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STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	788.40
Market capitalisation Tk	44.97 billion
Turnover in volume	111884
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NEWS BRIEFS

President visits Haripur Gas Field

SYLHET, Apr 27: President Abdur Rahman Biswas was on a two-day trip to Sylhet and Srimongal, today visited the Haripur Gas Field, country's first gas field. Earlier, Imdadul Hoque, Managing Director of the Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, briefed President Biswas about the exploration of gas and oil in the field, reports BSS.

BNP Dhaka div confce Apr 29

The Dhaka Divisional conference of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will be held here on April 29, a party press release said last night. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the conference at 10 am, reports BSS.

One killed by lightning

From Staff Correspondent
 SYLHET, Apr 27: One person was killed by lightning at village Kandigaon of Moglabazar union of sadar thana this morning. The victim, Abdul Khalique, met his tragic end while he was working in the field, reports BSS.

Saudi-Bangla body on cyclone

The fourth meeting of the Saudi-Bangla joint committee on cyclone grant will be held in Dhaka on May 10, according to a message received from Riyadh yesterday. The meeting will discuss the state of utilisation of the grant of 106 million US dollars, reports BSS.

1 chopped to death

JHENIDAH, Apr 27: One person was chopped to death early today by armed miscreants at Folia village in Shailakupa thana of the district, reports UNB.

Briefest JS session prorogued

By Staff Correspondent

The briefest session of the Fifth Parliament was prorogued yesterday after four days of little legislative business and discussions on matters of public importance, including Wednesday's attack on the Speaker's house in Khulna. Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali read out the prorogation order of President Abdur Rahman Biswas at around 9:20 pm after disposing some of the petitions of resolution and a long discussion on the attack on the Speaker's residence. President Biswas issued the order of prorogation as per Article 72 (1) of the Constitution. The JS went into session from April 24. Seven treasury bench members, including Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman, yesterday took part in the discussion on the Khulna incident with Deputy Speaker Humayun

Khan Panni in the chair. The treasury bench members condemned Wednesday's incident and demanded punishment for the culprits involved. During the four-day 19th session, only one Bill — the Supreme Court Judges' (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill 1995 was passed. Besides the question-answer sessions, two reports — the Public Service Commission's annual report for 1994 and that of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Local Government — were placed before the House.

The session was summoned basically to meet the constitutional requirement. The Constitution makes it mandatory that a session must be summoned within 60 days of the previous session. The 18th session was prorogued on February 23. At the end of the 19th session yesterday, the absence of the Opposition members from parliamentary proceedings rose to 89 working days. MPs from three major political parties started boycotting the sessions since March 1 last year to press their demand for a caretaker government to supervise the next general elections.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, in his winding up speech, said that despite the Speaker's ruling rejecting the resignation letters, the opposition MPs did not return to the House. Rather, they staged a sit-in in front of the Speaker's office, which is a highly unparliamentary and undemocratic act, he regretted. He also regretted Wednesday's attack on the Speaker's Khulna residence. On the concluding day yesterday, State Minister for

See Page 8 Col 1



Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman administering the oath to the new Chief Election Commissioner Justice A K M Sadeque in the city yesterday. — PID photo

Opposition may repeat sit-in inside JS

By Special Correspondent

The Opposition will intensify its agitation in support of the demand for holding general elections under a non-partisan caretaker government after Eid-ul-Azha.

In addition to street agitations, the opposition MPs, who resigned on December 28 are likely to demonstrate again both inside and outside the parliament building during the coming budget session, said a central leader of the Awami League.

The MPs belonging to the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami staged a sit-in near the Speaker's chamber Monday for about two hours to press their demands, including dissolution of the present Jatiya Sangsad.

Though the demonstration inside the Parliament building was severely criticised by the

ruling party, the Opposition leaders feel it had made considerable impact.

