Inflation rate up

cent from the corresponding period of 1993-94. But the current account deficit as a percentage of the GDP, with a five per cent growth projection, increased from (-1.0) per cent to (-1.8) per cent.

Disbursement of industrial credit during the July-April period of the current fiscal stood at Tk 1547.98 crore against the sanction of Tk 2609.47 crore. Credit sanc tions to the industrial ventures amounted to Tk 2212.37 crore during 1993-94 fiscal.

Alam said the credit disbursement figure reflects the growing industrialisation of the country,, while noting that most of the investments were going into agro-based induscries, cement, composite textiles and the knitwear sector.

Responding to a question, he said foreign direct invest ment during the July-March period totalled 64 million dollars, including portfolio investments, as against 49 mil lion dellars during the corresponding period of 1993-94.

The central bank governor pointed out that a marked growth in imports in recent months, particularly of industrial raw materials and capital machinery, also indicates growing investments in indus-

Import of industrial raw materials was worth US dollar 1.53 billion, marking a 50 per cent growth over the imports of the same period of the last

Imports of capital machin ery shot up to US 220 million dollars from dollar 120 million, machinery for small in-

Tendulkar weds From Page 1

guarded his privacy and is comfortable in his middleclass surroundings in Bombay, where he grew up in a congested neighbourhood.

He became the youngest Indian to play Test cricket at the age of 16. At 19 he became the youngest cricketer to score 1,000 runs in Test matches.

Bombay's post offices have been flooded with letters seeking invitations to the cricketer's wedding but all were in

Only 75 close relatives were invited to the ceremony. one newspaper quoted Sachin's brother Ajit Tendulkar as saving on Wednesday.

The wedding will be followed on Friday by a reception with 1,000 invited guests.

Saifur

From Page 1 approved by the government recently. The approved capital of the bank owned by 13 industrialists is Tk 50 crore and its paid up capital is Tk 20

The Finance Minister noted that during the last 10 years. the banks failed to play their due role in improving the national economy since much of the public money was devoured in the name of loans, by a group of unscrupulous bank entrepreneurs having no vision for the future.

He emphasised that promoters and bankers should pay attention to removing al indisciplines prevailing in the

"We must realise the geopolitical and economic situation of a country like Bangladesh, which produces annually a population equalling that of Singapore and put in concerted efforts for pro-poor. pro-employment and proequity development," he said.

Khorshed Alam said that a cell was created in the central bank to monitor and supervise the functioning of the newly approved private banks.

He said the prospects of economic growth is enormous and the banks should play their role in intermediating funds in the country's econ-

He advised the officials of the new bank to take measures for cost control and providing better service to the people.

Southeast Bank Chairman MA Quashem pledged to bring bank service to the doorstep of the people:

He said his bank will also introduce consumer credit scheme to help people buy domestic utensils.

Justice Khan From Page 1

A former minister, Justice T H Khan was elected last March for a second time President of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Associa-

Among the 12 judges nominated by the Security Council. five were from Africa (South Africa, Madagascar, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia); four from western Europe (Sweden, Ireland, Norway and the Czech Republic); one from eastern Europe (Russian Federation); and one from Asia (Bangladesh)

Among the 12 nominees were two women - from South Africa and Norway.

The names of the other five elected judges were not known immediately.

dustries to dollar 385 million from dollar 235 million, and intermediary goods to dollar 277 million from dollar 196

The bill on rice and wheat imports saw a sharp rise during the period to dollar 170 million, which was only dollar 31 million in the correspond ing period of 1993-94. Milk powder import stagnated at dollar 34 million.

The Governor also provided figures of the export performance for the first seven months (July-January) which showed significant rise in all major sectors, including readymade garment, frozen foods and leather.

Saving that the foreign exchange reserves stood at dollar 3447 million at the end of March last renough to meet the country's import bills of seven and half months, the Governor allayed concerns about any adverse impact of a big reserve.

"There is nothing to be alarmed in the reserve figures." he said.

