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DSE MARKET

DSE price index: 822.42 (-0.99%)
Market capital Tk: 5592.68 cr
Transactions in volume: 189620
Transactions in value: Tk 4.36 cr

NEWS BRIEFS

City AL holds spl extended meet today

By Staff Correspondent

A special extended meeting of Awami League Dhaka city unit will be held at 7 pm today at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city. With city unit chief and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif in the chair. The meeting is expected to be attended by presidents and secretaries of all 15 thana units of the city, said party sources.

This special extended meeting is going to be held just two days after another extended meeting of the city AL which was attended by leaders of all thana, ward and union units.

WB seminar in Nepal from today

The World Bank is sponsoring a high-level seminar in Kathmandu beginning today to bring together the senior South Asian government officials and the policy analysts with agriculture and trade specialists from the bank and several other international organisations including the SAARC. The three-day seminar will focus on the implications of the Uruguay Round Agreement for Agriculture in South Asian countries. Besides the World Bank, the specialist of World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) are also taking part in the seminar, reports BSS.

Appointments

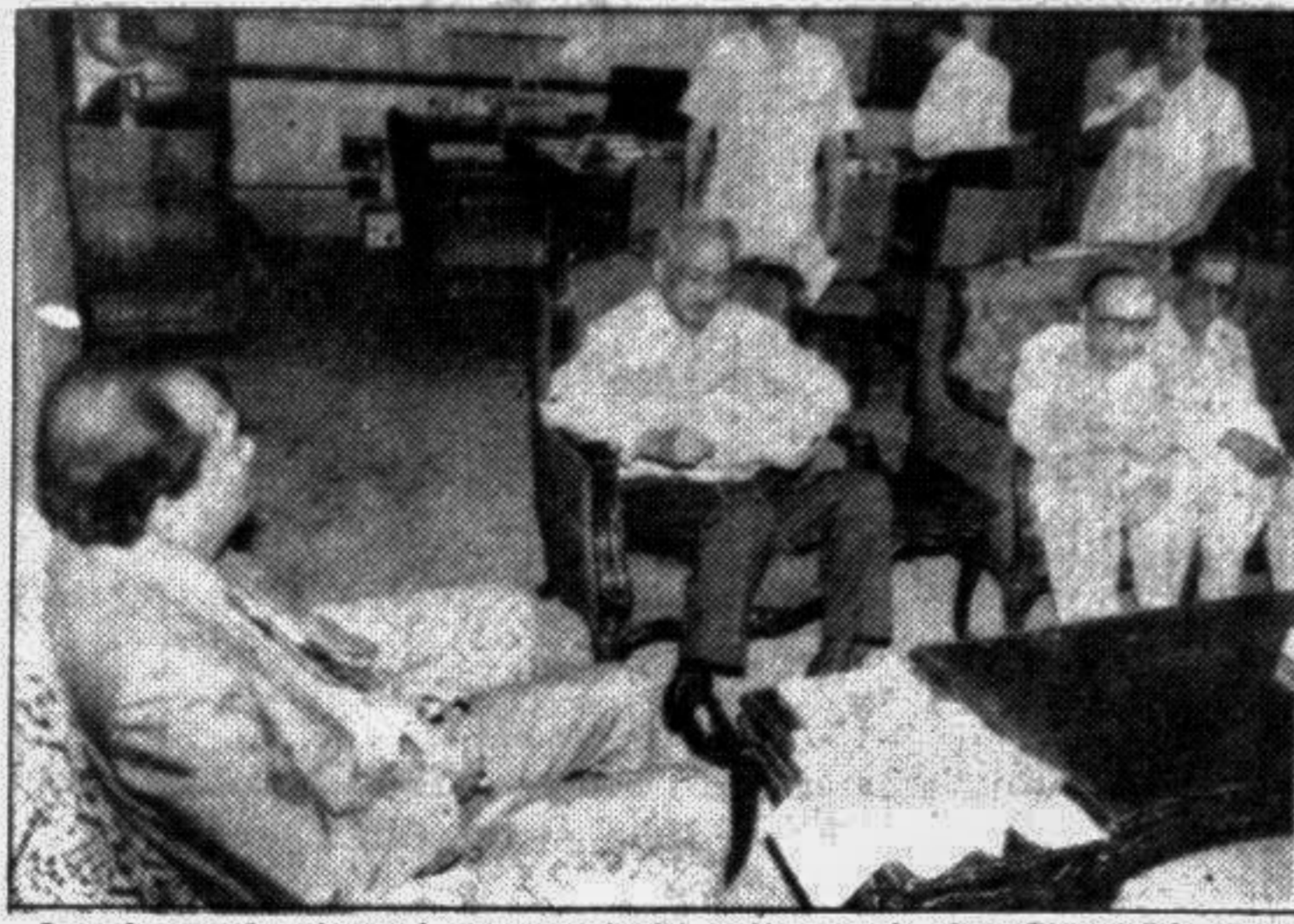
Md. Helaluddin Khan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports has been appointed the director general at the office of the Chief Adviser. Syed Abdur Rashid, Joint Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat, has been appointed the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, reports BSS.

