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Women's Day was observed on Friday. One of the seminars held on the occasion was addressed by, among others, film actress Babita.

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Business

Capital market gets bull's charge

Last week's activities of the market can be characterised as the bull's charge.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Humanitarian aid to Iraq

NEW YORK, Mar 8: The Security Council's Sanctions Committee gave the green light Thursday to send humanitarian aid to Iraq after receiving a report about the poor living conditions in Iraq from WIO and UNICEF, reports AFP.

\$ 650 m US aid for Israel

WASHINGTON, Mar 8: The House of Representatives voted Thursday to provide 650 million dollars in aid to Israel to help it meet expenses caused by the Gulf war, reports Reuters.

Bodyguards of Arafat killed

TUNIS, Mar 8: An explosion killed two of PLO leader Yasser Arafat's bodyguards in Algiers on Thursday. The explosion wrecked a building housing the offices of radical Palestinian and Lebanese political groups.

Journalists to be handed over today

BAGHDAD, Mar 8: Forty foreign reporters who went missing in southern Iraq last Sunday will be handed by the Iraqi authorities to the Red Cross early Saturday, several of the journalists told Agency France-Press.

Rebels reject Baghdad's offer for sharing political power

Rafsanjani asks Saddam Hussein to step down

TEHRAN, Mar 8: Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani urged Saddam Hussein on Friday to 'submit to the will of the Iraqi people' and make a deal with the opposition, reports Reuters. He said suppressing the rebellion sweeping Iraq since its defeat by the US-led allies would be Saddam's 'biggest and last mistake'. 'We advise them to submit to the will of the people, now that the Iraqi people are ready to take over a ruined country from you and rebuild it, you should welcome this offer,' Rafsanjani said in a Friday prayer sermon. Meanwhile, an Iraqi opposition leader said today Saddam offered two days ago to share political power with his Kurdish and Moslim Shi'ite opponents. But the plan was rejected, said Sheikh Mohsin Al-Husseini, an executive member of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

This was the first word of any concession to rebels by Saddam, Iraq's iron-fist leader. Another Iraqi opposition leader said more than 30,000 people have died so far in a week-old revolt against Saddam. Sheikh Abu Maytham Al-Saghir, a member of the supreme council for the Islamic militants who were in control of most areas of southern Iraq. There was no way of confirming Saghir's claim. But he told a news conference at his Beirut headquarters: 'I assure you that the number of martyrs who were killed during this period exceeds 30,000 and tens of thousands have been wounded.' AFP adds: Rafsanjani urged Iraqi leader to 'submit to the will of his people' in the face of widening anti-government unrest. Iraq was like a volcano ready to erupt and repressing

this popular revolt would be the last mistake' of the Iraq ruling Baath Party, he said. What was happening in Iraq 'is truly a popular movement, it is the people who are rebelling'. 'If the people say they are ready to accept the ruins which you will leave them, you should take this offer from the people,' Rafsanjani said. 'It is impossible for the Baath Party to govern alone, specially under the leadership of someone no longer wanted by the world, the region or the Iraqi people.' He also urged Iraqi opposition figures to set aside their differences. Rafsanjani, who received a message from Saddam on Wednesday, also urged Iraqi dissident groups to consider forming a coalition with the ruling Baath Party. 'The Iraqi opposition should be very alert. Factional fights are like poison — poison' See Page 10 Col 1



DIFFERENT OUT-RIDERS: Women escorting a women's procession (not in the picture) in observance of the International Women's Day in the capital Friday — Star photo

MPs likely to take oath tomorrow

BNP submits short list of ministers soon

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is likely to submit a short-list of a 10-member council of ministers to the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed either today (Saturday) or tomorrow. The BNP last night held a meeting of the Standing Committee with Khaleda Zia in the chair to take stock of the present political situation and decide about the formation of a government. The meeting was in progress at the time of filing this report late last night. According to competent sources, the 13-member Standing Committee meeting

was attended by Mirza Golam Hafiz, Badruddoza Chowdhury, Majedul Haque, Abdus Salam Talukder, Mustafizur Rahman, Khandaker Delwar Hussain, Co Oli Ahmed, Saifur Rahman, M.A. Baten, Dr R.A. Ghani, Emran Ali Sarkar and Dr Yousuf. According to the sources all members of the Standing Committee who have been elected members of Parliament may be inducted in the short list. Among the Standing Committee members Saifur Rahman, M.A. Baten and R.A. Ghani could not be elected

while the other two Emran Ali Sarkar and Dr Yousuf did not contest the elections. The insiders said that some members from outside the Standing Committee may also be inducted in the short list. Mirza Golam Hafiz is the strong contender for the post of Speaker but many of the members have given objection that he would not be able to conduct the parliament properly because of his old age. Hence the names of former president Mahmudullah has come up as Speaker. According to insiders, Khaleda Zia called the meeting See Page 10 Col 3

