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Notice
 Our today's instalment of interview series on BUDGET '95-96 by M R Ali, Chairman, Shippers Council of Bangladesh, scheduled to appear on Page 6, has been held over for tomorrow due to space constraints. Inconvenience to readers is greatly regretted.

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STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	766.62 (-0.51%)
Market capitalisation Tk	44.81 billion
Transactions in volume	60120
Transactions in value Tk	10.35 million

Weekend Magazine
 Manik Bandyopadhyay: Some issues and concerns;
 The question of Gopala's accession: A fresh study;
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 No to Sumptuous Dishes Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

HSC exams from July 6

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examinations under the four education boards of the country will begin July 6. The detailed timetable of the examinations of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Comilla and Jessore education boards will be announced in due time, said a PID handout yesterday, reports UNB.

Norwegian minister due Sunday

Norwegian Development Assistance Minister Mrs Curry Nordheim Larsen arrives here Sunday on a four-day visit to Bangladesh. The visit is taking place in continuity of the existing bilateral economic relations between Bangladesh and Norway, said an official handout last night, reports UNB.

Truck sramik leader killed

SIRAJGANJ, May 18: A local truck sramik union leader was killed near a bus stand in Ullapara thana of the district on Wednesday night. Jamaluddin, 30, who worked at the Srikhola bus-truck stand in Ullapara as a 'chain master', was allegedly strangled by his rivals who were aspirants for his post, police said. His body was recovered from a field near the bus stand this morning, reports UNB.

Israeli confiscation of land in East Jerusalem US vetoes UN resolution

UNITED NATIONS, May 18: The United States used its veto late Wednesday for the first time in five years to kill a Security Council resolution calling on Israel to rescind its expropriation of Arab land in East Jerusalem, reports Reuter.

All 14 other Council members voted in favour. But the negative vote by the United States, one of the five permanent members, was enough to block adoption of the resolution.

It was the 70th US veto in UN history. The last was in May 1990 over the situation in the Israeli-occupied territories. Russia and the then Soviet Union have cast 116 vetoes, most recently last

December, to block a resolution on the former Yugoslavia.

The US veto climaxed a debate, begun last Friday, on Israel's decision to expropriate 131 acres of land in areas of Jerusalem captured from Jordan in the 1967 Middle East war. It is to be used for housing and a police headquarters.

Virtually all the nearly 40 speakers in the debate criticised Israel and urged it to roll back the confiscation order.

US ambassador Madeleine Albright said she was casting the veto 'reluctantly, but without hesitation, on an issue of principle.'

The principle is this: The only path to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive

peace in the Middle East is direct talks between the parties.

She said the United States was compelled to oppose the resolution because 'the Council sought to declare itself on a permanent status issue — Jerusalem — and thus violated this principle.'

Albright was referring to a range of particularly thorny matters which, under a 1993 accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), do not have to be discussed by the two sides until next May.

Arabs today attacked the US veto and diplomats said Washington had made an Arab summit more likely by killing the UN measure.

The veto made it nearly certain that selected Arab leaders of state would meet in Morocco later this month for a special summit on Jerusalem, Arab diplomats in Cairo added.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), current chairman of the Arab League, expressed regret and astonishment at what it called the negative US attitude.

Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdul-Karim al-Kabarti called the use of the veto immoral and hypocritical. He summoned the US ambassador in Amman and used 'very harsh language.'

A spokesman for PLO leader Yasser Arafat said that the veto was incompatible with UN-res-



A mobile unit of the Dhaka City Corporation seized some unlicensed rickshaws from the Jatiya Press Club area in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Kolaroa in Satkhira district yesterday. — PID photo

Resist anti-people activities : PM

KOLAROA (Satkhira), May 18: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called for resisting the 'anti-people' activities like hartal and barricade of the opposition for smooth implementation of the development programmes, reports UNB.

She said the opposition parties were not only obstructing the development activities but also blocking the way of foreign investment.

Addressing a public meeting at Kolaroa High School ground in the afternoon, the Prime Minister sought people's support for carrying forward the on-going development programmes initiated by the BNP government and called upon all to build a strong resistance against those hindering the development process.

She made it clear that implementation of development programmes is possible only in a democratic atmosphere.

Listing various development activities implemented during

**Ministry differs on projection
 WFP forecasts 5m tonnes of food shortage**

By Morshed Ali Khan

The government has imported three million tonnes of foodgrains against an estimated shortfall of 5.01 million tonnes during the current fiscal '94-'95.

