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Vietnam's ruling party firm to maintain dominant state sector

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index: 616.25 (0.30%)
Market capital Tk: 5540.89 cr
Transactions in volume: 124702
Transactions in value: Tk 3.09 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index: 402.85 (0.30%)
Market capital Tk: 2779.56 cr
Transactions in volume: 2775
Transactions in value: Tk 486.27

Dhaka Day by Day



Visitors in Troubled Times

NEWS BRIEFS

Shop & Organisation Act suspended

The effectiveness of the Shop and Organisation Act of 1965 has been suspended for two weeks prior to the coming Eid-ul-Azha, an official announcement said here yesterday. As a result, the workers would have to be given compensatory leave and overtime allowances for working on the weekly holidays, the announcement added, reports BSS.

2 JCD activists expelled

By DU Correspondent

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Dhaka University unit, yesterday expelled two of its activists for their misbehaviour with a journalist last Friday. The two activists, Matin and Sabuj, along with another activist, Khokon, threatened Anwar Aldin, Dhaka University reporter of the Daily Ittefaq for reporting the incident of bomb blast in the Surjansen Hall of the university.

Patuakhali Polytech closed for 3 days

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 9: The Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute has been declared closed for three days beginning today. The decision was taken because of the tension prevailing on the campus following Sunday's clash between JCD and BCL activists. The Institute will reopen on Saturday. All resident students have been asked to leave their rooms.

No renewal of slavery treaty: Khaleda Let BNP complete its unfinished task

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 9: BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia urged the people to vote for her party in the next parliamentary elections to establish peace in the country by freeing it from terrorism and destructive activities.

"If you want peace and development and protection of the country's independence and sovereignty, vote for 'sheaf of paddy', symbol of BNP," she said while addressing a mammoth public meeting at the outer stadium.

"At any cost we are committed to safeguard the sovereignty of this country as we are for people and the country," she said amid thunderous applause from the crowd. Today's meeting was her first in the port city after her resignation as prime minister.

Begum Zia assured of completing the unfinished tasks for the development of the country if voted to power again. She urged the people to come under the umbrella of the 'nationalists forces' to lead the country towards progress and prosperity.

"You have to take correct decision in the next election to 'keep the democratic process and the politics of production on in the country,' she said.

She also said "we want to work together for peace and development in the country."

Begum Zia said BNP believes in ballot as it has confidence on people.

The BNP chairperson announced that if her party was voted to power the 'slavery treaty' would no more be renewed. The people are now

ready to face their enemies for safeguarding the independence and sovereignty of the country," she said.

