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DSE MARKET
 DSE price index 794.81 (+0.89%)
 Market capital Tk 6182.19 cr
 Transactions in volume 140028
 Transactions in value Tk 2.48 cr

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BNP ready to consider all but cancellation of polls

By Nazmul Ashraf

Top BNP leaders are considering Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's five-point proposal, except cancellation of the February 15 general elections, for resolving the lingering political crisis, well-placed party sources said.

"The ruling party cannot cancel the polls since such an action would block the way for implementing the proposal for non-party government for holding future general elections under the framework of the Constitution, a BNP stalwart told The Daily Star last night.

Explaining his party's latest stand on the Opposition demand for elections under non-party government, he said that they were even ready to accommodate any suggestion by the major opposition parties provided those were covered by the Constitution. "We're sincere as regards a constitutional way out of the crisis in the shortest possible period," said the BNP leader, asking for anonymity.

The AL chief on Wednesday made a five-point proposal including cancellation of the February 15 polls.

Asked to comment on the proposals, BNP Joint Secretary General and Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told newsmen at his Bailey Road residence yesterday evening that his party was yet to formally decide on the suggestions, especially the cancellation of the February 15 polls.

Mannan Bhuiyan, however, said his party would decide on the Opposition's proposal that the President initiate a dialogue on the proposed non-party government after they got Sheikh Hasina's reply to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's letter.

He said that his party wanted to reach a consensus with the Opposition on the structure of the proposed non-party government prior to passing a bill in this regard in the first session of the sixth Parliament. "The BNP government would also resign as soon as the non-party government is formed and the date for the seventh parliament polls is announced," he added.

About the release of Opposition leaders and improvement of law and order, he said some of the leaders had already been released and the others would be freed shortly.

About Hasina's demand for improving law and order in the country, the BNP leader commented, "We too want to improve the law and order."

Protesters attack polling centres, officials BDR firing kills one in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 7: One person was killed as BDR personnel fired on a mob when they tried to snatch ballots in an attack on a polling centre in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Sohrab Uddin, 40, said to be an Awami League worker, died on the spot as BDR opened fire to repulse the mob during repolling at Kamaliar Char Primary School Centre in Kishoreganj-3 (Sadar) constituency at about 2:30 pm.

Eleven other people, including seven securitymen, were injured during the violent clash.

Of them, Awami League activists Asadullah, 22, and Manju, 15, were rushed to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital with bullet injuries and later shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Police and witnesses said the trouble erupted at the centre at about 1:30 pm when some 1,000 anti-election activists stormed the centre with homemade bombs and other lethal weapons.

At one stage, paramilitary BDR personnel fired at least 25 gunshots as the mob snatched ballot papers and set fire to the polling station.

BDR also opened fire at Maria union parishad centre, Binnati Primary School centre and Bhinnagaon Primary School centre when the protesters tried to snatch ballot papers from the polling officials.

Violence was also reported from Kishoreganj-1 (Pakundia-Hossainpur) and Kishoreganj-5 (Itana-Austogram-Mithamoin) constituencies where repolling was held today amid tight security.

Repolling at 123 centres of another three constituencies in the district will be held tomorrow (Friday). The seats are



A bullet-hit Awami League activist (L) at the venue of the party rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday while some other activists running (R) for shelter. — Star photo

Hasina's call to Khaleda Quit, let President form non-party govt

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to start non-cooperation with the government for an indefinite period from tomorrow to force it to hold fresh elections for the sixth Parliament, reports UNB.

"Begum Zia was forced to accept non-party government idea in the face of people's demand and Opposition movement. Inshallah, she will also be compelled to concede to the demand for fresh elections under a neutral caretaker government," she told her cheering supporters at a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the afternoon.

Presenting her 5-point proposal, Hasina asked Begum Zia to quit clearing way for the President to form a neutral non-party government by March 10 to hold elections in May.

Her proposals include release of all opposition leaders and workers from jail by tomorrow, cancellation of fraudulent elections of February 15 and resignation of the government.

She demanded that the President constitute a neutral non-party caretaker government on consultation with political parties now in anti-government agitation.

