The Daily Star

VOL. VI NO. 96 REGD. NO. DA 781 | BAISAKH 10, 1403 BS, | DHAKA TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1996 | ZILHAJJ 4, 1416 HIJRI | 12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 5.00

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index	818.31 (-0.49%)
Market capital Tk	5554.79 cr
Transactions in volume	246942
Transactions in value	Tk 4.76 cr

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NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleda goes to Khulna today

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka this morning for a two-day election tour of Khulna. She will fly from Zia International Airport to the Jessore Airport in the morning and reach Khulna by road. She will address a public meeting at the Khulna Circuit House in the afternoon. She will also address some rallies on way to Khulna town. She is expected to return to the capital tomorrow.

Hasina leaves for S. Arabia today

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will leave here for Saudi Arabia today to perform the holy Hajj. Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Rehana and eight other member of the family of late Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will perform the Hajj as royal guests of Saudi King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz, reports UNB.

President visits Sayedpur Cantt today

President Abdur Rahman Biswas will pay a day's visit to Sayedpur Cantonment today where he will attend investiture ceremony of colonel commandants of EME corps. He will also address a darbar there. The President will inaugurate a conference of corps commander of EME during the visit, reports BSS.

Chief Adviser visits secretariat

Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman paid a surprise visit to Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday morning to see the function of the government's administrative headquarters. He stayed sometime in his Secretariat office and talked to high officials including Cabinet Secretary and Home Secretary to know the situation, reports UNB.

New import policy from tomorrow

The import policy for 1995-97 will be effective from tomorrow, a government handout said in the city yesterday. The import policy for 1993-95 will expire today, reports BSS.

IJC okays 4 projects involving $ 2m

By Staff Correspondent

The International Jute Council (IJC) has approved four projects involving about 1.84 million US dollars for development of jute, jute goods and promotion of the jute market.

The approval was given in the 24th session of the IJC which concluded in the capital yesterday.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the three-day IJC meeting in a local hotel, KM Rabbani, executive director of International Jute Organization (IJO), said: "The projects will be funded by some donor countries and agencies as they have already pledged a total of about 1.53 million US dollars."

He termed the session as one of the most successful and said that a number of member countries had committed a large amount of money for funding several projects.

Rabbani said the council reviewed the market of jute goods and decided to promote it in different countries particularly in Japan and West Europe.

Among the donor countries and agencies, The Netherlands, Japan, France, India, Bangladesh and the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) were prominent, he said.

The project includes, 'Specific Applications Development of Jute-Based Nonwovens to enable Commercialisation'; 'Revised Project on Application of Biotechnology in the Improvement of Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres'; 'The Market Promotion of Jute Goods in Western Europe' and; 'Environmental Assessment of Jute Agriculture.'

The 24th session of IJC, the policy making body of IJO, also gave approval to two pre-project activities and three non-project activities namely "Development of Jute-Based Knitting product for Selected End-Uses, and human resources development in the jute industry"; "Workshop on cost reduction and quality improvement in jute mills"; "Expert consultation on jute agriculture"; and "Contact promotion programme in Australia and New Zealand."

Besides, the council approved the IJO annual administrative budget of about one million US dollars for the year 1996-97.

The next meeting of the IJC will be held in Dhaka in April

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Delimitation of constituencies unchanged

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to keep the delimitation of the 300 constituencies unchanged during the coming parliamentary polls, EC sources said yesterday.

The EC approved the delimitation of all the constituencies on Sunday and decided that the next parliamentary elections would be held on the basis of the old delimitation, the EC sources confirmed.

The current delimitation was finalised on May 30, 1995, under which the February 15 polls were conducted.

Although the draft of the delimitation of the constituencies was prepared after the population census of 1991, it took about four years to finalise it in 1995.

"After the draft, the EC hears objections and passes judgement. Then it is finalised," said the EC source explaining why it took so much

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One lakh MT sugar to be imported

By Govinda Shil

The government has decided to import one lakh metric tons of sugar to meet the local demand and to stabilise the market price, officials at the Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) said.

A senior official of the corporation said that the country's 15 state-owned sugar mills may not be able to meet the production target due to a poor harvest of sugarcane in the country.

Due to shortfall in the production of sugarcane in northern districts caused by a sudden flash flood, the BSFIC sugar mills in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Seetabganj, Shyampur, Rangpur, Joypurhat and Rajshahi are unable to meet even half of their annual output target, the official told The Daily Star.

BSFIC has already opened two letters of credits against an import order of 50,000 tons of sugar at a cost of around Tk 78 crore, the BSFIC official pointed out. Another 50,000 ton of sugar would be imported later, he said.

Talking to this correspondent, Chairman of the BSFIC Muhammad Shawkat Ali said that the corporation has a ready-stock of 70,000 tons of sugar. "We have already despatched 29,000 tons of sugar for the month of May," Ali said adding the price of the product may not increase further as there is sufficient sugar in the country.

