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DSE index dips further

Star Business Report
The stock market shrugged off talk of confidence-building steps yesterday at the ceremonial launching of automated trading at the Dhaka Stock Exchange as the benchmark index continued to decline.

The DSE All Share Price Index went down to 637.21 points from the previous days' 647.29 points as business began after Finance Minister SAMS Kibria formally switched on the computerised system at a glittering ceremony attended by more than 1,000 guests at a city hotel.

Kibria told the ceremony that investors' confidence was necessary for developing the country's depressed share market.

He said investors would return to the market only when they felt confident that they would not be deceived. "Many investors had their fingers burnt in 1996 and they would start to return once they feel that they would not be cheated again."

He said trading would be more transparent under the automated system and that this should help restore confidence.

See Page 12 Col 8



Street in front of Notre Dame College in the city went under knee-deep water following day-long downpour yesterday. — Star photo

Flood situation worsens again in 12 dists

The overall flood situation in the country took an alarming turn yesterday following onrush of water from the upper riparian and downpour across the country, reports UNB.

According to monitoring reports of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), 12 rivers in the country's four basins were flowing above the red mark at 20 points.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall at many places in Brahmaputra and Southeastern Hill basins and light to moderate rainfall at many places with very heavy rain at one or two places in Ganges and Meghna basins were recorded in last 24 hours till 9 am yesterday.

Significant rainfall of 237 mm was recorded at Chittagong, 180 mm at Lama, 169.5 mm at Kaunia, 123.2 mm at Panchpukuria, 110.6 mm at Faridpur, 98.8 mm at Patuakhali, 91 mm at Dhaka, 62.5 mm at Durgapur, 51.5 mm at Barisal and 50 mm at Dewanganj.

Relief Ministry control room said the overall situation deteriorated with five more deaths reported from Brahmanbaria raising the death toll to 280.

According to the control

room, the situation deteriorated in Dhaka, Chandpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Narayanganj, Faridpur, Munshiganj, Jamalpur, Manikganj, Sirajganj, Bogra and Gaibandha.

The FFWC said the flood situation in Brahmaputra, Ganges and Southeastern Hill basins and central parts of the country and around Dhaka may continue to deteriorate further.

According to the FFWC bulletin, Brahmaputra-Jamuna and Padma recorded rise at all points. Rivers in the Meghna basin showed both rise and fall while in SE Hill basin recorded a sharp rise at most places.

Rivers flowing above the danger level are Jamuna at Bahadurabad, Sirajganj and Aricha, Buriganga at Dhaka, Shitalakha at Narayanganj, Turag at Mirpur and Tongi, Kaliganga at Taraghat, Padma at Pankha, Goalunda and Bhagyakul, Mahananda at Chapainawabganj, Surma at Kanaihat and Sunamganj, Kushiara at Amalshid and Sheola, Meghna at Bhaish Bazar, Haldia at Narayanhat and Matamuhuri at Chiringa.

An FFWC forecast said, the Buriganga at Dhaka is likely to

rise by 2cm and may flow 17 cm above the red mark while the Turag at Mirpur may flow 72 cm above the danger level and the same river may flow 59 cm above the red mark at Tongi point by 6 am today.

During that period all major rivers including the Brahmaputra will rise at Chilmari point by 6 cm, Jamuna at Bahadurabad by 3 cm, Jamuna at Sirajganj 2 cm, Jamuna at Aricha 6 cm, Old Brahmaputra at Jamalpur 5 cm, Old Brahmaputra at Mynensingh 7 cm, the Kaliganga at Taraghat 6 cm, the Padma at Rajshahi 9 cm, Padma at Hardinge Bridge point 7 cm, Padma at Goalunda 7 cm, Padma at Bhagyakul 5 cm, and Mahananda at Chapainawabganj by 6 cm.

Meanwhile, a report from Lalmonirhat adds: A vast area under Teesta Barrage, the largest irrigation project of the country, is threatened as protection of a frontier embankment was seriously damaged yesterday.

Officials said the protection wall of the embankment jointly built by Bangladesh and India developed breaches in the morning.

See Page 12 Col 7

Rain adds to the miseries of flood-hit city dwellers

By Special Correspondent
Heavy rain worsened the flood situation in the city areas yesterday, adding to the miseries of thousands of dwellers.

Normal life was disrupted in Dhaka city and suburbs, where in the last 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday, 91 mm rain was recorded by the Meteorological Office.

Met Office, however, said they expect an improvement in the weather by today.

Overnight rain and intermittent downpour throughout the day yesterday made life of thousands of people difficult with the flood water marking a fresh rise.

In the city, waterlogging in many roads compounded the suffering. Rain forced most rickshaws and other cheap transports off the roads. Other types of transports had to negotiate the streets with caution.

