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DSE MARKET	
DSE price index	1629.02
Market capital Tk	11397.56 cr
Transactions in value	977562
Transactions in volume	24.69 cr

### Metropolitan

#### Dhaka Day by Day



Clinging to Hope  
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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Local Government Commission

The government has formed an eight-member Local Government Commission to formulate recommendations in rendering the local government bodies more financial and administrative power. Meanwhile, a questionnaire has already been published in the newspapers for public opinion survey on the local government, said an official announcement last night, reports UNB.

### 2 MPs leave for Australia

A two-member parliamentary delegation left the city yesterday for Canberra to attend a three-day Asian parliamentarians' meeting beginning tomorrow. The member of the delegation are MPs Shah Azizur Rahman and Prof Khaleda Khanam, said a press release.

### Sylhet Parishad to gherao PDB office

**SYLHET, Sept 23:** The Greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad at a meeting today, has decided to gherao the office of Superintending Engineer of PDB here on October 7 to press their demand for immediate solution to the continued load-shedding.

### Saudi envoy hosts reception

Abdullah Omar Barry, Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh, hosted a reception at Sonargon Hotel yesterday evening to celebrate the National Day of his country. The reception was attended by some ministers, political leaders, high civil and military officials, diplomats, elite and journalists, reports BSS.

### 3 JCD activists held in Sylhet

**SYLHET, Sept 23:** Kotwali police arrested three youngmen from Fazilchhat area of the town tonight. One Chinese revolver and 6 rounds of ammunition were also recovered from their possession, police said. The arrested youngmen — Faisal Otr, Tahir Ahmed Chowdhury and Ishique Khan Ruhul — are reportedly the activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), sources said.

## Inability to meet pre-polls pledges alleged

# AL out to divert people's attention, says Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia said yesterday the ruling Awami League (AL) has resorted to oppression on political opponents to divert people's attention from its inherent inability to meet the pledges made before the general elections.

"The Awami League had made a lot of pledges before the last general elections. Inherently incapable of meeting those, the party has now indulged in oppressing its political opponents to divert attention of the people from the promises it made," said the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad. "AL wants us to remain busy facing various false charges, instead of reminding the government of its responsibilities to meet the pre-election pledges," she added.

Begum Zia was "exchanging views" with a group of newsmen on the latest socio-political and economic situation in the country at her Minto Road office.

She said it would be a wrong conclusion on the part of the AL leadership "if they think that they would remain in power for the next 21 years by oppressing the people." "People of this country would not tolerate the oppressors for such a long period only because they have come to power after 21 years," she asserted.

The Leader of the Opposition alleged that the government was filing false cases against her party activists across the country only to harass them and was oppressing them to silence the voice of the people.

Expressing her determination

to "continue to fight for the rights of the people from the opposition political camp," the BNP Chairperson said that her party would not stop her party from taking to the street, if needed.

"We want the government to work for the people undisturbed and meet the election pledges. We are still ready to cooperate with them in running the affairs of the state," she said. As a ruling party only recently, BNP knew it well how difficult it was to work for the people with the opposition consistently refusing to play a positive role, she noted.

"We really do not intend to start agitating so soon but the government is provoking us to take to the street everyday by

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Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia exchanging views with journalists at her Minto Road residence yesterday. — Star photo

## Transport workers clash at Syedabad: 5 hurt

By DMC Correspondent

At least five persons were injured during a clash between two groups of transport workers at the Syedabad bus terminal in the city yesterday afternoon.

One of the groups barricaded the road with buses near the Jatrabari crossing creating a massive traffic jam on the busy road for about an hour from 5:30 pm, police said adding at least ten vehicles were damaged.

Police seized six buses and arrested two transport workers from the spot, police said.

Two of the injured persons — transport worker Jahangir Kabir, 35 and a rickshawpuller Shajahan, 30 — were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) hospital sources said.

Besides, several crackers were exploded and there was chase and counter chase between the rival groups creating panic in the whole area, witnesses said.

