions in value Tk	5.00 cr

PM's election tour revised again

By Nazmul Ashraf

Prime Minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia's planned electioneering visits for the February 15 parliamentary polls have been further rescheduled, official sources said last night.

Her Khulna tour was marked by clashes between the security forces and the Opposition activists.

Under the revised schedule, the PM is likely to move outside the capital on election campaign after inaugurating the Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy premises on February 1.

Earlier, she was scheduled to start a countrywide election tour on January 30, said the sources. The next phase of campaign programme would be finalised after the

areas for campaigns were selected, they added.

A spokesman in the PM's Secretariat, however, explained that the change in the PM's election visits had been made as she would be pre-occupied with several official programmes in the city — the opening of the Book Fair, attending a programme at the Mirpur Defence Staff College and a number of other parties in the next couple of days.

Sources in the ruling BNP said that party stalwarts preferred to take a break before the PM's next round of election campaign, following violence let loose by the opposition parties boycotting the forthcoming polls. The region the PM would visit

would be chosen shortly after reviewing the law and order in the areas concerned and monitoring the Opposition's already announced plan to resist her visits," said a top leader of the ruling party.

Commenting on the objections of the Opposition the PM and other ruling party candidates are facing at different places, Minister for Housing and Public Works Rafiqul Islam Mia told The Daily Star last night, "It's a clear violation of our fundamental rights laid down in the Constitution. Such acts are also punishable under Article 109 of the CrPC as well as election laws concerned."

Asked if they would seek legal remedy against curbing

Half-day hartal in Dhaka, Khulna today

By Staff Correspondent

The mainstream opposition political parties will observe a half-day hartal in Dhaka and Khulna today to protest the killing and police firing in Khulna during the Prime Minister's tour on Saturday.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami earlier on Saturday night gave the 6am-2pm hartal call also to press their common demands for stepping down of the BNP government, stopping the one-party elections and holding elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Ambulances, medicine shops, vehicles carrying dead bodies, fire fighters, newspaper and newsmen, market places, food shops, conservancy service and other essential services like water, gas and power will remain outside the purview of the

Rule nisi on govt for detaining 8 during mop-up

Star Report

Eight writ petitions were filed at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court yesterday challenging the preventive detentions of eight persons arrested earlier by the law enforcing agencies during the on-going sweep against illegal weapons.

The petitions prayed for immediate release of the persons now detained under the Special Powers Act.

The court issued separate rule nisi upon the Government of Bangladesh, district magistrates of the respective districts and jailors of the respective jails.

The rules asked the concerned officials to show cause

if the detained persons were not held in custody without lawful authority or in an unlawful manner.

The rule nisís were returnable within three weeks for those detained in Dhaka and four weeks for those outside the capital.

The separate petitions were filed at the division bench comprising Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury and Justice Abdul Mannan on behalf of Noor Khan, Muhammad Shamsu Mia, Anwar Hossain Khan and Shaful Alam.

Those detained were: Helal Ahmed, Idu Mia, Md Abdus Salam, A K M Shamsud-

Experts suggest abolition of some ministries, departments

An expert committee has recommended restructuring of the country's outmoded administrative set-up, abolishing certain ministries, reports UNB.

The Administrative Reorganising Committee is also learnt to have suggested amalgamation of some divisions and creation of new offices suiting the present socio-economic condition of the country.

There are now 274 government organisations, including ministries, divisions, directorates and departments — many of which were modelled on the prevailing conditions in British period.

Set up in August 1993, the committee has so far submitted reports to the authorities concerned after examining 180 of the government.



Vast areas in Hatiya being devoured by the mighty Meghna.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

No scope to cancel polls, CEC tells AL

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice A K M Sadeque in his written response to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's letter has expressed his inability to cancel the upcoming polls, Election Commission (EC) officials said here yesterday.

In his 7-page letter, addressed to the AL chief, the CEC has said he is not in a position to cancel or postpone the elections because of his constitutional obligations, the officials said.

However, it was unclear whether the letter, signed by

the CEC during his office hours yesterday, was despatched on the day.

EC Secretary Ershadul Haque said that he knew that the letter was signed but expressed his total ignorance whether the letter was despatched or not.

"This is a matter of the despatch department of the EC... I cannot tell whether it has been sent or not," Ershadul said when he was asked for confirmation.

The major opposition parties had earlier sent separate letters to the CEC demanding cancellation of the schedule for the parliamentary elections.

Writ in HC against polls in Ramadan

By SC Correspondent

A writ petition has been filed in the High Court challenging holding of the parliamentary election in the holy month of Ramadan.

