

## Hearing of writ against women MPs election continues

Supreme Court Correspondent

The hearing of the writ petition challenging the election of women members to parliament resumed on Monday before a Division Bench of the Supreme Court, High Court Division, comprising Justice Fazle Hossain, Justice Habibur Rahman and Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury.

Mohammad Mohsen Rashid, the counsel for the petitioners, while making his submissions relied upon different Articles of the Constitution viz. Articles 65, 67, 124, 148 and Article 4 of the Representation of People (Seats for Women) Order 1973, to submit that it is mandatory to constitute the electoral roll for election of women members, consisting 300 members of Parliament. He said that it was this scheme of the legislature which led to the substitution of the original Article 4 of the Representation of People (Seats for Women) Order 1973 as the said Article provides for a roll of 300 MP-elect and that the amendment to the said Article made in 1986 was done to make it harmonious to the Constitution since only Members of Parliament under Article 65 of the Constitution can form electoral roll. He further contended that without the completion of oath for the petitioners within 90 days from April 5, 1991 the notification for election of women to reserved seats could not have been held.

Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, Additional Attorney General, while making his submissions, said that Parliament cannot be constituted without the election of 30 women members as per Article 65 of the Constitution. He further said that the submissions of the counsel for the petitioner that they have 90 days time from April 5, 1991 to take oath as per Article 67 of the Constitution is misconceived. The said provision is to meet contingencies only; it is not a right of members. He submitted that enough time was granted to the petitioners and the Jatiya Party Parliamentary group to take oath but they have so far declined to take oath.

The court is likely to deliver judgement today.

## Tk 2.25 lakh

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are now living under open sky with their belongings destroyed or damaged.

Begum Zia was moved to see the condition of the people and assured of all assistance.

The Prime Minister also visited Kalijuri primary teachers' institute where all tin sheds of the rooms were blown away.

The Prime Minister sanctioned Taka 2.25 lakh and 100 tonnes of wheat as gratuities relief for the affected people and directed the local administration to ensure proper distribution of the relief materials.

The Prime Minister later went to Comilla General Hospital where 21 injured persons have been admitted.

She also went to Nawab Fatuzzunna female wards of the general hospital and talked to the patients enquiring about their treatment and welfare.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by Shipping Minister M.K. Anwar, State Minister for Labour and Manpower Rafiqul Islam Mian, Local women MP Rabiya Chowdhury and Akbar Hossain, MP.

Begum Zia also directed the district administration to ensure proper treatment. She further directed the BNP leaders and workers to help the tornado hit people overcome their sufferings.

Earlier, Begum Zia was briefed by the local administration on the latest situation after the tornado.

Medical teams headed by the civil surgeon is working in the area and the local administration has called upon the non-government voluntary organisations to help in relief work.

## Death toll 11

Our Comilla Correspondent adds: The death toll in Sunday's Nor'wester at Comilla rose to 11, sources said.

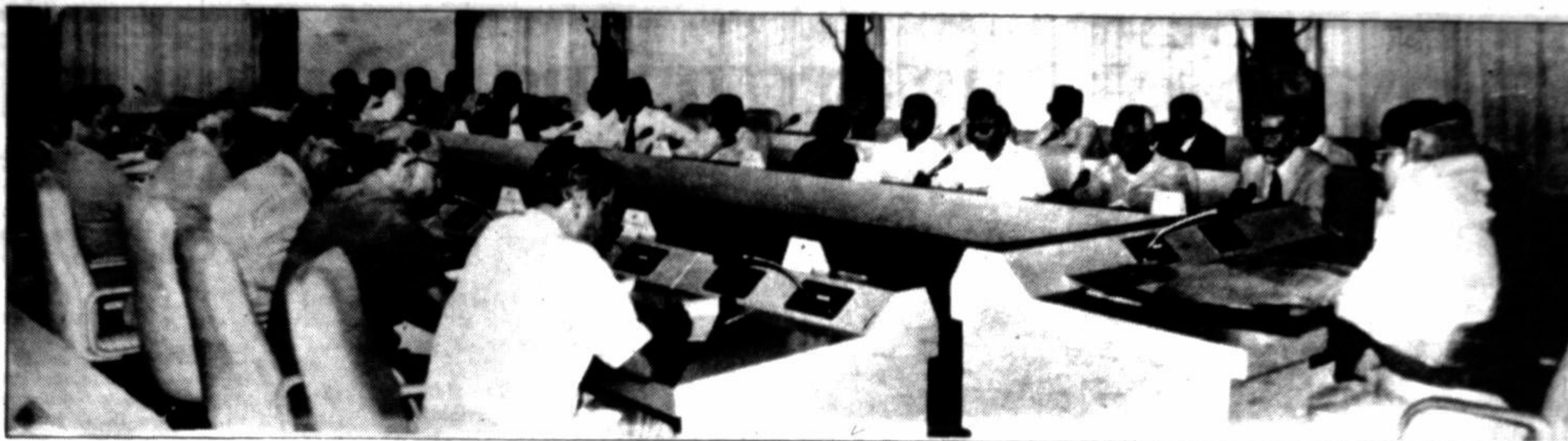
## Cabinet meet

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was given a directive to review and monitor the supply and market price of essential commodities and to take measures to keep the price stable and within the reach of the consumers.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Bangabhaban Monday. —PID photo

