

## 'Attempt to block transfer of power indicates conspiracy'

By Staff Correspondent

Workers Party has called upon political parties to solve all constitutional issues in pursuance of the November 19 joint declaration of the three alliances.

The party politburo at a meeting on Friday reviewed the post-election situation and opined that unnecessary questions were being raised about the parliament election which was free and fair.

It said, raising uncalculated debate on constitutional issues and opposing transfer of power to the majority party are indications of a conspiracy.

The party called for settling the political issues immediately keeping in view the urgency of the deteriorating economic situation.

The party warned that the people would not forgive those who would foil the process of institutionalising democracy simply because of having been defeated in the election, narrow party and individual interests.

The meeting also called for taking proper initiative to ensure Bangladesh's participation in the reconstruction of the war ravaged Gulf countries.

The politburo thanked Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, his Council of Advisers, the Election Commission and the people for the February 27 free and fair polls.

## Three held for snatching money

By Staff Correspondent

Patrol police has arrested three young men for alleged snatching Tk 42 in cash, a wrist watch and a wrapper from a rickshaw passenger on Friday morning at Mymensingh road, police said.

## Repolling

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stituencies have been completed while polls in two other seats have been rescheduled due to the death of two candidates in those constituencies. Election in Munshiganj-3 will be held on March 14 while March 28 has been fixed for polls in Kushtia-2 constituency.

## Rafsanjani

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— for the people. All of you join hands and work with Baath as a collection," he said.

Rafsanjani's call reflected Iran's concern at the turmoil sweeping two dozen Iraqi cities since Saddam's army was routed by US-led Allies which retook Kuwait last week.

Saddam on Wednesday appointed as Interior Minister Ali Hassan al-Majid, a cousin with a fearsome reputation of gassing Kurds in the final year of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988.

A Tehran-based Shi'ite opposition group, the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq, said its leader Ayatollah Mohammed Bager al-Hakim had said he would agree to meet a Baghdad envoy only if he carried news of Saddam's resignation.

Iran and the Iraqi opposition groups said on Thursday that battles raged in several cities across Iraq between the rebels and loyalist forces.

## US assessment

Meanwhile, AP reports from Washington: The primary threat to the rule of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein comes not from rebelling Kurds and Shi'ite Muslims, but from his own political and military inner circle, according to US intelligence assessments.

