

JUICE
JAM
PICKLE
KETCHUP
SHERBET

প্রাণ

SQUASH
VINEGAR
KEWRA-
WATER
ROSE-
WATER

প্রাণ

PRAN for Health

The Daily Star

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index	820.37 (+0.25%)
Market capital Tk	5968.78 cr
Transactions in volume	109131
Transactions in value	Tk 4.69 cr

NEWS BRIEFS

Samad Azad acting AL chief
Awami League Presidium member Abdus Samad Azad will act as the acting President of the party in absence of Sheikh Hasina, reports UNB.

Police raid DU hall
By DU Correspondent
Police conducted a sudden raid on the Mohain Hall of the Dhaka University yesterday morning as part of the countrywide illegal arms recovery drive. Police raided some specific rooms of the hall but failed to recover anything. No body was arrested during the half an hour raid starting from 11:30 am.

JP extended meet today
An extended meeting of the central working committee of Jatiya Party will be held today at Agargang Community Centre in the city. Party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Monju asked all members of presidium and working committee, presidents and secretaries of all front organisations and district committees, former party MPs, party candidates in 1991 election and upazila chairmen elected from party to attend the meeting, reports UNB.

Transfer
By Staff Correspondent
Director of the Directorate of Narcotics Control Md Iqbal Hussain Khan has been made Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of Sunamganj, said a PID handout last night.

Sirajganj Juba Dal, JCD presidents held
From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, Apr 23: Sirajganj police arrested District Juba Dal President Ershadur Rahman Nuru and JCD President Nazmul Hasan Rana on Monday night from the Bazar Railway Station area Police said, they were rounded up at about 1 am while drinking at an abandoned cottage. The arrested persons were wanted in connection with several cases including murder and toll collection, police said.

31 firearms seized, 20 arrested
Police yesterday seized 31 different types of firearms and arrested 20 people for possessing illegal arms and ammunition from different parts of the country. The seized arms and ammunition include six revolvers, one cut-rifle, one single-barrel rifle, two sawed-off guns, 17 pipeguns, two LGs 71 bullets and cartridges and 44 bombs, reports UNB.

Losses in Bagda export may cross Tk 600 cr 'White spot' disease threatens shrimp industry in Khulna

By Rashida Ahmad

A highly contagious viral disease, which has no cure or treatment, is threatening the country's shrimp industry as large numbers of shrimp are dying of the disease.

According to a special bulletin recently released by the Directorate of Fisheries (DOF), 'this sort of disease has never occurred before in such a widespread manner in the shrimp farms of our country.'

The disease, identified as 'white spot' disease by experts, has most recently hit shrimp cultivation in the greater Khulna area, including Satkhira district, the DOF bulletin said.

The disease, which attacks saltwater shrimp such as 'Bagda' (black tiger shrimp), was also found in areas of Cox's Bazar in 1995. Bagda cultivation occurs mainly in the Khulna and Chittagong divisions.

Two thirds of the 30,000 hectares under Bagda cultivation in the Satkhira district, and nearly half of the 28,000 hectares in the Khulna district have already been infected by the 'White spot' disease, according to estimates by shrimp farmers in the Khulna area and the Department of Fisheries. Affected shrimp normally die before reaching marketable size, the experts say.

The 1995 Shrimp Resources Statistics record that shrimp exports during 1993-94 amounted to Tk 788 crore, rising to over Tk 1,000 crore in 1994-95, making it the third largest export industry in the country.

Bagda accounts for approximately 70 per cent of all shrimp produced in the country. In 1995, Bagda cultivation in the greater Khulna area accounted for 77 per cent of the country's total 99,919 hectares compared to 29,071 hectares in the Chittagong area.

Losses in export of Bagda, due to the disease, this year could amount to over Tk 600 crore, industry sources said. The Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association recently stated that the frozen food sector — particularly shrimp — has already suffered Tk 250 crore losses this year due to the political unrest.

According to the Directorate's special bulletin, officials are almost certain that "the disease was brought in along with shrimp fry imported from Thailand and other countries."

The first imports of shrimp fry from Thailand, Indonesia and Taiwan, began in 1994 into Cox's Bazar, according to the Central Shrimp Cell at Department of Fisheries. This area was hit by the 'white spot' disease the following year. The first outbreak in the Khulna area was reported in February of this year, after imports of fry during 1995.

An independent report on 'white spot' disease, produced by aquaculturists working in Thailand, confirm that shipping of post-larvae (fry) across national borders, legally or illegally, is widely practiced and this could have spread the infection from Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, to India, Bangladesh.

