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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 3317.57
Market capital Tk 23637.21 cr
Transactions in volume 265782
Transactions in value Tk 17.86 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 1513.48
Market capital Tk 1699.32 cr
Transactions in volume 78515
Transactions in value Tk 2.55 cr

Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily
Star contains a four-
page supplement on
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NEWS BRIEFS

Clinton in Thailand

BANGKOK, Nov 25: US President Bill Clinton arrived here today for a 24-hour trip, the first visit to Thailand by an American head of state in 27 years, television reports said. US Air Force One carrying Clinton and his wife Hillary arrived at Bangkok's military airport from Manila where the US President had been attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit, reports AFP.

Sit-in in Golapganj from today

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Nov 25: The All-party Action Committee will begin a three-day dawn to dusk 'sit-in' at the four wells in the Kailashitla Gas Field of Golapganj tomorrow. The action programme has been announced to press the 6-point demand of the committee.

JSD nat'l convention tomorrow

The national convention of Jatiya Smatantirik Dal (JSD) will be held at the Engineers Institute in city tomorrow. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the convention as the chief guest, according to a JSD press release, reports BSS.

Traders observe strike in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 25: Local businessmen observed a 10-hour shutdown today demanding punishment of terrorists responsible for creating violence in the town. They gave the call to protest the last two days' clashes in the town between ruling Awami League and opposition BNP in which several shops were damaged. During the shutdown, the businessmen held a rally and submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner, reports UNB.

Teenage boy drowns

A teenage boy drowned in a pond near Kanchpur bridge in the city yesterday afternoon. Fire Brigade divers recovered the body two hours after the incident. The victim was identified as Shukur, 17, son of one Makiul Hossain, of Golapganj, reports UNB.



Sri Lanka's World Cup winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga listens to the dreaded sound of a ball being dislodged by a gem from Masudur Rahman Mukul whose post-kill waltz is not in the picture. Agra Bank's keeper Anwar watches yet another Mohammedan wicket tumble yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium. (Story on Page 11) — Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Agreement at APEC summit

Free trade by 2020, tariff cut on high-tech goods

SUBIC BAY (Philippines), Nov 25: A key Asia-Pacific economic summit today agreed to start tearing down trade barriers from January 1 and gave surprise support to a US proposal for slashing tariffs on high-tech goods, reports AFP.

The high-powered meeting of Clinton, Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and 15 other leaders promised to achieve free trade by 2020. Clinton scored a double victory with support — albeit qualified — for a contentious US proposal to liberalise trade in computers and related products by 2000.

That followed his ground-breaking agreement with Jiang at an informal meeting the day before for reciprocal state visits that effectively signalled the thaw of seven years' frosty relations between the two powers.

The result of the summit in Subic Bay was "a national achievement," said John Wolf, the United States coordinator for the 18-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). "We are delighted with the outcome of the summit. It achieved a number of things for which we have been working very hard through the years," he told reporters.

During the summit, Jiang promised that as part of Beijing's commitment to the free trade goal, China would slash import tariffs from 23 per cent to just 15 per cent by 2000.

The group's ambitious liberalisation schedule, tagged the Manila action plan for APEC, commits APEC to free trade

among developed countries by 2010 and 2020 for the rest. In their statement, titled "From Vision to Action," they agreed to implement initiatives from January 1.

The APEC leaders gave their support in principle for free trade in the region at a summit in Bogor, Indonesia in 1993 and drafted a framework for action a year later in Osaka, Japan. The trade liberalisation deal garnered little sympathy among left-wing Filipinos who charge lowering trade barriers will harm the poor in a country that relies heavily on agriculture.

Some 10,000 protesters, who had staged a massive overnight motorcade from Manila towards the Summit site in Subic Bay, were blocked by 2,000 riot police and an overturned crane

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Kerb marketmen gherao CSE as share prices fall

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 25: The Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) office came under attack by the kerb market traders who kept it gheraoed for several hours today, police said.

The Chief Executive Officer of CSE Shamsul Kamal told The Daily Star that the unruly mob had pelted bricks at the CSE office damaging some windows.

Forged share certificates seized

By Staff Correspondent

Forged share certificates are being sold in the country's booming stock markets, victimising mainly new investors who can not distinguish between the original and fake ones.

According to police, an organised gang has been involved in selling forged share certificates of different companies for

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besides, the mob gheraoed the office and none was allowed to come out of it, he said.

