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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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International cultural night

International cultural night featuring cultural traits of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, China, Thailand, the Philippines and Tashkent.
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Becker on top

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International

Oil spill won't hinder operation

Bush said Friday and US officers repeated Saturday that the oil spill will not impede military operations.
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NEWS BRIEFS

Iraq reopens border

RUWEISHED (Jordan), Jan 27: Iraq reopened its border with Jordan Sunday after a four-day closure, allowing a some war evacuees and oil trucks to cross. Seventy Tunisians and one Jordanian family had crossed by early afternoon. After crossing the border, some refugees said 3,000 to 5,000 people -- Egyptians, Sudanese and other Arab nationalities, with a scattering of Asians and Africans-- were still waiting at the Iraqi border post of Trebil, reports AP.

Iran unveils peace plan

NICOSIA, Jan 27: Iran's Parliament Speaker Sunday unveiled a Gulf war peace plan calling for an immediate ceasefire, simultaneous withdrawal by both sides and a halt to Jewish settlement in the West Bank. The official, Mahdi Karrubi, also asserted that Iran " will certainly fight Israel along with other Muslim states" if the Israelis enter the war against Iraq, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency said, reports AP.

Saudi bans on Palestinians

CAIRO, Jan 27: Saudi Arabia has reportedly issued a new order barring Palestinians and nationals of four Arab countries from entering the Kingdom, reports from the Saudi capital of Riyadh said today, reports Xinhua.

Five hurt in Delhi blast

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: At least five people were injured when a bomb exploded near a cinema in the crowded old quater of Delhi this evening, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said.

Dissension in Saddam's armed forces?

Iraq may use chemical weapons

Iraq hinted it would use chemical or biological weapons against the Allied forces as the Iraqi port city, Basra was relentlessly pounded on Sunday, report agencies.

Meanwhile, landing of Iraqi warplanes in Iran fuelled speculation of dissension within the Iraqi armed forces.

Iran called for world help to fight the devastating oil slick damages in the Gulf.

Chemical war threat

AP reports: Iraq hinted it would use chemical or biological weapons against the US-led multinational force as allied aircraft blasted Iraq's port city of Basra on Sunday, without encountering resistance.

Iraq's new Mother of Battles radio station held UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar responsible for the ugly crimes of Allied forces that indiscriminately attack civilian, economic and religious targets.

The accusations came as Allied warplanes kept up an unrelenting bombardment of Iraq. Explosions lit the night sky above Basra, Iraq's only Gulf port and military headquarters for the Kuwait theatre.

Iran's official news agency said the flashes were seen 25 miles (40 kilometers) away in Khorramshahr. It said anti-aircraft batteries, that can usually be heard in the city, were silent Sunday. The only sounds were the bomb blasts and the roar of aircraft.

RIYADH, Jan 27: US planes attacked and hit two pipe valve systems at a Kuwaiti oil terminal feeding a vast oil slick in the Gulf, Allied commander General Norman Schwarzkopf said today, reports Reuter.

- **Iraqi cities, mainly Basra, heavily pounded.**
- **Iran calls to help to fight oil slick.**
- **Three more planes downed : Iraq.**
- **Gulf oil slick 85 miles long.**
- **Iraq fires 4 more missiles at Israel.**
- **22 Iraqi planes shot down : Allies.**
- **Oil slick moving south 13 miles a day.**
- **Oil slick spreads over 240 square miles.**

Iraq claimed it downed three Allied warplanes or missiles Saturday during air raids on civilian targets and residential areas. The Allied command said no Allied planes were shot down Saturday.

Iraq threatened Sunday to carry out lightning strikes against Allied troops after hinting it might attack with chemical and biological weapons.

It also boasted that while 'Iraq's heroes are confronting the enemy's barbaric attacks,' the country's missile forces continue to launch attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia "to make its enemies pay a high price sooner and not later."

Dissension

Reuter reports from Washington: At least 24 Iraqi fighters and other aircraft have landed at airfields in Iran, the Pentagon said Saturday.