"We need to ask how and why shrimp fry was allowed into the country without any quarantine or checks," observed one official.

Nor'wester kills 5 in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 23: Five people were killed and 25 others injured, seven seriously, when a nor'wester accompanied by heavy rain hit five thanas of the district today, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Tikka, 20, and Shukur Ali, 26, of Pengashi village in Raiganj thana and Ramisa Khatun, 9, of Badraghat in Kamarkhand thana and Shuli, 25, and Nazma, 23, in Sadar thana.

Witnesses said the hour-long tropical storm with a speed of about 80 kph raged through Kamarkhand, Kazipur, Ullapara, Raiganj and Sadar thanas at 4 pm, damaging some 3,000 thatched houses.

Standing crops on about 10,000 acres of land were affected by the storm.

Meanwhile, electricity supply in the district, particularly in the storm-hit areas, was disrupted as good number of electric poles fell down during the hour-long fury.

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JP 'mass hunger strike' tomorrow to press for Ershad's release

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party yesterday announced a programme of mass hunger strike by its leaders and workers across the country tomorrow to press for release of its jailed leader H M Ershad before the Eid-ul-Azha and threatened of "outher agitations" for non-compliance.

The JP programme, announced at its 'grand rally' at the Manik Mia Avenue in the city, coincides with the reported 'hunger strike' by Ershad in jail.

Announcing the programme, JP acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said, "We are an electrifying party but do not push us to revise our programme."

It is the constitutional right of Ershad to go to his electorate to place his party programme said Mizan.

"There can be no election without releasing our leader," Mizan told the rally urging the party supporters to continue the movement for release of Ershad and the election campaign simultaneously.

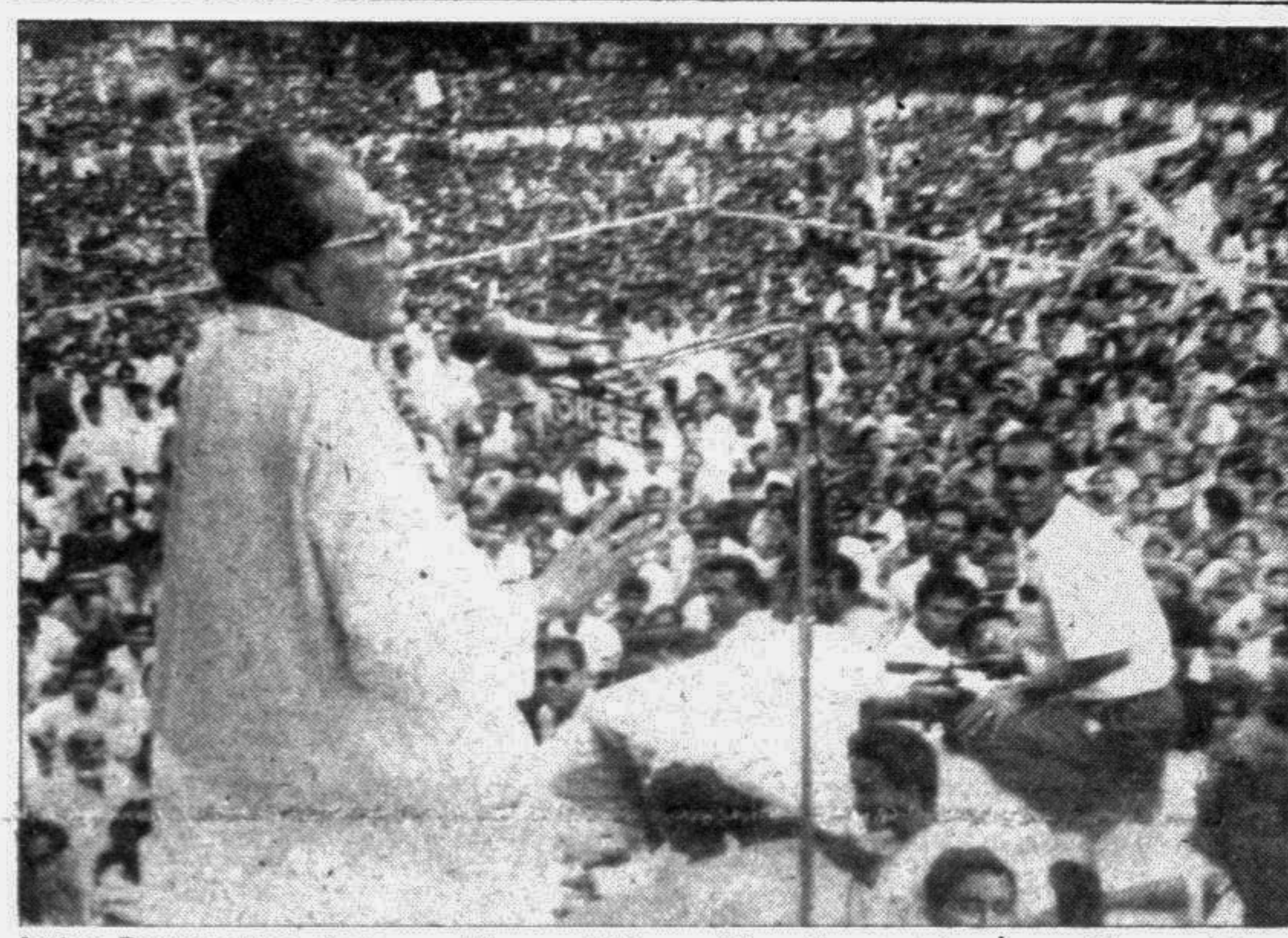
"We'll start a vigorous movement if the caretaker government does not release our leader before the Eid," he said.