The agitating mob chanted slogans and brought out procession in front of CSE office, police said.

Kamal said the trouble had begun from 1 pm when the fall of prices of some shares had sparked agitation among the investors waiting in the kerb market.

He informed that the floor trading was, however, completed before the trouble broke out.

Later, in the evening police swung into action by resorting to mild lathicharge and dispersed the agitating mob to bring the situation under control.

Then the CSE officials and authorised representatives of brokers left the office for home, police said.

UNB adds, The kerb market operators accused the brokers of deliberately causing the fall

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Yasmin murder case: Evidences of 3 recorded

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Nov 25: Trial of the Yasmin murder case resumed today in the Special Court, Rangpur.

Of the total nine accused in the case, three were charged under the Woman and Child Repression Control Act 6(4) and their trial first started in court.

The three are former ASI Moinul Haque, former constable Abdus Sattar and former driver Amrita Lal Barman. They are now under custody in jail hazar.

Special Court Judge Abdul Matin who is also the district and sessions judge, Rangpur, recorded depositions of three witnesses today. They were mother of Yasmin Sharifa Begum, CID investigation officer (I O) Alzal Hossain and Waheda Khatoun, mother-in-law of house lord Abul Ahsan Ahmed Ali of Dhanmondi, Dhaka in whose house Yasmin worked as a maid.

The mother of Yasmin, during submission of deposition was seen weeping. During cross

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BAC probe into 'irregularities' in BB proposed

By Staff Correspondent

The Finance Ministry has sent a proposal to relevant authorities for a probe by the Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) into alleged irregularities by a section of the 'high ups' in Bangladesh Bank (BB), according to informed sources.

A Finance Ministry probe conducted earlier by Finance Secretary Aktar Ali Khan had detected irregularities and floating of rupees in the central bank in granting licences to a number of non-banking financial institutions.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Khorshed Alam was removed barely three weeks before the expiry of his contract service following submission of the probe report.

The probe in October came in the wake of sudden removal of Deputy Governor Mahbubur Rahman Khan, who had been blamed for much of the alleged irregularities. He allegedly did

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BCL leader of Tejgaon Polytech shot dead, protesters torch ward commissioner's office

By Staff Correspondent

A Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader of the Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute was shot dead in the city yesterday.

A gang of six unidentified gunmen shot Ziaur Rahman Patwari alias Reaz, 23, at point-blank range near the campus at around 11:30 am. A third year student of the Mechanical Department, he was immediately taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH) where doctors declared him dead, police said.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

Zia, son of Motiur Rahman Patwari of Bakharpur in Chandpur district, was made the convenor of the BCL unit of the institute on Sunday, police said adding he was a resident of Chamelibagh in Shantinagar area.

Zia was taking tea with some of his friends at a roadside stall, known as 'Mama tea stall' at Begunbari near the institute, at about 11:20 am. A group of around six armed men came in a white colour car and gheraoed Zia and his friends at the stall, police said.

They then fired on him at close range.

According to hospital and police sources, two bullets hit Zia's abdomen and left arm. Zia died at about 1 pm.

None was arrested in connection with the murder till last night.

UNB adds: The killing sparked off violent protests as a group of Chhatra League (S-P) activists later at night set ablaze the local ward commissioner's office blaming him for the murder.

Witnesses said the enraged

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Khaleda leaves for KSA tomorrow for treatment

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will leave for Saudi Arabia tomorrow for treatment, reports UNB.

Begum Zia is scheduled to leave by a Saudi flight at 11:55 am, party sources said yesterday.

During her stay in Saudi Arabia, she would be operated upon for her arthritis in leg at Riyadh.

After her treatment, she will perform 'Umrah' at Makkah and offer 'fateha' at the rauza 'Muharrak' of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) at Medina.

Dhaka must meet fiscal target for loan: IMF

By Staff Correspondent

The leader of an Economic Review Mission of the International Monetary Fund said yesterday that Bangladesh could get IMF loan if the government could achieve its fiscal and monetary targets this year.

"Although it is too early to determine the performance of the economy (under this government), it can be said that the economy is performing well so far," said Margaret R Kelly, Senior Adviser in South-East Asia and Pacific Department, IMF and leader of the visiting six-member mission.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Bangladesh Bank Kelly said, "The export sector is overcoming the loss caused by the past strikes and inflation is down to 3 per cent as against the government's target of 4 per cent," she noted.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria sought a loan of 600 million US dollars from the IMF during his recent visit to the US.

