The Baily Star

Best with the views

World stocks of

wheat to drop

stocks of wheat are set to drop

to the lowest in 14 years as

drought hits harvests, the

international Wheat Council

Prices are already up by

said yesterday, reports Reuter.

around 30 per cent since early

July on prospects of bigger

Chinese and Russian imports, a

failed Australian crop and the

position for wheat continues to

"The international supply

in its latest monthly market

report, the fWC revised down

its forecast for world wheat

stocks in the year from July

1994 to 107 million tonnes.

vious estimate of 114 million.

stocks in 1993-94 stood at 12

trade in wheat is set to rise

with China forecast to import

9 million tonnes of wheat in

the year that began in July or

Arab Real Estate

Bank to reopen

branches in WB,

Gaza in Nov

Real Estate Bank is set to be-

come the first Egyptian bank

to open in the Gaza Strip and

West Bank since the launch of

Palestinian self-rule, a semi-of-

ficial newspaper said Wednes-

November its branches in Gaza

City, Jericho, Nablus and

Bethlehem closed since the

Middle East war in 1967, the

Bank's Chairman Abdel

Rahman al-Nadi told the Daily

Jerusalem will not be re-

opened until the status of the

holy city has been settled, Nadi

agreement dawn up with

Israeli and Palestinian authori-

The move follows an

The Bank's fifth branch in

The bank is to reopen in

day, reports AFP.

Al-Ahram.

CAIRO, Sept 23: The Arab

twice the volume in 1993-94.

At the same time, world

That compared with a pre-

the lowest level since 1980.

drop in stocks.

million tonnes.

tighten," the IWC said.

LONDON, Sept 23: World

Aman scheme in Barisal

BHOLA, Sept 23: A scheme has been taken up to bring 7.28 lakh hectares of land under transplanted aman cultivation in 11 districts of Barisal region during the current reason, reports UNB.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, 2.39 lakh hectares will be brought under high yielding variety and the remaining 4.89 lakh hectares under local variety.

The officials said 1.56 lakh hectares in Bhola, 1.16 lakh hectares in Barisal, 70,000 hectares in Pirojpur, 46,000 hectares in Jhalakathi, 1.98 lakh hectares in Patuakhali, 1.01 lakh hectares in Barguna. 21,000 hectares in Rajbari. 7.000 hectares in Faridpur, 2,000 hectares in Gopalgani 7,000 hectares in Shariatpur and 45,000 hectares in Madaripur will be cultivated.

For the successful implementation of the programme. 3,000 farmers have already been given training to cultivate the crop scientifically. Moreover, about 1,000 demonstration plots were established in the six districts of the region to acquaint the farmers with the modern methods of cultivation.

S African mining house announces 23 pc increase in earnings

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 23: South African mining house Gold Fields yesterday announced a 23 per cent increase in the group's attributable earnings for the year ended June, to 357 million rand (100.5 million dollars) from 290 million (81.6 million dollars) in June 1993, reports AFP.

In his annual report released here, Chairman Robin Plumbridge attributed the improvement to a recovery in base metal prices, a higher gold price and a 39 per cent increase in income from investments.

Taiwan's foreign exchange reserve reaches all-time high

TAIPEI, Sept 23: Taiwan's foreign exchange reserves reached an all-time high of 91 billion US dollars at the end of August; the Central Bank of China (CBC) officials said today, reports AFP.

The previous record high for Taiwan's foreign exchange reserves was 89.5 billion dollars posted in September

The reserves are the second highest in the world, with Japan's foreign exchange reserves taking first place, the official said.

They attributed the increase in the reserves to increase in the German mark and Japanese yen against the greenback, adding that 57 per cent of Taiwan's reserves were US dollar denominated, 22.6 per cent were in German marks, 14.6 per cent in Japanese yen.

The officials said that 25 per cent of the reserves were deposited in foreign banks. and the bank earned yearly interest increments of about five billion dollars from the re-

The CBC has set aside 10 billion US dollars from the reserves to refinance overseas projects by both private and state-run enterprises and injected seven billion dollars into the fledgling local interbank market.

