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STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	783.60 (+0.19%)
Market capitalisation Tk	43.26 billion
Turnover in volume	154633
Turnover in value Tk	34.69 million

Health

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Food aid unlikely to increase: WB

By Staff Correspondent

Food aid to Bangladesh is unlikely to increase during the next fiscal year because of a declining allocation and increasing demand, said the Chief of the World Bank resident mission in Dhaka yesterday.

He further pointed out that increasing the aid disbursement level would also be difficult because of the budgetary constraints of the donor countries.

"The food aid (situation) globally is worrying with declining allocation and increasing demand," noted Pierre-Landell-Mills in response to a

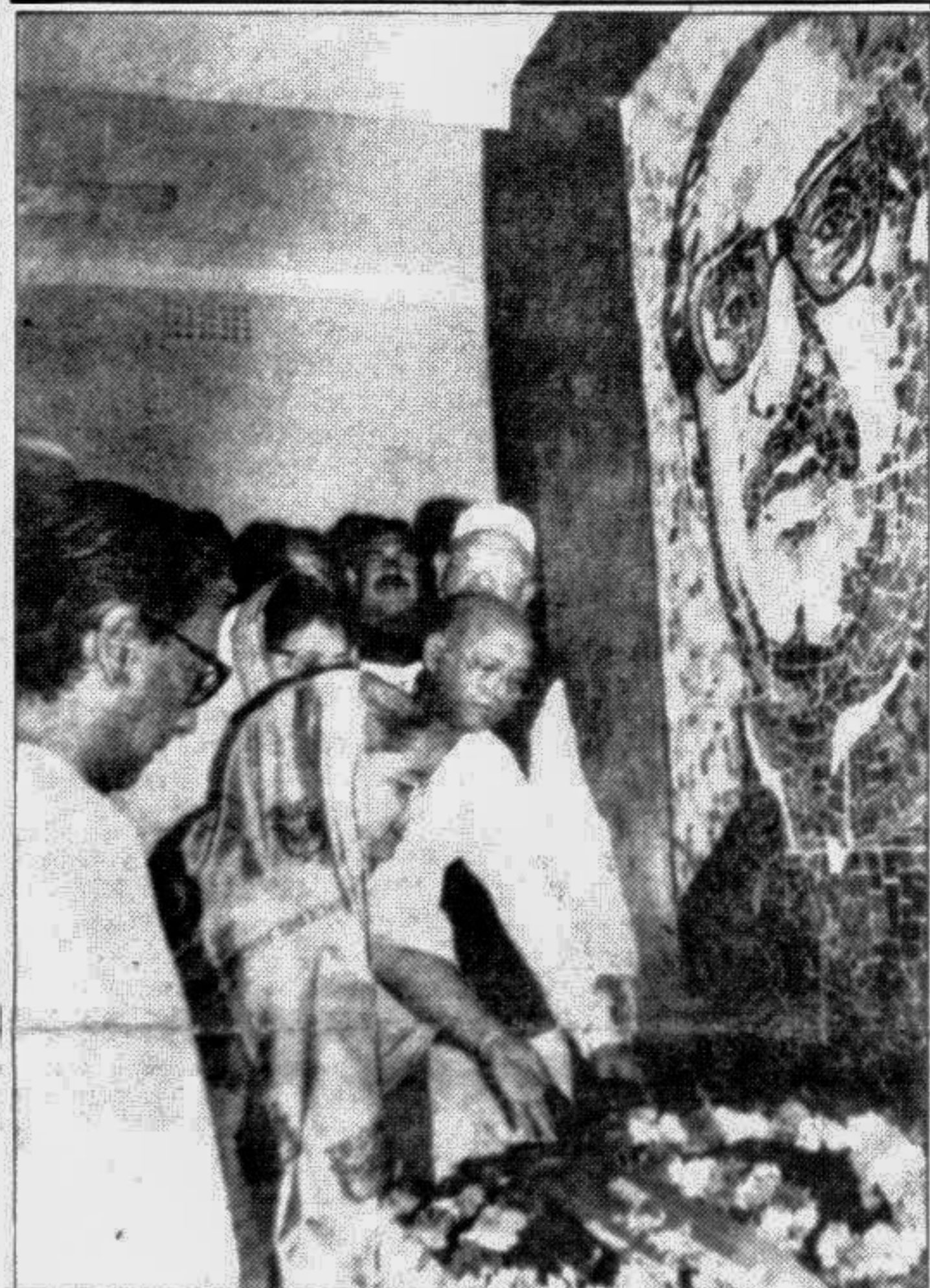
question at a press briefing. "It is extremely difficult to maintain the level of food aid and it seems very unlikely that it can be increased," he said when his attention was drawn to the possibility of Bangladesh seeking increased food aid at the upcoming Paris Consortium meeting, because of a projected shortfall in foodgrain production in the country.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman on Sunday told newsmen that Bangladesh is going to seek additional food aid from the aid club because of the shortfall in foodgrain output. The WB has projected a

