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STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	779.39 (+0.44%)
Market capitalisation Tk	43.05 billion
Turnover in volume	62839
Turnover in value Tk	15.19 million

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NEWS BRIEFS

3 JCD leaders held in Sylhet
 From Staff Correspondent
 SYLHET, Apr 19: Kotwali police arrested district convenor of the Jatiyatadhi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury and two joint-convenors — Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Wahid-uz-Zaman — here last night.

They were arrested after armed clashes between two rival groups of the JCD in Chowhatta and Mirabazar areas.

Hanif distributes relief
 Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif distributed relief materials among the Monday's fire victims at Jhuhri Mohalla in Mohammadpur yesterday. The relief materials include lungis, sarees and other essentials. The Mayor assured the fire victims of all possible help from the corporation, reports UNB.

Urinary drainage bags seized
 By Staff Correspondent
 The Customs Intelligence department seized 20,000 pieces of urinary drainage bags worth about Taka eight lakh from a company at the Free School Street in the city Tuesday. The bags were seized as the company evaded tax by devaluing the actual price of the goods imported from India.

Additional charge
 By Staff Correspondent
 Dr Shah Mohammad Farid, Secretary, Planning Division, has been given the additional charge of member, Agriculture, Water Resource and Rural Institution Department of the Planning Commission, says a handout.

Speaker proposes immediate Khaleda-Hasina meeting

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday proposed an immediate meeting between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina to end the long-drawn out political tangle.

"I personally feel, they should sit and resolve the crisis in the interest of the country and democracy, rather than head towards uncertainty and unknown destiny," he said in an exclusive talk with United News of Bangladesh (UNB) in his Parliament chamber in the afternoon.

The Speaker offered his all-out services for arranging the meeting if the two leaders agreed to sit together.

Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, who is considered chief of the shadow cabinet, are committed to the nation for democracy... Do they need any formalities to sit together?" said Ali, underlining the urgency of a meeting between the two arch-rivals in national politics in order to settle the dispute over the holding of future elections.

"Possibly, the whole nation now wants to see a solution of the problem," he said.

The Prime Minister, he said, has already expressed her desire to sit with the Leader of the Opposition and a fruitful dialogue could now be arranged if the opposition leader responded to her overture.

Shaikh Razzak Ali said the governing party and the Opposition had already narrowed down their differences through the Prime Minister's December 29 offer to step down 30 days ahead of elections and the Opposition Leader's January 10 proposal for a caretaker government headed by the President.

"After these two proposals, what else remains? The remaining part is very small and simple and could be worked out with honest efforts and will... But I can't perceive where the difficulty lies."

During the one-and-a-half-hour talk, the Speaker sometimes beamed with optimism, while at other times appeared a little emotional over the present state of affairs in politics and Parliament. Chief Whip

Khandaker Delwar Hossain happened to drop in during the interview.

Asked about his views on the continuing stalemate in the political arena, the Speaker said: "This is a very crucial time. Nobody knows where we are going. It's a suicidal holiday in politics."

No matter how big some problems may be, pointed out Ali, those have been solved through discussions at home and abroad. "Then why shouldn't this problem be solved? There is still scope for a solution."

In reply to a question, he said a solution to the present problem cannot be found in the interpretations of the Constitution. See Page 12 Col 1



Mother Teresa talking to a patient during her visit to the Dhaka Community Hospital yesterday.

Mother Teresa opens floating hospital today

Nobel laureate Mother Teresa arrived in the city from Calcutta yesterday on a five-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Governor of Rotary District 3280, M Mosbarraf Hossain, District First Lady Momtaz Hossain and leaders of the Rotary Club received the world-renowned social worker at Zia International Airport.

Founder of the Calcutta-based Missionaries of Charity and a dedicated soul for the deprived, Mother Teresa will inaugurate a floating hospital on the river Sitalakhya at Balurhat in Demra thana this morning.

The 38.5-metre-long and 5.05-metre-broad barge-turned-hospital, was steered from the French township of Messey by social worker Yves Marie and his friends under the sponsorship of Rotary Club. See Page 12 Col 8

Examines agitate, call hartal Hundreds didn't get admit cards

By Staff Correspondent

Several hundred candidates will be unable to appear in the SSC examinations, beginning across the country today because they failed to get their admit cards, according to reports from our correspondents.

In several towns, students who failed to get their admit cards agitated, held demonstrations and protest rallies yesterday. In Barisal, agitated students have even called for a full-day hartal today.

Our Barisal correspondent reported last night that 735 secondary school certificate examinees in Barisal, 385 in Bhola and 168 in Patuakhali were yet to get their admit cards according to information reaching him.