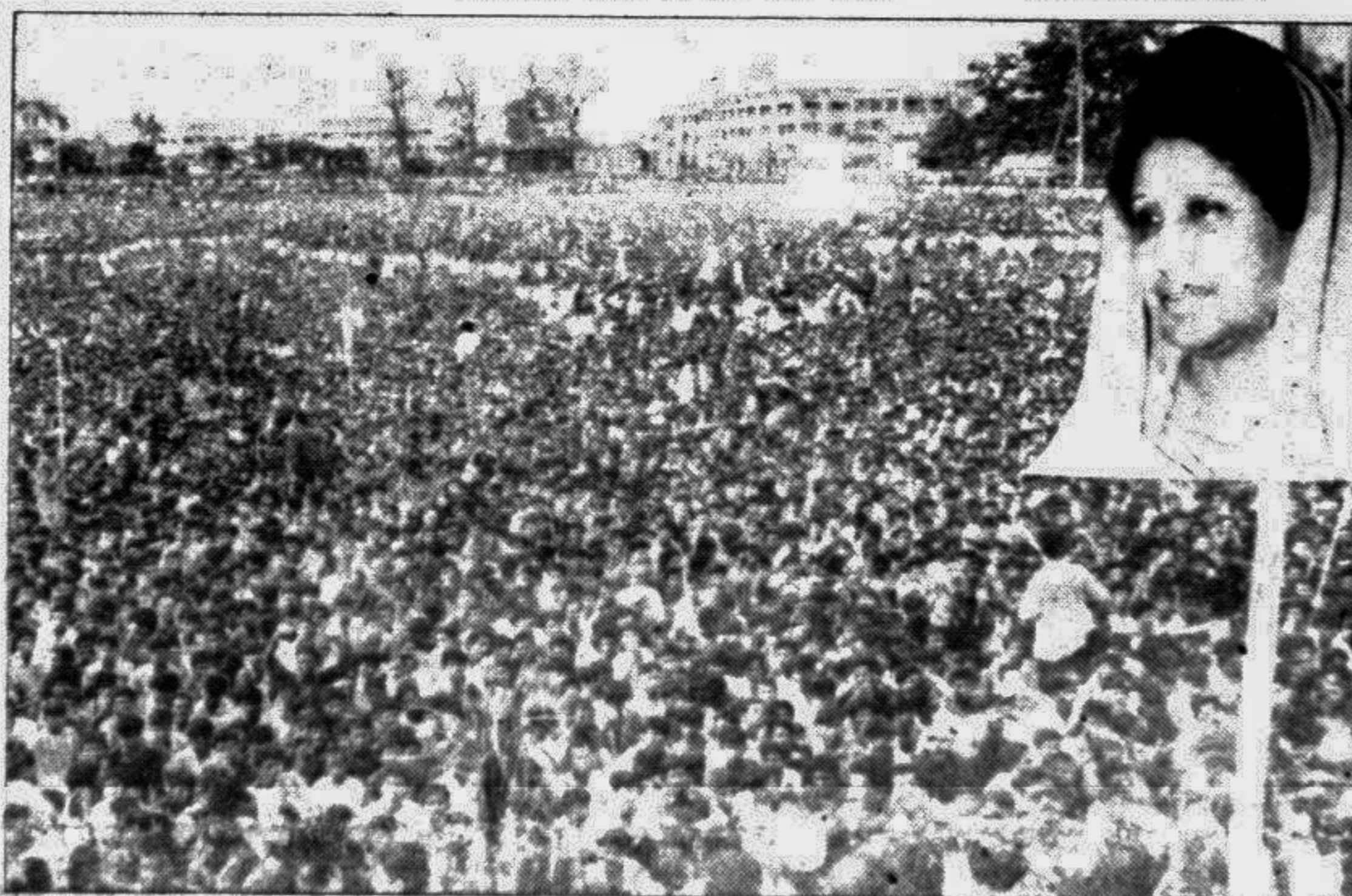
She also urged the freedom fighters to be on alert against any 'conspiracy' against the sovereignty of the country.

Begum Zia said that BNP during its rule, had taken up programmes for the benefit of the people and exempted agricultural loans upto Taka 5,000 besides providing other facilities to farmers.

"BNP never bowed down to any injustice or illegal demand she said that her party had quit power through constitutional way to safeguard the constitution.

UNB adds: The former prime minister said businesses and manufacturing sectors suffered losses of billions of

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BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a mammoth public meeting at the Outer Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

— Star photo

4 killed, 200 hurt as rival partymen clash in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 9: At least four persons, including a woman, were killed and 200 people were injured in sporadic incidents of violence this afternoon in the port city during a public meeting of BNP held at the outer stadium, police and witnesses said.

The meeting was addressed by BNP chairperson and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Among the dead, Azad Ali and Abdul Qayyum were both identified by BNP as its activists while Jahannara Begum, 50, was identified as assistant headmistress of Bakulia High School in the city.

Abdur Rahman, 40, a bidi factory worker, succumbed to bomb injury at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital at around 9 tonight.

Among the injured, 70 people were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital while the rest were admitted into private clinics.

The injured included three police personnel who received

bullet wounds during a clash with gunmen. They were admitted into the police hospital.

Azad was killed when a procession was heading towards the BNP meeting venue from Feringhi bazar came under attack by rival activists of a political party at the New Market area at 4 pm while Abdul Qayyum was killed during a clash with rivals at the Nandankanon area, police and party sources said.

Jahannara succumbed to her bullet wounds on the spot when she was caught in a cross fire near the MES College, two miles away from the meeting venue, on her way back home from the school by rickshaw, police said.

Abdur Rahman received bomb injuries at Paharshi during the violence, hospital sources said.

BNP leaders alleged that their processions were attacked at many places of the city. They blamed the activists of Awami League for the attacks and killings.