Mizan said that without releasing Ershad, there could not be a free and fair election. He urged the caretaker government not to create "a situation that might hamper the neutrality of the polls."

Neutrality of the caretaker government will be questioned if it does not provide "equal opportunity" to all the parties in the election, he said.

The JP leader also urged the caretaker government to intensify the drive to recover all the illegal arms before the election to ensure peaceful and impartial voting.

He alleged that a minister of the former BNP government



Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury addressing a huge public meeting at the Manik Mia Avenue in the city yesterday.

27-pt code of conduct awaits approval

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday sent the 27-point finalised version of the code of conduct for the coming parliamentary elections to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs for its vetting, EC sources said.

The code of conduct, to be announced formally after the ministry's approval, was finalised at a meeting of the EC on Monday. The finalisation followed the Chief Election Commissioner's meeting with leaders of the major political parties on Sunday.

In the finalised code of conduct, use of religious sentiments to solicit vote has been banned. Religious places such as mosques, churches and temples cannot be used for any electioneering purpose.

The parties and candidates are also banned from using racial or communal sentiments in their campaign for votes.

Parties, candidates and their representatives have been prohibited from using the government media for election campaign. They will also not be allowed to use government transports, and utilise the services of government officials or employees for electioneering.

During election campaign, use of provocative or indecent language and any language that might hurt the religious sentiments of the people, has been prohibited, according to the finalised code of conduct.

About the use of government circuit houses, dakbanglows and rest houses, all parties will have equal rights. But those or other government offices cannot be used for election campaign. Election Commissioners will enjoy priority over others in using these.

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DUTA requests Chief Adviser to ensure security

The Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) leaders yesterday requested the Chief Adviser to ensure security for the teachers who conduct vote, yesterday placed before the caretaker government movement, in the face of threats and attacks on them, reports UNB.

A 10-member DUTA delegation called on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office when they made the request.

Led by DUTA president ATM Zohurul Haque, the delegation assured Rahman of all-out cooperation from DU teachers community with his caretaker government and wished its success in holding free and neutral elections.

The teacher leaders also demanded recovery of all illegal arms from the Dhaka University campus, arrest of the terrorists and uprooting terrorism from society.

Other members of the delegation were: DUTA General Secretary AAMS Arefin Siddique, Dr Shahid Akhter, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Prof Shahadat Ali, Prof SM Imamul Haque, Prof Syed Giasuddin Ahmed, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Yusuf Haider and Prof SI Khan.

Teachers' recommendations to CA Magisterial power sought for presiding officers

Representatives of school and college teachers, who conduct vote, yesterday placed before the caretaker government a set of recommendations for holding a free and neutral election, reports UNB.

Representatives of college, secondary and primary school teachers met with Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman and put forward their recommendations, including vesting magisterial power in the presiding officers during votings.

Prof M Shariful Islam led the nine-member delegation of National Federation of Teachers' Associations, a federative body of five associations representing college, secondary and primary teachers.

During the meeting at the Chief Adviser's Office, the teachers' delegation requested Rahman to ensure well-coordinated security bulwark around the polling centres to resist any hindrance to votings.

Citing their experiences in conducting previous elections, the teachers leaders said the political parties had been insisting that the Chief Adviser ensure a free and fair election.

But in the past, they had assisted unwanted competition for occupying vote centres like occupation of chairs while their armed agents and allies showed more efficiency in stuffing ballots in favour of their respective parties, holding the presiding and polling officers hostage at gunpoint, the teachers said.