Ananda Puraskar for Akhtaruzzaman Ilyas

CALCUTTA, Apr 21: Bangladeshi writer Akhtaruzzaman Ilyas was yesterday awarded the Prafulla Kumar Smriti Ananda Puraskar for his Khonabana, while Dr Ramakanta Chakraborty won the Sureshchandra Smriti Ananda Puraskar for his research work on Bange Vaishnav Dharma (Vaishnavism in Bengal). The annual awards are instituted by the Ananda Bazar group of publications, reports PTI.

RCC Mayor calls on Chief Adviser

Mizanur Rahman Minu, Mayor of Rajshahi, made a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office yesterday. He stayed with the Chief Adviser for some time.



Leaders of political parties hold talks with the Chief Election Commissioner at the EC Secretariat yesterday. Photo shows



(L-R) leaders of BNP, Awami League and Jatiya Party. — Star photo

Leaders hold meetings with CEC Major parties agree on code of conduct

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of all major political parties have 'by and large' agreed on a code of conduct for the coming parliamentary elections, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mohammad Abu Hena said yesterday.

"By and large, all political parties have reached an understanding on the code of conduct for the polls," the CEC said while briefing newsmen after a series of meetings with leaders of the major, political parties at the EC Secretariat.

He said that the EC would take into consideration the suggestions made by the parties regarding the election schedule and take a decision on the matter soon.

"I wanted to have a feed back from all the political parties about the code of conduct and election schedule. They have expressed their views and the EC will give due consideration to their suggestions," the CEC said. "We will sit down tomorrow to find out something realistic."

He noted that the updating of the voters' list may be continued even after the polls schedule is announced. But, he added, it can only be done centrally from the EC Secretariat.

Leaders of the political parties separately met CEC Mohammad Abu Hena from 2.20 pm.

Top leaders of the BNP, Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, and Gano Forum and some other parties met the CEC following invitation. Election Commissioners Md Abdur Rahman and Mushtaq Ahmed Chowdhury and Secretary M Fazur Razzak were also present at the meetings.

BNP leaders, after meeting the CEC at about 10.30 pm, told newsmen that they had particularly drawn the attention of the EC that no party activists should be harassed in the name of arms recovery drive.

"We have seen in the past that false cases were lodged against our activists. I told the CEC that this should not happen this time," BNP Secretary General Salam Talukder said. He was accompanied by Salfur Rahman and Shamsul Islam.

Regarding election schedule, Talukder reiterated the party demand for elections in May.

The BNP may, however,

soften its stance on the election schedule, Salfur Rahman indicated. "We understand the EC needs time," he said.

AL leaders, following their meeting with the CEC at around 10 pm, told newsmen that the arms recovery drive was at the top of their agenda for discussion, followed by preparing a correct voters' list.