According to witnesses and police, sporadic violence started from around 4 pm at New Market, Nandankanon, Momin road, Anderkilla, Tiger Pass, MES College road, GEC crossing, Shidoshahar, Boxirhat and Muradpur.

The incidents of violence occurred when processions heading for the BNP meeting venue came under attack amid indiscriminate gun firing and bomb blasts, witnesses said.

At some places police opened fire and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the clashing groups.

The agitating processionists set fire to three police motor cycles and one baby-taxi, witnesses said.

The agitators also attacked Highway Plaza market at Lalkhan bazar and the PDB rest house, witnesses said.

Besides, around 100 vehicles were damaged during the rampage, witnesses said.

Some bombs blasted near the meeting venue when the

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CEC takes oath

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Justice, ATM Afzal yesterday administered the oath of office to the newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mohammad Abu Hena at a simple ceremony at his Supreme Court chamber.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas had appointed Abu Hena, former member of the Planning Commission, the CEC on Monday. Hena replaced Justice AKM Sadeque who resigned on Saturday.

Talking to newsmen just after the 15-minute ceremony from 1:30 pm, Hena said that he would look into all the problems in the Election Commission (EC) and solve those as soon as possible to ensure free and fair elections.

"This is a very big challenge for me and I am hopeful that with everyone's will, effort and cooperation we will be able to conduct a free and fair election which the whole nation desires," Hena said.

When asked whether he would go by the election code of conduct set by his predecessor, Hena said "the election code of conduct must be voluntary."

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Priority to agro-based industries Due share of Ganges water will be realised: Hasina

KHULNA, Apr 9: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina today said her party, if voted to power, will realise Bangladesh's just share of the Ganges water, reports UNB.

"We will realise the just share of the Ganges water and expand the agro-based industries to make the nation self-reliant," she told a huge public meeting at the Circuit House Maidan here.

Hasina said the BNP government had failed to ensure Bangladesh's due share of the Ganges water and turned the country into a market of foreign goods.

Hasina said her party will introduce a corruption and terrorism-free transparent administration accountable to the people.

"We'll serve the nation by introducing a people-oriented and accountable administrative system and adopting proper policies on the basis of national consensus," she said.

Hasina, in her unofficial election campaign, also pledged to introduce an elected local government system, provide subsidy to the agriculture sector and grant autonomy to the state-owned radio and television.

She said they will create job opportunities, establish women's dignity and take steps to increase foreign private investments in the country.

The AL chief hoped that they would be able to free the nation from the curse of illiteracy within 10 years and the educational institutions from terrorism.

"It is the Awami League which achieved the independence and will protect it by establishing an exploitation-free society," she said.

She said the past government, during its five-year rule, resorted to torture and killings and destroyed hopes and aspirations.

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing a huge public meeting at the Khulna Circuit House maidan yesterday.

— Star fax photo

4 overseas trade missions to be relocated

By Staff Correspondent

Four overseas trade missions of Bangladesh will be shifted to more commercially important locations, reports UNB.

Official sources said the country's existing trade offices in Colombo, Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi and Nairobi would be shifted to other countries.

A high-powered government committee, following the decision of a recent inter-ministerial meeting, identified the offices that deserve to be shifted to places which are becoming more important for Bangladesh's trade interest.

The committee suggested that the Colombo office be transferred to Amsterdam, the Kuala Lumpur office to Singapore and the Nairobi office to Tashkent.

For the trade office in Abu Dhabi, the committee recommended three options—Seoul, Paris and Warsaw.

The decisions followed a comprehensive expert review of the export performance in the countries where Bangladesh maintains trade offices over the last several years. Future market potentials were also assessed.

Govt wants to stabilise economy, donors told

By Staff Correspondent

Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud told the donors' representatives yesterday that the government was pursuing a damage management strategy aimed at leaving a stable, healthy and reactivated economy for the next elected government.

The government will pursue a realistic fiscal and monetary management policy to stabilise the economy as well as giving incentive for regenerating economic activities, said the Adviser at a meeting with the donors' local consultative group at the NEC committee room.

Ambassadors and high commissioners of different donor countries and local representatives of multilateral agencies were present at the meeting.