Many of the city schools were closed due to the heavy downpour yesterday.

Vendors at kitchen markets reported short supplies, hiking prices of essentials. Even the street vendors who hawk everything from fish to vegetables, also found it difficult to make

See Page 12 Col 7

AL drops plan to hold public meeting on Sunday

By Staff Correspondent
The ruling Awami League has dropped a plan to hold a public meeting in the city on Sunday.

An extended meeting of the city unit of the party last night cancelled the plan to hold the public meeting.

Earlier, at a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee on Monday, it was decided that the city unit would organise the public meeting at Paltan Maidan.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, city AL president Mohammad Hanif said, the meeting venue was soaked with rain water and holding of a public meeting was impossible.

"We'll fix a fresh date immediately after having consent of the party chief (Sheikh Hasina)", said Hanif, also the Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation.

Besides, last night's extended meeting of the city AL chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the National Mourning Day on August 15. Mohammad Hanif chaired the meeting.

Mass hunger strike

BNP trying to gain support of professional groups

By Staff Correspondent
BNP is trying to gain the support of various professional groups to the mass hunger strike programme planned by the Seven-party Alliance on August 18.

However, Jamaat-e-Islami, a partner in the Alliance, has decided to keep away from the programme. Differing with the Alliance plan, Jamaat has announced the holding of a separate public rally on the same

See Page 12 Col 2

Torrential rain triggers flash floods

Six children killed in Ctg, Cox's Bazar

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Aug 13: At least six children were killed in incidents of landslide and drowning during torrential rain that triggered flash floods in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts.

Two children, identified as Dil Mohammad, 3, and Monira Begum, 7, were killed in a landslide at Kusumbagh Colony near Debarpur under Double-mooring thana early morning today, police said.

They were trapped to death inside their hut when a portion of an adjacent hill collapsed during rainfall.

Another person, Md Shafi, 35, was injured when a wall collapsed at around 10 am today near Kaiballyadum under Pahartoli thana.

Four other minor boys were killed in Cox's Bazar yesterday, police confirmed today. Two of them were killed in a landslide at Paharika Housing area while the other two drowned at Rumalchhara in Cox's Bazar town, police said.

District administration officials said most of the low-lying areas of both the districts were inundated by flash flood caused by continuous rainfall for the past three days.

In Chittagong city, road communication was disrupted today as most of the roads at the low-lying areas of Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Nasirabad, Sholeshahar, Chandgao and Pahartoli were inundated. Chittagong-Nasirhat road was also inundated.

Besides, low-lying areas of Sandwip, Raozan, Hathazari, Fatikchhari, Satkania, Anwara and Banskali were inundated by rain waters.

Cases against Chetia

Answers of 3 witnesses do not corroborate the FIR

By Court Correspondent
Answers of the three witnesses cross examined yesterday in two separate cases against ULFA leader Anup Chetia and two of his associates did not fully corroborate the FIR.

The cross examination was held in the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate.

The witnesses could not mention the items recovered from the residence of Chetia when he was arrested last year. Besides, they could not also say which were the 'other names of Chetia' as mentioned in the complaint.

During the proceedings of the case yesterday Chetia told the court his photograph may be taken from the court premises otherwise there is no scope to take his photograph.

See Page 12 Col 3

Academic activities at IU remain suspended

KUSHTIA, Aug 13: Academic activities at the Islamic University here remained suspended for the fourth day today as tense situation is prevailing on the campus, reports UNB.

Tension mounted in the campus between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League and Islami Chhatra Shibir over the death of a BCL leader on August 9.

The administrative activities of the university, was, however, normal, the officials said.

Section 144 imposed on the campus by the district administration is still in operation and heavy contingent of police deployed earlier, was staying there to avert any clash.

BCL blamed Shibir for the death of Munam who reportedly died in a road accident.

The ruling party-backed student organisation enforced a two-day strike in the campus which ended Wednesday.

Meanwhile, VC Prof. M Gausuddin held separate meetings with the leaders of BCL and

See Page 12 Col 6

No illegal Bangladeshis in India: FM

Dhaka won't accept anyone from across border

By Staff Correspondent
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already stated that there are no Bangladeshis staying in India illegally and today I am also reiterating that position.

"I hope the BJP government will not create a new situation that would strain or destabilise the existing friendly and good neighbourly relations with India," said Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad while addressing a press briefing for the Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh (DCAB) at the state guest house Padma yesterday afternoon.

"We are not going to accept anyone from across the border as there are no illegal Bangladeshis in India," he said.

"India should not do anything unilaterally, without informing us. Otherwise, things might take an unpleasant turn. We are a sovereign country and we must be treated as a sovereign state," he added.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already stated that there are no Bangladeshis staying in India illegally and today I am also reiterating that position."