He referred to India's current reserve of 23 billion dol lars, which amounts to 11 months' imports of that country. "India is not concerned" he said.

At the press briefing, the Bangladesh Bank Governor was assisted by his Deputy Governors - Mahbubul Amin, Mahbubur Rahman and Shah Abdul

Budget session

From Page 1 had started their continued of boycott sessions from March 1994. The parties have not changed their stance as yet.

The next budget session will be the 20th session of this Parliament. The four-day 19th session — the briefest— was prorogued on April 27.

"The coming session would be a crucial one because the opposition members' boycott would cross the 90-day limit of absence," a source noted.

Ruling party sources said that they preferred to delay the next session by several weeks because the BNP wanted enough time before the session to strive for an agreement with the Opposition to end the lingering political impasse in the country.

Some BNP policy-makers. however, admitted that it would be difficult to reach an agreement with the opposition members keeping away from the house.

The opposition members have so far remained absent from the House for 89 consecutive working days since March 1, 1994.

According to constitutional provisions, an MP should lose his or her seat if he or she remains absent from sessions for 90 consecutive days without leave of absence from the

Speaker Although some 147 opposition members submitted their resignation letters on December 28 last year, the Speaker, by a ruling last February, rejected all the resignations, keeping their membership in-

The opposition parties. however, maintain that their resignations were valid and that they would not return to this Parliament again.



Tributes to Nazrul

From Page 1

Newspapers brought out special supplements while Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh put up special programmes highlighting the life and works of Poet Nazrul.

Begum Zia inaugurated a national level programme, a three-day 'Nazrul Mela' and a handicraft fair at the Shilpakala Academy on Mon-The national level functions

were arranged in Dhaka. Trishal in Mymensingh, Comilla town and Daulatpur in Comilla where Nazrul had spent a considerable part of his life. In the capital, various na

tional organisations. Including the Nazrul Institute, Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy and Shishu Academy organised discussions, cultural functions. exhibition, recitation and fair.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs concluded its two-day programme through a discussion yesterday at the 'Kavi Bhaban' in the capital, where Nazrul lived till his death in 1976.

A combined procession of reachers, students, officers and employees of the Dhaka University led by Vice Chancel lor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed placed wreaths at the mazar of Nazrul in the morning. The University also organised a discussion meeting at the mazar premises.

A three-day programmes began at Darirampur of Trishal where the poet spent his boy hood, vesterday, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder inaugurated the programme.

Malaria claims 50 in Sherpur

SHERPUR, May 25: Malaria that broke out in 25 villages of three thanas of the district claimed so far 50 lives including 20 children in the last three weeks, reports UNB.

Civil Surgeon of Sherpur Mohammad Lutfur Rahman however, confirmed only nine deaths in Nalitabari, Jhenigati and Sribordi thanas during the

MOU on child labour

Expressing great surprise and disappointment" at the rejection of the earlier MOU by the BGMEA members, he hoped that a revised MOU could be formulated during the fresh round of talks.

"With continued effort a MOU can be developed to maximise the development of the garment sector and to help the children," he said.

He noted that the main is sues to resolve in the new MOU relates to two specific points on educating the retrenched children and setting up an independent verification mechanism to ensure compliance, which coincides with the BGMEA decision, and also the two conditions set by the CLC to stop their boycott campaign

The US embassy officials confirmed that AAFLI would not be involved in the next round of negotiations and that it would include the government, for the first time, along with the embassy, the ILO, Unicef and the BGMEA. "We would support some changes (in the MOU) to accommodate the concerns of the BGMEA." the embassy spokesman added

"Under the next round of talks we would like to work out a two track programme." he noted.

Allaying the concerns of the BGMEA, he said provisions would be made for those international buyers who seek the complete elimination of child labour and a separate phased elimination framework for those buyers who want to help the children by agreeing to a work and study programme for the children, in line with the ILO Convention.

But when his attention was drawn to the fact that Bangladesh is yet to ratify that particular ILO convention, he said there is nothing preventing the BGMEA from adapting

On the BGMEA stipulation of only allowing the government, US embassy. Unicef and ILO in monitoring compliance with the MOU, he said that neither the embassy nor the Unicef have any desire to carry out inspections.