The target of sugar production for the current fiscal year (1995-96) was determined at around 243,312 tons of which about 1,85,000 tons of sugar has been produced in the country so far.

BSFIC sources fear that the production might not exceed two lakh tons while the country's demand for the product was more than 3,50,000 tons.

"So an additional 150,000

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Six killed in Comilla road accident

By Staff Correspondent

Ten people were killed and 75 injured in road accidents in Comilla, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Gaibandha yesterday.

Six people were killed and 40 injured when a bus collided with an autorickshaw on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and skidded off the road at Mostapur in Sadar thana of Comilla yesterday, according to UNB.

Police said the accident occurred at about 8 am when the Dhaka-bound bus from Laxmipur rammed the autorickshaw and tumbled into a roadside field.

The autorickshaw driver, Abdul Gafur (60), Lokman Hossain (50) and his grandson Abdul Kader Sohail (12) and Jahangir Hossain (17) of Laxmipur and an unidentified bus passenger died on the spot. Khokon Miah of the same area succumbed to his injuries at the Comilla Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

The passengers were trapped inside the overturned bus.

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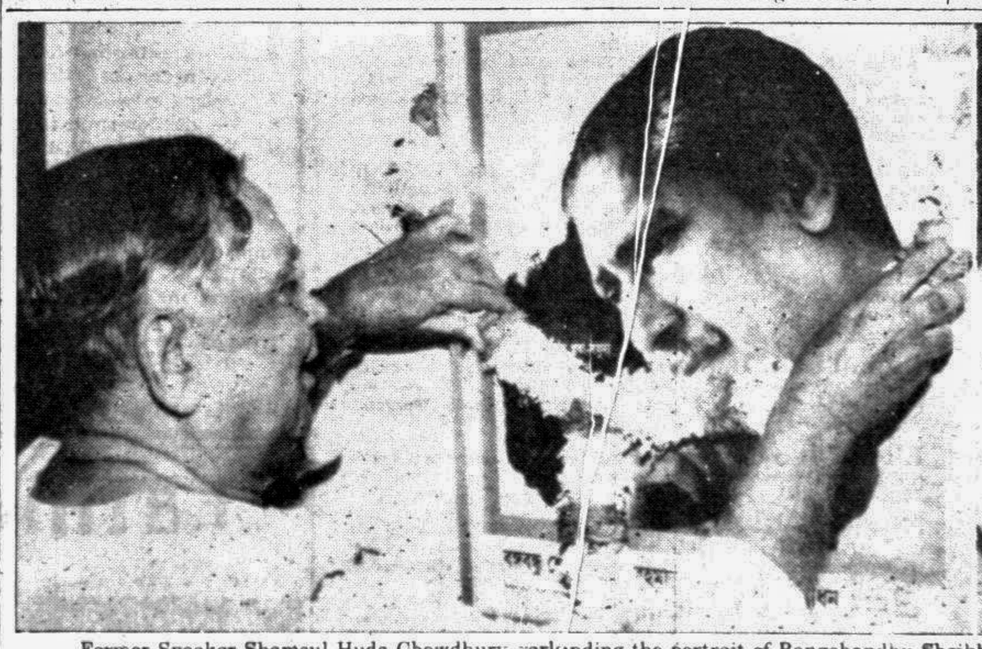

Former Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury garlanding the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's residence at Dhanmondi in the city on his joining the party (L) and K M Obaidur Rahman presenting BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia with a bouquet at the Diploma Engineers' Association office premises marking merger of his Janata Dal with the BNP (R) yesterday. - Star photo

AL polls campaign from May 4 likely

By Reaz Ahmad

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will formally launch her party's election campaign after she returns home performing Hajj in Makkah in the first week of May.

She is likely to begin the campaign from Sylhet after offering Fateha at the mazar of Hazrat Shah Jalal on May 4, according to party sources here yesterday.

Sheikh Hasina leaves for Makkah today on an invitation from the Saudi government. She is scheduled to return home on May 1.

After Sylhet, she is likely to tour the northern districts in the first phase of campaign programme.

Some central leaders of the party and mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Mohammad Hanif is likely to be included in her entourage.

The sources said that Awami League would invite applications from nomination seekers on April 25 if the Election Commission announces the polls schedules tomorrow. In that case, the parliamentary board of the party will start interviewing the nomination seekers after the party chief returns from Saudi Arabia.

Another central leader of AL told The Daily Star that the draft election manifesto of the party was undergoing last-minute checking. "We are putting our heads together to see what other important points having merit are be incorporated in our 21-point draft manifesto," he said.

AL general secretary Zillur Rahman, however, gave the impression that the manifesto was unlikely to be made public this month.