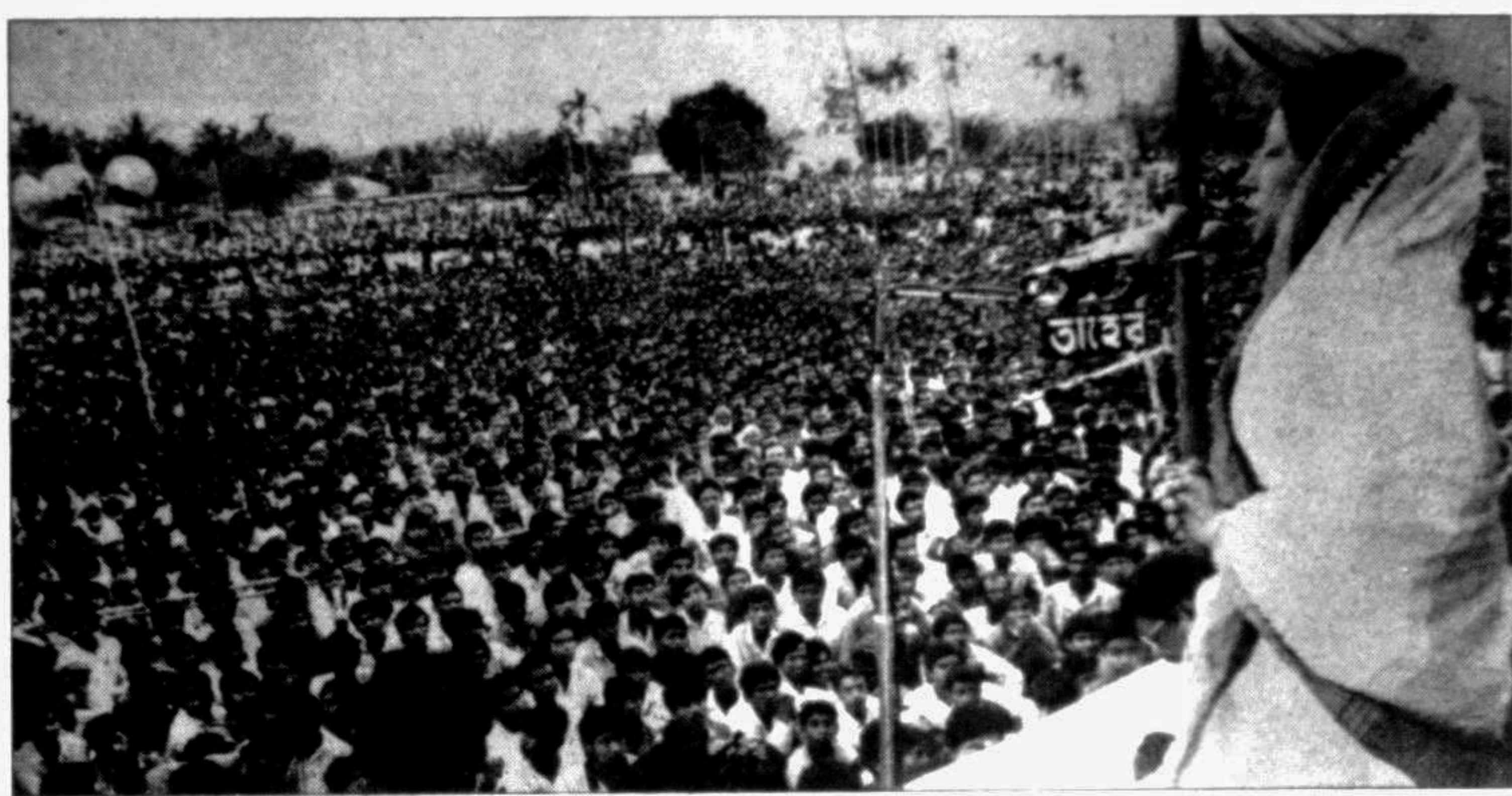
Members of the Republican Guard military corps close to Saddam and officials of the ruling Baath Party stand a better chance of toppling the Iraqi leader than the separatist movement staging open revolts, officials said.

In fact, they said, the Shi'ite and Kurdish rebellions may prolong Saddam's tenure rather than shorten it, because it will force those in the best position to oust him to unite behind him to avoid splintering the country.

"I think he still has enough forces to maintain some control over the population," Rep Dave McCurdy, Chairman of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, said Thursday.

"He will be brutal. The question is whether that continued brutality leads to his eventual downfall," McCurdy said in an interview. "I think it will."

Of more concern to the Iraqi President, he said, are those around him in Baghdad.



Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Kapashia, Gazipur Friday—Star photo

## Conspiracy

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Earlier on her arrival here, Begum Zia was given a rousing reception.

Presided over by Prof. Emadul Huq, the meeting was also addressed by MP-elect Brig (Retd) Hannan Shah.

Central leaders, including Col. (Retd.) ASM Mustafizur Rahman, Farida Rahman, Wing Commander (Retd.) M Hamidullah, Tanvir Ahmed Siddique and Ahmed Nazir, were also present.

## Female MP

Meanwhile, BSS adds: The last date for the submission of application seeking nomination for women seats in parliament from BNP has been extended upto March 12, a party source said.

## BCTA, BTA for BNP ministry

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh College Teachers' Association (BCTA) and Bangladesh Teachers' Association (BTA) on Friday urged the Acting President to immediately form the Council of Ministers with the leadership of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as the party won the mandate of the people securing majority in the February 27 parliamentary election.

In a joint statement issued by Prof. M. Shareful Islam and Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Secretary General of BCTA and BTA, said the caretaker government would be misunderstood if the party commanding majority in the parliament is not invited to form the government without delay.