Following his visit, the IMF mission led by Kelly arrived in Dhaka last week to hold discussions with ministers, secretaries and other officials as well as with leaders of labour unions, NGOs and other organisations. The mission leaves Dhaka today.

The report of the review mission will be submitted to the government by next week and negotiations will be on, Kelly added.

She also told The Daily Star yesterday that by early next year, another IMF mission will visit Bangladesh with detailed agenda before the finalisation of a loan under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) scheme of the IMF.

"We cannot exactly say what would be the amount of this loan at this point of discussion with the government of Bangladesh, the mission leader said.

The ESAF loan is usually

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Complaint with Speaker, copy to UNDP JS Task Force constituted without consulting BNP

By Nurul Kabir

The BNP has lodged a complaint with the Speaker that the party was neither consulted while constituting the Jatiya Sangsad Task Force nor taken into confidence in conducting its activities, sources in the party said.

A seven-member Task Force, headed by Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury was formed on October 30 to make recommendations for more effective functioning of the Jatiya Sangsad and strengthening support services for lawmakers, and the JS Secretariat. The Task Force includes three MPs from Awami League, two from BNP and one from Jatiya Party.

The opposition BNP has also sent a copy of the complaint to the UNDP, the coordinating body of the funding agencies to help implementation of recommendations to be made by the Task Force, the sources added.

Expressing full agreement with the objectives set for the Task Force, the BNP in its written complaint said that the way the Task Force was constituted, and now working, would not produce a 'positive result', the BNP sources said. The party also requested the Speaker to take necessary steps to make the body work effectively on the basis of consensus on the issue.

The letter of complaint, signed by Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament and a top-ranking leader of the BNP, was submitted on November 19.

Talking to this correspondent Sunday night, Delwar said: "We wholeheartedly welcome the idea of the Task Force and the UNDP efforts to modernise the JS Secretariat. We strongly feel that reforms in both the institutional and operational sectors are imperative for the effective functioning of

Parliament. "But the problem is that the ruling Awami League refuses to understand that the plans should be made in agreement with the Opposition," Delwar added.

Requested to substantiate the allegation, the Opposition Chief Whip said: "Two BNP legislators had been included in the Task Force without any prior consultation with the party, then a project director was appointed for the 'national project' undertaken by the Task Force without consulting us." The Chief Whip further alleged that the Task Force took up a programme to visit parliaments of some other countries without any discussion with the BNP.

"The attitude is inconsistent with the ruling party's slogan of running the parliament on the basis of consensus between

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Joint meet of AL units tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

A joint meeting of different units of the Awami League and its front organisations will be held at 11 am tomorrow at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

AL general secretary Zillur Rahman has requested the presidents and general secretaries of the Dhaka district unit, Dhaka city unit, district units of Manikganj, Gazipur, Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Narayanganj, Brahmanbaria, Comilla (north), Comilla (south), Myemensingh and Tangail, the presidents and general secretaries of Sramik League, Krishak League, central Jubo League, north and south Dhaka City units of Jubo League to attend the meeting on time.

Besides, the presidents and general secretaries of Mojibla

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Mannan Bhuiyan tells rally 'This govt using SPA more than BNP did'

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, has branded the present government as 'champion of speaking the best and doing the worst'.

"This government is uttering sweet words but committing the worst deeds... It is only giving lip service but doing nothing for the betterment of the country," the BNP leader told a public rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday evening.

JASAS, the cultural front of BNP, organised the rally in protest against the recent attack on its leader Kamal Mridha. President of the organisation Rezabuddin was in the chair.

Mannan Bhuiyan blamed the government for lying frequently even on the floor of parliament and filing false cases against the political opponents.

Alleging political repression and abuse of the Special Powers Act, the BNP leader said, "This government has detained people under the SPA at least 20 times more than the number during our regime."

He added that the former BNP government scrapped parts of the SPA and moved to repeal the 'black law' totally. "But we could not finish the task due to

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Cabinet okays refixing of DESA area, draft seed bill

By Staff Correspondent

The Cabinet yesterday approved the proposal for refixing the area under the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA), according to official sources.

The approval was given at the weekly Cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Cabinet also okayed the draft bill of "The Seed (Amendment) Act 1996", a minister who attended the meeting told The Daily Star.