Nazim Habbuzzaman filed the petition which may be moved today before a division bench of the High Court comprising Justice Bi-

Opposition leaders in their letters had questioned the holding of the elections amid an Opposition boycott.

Another source in the EC said that the CEC's response elaborated on the measures taken so far to ensure a free and fair parliamentary election.

In the letter, the CEC also expressed his deep regret that despite all these measures the major opposition political parties were not participating in the elec-

Book fair opening BCL to prevent PM, JCD to resist move

By DU Correspondent

The Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday threatened to prevent the Prime Minister from inaugurating the Ekushey book fair at the Bangla Academy premises on February 1.

On the other hand, the ruling BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) vowed to resist any conspiracy to spoil the book fair.

The BCL gave the threat at a rally on the Dhaka University campus, at the foot of the Aparajaya Bangla.

The rally and a procession were organised by the BCL to

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Khulna BNP calls hartal to protest Hasina's visit

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 28: The district BNP here called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Khulna on February 5 and will bring out a women's broom procession to protest Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's planned visit to the city on the day.

The programme was taken at a joint meeting of the city and district units of the BNP today which decided to call hartal whenever Hasina or any other front-ranking Opposition leader plans political tour in Khulna.

The decision appears to have been taken to retaliate the Opposition called hartal in Khulna city during the visit of BNP chief and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Saturday last when one person was shot dead and scores injured in clashes.

Open tender for foodgrains import soon

Star Report

The government has planned to procure internationally 1.30 lakh metric tons of foodgrains through open tender to meet the food shortage in the country, according to sources concerned.

A meeting of the procurement sub-committee of the Cabinet Division is due to meet tomorrow to finalise the issue.

The purchase of the foodgrains will be made from the government's own fund, sources said.

The country faces a production shortfall in food this year," said a food ministry source. "At the same time, international prices of foodgrains are on the rise. We foresee further rise in price in future and with that in view the procurement drive is being taken."

Car import 70pc depreciation benefit likely

The revenue authorities, in a bid to break the one-and-a-half-month deadlock over the car importers' refusal to pay duty on the basis of existing tariff value, is seriously considering some additional relief.

A source in the National Board of Revenue (NBR) told UNB that a rise in depreciation benefit for reconditioned cars was being actively considered to encourage importers to resume clearance at the port.

The importers, enraged by the government's decision to impose a ban on import of private vehicles under the

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Coming polls seen as 'danger signal' Refer caretaker govt issue to SC, lawyers demand

As the country's political crisis on the election issue accentuated, some top constitutional lawyers yesterday said there is a way in the Constitution for voting under a neutral caretaker authority, reports UNB.

"Refer it to the Supreme Court... we (lawyers) will show the way from the Constitution of holding election under a caretaker government," said Barrister Rafiqul Huq in a meeting with Sheikh Hasina.

The meeting to exchange views on the volatile political situation with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina was organised by Anjibi Samannaya Parishad at the Supreme Court Bar Council auditorium in the afternoon.

Taking part in discussion Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed said he had suggested many a times that the issue should be referred to the Supreme Court.

"Democracy," said the noted jurist, "has fallen much

behind, and if it continues to lag behind, it will be totally extinct."

Ishtiaq said today's election is a "danger signal"... whatever found written is not always the Constitution, spirit will not be found in writings. Those who do not understand these things can only give election to the people but not peace."

Renowned constitutional expert SR Pal said the set general election could be termed constitutional or unconstitutional but not democratic.

Advocate Sirajul Huq, another exponent of the Constitution, said: "Will of the people is Constitution."

Referring to government party stance that the demand for caretaker government is unconstitutional, Barrister Amirul Islam said the autocratic government of Ershad also had termed the opposition demand in 1990 unconstitutional.

Barrister Islam termed

the ongoing movement on caretaker government issue "unique" in democratic history.

In a resolution, adopted earlier, the Anjibi Samannaya Parishad expressed solidarity with the Opposition a current movement and called upon the people to resist the "farical" election.

The one party farical election would further deepen the present political crisis. The government which will be formed through the present electoral process will not get legitimacy and will have no moral right to rule the country," resolved the umbrella body of country's legal professionals.

The parishad urged all officials and employees of the Republic engaged in the electoral process to reject, what it called, a mock vote.