Hasina in Chandpur

Poll results have disappointed people

KACHUA (Chandpur), Mar 8: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has said the results of the parliamentary election as a whole disappointed the people of the country, reports UNB. 'People are frustrated because the poll results do not reflect their hopes. The Awami League leader was addressing a huge electioneering meeting at Ashrafpur High School ground Thursday night and urged the people to vote in favour of AL candidate. Amid thunderous slogans of the Awami League activists, an old man of the locality jumped on his feet and shouted 'Where do the ballots go we cast for the boat?' Responding to the demand, Hasina said 'You know very

well who hijack your votes ... who play foul with your rights.' Voting of Ashrafpur High School and Alhara Primary School centres were suspended following untoward incidents between the supporters of Awami League and BNP. The re-polling of these 2 centres (Chandpur-1) will be held Saturday. Total vote of these two centres are 5,408. Awami League candidate Mesbahuddin Khan is leading by about 900 votes against his rival Principal Abul Hasnat. Khan polled 24,330 votes while Hasnat bagged 23,446 votes. Hasina said, 'We had been struggling hard for the last 15' See Page 10 Col 3

AI call to end torture on women

LONDON, Mar 8: The human rights group Amnesty International called today for an end to the killing, rape, torture and arbitrary detention of women by security forces in more than 40 countries, reports Reuters. 'The world's torturers, executioners and jailers are no less cruel to women (than to men)', an Amnesty report said. 'No torture is deemed too barbaric to be inflicted on women. The London-based human rights group said its first major report to specifically address women's rights violations released on International Women's Day — was intended to mobilise international support for the protection of women.' See Page 10 Col 6

Repolling in 21 centres of four constituencies today

By Staff Correspondent

Repolling in 21 centres of four constituencies will be held today. Polling in all these centres of Jamalpur-2, Chandpur-1, Chittagong-6 and Chittagong-12 constituencies were suspended on February 27 as the situation went out of control of the returning officers. In Jamalpur-2, repolling will be held in eight centres. According to the counting of votes in other centres of the constituency, Rashed Mosharraf of Awami League has polled 30,545 votes, while his nearest rival, Sultan Mahmud Babu of BNP, 19,076 votes. Repolling will be held in two centres of Chandpur-1 where Mesbahuddin of Awami League has got 24,330 votes,

while his nearest contender Abul Hasnat of BNP, 23,446 votes. In Chittagong-6, there will be repolling in seven centres. Salauddin Kader Chowdhury of National Democratic Party (NDP) is leading in this constituency securing 45,221 votes. His nearest rival Abdullah Al-Harun of Awami League has got 31,838 votes. In Chittagong-12, repolling will be held in four centres. In this constituency, Akhtaruzzaman Babu of Awami League is leading having 39,774 votes. His nearest contender Md Kabir of BNP has bagged 31,944 votes. Elections in 294 centres See Page 10 Col 1

Ershad elected JP PP leader

The interned former President and Chairman of Jatiya Party H M Ershad was unanimously elected leader of the JP Parliamentary Party at its first meeting held in Dhaka Thursday night, according to a JP press release issued Friday, reports BBS. The name of the former President as the leader of the JP Parliamentary Party was proposed by Alhaj Reazuddin Ahmed (Bhola Mia), MP-elect, which was supported by all the party MPs elect. See Page 10 Col 2

Women pledge to fight for equal rights

By Staff Correspondent International Women's Day was observed on Friday throughout the country with a vow to establish equal rights for women. 'Refugee women' was the theme of the day and of the entire year 1991, in recognition of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' (UNHCR) 40th anniversary. The day is observed world wide in accordance with a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1977. On this day in 1857, police attacked a group New York City women demonstrations protesting against sub-human working condition, low salary See Page 10 Col 7

