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Inside today

International

Anti-Saddam rallies



Thousands of Iraqis staged anti-Saddam protests in several Iraqi cities storming prisons in Basra and releasing inmates. Page 5

Feature

Development

Women perform most farming activities, but mainly as invisible, unrecognised workers. Page 6

Article

Does the philosophy of Ziaur Rahman still prevail? Page 8



Extracts from a 1978 interview with the late President by S. M. Ali. Page 4

Business

Concern over US quota

Bangladesh will lose \$30 million yearly due to recently imposed quota by US in three textile and garments products including shop towel. Page 8

NEWS BRIEFS

Allies to free 300 Iraqi POWs

RIYADH, Mar 4: Allied forces will free around 300 Iraqi prisoners of war on Tuesday in response to Iraq's release of 10 soldiers and airmen, the US military said today, reports Reuter.

125 Indians die in epidemics

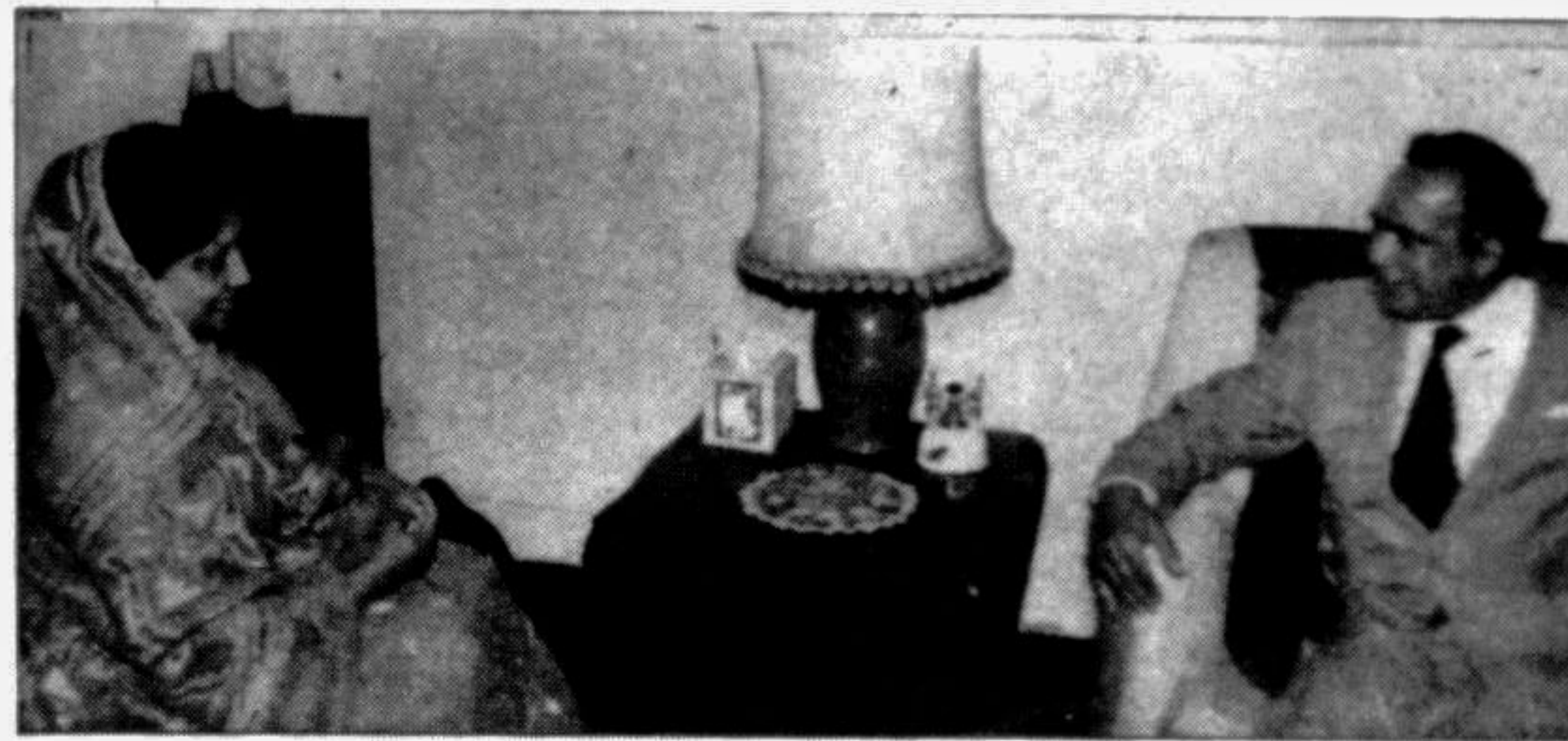
NEW DELHI, Mar 4: Some 125 people have died in epidemics of gastroenteritis and diarrhoea in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh in the last two weeks, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, states AFP.