According to the local people the rival groups were locked in the clash over gaining control in the bus terminal area.

## 'Smugglers prefer mid-night flights'

Star Report

Smugglers prefer midnight flights to bring contraband goods to Dhaka through Zia International Airport (ZIA), senior Customs officials say.

"We stepped up Customs surveillance at night a couple of months ago and Saturday's haul of smuggled gold was the outcome of our constant vigilance," one official said.

Some customs officials claimed that they had already identified the flights by which smuggling was carried out. Most of these flights came from some south east Asian countries, besides from the Gulf, they said.

A total of 1,175 gold bars, weighing 10 tolas each, worth about Tk seven crore were seized at the Cargo Complex at ZIA Saturday afternoon. Two cartons containing the gold were sent to a business firm, Hossain & Sons, at Gulshan in the city from Singapore by a Bangladesh Biman flight that landed at ZIA at 1.51 am on Thursday. No such firm could however be traced there.

Customs sources pointed out that smugglers preferred mid-

night flights to take advantage of the time factor and exhaustion of officials at late hours in the night. Customs surveillance teams were instructed to keep vigilance on the identified flights, they added.

A senior ZIA official, who preferred anonymity, alleged that Dhaka was being used as a transit for gold smuggling.

Meanwhile, the gold seized on Saturday was handed over to Bangladesh Bank authorities Sunday morning.

Surveillance Inspector of Air Freight unit of Customs Rafiqul Islam Khan lodged a case with the Cantonment thana in this connection, police said.

The case was filed under sections 15 and 16 of Customs Act of 1969, section 8(1) of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act of 1947, Section 3(1) of Export Import Act of 1950 and Section 25(B) of the Special Powers Act of 1974, police sources said.

A senior police official said that the case was likely to hand over to the Detective branch shortly.

## RAJUK drive against illegal structures

By Staff Correspondent

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha (RAJUK) yesterday began a crackdown on illegal occupants of its land and on people building unauthorised houses and structures deviating from the approved plan.

The Chairman of RAJUK talking to The Daily Star said that on the first day of the drive, illegal structures obstructing the natural flow of the rain water at the Jasimuddin Road behind Bangladesh Bank in the Motilheer Commercial Area were dismantled. The RAJUK conducted a similar drive in Banani area.

"We have evicted the illegal occupants near the culvert on Jasimuddin road. They were responsible for water-logging," Humayun Khadem, the RAJUK Chairman said. He said, the whole canal network will have to be cleared of these occupants to ensure uninterrupted flow of the rain water.

This drive will continue until the city's problems are

## Kesri stand-in President of Congress Party

**NEW DELHI, Sept 23:** India's Congress Party elected Sitaram Kesri as stand-in president here today following the resignation of scandal-tainted former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, the United News of India said, reports AFP.

The 77-year-old Kesri, who has been in charge of the party's finances since 1985 and is dubbed 'Moneybags' by detractors, had been widely seen as the front-runner before today's meeting.

The decision was announced by the Congress working committee, the party think tank, the agency said, quoting Congress Party sources.

Rao, who became Indian Prime Minister in 1991 but was ousted in May this year, resigned as Congress (I) chief after being confirmed as a co-accused in a 100,000-dollar fraud case.

Rao, 75, implicated in a series of corruption scandals, faces charges of criminal conspiracy and fraud after a businessman accused him and a Hindu guru of asking for the money in return for a newspaper contract.

Kesri was chosen to lead the Congress until fresh party elections are held later this year.

## Another batch of returnees arrives

Biman Bangladesh Airlines till yesterday operated 21 flights and brought back 3,200 overstaying Bangladeshis from UAE, reports UNB.

The national carrier plans to bring back 6,000 Bangladeshis by September 30, a Biman press release said.

Besides, seven foreign carriers will operate 60 flights from UAE to Dhaka. These foreign carriers have already operated 11 flights bringing back 3000 Bangladeshis.

The carriers are: Gulf Air, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian, Siberia Airlines, Asia Travels and Tours and Middle Eastern Airlines.