"Step down or face movement. These vote thieves and corrupts have no right to be in power," Hasina said just two days before the Opposition's countrywide non-cooperation movement against the government.

Recalling the significance of historic March 7, the Awami League chief said on this day in 1971 "Father of the Nation" called upon the people to fight for liberation of the country.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave the nation a political freedom. But he could not see the political process.

Donors concerned at political situation

Donors have expressed mounting concern over the worsening political and law and order situation in Bangladesh and called for a rapid resolution of the conflict through peaceful dialogue, reports UNB.

In a meeting in Dhaka on Tuesday, representatives of different development partners vented their concern at the grave impact of the political and law and order situation on the welfare of Bangladesh and on the country's development.

Once again they stressed that political stability is a precondition for development, said a statement, issued yesterday by World Bank Dhaka Resident Mission chief Pierre Landell-Mills on behalf of the local consultative group of donors.

"A quick return to normalcy is seen as essential if Bangladesh is to avoid a further devastating loss of export markets, foreign investment and consequently jobs, not to mention damage to property," the statement said.

Pointing at the political programmes that are going on in the country, the donors said there was already evidence of

HC declares Matiya's detention illegal

By SC Correspondent

The High Court Division yesterday declared the detention of Begum Matiya Chowdhury, Agricultural Secretary of the Awami League, illegal and without lawful authority.

A division bench of the HC comprising Justice Naim Uddin Ahmed and Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim by a judgement on the habeas corpus writ petition filed by Bazlur Rahman, husband of Matiya, also ordered the government to release her if she is not wanted in any other case.

The cases of A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation, Anwar Hossain Manju, Secretary General of Jatiya Party and Editor of the Daily Ittefaq, Makbul Hossain, Editor of the Daily Al-Amin, and Cyril Shikder, an Awami League leader, were fixed for hearing yesterday. But these petitions could not be disposed of due to lack of time.

All these cases have been fixed for hearing on Sunday next or on the following court day.

However, the cases of JP leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed, Tofael Ahmed, AL President Member, Mohammad Nasim, Organising Secretary of Awami League, and Abdur Quader Molla, Publicity Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, also came in the list for hearing but those were not heard as the detenues had already been released.

Barrister Maudud Ahmed was released yesterday in the morning while Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khandker informed the court.

The government vehemently opposed the petition

NEWS BRIEFS

AL protest rally today
 Awami League will organise rally and procession today in protest of yesterday's attack on its meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue. Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman will address the rally in front of the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 4 pm, reports UNB.

Maudud released
 Former vice-president and Jatiya Party leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed was released from Jessore central jail yesterday, his family sources said. The Jatiya Party leader was arrested on February 24 under the Special Powers Act, reports UNB.

One killed, 4 hurt as train hits microbus in city
 By Staff Correspondent
 A college student was killed and at least four members of a family were injured critically when a Mymensingh bound train hit a microbus at Banani rail crossing in the city early yesterday morning.

Apu, 25, a first year HSC student of a college in Comilla died on the spot while the injured, including two women, were under treatment at the Dhaka CMH, police sources said. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College

Reviewing the whole scenario, the development partners urged the political leaders to engage immediately "in frank and constructive dialogue" to resolve their differences.

Representatives of Asian Development Bank, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank World Food Programme and Ford Foundation were present in the meeting.

Attack on AL rally

By Staff Correspondent

One person was bullet-hit and several others were injured when unidentified assailants attacked an Awami League rally in the city with party chief Sheikh Hasina as its chief guest yesterday evening.

A journalist was picked up by police from Noor Hossain Square as violence spread to the entire Gulistan, GPO and Baitul Mukarram areas.

Witnesses said, the assailants opened fire and hurled bombs from the backside of the podium in front of the AL central office at Bangabandhu Avenue when the rally was in progress at around 6 pm.

Party workers and witnesses said, the sudden attack was made as soon as Hasina completed her address and AL Rama thana unit President Abul Bashar, who was in the chair, came to deliver his speech.

Police lobbed tear gas shells as enraged AL workers chased the attackers throwing bricks and cocktails. When contacted, both Ramna and Motijheel police denied having arrested anyone.