Mentionably, the AL president has already spell out the draft manifesto in last week's extended meeting of the party held at the Engineers' Institution in the city. She also invited suggestions in writing from party's grassroots level leaders.

Nor'wester hits Sirajganj: 15 hurt

SIRAJGONJ, Apr 22: At least 15 people were injured, five seriously, when a nor'wester accompanied by rain hit seven unions in two thanas of the district today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the tropical storm with a speed of 50 kph lashed four unions in Kamarkhand and three unions in Ulapara thanas.

Shamsul Huda Chy joins AL

Former Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury yesterday joined the Awami League expressing his confidence in Sheikh Hasina's leadership to implement the ideals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

Shamsul Huda, the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad during the Ershad regime, was received by Sheikh Hasina on his arrival at her Dhanmondi residence in the evening.

Earlier, Huda placed wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Addressing on occasion, Hasina urged all to rally round her party.

Awami League leaders Zillur Rahman, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hussain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Abdul Jalil, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Rashed Mosharraf were present.

50 shops gutted in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Apr 22: Fifty shops and several godowns were gutted in a devastating fire at Hatkrishnapur Bazar in Sadarpur thana today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the fire originated from an electric short-circuit at Nitaishaha Godown around 11 am and soon engulfed the bazar, burning down goods and property worth about Tk one crore.

Azizul Huq takes over as IGP

By Staff Correspondent

M Azizul Huq took over as Inspector General of Police (IGP) yesterday, according to a press release issued from the Police Headquarters here.

Azizul Huq replaces ASM Shahjahan who has been transferred to the Establishment Division for appointment as secretary. Shahjahan was IGP for four years.

Prior to his appointment as the IGP Azizul Huq was holding the post of Additional Inspector General of the Special Branch.

Azizul Huq who joined the police service in 1966 had served as DIG of the Special

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Obaid returns to BNP

Khaleda warns against one-party rule

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said that a political party was "conspiring to establish one-party rule in the country again".

Commenting on Awami League's election pledge that it would run the country with policies framed through national consensus, Khaleda said, "They spoke of governance through national consensus but had introduced one-party rule in the country".

"They're now speaking the same thing in a different language to re-establish one-party rule," Khaleda claimed.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina said recently that if voted to power, her party would frame policies on the basis of national consensus.

Khaleda Zia was addressing as chief guest the special council session of the Bangladesh Janata Dal at the Diploma Engineers' Institution in the city where its leader KM Obaidur Rahman announced formal merger of his party with the BNP.

Obaidur Rahman was the former secretary general of BNP. He, along with some of his allies was expelled from BNP in 1988 following his reported move to join the Jatiya Party. "We have merged with BNP for the greater national interest and for the sake of national independence, sovereignty and democracy."

He said all nationalist forces, groups and individuals would have to be united for the welfare of the country, its future generation and for a self-reliant Bangladesh with a stronger economy.

Without naming Awami League the BNP chief also claimed that freedom of the press would also be gagged if this party was elected. "This time, the number of newspapers may be reduced further and the state power would be exercised in a more drastic way".

Criticising her rival political parties, that had waged a united movement against her government, a visibly irritated Khaleda said, "They're very much jealous. They did not want us to do something good for the people since they themselves could not do anything good while in power. That's why, they, in the name of agitation obstructed us from going ahead with development works."

People had deserted those

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No plan to recall BNP-appointed ambassadors

By Staff Correspondent

The government is unlikely to recall the envoys who received political appointments during the former BNP administration, according to official sources.

Currently, the envoys serving abroad are Dr AFM Yusuf as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mir Nasiruddin as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Zulmat Ali Khan as Ambassador to Thailand and Akhtar-ul Alam as Ambassador to Bahrain. The first three had active involvement with the BNP.

Sources at the Chief Adviser's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the envoys would not be recalled unless they themselves resigned on personal grounds or for seeking party ticket for the next parliamentary elections.

A senior official said, "It is not the intended policy of the caretaker government to make ambassadorial or any other key diplomatic changes during this interim period. This would send a wrong signal to the host governments where our envoys and diplomats are posted for a particular tenure. However, routine changes at other levels are possible at the end of tenure of those posted abroad or serving at headquarters."

JP grand rally in city today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party will hold a grand rally at 3 pm at Manik Mia Avenue today.

According to some top JP leaders, the party will reiterate its demand for release of its jailed leader and former President H M Ershad as a precondition for holding free and fair elections.

Party sources said that the JP condition for participation in the forthcoming elections would be used as a strategy to secure the release of Ershad. The leaders were also considering a march towards the jail after the rally, they said.

Top JP leaders yesterday held a series of meeting to take stock of the situation and finalise programmes of today's meeting.