In the Jalalpur High School in Katiadi of Kishoreganj district, 231 candidates will not be able to sit for the examinations, reports our correspondent. Only 67 students of the school received their admit cards, without which they cannot enter the exam halls.

The students brought out a procession and gheraoed the office and residence of the Katiadi Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) yesterday demanding their admit cards. Headmaster of the school Md Moniruzzaman reportedly fled.

TNO Upendranath Sarker told The Daily Star that the SSC candidates of the school had submitted their forms in due time but the headmaster See Page 12 Col 7

SSC exams begin today

By Staff Correspondent

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations under the four education boards in the country begin today with over 7.50 lakh students appearing.

The examinations will be held at 754 centres under the Dhaka, Comilla, Rajshahi and Jessore boards. Of these five centres will be set up abroad.

A total of 2,39,602 candidates will sit for the examinations from 199 centres under Dhaka Board, 1,92,514 candidates from 212 centres under Comilla Board, 1,30,100 from 188 centres under Rajshahi Board and 1,43,222 candidates will appear from 155 centres under Jessore Board.

Some 15,000 students under Jessore Board, however, will not be able to appear at the examinations since their See Page 12 Col 7

Bangladesh should lessen political unrest: WB

The World Bank has said Bangladesh should 'lessen' political unrest to speed up her structural reforms for attaining higher growth, reports UNB.

"Bangladesh is set to accelerate structural reform after stabilisation, a task that would be eased if political tension lessens," said a World Bank report released in Dhaka yesterday.

The report on the 'Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries 1995' said Bangladesh's challenge is to enable the role of the private sector, raise domestic savings, restructure its financial sector and press ahead with reforms in product and labour markets.

It said growth in South Asia is expected to take off in the next decade and will experience growth rates higher than any other part of the world, except East Asia.

The report forecast that the region will achieve a 5.4 per cent growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) in the period from 1995 to the year 2004.

This outstrips projection in all OECD countries and if growth, consumption and capital formation continue at the current pace, India, along with China and Indonesia could be among the world's six largest economies in purchasing power parity terms.

Consumption and GDP per capita is projected to increase and the medium inflation rate should drop, the WB report said.

It observed that regional export growth could increase to an average of 7.5 per cent per year, up from 5 per cent in the past decade, if structural reforms and the resulting efficiency gains continue in South Asian countries.

"However, South Asia will See Page 12 Col 8

Opposition's reaction to PM's speech

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition leaders yesterday expressed their mixed reaction to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's fresh offer for a dialogue with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina.

Regarding the PM's statement in Chittagong Tuesday that general elections were imminent, they said announcement about polls should have been made soon after the Opposition MPs' resignation.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman commented that the Prime Minister's fresh call for a dialogue with Sheikh Hasina was designed to 'convince' the donors ahead of the aid consortium meeting and to 'deceive' the people.

The ruling BNP was not at all sincere as regards a dialogue and a congenial atmosphere for it and this had been See Page 12 Col 1

SAPTA likely to become fully operational by Jan '96

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a meeting yesterday underscored the urgency to accelerate the pace of regional cooperation in South Asia. Also, it was mentioned at the meeting that the SAPTA is expected to become 'fully operational' from January next.

They were speaking at the launching ceremony of the book "Shaping South Asia's Future — Role of Regional Cooperation" edited by Kant Kishore Bhargava, Heinz Bongratz and Farooq Sobhan.

M Morshed Khan, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, was the chief guest while State Minister for Planning Dr A Moin Khan was the special guest at the ceremony organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) at its conference room.

The need of the hour is to take up regional cooperation as the number one priority, said Morshed Khan. "We hardly have any time to lose."

Noting that historically this region had a common market with a common currency, he said "it would be lot more easier for this (South Asian) region to go for much closer cooperation."

He urged the politicians and bureaucrats to change their mind-sets. "The climate of mutual distrust must give way to regional cooperation," he said.

Calling for greater regional cooperation, Moin Khan noted that South Asia consists of 20 per cent of the world's population, of which nearly half live below the poverty level.

He said that a fresh approach to politics in South Asia is needed to strengthen the democratic norms for good governance and a sustainable political system in the region. "We must move from our politics of rhetorics to reason and reality."

Chaired by M Anis Ud Dowla, president of the MCCI, the ceremony was also attended by MPs, diplomats. See Page 12 Col 3

Justice Sadek may become new CEC

By Asiuzzaman

Justice A K M Sadek is likely to be appointed Chief Election Commissioner to succeed Justice M A Rouf, a highly placed government source said yesterday.

Justice Sadek retired from the High Court Division last month.

When contacted over telephone, a senior ruling party leader declined to confirm the name of the new CEC but said, whoever the person is, he would be acceptable to all.

Meanwhile, Justice Rouf who quit Monday, yesterday joined the HC Division from where he was taken to the Election Commission by the then acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, in December 1990.