food aid disbursement level of 150 million US dollars for the next fiscal year.

Responding to another question, the WB mission chief pointed out that it is going to be difficult to maintain the current aid disbursement level with the 'aid pinch' in the donor countries. But he assured that the Bank would propose maintaining the present disbursement level at the aid club meeting.

"There is no doubt we would recommend that the aid disbursement level should be maintained," he said. The See Page 12 Col 1



Awami League president Sheikh Hasina along with other party leaders placing a wreath at the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Bhavan in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Mujibnagar Day observed

By Staff Correspondent

The Mujibnagar Day was observed throughout the country yesterday.

On this day in 1971, the provisional government of Bangladesh was formed in the village of Baidyanathola in Meherpur.

The then Awami League leaders formed the cabinet under an open sky. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was at the time in a Pakistani prison, was made the President of the country.

The Bangladesh Awami League and its front organisations observed the day across the country through elaborate programmes.

The national and party flags were hoisted atop all the party offices at six in the morning. Flags were also hoisted at the Bangabandhu Bhavan in Dhanmondi. Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina along with other party leaders garlanded the portrait of Bangabandhu there in the morning. They also prayed for the martyrs of the Liberation War and the Bangabandhu and four national leaders.

A discussion meeting on the historic Mujibnagar Day was held at the party's central office in the afternoon.

A three-day programme was launched in Mujibnagar yesterday. See Page 12 Col 6



The slum dwellers of Zohura Basti at Mohammadpur survey the remains of the shanties which were gutted in a devastating fire in the early hours of yesterday. — Star photo

2 sisters burnt alive in city slum fire

By Staff Correspondent

Two sisters were burnt alive and at least six others injured in a fire at a slum in Mohammadpur area of the city in the early hours of yesterday.

The two were identified as Mariam, 22, and Shathi, 18. Both were garments workers, neighbours said, adding Mariam got married 20 days ago while Shathi was to be married yesterday.

The fire that broke out around 2 am originated from a candle in a thatched house at the slum at Zahuri Mahalla near Barar Road, local people said. The house was a den of ganja smokers, they alleged.

The inferno lasting more than two hours gutted about See Page 12 Col 7

New private bank launched Mismangement in banking sector dismays Saifur

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday expressed his dismay at rampant mismanagement in the banking sector, particularly the private sector banks.

The minister was inaugurating a new private commercial bank — Prime Bank Limited (PBL) — at Motijheel commercial area in the city.

Saifur Rahman said, hundreds of letters containing accusations against different banks have been received by

the Finance Ministry.

Expressing his mixed feelings of happiness and concern regarding the new bank, the minister said, "I am happy, because a new bank has started functioning, but I am concerned whether it would be able to overcome the existing uncertainty in the banking sector."

Governor of Bangladesh Bank Khorshed Alam, chairman of the new bank's board of directors R A Gani and Mana-

ging Director Lutfar Rahman Sarkar also addressed the inaugural function, attended by officials of the Finance Ministry, economists, sponsors and clients of the bank.

Saifur Rahman noted that although the government is following a free market economic policy, there is no free market in the banking sector as fair competitiveness is yet to grow in this sector.

How can the banks survive when the directors are fixing interest rates sitting together and taking away money from the bank, he asked.

