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STOCK MARKET
 DSE Index 756.76 (+0.46%)
 Market capitalisation Tk 44.88 billion
 Turnover in volume 64113.25
 Turnover in value Tk 18.99 million

Weekend Magazine
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How Dutiful!
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Rao plays coy on water issue



Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao (R) shakes hands with Pakistan President Farooq Ahmed Leghari, Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom seen standing by during the closing session of the SAARC summit in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP photo

NEW DELHI, May 4: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao said today that a solution to the complex issue of the sharing of water between his country and Bangladesh would hopefully be found in the near future, reports BSS.

Replying to questions at the post-summit press conference as the new Chairperson of SAARC, he said the issue was discussed at the bilateral meeting with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia here yesterday evening and added that details of the matter would be discussed at other levels.

Rao, however, denied that failure to reach an agreement on the issue amounts to denial by India of human rights to Bangladeshis and observed that both countries had their share of the blame in the present situation. He said it would not be proper to blame India for the situation since "availability" of water is also linked with the matter.

Rao said, following discussions with the Bangladesh Prime Minister the efforts would increase for a solution of the issue.

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Opposition's fresh action programme likely after Eid

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition parties observed a 'Protest Day' throughout the country yesterday ending their latest phase of agitation programmes for a neutral caretaker administration for holding the next general elections.

The parties — the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — however, announced no fresh course of action on the day.

The three opposition parties, since their MPs resigned on December 28, had been carrying out agitation programmes, announced gradually.

The parties would go for another phase of anti-government agitations after the forthcoming Eid-ul-Azha. Opposition sources said.

In observance of the 'Protest Day' the three parties held separate public meetings and brought out processions in different parts of the country.

In the capital, the AL and the Jamaat organised public rallies, followed by processions, and the JP held a press conference on the current political situation.

Speakers at the AL rally, held at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the afternoon, reiterated the demands for immediate resignation of the BNP government, dissolution of Parliament and holding of an early election under a caretaker administration.

They blamed the Prime Minister for her 'failures' to realise Bangladesh's due shares of the Ganges waters from India and narrow down the country's trade deficit with her.

Chaired by city AL vice president Rezauddin Ahmed, the rally was addressed by Abdul Mannan Siddiqui Roul Khan, Nurul Fazal Hossain, Mukul Bose, Monir Hussain and others.

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Six drowned as launch capsizes in Patuakhali

BARISAL, May 4: Six persons including two women and three children drowned when a passenger launch capsized at Golkhali under Mirzaganj thana of Patuakhali district today, reports BSS.

District authorities said the mishap took place around 10:30 am today when the overcrowded launch M L Queen of Patuakhali was on its way from Amtali to Patuakhali capsized in the river Paira. There were about 200 passengers in the ill-fated launch, the authorities said.

The launch was however salvaged by noon. Most of the passengers swam to safety or rescued, the authorities added about fifty remained missing.

The bodies which were recovered from the launch's haul were handed over to their relatives.

The dead were identified as Chan Boru (75), Kamruzzaman (11), Rezia (35), Manik (3), Rahma (40) and Mukta (5).

Biswas leaves tonight for London

President Abdur Rahman Biswas leaves Dhaka for London tonight to attend the celebration of Victory in Europe (VE) marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, reports UNB.

He will be his second trip abroad as the head of state. He visited Saudi Arabia in 1993 to perform holy Hajj.

On August 7 in 1945, World War II came to an end in Europe following the surrender of the Axis powers under the Berlin Agreement.

More than 50 heads of state and government have been invited to attend programmes on May 6-7 projecting themes of 50 years of peace, international reconciliation and the benefits the war time generation won for the youth today.

The programmes, hosted by the British government, include a banquet, reception, congregation, an international reconciliation ceremony in London's Hyde Park and a community entertainment in front of the Buckingham Palace.

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Delhi declaration adopted

NEW DELHI, May 4: A three-day summit of South Asian leaders ended here today with a call for greater economic cooperation among the seven nations which account for one-fifth of the world's population, report AFP, BSS.

The members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), in a joint declaration, condemned terrorism and called for an international convention eliminating nuclear weapons and prohibiting their use.

The leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka also urged developed nations to refrain from erecting trade barriers through the use of social or environmental issues.

The leaders in the 'Delhi Declaration' outlined the future plan to put the much-talked about South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) in operation by the end of this year.