The delegation of teachers, who perform duties in every

Jubo Dal leader shot dead in Khulna

KHULNA, Apr 23: A Jubo Dal leader was shot dead and three other BNP activists were injured while returning from the meeting of Begum Khaleda Zia here today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Rafiqul Islam Dulal, joint secretary of Khalishpur ward unit of Jubo Dal.

Witnesses said, a group of miscreants opened fire on them in front of Radio Centre at about 7 pm, leaving Dulal dead on the spot. His body was sent to Medical College Hospital morgue.

The injured were admitted to the same hospital.

BNP leaders, including Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, Rafiqul Islam Mia and Mirza Abbas, visited the body of the victim at hospital and later went to his residence at Khalishpur.

The BNP leaders blamed the Awami League and Jatiya Party activists for the killing and demanded immediate punishment of the killers.

BSS adds: Begum Zia today strongly condemned the killings of Jubo Dal leader and

Hasina leaves for Hajj

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina left for Saudi Arabia yesterday to perform Hajj as the royal guest of the Saudi King.

Her younger sister, Shaikh Rehana, and some other members of Bangabandhu's family also accompanied Hasina, said a party press release.

Before starting on her journey Sheikh Hasina offered nafil prayer at Bangabandhu Bhaban and also offered munajat at the Banani graves of family members and relations slained on August 15 of 1975.

AL central leaders including Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan; Mohiuddin Ahmed, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hussain Amu, Abdur Razzak and Dr Mohammad Selim and a host of party leaders and workers saw off Sheikh Hasina at the airport.

The AL president is scheduled to return on May 1.

In absence of Sheikh Hasina, AL Presidium member Abdus Samad Azad would act as the acting president of the party, the press release said.

Mother, 2 daughters slaughtered in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Apr 23: A young housewife and her two daughters were slaughtered allegedly by her brother-in-law in village Balabaria under Kumarkhali thana yesterday.

Younus Gazi, elder brother of the husband of Saleha Khatun, 25, was blamed for the killings.

Villagers said Gazi slaughtered Saleha and her daughters Jamelia (6) and Kamela (3) — as his younger brother married her against his will and was living at his father-in-law's residence.

Recently, Saleha's husband returned to his village with his wife and two daughters and was living in a nearby house. Her husband was absent from the house when they were murdered.

The alleged assailant went into hiding after the murders, police said.

Police sent the bodies to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Kumarkhali thana.

Dacoits kill one in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 23: Alleged dacoits shot dead a young man in village Shilak under Rangunia thana last night and decamped with huge valuables, police said.

The gang, while fleeing after committing dacoity in a house in the village, fired on neighbours who came out of their houses following cry for help. Abu Sufian, 28, died on the spot, according to police.

The dacoity was committed in the house of one Ahmed Miah.

In another incident some armed youths stormed into the house of a bank official in Ghatforhadbeg area this afternoon and decamped with colour TV, VCP and other household materials, police said.

Muggers stab 3 in city
By DMCH Correspondent
Muggers stabbed three persons and snatched away more than Tk 30,000 in separate incidents in the city yesterday, according to witnesses and Dhaka Medical College Hospital sources.

A gang of armed muggers stabbed a trader Jallil, 30, and snatched Tk 14,000 from him

Tax payment procedures to be simplified: NBR chief

Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) Dr Sadaat Hossain yesterday said, weaknesses in revenue collection that lead to "leakage and evasion" are blocking any radical reduction in tax rates, reports UNB.

He told a gathering of foreign investors in Dhaka that further reduction of corporate tax will remain a difficult proposition unless the tax administration is streamlined to plug evasion.

The NBR chief sought help from the private sector to get rid of the "moral hazards" in the revenue collection.

He pointed out that payers were also parties to the menace of tax evasion. "Sometimes rich people pay a ridiculous amount of tax, figures sometimes are definitely intriguing."

At the monthly get-together of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the NBR Chairman told the investors that the board is trying to simplify tax payment procedures to encourage more people to come into the tax net.

Tax forms are being simplified "as much as possible" to reduce harassment of the tax payers, he said.

He emphasised the importance of bringing a "balance of respect and trust" in the relationship between tax payers and revenue authorities. "There is a great amount of mistrust in the relationship at the moment. We are now impressing upon our field level personnel to treat the tax payers as respectable citizens," he said.