Khaleda urges people to guard against conspiracy

KAPASIA (Gazipur), Mar 8: BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia said today that after forming the government, her party would take all possible steps to direct the nation towards progress and for flourishing democracy in the country, reports UNB. Addressing a big public meeting at Kapasia High School field this afternoon, she urged the people to extend cooperation to her party in ensuring food, clothing, medical care and education for all. The BNP leader accused the Ershad regime of destroying all institutions during its rule and said the history of last nine year was the history of killing, looting, bribery and repression. She said the autocratic ruler had brought the country's economy to such a situation that running the gov-

ernment would be a very difficult task. 'We want to change this situation ... and for this, we need your (people) cooperation. You have supported us for the last nine years and I am confident you will continue your support in our efforts to make Bangladesh a self-reliant country', she said. All of us would have to work day and night for the country's welfare, she said. 'If necessary, we must work even on holidays.' Begum Zia alleged that certain quarters were still conspiring against the nationalist and patriotic forces to stall the nation's bid for self-reliance. The BNP Chairperson, without mentioning names, said the conspirators are afraid that if the nationalist forces from the government, the

country would not be run at the dictation of others as they would have liked. They had also intrigued in the past but their heinous designs were not successful, she said urging the people to keep watchful eyes on them. Begum Zia said those who are 'politicking keeping one foot in Bangladesh and another in a foreign country', cannot bring any good for the nation. Spurning a note of warning against the trouble makers in the society, the BNP leader said she would not allow anybody to disrupt social peace through terrorism. 'The trouble-makers will be dealt with sternly.' In this respect she said her government would make Bangladesh an abode of peace by uprooting seeds of all conspiracies. See Page 10 Col 2

\$ 6.2 crore US aid likely

Star Economic Report The United States government plans to extend 6.2 crore dollars aid to Bangladesh for the financial year 1991-92. The proposed aid is 22 per cent higher than the US grant received during the current fiscal year. According to Voice of America (VOA) monitored in Dhaka on Friday, the US government has already written off 30 crore dollar debt of Bangladesh. The process of transition to democracy in Bangladesh has received positive response from the US government. UNB adds: Development loans, including the PL-480 credit, are also being considered to be written off the House of Representatives Sub-

Indian poll likely in two months

NEW DELHI, Mar 8: A national election is likely to be announced soon, ending the political uncertainty caused by Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's resignation, party leaders said Friday, reports Agencies. One politician spoke of touring his constituency in April, indicating an election in early May. Opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani said after meeting President Ramaswamy Venkaiaraman that elections will soon be set. On Thursday, Advani had said he feared

former Prime Minister (Rajiv Gandhi, leader of the largest party), would try to bypass an election and form a government by cobbling together a majority in Parliament. It is Venkaiaraman's decision whether to order polls or allow one party a chance to form a government. The presidency usually is a ceremonial post which assumes political power only at times of turmoil. Chandra Shekhar announced his resignation in Parliament Wednesday, complaining that he was being manipulated by Gandhi's Congress

Party whose support was essential for his minority government. He remains in office until a new government is formed. Gandhi was accused of dictating policy to the prime minister during the last two months in what was seen as a naked display of the Congress Party's power over the weak government. Newspapers have speculated that Gandhi may try to win back the job he held for five years by roving in enough defectors from other parties to See Page 10 Col 7

Baker begins Mideast tour

UNDATED: The US Secretary of State James Baker began a Middle East tour Friday in search of lasting peace in the region, reports AFP. Meanwhile Baghdad, which has given no information on the unrest apart from references to a threat to national unity, on Friday extended a deadline for deserting troops to rejoin their units, citing transport difficulties. It also forced all foreign journalists to leave the country, two days after the appointment of a new hardline Interior Minister loyal to President Saddam. At the same time, Iraq said it had located some 40 foreign journalists missing in southern Iraq since early this week. The reporters, who had

been listed as missing since Sunday when they went illegally to Basra had been taken to Baghdad and would be handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) later Friday. Iraq also said it would release 20 US soldiers. The focus on the international diplomatic front, meanwhile, moved to efforts to find a lasting solution to Middle East problems as US Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Riyadh Friday at the start of a 10-day Middle East tour. Baker said he wanted to explore whether the outcome of the Gulf War might have created a possibility for greater flexibility in the Anti-Israeli stance of Saudi Arabia and other states in the region. In a move likely to create

further discomfort in Israel, Baker said he would be prepared to meet with Palestinian Arabs in Israel despite the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's strong support for Saddam during the six-week war. King Hussein of Jordan said Thursday that Palestinians must play a key role in any settlement to the Middle East conflict. He was speaking to three European Community Foreign Ministers in Jordan as part of a Middle East tour. Jacques Poos of Luxembourg said after talks with Israeli leaders earlier Thursday that they still favoured an international conference on the region. Israel has rejected calls for See Page 10 Col 4

AL will play constructive opposition role: Hasina

Sheikh Hasina has said Awami League would play a constructive role as an opposition in parliament and ensure accountability of the government, reports UNB. In an interview with India Today magazine on Thursday she said she will continue the struggle to restore parliamentary democracy, undone 16 years ago by Awami League. The Awami League chief observed that 'with BNP in power the country seems to be heading towards darkness. There does not seem to be any light at the end of the road. We must pick up the threads all over again'. See Page 10 Col 5