Until Eid-ul-Azha, in the second week of May, the AL and other opposition parties will continue mass contact programmes all over the country through rallies and meetings. While campaigning for the demand for a caretaker government, the opposition also plans to focus on the BNP government's failures in proper handling of the fertilizer crisis and containing the price hike of foodgrain.

This government has failed to solve any of the problems faced by the people. Rather, the ruling party contributed to the aggravation of the problems which have made people's lives miserable," said AL organising secretary

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Minister sees 3 reasons behind price-hike of food items

By Staff Correspondent

Food Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said there were three reasons for the recent price-hike of food items including rice. He cited low production of rice and wheat due to a drought in the northern region of the country, increased production costs and press reports that 'encouraged the unscrupulous traders to take advantage of the situation.'

Yet there is no food shortage in the country now since the government has taken appropriate measures to meet the situation through imports, he told the Jatiya Sangsad.

Replying to questions on the prices of rice and other food items, the minister in-

See Page 8 Col 1

JP enforces hartal in Khulna

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 27: A half-day hartal called by the Jatiya Party in protest against the killing of its leader Sheikh Abul Kashem was observed here today.

Abul Kashem, General Secretary of the city JP, was shot dead Tuesday. His driver was also killed in the incident. The JP had also called a dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday. During the hartal hours today, all modes of transport stayed off the roads and shops, banks and business houses remained closed.

However, in the evening some hand-bombs were exploded near the Dakbunglow square while a procession of the Awami League was proceeding towards party office. The authorities had earlier decided to withdraw Section 144 from 6 pm Wednesday but lifted it from 2 pm today.

Meanwhile, the Criminal

See Page 8 Col 1

EC timetable for public hearing on constituencies

The Election Commission yesterday announced detailed timetable for public hearing on written demands, objections, recommendations, and opinions on the parliamentary constituencies of the Jatiya Sangsad published by the Commission on February 1, reports BSS.

The timetable was announced through a gazette notification yesterday.

Following is the timetable for the public hearing which will be held at the Election Commission Secretariat in the city.

Panchagath, Dinajpur and Nilphamari on May 15; Rangpur, Kurigram and Gaibandha on May 16; Meherpur, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Jessore on May 17; Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira on May 18; Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Bakerganj

See Page 8 Col 4

Justice Sadeque takes oath as new CEC

The new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Justice A K M Sadeque, took the oath of office yesterday, an Election Commission press release said, reports BSS.

Chief Justice M H Rahman administered the oath at his Supreme Court chamber.

Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdul Jalil and the Director of the project for making identity cards for the voters, Muhammad Omar Faruque were present.

Son of late Hajee Abu Musa Ahmed Mujtaba, Justice Sadeque was born on February 1, 1930.

He did his M A in Economics from the Dhaka University in 1951 and LLB at the same university two years later.

Sadeque practised as a lawyer at the Comilla Bar from 1953 to early 1957.

In February 1957, he was appointed a munsif.

He served the Supreme Court of Pakistan as an Assistant Registrar from October 17, 1967 to November 30, 1972, on deputation.

He was Law Officer of Dhaka University and a part time lecturer of the Faculty of Law of the same university on deputation from December 21, 1974 to August 4, 1976.

In August 1976, he was promoted as Additional District Judge and between July 1976 and May 1982, he was a Deputy Director, Bureau of Anti-corruption, on deputation.

In May 1982, he was promoted as a District Judge and was elevated to the Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court in 1987.

He retired from the judiciary in January.

Justice is done!

By Court Correspondent

A city school teacher walked out to freedom yesterday after being interned for three days in jail on a false murder charge.

The teacher, Hosne Ara Begum Shelley, was released from the Dhaka Central Jail after the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate ordered she be set at liberty forthwith. He also ordered an urgent enquiry into the incident.

Shelley was picked up by

See Page 8 Col 4

Separate police station for women recommended

The inter-ministerial coordination committee on prevention of oppression against women and children yesterday recommended setting up a separate police station for women in the Dhaka Metropolitan City area on a test basis, reports BSS.

