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DSE brokers for  
reverting to  
old settlement  
system

By M Shamsur Rahman

Unnerved by the falling index, Dhaka Stock Exchange brokers are seeking re-introduction of the previous settlement system in their bid to bring back investors' confidence in the market.

They are planning to ask Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to allow them to return to the "T+4 rolling settlement" system instead of twice-a-week netting system.

The DSE members who had almost forced the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) last October into agreeing to introduce the "T+2" system, one that was being practised by the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) where the trade volume was surpassing that of the DSE.

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US lauds outcome  
of Business  
Summit in Dhaka

The US State Department welcomed the successful outcome of the Bangladesh-Indo-Pakistani Business Summit held in Dhaka at the initiative of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reports UNB.

The State Department said the summit was important as it was attended by the Prime Ministers of the three South Asian countries.

The US government was glad that the dialogue between India and Pakistan was continuing. The United States also very much supports the greater economic cooperation among the countries of South Asia.

The State Department officials stressed that the US has also been closely following the growing cooperation between eastern India and Bangladesh.

They also referred to the US Secretary of Commerce William Daley's visit to Calcutta for the Investment-Economic Summit

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Alleged kidnappers  
hand over girl  
to her parents

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage girl who had been missing for about nine months was handed over to her parents by the alleged kidnappers at Hazaribagh area in the city Thursday morning.

Police said the father of the girl filed a case with Dhanmondi thana yesterday accusing four persons, in connection with the alleged kidnapping.

In the FIR, the father, said that a gang had abducted her in March last year. Later, one of the abductors married the under-aged girl and stayed in a village in Rangpur for the last nine months.

However, it could not be known immediately why the parents of the girl did not inform police when the alleged abductors came to their house and left their daughter on Thursday. Besides, police were yet to find out why the kidnappers left the girl after nine months.

Dhanmondi police arrested one of the accused persons. He was identified as Murad. But the main accused of the case was yet to be arrested, police said.

The case was lodged with Dhanmondi thana under the Women and Children Representation Act of 1995.

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
19	19	5-20	5-39
20	20	5-20	5-39
21	21	5-20	5-40

## India break world record, lift Cup



Indian skipper Md Azharuddin receiving the coveted Coca-Cola Independence Cup from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

By Al-Amin and Syed Ashfaqul Haque

India broke a world record to clinch the Coca-Cola Independence Cup, beating Pakistan in the spill-thrill last game of the three-match finals by three wickets at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Set to score a mountainous total of 315 in 48 overs, India carved a niche in the record-books by overhauling a target that no team had ever dared to cross in the 27-year-old history of the limited-overs cricket.

Left-handed batsmen Hrishikesh Kanitkar pulled the penultimate delivery of the match for a four over mid-wicket to throw the Indians into a sea of euphoria, much to the disbelief of their arch-rivals.

Sri Lanka were the only country who enjoyed the unique feat of surpassing a 300-plus target in one-day cricket. In 1992 World Cup at Hamilton, the islanders, chasing a mammoth Zimbabwe total of 312 in the stipulated 50 overs, scored 313 to clinch an unbelievable victory with four balls to spare.

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Gujral greets  
Hasina

Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral has congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for organising the Independence Cup Cricket Tournament, reports BSS.

Indian premier's greetings were conveyed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Deb Mukherjee, High Commission sources said.

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## Smuggling of goods major cause for low revenue collection

Star Report

As the revenue collection has substantially fallen short of the target, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) now plans to gear up its activities to plug off the leaks in the collection system.

But one of the main reasons why revenue collection faltered so badly is increase in smuggling of goods from across the border, according to official sources.

"Efforts to stop smuggling has so far been of little effect," said an NBR official. "It is never possible to completely seal off the borders. But things are scopes to tighten the customs in the borders."

However, sources point out that there had been a number of tax evasion cases pending for a long time and actions regarding them are slow. Unless quick steps are taken regarding these cases, checking leakage may become difficult, they said.

But the government is still keeping sales of national savings instruments as a way of financing collection and the target widening every month, the government said.

With the gap between revenue collection and the target widening every month, the government said.

As a result, goods are flowing in, but the government is being deprived of the crucial income needed to support its spending.

Revenue collection in the first six months of the current

fiscal year fell short of the target by Tk 538 crore. It is now feared that this amount may surpass Tk 1000 crore by year end in meeting its expenditures.

