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**STOCK MARKET**

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| DSE Index                | 782.57 (-0.09%) |
| Market capitalisation Tk | 43.34 billion   |
| Turnover in volume       | 170818          |
| Turnover in value Tk     | 33.07 million   |

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Dhaka Day by Day



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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Urs of Shahjalal begins tomorrow**

SYLHET, Apr 18: The two-day urs of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) begins here on April 20 to mark his 675th death anniversary. Necessary arrangements have been taken up by the mazar management, municipal and district administrations and voluntary social organisations to facilitate the devotees joining the urs from across the country. The mazar management told BSS that the final prayer (muaujat) will be held at 3 am on April 22, reports BSS.

**Assembly banned**

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has banned assembly and movement of more than four persons together within 200 yards of the centres of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations, 1995, which begin tomorrow. The ban will remain enforced from April 20 to May 21 around 95 SSC examination centres in the capital to ensure proper and peaceful conduct of the examinations, reports BSS.

**10 hurt as BNP, JP clash in Sirajganj**

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 18: Some 10 people were injured in a clash between activists of the BNP and Jatiya Party at Dukuria bazar of Belkuchi thana in the district this afternoon. Police said the clash occurred as a sequel to an earlier clash between the two parties over re-examination of the Hurasagar river. A JP activist was arrested on Monday after a BNP leader filed a case with the local police against 103 persons, reports UNB.

**Fresh offer for dialogue with Hasina**  
**Elections imminent: PM**

CHITTAGONG, Apr 18: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said general election is imminent and asked her party workers to take all preparations for the electoral battle, reports UNB.

"The next election is very important on many counts. A difficult time is ahead. The Opposition will unitedly deal a death blow to the BNP. We have also to face that challenge," she told her party leaders and workers here this evening.

"The BNP will have to win in the interest of the country," the BNP Chairperson said winding up day-long deliberations of the Chittagong Divisional Representatives' Conference of her party at the Chittagong stadium.

The Prime Minister, however, did not say when the general election is going to be

held. The next election is due early next year.

Turning to the current political scenario, the Prime Minister renewed her offer for an open dialogue with the Leader of the Opposition to resolve the staggering political impasse.

"I had given the offer earlier, but I did not receive any response... Still I am ready to sit for dialogue," Begum Zia said.

She said the Secretary General of her party also gave a fresh proposal for discussion to the Awami League General Secretary over telephone. But they are yet to respond.

On a caretaker government, Begum Zia said the Opposition failed to receive the people's support to their demand. They thought that they would be able to pull down the BNP government through resignation

from Parliament. "But as a matter of fact the country, Parliament and the government are functioning normally."

The Prime Minister said despite her offer to step down 30 days ahead of election, the Opposition did not turn up at the Parliament.

Referring to the Opposition proposal for election under the President, the Prime Minister said there is no provision for it in the Constitution. It will require amendment to the Constitution. "But whatever you seek you must sit for solution. How it could be possible without discussion?"

The Prime Minister again expressed her readiness to settle the present problem through dialogue in the interest of democracy. "Despite our repeated calls, they remain non-responsive."

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BNP Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the Chittagong divisional conference of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party at the Chittagong stadium yesterday. — PHD photo

**Forgery-proof passport**

By Staff Correspondent

The government has introduced a new hi-tech passport which officials claim is virtually forgery-proof.

Officials at the Immigration and Passport Department said that the new books comply with the requirement preferred by the international standard.

The new passport, first issued in February, is much handier than the old ones, being smaller in size, the officials said.

The photo page of the new book is laminated by an ultra-modern coating of plastic and glass dust.

It is also marked by invisible security tags which can be seen with a special security machine.

The officials at the Passport Department said that in the past they have had many complaints from international au-

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**Dhaka expresses 'deep concern'**  
**ADB aid declining**

By S Y Bakht

The government has expressed 'deep concern' over the reduced level of lending to Bangladesh by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Bank's lending to Bangladesh declined steadily from 331 million US dollars in 1993 to 280 million in 1994 and a projected 265 million dollars during the current calendar year.

According to official sources, the concern was officially communicated to P K Lahiri, the visiting executive director of the Manila-based ADB.

The Finance Ministry had pointed out that the Bank's lending to Bangladesh amounted to only 280 million dollars for two projects in 1994. In fact, there was no new commitment during the year as the Jamuna bridge was a special project, which the ADB co-financed with 200 mil-

lion dollars, and the Railway Recovery Programme loan was a hang-over from 1993, the ministry added.

"The projected 1995 lending programme shows an allocation of 265 million dollars for seven projects which is lower than the commitment of 1994," noted one official.

"Even this reduced target may not materialize because of delay in processing."

In its recent country performance assessment, the ADB appreciated Bangladesh's improved and better management and efficient implementation of development programmes and enhanced disbursement of foreign aid.