The CBC also holds 15.57 million ounces of gold reserves worth 5.24 billion US dollars.

US to bar 10 Japanese firms

TOKYO, Sept 23: The United States is to bar 10 Japanese firms from taking part in US public works projects following their alleged involvement in bid-rigging on projects for a US naval base in Tokyo, a report said today, says

The Asahi Shimbun said Washington planned to impose the ban on the Japanese companies - including local subsidiaries of Kashima Corp. and NEC corp - by the end of September.

Washington filed a lawsuit at a Tokyo court last week demanding five million dollars in compensation from the firms and other companies for their alleged illegal bid-ridding for public work projects at the Atsugi naval base in 1982.

US plans \$100m aid for Haiti

WASHINGTON, Sept 23: moving ahead with more than 100 million dollar in recovery assistance for Haiti, although a UN embargo remains in force against the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation, reports

Technical help, humanitarian aid and economic grants are intended to help Haitians rebuild their embarge-starved economy and hold a new round of democratic elections.

The US military, now in control of Port-au-Prince's harbour, agreed Thursday to speed the delivery of fuel and other humanitarian supplies for private aid groups working in Haiti, according to an official from the US Agency for International Development

A backlog of humanitarian aid built up during the three years the military junta controlled port access.

the city on Thursday.

Weather reporting contributes

from 20 to 40 billion dollars

to world economies each year.

or five to 10 times the com-

bined cost of national meteoro-

logical services, an interna-

tional conference of experts

and hydrological services have

lives by providing an early

warning about disasters, and

also benefit sectors including

Experts from 127 countries

took part in 'the week-long

talks sponsored by the World

Meteorological Organisation

(WMO), a specialised agency of

" National institutions that

the United Nations.

agriculture, defence and en-

Reports by meteorological

said today, reports Reuter.

step down and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide returns to

To ensure that the military guests no credit for helping the people, government-togovernment aid likely will not occur before Aristide's return.

But recovery programmes now are taking shape. Agreements have been signed with the United States and Aristide to allow rapid assis tance to Haitians, who even before the September 1991 coup that ousted Aristide. were among the world's poorest people.

In the meantime, as more than 10,000 US troops have move onshore, AID has fed up to I million people a day and provided medical assistance and a jobs programme for 25,000 people.

AID assistance of 75 million US officials have said that dollar for this fiscal year is so that assistance that was tar-UN sanctions blocking trade to budgeted to increase to dirs geted earlier can be released.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas distributing certificates among the successful students of

the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh at its 12th convocation ceremony in

Weather reporting contributes

about \$40b to world economies

provide weather, climate and

water services to their citizens

contribute an estimated US 20.

to 40 billion dollars to the

economies of nations world-

wide." WMO said in a state-

ment issued on the final day of

broad consensus that these

economic benefits from the

national meteorological and

hydrological services were typ-

ically five to 10 times the bud-

gets expended by them," it

on 80 case studies which anal-

ysed economic benefits such as

crop and livestock protection,

and aviation fuel savings, ac-

cording to the Geneva-based

The conclusion was based

added.

The conference reached

104 million, said AID Assistant Administrator Mark Schnei

in addition, the administra tion is working on a balance of payments agreement with Aristide to get Haiti's government running again.

The arrangement would provide temporary funds to pay government salaries and bring in oil and other commodities until tax-collecting can start and money becomes available from international lending

Haiti will need about 45 million dollar for government operations in the first three months, according to Schneider The United States intends to contribute a share of that, but officials have not disclosed how much.

A top priority is to clear Haiti's 80 million dollar in overdue debt payments to international lending institutions

- PID photo

Bernard Hardan, of the

British meteorological office

who chaired the Geneva

meeting, told a news briefing:

Apart from public safety and

disaster prevention, weather

forecasts are made optimal use

of by off-shore oil industries.

shipping and to help utilities

greater the right amount of

general of the 179-member

state WMO, said: "There is a

clear and demonstrated case

for governments to recognise

that properly-funded national

meteorological and hydrologi-

cal services will yield major

economic benefits to their na-

tional economies that more

than justify the investments

which are to be made."