The minister underlined the important role of the banking sector in generating economic activities in a society but regretted that there had been an increasing propensity of withdrawal of people's money by the directors of banks and of not returning those. Such a propensity among the banks directors of earning ten times what is invested in a year was the most disastrous set back in the promotion of smooth banking in the country, he added. See Page 12 Col 6

Manzur murder Next hearing on May 2

CHITTAGONG, Apr 17: The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate here today rejected the bail prayers of Major General (Retd) Abdul Latif and Lt Col (Retd) Shamsur Rahman, reports UNB.

The former army officers, who were arrested on March 13 last in connection with the General Abul Manzur murder case, were not produced in the See Page 12 Col 6

Zahir murder Defence counsel changed

By Court Correspondent

Advocate M Serajul Huq, the defence counsel appointed by the State to defend principal accused Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, MP in the Humayun Zahir murder case, has been withdrawn.

Advocate Huq was appointed the defence counsel by the State on an application filed by the wife of the ac-

Mother Teresa due tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Nobel laureate Mother Teresa will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow on a five-day visit to Bangladesh.

Teresa was invited by the Rotary International District 3280, Bangladesh. Her entourage includes three members of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Downtown — Hemani Saha, special aide Dipankar Adhya, and Tony Ghosh and three sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, Calcutta.

District Governor of the Rotary International District 3280, Bangladesh, M Mosharraf Hussain, Rotary District Other Lady Mamta Hossain and other Rotary leaders will receive Mother Teresa at the airport, says a press release.

Mother Teresa is scheduled See Page 12 Col 5

Annual reports on ministries presented

The annual reports of the activities of different ministries and divisions during the last fiscal (1993-94) were presented at the weekly cabinet meeting held yesterday at Bangabhaban, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting.

Gas mishaps: Poor safety measures, public awareness blamed

By Masud Arif and Morshed Ali Khan

Careless use of equipment and too inadequate safety mechanism coupled with poor monitoring system are the prime factors behind the accidents relating to the use of natural gas.

Experts warn that more accidents may occur in the future because of the absence of a well coordinated safety mechanism.

Investigations following the recent explosions of a household gas burner and pipeline in the city, which left 11 dead and scores injured so far, revealed that prevailing safety measures and awareness among the users are grossly inadequate.

Because of a half-hearted public awareness campaign by the relevant organisations, the problem is further compounded by the fact that many consumers, primarily at the household level, are ignorant about the precautionary safety measures, experts noted.

Furthermore, it was found

that there was hardly any coordination among the agencies, including the Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Co Ltd, Bangladesh Standard Testing Institution (BSTI) and the Fire Service and Civil Defence who are involved in ensuring minimum safety standards.

"Most of the people are

40 garments workers taken ill at Tongi

By DMCH Correspondent

In a mysterious incident, some 40 workers of a garments factory on the outskirts of the city suddenly fell sick while on duty yesterday.

The reason for the sudden sickness of the workers of Continental Garments Ltd at Duttapara under Tongi thana could not be known immediately.

completely ignorant about the proper use of gas in their households," said a teacher of the Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET).

"They are playing with their own lives by misusing the natural gas," he added.

A senior official of the Fire Service Department said that proper coordination among the relevant departments were grossly lacking.

The official, who preferred anonymity, further said the Titas Gas has miserably failed to build awareness among its users.

During the course of this investigation, it was found that in many places of the city, illegal and dangerous gas connections were installed by unscrupulous persons.

Managing Director of the Titas Gas Major (retd) Md Muqtadir Ali said that they did not have any separate wing for awareness campaign and over-

See Page 12 Col 4

Mohd Ali of JP joins BNP Opposition programmes to make poor poorer: PM

FATULLA (Narayanganj), Apr 17: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said, the programmes of the opposition parties are designed to make the poor poorer and continue their politics of hoax, reports UNB.

"Their politics is not for ensuring progress and establishing democracy," she said while addressing a large public meeting at Fatulla Balurmath here this afternoon.

Begum Zia told them: "There is still time. Shun the politics of destruction, and join the politics of development, poverty alleviation, strengthening of democracy and carrying forward the democratic process."