The representatives of the donors highly appreciated the measures taken for economic management by this government and extended their co-operation as regards aid programmes, ERD sources said.

Noting that a long way has

to go on the agreed reform agenda, WB representative Pierre Landell-Mills said that the caretaker government should take up the unfinished agenda so that the next elected government can enjoy the momentum of early start.

The Adviser told the meeting the previous policies would continue during the caretaker government's tenure.

"The WB representative remarked that a 'window of opportunity' had been created through resolution of the political impasse and formation of the caretaker government, the advantage of which must be taken to advance the economy."

He also remarked that the present size of the ADP was unrealistic and felt that it had to be downsized keeping its quality.

Landell-Mills pointed out that the revenue and ADP budgets must be commensurate with revenue position of the government which will have to go for borrowing which will have

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MPs of 6th JS yet to vacate hostel rooms

Star Report

More than a week after the dissolution of the sixth Jatiya Sangsad, the former members are yet to vacate the MP hostels.

A total of 208 MPs, out of the 330 of the 6th JS were allocated rooms at the hostels in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and Nakhla para. The 6th JS was dissolved on March 30.

Out of them, 153 are still in possession of rooms at the Sher-e-Bangla MP hostel, while another 55 are staying on at the other hostel at Nakhla para. JS Secretariat sources in the dealing with accommodation for MPs said Monday.

However, the MPs have not yet been given notice to vacate their rooms, the sources said.

"We have sent proposal to higher officials in the administration to issue letters to the MPs requesting them to vacate the rooms," the source said. "But there is no hard and fast rule regarding the time limit MPs are allowed to avail of official accommodation after they cease to be members of parliament."

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35 hurt as train derailed in Nertokona

NETROKONA, Apr 9: At least 35 people were injured when four compartments of a train derailed at Kandulia, about six kilometres off here, on Netrokona-Mohanganj railway section last night, reports BSS.

Police and railway sources said the train was running towards Mohanganj from Mymensingh via Netrokona when the accident occurred.

Two teams of police and fire brigade rushed the spot and rescued the injured passengers. They were sent to Netrokona Sadar Hospital.

Rail communication on Mohanganj-Mymensingh section remained disrupted since last night following the accident. Meanwhile, a railway relief train reached the spot this noon and conducting the salvage operation.

Champa murder case: All acquitted

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday acquitted all convicts of the Champa murder case of Barisal.

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice Mohammad Mozammel Hoque and Justice Mahfuzur Rahman yesterday by a judgement on an appeal acquitted the accused on the grounds of "benefit of doubt."

The court also issued an advance order for immediate release of the accuseds.

Fouzia Rahman Champa, mother of a two-year old son, was murdered in the night of October 18 or in the following morning in 1989.

She was sleeping with her son Shekhar in the bedroom of her father-in-law's house on that night. But in the next morning she was found murdered in her locked room.

Police recovered her dead body and lodged a case against

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JP submits 7-pt suggestions to Chief Adviser

Jatiya Party yesterday submitted a 7-point recommendation to Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman for ensuring a free and fair election, reports UNB.

A seven-member delegation of the JP, led by its senior President member Begum Rowshan Ershad, met with the Chief Adviser at his office and handed over to him the recommendations that includes the release of party chairman Ershad.

The delegation regretted that the advisory council of the caretaker government includes a member who was a supporter of the former ruling party and opposed the concept of the caretaker government, according to a JP press release.

JP suggested that BNP sup-

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Jalil resigns as EC

By Staff Correspondent

Election Commissioner Justice MA Jalil submitted his resignation to President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday afternoon.

The President accepted his resignation, an official announcement said.

When contacted last night, Justice Jalil said that he had resigned at his own will. Justice Jalil was appointed as the Election Commissioner on May 7, 1994.

"But I sincerely wish all the success to the new Chief Election Commissioner and the

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Army ready to attack, DPRK warns ROK

SEOUL, Apr 9: North Korea stepped up its war rhetoric today, warning that its 1.2 million-strong army was ready to attack South Korea on the orders of its leader, Kim Jong-il, reports AFP.