Pak Minister resigns

ISLAMABAD, Mar 4: Pro-Iraq Pakistan minister resigned today citing as one reason Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's support of the United States in the Gulf war, reports Reuter.

German-Soviet treaties ratified

MOSCOW, Mar 4: The Soviet Parliament Monday ratified several German-Soviet treaties dealing with German reunification, the news agency Tass reported, states AFP.



Indian High Commissioner, Srinivashan held an hour-long meeting with Begum Khaleida Zia at the Banani office of BNP on Monday. —Star photo

BNP threatens counter movement

AL stand seen as a bid to stall democratic transition

Star Report

Awami League's bid to block formation of a Council of Ministers by the Acting President came under criticism by political parties. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) rejected Awami League's contention that the Acting President loses neutrality if he allows a Council of Ministers to be formed right now. Earlier Workers Party and Five-Party Alliance leader Rashed Khan Memon and Ganatantri Party leader Suranjit Sen Gupta, both are newly elected MPs, urged the Acting President to allow BNP to form a Council of Ministers. Awami League's move on Monday to stop formation of a Council of Ministers came as a surprise to political circles. Political analysts describe AL stand as a

move to stall the transition to democracy. An Awami League delegation led by Sheikh Hasina met the Acting President on Monday to convey their decision to launch a movement in the event of formation of a Council of Ministers by BNP. The Acting President made it clear that the formation of a Council of Ministers under Article 58 of the Constitution would in no way affect his neutrality. BNP in a sharp reaction to Awami League's move stated that the party has an apparent majority and enjoys the confidence of the Acting President. If the Council of Ministers is formed now it will be the Acting President's Council. BNP Secretary General Barrister See Page 10 Col 5

Indian envoy holds hour-long talks with Khaleida

The High Commissioner of India, K Srinivashan, Monday called on Begum Khaleida Zia, chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), at her residence, reports BSS. In the one-hour meeting, the Indian High Commissioner hoped that the irritants between BANGLADESH and India would be solved peacefully. He also discussed matters of bilateral cooperation and mutual interest with Begum Zia and hoped that the friendly relations between the two countries would be strengthened further in future. Mr Srinivashan congratulated See Page 10 Col 1



AL leader Sheikh Hasina speaking to agitating party workers on Monday after report of her resignation. —Star photo

Shahabuddin rejects Hasina's contention AL will start movement if BNP forms government

The Acting President, Mr. Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, said here Monday that he present form of presidential government would remain intact whoever was appointed the prime minister, reports BSS. The Acting President stated this when a delegation of Awami League leaders headed by the party chief, Sheikh Hasina, called on him at his residence here last evening. Mr. Justice Shahabuddin further, said that he would not lose his neutrality, for, whoever was appointed prime minister under the presidential form according to an official release. The official release said: During the meeting, the dele-

gation of Awami League leaders discussed with the president the post-election situation. The delegation expressed the view that the constitution of Parliament has not yet been completed and as such it is not possible for the president to say which member of Parliament commands the support of the majority in Parliament. The Awami League leaders further said repolling in some constituencies and election in two constituencies are yet to be held. They said the BNP has not got absolute majority in parliament and since it is not parliamentary system of government he party getting single See Page 10 Col 2

AL wants power transferred to Parliament

The Central Executive Committee of Bangladesh Awami League in an emergency meeting requested party chief Sheikh Hasina to withdraw her decision to resign for greater interest of the country, nation and the organisation. The committee meeting, held Monday evening at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, expressed total confidence in the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Earlier, Sunday night Sheikh Hasina tendered her resignation from party leadership assuming the responsibility of her party's setback in the parliament elections. She wanted to step down from the party leadership showing respect to democratic norms and values, says a source close See Page 10 Col 3

Saddam's son, Governor General of Basra killed Rebels take 2 Iraqi cities



US Gulf Commander General Norman Schwarzkopf (L) and Saudi General Khaled bin Sultan (2nd L) discussing formal ceasefire with Iraqi generals on Sunday. — AFP photo

DAMASCUS, Mar 4: Opponents of President Saddam Hussein belonging to a Tehran-based Muslim fundamentalist group said Monday that they controlled Basra, Iraq's second city, reports Reuter. A spokesman said they had beaten back an attempt by government troops to drive the rebels out. The spokesman, Bayan Jabr, said members of the ruling Baath Party and policemen had

- ★ Iraq releases 10 Allied prisoners-of-war
- ★ 7,000 Iraqi troops are heading for Baghdad to prevent Saddam's overthrow
- ★ Allied troops won't help anti-Saddam rebels, UK commander says
- ★ Iraq complains about Allied overflights over cities

surrendered and some had joined the rebels. Jabr said Iraqi troops who had gone over to the rebels helped drive off Saddam loyalists of the Republican Guard who tried to retake Basra on Sunday. He also said Kurdish guerrillas had seized control of the northern city of Sulaymaniyah, cutting it off from the rest of Iraq. AP says: Opposition to Saddam Hussein is being reported in six Iraqi cities, while 7,000 soldiers are returning to Baghdad in what US sources say could be efforts by Saddam to protect himself from overthrow. Earlier AFP reports from Tehran says Saddam Monday faced an 'uprising' in southern Iraq, according to Iranian reports that said his son Oday Hussein and top officials in the country's second-largest city Basra had been killed. The head of a Shiite opposition group based here, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Baqir Al-Hakim, said the cities of Basra

See Page 10 Col 3

Kamal Hussain hooted by party workers

By Staff Correspondent
A section of Awami League workers Monday hooted and hooted Dr Kamal Hussain for his recent statement that parliamentary elections were held free and fair. Disgruntled AL workers swarmed Dr Hussain, himself a party presidium member, when he emerged from an executive committee meeting of the party in the evening. The workers warned him not to come to the party office and kicked his car which was parked in front of the office. Dr Hussain was rescued from See Page 10 Col 1

AL executive body asks Hasina to withdraw resignation

By Staff Correspondent
The Central Executive Committee of Bangladesh Awami League in an emergency meeting requested party chief Sheikh Hasina to withdraw her decision to resign for greater interest of the country, nation and the organisation. The committee meeting, held Monday evening at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, expressed total confidence in the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Earlier, Sunday night Sheikh Hasina tendered her resignation from party leadership assuming the responsibility of her party's setback in the parliament elections. She wanted to step down from the party leadership showing respect to democratic norms and values, says a source close See Page 10 Col 5

Ershad's trial in arms case begins Mar 19

By Staff Correspondent
Hearing in the pending arms case against deposed President H.M. Ershad will begin March 19 at the Special Tribunal headed by Mr. Mohammad Habibullah, a district judge and sessions judge. A full court of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court last week (Feb 26) vacated a two weeks' stay order granted on February 18 by a single-judge bench of the Appellate Division. The trial of the former president for keeping unlicensed arms was to begin on February 16. But Ershad did not appear before the Special Tribunal on grounds of illness which a 3-member medical board found baseless after examination. See Page 10 Col 5

Court orders release of Maudud

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court Monday ordered immediate release of former Vice-President Maudud Ahmed from preventive detention, reports UNB. Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury passed the judgement after hearing a writ petition filed on behalf of Maudud Ahmed against the order of preventive detention under the Special Powers Act. The court ordered that Maudud Ahmed, who was arrested on December 20, 1990, and now detained in Dhaka Central Jail, be at once released from custody if not wanted in connection with any See Page 10 Col 2

Election was free and unprecedented, says CCHRB

By Staff Correspondent
The Coordination Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB) said on Monday the election to the fifth parliament was free, fair and unprecedented in the country's history. It said the mechanism of election was carried out smoothly. CCHRB fielded nearly 400 observers in 40 constituencies throughout the country who had overseen elections in 3000 polling centers. The CCHRB survey said violence, which had become part of electioneering and politics in the country, was almost absent during the election. Several killings and incidents of violence took place mainly before and after the elections. See Page 10 Col 5

US to waive \$300m loan

The United States has decided to waive a 300-million Dollar loan to Bangladesh as a 'gesture of friendship and co-operation' between the two countries, reports BSS. This was stated by the U. S. Ambassador in Dhaka, William B. Milam, when he called on the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the President's Secretariat Monday morning. During the discussion, the U. S. Ambassador said that the

Latvia, Estonia vote for independence

In neighbouring Estonia, 77.8 per cent of voters backed independence, according to preliminary figures. This has been an historic day for Estonia. President Arnold Ruutel told reporters after preliminary results were released. This is a long step forward in our political struggle to our primary goal— independence. Ruutel said the results dispelled claims that the elected

Jamaat for future polls under caretaker govt

Jamaat-e-Islami has said that all future elections in the country should be held under a 'caretaker' government. The central working council meeting of the party which was held on Monday was of the opinion that if elections were held under a caretaker government, the Election Commission and the law enforcing agencies would not

See Page 10 Col 1

BNP leader arrested Section 144 in Ramu

CHITTAGONG, Mar 4: Ramu upazila administration Sunday imposed Section 144 on the upazila headquarters in the wake of clashes between rival political workers, police said Monday, reports BSS. Ten persons were injured in sporadic clashes between workers of Awami League and Jamaat during the past few days at Ramu. As tension was mounting and people became

See Page 10 Col 4