Terming the talks with the CEC "very useful," AL Presidium member Abdus Samad Azad said that they had requested the EC to hold the elections at least 15 days before the expiry of the 90-day time-limit as per constitutional provisions.

"In other words, we have recommended to the EC to hold the elections on June 13," Samad Azad said. He was accompanied by Amir Hossain Anu, Tofael Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, ASM Kibria and ATM Shamsul Haq.

Jatiya Party leaders, after their meeting with the CEC at about 11 pm, told newsmen that they emphasised arms recovery and release of their party chief former president HM Ershad.

The JP team consisted of

'No mechanism to control polls expenses'

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) under the existing laws of the country, has no mechanism to check or control the election expenses of candidates, said an EC official.

The EC has to depend completely on the returns sent by candidate regarding his expenses in the elections.

Even if a complaint is made about over-expenditure by a candidate, the EC, on its own, cannot set aside the election result of that candidate, as the matter is required to be referred to the court, the EC official pointed out.

According to the Representation of the People's Order, 1972 (RPO), the election expenses of a candidate, excluding his personal expenditure, shall not exceed Tk three lakh. Personal expenditure of a candidate will not exceed Tk 5000 as per the RPO.

Election expenses, as stated in the RPO means, "any expenditure incurred or payment made, whether by way of gift, loan, advance, deposit or otherwise, for the arrangement, conduct or benefit of, or in connection with, or incidental to, the election of a candidate, including the expenditure on account of issuing circulars or publications or otherwise presenting to the electors the candidate or his views, aims or objects."

Expenses for public meetings arranged by the political parties in a particular constituency are also included.

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Sundarbans burning

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 21: The devastating forest fire in the Sundarbans that broke out on Friday, has already destroyed flora and fauna on more than 500 acres of the world's largest mangrove.

All efforts to tame the fire have proved futile for want of water and adequate number of fire fighters, according to officials.

"Massive activities to control the fire could not be conducted for shortage of water in the Bhola river, the nearest source of water due to the current ebb-tide," Divisional Forest Officer (DEO) said.

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He said adequate number of fire fighters could not reach the affected areas due to lack of proper communication facilities. The divisional forest officials, however, visited the areas today.

A fire service motor launch of Bangladesh Navy reached the spot from Mongla tonight.

But none of the press community was allowed by the DFO to get in the affected area. A huge number of trees, including valuable Sundari and Gewa, are being incinerated by the devastating fire that broke out at Baidya Mahal of Chhangpai range in the deep forest in Bagerhat district, forest officials said.

The big blaze has burnt down trees over 500 acres and was raging through the forest, till filing of this report according to them.

But they could not confirm whether animals were burnt or not.

The Sundarbans, which stretches across the border into India, is a sanctuary of various species of birds, reptiles and wild animals, including Royal Bengal Tiger, Bangladesh's national animal.

The Forest Department could not identify the cause, but suspected the current hot spell or fire of honey collectors might have ignited the blaze.

Meanwhile, environmentalists and wildlife conservation societies expressed grave concern over the burning of the famous forest which is damaging the ecology.

The Coastal Area Resource Development and Management Association in a press statement yesterday expressed concern over the incident of fire in the Sundarbans.

"The fire will have negative effect on our already threatened tiger population and other living beings," said Hasna J Moudud, President of the association.

She urged the government to ensure protection of the Sundarbans from extinction.

Contractor murdered near Rajuk Bhaban



Mother of Jamal breaks down holding a photograph of her son at her residence in the city yesterday. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

An armed gang shot dead a contractor and seriously injured another man accompanying him at the RAJUK Bhaban in the city at noon yesterday.

Witnesses said, Mahfuzul Huq Jamal, 34, died on the spot when the gang, arriving in a microbus, fired several shots in his belly and back near the gate of the RAJUK building.

Jamal was the joint secretary of Jatiya Party unit in Ward No. 75 in the city.

Aslam, a friend of Jamal, was seriously injured with several bullets. He rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and was fighting for life after undergoing a number of operations, doctors said last night.