Roadside vendors told this correspondent violence flared up in the area and lasted more than an hour and a half.

Mohiuddin Ahmed Helal, Vice-President of the AL-backed Chhatra League, said he was present at the rally and heard firing at least five to

Opposition urges people to make non-cooperation a success

By Staff Correspondent

The mainstream Opposition has called upon the people to make a success their non-cooperation movement from tomorrow till the fall of the present government.

The call came from a joint meeting of Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami held last night at the residence of AL Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim.

According to a statement released last night by Mohammad Nasim, the meeting resolved that the Prime Minister should step down immediately.

It said the joint meeting was critical of the ruling BNP, saying that on the one hand government was talking about dialogue while on the other it was taking repressive measures against Opposition leaders and workers.

The meeting condemned the attack on a rally of Awami League held in the city yesterday.

Bank manager robbed in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
 SYLHET, Mar 7: A bank manager was robbed of Taka one lakh at Burunga Bazar of Balaganj thana today. Golap Miah, Manager, Janata Bank, Burunga Bazar branch, was going to his bank from Tajpur branch with Taka one lakh by a motorcycle when a gang of armed people laid it on him and snatched the money. A case has been lodged.

Bodies of two fishermen found

BHOLA, Mar 7: Two bodies of fishermen, who were thrown into the Meghna river by pirates on Monday, were recovered from a char area of Nolding Boikantapur in Daulatkhana on Wednesday. Police said Jahangir and Nirab were attacked by the pirates on Bholra Ramgati riverine route and thrown alive with another fisherman who is yet to be traced out. The bodies were sent to morgue for autopsy, reports UNB.

Hartals cost 15 working days out of 67 since Jan

By Reaz Ahmad and Mizan Ali

Fifteen working days were lost out of 67 days of this year till yesterday due to hartals, barricades and other agitation programmes of the mainstream, opposition.

The country is likely to experience more such anti-government programmes as the major Opposition parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — launch an indefinite non-cooperation movement tomorrow.

Opposition parties on many occasions said that the government compelled them to go for hartals repeatedly by not meeting the peoples demands.

The opposition political parties in their bid to resist the February 15 elections mainly called the hartals this year coinciding with the election schedule.

While the opposition agitated on the streets, backstage parleys with the ruling party — facilitated by some powerful countries — also took place. But the impasse continued.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat enforced a 36-hour countrywide hartal on January 8-9 that disrupted economic activities and rail and road communications. The hartal coincided with the filing of nomination papers (last date), scrutiny of those on the following day.

The opposition also called a dawn-to-dusk hartal on January 17 the last date for filing of nomination papers under a revised schedule. They also announced the programme for gherao of all the election offices including the office of the CEC in the capital during this hartal programme.

The Opposition had earlier shifted its hartal date twice

Unusual rush at city banks

By Sharier Khan

The commercial banks in the city experienced unusually high transactions yesterday, as people thronged to the banks in large numbers to make cash withdrawals from their accounts before the Opposition's indefinite non-cooperation movement begins Saturday.

Officials at different private and public commercial banks told The Daily Star that despite yesterday being a half working day, transaction was at least 50 per cent higher than that of a full working day. Most transactions were LC related and cash related, they said.

"A lot of people drew big chunks of money from their savings account today because they are afraid that the banks might remain inaccessible during the (Opposition's) non-cooperation programme," an official of the IFIC Bank said yesterday.

"Businessmen crowded the banks because they want to keep their credit and

Int'l Women's Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The International Women's Day will be observed today throughout the country as elsewhere in the world.

The day commemorates a procession brought out on this day in 1857 in New York by female workers protesting their working conditions and wages. The rally was attacked by the police.

Later, in 1910, the day was declared as the International Women's Day at the 2nd International Socialist Women's Conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

This year, the theme of the day is "Equality of women and men". President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia issued separate messages on the occasion.