But he hinted that the ex isting inspections by the in ternational representatives of the international buyers could be incorporated, which the BGMEA also favours, and stressed the independence and integrity of the monitoring mechanism. "We want to find out more about the buyers' inspectors, utilise their experience and may be, use them in some way," he said.

The US official said that a comprehensive, socially responsive plan for the phased elimination of child labour was "far more preferable than by just simply throwing them into the streets," referring to the unilateral BGMEA announcement for the total elimination of child labour from the garment sector by October 31, 1995.

"The US government hopes this MOU can be successfully concluded. And both the US and the Unicel are ready to contribute substantially towards the cost of the children's education and monitoring," he added, "But the US government is not willing to force anyone to sign it. It is a

voluntary thing." He said US funding for the programmes could amount to

some 500,000 dollars, which would be channeled through the ILO's international programme for the elimination of child labour (IPEC).

He said that the embassy had contacted the CLC to inform it about the latest developments and asking it to refrain from "negative" campaign against the Bangladesh garment sector. And the Coalition agreed to temporarily post pone its threatened boycott programme, he added.

"(The CLC) said that it will watch the developments over the new MOU during the next few days and will refrain from the negative campaign for the time being," he pointed out. The CLC also reiterated its earlier commitment to support the Bangladesh garment sector if a comprehensive MOU is concluded, he said. "They agreed to initiate a campaign-"Buy a blouse from Bangladesh and send a kid to school- if the MOU is concluded."

Responding to a question. he brushed aside allegations that the draft MOU was a conspiracy', saying "The MOU was intended to place Bangladesh in the most favourable position with respect to the US consumers. and to maximise the welfare of the garment industry from impending harm.

When his attention was drawn to charges that the original MOU represented a form of US protectionism, he said, "I can't see how this could be protectionist."

He reasoned that if the US importers stop buying Bangladeshi garments they are not going to buy it from America as the wages there are 55 times higher than in Bangladesh. "It would help garment companies in other Asian countries, but it doesn't help the US garment industry at all."

NSC lottery draw results

The draw for the eighth lottery of the sports development fund was held at the conference room of the National Sports Council (NSC) vesterday, reports BSS.

Labour and manpower minister M Shawkat Ali was the chief guest on the occa-

The first prize of Taka 40 lakh was won by the ticket holder of Za0056456. The holder of ticket number Gha 0280975 won the 2nd prize Tk 10 lakh while the winner of the third prize Taka five lakh is ticket number Uma 0262318.

The National Sports Council earned about Taka 17 crore from the eight lotteries held so far.

Fertiliser crisis: Probe body to visit Kishoreganj The Judicial Enquiry Com-

mission, formed to probe the country's recent fertiliser crisis, will talk to the people of Kishoregant district on May 30 and 31. The concerned people are requested to give their statements to the commission at Kishoreganj Circuit House from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm. reports UNB.

The Midnight File

Russian troops kill 123 Chechen rebels

MOSCOW. May 25: Russian troops killed 123 rebels in 24 hours of fighting in the breakaway republic of Chechnya but lost eight of their own men, the Interfax news agency reported today, citing several sources. It quoted Mikhail Egorov, the commander of Russian troops in Chechnya, as saying "the Chechens are firing on federal troops with tanks, artillery and rockets," and that eight Russians were killed and another 20 wounded, reports AFP

JMB to be completed on schedule

BHUAPUR (Tangail), May 25: Communications Minister Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed today said the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge (JMB) construction would be completed by December 15, 1997 as sched uled, reports BSS.

He said that the JMB project alone would contribute 2 to 3 per cent to the growth of the GDP.

Costing nearly Taka 4,000 crore. JMB is one of the biggest projects undertaken in Asia and is the biggest in South Asia, he said.