## ESCAP : Industrial restructuring

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International development strategy for the Fourth UN Development Decade (1991-2000). Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and regional co-operation in agriculture, energy, human resources development, human settlement, transport and communication, and special problems of the Pacific countries are some of the other issues expected to be taken up by this session.

Finance and Planning Minister of Bangladesh, Saifur

Rahman leads a five-member delegation which includes the Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment, the Ambassador to Korea, an official from the ERD and the deputy permanent representative to ESCAP.

S.A.M.S. Kibria, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in a pre-conference press briefing said the purpose of choosing industrial restructuring as the theme of the current ESCAP session was to achieve two things; first to enable the Asia-Pacific region to sustain their extraordinary economic per-

formance which has been the best compared to all other regions of the world, and second to adopt policy guidance to enable the not so dynamic countries to share in the region's prosperity. He laid special emphasis on the performance of SAARC countries and their need to adopt policy reforms so that the "growth impulse" prevalent in other parts of the region could spread to this region.

ESCAP study on industrial restructuring, specially produced for this session, states that trends likely to be inter-

sified in the 1990s include (a) further globalisation of trade and production structure; (b) declining importance of labour cost; (c) increased competitiveness of industrial output. In all these trends technology and information are likely to play a very important role. The study reveals that in the future international transfer of production facilities, technology and finance will look for efficient physical infrastructure, skills, quality and productivity of labour. It will look less at comparative wage levels. The study concludes that countries with superior ability to create, generate and transmit knowledge are likely to be ahead of others without such capacities. These findings are of special importance of countries like Bangladesh whose future development and industrial growth are to a large extent dependent on attracting sufficient foreign investment.

The ESCAP session which will end of April 10 is expected to adopt an elaborate plan containing about 20 recommendations and 76 action proposals. It is also likely to adopt the "Seoul Declaration", which will express the political support of the participating countries behind the recommendations and the action proposals.

An undeclared agenda of the host country, in organising this conference is to lobby for its upcoming application for UN membership. After decades of being left out of the UN system because of Cold War politics, Republic of Korea expects this year to be admitted to the world body. Foreign Minister Lee Sang-ook in a press statement few days ago said hosting the ESCAP session "will create an atmosphere favourable to gain UN membership".



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing an extended meeting of her party's student front Chhatra League in the city on Monday. —Star photo

## BNP, AL meet

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Concerned quarters told The Daily Star that both the BNP and the Awami League would like to see Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed continue in his present position for some time yet, though for wholly different reasons.

The BNP would like to hold the presidential election under the Acting President to give it a cover of neutrality. On the other hand, the Awami League would like the Acting President to handover power to a parliament, to which the government would remain accountable. And by their interpretation, an accountable government is a parliamentary government. However, such a transfer of power by the Acting President may be delayed.

On the question of acceptability of the outgoing Speaker's presiding over the inaugural session, the two parties would probably like to take a common stand on the issue on Wednesday.

In the proposed meeting, an Awami League source told The Daily Star that the party

would place a formal proposal before the BNP to bring a bill changing the form of government to a parliamentary one.

Meanwhile, the Awami League MPs who participated in the orientation programme at the parliament on Monday also reportedly tried to impress upon the BNP MPs on this issue.

Awami League MP Asaduzzaman, who had played an active role attempting to revert to parliamentary system during the Third Parliament in 1987 as secretary of the Awami League parliamentary party, in his speech at the orientation course Monday emphasized the need for a parliamentary form of government for the country.

However, the BNP MPs attending the course did not make any remarks.

The sources told The Star that if the proposal of the Awami League is not accepted by the BNP the party would move a resolution on a bill amending the constitution on a private members' day.

## ALPP

From Page 1 Col. 6 support for the bill from all MPs belonging to Eight-Party partners, Five - Party, JSD (Straj), NDP and Jamaat-Islami.

Meanwhile, the Awami League Parliamentary Board (ALPB) met at the Bangabandhu Bhaban Monday

## Hasina

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were pledged by the three alliances, she reminded.

