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The Daily Star

Let us devote our efforts to ensure free and fair polls on February 27. Cast your vote judiciously and allow others to exercise their rights.

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A whimpering end?



Did we really need a year and then subsequently a decade to tell us that we mistreat women? Page 6

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US carriers near Iraq

Six US aircraft carriers with over 450 warplanes were in position near Iraq in final hours before a UN deadline. Page 5

Metropolitan

Dolls with magical powers



Dolls hold a special place in the cultures of all nations. Since ancient times they have been created for various purposes. Page 3

Business

Garment exports

Readymade garments had another upbeat year in 1990. A 22 per cent growth boosted its export earnings to Taka 2,200 crore. Page 8

NEWS BRIEFS

US combat preparedness

WASHINGTON, Jan 15: US soldiers moved into combat preparedness as Iraq continued to build its forces along a front of expected conflict, the Defence Department said Tuesday, reports AP.

Arab hostages put in target areas

TEHRAN, Jan 15: Iraq has put 10,000 Kuwaiti hostages at likely targets inside Iraq, Iraq hopes the hostages will cause Arabs in the alliance to prevent military action after the UN's January 15 deadline for withdrawal from Kuwait passes, said Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah governor of the tiny emirate's Ahmedi province, reports Reuters.

Body to probe CU incidents

The Government has constituted a One-Man Judicial Enquiry Commission with Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, Judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court to investigate the incidents on the Chittagong University Campus on December 22, 1990 and the subsequent days, reports BSS.

Ershad will be tried in accordance with law Shahabuddin seeks cooperation to ensure fair elections

By Staff Correspondent

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on Tuesday called upon the countrymen irrespective of party affiliation, particularly the students community, to extend all cooperation for holding the polls. The utmost need of the hour is to maintain peace, discipline and to exercise restraints and tolerance, he noted.

Addressing the nation over radio and television in the evening the Acting President who is heading the 40-day old caretaker government expressed firm determination to hold the parliamentary polls properly and impartially.

The Acting President

noted with concern that there was a trend of conflicts and clashes among the political parties, especially the big ones. The intensity of such conflicts is growing the election date approaching, the Acting President said.

He regretted that because of conflicts prevailing among the political parties the government did not get any help from them in resolving the most acute crisis like prison trouble.

BSS adds: The Acting President reiterated his firm determination to hold free, fair and impartial parliamentary polls on February 27 and sought cooperation from all

concerned, particularly from the democracy-loving student community, in this regard.

In his 18 minute address, second since he assumed the responsibility as head of the interim government, Justice Shahabuddin listed the steps taken by his government to ensure free, fair and impartial polls and said what was needed now was demonstration of utmost patience and tolerance beside maintenance of peace and order.

Code of conduct

The Acting President said the Election Commission would sit with the leaders of all political parties and representatives of the government

to formulate a code of conduct for elections. He said elections were certain to be free, fair and impartial if the code of conduct was followed by every party and its candidates and if an all-party volunteer corps was created to help the law enforcing agencies. He, however, said it would be of no use if only lip service was given to the code of conduct without adhering to it.

The Acting President said foreign observers' teams would be invited to observe the conduct of polls.

Justice Shahabuddin also said the trial of the former See Page 10 Col. 2

100 cases against Ershad before Commission

By Reazuddin Ahmed

The commission, set up to investigate the allegations of corruption and abuse of power by ousted president I.M. Ershad and his associates has detected irregularities in external purchase of foodgrains, aircraft, rescue boats and sodium lights. It also found evidence of gross abuse of power in dealing in public funds.

The commission which began hearing and examining the relevant documents from January 10, has summoned the officials of Ministry of Food, Local Governments and Cooperatives, Dhaka City Corporation and Bangladesh Human so far for investigating financial irregularities and

corruption in different ministries.

It has received over 100 cases of irregularities from various ministries so far and some of the ministries sought more time to furnish information about irregularities and abuse of power by Ershad, his ministers, members of parliament and high officials. The commission is learnt to have allowed them seven days time to complete the findings. It will now hear the officials and examine the documents to frame charges against the concerned people.

The commission has so far received over 1000 complaints from members of the

public. About 100 complaints are still pouring every day from different parts of the country against the former president and his associates.

Complaints are coming against the district collector and upazila chairman also.

The interim government set up the three-member commission on December 22 to probe the cases of corruption against Ershad and his former colleagues. The commission started receiving complaints from December 24. The ministries were asked to furnish the information by January 10. But some of the ministries could not complete the work and prayed for more time.

See Page 10 Col. 1

Gulf war preparations, fears intensify

US rejects French proposal

War preparations, protests and fears all intensified Tuesday, as the final hours passed before the UN deadline for Iraq to free Kuwait or face the use of force, reports AP.

The UN Security Council gave Iraq until Tuesday to withdraw its invasion forces from Kuwait or face removal by use of any means, including war. Although the council did not set a time, UN officials say the 48-day "pause for peace" that began in November expires at midnight UN time (0500 GMT Wednesday) or 8 a.m. in Kuwait.

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar addressed the Security Council into the early hours of Tuesday, giving a sobering summary of his failed peace

mission to Baghdad. The council was expected to reconvene later Tuesday to discuss an 11th-hour French peace plan.

The United States has all but rejected the French initiative because it offers a Middle East conference addressing the Palestinian issue. The United States opposes any resolution that appears to reward Iraqi President Saddam Hussein by linking the Gulf crisis and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said today that, with only hours to go before a deadline expires for war in the Gulf, Iraq had made "no tangible response" to a last-minute French peace initiative. French officials said Tues-

day their peace plan is backed by Germany, Belgium, Spain, Yugoslavia, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The German Foreign Ministry on Tuesday confirmed Bonn's support for the French proposal. Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis also said Tuesday that he supported the plan.