Jamal, father of two sons and a resident of KM Das Lane, had gone to the RAJUK office with some friends to file a tender schedule for a road construction work in the city.

Motijheel police confirmed the incident but could not give details as no case was filed in this regard till last night. Body of Jamal was sent to the DMCH for autopsy.

UNB adds: Another young businessman was beaten to death by some miscreants Saturday midnight.

Locals said that some 5-6 hoodlums including Nazu and Tajul, took Wasim (26), a trader of raw materials, to Nurbagh area at Dhania of Demra and beat him severely.

Later, people of the area

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AL, BNP likely to nominate many 'political strangers'

By Nurul Kabir

The two major contenders for power, the BNP and the Awami League, are likely to nominate a significant number of "political strangers" to contest the forthcoming general elections, sources close to the policy makers of the parties have said.

The new faces will include leading businessmen, industrialists and retired bureaucrats, the sources hinted.

Apprehensive of "revolt" by a number of local level leaders of the parties at the decisions of nominating "outsiders", the policy makers of both the parties are planning to offer "rewards" for the "original" leaders, the sources added.

With the League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat out to defeat us, the ensuing national polls is going to be the most crucial one for our party. We therefore might need to nominate some influential people who had not been directly involved in the party earlier," a member of the BNP standing committee told the daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

Another BNP leader said that the result of the ensuing polls will be a matter of prestige and survival of the party.

"So top priority for the party should be to ensure majority seats in Parliament, not to entertain the sentiment of all the local level leaders," he said.

An influential member of the Awami League's central working committee told this correspondent: "You see, the Awami League has been out of power for the last two decades. The next polls is a life and death question for our party. It is therefore imperative for us to ensure victory, not to entertain mere aspiration of any local level leader however dedicated he may be."

"In power politics with BNP, what is the use of giving nomination to a dedicated worker if you see a new face more prospective," a source close to a member of the AL presidium said.

Members of the high commands of both the parties however said that they had no intention to "belittle or undermine" the party activists who had worked day and night for their respective organisations.

They argued that once a

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Hasina tells newcomers to party AL to frame policies on the basis of consensus

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has reiterated her party's commitment to run the country on the basis of 'national consensus'.

"If elected, we will formulate every policy on the basis of national consensus and will free the administration from widespread politicisation," the AL president said at a function to welcome newcomers to her party.

Some 10,000 leaders and workers of BNP and Jatiya Party and businessmen from the city's Gulshan and Uttara areas joined the AL yesterday, said an announcement at the function held in front of the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city.

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Prominent among those who joined the AL included former secretary Asafuddin, former Jatiya Party MP and a leading businessman AKM Rahmatullah, former Director of IPGMR Dr M A Mannan and former Upazila chairman Nurul Karim, who is also a son-in-law of late Nurul Amin, chief minister of then East Pakistan.

Besides, thana and ward level leaders and workers of BNP and JP and businessmen of Gulshan Shopping Centre, DMC Market and DCC Market the area also joined the AL, it was said at the function.

The AL chief said the main objectives of her party were to realise the just rights of

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Dr Kamal for nat'l consensus on fair polls

CHITTAGONG, Apr 21: Gano Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged all progressive political parties to reach a national consensus for the holding of a free and fair election, reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting at Laldighi Maidan here this afternoon, he said the contesting political parties should strictly follow a code of conduct for a smooth and meaningful election.

He lambasted those political parties which pursue 'negative and sick politics' and lamented that in last 25 years, democracy, the Constitution and the rule of law were obstructed time and again.

The next generation will be endangered if democracy and the rule of law are not

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Twenty more DU students fall sick Most DU hall kitchens unhygienic

By DU Correspondent

At least 20 more students of Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University fell sick with food poisoning yesterday.

The university authorities have engaged a special medical team for treatment of the sick students in the hall.

Meanwhile, most of the 300 or so students of the hall who were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and the ICCDRB, with food poisoning Saturday were released yesterday, sources in the dormitory said.