But US Defence officials

See Page 10 Col 4

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein visiting the war front. —Photo from CNN telecast

Secondary teachers to be recruited soon

By Staff Correspondent

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education will soon recruit about two thousand government secondary school teachers, it is reliably learnt.

A total of 1,539 teachers will be employed against the posts created 'on a temporary basis' to introduce two shifts in each of the 62 government high schools. About five hundred others will be recruited to fill the existing vacancies.

Sources disclosed that the posts will be advertised after the finalisation of recruitment rules for government secondary schools. In the absence of such rules recruitment was virtually stopped in government high schools since 1984, the sources added.

The posts created to introduce two shifts include those of 40 assistant headmasters, 1,491 assistant teachers and eight head moulanas. Besides, 61 upper division assistants, 62 lower division assistants and 315 menial staff will be appointed in the government secondary schools offering double shifts.

According to sources, double shift was introduced in 22 schools at old district headquarters including Dhaka city till 1990. This year the Gov-

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Hearing of arms case against Ershad soon

By Staff Correspondent

A Special Tribunal headed by the Sessions Judge is likely to take up the arms case against ousted President H. M. Ershad for hearing soon, according to official source. The tribunal will be formed under Special Powers Act, 1974 to try the arms case.

The amended provision of the Arms and Explosives Act provides for punishment of one up to life imprisonment, if found guilty.

Police on Saturday submit-

See Page 10 Col 7

16 ladies locked in battle

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia faces Awami League General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury and another AL candidate Sirajul Huq in Dhaka 9 and 5 constituencies

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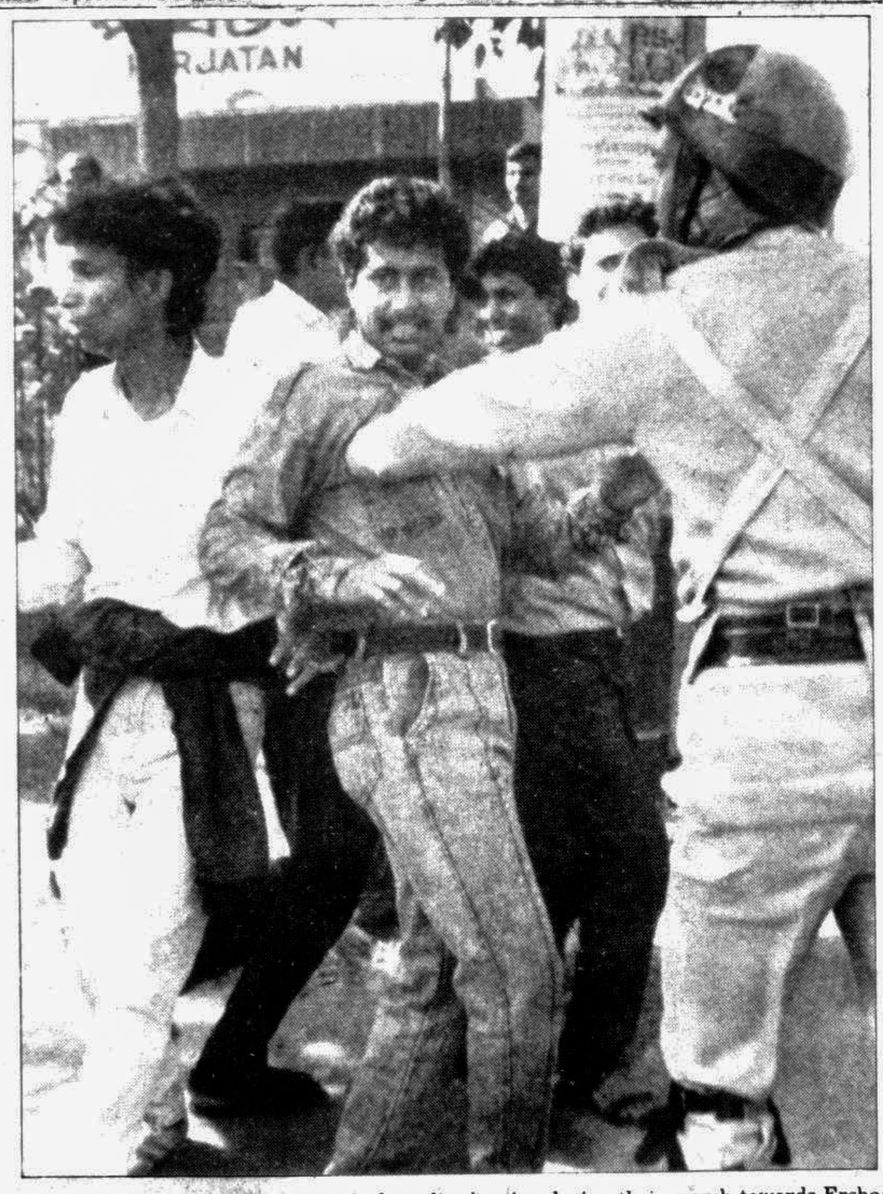