He was briefing editors and senior journalists who were taken to the bridge side this morning to witness the progress of construction work of the project. Secretary, JMB project Mohmmed Ali. assisted the minister during the brief-

PM's personal physician ill

By Staff Correspondent The Prime Minister's per-

sonal physician Brigadier Mahtabul Islam was taken seriously ill on board the flight carrying Begum Khaleda Zia and her entourage to Seoul yesterday morning. As soon as the flight landed for a stopover in Hong Kong, the personal physician was rushed to the St Teresa Hospital. Brig Mahtab had myocardial

infarction and he was put under observation for 72 hours, his family sources said.

Meanwhile another physician left Dhaka yesterday to be with the Prime Minister during her trip, according to a source concerned.

Talks today

From Page 1 and a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent from the services.

National anthems of the two countries were played. The Airbase where visiting dignitaries are usually received, was decorated with the national flags of Bangladesh and ROK.

The airport ceremony over. the Prime Minister drove straight to the National Ceme try to pay tributes to the memory of those who had laid down their lives in the Korean war in early 1950s. She laid wreaths on the al-

tar and signed the visitor's book at the cemetry. Prime Minister is leading a

20-member delegation including foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman. Besides, a 45-member team of businessmen and industrialists is travelling with the Prime Minister She is also scheduled to in-

augurated a seminar on investment which will be attended by top Korean businessmen and industrialists.

BDR-BSF flag meet held

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 25: A battalion commander level flag meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles and the Indian BSF today decided to withdraw the reinforcements by both the sides immediately in order to restore peace along border. highly placed sources said.

The meeting held at Jalia, a border village in Tripura. also decided to maintain status quo in the disputed land at Fenichara river catchment and inform the higher authorities of the respective countries about the situation, sources About 200 Border Security

Force BSF personnel in Tripura took position along Asalong border of Khagrach hari lastweek

The trouble initially began following clashes between two groups of farmers of the two countries over cultivation of disputed land in Fenichara catchment, sources said.

Hasina From Page 1

was just attempting to make political gain from the issue.

Reiterating her promise to realise Bangladesh's just share of the Ganges water, Hasina said she had talks with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao on the matter while she visited Azmir Sharif in India recently.

"We are confident of resolving the Ganges water sharing issue and the Farakka problems if we go to power." the AL chief said.

In her speeches. Hasina also assured of resolving other problems like unemployment and desertification of the northern region, if people

voted her party to power. About her pledges. Hasina said, "We don't make hollow promises but act in accordance with our commitments." She termed the BNP government a

pledge-breaker." Claiming that the people were now tired of BNP's misrule, the AL president said, Those who had voted for BNP in the last general elections are now agitating against it for its corruption, nepotism and

vote-dacoity." "AL is your party and it is pledge-bound to establish your fundamental rights and it will never violate its commitments." Hasina told the meet-

Local Gano Forum leader Advocate Nazrul Islam along with his followers joined the AL during Hasina's public meeting at Shibgani Hasina is due to visit differ-

ent areas of Natore district today before returning to the

Countrywide voter registration begins

dso registered as a voter on the first day at his Hare Road residence at 5:30 pm. The CEC himself was enrolled at his Uttara residence early in the

EC sources said. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina were earlier contacted for appointments but neither could give time for personal pre-occupations. Begum Zia would be regis-

tered as voter after her return

from South Korea. The EC would again contact Sheikh

Hasina after she returns from a tour of the northern districts Jute Minister Hannan Shah was registered at his village Ghagutia under Kapasia thana

in Gazipur district yesterday.

In the city enumerators, selected and trained by the EC. visited a few areas on the first day. A resident of Green Road area said two enumerators visited his house in the evening and collected information. A school teacher acting as an official enumerator visited Dhanmondi Road No 9 in the afternoon, said an inhabitant of

colleges and madrashas, field workers of the Family Planning and Agriculture Departments - would be making house-tohouse visits until May 31. Each enumerator would receive an honourarium of Tk 1000. From June 1, their supervisor — one for every four enumerators - would be knocking