The district level leaders along with their supporters will also join the grand rally, according to a JP press release last night. The party will hold a meeting of its extended committee tomorrow, the press release said.

Ershad refuses food in jail

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party chairman H M Ershad refused his afternoon and evening meals in jail yesterday, according to party source.

Ershad had resorted to the programme to garner public sympathy for his release, the party sources said.

The Jatiya Party is scheduled to hold a rally today in the city, where party leaders are likely to plead for his release from jail for participating in the election campaign.

PNC session begins in Gaza

GAZA, Apr 22: President Yasser Arafat convened the Palestine National Council today, urging it to amend passages of the 1964 PLO charter calling for the destruction of Israel, reports Reuter.

"I call upon your council to amend all the articles in the National Charter which contradict the peace of the brave that we signed," he told the opening session of the PNC in Gaza in a reference to peace deals with Israel.

Under a self-rule deal signed with Israel last year, Arafat undertook to amend

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Govt plans deficit financing thru' savings instruments

By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir

With the government's increasing requirement for funds and the galloping inflation rate, the authorities are planing to meet much of the needed deficit financing from non-inflationary instruments, according to a well-placed Finance Ministry source.

The government in a recent meeting on the revised budget has already decided to raise the target to mobilise resources from its various savings instruments, the source said.

The target of mobilising funds through savings instruments was Tk 2000 crore. But this has been extended by another provisional amount of Tk 800 crore, he said.

As a first measure to expedite the mobilisation of resources, the government has already decided to start publicity through the media to encourage members of the public and different organisations to purchase the government savings certificates.

However, nothing has been decided regarding increase of bank interest rates, though the commercial banks have already started to offer around nine per cent as interest for six months to one year deposits.

"There is now a dearth of resources as the revenue collection dropped due to the political turmoil, and at the same time the government's expenditure rose," said the Finance Ministry source. "But at the same time the government's overriding concern is not letting the inflation escalate due to deficit financing. These obligations compelled us to explore the savings instruments to raise resources."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Bank sources said that the government is now trying to avert borrowing from the banking system to avoid liquidity crisis in the banks and also to stop inflation from rising further.

When asked about the high interest rates involved in mobilising resources through savings instruments, the source said that the interest rates on the savings instruments have been reduced by 0.5 percentage points in February this year. At the same time, fixed deposit rate of the banks have been raised by two per cent which narrows down the gap between the interest rates of the savings instruments and borrowing from the banking system, he noted.

"We took this opportunity to mobilise funds through non-inflationary instruments while leaving the banking system untouched," said the source. "Moreover, banks now need their liquidity to cope with the increased demand now created by the sudden spurt of economic activities."

The government has now two savings instruments — five years' savings certificate bear-

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Young man murdered in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A young man was murdered and three persons were injured in separate incidents of violence in the city yesterday, according to hospital sources and witnesses.

Altaf Hossain, 30, a guard at a construction site of a government project in Agargaon was stabbed to death by an unidentified gang, witnesses said.

Besides, Ilias, 28, who was also on duty at the site, sustained serious stab injuries.

Altaf and Ilias were attacked at around 2 am allegedly by a gang of about eight armed terrorists of the locality as the two guards refused to give the keys of the storeroom. The injured persons were taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where Altaf succumbed to his injuries. Ilias was later shifted to the Othopaedic Hospital.

Police, however, could not provide any details about the murder.

Meanwhile, one Raj, 28, was shot near at Monipuripara

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'Damage won't be extensive'

Sundarbans fire extinguished

By Staff Correspondent

The fire in the mangrove forest of Sundarbans was finally extinguished yesterday after two days of continuous efforts, informed Prof Md Yunus, Adviser to the Ministry of Forest and Environment.

"According to the preliminary estimate, the amount of damage is not very extensive. Trees worth Tk 2.5 lakh have so far been reported to be damaged," Prof Yunus said.

"But, the extent of damage is yet to be fully estimated. It's a remote area and therefore we can not jump to conclusions today about the total damage," he added.

When asked whether the country had any sort of equipment to fight forests fires, Prof Yunus said that he was not aware of the availability of any such equipment in the country.

He said that the Forest Department workers had a hard time putting out the fire because the canals inside the mangrove forest were dry.

The Forest Department is still investigating the root cause of the fire. Spread over an area of about 6,000 sq km of deltaic swamp along the coastal belt of Khulna region, the forest attracts a good number of illegal wood cutters, honey collectors and others.

It is suspected that the fire broke out due to negligence of such people, official sources said.

In the recent past, at least four fire incidents were reported from the Sundarbans, Prof Yunus pointed out.

BSS adds: At least 200 acres of forest areas in 27 compartment of Baidhyamari forest camp under Chanpai forest range of the Sundarbans have been gutted by the fire.

Divisional forest officer of

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