Godwin Obasil, secretary-

electricity and gas."

The United States is prepared to contribute 25 million dollar for that purpose.

President Clinton promised Aristide in March 1993 that this administration would help coordinate 1 billion dollars in multilateral aid over the next five years. Meantime, AID is working on shorter term help.

For instance, the agency will help organize local and parliamentary elections scheduled for December and assist in reforming the judiciary. which is considered dysfunctional at best.

AID plans to double - to 50,000 — its jobs programme through public works programmes and sanitation and road repair. In addition, the agency plans to help rebuild schools and assist small farm

Aristide's advisers have mapped a social and economic reconstruction plan in hopes of attracting international financial support.

China to become one of the biggest computer markets

BEIJING, Sept 23: By the end of the century. China will become one of the biggest computer markets in the world, The Beijing-based 'market' newspaper reported, says

According to statistics from a survey, the sales of computers in China have been expanding during the past few years. It is predicted that 550,000 personal computers will be sold this year, an increase of 50 per cent over last year.

By the end of the year, a total of 1.9 million computers will be in use across the coun-

While imported conputers such as 'Compaq' and 'AST' are taking a big shore in government institutions and big companies, there are signs showing that more and more people are buying China assembled computers.

Yuan to be fully convertible by 2000

BEIJING, Sept 23: China plans foreign exchange reforms that would make its currency, the yuan, fully convertible by the year 2000, senior central bank official said Thursday, reports AP.

Zhu Xiaohua, vice minister of the People's Bank of China said in Shanghai that China was not yet able to make the yuan freely convertible because necessary laws and forcign exchange systems had not been put into place, the China Securities Daily reported Friday.

But it plans reforms in the banking and other financial institutions that would enable the currency to float freely on foreign exchange markets, he was quoted as saying.

LGED project nearing completion in Maijdee

MAIJDEE COURT, Sept 23 Ninety per cent work of the Cyclone Rehabilitation Programme, undertaken by the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) in 1993 94 fiscal year in Hatiya thana of the district, have been completed, reports UNB.

Rest of the work on the project is expected to be completed by December this year. officials said

Some 59.13 km roads and 18 bridges, including culverts. are being constructed in the thana at a cost of taka 6.57 crore with the assistance of Saudi government, they said.

The LGED is completing construction of 16.21 km roads, including carpeting work on 7.75 km, and construction of four bridges in Sadar, Companigani, Chatkhil Senbagh and Begumgani thanas at a cost of Tk 1.92 crore.

The carpeting work on 13.59 km roads and construc-

tion of 10 bridge and culverts in Sadar, Begumgani, Chatkhil, Senbagh thanas are nearing completion costing Tk 2.48 lakh.

The LGED also constructed 18 government primary schools in six thanas of the district and introduced Mass Education programmes at a cost of Tk 34.50 lakh in last fiscal year

Under the programme 34 primary schools have been constructed in the six thanas at a cost of Tk 2.42 crore with the help of Asian Development Bank (ADB). Sixty per cent work on the project has been completed.

Meanwhile, renovation of 46 government schools has been completed costing Tk 97.89 lakh. Furniture worth about Tk 98.52 crore have been supplied to 152 government primary schools in the six thanas of the district du ing the period.

Tk 25 cr programme for Gazipur power plant

KALIGANJ(Gazipur). Sept 23: Energy and Mineral Re sources Minister Dr Khan daker Mosharraf Hossain said Tk 25-crore programme to improve and expand the power network in Gazipur district will be commissioned soon. reports UNB.

Under the programme, a total of 280 kilometres of power distribution lines will be constructed and 110 transformers will be installed, the minister added

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) will implement the programme scheduled to be completed by 1996-

Mosharraf was addressing the foundation-laying ceremony of pole-mounted substation at Jangalia in Kaligani thana of Gazipur district on Thursday.