This shortfall was estimated by the World Food Programme (WFP) recently. The estimate was based on information obtained by the international agency from the government of Bangladesh and the donor community.

According to the estimate, contained in a WFP report, the requirement of foodgrains for a population of 119.7 million this year would run into 20.31 million tonnes.

The net production during this fiscal has been calculated at 15.30 million tonnes.

Minister for Food Abdul Mannan Bhuiya told The Daily Star that 30 lakh tonnes of foodgrains had already reached

40 still missing in Urirchar, Sandwip

By Staff Correspondent

The situation in the coastal areas and off-shore islands further improved yesterday as the tidal waters continued to recede.

However, the fate of the 40 people missing in Urirchar and Sandwip islands were still not known and the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway remained submerged by flood waters at many points for the second day yesterday.

Lakhs of people were affected as tidal waters and storms struck the entire coastal belt and the off-shore islands late Monday and Tuesday. The surging sea-water breached a number of flood-protection embankments in the region, damaging thousands of homesteads and destroying standing crops.

Our Chittagong correspondent reports that district administration officials yesterday said the fate of the 40 people

Money, musclemen must keep off polls : CEC

Chief Election Commissioner Justice A K M Sadeque said yesterday he would maintain strict neutrality and go tough in ensuring a fair election, reports UNB.

"Money and musclemen must not work in election," he asserted.

Justice Sadeque was exchanging views and responding to queries during a meeting with News Editors and Chief Reporters of news agencies and newspapers at the Election Commission office.

"The question of holding election under a party government or a caretaker government will have to be settled politically by politicians... But this is possibly my last assurance that I will remain neutral and fearless."

Responding to Opposition views that his appointment was an 'unilateral decision by the government, Justice Sadeque said he would not make any comment whether consultation with others was needed.

"It's a political matter and matter of politicians. What I can say is that my appointment was not unlawful," said the Supreme Court judge who

Credit rating agency soon

The country is going to have its first credit rating agency soon, possibly in less than two months, to the relief of stock investors and the banks often fumbling for investment decisions, reports UNB.

A consortium of local professionals has moved to float the agency, to be named Credit Rating Information and Services Ltd. (CRISL), in collaboration with a prominent rating firm of India.

The sponsors are learnt to have been trying for technical assistance from the Standard & Poor, a US-based credit rating agency regarded as one of the world's most reputed firms.

An official source, disclosing the move the UNB, said the authorities were considering making credit rating mandatory for stock issuers after the proposed agency coming into being.

A company, willing to float shares, has to make its rating public through the prospectus.

The proposed rating agency has already initiated to form a company and is awaiting registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission, regulator of the stock market.

Passengers stage sit-in at ZIA lounge

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury and a number of other passengers yesterday staged a sit-in at the domestic lounge of Zia International Airport (ZIA) protesting an announced rescheduling of a Biman flight.

Motia and the other passengers went to the domestic lounge of the ZIA in the early morning to take the 7-30 am flight to Jessore.

On arrival there, the passengers noticed that the check-in counter was not open even after 7-30 am. Motia and the others asked the Biman officials the causes of the delay in completing the check-in formalities.

The officials informed the AL leader that the flight was converted into a VIP flight which would leave at 2-30 pm instead of 7-30 am.

The passengers were also told that they would have to report to the airport by 12-30 pm since it was a VIP flight.

"I have started a sit-in along with other passengers to protest the irresponsible act of Biman," Motia told The Daily Star over telephone from the

Gulf returnees will get jobs abroad in phases

By Reaz Ahmad

Bangladeshi wage earners who returned from Kuwait and Iraq four years back because of the Gulf War will soon be sent to various prospective manpower-importing countries in phases on a priority basis.

A high powered task force formed on April 1 this year by the Ministry of Labour and Manpower recommended sending of 49,352 of the 72,352 Kuwait-Iraq returnees to different countries in phases. Some 23,000 returnees have already gone abroad, ministry sources said.

The task force, headed by a joint secretary of the ministry and having representations of the Kuwait-Iraq Repatriated Bangladeshi Association (KIRBA), also decided to keep on pursuing the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) for early disbursement of the already granted compensation.