The official argued that if aid utilization is used as a criterion for allocating the Bank's resources, then Bangladesh deserves and qualifies for an

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**Mother Teresa arrives today**

By Staff Correspondent

Nobel laureate Mother Teresa arrives in Dhaka today on a five-day visit to Bangladesh.

She will be accompanied by three Rotarians, her special aide and three sisters of the Missionaries of Charity.

Mother Teresa has been invited by the Rotary International District 3280, Bangladesh.

On her arrival from Calcutta, she will be received at the airport by Mosharraf Hossain, Rotary District Governor and his wife.

Mother Teresa will be staying at the Home of Compassion, the Missionaries of Charity at Tejgaon.

She will inaugurate the first ever Rotary Boat Hospital at Shitalakhya river tomorrow (April 20) and an old home rehabilitation centre at Rajendrapur in Gazipur district the next day.

Her programme in Dhaka includes courtesy calls on the President tomorrow and the Prime Minister on April 22.

Mother Teresa will also attend receptions to be hosted by the Ramna Cathedral and the Rotary International District 3280, and a meeting of the Rotary Club of Dilkusha.

She is scheduled to leave Dhaka on April 23.

**BNP unleashes terrorism, says Hasina**

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina has alleged that the BNP, being isolated from the people for the fertilizer and rice crises, resorted to repression on Awami League and other opposition workers to hang on to power, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, the Awami League president condemned the killing of Khulna Jubo League workers Anwarul Azzah Lichu and Shaheen at Dighalia, Gazirhat on April 14.

The murders occurred at the instigation of BNP, she alleged, saying that police could not recover the body of Shaheen till today, nor did they arrest the people involved in the killing.

Hasina said that a few days ago, commissioner Moslem Khan of Khulna City Corporation was killed in broad daylight.

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**ESCAP sees brighter economic prospect**

By Staff Correspondent

The prospects for Bangladesh's economy appeared brighter with notable progress in the restoration of macro-stability following recent reforms, but the transition from stability to growth is proving to be a challenging task, says an annual report of the ESCAP.

The ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) report on the economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific was simultaneously released in Dhaka and in the capitals of other countries of the region yesterday.

Dr S A L Reza, Director General of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), released the ESCAP report through a news conference held at the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon.

The structural reform pro-

gramme initiated four years ago had encompassed all major areas of economic policy, the Bangladesh chapter of the report says. The policy imperative was to build upon the stable economic environment that had been attained and to lift the economy on to a higher growth path in order to alleviate the severe poverty still faced by a high proportion of the country's population, it adds.

The report also deals with the country's output and inflation, external trade and balance of payments and continuing policy challenges. It says an acceleration of growth would require substantial increases in both public and private sector investment which together now account for about 13 per cent of the GDP.

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**ECNEC okays Tk 737cr projects**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) at a meeting held at the NEC Bhaban yesterday approved six projects involving a cost of Taka 737 crore, reports BSS.

The Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman chaired the meeting.

Two of the projects for gas development are: gas infrastructure development project and setting up of a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) telecommunication system, an official press release said.

The gas infrastructure development project which involves an expenditure of Taka 233 crore seeks to improve drilling and surface facilities at the Rashidpur gas field in Sylhet. World Bank will provide Taka 181 crore for the project.

The project also aims at setting up of a siliceluge gas

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**CEC Rouf quits to return to bench**

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf quit his office yesterday to return to the bench.

Official sources said, Justice Rouf relinquished his office after President Abdur Rahman Biswas granted his application seeking to return to his original office of a judge of the High Court division of the Supreme Court.

Elevated to the High Court bench in the early 1980s, Justice Rouf by virtue of his seniority is the most natural candidate to fill that post.

The outgoing CEC could not be contacted last night for his comments.

Justice Rouf was appointed CEC in December 1990 soon after the then Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed took over as acting President after H M Ershad resigned on December 6.

On February 27, 1991 the EC under the interim govern-

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**Mob attacks circus party, kills animals**

COXS BAZAR, Apr 18: A mob of about 300 people attacked a circus party in sadar thana today and set fire to its pandal and the animal cages that killed a Royal Bengal tiger, a bear, some deers and performing birds, and the party's favourite goat, reports UNB.

Two elephants and two injured horses fled the blazing tents and were untraced till filing of this report tonight.

Witnesses said about 50 workers of the New Star Circus Party, including some women performers, were injured when the mob, led by one Moulana Abdul Jabbar, attacked the party camped at the Eidgah bus station, about 25 kilometres north of the tourists town.

After Asr prayers, the Moulana addressed a gathering accusing the roving circus party of organising vulgar and anti-Islamic dances.

The instigated mob poured kerosene on the pandal and the animal cages before setting them on fire while the panicky members of the circus party ran helter skelter to save their lives.