BNP leader Borhanuddin, the function was addressed by President of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Faziul Hoq Milon, Senior Vice President of JCD Moniruzzaman Monir, General Secretary of Gazipur district BNP Abu Taher, President of district JCD Rana Ahmed and General Secretary of thana BNP Mintu. The minister said that the

Presided over by district

government is implementing another programme at a cost of about Tk 24 crore to improve the power supply situation in Gazipur district. The programme is nearing completion, he added.

Dr Mosharraf said the present government is implethe masses.

menting a lot of programmes in the country to develop the socio-economic condition of

American cos cautious in export forecast

NEW YORK, Sept 23: Slightly fewer American companies expect to sell their products overseas than last year, according to and Dun Bradsteet Corp. survey published Wednesday, reports AP. About 17 per cent of 5,000.

companies surveyed in May said they plan to export in the next 12 months, down from 18.3 per cent in the previous year's survey.

The cautious forecast comes a day after the Commerce Department reported that the U.S foreign merchandise trade deficit surged 21.6 per cent to dlrs 10.9 billion - the second worst gap in U.S history.

Among the exporters surveyed by D&B, an increasing number said they were con-

cerned that conditions overseas were not ripe for trade.

The number of firms reporting poor economic conditions abroad increased from 23.3 per cent last year to 44.8 per cent this year, D and B

The number of exporters reporting that foreign trade barriers are an obstacle in their dealings fell to 34.4 per cent from last year's 44.2 per

This perception was more common concerning Mexico and Canada, which with the United States approved the North American Free Trade Agreement earlier this year to gradually drop tariffs in the re-

Youths in jeans run Rwanda's foreign exchange market

ties in August, he said

KIGALI, Sept 23: Rwanda's main foreign exchange market is run by a crowd of youths in jeans and dark glasses who mill around on the pavement outside the main post office in downtown Kigali, reports

Reuter. Waving pocket calculators and wads of dirty Rwandan francs, the young men are the market-makers in a country devastated by civil war and the

murder of a million people. Yesterday street traders were selling the dollar at 220 francs, down from a rate of 270 on Monday.

Before President Juvenal Habyarimana was assassinated on April 6, the franc was traded at 145 to the dollar.

It kept that value in Kigali after the war erupted on his death but began losing value rapidly when guerillas of the mainly Tutsi Rawanda Patriotic Front (RPF) declared victory

over their hardline Hutu foes

in July.

Four Chinese automakers to get state funding

BEIJING, Sept 23: Four of China's major automakers have been selected to receive special state funding to boost car output, an official report said Thursday, says AP.

Two joint ventures with the German automaker Volkswagen, one funded by French Peugeot SA in Wuhan and one totally Chinese-owned automaker in Tianjin were chosen to receive the state aid, the China Daily reported.

The plan is part of China's effort to launch a major expansion of its auto industry in 1996.

The report said the four firms are expected to produce up to 150,000 cars per year by 1996. Total car output is expected to reach 1.35 million cars by the year 2000 and 4 million by 2010. China expects two or three

auto making industrial groups to be formed by the end of the century, Chinese Minister of Machinery He Guangyuan was quoted as telling a two-day motor conference that ended Thursday in Beijing.

"China's automotive industry would be hopeless if all these plants continue to operate separately," he said.

De Klerk chides financial markets

EDINBURGH, Sept 23 South African Deputy President F.W de Klerk chided financial markets Friday for being skeptical about the ability of Nelson Mandela's administration to govern wisely. reports AP.

In a speech at a conference of European financial analysts in the Scottish capital Edinburgh, de Klerk said South Africa's post-apartheid government is determined to follow sound economic policies and avoid purely populist measures. He said that while, the

world applauded reform in South Africa, he found it strange that global financial markets "should reflect a skepticism on the government's ability to govern the country efficiently and prudently.

This is unfair to the government of national unity, and

has no basis in fact," he said on the second day of his British visit aimed at boosting investment.