At the meeting, Sheikh Hasina asked her Cabinet colleagues to make sure that the fertilisers reach the cultivators at the grassroots level.

The Prime Minister asked the ministers to keep an eye on the fertiliser distribution system to make sure that it reaches the cultivators across the country, the minister said.

With the passage of the seed bill, only those getting permission of the National Seed Board would be able to import various types of seeds, he said.

The decision was made to ensure import of quality seeds which would have positive implications in the productions of various foodgrains, the minister added.

Jyoti Basu due tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Minister of the Indian state of West Bengal Jyoti Basu arrives in the city tomorrow afternoon on a five-day official visit to Bangladesh.

He will be accompanied by West Bengal Minister for Home, Information and Cultural Affairs Buddha Dev Bhattacharjee, Minister for Finance and Excise Asim Dasgupta and the Chief Secretary and the Irrigation and Waterways Secretary.

Basu's visit is considered crucial in finalising a water-sharing agreement between Dhaka and Delhi. He is coming at the invitation of Foreign Minister Abhis Samad Azad, who had earlier made a trip to Calcutta at the invitation of the former.

The West Bengal Chief Minister would be received by the foreign minister. He would be staying at Sonargaon Hotel.

Shortly after his arrival, Basu would call on Samad Azad at state guest house Padma, where the two leaders would

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Basu's agenda for talks being finalised

CALCUTTA, Nov 25: The issue of sharing river water will figure prominently during talks between West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka, during the former's five-day visit beginning Wednesday, reports PTI.

External Affairs Secretary Salman Haider today met the chief minister for discussions, described by the officials as a preparatory to the latter's five-day visit and to finalise the agenda of discussions.

Haider met Basu at his Salt Lake official residence and later had discussions with State Finance Minister Dr Asim Dasgupta to finalise the agenda for the Chief Minister's visit at the invitation of the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

Dr Dasgupta, who will be accompanying Basu, along with State Home (police) Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee, chief secretary, Anish Majumder and Irrigation Secretary, Dhruva Ghosal, said that talks on the water sharing issue was likely to be held on the day Basu arrives in Dhaka.

Haider was accompanied by Joint Secretary to the External Affairs Ministry, R Mathai, and Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Dev Mukherjee.

13 houses gutted in N'ganj fire

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 25: Thirteen tin-shed houses were gutted in a fire in Chowdhurybari area under Fatulla thana here this morning.

At least 15 people were injured. Zaheda Khatun, 47, was admitted to the Narayanganj General Hospital with severe burn injuries.

Firemen from the Hajiganj and Mondapara fire stations, who rushed to the spot soon after the houses caught fire at eight in the morning, extinguished the blaze at around 10 am.

The fire reportedly originated from a gas stove. According to fire brigade sources the property worth Tk. two lakh was damaged while the victims claimed their loss at Taka four lakh.

AKM Shamim Osman, MP, visited the fire victims and sanctioned 10 bundles of CI sheets. Taka 10,000 for construction of houses and Taka 1500 for each of the affected families.

People exposed to constant air pollution should use masks

By Morshed Ali Khan

People who spend time on the city roads as part of their jobs are most vulnerable to a wide-range of health problems, doctors, environmentalists and health workers said.

They stressed the need for introducing pollution masks to protect people such as traffic policemen, transport workers, rickshawpullers, taxi-drivers, roadside vendors and thousands of others who are constantly exposed to an increasing level of air pollution during their normal duties.

Moreover, relevant government agencies should take stern action against the air polluters and conduct health awareness campaigns across the country.

"Black fumes, lead, dust and other air pollutants are always increasing in our surroundings, and these are causing a wide-range of health problems relating to eye, throat, skin, gastro-intomy and the respiratory and nervous systems," said Dr Md Ali Hossain of the Chest Diseases Institute and Hospital (CDIH).

"We have lots of policemen and BDR personnel coming to us with respiratory problems," Ali Hossain said.

The first and most effective protection from air pollution is to use a pollution mask whenever someone is required to do his job in the heavy traffic of

the city on a regular basis, doctors and environmentalists pointed out.

According to a study carried out by five scientists of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1996, concentration of fine particulates in the city air during low rainfall period is double that in 29 major US cities combined. The scientists detected 19 elements in the city air which include one of the world's highest counts of lead. Other elements include significant levels of strontium, sulphur, silicon, phosphorous and zinc.

In the city markets only three kinds of mask are available. One is an imported filter

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