**Rao ignores US concern, hails visit as a landmark**  
**Free Indian Ocean from foreign fleets, revive NAM: Rafsanjani**

NEW DELHI, Apr 18: Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani called today for pullout of foreign warships from the Indian Ocean and the Gulf and said a revived Non-Aligned Movement could help resolve regional conflicts, reports AFP.

The Iranian leader, in a 20-minute speech to the Indian Parliament greeted by frequent bursts of applause, also called for a restructuring of the United Nations and a deepening of bilateral and regional cooperation with India.

He called on predominantly Hindu India and its Muslim neighbours Pakistan and Bangladesh to strengthen their cooperation for stability in South Asia.

Rafsanjani, who arrived here Monday for a three-day state visit, lashed out at the United States and other devel-

oped countries accusing them of "trying to impede the progress of the developing countries."

"The end of the Cold War has provided good opportunities for new forms of cooperation among Third World countries, especially in the economic field," he said in the speech delivered in Farsi and translated simultaneously.

Rafsanjani, the first Iranian head of state to visit India since the 1979 Islamic revolution, accused foreign powers of exacerbating regional conflicts and said they could best be resolved on a regional basis.

"Politically, revival of the Non-Aligned Movement and solidarity of its member states can to a large extent facilitate the resolution of existing conflicts," he said.

"Considering the importance of the Indian Ocean and

Persian Gulf, we emphasize the withdrawal of foreign fleets from this region which tend to aggravate tensions," he said.

"We believe that it is with the regional states to preserve security and stability in this region, not foreign powers," the Iranian leader said.

Rafsanjani added that Iran "opposed the domineering politics of great powers, particularly the USA, and their efforts to exploit international organizations and fora for their illegitimate goals."

"We believe that it is necessary to study and review the structure of international organizations, in particular the United Nations Organization, on the basis of today's needs," he said.

Reuters says, Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao ignored US criticism of Iran

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**Dolphins in the Ganges face extinction**

NEW DELHI, Apr 18: Blind dolphins found in two Indian rivers are being wiped out by farm chemicals, fine nylon fishing nets and dams, a zoologist said today, reports AP.

Dolphins are the mirrors of a river's health," said Ravindra Sinha, who is alarmed that hundreds of thousands of the rare mammals have disappeared from the Ganges and the Brahmaputra rivers.

Barely 3,500 of the endangered dolphins remain in these rivers, said Sinha, a Patna University Zoology professor who is completing a survey of the freshwater dolphins.

The study is sponsored by the Indian government and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society in Bath, England.

Sinha found a high content of DDT, a pesticide that has been banned in industrialised nations but is still widely used

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**Fresh law being drafted to protect consumers' interest**

By Special Correspondent

A fresh law to protect consumers' interest is being drafted by a committee appointed by the commerce ministry.

The committee, headed by a high official, has been asked to finalise the draft and submit it to the government by May 31.

The proposed law, titled 'Consumers' Protection Act', will come into force following approval of the Cabinet and passage by Parliament.

The formulation of such a law was initiated in June last year. A seminar in the city September last discussed in detail the pros and cons of such legislation.

Government officials, experts, representatives of leading chambers and trade bodies attended that seminar.

A well-placed source in the Ministry of Commerce said the drafting of the new law is progressing smoothly and it is expected to be finalised within

the stipulated time.

Existing laws relating to consumers' interests will be incorporated in the proposed Act to make it a comprehensive and effective law," he said.

The relevant laws currently in operation include the Essential Commodities Control Act of 1956, the Pure Food Act of 1959, the Anti hoarding Act, the Sale of Goods Acts and some other laws made long ago, most of which, especially the Anti hoarding Act have virtually been rendered irrelevant, as the government switched over to open market economic policy.

Sources concerned said that the recent price hike of rice and some other essentials and the crisis created over distribution of fertilizer had prompted the authorities to enact a comprehensive law to handle such critical situation.

"That is why the committee

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**Fake registration of SSC candidates: Teacher arrested**

JHENIDAH, Apr 19: A school teacher was arrested today for his alleged involvement in fake registration of some SSC candidates, reports UNB.

He was identified as Saded Ali, assistant teacher of the Madhupur High School. Headmaster of the school Shahab Uddin went into hiding following a warrant of arrest in connection with the fraud.

Guardians of two SSC candidates, who got enlisted to be candidates for the SSC Examinations beginning tomorrow (April 20), filed two cases against the teachers for taking money from 368 students, most of whom either

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**2 die in separate accidents**

By DMCH Correspondent

Two unidentified persons were killed in separate accidents in the city yesterday.

An unknown man, aged 35, was run over by a bus at Mohakhali crossing at 9 am while an unknown female, 22, was crushed under the wheels of a running train near Uttara yesterday morning.

Both the bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Separate cases were registered with respective police stations.