APSU demonstrators trying to break the police bastion during their march towards Ershad villa at Gulshan. —Start photo

Shift Ershad to Central Jail in 24 hours, APSU tells Govt

By DU Correspondent

Police on Sunday obstructed a march by the All-party Students Unity (APSU) towards Gulshan where the deposed president, Ershad is detained under the Special Powers Act.

The APSU march demanding transfer of the former president to the Central Jail and his trial by a special court started from the Dhaka University campus at around 12 noon.

A section of the marchers however proceeded breaking the police barricade near Bijoy Sarani. But the APSU leaders asked them to stop showing respect to the interim government when some students got agitated.

While addressing the marchers near Bijoy Sarani the APSU leaders gave an ultimatum to the government asking for transfer of former president Ershad to the Central Jail within next 24 hours failing which, they warned, an action programme would be announced from a rally on the DU campus today (Monday) at 10 am.

Among others Chhatra League (H-A) president Shahe Alam, assistant general secretary of Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) Najimuddin Alam, Chhatra Union general secretary Nasir-Ud-Doza, Samajtantrik Chhatra

See Page 10 Col 3

Farm loan relief pledge involves Tk 1,200 crore

By Moazzem Hossain

The financial implications of electoral commitments on outstanding agricultural credits alone by the two major contesting parties will involve a huge amount of funds — Taka 1200 crore to a minimum.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Awami League (AL) as well have announced in almost identical terms the programme for agricultural loan relief. It includes: writing off all loan claims up to Taka five thousand. The exemption of interest accrued on outstanding loans up to Taka ten thousand.

Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina have already committed themselves to implement the programme, if voted to power. The commitments have been made through their electoral pledges in the course of their recent tours to the countryside.

The outstanding agricultural credits are a major issue in the rural areas. Certificate cases in thousands are pending against "defaulting loanees." Fresh credits in agricultural sector have slowed down as the banks are not offering loans to "defaulters" on the ground that they have lost 'eligibility' for the same.

Total outstanding agricultural credits amount to about Taka 5,000.00 crore. The banks have so far disbursed fresh loans of about Taka 225 crore against the target of Taka 1100 crore for fiscal 1990-91.

The banking sources said about one fifth of the total outstanding agricultural loan is on account of credits involving Taka 5,000.00 or less. Accumulated interest on loan operations up to taka 10,000.00 will involve more than Taka 150.00 crore.

The agricultural loan relief programme of the two major parties will thus involve writing off a large amount of out-

See Page 10 Col 2

Hasina comes under fire for seat offering

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has come under increasing pressure from her party workers opposing her decision to concede 36 seats to the components of the Eight-party Alliance. Many of them came in processions to lodge protest against the decision at the Dhanmondi residence of Sheikh Hasina.

A truck procession was also brought out by the Awami League workers of Nawabganj to protest the decision. They held demonstration in front of National Press Club and later went to the Dhanmondi residence of Sheikh Hasina.

The AL chief also received complaints from her partymen from different constituencies about the candidates of the 8-party partners who are yet to issue any statement asking their candidates to withdraw from the race in favour of AL candidates. There are more than 200 candidates of the smaller partners of the alliance throughout the country.

Meanwhile, almost all the candidates of the smaller 8-party partners who got the blessings of Awami League have changed their election symbol to 'boat'. Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, president of NAP, is the only candidate who is contesting the election with his party

See Page 10 Col 1

30 injured in clash at JP's Chandpur meeting

CHANDPUR, Jan 27: Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury today called upon the political leaders to follow the code of conduct given by the Election Commission that calls for tolerance and respect to each other's views, reports UNB.

He was addressing a largely attended public meeting here, his home town, to start the election campaign for his Jatiya party which fielded about 270 candidates for the

See Page 10 Col 2

People know who joined '86 polls: Khaleda

GHATAIL (Tangail), Jan 27: Begum Khaleda Zia said today BNP reverted to democracy from one-party autocratic rule imposed on the country by a politicall party, reports UNB.

"BNP had first introduced true democracy in the country under a multi-party system, " she told an electioneering rally at the Thana maidan here in the afternoon.

Without naming, the BNP leader alleged those who had established autocracy during their rule later helped Ershad restore it by deposing an elected government.

"Conspiracy is still on against the patriotic nationalist forces who want to give back democracy to the people," Khaleda told her audience and asked them to be cautious against the conspirators in the

See Page 10 Col 6

Detention of Kader Siddiqui challenged

By Supreme Court Correspondent

A Division Bench comprising Mr. Justice Md. Abdul Jalil and Mr. Justice Quazi Shafiuddin of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court issued a Rule Nisi on Sunday upon Bangladesh, represented by the Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs and four others calling upon them to show cause on or before February 6 as to why the detenu Abdul

See Page 10 Col 7

No democratic rule in 15 years: Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on Sunday called on the people to cast votes for "boat" symbol to elect an accountable government for ending corruption, exploitation and irregularities practised by the past regimes, reports UNB.

She was speaking separately to delegations of Dhaka City Rickshaw Owners' Association, Dhaka City Rickshaw Drivers' Association, Bangladesh Welfare Association of the Loanees and Bangladesh Water Development Board Sramik Karmachari League.

Hasina, also the leader of the 8-party alliance, said her party and the alliance announced a 7-point socio-economic and political programme to ensure political stability and economic emancipation through establishment of a society free from deprivations.

The crises in every sphere

See Page 10 Col 1

Stern action for corruption in polls

The chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf Sunday held the first meeting in Mymensingh town as a part of the Elections Commission's programme to exchange views with politicians, distinguished personalities and officials at different places with a view to holding free, fair, impartial and corruption free parliamentary election, reports BSS.

During the meeting the chief Election Commissioner directed all to put down with iron hand any corrupt or terrorist activities. There must not be any laxity or negligence in this respect, he stressed.

Writ against detention of Mosharraf, Zinat

By Supreme Court Correspondent

A Division Bench of the Supreme Court, High Court Division comprising Mr. Justice Fazle Hussain Mohammad Habibur Rahman and Mr. Justice Abdul Hasib on

See Page 10 Col 3

Anti-US protests spark riots in India : Five killed

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Security forces with orders to shoot rioters on sight today patrolled an Indian town where five people were killed in Hindu-Muslim clashes sparked by an anti-Gulf war protest, news reports said, reports AFP.

Police and paramilitary forces were out in force in curfew bound Ghaziabad near here following the Saturday evening violence that left five dead. At least 50 people injured and more than 100 shops gutted, the reports said.

The condition of nine brought to hospitals here was said to be serious.

The violence erupted on Ghaziabad town, just outside, the Indian capital, Saturday evening after some 200 Muslims burnt US President George Bush in effigy to condemn allied attacks on Iraq, the Hindustan Times and other newspapers said.

A predominantly Hindu group of some 200 to 300 celebrating India's Republic Day nearby protested against the effigy burning, triggering verbal exchanges which led to widespread violence.

Newspapers reported that the two groups attacked each other with stones, knives and home made bombs while snipers fired on the crowds from rooftops and arsonists set ablaze more than 100 shops near the town's bus terminals and railway station.