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RABIUL AWAL 5, 1417 HIJRI

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### Business

**ASEAN expresses concern over multilateral investment pact**  
Country fails to export 100 kg gold ornaments in 9 months  
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### DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1103.76 (-0.84%)  
Market capital Tk 7494.49 cr  
Transactions in volume 704678  
Transactions in value Tk 13.51 cr

### Metropolitan

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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Hasina thanks Saudi govt

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a message yesterday thanked the government of Saudi Arabia and its people for extending her warm hospitality during recent visit to the kingdom. Bangladesh Ambassador to the kingdom Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin handed over the message to the Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz at Al Salam palace in Jeddah yesterday. Receiving the message Crown Prince Abdullah, who is second in royal hierarchy, recalled the deep-rooted relation between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia and wished Bangladesh peace and prosperity, reports UNB.

#### BNPPP adjourned meet today

The adjourned meeting of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNPPP) will be held today at 3 pm at the Jatiya Sangsads Bhawan. Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury has requested all BNP MPs to attend the meeting on time, reports UNB.

#### 200 phones out of order in city

Nearly 200 telephones have been out of order under Gulshan exchange for the past few days. A press release of the T&amp;T board yesterday said the disruption was due to fault in the underground cables in Amriti, TBV gate and Titumir College areas. The workers and officials of the board have been working to mend the wires and the operation of the telephones is expected to resume by July 23, reports UNB.

#### Ferry fare for passengers waived

The government has decided to waive ferry fare for passengers from the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain yesterday informed Parliament of the decision during question hour.

Fare for vehicles ferried in different river routes will, however, have to be paid as usual.

## By-elections to vacant JS seats Sept 5

By Staff Correspondent

By-elections to the 16 vacant seats of the Jatiya Sangsads (JS) will be held on September 5.

The last date for filing nomination papers is August 5. The nomination papers will be scrutinised on August 6 and the last date for withdrawal is August 12, according to the election schedule announced by Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena at a press conference at the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat in the city yesterday.

Abu Hena said firmly that the by-elections will be fair like the June 12 general elections and sought cooperation from the political parties and all others concerned in holding the by-polls.

The EC is considering deployment of army during the by-elections, the CEC said.

The 16 JS seats were va-

cated by nine members of the parliament (MPs) who was elected from more than one seats in the June 12 elections.

The constituencies where by-elections would be held are: Rangpur-2, 5 and 6, Kurigram-3, Bogra-6 and 7, Sirajganj-1, Bagerhat-1, Khulna-1, Bhol-1, Pirojpur-2, Sharariatpur-1, Sylhet-4, Laxmipur-2 and Chittagong-1 and 13.

Abu Hena also replied to a volley of questions by newsmen about alleged irregularities, election expenses of candidates, and disposal of complaints by some candidates regarding the June 12 election. Election Commissioners Mushtaq Ahmed Chowdhury and Abdur Rahman were also present at the press conference.

He said that the EC had put forward to the government

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Abu Hena at the press conference yesterday

## BOI drafting legal framework for private sector EPZs

projects.

We are particularly interested in Japanese investment because Japanese capital was the real engine of growth in the countries of Southeast Asia ... we also know that Japanese investments are long-term investments, he said.

The representatives of the entrepreneurs attended the meeting include: Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsui and Co Ltd, Nichimen Corporation, Sumitomo Corporation, Ito Tushou, Itochu Corporation.

### Nurses, employees go on strike at BIRDEM

By Staff Correspondent

Sufferings of patients in the country's only diabetic hospital, BIRDEM, mounted yesterday as nurses and other employees of the hospital started an indefinite strike.

Sources in the hospital said, doctors could not perform operation and attend patients because the striking employees also obstructed services in the hospital kitchen, air conditioning system and lift etc.

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Japan Engineering Consultant Co Ltd, Kanematsu Corporation, Kinsho Mataichi Corporation, Marubeni Corporation, Nissho Iwai Corporation, Obayashi Corporation, Pacific Consultant International, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd and Japan-Bangladesh Company Limited.

Officials of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) and the Japanese Embassy were present.

The meeting at a local hotel was arranged mainly to discuss the possible ways of attracting more Japanese firms who have been doing business in Bangladesh.

Proposals for further improvement in the areas needed for attracting foreign investment and specific advantageous areas for joint-venture cooperation from Japanese firms were also discussed in the meeting.

The BOI official informed about the proposed industrial estate for Japanese entrepreneurs on the bank of Karnaphuli river for which the

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