PM tells people of Bhandaria Join democratic party to change your lot

BHANDARIA (Pirojpur), Apr 19: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today urged all to work together in democratic spirit to make the country self-reliant through increased production, employment generation and poverty alleviation, reports UNB.

She told a large public meeting at the Shaheed Zia Maidan here in the afternoon that the BNP government ensured democracy and accountability in the country, as a result of which people now can know everything about government activities.

The Prime Minister observed that only a democratic government could ensure peace, progress and development of a nation. "Without democracy, it is not possible to improve people's lot and ensure national development."

She noted that the prime need for the nation is to educate the people as it is not possible to ensure development without literacy.

Pointing her finger at the children in the meeting, she said, "Let's build a better future for them. Children should be brought up as worthy citizens."

The government has introduced compulsory free primary education, food for education, free education upto Class X and stipend for girls, especially for the children of the poor people, she said and called upon the guardians to send their wards to school. See Page 12 Col 4

Saifur leaves for Paris to attend Aid Club meet

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman left Dhaka for London en route to Paris to attend Bangladesh Aid Consortium meeting to be held in the French capital on April 23-24, reports BSS.

He is leading a six-member Bangladesh delegation to the Aid Group meeting.

In London, the Finance Minister will attend a discussion today on the prospect of democracy, good governance and development in Bangladesh in the post cold war environment. Saifur will deliver the key-note paper on the theme of the discussion.

On his way back home, the Finance Minister will also attend a seminar in the Dutch capital, Amsterdam, on April 26. He is expected to return home on April 28.

Fresh gas attack in Japan



An elderly woman being carried by a policeman after falling ill at the Yokohama train station, 30 kilometres southwest of Tokyo yesterday. At least 261 people were provided treatment after inhaling foul-smelling fumes at the station and on trains. — AFP/UNB photo

261 fall sick

YOKOHAMA, Apr 19: More than 260 people were sickened today by a mystery gas released in an underground corridor at the main train station in Yokohama, a crowded commercial port city adjacent to Tokyo, reports AP.

Police said they believe it was a deliberate attack, and may have been carried out by someone imitating the nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subways exactly 30 days earlier.

Japan has been on edge since that attack, which killed 12 people and sickened 5,500. The religious cult that is the chief suspect, Aum Shinri Kyo, denied any involvement in Wednesday's case.

At least 261 people were taken to hospitals Wednesday when they complained of stinging eyes, coughs and dizziness after smelling a foul chemical odour at the station, police said.

Police, fire fighters and chemical weapons experts — some in gas masks — checked the station, and television cut to live reports.

Police said the Yokohama case appeared different enough from the Tokyo subway attack that it may have been a "copycat" crime by another See Page 12 Col 6

UN lifts embargo on Libyan Hajj flights

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 19: The UN sanctions committee today authorised flights between Libya and Saudi Arabia to allow some 6,000 Libyan pilgrims to travel to the Muslim holy city of Makkah, reports AFP.

The panel's chairman, Karel Kovanda of the Czech Republic, said the move to grant an exemption from the air embargo came at the request of Egypt.

Earlier AP reports: A Libyan airliner took off Wednesday from Tripoli on a flight carrying Muslims to Saudi Arabia in defiance of UN sanctions.

Yusufganj plots Affected families to get priority

Housing and Public Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia yesterday asked the Rajuk officials to serve the people and not to harass anybody as Rajuk is a welfare oriented organisation, reports UNB.

He was speaking at a review meeting on the progress of the development works of Yusufganj (Purbachal) project of Rajuk held at the Rajuk Bhaban.

Presiding over the meeting the Housing Minister instructed Rajuk to give priority to affected families at the time of allotment of plots.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue, Dhaka
Notice

The Government has decided to bring about certain procedural changes regarding import and export between Bangladesh and India as well as between Bangladesh and Myanmar, through the land customs stations except Benapole and Tamabil. The existing procedure will continue to apply for imports & exports through land customs stations of Benapole and Tamabil, exports of all goods through any land customs station and in respect of imports of bovine animal, fresh fruits, rice, wheat, seeds, plants, fish and cement. The new procedure shall apply to all other goods imported through any land customs station other than Benapole and Tamabil. The importer will have to submit a pre-shipment inspection certificate as provided under SRO No 316-L/94/1568/Cus dated 3.11.94 in respect of price, quantity & quality. Import without the above mentioned certificate shall be treated as irregular import and actions in accordance with law will be taken. This new procedure will not be applicable to those imports in respect of which letter of credit has already been opened or have been opened by 10th April, 1995. It may be mentioned here that the land customs stations which are presently not in operation due to various reasons shall remain as it is until further orders.

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