Sheikh Hasina urged her party members to prepare themselves for building a movement both within and outside Parliament for establishing parliamentary democracy. She said we must take lesson from our past mistakes and made a new start thereon.

Awami League Secretary General Begum Sajeda Chowdhury called for resisting all conspiracies against the party and consolidating its strength. The meeting which was adjourned Monday resumes at 10 am today (Tuesday).

## Ershad

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unconditional faith and support to the present leadership of the party.

In a resolution the Jatiya Party parliamentary party expressed their concern at the rise in price of essential commodities.

Earlier the Jatiya Party had taken a decision not to take oath unless their demand was fulfilled.

## Iranian embassy in Riyadh opened

NICOSIA, Apr 1: Iran reopened its embassy in Riyadh today, beginning a new era of friendship with Saudi Arabia after years of bitter political and religious rivalry, reports Reuter.

## Jails

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on Monday. Eight prisoners were killed and over a hundred others including wardens were injured during revolt in the jail on 27 March. The situation was quickly brought under control.

The jails in Peni and Myensingh which also experienced trouble in the last two months were reported to be peaceful on Monday.

## Take up issue of sovereign Sangsad, intellectuals call upon alliances

A group of prominent personalities appealed to the three political alliances to discuss a new the issues of a sovereign Parliament and a government accountable to it and reach a consensus for necessary amendments to the present constitution, reports BS.

The signatories to the statement are: Prof. Khan Sarwar Murshid, Prof. Salah Uddin Ahmed, Former Presidential Adviser Dr Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Barrister Amirul Islam, Dr Akhtaruzzaman, Dr Hamida Hossain, Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, Dr Sarwar Ali, Nurur Rahman, Engineer Murtuza Khan, Ahmedul Kabir, Mrs Ayesha Khanam, Mrs Shamsun Nahar Rose, Mafidul Haq and Architect Rabul Hossain.

## Programme

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will be finalised today (Tuesday).

The secretariat has prepared the programme in consultation with both the Treasury and the Opposition benches.

A three-member delegation of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) met the Parliamentary Secretary Monday and discussed the programme.

The programme which has been prepared includes the election of a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker soon after the inauguration of the session at 10 am on Friday.

The session will be adjourned for half-an-hour after the election and the newly elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker will take oath from the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Sangsad Bhaban.

In the opening session, an obituary reference will be adopted and different parliamentary committees will be formed.

The Acting President will address the inaugural session after which the session will remain adjourned till Sunday morning.

During the working sessions, which may continue till April 12, the MPs will take part in discussions on the Acting President's speech.

Some bills, including amendment of the Cooperative Act and the civil and criminal laws are likely to be placed before parliament.

## The Midnight File

### Dacoits loot Tk 1 lakh in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: A group of armed dacoits looted Taka one lakh in cash from eight shops at Sholashahar here this morning, police said. The looters numbering about 20 fled away with the cash towards Nasrabad hills. A case was registered in this connection, reports BS.

### Quake panic in Thailand

BANGKOK, Apr 1: Thai office workers fled into the streets today after in earthquake shook building and cracked glass in central Bangkok. Official Burmese Radio reported the earthquake as measuring 4.9 on the Richter Scale with its epicentre in the Bay of Bengal 180 km (120 miles) southwest of Rangoon. No injuries were reported in either Burma or Thailand, reports Reuter.

### Krajina joins Serbia

BELGRADE, Apr 1: A rebellious ethnic Serb region of Croatia on Monday declared it was joining Yugoslavia's largest republic of Serbia, according to Belgrade Radio. It was not immediately clear what practical effect, if any, the declaration from leaders in the region of Krajina would have. But if the Serbian leadership, which has supported the Krajina minority's moves in the past, accepts the declaration, it could lead to a major confrontation between two republics, reports AP.

### Jews' march in Jerusalem

TEL AVIV, Apr 1: Police on Monday prevented a group of Jewish extremists from going to Jerusalem's Temple Mount but later permitted them to march with Israeli flags through the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. The group, known as the Temple Mount Faithful, calls for reconstructing the biblical Jewish temple on the mount, which is the site of the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosques. The site is the third holiest in Islam, reports AP.

### Black snow in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Apr 1: Indian environmentalists said Monday they were trying to determine whether a huge patch of black oily snow in the Himalayan mountains was caused by the burning oil fires in Kuwait. The patch, about one square kilometer (247 acres), was found by skiers in an inaccessible area near Gurd, 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of Srinagar in the Kashmir province last week, reports AP.



Chief Election Commissioner Justice Rouf administering oath to women MPs at Sangsad Bhaban on Monday. —Star photo



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