It also urged police, BDR and army not to cooperate with the government in implementing its "blueprint" to



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing members of the Lawyers' Samannaya Parishad at the Supreme Court Bar Auditorium yesterday. — Star photo

AL condemns Foreign Secy's advocacy to bring observers

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League has condemned the foreign secretary's advocacy beyond his responsibilities to bring in foreign observers to monitor the elections which is being boycotted by the major opposition parties.

The working committee of the AL at a meeting yesterday said that bringing in of foreign observers would be a waste of people's money and a farce with their voting rights while there is not even a "credible voters list" for holding the polls.

Presided over by AL president Sheikh Hasina, the meeting pointed out that the government has not yet permitted the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), an independent indigenous organisation to observe the February 15 elections.

In another resolution it alleged that the government was using the armed forces for its political purpose. This would smear the good name of the armed forces, it said.

The AL also demanded that the armed forces be taken back to the barracks to maintain its neutrality and image.

11 more textile mills to be privatised

By RM Titumir and Inam Ahmed

The government has planned to off-load 11 more state-owned textile units after the February 15 parliamentary elections.

These mills under the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) now account for a total accumulated loss of Taka 254.92 crore, according to Textile Ministry sources.

The privatisation programme also includes one engineering unit under the BTMC, the sources said.

The Textile Ministry has already sent the list of these units to the Privatisation Board which will start the sale process after the polls.

This is the second phase of the Ministry's privatisation programme under its reform plan. In the first phase, 10 mills were put on auction and six were finally sold out.

These eleven units, with their individual cumulative losses till fiscal 1994-95 are: Olympia Textile Mills (Tk 39.86 crore); Chittaranjan Cotton Mills (Tk 26.02 crore); Lakshminarayan Cotton (Tk 18.31 crore); Jinat Tex-

tiles (Tk 38.12 crore); Monno Textiles (Tk 23.01 crore); Fine Cotton Mills (Tk 54.19 lakh); Meghna Textiles (Tk 62.05 crore); National Cotton Mills (Tk 24.65 crore); Satrang Textile (Tk 13.5898); Pilon Industries (Tk 65.70); and Carlin Silk (Tk 9.16 crore).

As per the plan, if the government fails to receive any satisfactory offer for sale of the mills in three consecutive tenders, the units will be liquidated by selling the machinery, buildings and lands separately.

These units, with obsolete machinery now, cannot attain the required production level to reach break-even levels, sources said.

According to the plan, weaving section of five composite mills will be laid off. For retrenchment of 3025 employees of these sections, the government will have to spend Tk 30.49 crore.

It is expected that sale of these 12 units will reduce the BTMC's losses by Taka 58 crore annually.

20 vehicles damaged in city

By Staff Correspondent

At least 20 vehicles were damaged in different parts of the city yesterday evening.

Vehicles were damaged at the Dhaka University campus, Bangabandhu Avenue and Bojnagar areas as militant activists of an opposition political party went on a rampage following a torch procession.

Awami League brought out a torch procession from the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue to drum up support in favour of today's half-day hartal in the city.

Police lobbed several tear-gas shells to disperse the mob, witnesses said. However, neither Ramna nor Moulbeed thana could confirm the incidents.

Workers clash at AJM: 50 hurt

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 28: At least 50 workers were injured, four of them bullet hit, in a clash between two groups of workers at Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM) late last night.

The four with bullet injuries — Joinal, 25; Billal, 20; Tofael, 27; and Nurunabi, 45 — were rushed to a hospital in Dhaka in critical condition and the rest were also taken to unidentified hospitals and clinics to escape arrest.

Witnesses said, the clash broke out following bomb attack allegedly by pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, locally known as Khair group, on the activists of pro-Awami League Adamjee Patkal Sramik-Karmachari Union, known as Rehan group, at Mill Gate No. 1 at around 11 pm.

During the clash, the two groups exchanged about 100 gunshots and exploded bombs.

Rehan is president of the CBA of the AJM.

Later, police intervened. They fired five shots and resorted to lathi charge. The situation was brought under control after midnight.

Insiders and witnesses said, the appointment of one Monir, allegedly backed by the CBA, as a Sarder (leader) led to the trouble.

Meanwhile, the AJM authorities withheld the appointment of Monir following the clash.

A heavy contingent of police was deployed in the mills areas as a tense situation was prevailing there. No arrest was, however, made in this connection.

Morshed Khan elected unopposed

Prime Minister's Special Envoy Morshed Khan has been elected unopposed from Chittagong-10 constituency taking the number to 48 of the MPs elected uncontested to 6th parliament, reports UNB.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ram	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
8	29	-	5:47
9	30	5:18	5:47
10	31	5:18	5:48