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# The Daily Star

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## JS session resumes today amid hints of heated debate

By Staff Correspondent

The session of the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) which was adjourned on April 11 will resume at 2 pm today (Sunday).

Available indications suggest a stormy session.

Today's session will begin with the question hour which remained suspended during the first five days of the session before Eid due to a shortage of time to print the questions and their answers.

Besides, four bills are likely to be passed and four new bills introduced by the House.

A call attention on the diarrhoea situation in the southern part of the country is also likely to be disposed of today.

The Opposition Bench is likely to take up the killing of four Bangladeshis including

two members of the Bangladesh Rifles, two recent train accidents and robbery incidents for discussion in the House.

The Awami League and its allies will focus their discussion on the form of government and put pressure on the Treasury Bench to concede to their demand for a switchover to parliamentary form.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad has already given a notice to the Parliament Secretariat for introduction of constitutional amendment bill for the purpose.

Awami League looks determined to explore every possibility to cash in on the publicity that the ruling BNP is not

ready to concede the demand. AL has started contacting MPs belonging to other opposition groups in the parliament for support.

The Parliament could transact very limited business during the first five days of the present session beginning on April 5.

After the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed delivered his inaugural address.

The House formed the Business Advisory Committee and the House Committee.

The Treasury Bench laid before the House 44 Ordinances which were promulgated between August

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### BNP considers more power for parliament

## AL contacts other MPs over amendment move

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League has given a notice to the Secretary of the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) to introduce a constitutional amendment bill for reversion to parliamentary form of government.

The ruling BNP on the other hand, knowledgeable sources say, is considering delegating more power to the parliament to establish an 'accountable government'.

Constitutional experts of the party are working on the proposal and the outcome will be made public soon.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the 5-party alliance led by Rashed Khan Menon MP called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Friday request-

ing her to take initiatives to introduce parliamentary form of government.

Begum Zia is learnt to have told the delegation that she would take up the matter with the BNP leadership.

The session of the Parliament which was adjourned on April 11 will resume at 2 pm today (Sunday).

Parliament Secretariat sources confirmed the receipt of notice from Abdus Samad Azad, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

On April 14 the AL bill will require prior recommendation of the President, and will have to be processed through the Ministry of Law and Justice.

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## IJO project committee meet begins

The three-day 15th session of the International Joint Organisation Committee on Projects began here Saturday, reports BSS.

The session opened by the chairman of the IJO Committee on Projects Zhan Jian Jun of China, was attended by representatives from exporting and importing countries, observer countries, the United Nations agencies, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The committee will review activities and progress of the projects under implementation in the agricultural industrial and market promotion sectors.

Speaking on the occasion the Executive Director of IJO Mohammad Shamsul Haque

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## Attempt to procure gift certificates for seized arms Ershad signed 17 cheques in jail

Star Report

Deposed President H.M. Ershad had reportedly signed 17 cheques since his detention at the Gulshan sub-jail, according to reliable sources.

The sources said that his Defense Council Kazi Shahadat Hossain obtained the signature on all the cheques at the request of Ershad's brother-in-law Mostafizur Rahman.

The sources said that Kazi Shahadat went to obtain the deposed President's signature on Thursday for withdrawing money from an account at the Green Road branch of Agrani Bank.

Kazi Shahadat needed the money to procure gift certificates to show that the recovered arms from the Sena Bhaban were gifts and he

was scheduled to leave for London to procure the certificates the sources added.

Ershad is now facing trial for the possession of illegal arms.

Kazi Shahadat was caught red-handed by the security guard at the Gulshan sub-jail when he took the cheque to get Ershad's signature on Thursday.

Meanwhile Kazi Shahadat Hossain was charged by his professional colleagues at the Supreme Court for the violation of professional ethics.

He however confessed that he took the cheque to Ershad at the request of his Ershad's brother-in-law. According to a source the Supreme Court Bar

Association may take disciplinary action against Kazi Shahadat Hossain.

According to a police source, Kazi Shahadat may also be sued by the concerned authorities for violating jail rules.

The Central Jail source said that after the transfer of Ershad from the Gulshan sub-jail to Central Jail only Advocate Mufizur Rahman Mazumdar who is assisting Kazi Shahadat Hossain in the arms case met Ershad at the jail yesterday (Saturday). He discussed various legal matters with Ershad.

Meanwhile Office Secretary of Jatiya Party Tajul Islam MP in a statement to the press said that the cheque was sent to the sub-jail author-

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## Khaleda's visit to S. Arabia, Kuwait postponed

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's proposed visit to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait later this month has been deferred due to unavoidable circumstances, official sources said Saturday, reports UNB.

Begum Zia was scheduled to leave the capital on April 25. Her visit to the Gulf will be rescheduled in due course, the sources said.

## Govt has failed to protest border incidents: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent  
Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has said her party expects good neighbourly behaviour from a big democratic country like India.

Sheikh Hasina in a statement on Saturday expressed her deep concern at the killing of two BDR personnel and two civilians by the Indian BSF members at Kaziপুর under border district Meherpur on April 19.

The AL leader accused the government of failing to immediately protest the landing of an Indian copter on Bangladesh territory and increasing number of untoward incidents taking place in the border areas.

She termed the government inaction as a naked expression of its 'subservient

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## BDR asked for details about Friday's incident

By Staff Correspondent  
Foreign Office has asked the BDR authorities to provide details about Friday's incident in the border village of Kaziপুর, in which four persons including two BDR personnel were killed in BSF firing.

A Foreign Office source told the Daily Star that Bangladesh would lodge strong protest when the details would be available.

When contacted last night, a Home Ministry official said the BDR authorities had already been asked to provide information to the Foreign Office.

## Decision on Pay Commission report may be delayed

Star Economic Report  
The government's decision on the National Pay Commission report is unlikely before July.

Official sources said the recommendations of the Pay Commission about salaries and fringe benefits for government officials and employees, including those under public sector corporations and autonomous bodies, would be examined by a council committee. No such committee has yet been formed.

The Pay Commission submitted its report to Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in March.

Sources said the financial implications of salary and other benefits, recommended by the Pay Commission, have not yet been assessed in full. Tentative indications suggest that implementation of the recommendations by the Pay Commission will involve an additional expenditure, varying between Taka 800 crore and

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## Dhaka to join UNIKOM

Bangladesh will join the United Nations observers team—UNIKOM (United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observers Mission)—to monitor the demilitarized zone on Iraq-Kuwait border, reports UNB.

A Foreign office spokesman told newsmen Saturday a seven-member Army team will soon leave Dhaka for the area to join the UN mission, constituted as per the Security Council resolution 687 adopted April 3.

Bangladesh team will comprise officers in the ranks of Major and Captain.

A total of 300 military observers from 31 countries will constitute the mission which is mandated to policing the 240 mile zone for a period of one-year.

Other major countries sending observers include: United States, USSR, China, France, UK, India and Pakistan.

## S. Arabia unlikely to sit with Israel

## Baker talks peace process with Hussein

AQABA (Jordan), Apr 20: US Secretary of State James Baker held talks Saturday with Jordan's king Hussein in an effort to develop a Middle East peace process, then flew on to Cairo, reports AP.

Baker described the meeting in Jordan's Red Sea port as "very productive and useful" but did not elaborate. Also attending the talks were Hussein's younger brother, Prince Hassan, as well as Jordan's Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Foreign Minister Taher Masri and other close aides to the monarch.

Baker's stopover here came after a US official said Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states should be excluded from any negotiations following the secretary's meeting in Jerusalem with Israeli and Palestinian officials.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also told reporters that Baker had made little headway during his Middle East trip in setting up peace negotiations.

The Saudis had been expected to play an enhanced role in the region following their prominent role in the Gulf War.

"It's not because Saudi Arabia is refusing anything," Baker explained.

"I think there is a feeling on the part of the sometimes-called frontline states neighboring Israel that the issues in dispute are issues that affect Israel and those countries and issues that affect Israel and Palestinians," said Baker.

"If you bring other Arab states to the table at the same time where do you draw the line," the secretary said.

Israel and its Arab neighbors agree neither on arrangements for a peace conference nor on who would represent the Palestinians, the official said.

But Baker, before leaving Jerusalem to see Hussein, said, "We are going to keep plugging away."

Baker met with three Palestinian leaders before leaving the Israeli capital. They urged him to stop Jewish settlement in the occupied territories and to reject "unacceptable conditions" Israel has set for peace talks.

Baker's stop at this Jordanian city is his first in the Arab world on the current trip and Hussein's first direct involvement in the peace process.

The king condemned the war by the United States and its allies against Iraq as a conflict against all Muslims. Several years ago, he said he was dropping out of the search for a peace settlement because the United States was hopelessly one-sided in favour of Israel.

This is Baker's third Mideast trip since March 11. On his trip to the area last week, he won agreement from Israel and the Arabs to hold peace talks. His task this time is to set them up, but he is not doing well so far.

"As we get closer, the decisions get tougher," said the official. "I think that's what you are seeing. These are tough calls and tough decisions." However, the official added, "No one has definitely said they would not attend a peace conference."

Asked what Baker had achieved, the secretary said

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**HOLIDAY INERTIA:** Government offices reopened yesterday after a eight-day Eid vacation, but attendance was very thin. In the picture a lone Establishment Ministry staffer sleeping off its sultry summer noon on the opening day. — Star photo

## Gorbachev, Roh agree to new economic cooperation

CHEJU ISLAND (South Korea), Apr 20: The Soviet Union and South Korea agreed Saturday to broad new economic cooperation and a joint multimillion dollar natural gas development project in the Soviet Far East, officials said, reports AP.

The Soviet Union also reaffirmed its position that if North Korea refuses to sign the nuclear safeguard treaty it will suspend supplies of nuclear fuel, technology and other help to its longtime

communist ally, officials said. The agreements came during Saturday's summit talks between Soviet President Mikhail S Gorbachev and South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo.

Reuter adds: Gorbachev also lent support to Seoul's long-held desire to join the United Nations and appeals for economic and political cooperation.

This year the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea have walked a long distance in a

very short time," Gorbachev told reporters at a briefing on Cheju island off the southern tip of the divided peninsula. Gorbachev arrived in South Korea late on Friday following a disappointing four-day visit to Japan. He met South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo for 95 minutes today and left for home in mid-afternoon.

In an atmosphere of cordiality in marked contrast to his chilly visit to Japan, Gorbachev called for more

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## Schwarzkopf bids bye to Gulf

RIYADH, Apr 20: US Gen H Norman Schwarzkopf and hundreds of his staff packed their bags for the trip home this weekend, closing down the nerve center of the Gulf War, reports AP.

His scheduled departure Saturday after what some say was a brilliant military strategy signals the end of the US combat role in the Gulf. Less than 270,000 troops remain from a peak of 540,000.

His US Central Command headquarters in Riyadh, from which he plotted a smashing victory over Saddam Hussein, See Page 10 Col. 7

## US asks Baghdad to pull back from northern Iraq

ANKARA, Apr 20: The United States has asked Iraq to pull its troops well back from the Zakho region of northern Iraq to make way for refugee havens, a US diplomat said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

"We asked for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces to a line 30 kilometres (19 miles) south of the town of Zakho," the diplomat told Reuter.

"The idea is to give US breathing space in the Zakho valley where we plan to set up

transitory camps for the refugees."

He said US Lieutenant-General John Shalikashvili, allied task force commander, had transmitted the demand at Friday's meeting with two senior Iraqi officers just inside Iraq.

"The Iraqi delegation asked to study the proposal," the diplomat said. "Negotiations are still going on."

Shalikashvili and allied officers met two Iraqi Brigadier-Generals, Nushwan Danoun

and Abdul-Hafiz Jezail, for 50 minutes on the Iraqi side of the Habur crossing between Iraq and Turkey.

The US General said later no further meeting had been arranged, saying issues would be pursued through other channels.

Meanwhile, AP adds from Damascus: Efforts are under way to arrange a meeting between Kurdish leaders and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to discuss the plight of millions of Kurdish refugees.

A Kurdish spokesman said.

There are direct contacts between us and Iraqi officials to arrange for these discussions," said Flak el-Deen Kakai, a spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Party, one of the two main Kurdish guerrilla factions.

Kakai said he had no details on how or when such a meeting would take place.

But he stressed that one prerequisite for such talks was that they be sponsored by the United Nations.

"The Kurds insist on that," he said.

Kakai said talks should focus on the refugees and also the Kurd's decades — long struggle for autonomy in Iraq.

Reuter from London says: A high-level Kurdish delegation is in Baghdad at Iraq's invitation to discuss an Iraqi offer to grant expanded autonomy for the Kurds within a pluralistic political system, a Kurdish spokesman said today.

The delegation is led by prominent Kurdish leader Jalil

Talabani, a spokesman for Kurdistan's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said in London.

"They are discussing an Iraqi offer for expanded autonomy within the federated structure of Iraq, promising democracy, pluralism and constitutional rule in Baghdad," spokesman Barham Saleh said.

Another report from Damascus says: The Iraqi Shi'ite opposition reported fresh fighting against govern-

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### AL PP meets tomorrow

A meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party will be held on April 22 at 10 am at committee room No 9 at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, a party press release said Saturday night, reports BSS.

### New cabinet in Kuwait

KUWAIT, Apr 20: Kuwait, under pressure to form a more democratic government, on Saturday announced a new cabinet with members of the ruling Al-Sabah family keeping key posts, reports Reuter.

### US committed to ME peace: Bush

JIDDAH, Apr 20: President George Bush has assured the Organisation of Islamic Conference that the United States is committed to Middle East peace efforts, OIC officials said Saturday, reports AP.

### Hasina condoles deaths

By Staff Correspondent  
Awami League President and Leaders of the Opposition in the Parliament Sheikh Hasina Saturday expressed profound shocks and condolence over killing of five people in Tuesday's train accident in Chittagong.

### Emergency in North Ossetia

MOSCOW, Apr 20: A state of emergency was clamped on the North Ossetia region of southern Russia today.