## JCD activists rehabilitated in 2 DU halls

By DU Correspondent

The activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), who were ousted allegedly by the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) workers from Mohsin and AF Rahman halls of Dhaka University, were rehabilitated yesterday.

According to sources, some 17 students of the Mohsin hall and nine of the AF Rahman hall were rehabilitated in their respective seats in the hall.

The acting Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof Shahiduddin Ahmed, was present.

The JCD earlier claimed that some 2000 activists were ousted from the BCL-dominated halls. But they submitted to the university authorities a list of less than 100 students.

## Deadlock at CU passes 5th day

From Staff Correspondent

**CHITTAGONG, Sept 23:** The stalemate at Chittagong University is continuing with no sign of any solution in sight.

The ruling party's student front, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), continued to block the entrance to the university campus for the fifth day today protesting the violence of September 17. The BCL held the activists of the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami responsible for the September 17 violence. The Shibir however blamed the BCL.

The BCL supporters took position at the entrance to the campus and Shibir activists took control of the halls, campus sources said.

Both the groups held separate protest rallies and staged

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## Steps to rid city of waterlogging

By Staff Correspondent

Representatives of different organisations concerned at a meeting yesterday decided to take immediate measures to rid the city of water-logging.

The meeting was presided over by Mayor Mohammad Hanif and attended by top officials of WASA, RAJUK and the Water Development Board, according to a Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) press release.

The meeting decided that DCC would see that the sewerage system in the city remains unaffected while WASA would ensure pumping out of stagnant water. As a permanent measure, WASA would also take steps to complete construction of the box-culvert on Segunbagicha Canal near Shilpakala Academy on and near DIT Avenue and Notre Dame College and set up a pump station on the highway near Kamapur. After the completion of Dholai Khal pump station, steps would be taken up to connect Segun-

bagicha Canal with Dholai Khal, the DCC release said.

A 60-foot wide road would be built on top of the box-culvert.

The Mayor has appealed to the city dwellers to help the authorities carry out their work.

BSS adds: The government has taken up short, mid and long term measures to solve the problem of waterlogging in the city. Minister of State for LGED and Cooperatives Alhaj Syed Abul Hossain said yesterday.

Listing the immediate measures taken by the government in this regard, he said, all impediments to the free flow of water in the Segun Bagicha Canal are being removed. Attorney General is moving the courts to vacate the injunctions on the acquisition of land to be used for drainage purposes.

The district administration has been directed to immediately transfer the earmarked land in the city for immediate

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## Cabinet okays turning BCI into a bank

The Cabinet has approved the proposal for reorganising Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI) Limited as a bank, reports UNB.

The approval was given at a Cabinet meeting yesterday held at the PM office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

It also approved a proposal for formulating the Bank Company (Amendment) Act 1996.

The Cabinet further endorsed amendment proposals of three laws — Securities and Exchange Commission Act, 1993, Securities and Exchange Commission Ordinance, 1969 and Judicial Administration Training Institute Act, 1995.

Minister and state ministers attended the meeting. Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and secretaries concerned were present.

## Habiganj-2 bypolls BNP leader pulls out of race

Zakaria Chowdhury, a BNP leader, yesterday withdrew his candidature from by-election to the Habiganj-2 seat of Parliament, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, now Leader of the Opposition, has boycotted the coming by-election apprehending that the result is a foregone conclusion.

Yesterday was the last date for withdrawal of candidature for Habiganj-2 constituency. Another candidate, Mohammad Abid Ali Chowdhury, also withdrew from the race, the Election Commission said.

Now four candidates remained in the fray. They are Sirajul Haque, Sirajul Hossain, Sirajul Khan of the Jatiya Party, Tozazzal Hossain and Krishak Mohammad Sadeq.

The seat fell vacant with the death of Awami League MP Sharifuddin Ahmed.

Voting will be held in some 115 polling centres from 8 am to 4 pm without break on October 15. A total of 1,76,407 voters are there in the constituency.