The heads of state or government noted with satisfaction the progress made on the SAPTA following the decision on the issue taken in the seventh summit in Dhaka in April, 1993 and directed that all necessary steps including the ratification by member states be completed by the end of this year.

The Delhi declaration also noted with satisfaction the progress made by the SAARC during its nearly a decade of existence and gave a future course of action to further strengthen the cooperation among the member countries.

The leaders endorsed the proposal of the Council of Ministers to convene a commemorative session marking the first decade of the SAARC on the theme "SAARC-Vision of the Second Decade" to identify the areas on which the SAARC should focus in its second decade.

The declaration contained the resolve of the leaders to address such issues like the eradication of poverty in South Asia, women in development, integrated programme of action, promotional activities for the children, youth and disabled, shelter, literacy and environment and outlined SAARC activities in these areas.

The declaration highlighted the problem of poverty in the region and reiterated the leaders' commitment to eradicating this curse in the South Asia preferably by the year 2002.

It also touched upon problems like terrorism, drug trafficking, South Asian development fund, people-to-people contact, and science and technology, and reiterated SAARC positions on these matters.

See Page 12 Col 1

Rao rejects Pak plea to discuss bilateral issues

NEW DELHI, May 4: India today rejected Pakistan's demand for raising bilateral issues in the SAARC forum, saying the "time was not ripe for it" and there was no agreement among members for changes in the SAARC charter, reports PTI.

Addressing a press conference at the end of the three-day eighth SAARC summit here, Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao asserted that forcing the issue will not work and any change in the charter, which precludes raising of bilateral issues, would have to evolve over a period of time.

Pakistan President Farooq Leghari, on the opening day of the summit had, without mentioning Kashmir, demanded that the SAARC charter should be amended to allow discussion of bilateral issues.

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Hasina for restoring upazila system

NETRAKONA, May 4: Sheikh Hasina today said if voted to power, the Awami League will introduce a local government system to be run by the elected representatives for the welfare of the common people, reports UNB.

We will try to reach the services to the doorstep of the deprived people," she told a public meeting in Mohanganj on the second day of her three-day organisational tour in greater Mymensingh district.

The Awami League president said that the Opposition had suggested continuation of the upazila system by removing corruption which plagued the system. "But the ruling BNP ignored the suggestion."

Calling the ruling party corrupt and inefficient, Hasina renewed her allegation that the people in power had created the fertiliser and food crises to amass fortune.

Hasina demanded dissolution of Parliament and elections under a caretaker government. "This government must resign 90 days ahead of the next general elections and hand over power to a neutral, caretaker administration," she said.

The opposition leader also demanded autonomy for radio and television or separate channels for the opposition parties to ensure neutrality of the state-owned electronic media.

"Awami League will allow autonomy of the media if voted to power," she pledged.

Referring to the Prime Minister's resignation, she said: "We will try to reach the services to the doorstep of the deprived people," she told a public meeting in Mohanganj on the second day of her three-day organisational tour in greater Mymensingh district.

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Saifur urges donors to begin ADF's replenishment process

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday urged the donors to commence the replenishment process of the Asian Development Fund-VII (ADF) with immediate effect, reports UNB.

The minister made the plea while addressing the 28th annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank, according to a message received in the city.

The poorest countries of the region like Bangladesh largely depend on resources of the ADF, the concessional window of the ADB, for financing their development programmes.

Saifur pointed out that while some nations in the region have attained accelerated economic growth, many countries suffer from pervasive poverty as the region is home of two-thirds of the world's poor.

He observed that direct foreign investment remained confined to only a few countries of the region and flow of private capital to the poorest nations was negligible.

The need for overseas development assistance (ODA) and concessional assistance will remain important as there has not been any increase in direct foreign investments to poor countries, he said.

Referring to economic reforms of various developing countries, Saifur gave a brief account of Bangladesh's widespread liberalisation in financial, fiscal, trade exchange rate and other areas of the economy.

The finance minister also explained the benefits the country has been reaping from such reforms, creating a favourable macro-economic environment.

In this regard, he referred to macro-economic stability, reduction of budget and current account deficits, a low inflation rate, increasing domestic resources and the foreign exchange reserve.

He said the private sector has responded well to the favourable environment as reflected by higher imports of capital goods and a 39 per cent rise in export during the first six months of the current fiscal.

About poverty reduction programmes, the finance minister emphatically said that poverty reduction must be the fundamental objectives of all development activities in the developing nations.

"Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere," Saifur said while quoting from the human development reports of 1993.