At the meeting, several thousand workers and leaders from Narayanganj unit of the Jatiya Party, Awami League and Communist Party as well as a number of UP chairmen formally joined the BNP.

The JP group was led by local industrialist Mohammed Ali

while the AL group was led by Tofazzal Islam.

Presided over by Narayanganj district BNP president Rokonuddin Mollah, the meeting was also addressed by Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Abul Kalam MP, Prof Rezaul Karim MP, Ataur Rahman Angur MP, Serajul Islam MP, Begum Khawja Ahsanullah MP, JCD leader Shirin Sultana.

Referring to their joining the BNP, the Prime Minister said, "They are joining us because they want to do politics of development and ensure welfare of the people."

"The BNP does not believe in politics of tall talks," she told the meeting calling upon the people to strengthen the hands of her party to ensure the country's overall development and continued progress.

Listing the development efforts of her government, Begum Zia expressed her firm See Page 12 Col 3

Credit facility for urban poor urged

By Staff Correspondent

Some 100 local and foreign experts at a workshop in the city yesterday emphasised the need for setting up an 'urban poor bank' in the model of Grameen Bank.

In about 35 sets of suggestions, they also called for constituting an 'Urban Policy Council' to bring all urban development programmes under one body and for better coordination among the agencies concerned.

The experts, at least 20 of them from abroad, held a day-long discussion on, 'The Document of Bangladesh Urban Sector National Programme' at a city hotel.

The suggestions made in the document are to be included in the Fifth Five-Year

Plan. The document has been prepared by a panel of seven experts headed by Prof Richard Ludwing of the University of Washington.

The workshop was jointly organised by the Local Government Engineering Department and the United Nations Development Programme.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar was the chief guest at the workshop inaugurated by Minister for Housing and Public Works Rafiqul Islam Mia. State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan and UNDP resident representative Elmi Watanabe were present as special guests.

Deputy Minister for LGRD See Page 12 Col 3

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US will return \$700m military hardware to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Apr 17: The United States will return about 700 million dollars worth of military hardware to Pakistan, nearly five years after it was impounded, Foreign Minister Sardar Assef Ali said today, reports AP.

Washington impounded the equipment, which included several Cobra helicopters, in 1990, when US aid to Pakistan was dropped to protest its nuclear weapons programme.

The equipment was in the US for repairs.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto secured Washington's promise to return the equipment during a 10-day visit to the US which ended last week.

Credit facility for urban poor urged

By Staff Correspondent

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SSC Examinations 1995

- The Secondary School Certificate Examinations, 1995 of the 4 (four) Education Boards will be held throughout the country from April 20, 1995.
- Invigilation of the examinations has been arranged in a cyclic order to ensure that under no circumstance a teacher has to discharge the duty of invigilation for the examinees of his own institution in the examination hall. Under this arrangement, teachers of the examinees at Centre 'A' will discharge the duty of invigilation at Centre 'B'; teachers of centre 'B' at centre 'C'; and teachers of centre 'C' at centre 'D', in a cyclic order.
- Prior to entering the examination hall/room, each examinee will be body-searched and illegal papers and documents, if any found, will be forfeited.
- If any copying material is found with any examinee at the time of examination then his Roll No will be put in writing on that copy or if any examinee is found adopting any unfair means in the examination then a note will be kept of that and after the examination, the copy or the note, as the case may be, will be attached to the respective answer script and reported to the Board for cancellation of the examination.
- Refrain from copying. There is legal provision to bar one from taking part in examination for up to 4 (four) years for the offence of copying.
- To support or help one to copy is a criminal offence. Shun it immediately.
- Habit of copying causes severe erosion in the academic career of students. This offensive tendency leads them fast to destruction.
- One cannot gain knowledge by copying. There is no glory in copying but self-deception and self-reproach through failure. To copy is a punishable offence.
- Steps will be taken to try on the spot any one creating a law and order situation at examination centre, under the Public Examinations Offence Act and award him/them imprisonment or fine or both.
- All-out cooperation of all concerned is solicited towards smooth and systematic holding of SSC Examinations 1995.

Md Irshadul Huq
 Secretary
 Ministry of Education
 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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