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin said Moscow respected the French initiative, as well as any initiative by UN Security Council.

But French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas remained in the French capital Tuesday morning, judging conditions unripe for a visit to Baghdad to promote the initiative, a spokesman reported.

Dumas had said Sunday that he would make a special trip to the Iraqi capital if it would be useful in encouraging Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait. US President George Bush, who has led opposition to Iraq, was briefed early Tuesday by his intelligence and national security advisers. Presidential spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Bush had made "no decisions yet" on whether to go to war.

Bush late Monday signed the congressional resolution, passed over the weekend, authorising him to use US military force to drive Saddam from Kuwait.

Iraq's state-run press on Tuesday reiterated that Kuwait See Page 10 Col. 7

Hasina urges Govt to recover arms

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina alleged that certain anti-people forces are conspiring to foil the democratic process which has been initiated after a long struggle of the people.

"The conspirators are engaged in creating terror to foil the elections", said Sheikh Hasina while addressing a large gathering of Awami League supporters in front of Bangabandhu Bhavan yesterday evening. The supporters came

there with 'boat' processions from Tejjgaon-Ramna and Mohammedpur-Dhanmandi constituencies.

Sheikh Hasina called upon the caretaker government to take strict measures to recover illegal arms and said all the democratic organisations would assist the administration in its effort.

She accused certain political parties of giving shelter to the associates or the autocratic See Page 10 Col. 6

US, European missions seek security

By Moinuddin Naser

The officials of American and European missions in Dhaka reviewed the latest Gulf situation yesterday and its impact on Bangladesh, particularly the security of their nationals.

The missions have already opened monitoring cells at their respective offices to gather information about any occurrence centering on the Gulf crisis.

The American and European missions have also sought adequate security mea-

Niaz Murshed champion

CALCUTTA, Jan 15: Grandmaster Niaz Murshed of Bangladesh settled for an easy draw against Soviet Grandmaster Yakovich to win the second Goodricke international chess championship title with a total of 8.5 points here today, reports PIT.

In the last round match neither player took any risk as Niaz Murshed did not need to win and Yakovich, perhaps, did not attempt to win against a player who was obviously in peak form.

Yakovich along with G. Flear of the United Kingdom, and Nevrov of the USSR took the second position jointly with 7.5 points each.



Emotion-choked mother receiving her son after his release from Dhaka Central Jail yesterday. (Reports on Page 10) — Star photo

3 top PLO leaders assassinated

TUNIS, Jan 15: A renegade body guard assassinated the two closest aides of PLO leader Yasser Arafat and took the wife and daughter of one of them hostage before being arrested early Tuesday, PLO sources said, reports AP.

The gunman, armed with an AK-47 rifle, fatally shot Salah Khalaf, Arafat's second in command, and Hayel Abdel-Hamid, the Palestine Liberation Organization's Security Chief, late Monday night.

He also killed Abu Mohammed Al-Omari, Khalaf's chief body guard, senior Palestinian officials in Tunis said.

The gunman, identified only as Hamza, took Abdel-Hamid's wife and teen-age daughter hostage inside their house, where the shooting occurred, in

the Tunisian suburb of Marsa Hamza demanded a plane to fly him to an unspecified destination.

A joint force of PLO guerrillas and Tunisian policemen stormed Abdel-Hamid's house. They arrested the assailant and freed the two women hostages unharmed. Tunisian police also arrested up to a dozen Palestinians alleged by linked with the killing.

Israel blamed

PTI reports: Several Arab diplomats at the United Nations blamed Israel for the assassination of two PLO leaders and described it as an act aimed at increasing tensions in the region.

The Security Council mem-

bers were having informal consultations on a resolution on deportation of four Palestinians by Israel on January 8 when the news of the assassination of three PLO men came in.

They expressed concern as the killings came just as the deadline for the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait was entering its final 24 hours.

Arafat, who was on his way from Amman, Jordan, to Paris for talks on the Gulf crisis, was informed of the assassination by radio, the commander said.

Arafat cancelled his visit because of the assassinations, Daniel Bernard, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman, said at a Paris briefing early Tuesday morning.

Arafat had planned to promote a French-Palestinian initiative in which Iraq would pull its troops from Kuwait in exchange for promises of a future Mideast conference on the Palestinian situation in the occupied territories.

The bodyguard had reportedly split from Libyan-backed PLO dissident Abu Nidal, who is engaged in a bitter feud with Arafat.

PLO security sources in Tunis and the organisation's United Nations Ambassador, M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, blamed the killings on Israel.

The PLO sources blamed Israel and noted similarities with the attack on April 16, 1988, that killed Khalil Wazir, the Deputy Commander of the PLO. Israeli sources have acknowledged their responsibility for Al-Wazir's death.



Begum Khaleda Zia speaking at a rally of retired soldiers at Gulistan square yesterday. — Star photo

Defeated forces out to foil poll: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has warned people against possible violence by the accomplices of ousted president Ershad during the February 27 Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) elections.

She was addressing the grand conference of Bangladesh Prakton Sainik

Sangsa' (association of retired soldiers) at Gulistan square in the city yesterday afternoon.

"The defeated forces may foil the effort to hold an impartial election by their illegal arms, because they are afraid of the nationalist forces getting elected to power," the BNP See Page 10 Col. 1

APSU programme to press for trial of Ershad's associates

DU Correspondent

The All-Party Students Unity (APSU) has taken up a series of programmes for realizing their 10-point demand including trial of the associates of the deposed president See Page 10 Col. 5

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