Referring to the poverty alleviation programmes in Bangladesh, he mentioned different targeted poverty schemes and the country's thrust on social sector development.

He stated that development expenditures in the education, health, family planning, social welfare, women and children sectors increased fivefold from 1989-90 to 1994-95.

See also Page 6

Storms hit Pabna, Rajbari: 3 die

Three people were killed and 55 others injured when tropical storms swept over three thanas in Rajbari and Pabna districts Wednesday, reports UNB.

In Rajbari, two people were killed and five injured in a nor'wester that swept over nine villages of Sultanpur union of Sadar thana in the evening, witnesses said.

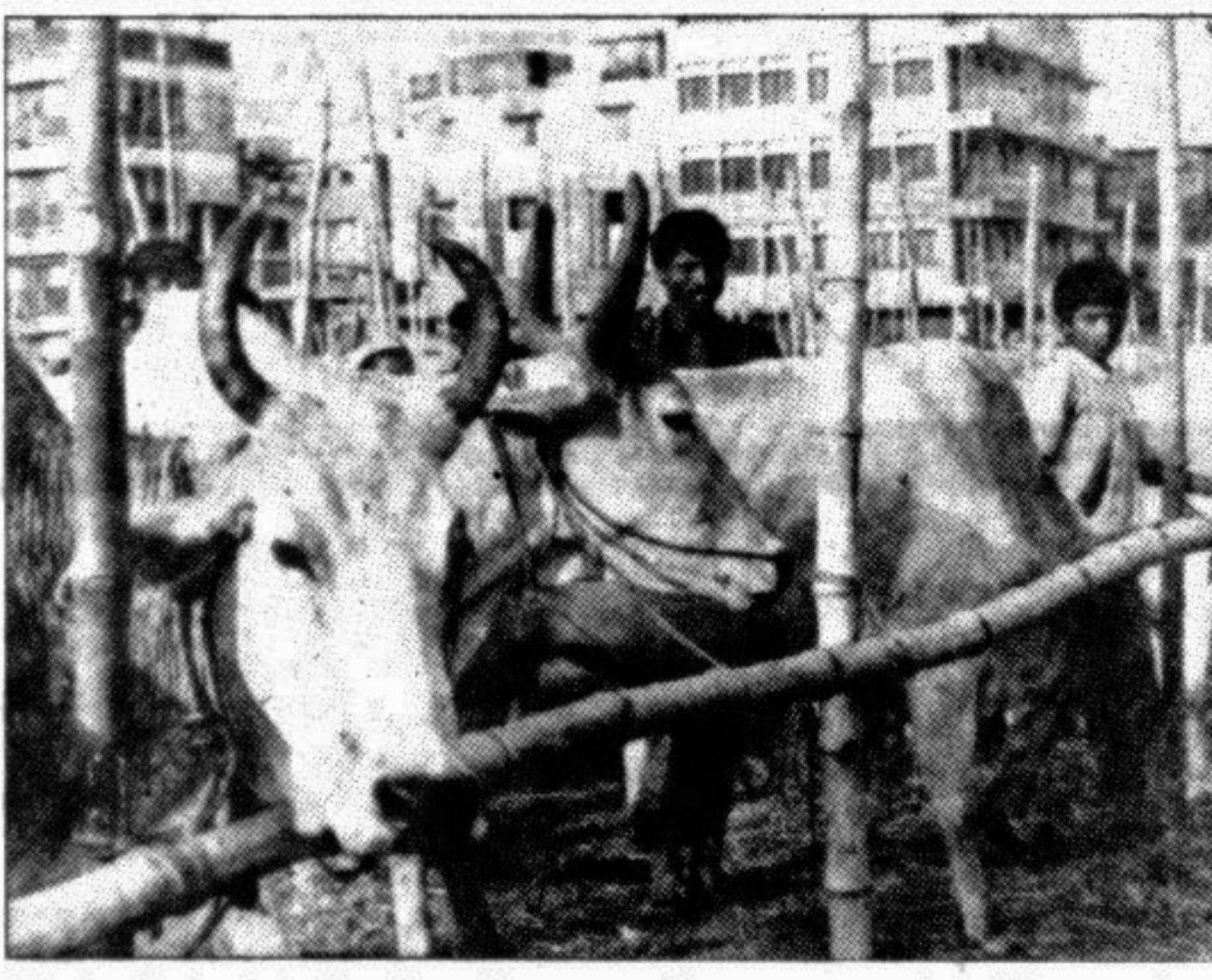
The dead were identified as Jalaluddin Mollah, 60, of Lakshmandia village and Narayan Halder, 26, of Char Shamnagar village.