Begum Sufia Kamal, poet and a leader of the women's rights movement in Bangladesh in her message said

BGMEA

রাজনৈতিক অচলাবস্থার প্রেক্ষাপটে
মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়া ও
বিরোধী দলীয় মাননীয় নেত্রী শেখ হাসিনা ওয়াজেদ সমীপে

ভৈরী পোশাক শিল্পের সকল শিল্পকর্তা গত দু'বছর ধরে চলমান রাজনৈতিক সংকট ও অস্থিরতার কারণে ক্রমবর্ধমান ধীরে ধীরে পোশাক শিল্পের প্রায় পাঁচশ কারখানা ইতিমধ্যেই বন্ধ হয়ে গিয়েছে। বিদেশী প্রেক্ষাপটে এই দেশ থেকে বারবার গুটিয়ে নিচ্ছে। বহু কলকারখানা অগ্নি সংযোগ ও দুর্ভাগ্যের ফলে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত ও ধ্বংস হয়েছে। প্রত্যাকভাবে বার লক্ষ লোকের কর্মসংস্থান ও পুরোকারের এক কোটি লোকের জীবিকা নির্বাহের পথ সম্পূর্ণ রুদ্ধ হওয়ার উপক্রম হয়েছে। অথচ এই রাজনৈতিক অচলাবস্থার সৃষ্টি না হলে এই সময়ে রত্নাী ও কর্মসংস্থান দ্বিগুন হতে পারত।

ভৈরী পোশাক শিল্প কারখানার এই সংকট বিপর্যয়ের বিষয়ে ইতিপূর্বে বারবার আমরা মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও বিরোধী দলের নেতৃত্বকে অবহিত করেছি। কিন্তু ক্রমবর্ধমান রাজনৈতিক অস্থিরতা ও পারস্পরিক সমঝোতার অভাবে রাজনৈতিক সমস্যার রাজনৈতিক সমাধান না হয়ে এমন একটি অচল অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে যা জাতীয় অর্থনীতি বিশেষ করে রত্নাীমূল্য পোশাক শিল্পকে ধ্বংসের মুখে ঠাঙ করে দিয়েছে। আমরা এই অবস্থার নিরসন কামনা করি। দেশ ও জাতির বৃহত্তর স্বার্থে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও বিরোধী দলীয় নেত্রীরা কাছে যে কোন মূল্যে বিরাজমান অস্থিরতার অবসান দাবী করি।

এই ধ্বংসনাম্বু পরিষ্কৃতিতে আমরা জাতির কাছে স্পষ্টভাবে উল্লেখ করতে চাই যে রাজনৈতিক অস্থিরতার অবসান ঘটিয়ে উপপাদনমূল্য পরিবেশ সৃষ্টিতে বার্ষিক সর্বোচ্চ শিল্প কারখানা স্বাভাবিকভাবেই বন্ধ হয়ে যাবে, অসংখ্য শ্রমিক কর্মহীন হয়ে পড়বে এবং দেশে এক ডিম্বাধ পরিষ্কৃতির সৃষ্টি হবে-যার সম্পূর্ণ দায়-দায়িত্ব সরকার ও বিরোধীদলীয় রাজনৈতিক নেতৃত্বকেই বহন করতে হবে এবং স্বাভাবিকভাবেই নেতৃত্বের আসনে আসীন মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও বিরোধী দলের নেত্রী উপর দায়িত্ব বর্তাবে।

আমরা সর্বশেষে অশ্রু প্রকাশ করবো ধ্বংসের এই হার প্রান্তে যেটুকু সময় অবশিষ্ট রয়েছে তার সদ্ব্যবহার করে রত্নাীমূল্যকোচিৎ মনোভাব গ্রহণ করে রাজনৈতিক অস্থিরতার অবসানে আর কালক্ষেপন করবেন না। অসংখ্যগণ আন্দোলনের প্রেক্ষাপটে আপনাদের উভয়ের কাছে আবেদন এই উভুত পরিষ্কৃতিতে সকল উপপাদনমূল্য শিল্পকারখানার বিশেষ করে রত্নাীমূল্য পোশাক শিল্পকে এর অত্যন্তমুখ রাখার ব্যবস্থা সুনিশ্চিত করুন।

বাংলাদেশ পোশাক শিল্পকারখানা ও রত্নাীকারক সমিতি (বিজিএমইএ)