Cut in ADP spending may now be an option left for the government in maintaining budgetary balance. The finance minister has already said that the shortfall may be adjusted by the usual non-implementation of the ADP.

Finance ministry sources said there should not be much pressure to curtail the ADP. The World Bank has already identified a number of projects which have low rationale for inclusion in the development programme. If these are pruned, the pressure on the budget would come down, they said.

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which ruled India for most of its 50 years since independence in 1947 would benefit from Sonia Gandhi's campaigning.

"Given the positive response among respondents to Sonia Gandhi's decision to campaign for the Congress, the party's tally is expected to go beyond 150 seats," a statement from the Outlook magazine said.

The Congress faced its worst electoral rout with barely 140 seats.

The Italian-born Sonia Gandhi has become the chief crowd puller for the Congress but her foreign roots and her religion — a Catholic in a overwhelmingly Hindu country of 960 million — have become the target of the BJP.

More than 60 per cent of the respondents said the 51-year-old Sonia Gandhi's 'Italian' birth is a non-issue while 54 per cent said the Congress

should field her as prime minister.

"Nearly a third said they will vote for the Congress after Sonia Gandhi took up the campaign," the survey added.

Meanwhile, India's leading communist party announced today that it would not say 'no' if it was called upon to head a coalition government following upcoming elections.

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) said the party had changed its earlier stance of not joining a government in New Delhi in the event of a hung parliament.

"There is a change in our stand. Now we don't say we won't participate in the government," the Press Trust of India quoted CPI-M general secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet as saying in the southern city of Trivandrum.

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## Indian polls may result in a hung parliament, survey says

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## Deer observation point at Karamjal now a tourist spot

By Morshed Ali Khan, back from the Sundarbans

smart-looking bungalows for the tourists.

"In the winter season we have more than two thousand tourists visiting the site everyday," said Syed Shawkat Ali, Forester of Karamjal. "But at present we do not have any infrastructure to accommodate so many people," he said.

The forest office, an wooden structure, bears the marks of age. Hundreds of men, women and children were seen moving about to have a glance at the few deer, baby crocodiles and two turtles. Few descend on the elevated platform of the office and teased the turtles and the tiny crocodiles with sticks.

At its wooden pier on the adjacent canal and the Pashur river, boats full of tourists kept

arriving. Some settled down on the ground, opening their picnic baskets.

The area is strewn with litter — empty lunch packets, polythene bags and so on — discarded by visitors. Litter also float in the nearby canal. A makeshift shop, authorised by the Forester, sells bananas, bread, biscuits and cigarettes. A picnic party nearby was seen cooking biryani.

Some were seen taking a walk into the forest despite repeated warnings of danger from wild animals especially the mighty Royal Bengal Tiger. A natural path has been created inside the forest as scores of people regularly take a walk. Families pose for pictures inside the forest.

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20m children  
immunised in  
second phase  
of 4th NID

Some 20 million children under five were immunised against polio and five other killer diseases in the second round of the fourth National Immunisation Day (NID) across the country yesterday, reports BSS.

The first round of vaccination was carried out on December seven last.

The children were given polio vaccines and Vitamin A capsules in the nationwide drive through 1,20,000 vaccination centres from 8 am to 4 pm without any break.

About 600,000 volunteers helped doctors and 50,000 health workers in conducting the vaccination campaign run by the government and the World Health Organisation.

Besides, regular vaccination centres, makeshift centres were set up in different poura areas including the Dhaka city.

In the capital mobile vaccination units worked throughout the day to vaccinate the floating population.

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## BNP dist units suggest anti-govt stance in JS, agitation on streets

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of BNP's district units while addressing the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in the city yesterday backed the party lawmakers favouring its return to the Jatiya Sangsad.

Majority of the BNP legislators, who spoke in the BNP Parliamentary Party (BNPPP) meeting till Saturday, had suggested that the party end the indefinite boycott of parliament. The BNPPP meeting resumes this evening at the Sangsad Bhaban.

At yesterday's NEC meeting, heads of BNP's 14 district units expressed the view that the major opposition party should go

back to the House to strengthen its anti-government stance in the House as well as its agitation on the streets, a party spokesman said after the five-hour meeting.

Party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia announced in the meeting that the party's oust-government agitation would be intensified if the government failed to reach an acceptable position with it on the so-called peace accord on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).