The leaders also said that the enemies of the democracy should not be given scope to hatch conspiracy to foil the success of the people achieved through mass upsurge and peaceful election.

## Ershad

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The meeting was presided over by Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury. After the election of the JP Parliamentary Party leader, the responsibility of presiding over the meeting fell on Alhaj Reazuddin Ahmed.

Congratulating the newly-elected MPs of Jatiya Party, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said the only task before us now was to secure the release of the party chairman and other leaders from jails and force the government to lift warrants issued on other JP leaders. As an opposition organisation Jatiya Party would have to play a constructive role both in and outside the Sangsad, he added.

Jatiya Party organised milad mahfil and offered special prayers for the stunning victory of Jatiya Party in the elections.

The party held Shokrana Dibas for the election of its chairman former President Ershad from five constituencies and support extended by the people for politics of Jatiya Party.

## Annual fire service week begins today

The Annual Fire Service and Civil Defence Week '91 begins throughout the country today, reports BSS.

In Dhaka city the week will be formally inaugurated by Home Secretary, M. A. Sayeed at 9-30 a.m. at the Civil Defence Training Complex at Mirpur.

A number of fire extinguishing and rescuing equipment and devices will be put on display on the occasion.

Editor : S. M. Ali

## List of ministers

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to seek the opinions of the party leaders about the formation of the government and finalisation of a short list for submission to the Acting President.

During a meeting of a BNP delegation with Justice Shahabuddin on March 3, the Acting President had advised the BNP leaders to prepare a list of the probable members of the proposed council of ministers and submit it to him.

Later the Acting President is learnt to have intimated the BNP leadership to accelerate the process.

Meanwhile, the BNP members of Parliament are likely to take oath tomorrow (Sunday). The formation of the council of ministers will follow the affirmation of the MPs. It is reliably learnt.

Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, Speaker of the fourth Parliament will meet with senior officials of the Parliament Secretariat today (Sunday) to discuss the arrangement for swearing in of the newly elected members of Parliament.

Constitutionally Chowdhury continues to be the Speaker till the election of a new Speaker and a new Deputy Speaker by the fifth Parliament, and he is also to preside over the first session. However, since many MPs

elect do not want to take oath from him, an influential government functionary may be asked to approach Chowdhury to designate somebody to administer the oath to the new members, reliable sources say.

Under the Constitution the Speaker can designate anybody to administer the oath. The swearing in ceremony is likely to take place tomorrow (Sunday).

Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night that he had not been approached to designate anybody to administer oath nor had he himself taken any decision in this regard.

He said that the demand to take oath from any person designated by him would only lower the MPs—elect in public esteem, because in that case a less important person will administer oath.

Chowdhury said he was eager for a speedy transition to democracy. Violation of the Constitution can only lead to instability. He said since he did not seek election this time he was a neutral person.

Earlier on Thursday Chowdhury met The Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to discuss the formalities of oath taking of the newly elected members of Parliament.

Some constitutional experts

say that the claim of former Speaker Mirza Golam Hafiz that he continues to be the Speaker does not stand because his term had lapsed after the promulgation of martial law in March 1982.

After the election of the third parliament in 1986, the Chief Martial Law Administrator had under a martial law order designated Shamsul Huda Chowdhury as the temporary Speaker for administering of oath to MPs—elect by him. Chowdhury took oath from the Chief Election Commissioner under provisions of martial law.

The AL MPs of the third Parliament took oath from Chowdhury even though on the first day of the first session of that House they had taken oath from Abdul Malek Ukil (who was speaker of the first Parliament that existed till November 1975) on the southern Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban.

Meanwhile, the BNP has also called a meeting of its Executive Committee on March 15 to decide about the next presidential election. The agenda of that meeting also includes a review of the present political situation and the joint declaration made by the three alliances November 19 last year.

## US aid

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committee on Asia and the Pacific was told in Washington on Thursday.