Over four lakh enumerators

mainly teachers of schools,

ered. Fresh registration would also be made, if necessary. Each enumerator will be recording information about some 200 eligible voters on

at every door to collect and

verify the information gath-



EC enumerators listing the names of the eligible voters of a family in the city yesterday, the - Star photo

first day of the country-wide registration process. three separate forms. Any citizen of Bangladesh who has attained the age of 18 on January 1 this year is eligible to vote in

the next general elections. One assistant registration officer would work for each union in the rural areas and each ward in the urban areas from June 15. The draft voter list would be published on June 25, while the final list would be available on August

The voters can examine the draft list to see whether their names have been properly enlisted. If they find their names are missing they can apply for fresh registration. EC officials said, a citizen

can be registered as a voter from only one particular area. A voter would be considered and inhabitant of the locality where he or she usually re-

During registration, the concerned voter must be physically present before the enumerators when they make their visits. It somebody wants to become a voter in his permanent address, he or she has to be present there.

Anyone giving false and incorrect information during the registration process will be punished with six month's jail or a fine of Tk 1000 or both. Any enumerator, supervisor or assistant registration officer would also be punished if they resort to malpractice during preparation of the voter list.

Identity cards would be prepared on the basis of this registration and voter list.

The government has declared a general holiday tomorrow, Saturday, to enable the employees and officers of the public and private organisations to enlist their names in

the voter list Meanwhile, the major political parties have asked their leaders and workers to maintain vigil so that none is excluded from the registration programme. Local party leaders have also been asked to remain present in their respective areas.

A delegation of the Workers' Party yesterday afternoon met CEC Justice Sadeque at his of fice and demanded extension of the time for registration. They said it would be diffi

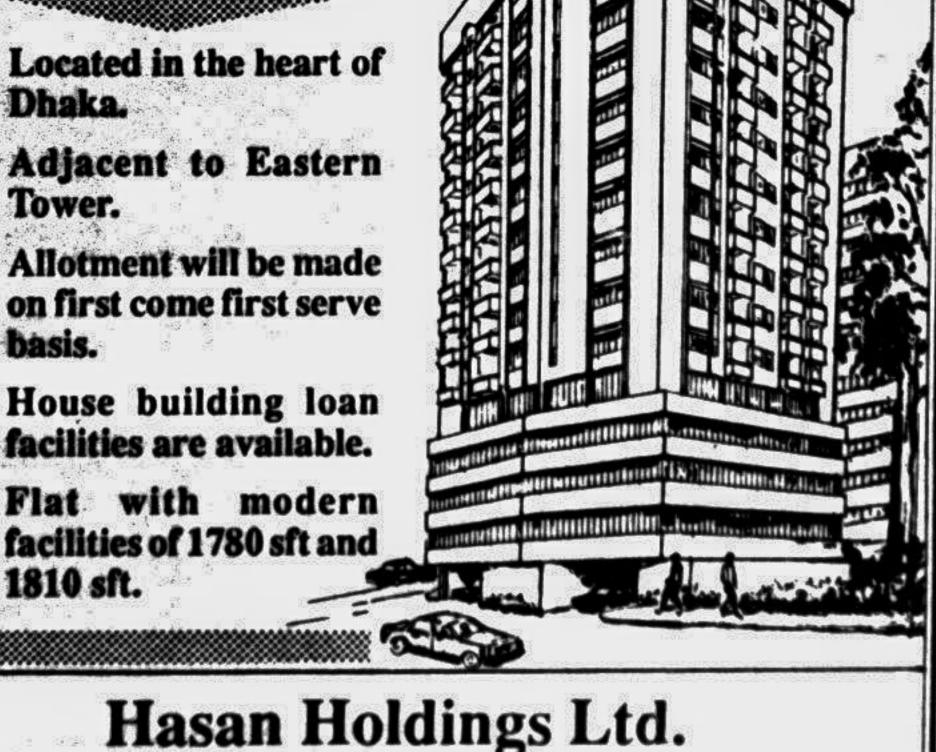
cult for many to remain present in their respective areas within the stipulated time. They also mentioned some complexities in the registration forms. Party general secretary

were present on the occasion.

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