Among those who have spoken of possible instability in South Africa is former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher. In a speech in Bombay to Business leaders on Wednesday, she said: "What you are getting is people who look at the rest of Africa. They say, 'Look at Rwanda, look at Somalia." Are we going to have the same thing happening in South Africa.

De Klerk in his speech Friday denied that Barones Thatcher's comments had undermined his mission. He said she was simply voicing the reality" that some potential investors remain - wrongly, in his view - cautious.

British Prime Minister John Major, who was on the second

genes might only protect one

researchers' report finding the

first family of genes that fight

any type of disease - fungal,

On Friday, three teams of

plant against one disease.

day of a three-day visit to South Africa when Baroness Thatcher made her comments in Bombay, in a swift rejoinder Wednesday vigorously rejected her views.

In a subsequent statement Wednesday designed to cover the rift, Baroness Thatcher backed down, saying she "fully supports the new democratic government of South Africa and feels that the country will attract the inward investment it so much needs."

De Klerk in his speech Friday said economic prospects in South Africa are good. "We feel positive about our future and we want you to share in our optimism," he said. "We are confident that we will continue to move away from the imposition of ideology, from confrontation and conflict."



A three-member Korean investors team led by Bo Sun Park called on Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan at the latter's office in the city on Thursday -- PID photo

Until now, scientists had

succeeded in isolating just two

US scientists discover new gene plant to fight crop killers the process had feared those lights a serious bacterial infecrate diseases.

WASHINGTON, Sept 23: Scientists in the United States have discovered a new family of plant genes that may one day allow farmers to fight crop killers with a simple flick of

genetic switch, reports AP. "It's a discovery that brings us up to a whole new level of understanding," said Dr. Brian Staskawicz of the University of California, Berkeley, who isolated one of the genes.

chemicals or by spending

decades breeding disease-re-

sistant species. Scientists

hunting plant genes to ease

to this time. Now, the only way to fight plant infections is with

viral or bacterial - in a variety of unrelated plants. "That's the really exciting part." Staskawicz said.

"There's been a bottleneck up, "Staskawicz and a separate team of Harvard researchers led by Dr. Fred Ausubel each isolated the RPS2 gene from a

member of the mustard family,

Arabidopsis thaliana. This gene

Simultaneously, Dr. Barbara Baker and colleagues at Berkeley and the U.S Department of Agricultural isolated the N gene from tobacco, the first gene ever cloned that defends a plant against a virus.

The three teams report their discoveries Friday in the journals Science and Cell. But the biggest finding was

that these genes, together with a newly discovered fungus-resistant gene from flax called L6, are related - even though they're in unrelated plants - and fight totally sepa-

"When the researchers compared the sequences of proteins and amino acids that make a gene unique, they found startling similarities between the three. In fact, some sequences were identical.

The researchers predict that within three years, they may know enough from these genes to protect any plant, with a little genetic tinkering. from bacterial, fungal and viral infections in one fell swoop.

and N at the same time. "It could have a very big

impact," agreed Dr. Michael Deom, a plant pathologist at the University of Georgia.

plant disease genes, each of which protects only tomatoes against one disease. Then this summer Australia's Dr. Jeff Ellis unveiled L6 at a scientific meet-

Because of the timing and "simple curiosity," Baker said she and Staskawicz compared their genes and then L6 - and found the similarities in how the genes work.

Excited by the finding. they're already trying to trans-

plants defends itself against the gene-targeted diseases through a process called hypersensitivity, quickly killing surrounding cells so the infecing and the other researchers tion cann't spread, she excoincidentally cloned RPS2 plained That is the optimal kind of disease resistance, but one

> scientists don't yet understand. Deom said. "The idea is to learn how it

fer N and RPS2 into tomatoes.

sense," Baker said. Each of the

"In hindsight,it makes

works and see if you can introduce the system into other plants that don't normally show a response," he said.

Haiti will be lifted only after The Clinton administration is the country's military rulers