The Committee headed by Congressman Stephen Solarz met to consider foreign aid appropriation for the countries of South Asia and discuss the latest political developments in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

According to VOA, Solarz told the Committee that "last week the people of Bangladesh participated in a free and fairest elections in 20 years heralding a very significant democratic process".

Congratulating the people of Bangladesh, Solarz said he was confident they would certainly enjoy the fruits of this unprecedented democratic change achieved recently.

He said he had no doubt that the transition from the autocratic rule to democracy would further strengthen relations between Bangladesh and USA, and the quantum of US aid to Bangladesh would increase.

The US administration, Solarz said, already announced a substantial increase in the US aid and exempted loans amounting to about \$60 million dollar.

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near-East and South Asia desk in the State Department Theresa Shephard, Assistant Secretary Henry Romanov of the Defence Department and the official concerned of USAID attended the meeting to testify to the Committee.

Referring to the suspension of aid to Pakistan, Solarz told the committee that the United States was gravely concerned about Pakistan's nuclear activities.

About India, the Committee wanted a detailed report on the impact of the recent political events leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar would leave on US-India relations.

PTI adds from Tokyo: Japan is considering one billion dollar special aid for India and four other Afro-Asian countries including Bangladesh hard-hit by the Gulf War economically, press reports said here today.

Apart from a share in the proposed billion-dollar assistance, India may also get more Japanese loan, reports said. These loans are in addition to the normal yearly aid India gets from Japan. The current year's Japanese aid to India totalled nearly one billion dollar.

## The Midnight File

### Talks on post-Gulf war era

WASHINGTON, Mar 8: President George Bush will leave Wednesday on a four-day trip to Canada, Martinique and Bermuda for talks on the post-Gulf war era with leaders of Canada, France and Britain, the White House said Thursday.

Bush is to meet with officials of Bermuda on the 17th before heading back to Washington that afternoon, reports AFP.

### Kuwait to aid Palestinians

KUWAIT CITY, Mar 8: Kuwait, on its Arab nationality duty, will never stop providing financial aid to the Palestinian people, Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al-Sabah said yesterday. The Crown Prince, heading the government here before his father's return, told a press conference he would not tolerate maltreatment of Palestinians, reports Xinhua.

### 5 to die for attacking TV station

BANGKOK, Mar 8: A military tribunal in Rangoon has sentenced five Burmese men to death and 10 to life imprisonment for attacking a television relay station early this year. The attack took place a few miles (kilometers) north of Rangoon on January 6 on the orders of ethnic Karen rebels who are fighting Burma's military government for regional autonomy, Radio Rangoon said, reports AFP.

### Tories suffer stunning defeat

HURST GREEN (England), Mar 8: The governing Conservatives have suffered a stunning defeat in a special election, losing the former stronghold of Ribbles Valley to centrists in its biggest upset in more than a decade. In results announced early Friday, the Liberal Democratic Party candidate won the seat in the prosperous north England district by 4,601 votes. In the previous election for the seat, the Conservatives won by nearly 20,000 votes representing a vote swing of 24 per cent, reports AP.

### Bush honours Mrs Thatcher

WASHINGTON, Mar 8: President George Bush on Thursday bestowed America's highest civilian honour on former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, calling her "one of the greatest leaders of our time". This heroic woman made history move her way," Bush said before presenting her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Mrs. Thatcher, ousted from 10 Downing Street just 14 weeks ago in a Conservative Party rift, said, "It's a double honour to receive this medal at the hands of a president whose steadfast leadership has just won the victory of freedom that will rank with the greatest in history."

### 700-yr-old military tunnels

BEIJING, Mar 8: Archaeologists have discovered ruins of complex military tunnels dating back more than 700 years that contained hiding areas for soldiers and caves to confuse enemies. The China Daily said the tunnels dated to the Sung Dynasty and offered a glimpse into military methods used when Chinese soldiers battled nomadic invaders. The newspaper said the tunnels were discovered recently, but did not give a specific date, reports AP.

