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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

International

Winnie faces kidnapping charge



Winnie Mandela appears briefly before the court on assault and kidnapping charges. Page 5

Preparing for a new world the CNN way?

It is clear by now that the media is a key weapon in the Gulf war. Vikram Sundarji profiles the network and men. Page 6

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Agony of West Papua



West Papua has been the scene of mass slaughter and brutal occupation. Page 4

Business

Three Bangladeshi firms working in Iraq seek fund. Page 10

NEWS BRIEFS

Iraq, Syria trade fire

RIYADH, Feb 5: Syrian troops, exchanged fire with Iraqi forces, a Saudi military spokesman said Tuesday, in the first reported combat involving Syrians in the Gulf War.

Cheney, Powell due in S. Arabia

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: President George Bush said today he was sending Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Military Joint Chiefs of Staff, to Saudi Arabia late this week for a first hand look at the war effort.

4 more Iraqi planes in Iran

NICOSIA, Feb 5: Tehran television reported Tuesday that four more Iraqi planes had arrived in Iran and landed at an undisclosed airfield, Tehran television reported, reports AP.

Federal system in Sudan

KHARTOUM, Feb 5: Sudan's military government has decreed a federal system, dividing the largest country in Africa into nine states as part of an effort to end seven years of civil war, reports Reuters.

Soviet envoy enroute to Teheran

Iraq cries vengeance as allied raids go on

LONDON, Feb 5: The Iraqi army is waiting for orders to avenge Iraqi children and their mothers killed in Allied air attacks on the country, Baghdad radio said in a commentary monitored here, according to agencies.

"It is vengeance to avenge every Iraqi child, to avenge the hair of every Iraqi girl who was stained with her own blood, to avenge every Iraqi mother who cried over the death of her child," the radio said before midnight Monday.

According to Baghdad, Allied forces have launched more than 40,000 "treacherous raids" against Iraq since the

- ★ Baghdad radio, TV hit
- ★ Allied attention more on Silkways
- ★ Republican guard units hit
- ★ Uneasy lull in sea action
- ★ Allies hope destruction of half of Iraq's military before ground war
- ★ Iraq halts fuel sales to public
- ★ Schwarzkopf compares Saddam to Goliath
- ★ Iraq airs messages for terrorist attacks
- ★ Soviets welcome Iranian peace move
- ★ Gorbachev gets Saddam's negative response

start of the Gulf war on January 17.

The radio monitored by the BBC said that US President George Bush and the Allied forces were responsible for the "crime of the age."

Describing Mr. Bush as the "executioner of all ages" it addressed itself to "fair-minded people" all over the world and asked: "Why do they seek to kill life in Iraq?"

The radio asserted that "the Iraqi armies of right are awaiting a signal for a crushing and devastating offensive that will sever the necks from shoulders".

Shahabuddin tells US envoy

Ershad detained in a house befitting status

The US ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr William B Milam called on the Acting President, Mr Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at the President's Secretariat in Dhaka Tuesday, reports BSS.

During the meeting the Ambassador expressed appreciation of the measures taken by the interim government to ensure security of the diplomats and foreign missions and foreign nationals in Dhaka in the context of the Gulf war.

Mr William referred to some to some questions about former President Ershad, as raised by some US Congressmen.

The Acting President told the US Ambassador that the former President was first detained under the Special Powers Act in order to prevent any breach of peace following his inflammatory telephonic interview with a foreign correspondent.

He mentioned that two criminal cases had been started against the former President following recovery of unlicensed arms and a huge amount of cash, disproportionate to his income, from his residence.

A charge-sheet has also been submitted in one of the two cases, he added.

Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said the ex-President had been detained in a house that befits his social status.

He said regular visits by some relatives and daily examination of his health by government physicians were being allowed to the former President.

The Acting President also mentioned that lawyers of Mr Ershad had been given access to him for consultation. Everything is being done in accordance with law, he added.

Press Note

No assurance on Ershad's criminal case given

The Government on Tuesday made it clear that the Deputy Attorney General had given no assurance that steps would be taken for speedy trial of criminal case against the ex-President if the writ petition challenging Ershad's nomination papers was withdrawn, reports BSS.

The government, in a Press Note issued here, said "the judgement of the High Court division itself shows that the said writ petition was withdrawn by the petitioner's lawyer."

The Press Note said: "Attention of the government has been drawn to a news item published in a section of the press stating that the writ petition filed against the Election Commission for accepting the nomination papers of ex-President H M Ershad was withdrawn on the assurance given by Deputy Attorney General. See Page 10 Col 1

Tribal refugees want to return before election

By Moinuddin Naser

Bangladesh will hold talks with the Indian administration Monday to expedite the return of stranded tribals in Tripura.

The talks will be held at Deputy Commissioners level at Ramghar in response to a request by the tribal people to arrange their return before parliament elections.