## Turnover at CSE hits record high

From Nurul Alam

**CHITTAGONG, Sept 23:** Turnover at the country's second bourse in the port city jumped to a record high and stood at Tk 6.61 crore at the end of the day's trading today, official sources said.

The turnover at the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) today was Tk four crore higher than the previous days transaction.

Market operators attributed the sudden jump in transactions today to an increase in buying and selling of shares.

A total of 50 issues were traded on the day, of them 20 gained and 30 suffered loss. But the share price index came down today to 680.82 points from yesterday's 687.97 points.

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## One killed, 25 hurt as two launches collide in Buriganga

From Our Correspondent

**NARAYANGANJ, Sept 23:** One person was killed and at least 25 others were injured when two passenger launches bound for Dhaka collided at Dharmaganj in the Buriganga river under Fatullah thana this morning.

Police and witnesses said, the launches, ML Rita, coming from Barisal and the ML Fazilat coming from Tohri, Munshiganj, were in a race to reach Dhaka when one collided with the other.

One Abdus Salam, 40, of Chandatala, Munshiganj died on the spot. Many panic-stricken passengers jumped into the river and swam ashore. Both launches were damaged.

## Mob-police clash in N'ganj: 25 hurt

From Our Correspondent

**NARAYANGANJ, Sept 23:** At least 25 persons were injured, four of them seriously, in clashes with police when a mob of about five hundred people tried to snatch two alleged hijackers from the Bholta police outpost under Rupganj thana this morning.

One policeman was among the injured. Four persons sustained bullet injuries. Two of the injured were admitted to the Pangu Hospital in Dhaka while two others to the Narayanganj Hospital.

During the clash which lasted more than three hours, the Dhaka-Sylhet highway remained closed, witnesses said.

At about 10:30 am some five hundred people gheraoed the out post and demanded release of the two arrested persons. Police reinforcements had to be brought in from Narayanganj, 20 kilometres away. At one point, police made baton-charges to disperse the mob, witnesses said.

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## Workshop on project finance told Red tapism, power shortage hinder private sector investment

**GAZIPUR, Sept 23:** The government should have the political will to negate the direct pressure of the trade union and indirect pressure of the vested bureaucracy for attracting private investment in infrastructure development, reports BSS.

This was observed on the first day of the four-day workshop on project finance co-hosted by Board of Investment and the World Bank at the BRAC's Centre for Development Management (CDM).

The speakers at the workshop observed that the country needed five to six per cent infrastructural investment annually to attain five to six per cent of GDP growth.

They said the country would need to generate an additional 1200 megawatt of electricity by the end of the century and immediate investment was needed to strengthen the power sector infrastructure.

Energy and Project Finance Division Chief of World Bank for South Asia Per Ljung said, "Bangladesh's energy sector is poised to develop rapidly" and to cope with the situation, private sector investment was imperative in the sector.

He also pointed out that there was a need for increase of the level of infrastructure in-

vestment, particularly from private sector in telecommunication, and roads and transport.

Ljung said that there were numbers of barrier to private investment in Bangladesh which included public sector dominance, high level of regularity uncertainty, lack of buyer creditworthiness, limited availability and convertibility of foreign exchange, lack of clarity in decision making process and high transaction costs.

He suggested that the government should reorient its role to barriers of private investment.

He also underlined several aspects to remove the barriers to private investment including learning from experience of other countries, building awareness, enhancing appropriate skills, developing opportunities, securing a more friendly investment climate, establishing efficient and transparent interface with would be investors, selecting sound projects and following through on implementation.

A member of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Syed Manzoor Elahi, while discussing the issues of the domestic private sector said that high corporate tax, inadequate legal and regulatory framework, unclear labour policy and insufficient protection for intellectual property were the reasons for the lower domestic private investment.

Elahi said about 75 per cent of the foreign companies believed that bureaucratic red tape and shortage of power stopped the process of private sector investment in Bangla-

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Sequence of a dance programme organised by the GA Mannan Sangkritik Parishad at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo