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The Daily Star

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VOL. 1 NO. 83 REGD. NO. DA 781

CHAITRA 26, 1397 BS,

DHAKA WEDNESDAY APRIL 10, 1991

RAMADAN 24, 1411 HIJRI

10 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 3.00

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Dhaka Day by Day



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NEWS BRIEFS

36 Greek tourists die in bus fire

ISTANBUL, Apr 9: At least 36 Greek tourists, including five children, were killed today when a gas canister exploded in their bus, starting a fire which trapped them inside, officials and witnesses said, reports Reuter.

Storm batters Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Apr 9: Chittagong city and its adjoining upazilas were battered by a storm with maximum speed of 65 km per hour for forty-five minutes this evening, Chittagong Met Office sources said, reports BSS.

Hartal observed at Netrokona

NETROKONA, Apr 9: A five-hour hartal was observed peacefully here at Purbadhala upazila today in protest against Monday's clash between two rival factions of BNP, which left 20 people injured, seven of them seriously, reports UNB.

Sikh militants kill civil servant

NEW DELHI, Apr 9: Suspected Sikh militants shot and killed a senior civil servant at his office in the troubled northern state of Punjab today, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, reports AFP.

Repatriation

ISLAMABAD, Apr 9: Pakistan will start repatriating its stranded nationals from Bangladesh as soon as the required funds are available, the government told the National Assembly here today, reports AFP.

Schri and Hjar trimes

Times Day Last time for Sale: 11:24 Wednesday 4.21 am 6.23 pm 25 Thursday 4.20 am 6.23 pm

General discussion on prison situation today

Certain political quarters behind jail unrest : PM

By Staff Correspondent



Body of the victim of Monday's Dhaka Central Jail riot. The victim is identified as Momin, an under-trial prisoner, who managed to escape from the jail but was recaptured and allegedly severely beaten by security guards. —Star photo

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Tuesday told the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) that the Government has constituted a commission to find the details of Monday's Dhaka Central Jail incidents. The commission will be headed by the District and Sessions Judge of Comilla and submit its report soon.

The Prime Minister and Leader of the House made statement in the House on the incidents at Dhaka Central Jail. She said certain political quarters are involved in it and trying to realise its political motives. She did not elaborate which quarters are doing so.

Suranjit Sengupta of Ganatantri Party (GP), who took the floor after Leader of the House Begum Zia made her statement wanted to know who are the 'political quarters' responsible for the jail riot. He also stated that it does not matter whether the government 'is one-hour or one-year old'. The basic thing is the continuity of the government and it must give a full picture of what has been going on in the jails, he said demanding a full explanation from the Government on the state of affairs in the prisons.

The GP member maintained that the government must not consider itself as being absolved of its responsibilities for maintaining law and order in the jails. 'The prisons are supposed to be the safest place where the government is alone responsible for maintaining law and order', he said.

The GP member demanded that a committee should be constituted by the government with representative from the

Ershad appears depressed at trial CMM's statements corroborated by witnesses

By Staff Correspondent

The arms case trial of deposed President H M Ershad resumed yesterday with the cross examination of two more prosecution witnesses.

The witnesses corroborated the statements made earlier before the Tribunal by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM).

Ershad was put in the dock of the Special Tribunal at around 10:30 a.m. looking as grim and gloomy as he did at the previous hearing on Sunday. And though he had recovered from a fever he looked very depressed.

The prosecution witnesses cross examined Tuesday were Dental Surgeon Ishtiaque Ahmed and the Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department A. K. M. Mukitir Rahman.

Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed was a signatory to the seizure list prepared by the ASP of the CID Golam Mostafa, who seized a lot of documents found in the Sena Bhaban by the Inventory Committee.

The CID officer seized the documents from the CMM on December 26.

Ishtiaque Ahmed said that the list of the items found in the Sena Bhaban by the Inventory Committee was prepared in front of him but that he did not see any of the recovered articles.

He said that one Anil Kumar Saha, known to the CMM, was also present during the preparation of the seizure list and was also one of its signatories. The other prosecution witness A K M Muskitur Rahman who was later produced before the Tribunal said that the inventory was made between December 22 and 26.

He said that he had been nominated a member of the

committee headed by the CMM by the Chief Engineer of the PWD at the instruction of the Home Ministry.

He said that members of the Inventory Committee entered the Sena Bhaban daily opening the door kept under lock and key after each day's work.

He said that the PWD had been entrusted the responsibility of maintaining the Sena Bhaban since January 1, 1989.

Both the prosecution witnesses were cross-examined by the Defence Lawyer Strajul Haque.

The tribunal will resume today (Wednesday) at 10 a.m.

Representatives of a foreign donor agency were also present during the court proceedings on Tuesday.

The prosecution was conducted by the Attorney General (AG) Aminul Haque who was assisted by DAGs Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Hasan Arif.

Besides, PPs Farid Ahmed, Bashir Ahmed, Adilur Rahman Khan and Mohammad Azad were also present on the prosecution side.

The Defence was led by Advocate Strajul Haque, while Kazi Shahadat Hussain, Mufzur Rahman, Humayun Khan and others assisted him.

Following is the excerpts from the cross-examination of Ishtiaque Ahmed by the Defence Lawyer Strajul Haque:

Defence Lawyer (DL): Have you seen an overwriting on the seizure list? (showing the seizure list)

Ishtiaque Ahmed (IA): Yes, I could not guess it.

Judge: What is the meaning of overwriting in Bangla?

Attorney General: Writing over writing.
I.A.: I don't know whether

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'Post-75 govts failed to ensure due share of Ganges water'

By Staff Correspondent

Eight MPs belonging to BNP, Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami, who spoke on the motion of thanks on Acting President's speech observed that the speech projected an accurate picture of the economic condition prevailing in the country.

They also took the opportunity to express their views on the political situation and put forward suggestions for solving problems faced by the nation.

The motion of thanks was moved by Abdul Mattin Chowdhury of the Treasury Bench on Sunday.

Salauddin Yusuf, a president member of Awami League, who has been elected from Khulna-5, praising the speech of the Acting President. He said a sovereign parliament accountable to the people was

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JP threatens action against Speaker

The Jatiya Sangsad members belonging to the Jatiya Party Tuesday demanded that they should be given due right of speaking at the Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

Addressing a press conference at the Sangsad Bhaban, the Secretary of the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party, Mr. Mantrul Huq Chowdhury, said that though the Jatiya Party had emerged as the second largest opposition party in the Sangsad, the Speaker of the House was not giving the JP members any chance to talk in the House.

Earlier the Jatiya Party members staged a walkout in the morning session in protest against what they said, not allowing them the floor by the chair.

Mr Chowdhury said that if

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Walkout over jail incident

By Staff Correspondent

Three more bills were introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) which witnessed walkout twice on Tuesday.

The first walkout was staged by Jatiya Party MPs who alleged they were not given floor despite the fact they form the second largest opposition group in parliament.

The second walkout was staged by the Opposition members led by Sheikh Hasina as their appeal for an adjournment motion on the Dhaka Central Jail incident was not granted.

As outburst of anger from the Opposition Bench over the jail incident tilled the House, JP MPs stood up simultaneously to draw the attention of the Chair. Advocate Fazle Rabbi of JP thumped the table to the limits of his strength and Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas gave him a warning instead of the floor.

Mantrul Huq Chowdhury, Secretary of the JP Parliamentary Party, told newsmen later they would decide about the next course of action today (Wednesday).

He said even parties having only one member in the House got more attention than the 25 JP members. He said their walkout was also related to the Opposition demand for an adjournment motion on the jail incident.

He said JP leaders Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Anwar Hossain, Nazir Rahman, Kazi Piroze Rashid, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Abul Hassnat, and Sardar Anjad

Hossain did not surrender, because the jails were not safe. The JP leaders were also not faced with public wrath. Rather they were welcomed by the people. The results of the February 27 polls proved this, he added.

Meanwhile, Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas informed the House that the difference over positioning of names in the Business Advisory Committee was settled amicably through talks.

Amid table thumping from the Opposition he announced the Business Advisory Committee which he himself, heads other members of the committee are: the Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia, the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami group Matur Rahman Nizami, Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, Local Government Minister Abdur Salam Talukdar, Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, Chief Whip of BNP Khan-dakar Delwar Hossain, State Minister for Labour and Manpower Rafiqul Islam Mia, BKSAL MP Mohiuddin Ahmed, Secretary of JP Parliamentary Party Mantrul Huq Chowdhury, CPB group leader Shamsud-doha and Education Minister Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Communication Minister Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed and State Minister for Labour and Manpower Rafiqul Islam Mia introduced three bills when the Opposition was absent

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Fleeing prisoner dies in jail : Revolt leaders transferred

By Staff Correspondent

Nineteen leaders and their associates who led Monday's jail revolt have been transferred to four other jails on Tuesday and the authorities are planning stern measures like cancellation of special remission granted to the prisoners earlier, jail sources said.

The leaders include Jashim, Selim, Akhter, Kamrul and Nishan who have been sent to Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Sylhet jails. Separate charges for creating anarchy inside the jail may be brought against them, the sources said.

The authorities granted special remission and general amnesty after December revolt under which 4,500 prisoners

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Token strike in city newspapers today

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) has called a three-hour token strike on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in all city newspaper and news agencies.

DUJ has called the strike to press home its demands for reinstatement of journalists of the Dainik Desh and the Bangladesh Observer whose services have been terminated, and an end to the harassment of journalists in the Dainik Azad, payment of all dues of the journalists of the Dainik Dinkal and the Naba Abhijan and rapid solution of the problems of the

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Seen from the Gallery

Reazuddin Ahmed

In a marked departure from past practice, Awami League MP Salahuddin Yusuf appeared concerned at the infringement of our sovereignty by the landing of an Indian helicopter and also at the killing of some people by the BSF.

Yet another Awami League MP Abul Ahsan Choudhury, began his speech with Arabic verses (Nahmaduhu Owa Nusallihuh.....), which was

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Mob attacks vehicles as two die in mishap

Two middle aged pedestrians were crushed under the wheels of a speeding Dhaka bound bus from Sherpur when its driver tried to overtake another vehicle near Khilkhet railway crossing at about 7-10 pm Tuesday, reports UNB.

At least another four pedestrians were injured by the killer bus, but none of the victims could be identified immediately. The injured were rushed to the city hospitals in a critical condition, police said.

Witnesses said the pedestrians fell victims to the speeding bus when they were crossing the road.

Immediately after the accident, 3 to 4 hundred people from the nearby Khilkhet bazar

rushed to the spot. Soon they stopped a speeding mini bus and turned it over on the middle of the Airport road, and damaged more than a score passing vehicles.

The mob also attacked the nearby police outpost and broke its windowpanes by stoning. They also came into clash with police, witnesses said.

A heavy contingent of Riot police was rushed to the spot to quell the situation created by the angry people. It took about two hours for the riot police to bring the situation under control.

Senior police officers including DMP Commissioner A S M Shajahan visited to spot.

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High-powered body to identify causes of campus violence

The government has constituted a high-powered committee to formulate recommendations aimed at bringing back an atmosphere congenial to education at the universities and resisting violence there, reports BSS.

The Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Kazi Saleh Ahmed has been made Chairman of the committee. The other members are: Dr. Abdul Aziz Khan, a former Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University, Engr L K Siddiqui MP, Amanullah Aman MP, Advocate Zulmat Ali Khan, the President of Bangladesh Federation of University Journalists

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Bijrani leaves for home

Mir Hazar Khan Bijrani, special envoy of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, left Dhaka Tuesday for Islamabad ending a four-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

During the visit, Bijrani, who is also his country's Railway Minister, handed over a personal message of Nawaz Sharif to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The envoy also handed over a personal message from Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Bijrani, who headed a five-member Pakistan delegation, also called on the Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas, Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman, and Communication Minister Oli Ahmed.

Plea to make jobs of Ansars permanent rejected

The Finance Ministry has rejected the plea of the battalions Ansars to make their services permanent, reports UNB.

It was learnt Tuesday that recently the Finance Secretary has formally informed the Defence Secretary of the decision.

The Finance Ministry has also reportedly refused another plea of promoting the upazila Ansar and VDP (Village Defence Party) officers.

Georgian parliament proclaims independence

MOSCOW, Apr 9: The Georgian parliament declared independence Tuesday, Tass said, following an overwhelming vote of its citizens in favour of separating from the Soviet Union, reports AP.

Tass said the Supreme Soviet, meeting in a special session, unanimously adopted a declaration 'proclaiming state independence for Georgia' presented by President Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

Some 98 per cent of Georgians voted March 31 in favour of an independence resolution.

President Mikhail S. Gorbachev branded the poll invalid, but did not try to stop it.

The multi-ethnic republic of 5.3 million people, wedged between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea, proclaimed independence from the Russian Empire near the end of World War I, but was forcibly absorbed into the Soviet Union nearly three years later and incorporated under a 1924 Union Treaty.

According to Tass, Tuesday's resolution was based on declaration of Georgia's inde-

pendence of May 26, 1918, which granted Georgians living in the former Russian Empire the right of self-determination.

Tuesday's declaration comes against a backdrop of fighting between ethnic Georgians and South Ossetians that has claimed more than 50 lives in recent months.

South Ossetians, mostly Muslims, want to be an autonomous republic loyal to the Kremlin; the mainly Christian Georgians want to leave the Soviet Union.

Georgia was one of five re-

publics, including Moldavia and the three Baltic republics, that refused to take part in a nationwide referendum on preserving the union. The Baltics also are seeking independence from the union.

Nine republics, representing three-quarters of the country's population, approved the march 17 referendum by 76 per cent. Gorbachev has used the results to bolster support for his proposal to strengthen and revamp the Union Treaty governing relations among the 15 Soviet Republics.

Meanwhle workers at 17 factories and enterprises in the Byelorussian capital of Minsk called for a three-hour warning strike Tuesday despite economic concessions by the republic's government.

The call puts more pressure on Gorbachev, already facing a six-week-old nationwide strike by coal miners who insist on his resignation. Gorbachev has steadfastly refused to step down.

Gorbachev Tuesday declared that the crisis facing his country has reached 'alarming'

and very constructive meeting," Baker said after the hour-long session with Levy at the foreign ministry.

Baker then met for 2 1-2 hours with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who had set a positive tone for Baker's stop in Israel by announcing that about 1,000 Palestinian prisoners would be released this weekend.

Baker and Shamir said nothing afterward. But Avi Pazner, the Prime Minister's press councillor, said the two would meet again, either later Tuesday or Wednesday before Baker goes to Cairo.

"I think the fact that they are continuing to talk is a sign there is something to talk about," Pazner said.