"Currently, the situation in our country is on the verge of war," the North's ruling Communist Party organ Rodong Daily said in an editorial monitored in Seoul.

"The Korean People's Army is full of fighting spirit to attack the enemy if the respected supreme commander Kim Jong-il gives an order," said the daily, quoted by the official Korean Central Radio.

The warning came after North Korea suddenly halted its sabre-rattling in the sensitive security area around the truce village of Panmunjom in the demilitarised zone (DMZ).

Tension has been running high around Panmunjom over the consecutive deployment of heavily armed North Korean troops from Friday to Sunday in violation of the armistice agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

AP adds: While closely watching North Korean mili-

tary incursions into their border buffer zone, South Korea has launched diplomatic efforts to defuse the tension.

Foreign Ministry officials on Tuesday said efforts were being made through the United Nations, Russia and China to dissuade North Korea from further provocations along the world's most heavily armed border.

North Korea declared last week that it would no longer recognise the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. It then launched heavily armed troops into the neutral border village of Panmunjom and aimed machine guns and mortars southward for three straight nights.

Each time, the soldiers retreated a few hours later without incident. There were no reported incursions Monday. But Seoul officials predicted that the communist provocations would continue.

Army Chief of Staff Gen Yoon Young-nam called a meeting of major field commanders Tuesday and ordered troops to respond resolutely to any North Korean soldiers crossing the border into the South.

Pahela Baishakh now to fall on Apr 14 every yr

By Staff Correspondent

The first day of the Bangla year, the Pahela Baishakh, has been permanently fixed to fall on April 14 of the Gregorian Calendar from this year (1996) onwards.

The dates have been synchronised by the Bangla Academy Calendar Reform Committee, which has also brought about some changes in calculating the leap year, says a press release.

Pahela, Baishakh, which heralds the beginning of the 12-month Bangla year, based on a solar calendar, used to fall on either April 14 or 15 before the change.

From now on, during leap year on the Gregorian Calendar, an extra day will be added to the month of Paigun in the Bangla Calendar, making it a 31-day month. Previously, an extra day was added to the month of Chaitra on leap years.

On a non-leap year, the months from Baishakh to Bhadra will have 31 days, and months from Aswin to Chaitra 30 days.

Garments owners, exporters view 'Damage management measures' needed to overcome crises

By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

Cash crisis, huge forced loans by banks, shrinking limits of loans caused by stockpiles, an alarmingly short time left to ship the existing orders and shattered confidence of buyers are the major challenges the country's garments manufacturers and exporters are now fighting to recoup their international market, industry sources said.

Garments manufacturers can overcome the odds if the government takes immediate damage management steps to resolve their crises, the sources pointed out.

In the last three months, the political unrest in the country badly affected the garments industry causing a loss of about Tk 600 to Tk 650 crore in cutting and making (CM) charge, they said. The estimate is based on the country's apparel export of about Tk 10,000 crore annually of which 30 per cent is retained as CM charge for quota items and 25 per cent for non-quota items.

The sources suggested that this amount be financed by banks at London Interbank Borrowing Rate (Libor) plus one percentage point rate to keep the garments factories running.

"About one thousand factories are now closed. They need cash to pay the arrears of workers who have not been paid in the last three months, to order new fabrics, and to pay their previous import bills for which orders had been cancelled," said Engineer M A Taher, Managing Director of Fortuna Apparels, a leading garments manufacturer.

"The repayment on new finance should start six months after loans are given and the total amount should be made repayable in three years to give garments factories enough breather," said Taher.

"This will finish off the sector," said Taher. "We suffered loss in terms of order cancellation. Now, we have to pay high interests. The Libor should be applied in cases of demand loans, working capital and loans for air freighting orders."

On the question of finance, garments exporters see a crucial role by the central bank that can pull the sector out of the present crisis. They maintain that the central bank can help provide 100 per cent export finance, as in India, to be given to individual parties through their respective banks, sources concerned said.

The Export Development Fund (EDF) which now comprises 30 million dollars can be enhanced to mitigate the crisis, many exporters feel. "EDF is a way of overcoming our handicap of having a weak backward linkage," said Iqbal Ahmed, Managing Director of Burlingtons Ltd. "We can use it to buy fabrics in advance of

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