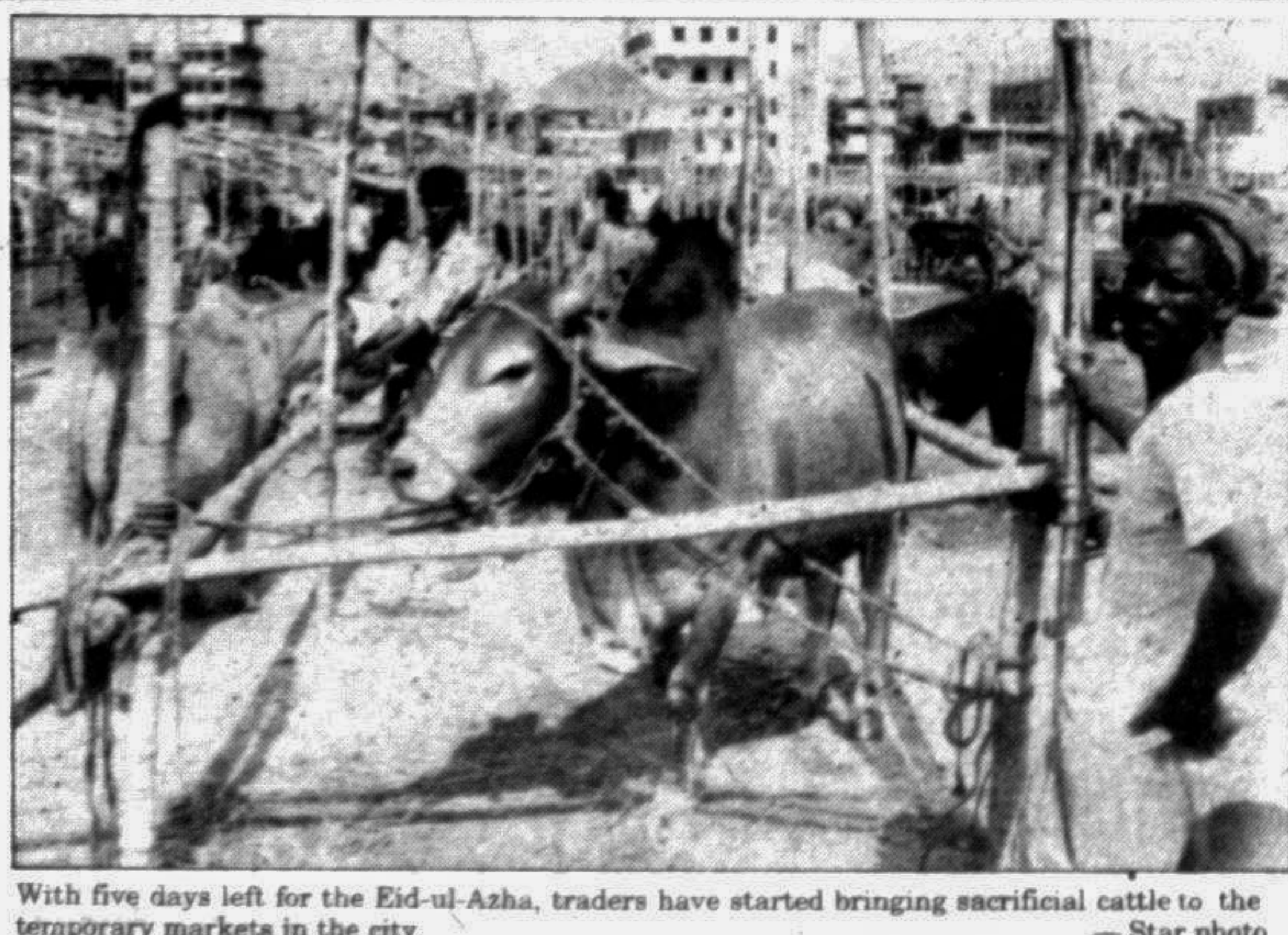
Dr Hossain lamented that income tax constitutes only 14 per cent of the country's total tax revenue. The number of income tax assesses in Bangladesh is only 623,000, a figure which is too meagre for a country of 120 million.

Earlier, FICCI President Mahboob Jamil recommended for reduction in the corporate tax rates in the next budget to encourage investment activities. He proposed that the rate be brought down to 25 per cent for publicly traded companies, and 30 per cent for other companies including banks and insurance companies.

Jamil also called for removal of existing tariff anomalies which put the domestic industries in an unfair competition with imported goods.

He pleaded for tax relief for donations upto 30 per cent of total income to genuine national level sports, cultural, humanitarian and educational organizations.

Dr Hossain assured the FICCI members that many a existing anomaly in the tariff structure would be removed in the coming budget. NBR was



With five days left for the Eid-ul-Azha, traders have started bringing sacrificial cattle to the temporary markets in the city.