According to a diplomatic source, the refugees have intimated the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Calcutta about their desire to return home before February 27 so that they can exercise their franchise in the parliament elections.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed told the Daily Star that the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari district will represent Bangladesh side during the talks.

He said: After receiving the intimation from the Indian side the Special Affairs Division of Bangladesh at a meeting held on January 26 took a decision to gear up the process of repatriation which could same the way for solution of insurgency in the hilly areas of Bangladesh.

Earlier a tribal delegation comprising professionals and

students called on Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and urged him to arrange early return of the refugees and to meet other demands made to resolve the problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs).

Indian newspaper Daily Sangbad was quoted by BBC Monday to have said that the tribal refugees in Tripura wanted to return early so that they could cast their votes during ensuing parliament election.

This correspondent during his recent visit to Chittagong. See Page 10 Col 2

Ershad responsible for Zia's killing: Khaleda

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 5: Begum Khaleda Zia said today a particular party was afraid of the popularity of BNP and conspiring against it.

Accusing Bangladesh Awami League without naming it she urged the law enforcing agencies to deal with 'terrorist elements' with an iron hand.

The BNP chief was addressing a mammoth public meeting at Agrabad commercial area here she accused 'a certain party' of having a close understanding with former President Ershad who had toppled the democratically elected government of her party.

Begum Zia who is also the chief of the 7-party combine held former President Ershad responsible for the martyrdom of President Zia at a time when he had introduced a process of development.

The government of Ershad 'in league with that party' trumpeted democracy, shattered the economy and turned Bangladesh into a country of beggars', Begum Zia complained.

She said that this particular party had failed to fulfil its commitment to reach the basic necessities of food and clothing to the people who had

See Page 10 Col 5

Partial strike at Suhrawardy Hospital

By Staff Correspondent

A section of physicians and staff members of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital in the city struck work for the second consecutive day on Tuesday demanding immediate removal of the Hospital Project Director, Dr Jahanara Rabbi.

The strikers have accused the Project Director of harassing them in various ways.

Treatment of patients and normal activities at the hospital is being affected following the strike, Hospital sources said.

On the second day of the indefinite strike processions were brought out and rallies were held in the Hospital premises.

One fourth class employee was reportedly beaten up when he tried to erase graffiti in favour of the strikers demands.

Posters, demanding immediate removal of the Project Director and alleging her association with the former first lady Rawshan Ershad were also put up.

The Director General of Health visited the hospital on Tuesday morning met the striking doctors. He urged them to resume their duties and assured them that the matter would be looked into. However, they did not resume their duties till last night.

Dr Jahanara has remained absent from the hospital since Monday, the day the strike began. The agitating employees locked her office since then.

Dr Jahanara when contacted told The Daily Star, she was aware of events at the hospital.

JP processionists damage vehicles

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Samik Party workers of Adamjee industrial belt brought out a big procession in the city yesterday demanding immediate release of former president Ershad and his ministers.

Several cocktails were reportedly hurled on the procession from the Bangladesh Bank Colony buildings. Nobody was, however, injured.

Following the blasts the processionists scattered and began pelting stones at vehicles in the Motijheel area. A few vehicles were damaged.

Earlier, the Jatiya Samik Party workers came in a truck

procession from Adamjee. They assembled in front of the Bangladesh Bank and proceeded towards the Press club in a procession.

The processionists carried banners, festoons, placards, Jatiya Party flags and portraits of Ershad.

Addressing the gathering in front of Jatiya Press Club, Siddiq Sardar, a labour leader of Adamjee Jute Mills warned that all the mills and factories across the country would be closed if former President Ershad and his ministers were not released before the ensu-

See Page 10 Col 2

Lithuanian poll nullified

MOSCOW, Feb 5: Mikhail S. Gorbachev issued a presidential decree Tuesday invalidating Lithuanian's poll on independence set for Saturday, the state news agency Tass said, reports AP.

The decree set up another confrontation between the Kremlin and the secessionist Baltic republic, which scheduled the non-binding vote at the urging of Western governments to demonstrate popular support for its independence drive.

The decree came less than a month after Soviet troops stormed buildings in Lithuania in a crackdown that left 14

people dead. Lithuanians campaigned Monday for the Soviet Union's first republic-wide poll on independence, with nationalists calling for secession and critics urging a boycott of the vote.

Leaders of Lithuania and Estonia, meanwhile, urged residents to maintain vigilance against Soviet troops in the Baltic states, despite recent calm after the military assaults last month that left at least 20 people dead.

Voters were expected to support independence in the non-binding ballot Sunday, giving ammunition to Lithuania's secession drive and possibly

setting up a new confrontation with the Kremlin over the vote's validity. A victory also could embolden pro-independence nationalists in other republics.

Lithuanian leaders have stressed the ballot is mainly symbolic and will not be binding under Soviet law, which they reject on their territory. President Mikhail Gorbachev repeatedly has demanded Lithuania hold such a referendum along with all republics by March 17, but has not stated his position on Sunday's poll.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis lashed Sunday. See Page 10 Col 3



Bangla Academy premises — and Mahmood Shah Qureshi, the Director General of the Academy, is booted out of the stage set for opening of the Ekushey Book Fair Tuesday. Story on page 10. — Star Photo

JP workers set BNP camp on fire at Adamjee

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 5: Jatiya Party workers on Tuesday afternoon set on fire a election campaign camp of Bangladesh Nationalist Party near Adamjee Jute Mills.

A case has been filed with Narayanganj Police. None has been arrested.

Narayanganj bandar thana police recovered 6 hand bombs from an abandoned shoe-box on Tuesday morning.

No one was arrested in this connection.

Some out to create terror, says Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief and Eight-Party Alliance leader Sheikh Hasina has said a government accountable to the people will have to be established to solve the problems now facing the nation.

She was addressing newly elected office-bearers of Dhaka Cotton Mills Employees Union and leaders of Bangladesh Institute of Diploma Engineers on Tuesday at Bangabandhu Bhavan.

February 27 elections, Hasina said, have created a scope for the people to establish democratic government. She said the people would have to choose the party which bears the flag of real democracy for giving democracy an institutional shape 'as against the 'Zia-Ershad system'.

Awami League chief said if voted to power her party would take steps to solve the

See Page 10 Col 3

Israel bombs Fatah bases

SARBA (Lebanon), Feb 5: Israeli warplanes blasted seven Palestinian guerrilla bases in south Lebanon today, killing at least seven people and wounding 25, police sources said, reports Reuters.

They said the planes fired about 30 missiles at bases of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mainstream Fatah group, led by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Targets included a command post near the port city of Sidon and bases in the Iqlim Al-Toufah area, just north of the Jewish state's self-declared security zone in south Lebanon. The sources said it was Is-

rael's biggest air strike since it 1982 invasion of Lebanon to drive the PLO and its guerrillas out of the country.

The police sources said the Israeli planes also hit a position of the Lebanese wing of Iraq's ruling Baath Party in the mountain village of Abajissour, wounding three people.

An Israeli Army spokesman in Jerusalem said Air Force planes attacked Fatah targets east of Sidon this morning in response to the rocket attacks and returned safely to base.

The guerrillas responded with artillery fire and Soviet-designed SAM 7 missiles but failed to hit any of the Israeli planes.

The Israeli air attack was the first on guerrilla targets in south Lebanon since the Gulf War broke out 20 days ago.

Lebanese security sources said the Army would not be able to deploy in the south because the Israeli raid badly damaged main roads.

Witnesses said the Israeli planes fired on the main road linking Sidon, 40 km (25 miles) south of Beirut, to Iqlim al-Toufah, causing deep craters.

Senior PLO official Anwar Madi, whose home was destroyed by the raid, said: "The attack indicated that Israel will not allow the Lebanese Army to spread in the south."

ADB team arrives Feb 8 to talk special assistance

Star Special

A three-member Asian Development Bank (ADB) team arrives in Dhaka on February 8 to discuss special assistance needs of Bangladesh in the wake of the Gulf war.

The interim government requested the Manila-based ADB to extend emergency assistance in view of the severe repercussions of the war on the economy.

The bank has already listed Bangladesh as one of the countries hard-hit by the Gulf war, the sources said.

It had done some preliminary exercises on the economic impact of the Gulf crisis on the Bangladesh economy after Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in early August.

The bank is working out a special assistance programme for its member of the developing countries which have suffered substantial losses. See Page 10 Col 7

Biman plans another fare hike

Star Report

Bangladesh Biman is contemplating fare hike on domestic routes by 40 percent. The authorities of the national airlines have been pressing the ministry for enhancement in order to reduce the losses in the domestic sector.

According to Biman sources, the operational cost of the airlines has increased substantially since the beginning of the Gulf crisis in August last year. The cost of aviation fuel, which was 77 US cent per one imperial gallon at that time, has now gone up to 1.17 dollars. Due to the Gulf war, the fleet insurance premium for Biman has been increased from 1.1 million US dollars to 2.4 million dollars per year, which has also affected the domestic sector.

Since the Gulf crisis, the passenger fare on the international routes has been raised twice at the rate of seven percent each time as determined. See Page 10 Col 1

Kazi Zafar's Khulna property attached

KHULNA, Feb 5: Government today attached a two-storied building of former Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed who has been absconding since the fall of Ershad government on December 6, reports UNB.

Kotwali police, on orders from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka, attached Kazi Zafar's immovable property, including 39 decimal of land with a two-storied building and a pond. Police sealed all 49 shops housed in the building in heart of the city.

The government on January 24 ordered Kazi Zafar and 10 other ministers of ousted President Ershad to surrender within one week to the authorities at Dhaka Central Jail, failing which their property will be confiscated and they may be given one year's rigorous imprisonment.

Kazi Zafar's property in Dhaka and Comilla have already been attached.