### Kamchatka rocked

STOCKHOLM, Mar 8: Sweden's Uppsala University said today it had monitored an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter Scale centred in the Kamchatka peninsula in the far east of the Soviet Union at 1146 GMT. The quake is strong enough to cause a disaster if it hit any of the military installations on the peninsula, reports Reuter.

## Indian polls

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The Congress Party has decried the charges and says it will seek a mandate from the people. On Friday, party spokesman M. J. Akbar indicated elections would be held in about two months.

"I will be in the capital for the next 30 days, and then I will be in Kishanganj," he told reporters, referring to his constituency.

Communist leader Jyoti Basu said elections were inevitable. "The die is cast. There is no alternative to elections," he told the Foreign Correspondents Association.

Chandra Shekhar was named Prime Minister

November 10 after he split the Janata Dal Party of former Prime Minister V.P. Singh. His faction's 54 lawmakers were supported by Congress' 211 members in the 514-member house.

Basu said Chandra Shekhar's resignation came as a shock to Gandhi's colleagues. "I have a feeling they were taken by surprise," he said. "They didn't want an election right now."

Chandra Shekhar quit amid a furor over alleged police surveillance of Gandhi's home last week. Congress boycotted Parliament sessions in protest, denying the house a quorum to conduct business.

## Women's day

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In a message on this day, UN Secretary General Javier Perez De Cuellar called upon the least fortunate women to encourage the community to do its best in establishing equal rights for all women.

He said all women should enjoy development and peace within the framework established by the United Nations (UN).

Different socio-cultural, political and women organisations of the country chalked out programmes to observe the day.

The Institute of Rural Journalists (IRJ) and Bangladesh Human Rights Commission arranged a discussion to observe the day at Mallbagh. The speakers stressed the need for women's self-reliance.

The organisations also observed that women workers in the garment industries were being exploited. Speakers at the meeting said women are also being exploited in the name of religion. They alleged that the laws for women are not being applied properly.

Association for Realisation of Basic Needs (ARBAN) held a discussion meeting at its office on the day.

Dr Meghna Guhathakurata, while addressing the meeting, said women were being suppressed in the income-generating projects. They were also subjected to discrimination in technology oriented jobs.

Meanwhile, Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra on Saturday arranged a poster and film exhibition at Public Library auditorium to mark the day.

BSS adds: Marking the day International Women's Day observation Committee 1991

brought out a procession Friday from the Dhanmondi Club play ground. The procession ended in the Sangsad Bhaban premises after parading Mirpur Road and Manik Mia Avenue.

A four-point charter of demands was read out at the end of the procession. The demands include framing of personal law on the basis of equal rights for men and women.

Twenty three organizations participated in the procession. The Odkyabaddha Nari Samaj Friday held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club with poet Begum Sufia Kamal in the chair.

The rally, addressed by Farida Akhter, Dil Afroze Diba, Selma Khalek and Khaleda Salahuddin, demanded equal rights of women in all the spheres of life.

Uditchi Shilpi Gosthi later presented 'gano-sangeet'. The musical soiree was followed by a procession.

The USSR embassy here held a discussion marking the day in the Soviet Cultural Centre.

A women-labourer rally was held in front of the Jatiya Press Club under the auspices of Narigrantha Prabartana and Sram Bikash Kendra. Presided over by Ms. Farida Akhter, the rally was addressed by Jahannara Begum, Beby Moudud, Sima Das Simu and Samsunna-hira.

Bangladesh National Women's Lawyers' Association, in cooperation with UNIC, will organize a seminar at the UNIC on March 11 at 4-30 p.m.

In Khulna various socio-cultural organisations observed the day through holding rallies and seminars.



Representatives of Iraqi opposition movement based in Damascus at a press conference on March 7 affirmed that they would continue the uprising in Iraq until Saddam's fall — AFP photo.

## Baker's ME tour

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such a conference and refuses to negotiate with the PLO which it considers a terrorist group.

According to AP: The US military, for its part, announced plans Friday to repatriate about 63,000 Iraqi POWs captured in the Gulf War.