The students started falling sick with serious stomach ache after they took their meal at the dining room of the hall Friday night.

The Dhaka University au-

thorities have formed a three-member inquiry committee to investigate the scourge of food poisoning.

The committee headed by

Mohsin Hall provost Jamal

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Uddin Ahmed has been asked to submit its report to Vice-Chancellor Emajuddin Ahmed by April 24.

Two other members of the committee are chief medical officer of the university Dr Ketabuddin and Director of the Institute of Food and Nutrition Salamattullah.

No action has been taken against the manager of the cafeteria of the hall, according

to sources in the hall. The manager has been absconding since late night Friday when the students started complaining about serious stomach ache.

It was gathered from the students that those who took fish curry and egg fell sick quickly. Those who took chicken curry fell sick the next day.

Cafeterias in Dhaka University halls are run by contractors. Students frequently complain about poor quality of food but no measure has been taken.

On February 19, 1994, at least 200 students of Jagannath Hall fell sick with

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PO '72 amendment

Advisory Council okays proposal to debar bank loan defaulters

The Council of advisers has approved the proposal for amendment of 'the Representation of the People's Order' 1972 (PO No 155 of 1972), an official handout said in the city last night, reports BSS.

The approval was given at a meeting of the Council of Advisers held yesterday evening at the Chief Adviser's office with Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman in the chair.

The amendment has been made in order to debar the bank loan defaulters from contesting in the coming general election and to enable the voters to exercise their franchise in the election without voter's identity cards.

Besides, violation of the code of conduct — to be framed by the Election Commission — has been made a punishable offence in the Representation of Peoples Order 1972.

Dhaka College student shot dead

A college student was shot dead while gossiping with his friends at a coffee shop at Elephant Road in the city last night, reports UNB.

Witnesses said that Nasir Sadek Kanak (20), a first year Accounting Honours student of Dhaka College, received bullet injuries when an armed group fired 15-16 rounds of bullet. Kanak died on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The incident occurred while he was talking to his friends at a coffee shop at around 10.15 pm.

The four other seriously injured during the incident are Masud (22), Tapash (24), Sadek (20) and Tanvir (23). They were admitted to DMCH.

Our DMCH Correspondent adds: Police yesterday morning recovered body of one Kismat Ali, 65, from 333 West Rampura.

Gulshan police said they found Kismat hanging from the ceiling of his house.

He might have committed suicide because of prolonged illness, police said.

Ruma, 20, wife of one Asad Mia was admitted to DMCH with serious cut injuries. It was alleged that she was attacked with sharp weapon by her husband's first wife.

BNP tried best to realise due share of Ganges water: Salam

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday denied allegations that his party failed to realise the country's due share of the Ganges waters during its five year rule.

"It's not our failure. We tried our best to realise our just shares of the Ganges waters. We held talks on the issue at the levels of prime minister, foreign minister and officials on different occasions. We will continue our efforts and adopt more effective measures to succeed if the people re-elect us," he said at the regular press briefing at the BNP central office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday evening.

Salam Talukder told journalists that party chief Begum Khaleda Zia would undertake an extensive tour of the country soon after the schedule for the coming general elections was announced.

Begum Zia will visit the district headquarters and also some thana headquarters for

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K M Obaid joins BNP today

By Staff Correspondent

KM Obaidur Rahman is expected to return to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) by merging his Bangladesh Janata Dal with the BNP through a special council of his party in the city today.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has been invited to attend the Janata Dal council, scheduled to be held at the Diploma Engineers' Institution auditorium at 3 pm, as the chief guest.

When asked, BNP secretary general Abdus Salam Talukder told reporters at the party's Naya Paltan central office yesterday evening that KM Obaid had expressed the hope to return to the BNP. Other central leaders of the BNP had also been invited to attend the Janata Dal programme, he added.

Former secretary general of the BNP KM Obaidur Rahman was expelled from the party on the eve of his reported plan to join the Jatiya Party of HM Ershad in late 80s. Later, he and other expelled BNP leaders formed the Janata Dal.