The recommendation came at the 5th meeting of the committee held at the secretariat with State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Sarwari Rahman in the chair.

The meeting asked the ministry concerned to create

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India may prohibit arrest of women after sunset

NEW DELHI, Apr 27: The Indian government, under pressure from women's rights groups, has proposed legislation that would make it illegal to arrest women after dark, activists and officials said today, reports Reuter.

Women's rights activists said it was likely the proposal was spurred by their demands to take steps to check the increasing incidence of custodial rape at Indian police stations.

"There are innumerable rapes in custody all the time," said Kalpana Mehta, who works for Delhi-based women's group Saheli (a women's friend). "There's nothing new about it."

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Hasina rejects CEC's appointment

CHITTAGONG, Apr 27: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina today rejected outright the appointment of Justice AKM Sadeque as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), reports UNB.

"Opposition parties gave a proposal to appoint a person acceptable to all as CEC, but the BNP government ignored it as they want to rig elections," she told a public meeting at Sitakundu High School ground this evening.

"We will not accept this appointment," the Awami League president said categorically and called upon the government to resign 90 days ahead of next elections handing over power to a neutral caretaker government to conduct polls.

"Why the government is talking about dialogue, when they did not consult the Opposition before appointment of the new CEC. In fact, the government is trying to mislead

the people by talking about dialogue with the Opposition," she said.

The government today appointed Justice AKM Sadeque Chief Election Commissioner. He took oath of office this afternoon.

The Awami League leader, who is on a six-day tour of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, addressed three public meetings at Mirsarai Aburhat High School ground, Aburhat High School Ground and in Sitakundu.

Sheikh Hasina said, the BNP, which came to power taking part in the 1991 election held under a caretaker administration, was not conceding to the Opposition demand for a caretaker government as "it want to hang on to power by rigging vote."

"We want to establish peoples' franchise and for this we want elections under a neutral

See Page 8 Col 5

Paris meet identifies 3 priority areas to speed up development

By Staff Correspondent

Three areas of priority were identified to accelerate Bangladesh's development at the just concluded Aid Group meeting in Paris. The areas are poverty reduction, human resources development, private sector growth and improvement of public services.

According to a World Bank press release made available here yesterday, the Aid Group said that to achieve a significant reduction in poverty, further efforts are needed to raise annual GDP growth to at least 6-7 per cent, with emphasis on actions to raise the productivity and welfare of the poor.

The statement said that to expedite the development, the government's efforts will be focused on three priorities: human resource development and poverty alleviation programme; fostering private sector investment; and improving the efficiency of public services.

Issued in Paris on the concluding day of the meeting Wednesday it said, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman told donors that the Bangladesh Government recognises the need for continued economic reform.

Donor governments and organisations expressed concern over the decline in the pace of reform as elections approached, while indicating a total of 1.9 billion US dollars in support of a sustained development effort.

The Bank statement praised the government's sound macroeconomic management which had resulted in a strong currency, low inflation and steady rise in domestic savings. Consequently, it said, per capita incomes have grown at an annual average of 2.5 per cent over the past three years, exports expanded at an impressive 18-20 per cent annually and industrial output risen

to 11 per cent in 1994. "The government was urged to continue its efforts to mobilise domestic savings and to contain the growing demand pressures as development expenditures were increased," it added.

Human resource development with continue to be given special emphasis, with expanded budgetary allocations for basic health, education and family planning.

"The Government will launch a pro-poor action plan for improved quality of and access to social services. More attention will be given to ensure full participation of women in the economy (and) measures will be taken to finalise and implement the National Environmental Management Action Plan in the coming year," it added.

The statement pointed out that private sector develop-

See Page 8 Col 8

Census of children ends Sunday, report in May

By Reaz Ahmed

The report of the ongoing census of children under 14 will be published by the end of next month following data analysis in the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) Implementation and Monitoring Unit of the Primary and Mass Education Division, sources concerned said.