The UNCC, established under the UN Security Council's resolution no. 692 in 1991 to review compensation claims resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, has so far approved compensation

Saudi Arabia to build 50 more cyclone shelters

The visiting delegation of Saudi Committee on Cyclone Grant led by the Deputy Managing Director of the Saudi Fund for Development Dr Abdul Aziz M Ali called on Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

They discussed various on-going Saudi aided projects in Bangladesh with particular reference to the construction of 306 cyclone shelters in the cyclone affected coastal areas of Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts. They have committed to build 50 more cyclone shelters.

Saifur Rahman sought Saudi assistance for rural electrification and requested Saudi help to procure railway locomotives and for construction of the Dwari Ghat Sikarpur bridge at Barisal.

**Dissidents to elect new party chief today
 Cong faces fresh split**

NEW DELHI, May 18: India's embattled Congress (I) Party may split tomorrow for the third time, when Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's increasingly vocal critics stage a mass rally aimed at ousting him as party chief, reports AFP.

More than 5,000 members of one of the most venerable political parties in the world are expected at the highly-publicised meeting, which could mark a formal and damaging parting of the ways.

Rao, 73, is in no mood to compromise, despite mounting demands from the rank and file of the 109-year-old party.

The dissidents are determined to have him replaced.

Tomorrow we will elect a new President of the Congress," asserted K K Tewari, spokesman for the rebel camp. "Our bottom line is that Rao must go, lock, stock and barrel, as the Congress President."

"The Congress is in peril and Rao must go," Tewari told AFP. "We are the real Congress. It is we who represent the party's sentiments, Rao is phoney and a usurper."

The organisers have put up scores of giant cardboard cutouts of their leaders all over the city in a massive build-up to Friday's meeting, which is widely seen as the most serious threat to Rao since he became the Premier in 1991.

The Rao camp has refused to make peace with the rebels in particular its most prominent leader, Arjun Singh, who has been spearheading a campaign against the Prime Minister since quitting the cabinet in December.

Alarmed at the prospects of a split in the party, nearly 80 Congress MPs called on the charismatic widow of slain former premier Rajiv Gandhi Wednesday to seek her intervention to avoid a break-up.

It was the largest group of Congress leaders to meet the 49-year-old Sonia Gandhi since Rao took office, one month after the assassination of her husband.

"Apart from Sonia Gandhi no one enjoys the support of all the groups in the Congress," said Gurudas Kamat, an MP who organised the 45-minute meeting. "Only Sonia can bring the warring groups together."

The Italian-born Sonia holds no position in the Congress or the government, but enjoys tremendous influence among the rank and file of the party. Party leaders including Rao regularly call on her at her heavily-guarded residence.

Congress sources said Friday's meeting of the dissidents has unnerved Rao.

**Maid's death
 Police may file murder case today**

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police is likely to file a murder case today in connection with the mysterious death of a maid at Concord Tower apartment in the city recently.

"We have been convinced following the investigation that it is a case of murder," a senior police official told The Daily Star yesterday.

Police has seized a private car from a residential area in this connection, according to a source.

Meanwhile, detectives interrogated a number of persons including the two suspects in the case — Rokhsana Chowdhury and her teenage daughter Sharmin Chowdhury — the source added.

The maid was found dead after falling from the fourth floor of the multistoried building at Bangla Motor on May 5.

**LTTE attack on Chandrika feared
 Tight security around presidential palace**

COLOMBO, May 18: Soldiers set up machine guns on rooftops around the presidential palace today to prevent a feared rebel attack on President Chandrika Kumaratunga, reports AP.

The military also stepped up security checks at Colombo port, following military intelligence warnings of a possible attack by Tamil rebels, who are fighting for autonomy in the north and east of this Indian Ocean country.

In the northern Jaffna Peninsula, hundreds of army troops with tank support expanded their hold in rebel-controlled territory yesterday, moving three kilometres (2 miles) from their bunkers. Twenty rebels were killed in the operation and 34 soldiers wounded, the army spokesman said. The army base is 310 kilometres (195 miles) north of Colombo.

Salinity rise may delay resumption of production

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 18: Resumption of production at Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Factory may be delayed due to increase in the salinity of the waters of the Karnaphuli river after the high tide caused by the recent depression, official sources said.

The factory, which stopped operation on May 15 due to nonavailability of required sweet water, has been incurring production loss of 1700 tons of fertilizer worth about Tk 70 lakh a day, said the General Manager (Operation).

One stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A youth was stabbed to death by some unidentified miscreants at Shah Alibagh in the city's Mirpur area yesterday, police said.

The victim, Jahangir Hossain, 25, an employee of a local community centre, died on way to hospital.

The motive behind the killing could not be ascertained immediately. His body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.