Iraq also intum was releasing an estimated 30,000 Kuwaitis to the Red Cross. It had rounded up Kuwaitis during its 6-1-2-month occupation of the oil-rich Emirate.

On Thursday, the first 1,000 Kuwaitis were turned over to the Red Cross in allied-controlled southern Iraq. Some arrived Friday in Kuwait City.

Support for peace

Away, Jordanian and Palestinian leaders on Thursday welcomed Washington's promise to seek a land-for-peace settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, a Palestinian leader also said Arabs should be wary of any US efforts to intervene in the Middle East.

Egypt welcomed US President Bush's call for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours and urged the Israelis to respond favourably.

UN representative

In the meantime, the UN Secretary General, in a high-profile step to galvanise the Mideast peace process, has selected the Swiss Ambassador to Washington as special representative for the region. UN

## AI call

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The report, which has been submitted to the UN Commission on the Status of Women now meeting in Vienna, said women were subjected to certain forms of abuse on the basis of their gender, primarily rape and other sexual abuse.

"Young and old women are raped by prison guards, pregnant women are beaten and others are used to get at their husband or brothers," Amnesty said.

In India, it said reports of rape by policemen appeared almost daily in local newspapers and in Peru rape was widespread in parts of the country where security forces had been given sweeping powers to suppress insurgencies.

In the Israeli-occupied territories, Palestinian women had reported that interrogators threatened them with rape and subjected them to sexually humiliating practices.

In South Africa, human rights lawyer Nonyamezelo Victoria Mxenge was killed by what Amnesty said could have been a government sponsored right wing death squad and in Colombia a woman magistrate was shot dead while investigating summary executions by the military.

Explaining she said "elections were hijacked by those who had collaborated all these years with army rule and were engaged in drug trafficking and gold smuggling".

Vested groups had successfully manipulated the polls. Even then Awami League and its allies polled 41 per cent votes when BNP got 31 per cent, she added.

## Hasina

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Asked about the February 27 elections, Sheikh Hasina said its results did not reflect the people's will.

"Rigging was done very cleverly... with money they influenced the results," said Sheikh Hasina negating the views of election observers from within and without the country who said the polls were the fairest.

She said, "People voted in the elections in large numbers as they had never done in last 15 years".

Explaining she said "elections were hijacked by those who had collaborated all these years with army rule and were engaged in drug trafficking and gold smuggling".

Vested groups had successfully manipulated the polls. Even then Awami League and its allies polled 41 per cent votes when BNP got 31 per cent, she added.

## Moscow hopes ties with Dhaka will improve

MOSCOW, Mar 8: Soviet Union has received with satisfaction the reports about the successful holding of the Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The USSR Foreign Ministry spokesman V. Churkin told the media representatives here on March 8.

Undoubtedly the efforts of the interim administration and in particular of the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed were instrumental in holding the elections in an undisturbed and peaceful atmosphere, said Mr. Churkin.

He wished a successful completion of the democratisation process in the country and every success to the legitimately elected Jatiya Sangsad.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed the hope that after the new government in Dhaka is formed the Soviet-Bangladesh relations will be given new impulses for their progressive development in the interests of creating in Asia and in the world an atmosphere of security and stability.

## Poll results

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years to create a congenial atmosphere to hold a free and fair parliamentary election for establishing a government, accountable to the people."

She alleged that the hooligans of BNP had terrorised different polling centres of the country including Islampur in Jamalpur district and two centres of Kachua and turned results in favour of them by rigging of ballots. She called on the people to remain vigilant against the hooligans.

Thousands of people greeted Hasina who arrived here from Dhaka at about 11 p.m. They showered petals on the Awami League President while she alighted from the car and climbed the boat-like podium.

Presided over by local Awami League leader Serajul Haq Majumdar, the meeting was also addressed by former DUCSU VP Aktaruzzaman, Mesbahuddin Khan and Advocate Abdul Awal.

Aktaruzzaman said Awami League had been fighting relentlessly to restore parliamentary democracy in the country. Sheikh Hasina returned Dhaka on the same night.