The census that began on April 23 throughout the country will end on April 30. The CPE Unit is conducting the census involving an expenditure of Taka 84 lakh. It will evaluate the progress of the CPE and help prepare future action plans accordingly, the sources said.

A total of 2,24,000 teachers from 56,000 government and registered non-government primary schools is engaged in the collection of data and compilation of those in forms provided by the CPE Unit.

This was for the first time that the age limit of the target group for the census has been

extended to 14 years from 10 plus years, sources pointed out.

The last census of children conducted in December 1993 showed there were 1,74,19,253 children of six to 10 plus age group. Of them 1,43,70,908 were enrolled in primary schools — 82.50 per cent of the total. The number of six plus children in the country was 44,60,139. Of them, 37,95,528 were enrolled in schools and the percentage was 85.10.

The census reports said there were 37,699 government primary schools, 8,912 non-government primary schools, 22,455 madrassahs and 426 kinder garden schools in the country.

Explaining the goals of the present census, an official of the CPE Unit told The Daily Star the census would reveal how many of the eligible children were left out of the CPE

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PM leaves for New Delhi Tuesday

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to leave Dhaka for New Delhi Tuesday morning to attend the eighth meeting of heads of state or government of the SAARC countries, reports UNB.

At the opening session of the three-day summit beginning in the Indian capital on Tuesday afternoon, Begum Zia, the current chairperson of the association, will hand over the chairmanship to Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister of the host country.

On Wednesday, the second day of the summit to be held at Biggan Bhaban, leaders and members of the delegations will go on retreat in Simla, a summer resort of the Governor General of British India.

The 8th SAARC Summit will adopt the Delhi Declaration at the closing session on Thursday, giving a new impetus to the 10-year-old regional forum to fulfil its commitment to poverty alleviation and operationalisation of the SAPTA.

A two-day meeting of the Council of Ministers, the second tier of the association, on

See Page 8 Col 8

Dy minister seeks ruling on use of flag

By Staff Correspondent

Deputy Minister for Health Sirajul Haque yesterday sought a ruling from the Chair on why he was not allowed to use national flag in his car during a visit to Sylhet.

He said in Parliament yesterday that he went to attend a function in Sylhet where the President was present. But he saw that there was no flag in the transport waiting for him. He was told by the driver that the DC had ordered him (driver) not to use any flag in the car.

Sirajul Haque said the DC had also told him that according to protocol a deputy minister could not use flag in his car.

Asked to show written rules in this regard, the DC could not do so, the deputy minister said.

Describing the incident, Haque sought action from the Chair.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni said that he could not give any decision on the statement the deputy minister made under clause 300 of the Rules of Procedure.

Water bhaban to be set up in city

Fifty-three per cent work on projects in the water resources sector under the annual development programme of the current fiscal year has been completed as against 42 per cent in the last fiscal, reports BSS.

It was told at an interministerial meeting held at the Bangladesh secretariat here yesterday with Agriculture and Water Resources Minister M Majid-ul Haq in the chair.

The meeting decided to take preliminary steps for constructing a multistoried 'water bhaban' at Green Road in the city.

Gen Nasim leaves for Bosnia

By Staff Correspondent

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Bir Bikram left Dhaka yesterday for Rome on way to Bosnia, says an ISPR press release.

During the visit, the Chief of Army Staff will meet the members of the Bangladesh battalion in Bihac and see their activities there.

He is expected to return home on May 1.

Jury board for '94 film award

The government has formed an 11-member Jury Board with retired acting secretary Syeed Ahmed as its President to recommend for the National Film Award of 1994, reports UNB.

Chairman of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board Iftekhar Hossain will act as the Member Secretary of the Board, said an official handout yesterday.

The other members of the board are: Gazi Shamsur Rahman, Dr Ashraf Siddiqui, Rezauddin Ahmed, Khan Ataur Rahman, Ferdousi Rahman, Abid Hossain Khan, Fayez Ahmed, Mobashwer Ali, Ali Monsur and AKA Feroz Zohi.