Responding to questions, the foreign minister said the government had learnt from media reports about Indian plans for deporting so-called Bangladeshi nationals and stressed that Dhaka did not want that the government in Delhi should do anything to destabilise the good and stable relations between the two countries.

Asked if the government has officially taken up the push back issue with the Indian government, he replied, "We have not as yet, since they have also not informed us officially."

Samad Azad said an inter-ministerial meeting on the issue of handling possible deportations threats were held yesterday morning.

He pointed out that from the very beginning, there have been many outstanding problems between India and Bangladesh, but only some have been solved.

"After lot of efforts, we have resolved the water issue and the tribal issue and we do not want to open yet another new issue with India," he said.

The foreign minister said that the issue of migration between India and Bangladesh is a settled one. Some people went to India during 1971, and that is now a settled issue.

Some tribal people from Chittagong Hill Tracts took refuge in Tripura, but that issue too is settled now, as they have come back, he said.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman were also present at the briefing.

BNP conspiring to protect killers of Bangabandhu: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the opposition of conspiring to kill democracy and capture power through undemocratic means, reports UNB.

"They (opposition) are trying to create issues one after another for agitation and grabbing power undemocratically," she told a discussion marking the 23rd death anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The discussion on 'Thoughts of Bangabandhu on Peace, Democracy and Development' was organised by Bangabandhu Parishad at Engineers Institution in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister said the opposition has become desperate to turn non-issues into political issues. She asked "for whose interest, they are trying to create issues."

Referring to BNP's threat to oust the government, Hasina said the party is giving the threat to protect the Bangabandhu's killers whose trial are on.

The Prime Minister said BNP's threat to stage another 15th August is designed to create unrest in the country and protect the killers.

Gen Zia rewarded the killers by giving them jobs in Bangladesh missions abroad and now the Leader of the Opposition is trying to launch movement to save them from the trial, Hasina said.

"Trial of the killers should be held for the sake of peace and stability," she said.

She said this trial must be held to fulfil the hope and aspiration of the people and establish a happy and prosperous 'Sonar Bangla'.

The Prime Minister said peace and stability is needed for flourishing democracy and ensuring development of the country.

Referring to BNP's various moves to create unrest, Hasina said they first tried to launch movement on the signing of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, but people rejected them.

They also tried to use the

See Page 12 Col 7

'HANA accord signed for specific period'

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh has accorded permission to the United States to conduct a survey of the country's needs during times of calamity and disaster under the HANA programme.

This was stated by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at a press briefing for the Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh (DCAB) at State guest house Padma yesterday.

Samad Azad said an agreement has been signed between the two governments under the Humanitarian Assistance Needs Assessment (HANA) programme and informed that the agreement was for a specific period.

The foreign minister said that under the agreement a 10-member US defence team came here at the beginning of this month and will be staying till August 27 to conduct a survey to assess the country's needs for disaster assistance.

The team will submit a report and it is upto the government to accept the suggestions. He said that the US defence team came with valid passports and visas.

Responding to a question at

See Page 12 Col 1

Inside Today

Article

"Dialogue between a Daughter and a Father"

Column: Do I Dare!
by A Z M Obaidullah Khan
Page 4

Focus

Post-Nuclear South Asia

Toward an alternative concept of power politics for Bangladesh
Page 5

Business

Making the investor feel safe matters now, says Kibria

Asian recovery hinges on trade with Japan

DSE price quotation
Pages 6, 7 & 8

Supplement

One page supplement on the 'Independence Day of Pakistan'
Page 10

'White spot' virus 'disappears' from Satkhira shrimp gher

By Morshed Ali Khan, back from Satkhira
A 'strange virus' that has wiped out millions of taka worth of shrimps over the last few years has not struck this year, shrimp cultivators in Satkhira said.

They said that there has been no attack of the 'much dreaded' virus, which causes a disease known as 'white spot', in the current year in Satkhira region.

The shrimp producers did not know the reason behind disappearance of the virus. But officials of the Department of Fisheries said their efforts to educate farmers for proper cultivation have started to bear fruit. "The virus has disappeared because the farmers are now cultivating in a very modern way which we have taught them under a FAO aided project," claimed a fisheries official requesting anonymity.

Shrimp cultivators at Baburabad under Kaliganj thana of Satkhira district said, this year the level of salinity in the region's rivers was recorded at 7.8 PPT (Part Per Thousand) against an 'ideal level' of between 10 and 30 PPT required for a good shrimp culture.