The storm damaged 1500 thatched houses in the villages of Dharmashi, Kajuri, Hajrakhal, Jaldia, Baniari, Lakshmandia, Saikhathi, Roynagar and Char Shamnagar.

In Pabna, an old man was killed and 50 people were injured when a severe tropical storm lashed over Bera and Sujanager thanas of the district at night.

Witnesses said Javed Mia, 65, was killed when a tree fell on him during the storm at Kanarpur village in the Sujanager thana.

Of the injured, 17 were admitted to Bera and Sujanager thana health complexes.



With Eid-ul-Azha barely a week away, makeshift cattle markets have started cropping up all over city. This picture was taken at Kamalapur yesterday. —Star photo

Cattle markets preparing for Eid sales

By Reaz Ahmad

Special security measures will be taken to ensure a trouble-free atmosphere in the 17 sacrificial animal markets in the city, which go into business from Monday, three days ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha.

Besides normal patrol by Dhaka Metropolitan Police, one platoon of police under three magistrates of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) would be on round the clock mobile duty in the sacrificial animal markets in different areas of the metropolis to check pick-pocketing extortion and other unlawful activities, said DCC sources.

Till Thursday, the DCC leased out 17 temporary cattle markets through open tenders that fetched Taka 72.95,000 for the corporation, as against Taka 62,12,300 last year.

Maintaining its tradition of being the biggest one, the Nayabazar animal market has this time also been leased out at the highest amount of Taka 30,56,000. Last year, the market was leased at Taka 26,50,000.

The DCC authorities had to call tenders, three times for leasing Dhanmondi Sports Ground and Hazaribagh Ground markets due to low bidding. But all the two markets were leased at far lower rate than that of the previous year. The

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GOP sweeps DU Senate polls

By Staff Correspondent

The Ganatantrik Oikya Parishad (GOP) has won all the 25 posts of registered graduates' representatives to the Dhaka University Senate, according to unofficial results of the election available yesterday.

A total of 6336 registered graduates from across the country elected the 25 representatives for a three-year tenure.

Candidates from three panels — GOP (supporters of the Awami League and left parties), White (supporters of the BNP) and third one comprising supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party — contested the elections.

See Page 12 Col 8



Israeli policemen arrest Jewish far-right nationalists who tried to force their way into the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem as Israel celebrated its 47th Independence Day yesterday. —AFP photo

Scuffle inside Al-Aqsa complex: 4 hurt

JERUSALEM, May 4: Right-wing Jews burst into the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex today sparking a scuffle in which three Israeli police officers and a Palestinian guard were hurt, a police spokesman said, reports Reuter.

The Jews, who intended to pray at the site also known as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's old city, were eventually pushed out. Police detained 12 Israelis, the spokesman said.

Sheikh Abdel-Aziz Salhab, an official of the Waqf (Islamic trust), told Reuters some of the Jews were armed. Police confirmed the report.

A Jewish settler shot dead 29 Arab worshippers at a mosque in February last year in the West Bank town of Hebron. Civilians are now barred from carrying weapons into the Hebron mosque.

Asked about regulations at the site, the spokesman said: "We are maintaining strict security at the site."

See Page 12 Col 8

Urgent Notice to Esteemed Power Consumers on Use of Electricity

Attention of all power consumers & the public is drawn to the following steps in view of ensuring smooth distribution of electricity received from the national grid as per demands of all classes of consumers & implementation of the Govt announced electricity load management policy.

- Irrigation pumps should be kept off during peak hours i.e. 6 pm to 10 pm.
- All kinds of shops & shopping centres except medicine, kutchabazar, wholesale market of perishables & eating houses, should be kept shut after 8 pm.
- All kinds of illumination shall remain prohibited except on the Govt announced special festival days.
- Use of such high power consuming electrical appliances as iron, heater, cooker, water heater etc shall have to be kept as much possible limited during peak hours i.e. 6 pm to 10 pm.
- Industrial factories running on single shift shall have to operate in day time or remaining time of the night.
- Unnecessary burning of lights and operation of fans & other electrical implements shall have to be discouraged.

Cooperation of esteemed consumers/all concerned is solicited smooth use of electricity available under the present situation & proper implementation of the electricity load management policy.

DPP-10850/294 G-699

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority