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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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Inside today

Sport

Ansars, BTMC gymnasts reign



BTMC's Rokeya wins balance beam gold medal in national gymnastics.

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Magazine

The Daily Star introduces a weekly column entitled My World—the first of which appears today, written by S.M.Ali.
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Metropolitan

Sokhina's Pithaghar



This winter's foot-path near New Market has an odd sight to offer. A young woman sits tending a makeshift fire and cooking 'bhapa pitha' at the price of Tk 1 per one.
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International

Desert to turn into a sea of blood

Iraq intends to transform the desert into a "sea of blood" at the start of land battle with US-led forces deployed in Saudi Arabia.
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National

Ganges barrage uncertain The Tk. 1,131 crore Ganges Barrage scheme un-dertaken over a decade ago now faces uncertainty.
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NEWS BRIEFS

28 Iraqi expelled by Germany

BONN, Jan 24: Germany expelled 28 Iraqi diplomats Thursday. Government officials said there was "very great suspicion" some of the diplomats controlled extremist groups in Germany and could direct terrorist activities, reports AP.

AL motorcade mishap: 6 hurt

CHITTAGONG, Jan 24: Six persons were injured when a micro-bus of the motorcade of Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina collided head-on with a truck coming from opposite direction at Saltgola here this morning, party sources said, reports BSS.

Iraq seeks food aid

NEW YORK, Jan 24: A United Nations headquarters in New York, sanctions-hit Iraq said food and medical shortages had caused the deaths of 4,224 children and old people and for the first time asked the UN to send a humanitarian mission to Baghdad to evaluate their needs, reports Reuter.

Fresh Scud attack on Saudi Arabia, Israel

First Allied-Iraq air duel

A huge number of Allied planes Thursday countered three Iraqi Mirage fighters over the Persian Gulf for the first time after the war began January 17. Allied jets shot down two Iraqi fighter planes, reports agencies.

On the other hand, Iraq unleashed a fresh Scud barrage that reportedly failed to penetrate the US-made Patriot missile shields in Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Patriot missiles on Wednesday night destroyed 6 Scud rockets aimed at both

Saudi Arabia and Israel.

On the 8th day of war, Allied planes Thursday bombed several Iraqi cities including Baghdad and Basra. Pentagon said Allied air strikes were moving south into Kuwait.

However, President Saddam Hussein braved heavy bombings by Allied forces to visit his soldiers in frontline positions and pledged Iraq would win the mother of all battles against US-led forces.

Reuter reports: In their first dogfight two Iraqi Mirage

- ★ Allies launch over 12,000 sorties, plan 3,000 per day.
- ★ Allied planes bomb hospital in Baghdad.
- ★ France, Canada join blitz of Republican Guards.
- ★ 2 Iraqi planes shot down in first dogfight.
- ★ 19 Iraqi planes downed, 22 destroyed: Allies
- ★ 169 Allied planes downed: Iraq
- ★ No one should weep for Saddam: Bush
- ★ 90 Iraqi troops killed: INA.
- ★ 25 airmen captured or missing: Allies.
- ★ Iraqi gunboat sunk by Saudi ship.
- ★ Allied planes hit 2 Iraqi tankers.
- ★ 2 oil slicks in Gulf moving south.

fighters were shot down Thursday while apparently trying to launch the first attack of the war on Allied warships in the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia said one of its F-15 fighters shot down two Iraqi Migs in a dogfight over southern Iraq or Kuwait.

A British Broadcasting Corporation Correspondent aboard the British frigate London said two Iraqi French-built Mirage F-1 were shot down by US fighters before they could fire Exocet Sea-skimming missiles at the war-

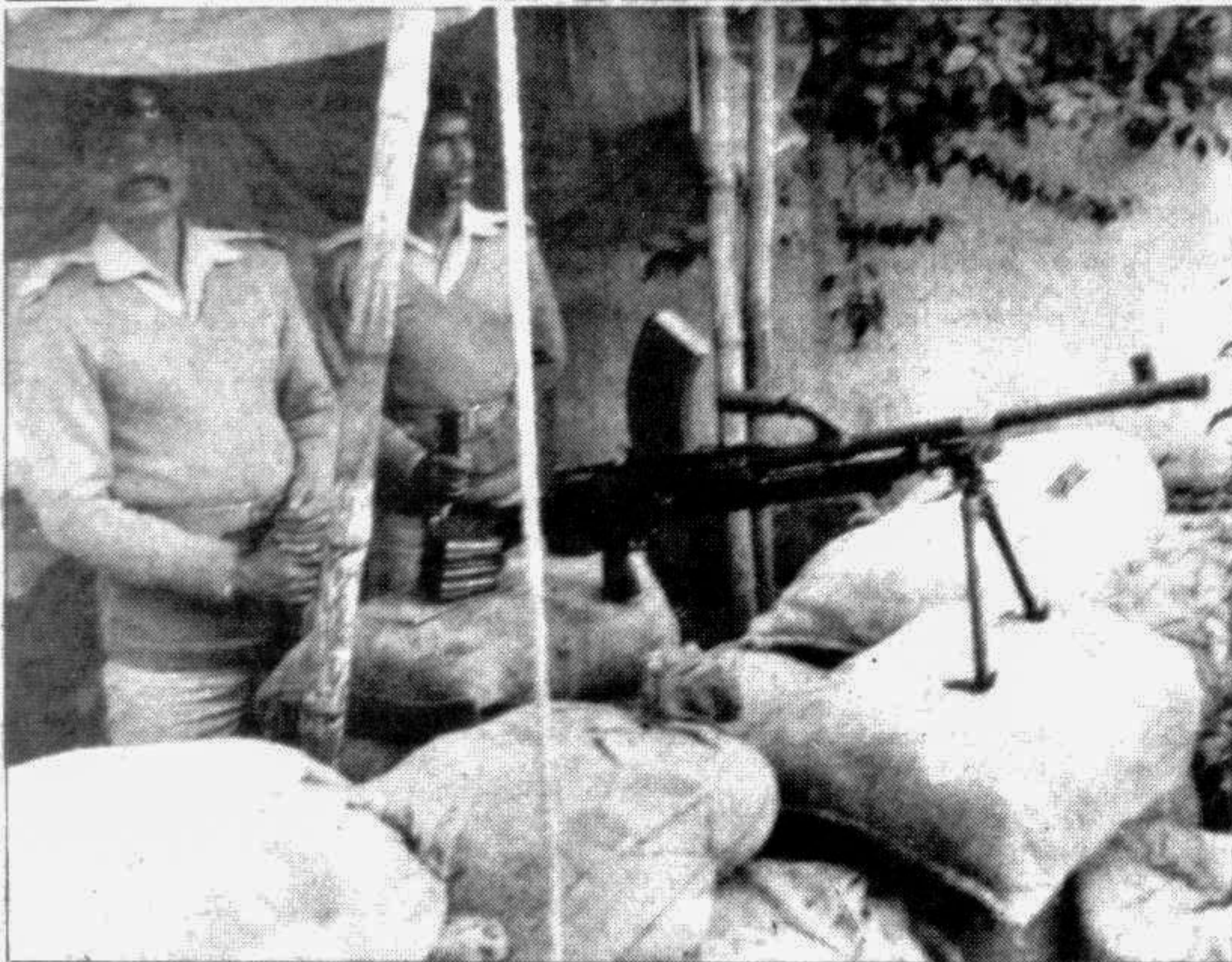
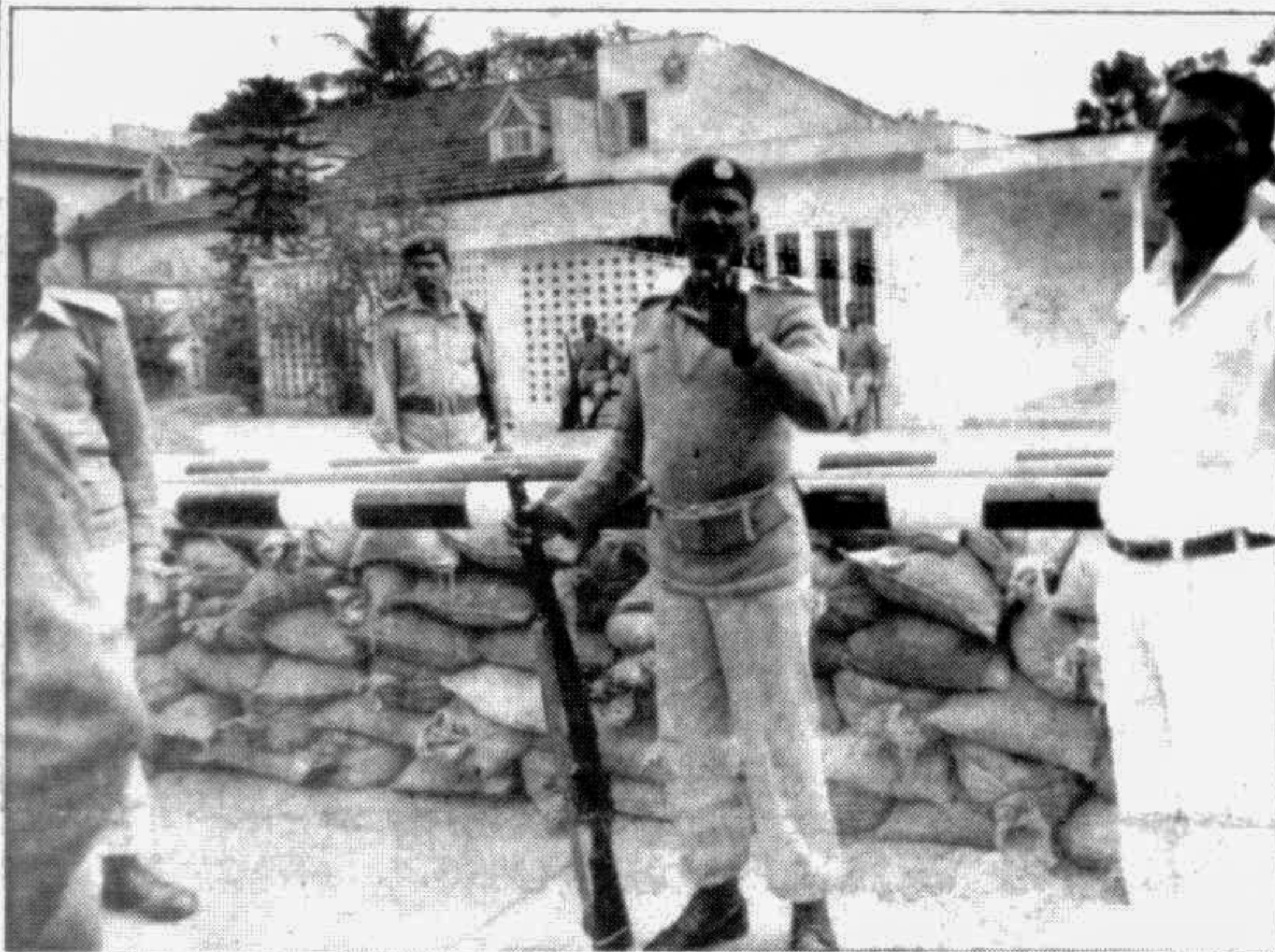
ships. Britain's national news agency, the Press Association, quoted military sources as saying a third Iraqi Mirage retreated, dropping its missile over land.

Iraqi gunboat sank

In other fighting, a Saudi ship sank an Iraqi Gunboat in a pre-dawn attack with Harpoon missiles, the state-run Riyadh radio reported.

The Iraqi ship was detected sowing mines in the northern Gulf when it was destroyed at See Page 12 Col. 1

Security at Ershad villa tightened



Gulshan villa under strict and constant vigilance. Security measures have been stepped up in the face of students' ultimatum. —Star photo

By Khalilur Rahman and Asiuzzaman

Security measures have been further tightened at Gulshan villa in the face of students' ultimatum to the Government to move the ousted President H.M. Ershad to the Dhaka Central Jail. Former President Ershad and his wife Begum Raushan are detained in the house since December 12 after the fall of his government on December 6.

The Daily Star on Thursday that the armed police battalions posted there were guarding the house. The villa has, in fact, been turned into a sub-jail and brought under the administrative control of the jail authorities, he added. Arrangements so far made for the security of the ousted President and the former First Lady were adequate, the Home Ministry official stated. He further

said that the students demand for shifting the former President to the Dhaka Central Jail was under consideration at the highest level. A senior official of the Home Ministry said the Government is in difficulty to move Ershad to Dhaka Central Jail owing to persisting prison trouble since December 29. Gulshan villa appears to be a

Absconding ex-ministers ordered to surrender

The government has ordered the former Prime minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed and 10 other ministers of ousted president Ershad to report to the authorities of Dhaka Central Jail within seven days, a government Press Note said last night, reports BSS.

The ministers are: Mr Nazir Rahman, Lt. Col. (ret) Zafar Imam, Mr A. B. M. Ruhul Amin Howlader, Mr Anisul Islam Mahmud, Mr Ziauddin Ahmed, Bablu, Kazi Piroz Rashid, Mr Abul Hasnat,

Nazir Rahman, Lt. Col. (ret) Zafar Imam, Mr A. B. M. Ruhul amin Howlader, Mr. Abul Hasnat on December 11 1990 under Section 3 (1) (A) of Special Powers Act of 1974 in the interest of public safety and order. The former Prime Minister and the ministers are now in hiding. The following is the text of the Press Note: The Government served detention orders for 120 days against Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Mr

Protest lodged with Iraqi Embassy

The government on Thursday lodged protest with the Iraqi Embassy here against its alleged involvement in activities which contravene with "diplomatic norms" reports UNB.

An official of the Iraqi mission was summoned to the Foreign Office to convey the protest that it was allegedly inciting and funding demonstrations and rallies against friendly countries of Bangladesh.

The Iraqi diplomat, Namir Muhammad Al-Saleh, was also asked "to desist from political activities in obtaining support for President Saddam Hussein, which is prejudicial to diplomatic norms," an official at the Foreign Ministry told newsmen.

The Iraqi Embassy official denied the allegations. Director General of the West Asia desk at the Ministry Fazlur Rahman also told reports "Bangladesh troops in Saudi Arabia are now safe and secure."

Quoting Bangladesh Ambassador to the Kingdom, Rahman said "our troops are now in defensive position 20 miles away from the front."

"There's no report of any untoward incident with our troops and nationals," he added. Rahman also informed that the 75 Bangladeshis, who earlier crossed into Jordan from Iraq, were being ferried to Cairo by boat through the Aqaba for their repatriation.

Rima murder case pending long

By Staff Correspondent

The sensational Rima murder case in which Munir Hossain Suruj and Hosneara Khuku were awarded death sentence by the Dhaka Sessions Judge on May 21 last year is now lying with the High Court for decision, according to High Court sources.

The sources said that about 60 death reference cases had been lying with the High Courts including its six other Benches outside the capital since long. Several people facing death penalty for various crimes have been languishing in condemned cells inside the jails for years together, said the sources.

All the criminal cases in which death penalty are awarded by the Sessions Judges must be referred to the higher courts for confirmation under Section 374 of Criminal Procedure Code.

But many of the cases, the sources said, had been lying with the higher courts because of the shortage of judges. In See Page 12 Col. 2

65 political parties agree to draft code of conduct

By Staff Correspondent

All political parties on Thursday agreed to a draft code of conduct to stop the use of muscle power to force a voter to cast vote illegally and refrain from spending money to allure voters.

The draft code of conduct was adopted at a meeting of political parties participating in the parliamentary elections. The meeting, convened by the Election Commission, was held at the auditorium of the Planning Commission.

The code calls for strict adherence to all election laws, respect for and tolerance of each other's opinion and equal opportunity for election campaigns.

It urges political parties to

be vocal against terrorism, avoid mudslinging and conflicts and resolve conflicts through coordination committees representing all parties.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice M.A. Rouf read out a 12-point code at the meeting. Representatives of political parties put forward their suggestions during the two-hour deliberations at the meeting.

The code calls upon political parties to refrain from interfering in each other's meetings and processions, and give voters ride in transports from their homes to polling stations.

It says the political parties should have understanding

among themselves to prevent capture of polling centres by using muscle power and illegal casting of votes. The Election Commission will cancel election at such centres.

There should be no campaign within or near polling stations which will be open only to voters and election officials and employees and polling agents.

About 150 representatives from 65 political parties were present at the meeting. Election Commissioners Justice Mesbahuddin and Justice Naimuddin Khan and senior officials of the Election Commission were also present.

The Chief Election Com- See Page 12 Col. 2

Democracy existed only during AL rule: Hasina

CHITTAGONG, Jan 24: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina today called upon the people to cast their votes in favour of her party and Alliance in the forthcoming parliamentary polls so that the nation's march towards democracy could not be foiled with the reappearance of autocracy, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina who is also the leader of Eight-party Alliance, said people had launched and won the crucial movement against autocracy not to instal a new ruler in his place but to change the whole system by electing a government accountable to them.

She was addressing a big public meeting organised by Awami League in memory of a

number of innocent people who were killed in indiscriminate police firing on the crowd who had assembled to attend Sheikh Hasina's Lalghighi Maidan meeting this Jan 1988.

Chaired by Mohanagar Awami League President M. A. Mannan, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Prof. Pulin Dey, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Ataur Rahman Khan Katsar, Mr. Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury, Advocate Zahurul Islam, M. A. Wahab, Mosarrat Hossain, Mohammad Ishaque Meah, A. M. B. Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Mr. Moslemuddin Ahmed.

Sheikh Hasina cautioned the people to remain alert so that the victory attained by the See Page 12 Col. 5

Post-'71 Govt introduced 1-party rule: Khaleda

RAJSHAH, Jan 24: BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia today urged the people to vote for her party to strengthen its hands to protect national independence and restore democracy, reports UNB.

"If you want to protect the country's independence and sovereignty, vote for sheaf fo paddy... sheaf of paddy can bring peace, progress and resolve people's problems," she told a huge gathering at Saheb Bazar crossing here on the third day of her electioneering in the northern districts.

Begum Zia said the patriotic soldiers and masses through a revolution had protected the country's independence by felling intrigues.

"Conspiracies are still going on against the independence. So, all of us should be vigilant against it and safeguard inde-

pendence at any cost," she said.

Presided over by Eklakh Hossain, the meeting was also addressed, among others, by Emran Ali Sarkar, Kabir Hossain, Mizanur Rahman and RUCSU VP Reza Ahmed.

Begum Zia criticised the proponents of secularism saying it was during their rule when Hindu temples were damaged and minorities repressed.

Justifying inclusion of "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" in the constitution, she said the rights and security of minorities were best protected during BNP rule.

The BNP leader blasted at Awami League rule saying the people had rejected it because it frustrated them and was not true to its words.

See Page 12 Col. 1

Hearing of writ against Moudud's detention continues

By Supreme Court Correspondent

Mr. Aminul Haque, Attorney General for Bangladesh opened his submission on Thursday before a Division Bench of the High Court Division saying that "for the first time in my life" I am appearing to defend a detention order passed by the Government. Special Powers Act is a necessary law to protect the society in extreme need of the hour and it is necessary to detain Mr. Moudud Ahmed, former Vice-President of the deposed President H.M. Ershad government to protect the society.

The hearing of the detention matter of Mr. Moudud Ahmed resumed on Thursday for the second day before a Division Bench of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, High Court Division comprising Mr. Justice Md. Abdul Jalil and Mr. Justice Quazi Shafiqul Islam.

Mr. M. Mahmood Ahmed, elder brother of Mr. Moudud Ahmed challenged the detention order passed against Mr. Moudud who is detained for 120 days with a view to preventing him from doing prejudicial acts in order to maintain public safety and public order under Section 3(1) (A) of the Special Powers Act.

Mr. Aminul Haque drew the attention of the Court to the salient features of the Special Powers Act and placed before the Court the background, antecedents and history of the detenu and his overt acts in destabilising the "present sit-

See Page 12 Col. 5

APSU march for Ershad's trial

The All-Party Student Unity (APSU) will launch on January 27 a march towards Gulshan where Ershad is interned to press for shifting the ousted President to jail and his trial in a special tribunal, reports UNB.

The APSU demands also include arrest and trial of the corrupt ministers of Ershad, corrupt bureaucrats, Jatiya Party bastans and recovery of illegal arms.

In a press release Thursday night APSU urged students and people of all walks to join the demonstration march, which will begin at 11 a.m.

5-party ignores AL offer

By Staff Correspondent

Five-Party Alliance is still striving hard to retain the unity of the Ganatantrik Oikya Jote (GOJ) they resolved in a meeting yesterday to ignore unilateral offer of six seats by the Awami League. Meanwhile, the eight-party components in the GOJ are now busy in pacifying the party candidates, who are unhappy about the changed stand of the parties to accept the unilateral offer by the Awami League. Many of the disgruntled candidates have threatened to desert the party.

In a bid to remove dissatisfaction among their rank and

file the CPB and NAP agreed to sit with five-party to save the GOJ. The meeting is likely to be held today, says a five-party leader. However, the eight-party leaders were found unruffled on the issue.

Awami League offered 14 seats to Baksal, eight seats to NAP, eight seats to CPB, four seats to Ganatantri Party, one seat to Janta Mukti Party and one seat to Ohidur Rahman of CPB who is learnt to have joined Awami League later. Besides six seats have also been offered to five-party

Alliance leaders. Among the smaller components of the Eight-party Alliance Ganatantri party did not officially accept the offer made by the Awami League.

The four Ganatantri Party leaders who got the blessing of the Awami League were happy to take 'boat' as election symbol. Meanwhile, Suranjit Sengupta of the party also changed his election symbol to boat.

But the other candidates of the Ganatantri Party, CPB and NAP who were excluded with- See Page 12 Col. 4