The strange viral disease first struck the gher in the region in 1995 following import of fries from Thailand and India due to an acute shortage of local fries. Local farmers and businessmen think that the virus was brought into the country along with the imported fries. 1996 and the first half of 1997 was the worst period for the cultivators when almost every gher was attacked with this disease. It was estimated that since 1995, the virus has caused a production loss of more than Tk 500 crore.

A shrimp expert in the Department of Fisheries, explaining the symptom of the disease, said first white spots grow on the shells of shrimps. "Then within a few days, their shells become soft and at one point, the whole lot is wiped out," he said.

The low level of salinity in the rivers might slightly hamper shrimp production this year but it would increase production of *galda* (a sweet water variety of shrimp) people at Baburabad said. Three species of shrimps are found in the gher of Satkhira - *Baghdad monodon*, *Galda* (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) and *Harina*.

Shrimp cultivators, however, said the Fisheries Department failed to even identify

See Page 12 Col 6

Janmastami today

Janmastami marking the birth anniversary of Lord Sri Krishna will be celebrated by the Hindu community today, reports BSS.

Different Hindu religious, social and cultural organisations as well as temple committees have drawn up elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

The Central Janmastami Festival Committee has announced a two-day programme in the capital which includes Geeta Jaggya at the Dhakeshwari Mandir premises at 8 am today and bringing out of traditional Janmastami procession at 3 pm and puja at midnight.

A discussion on the life and philosophy of Lord Sri Krishna will be held on August 17 at 5 pm at Dhakeshwari Mandir premises. Political Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr S A Malek will be the chief guest at the discussion while State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf, Justice Debesh

See Page 12 Col 6

Rubel murder case

CID starts verification of statements

By Staff Correspondent
Commissioner Mahmud Al Farid regarding reforms of Section 54 of the CrPC and measures to improve conditions under police custody. A retired IG of Police also gave his suggestions in this regard.

Meanwhile, doctors could not say how long AC Akram Hossain will be kept for treatment at the PG Hospital. Akram's health is improving, they said without giving any detail.

Admission of AC Akram to the prison cell of the PG Hospital while on CID remand was an exceptional case and no such incident had occurred in the past, said highly-placed official sources.

Akram, the principal accused in the Rubel murder case, was admitted to the prison cell of the PG Hospital as an outdoor patient on Monday without any bail.

See Page 12 Col 6

JCD president Annie released on bail

President of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie was released on bail from the central jail yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

The leader of BNP-backed student organisation was detained by the police six months ago.

A larger number of leaders and workers of JCD and BNP received Annie at the jail gate at 4.30 pm.

City BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, JCD Acting President Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, General Secretary Habibun Nabi Sohel, Saiful Alam Nirob, Hasan Manjor and SM Jahangir Hasan welcomed Annie with floral bouquets.

Annie along with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will visit the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman at 4 pm today, said a party press release.

Tk 1.4 lakh snatched

By Staff Correspondent
Snatchers stabbed two persons and took away Tk 1.4 lakh in cash from them on Noorjahan Road at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday afternoon.

The injured — Amzad Hossain and Kamal — sustained wounds in their legs. They were taken to a local clinic, police said.

A gang of four attacked Amzad and his friends Kamal and Anwar when they were going to Banshbari Road in Mohammadpur after withdrawing the money from Sonali Bank Branch at Town Hall in the area.

Police said the muggers intercepted the rickshaw in which Amzad and his two friends were passing Noorjahan Road at about 2.30 pm.

The gang stabbed Amzad and Kamal as they refused to give them the money. Later, the attackers, searched their body and took away Tk 1.4 lakh.

Police could not arrest anyone in connection with the incident filing of this report last night.

Anzad lodged a case with Mohammadpur thana in this regard.

Round-the-clock 'security' 300 policemen guard DU halls, VC's residence

By DU Correspondent
About 300 policemen have been guarding the 11 residential halls for male students as well as the residence of the Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University for the last couple of years.

At least 24 policemen in three shifts guard the residence of the VC and 264 policemen guard the 11 halls round the clock, 24 at each hall.

According to the authorities concerned, the responsibility of the police deployed at the VC's residence is to protect him from any possible attack by 'unruly students', while those posted at hall gates are responsible for preventing 'outsiders' from entering the dormitories.

Asked over telephone about the reasons behind permanent deployment of police in front of his residence, Vice Chancellor

Prof A K Azad Chowdhury was annoyed and advised this correspondent to ask the police about it. "You better ask the police — not me. I am not a police clerk to tell you all these things."

Hasan Mahmood, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Dhaka South, said the deployment was made at the request of the university authorities for security reasons.

"There is no specific rule as to how many policemen would be guarding whom on the campus or which establishments of the university. The number of policemen deployed varies from time to time, depending on situation," the DC said, adding "Usually both the VC and the Proctor of the university re-

See Page 12 Col 3