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The Daily Star

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Special to The Star

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NEWS BRIEFS

Lokman Hossain Fakir dies

Lokman Hossain Fakir, a renowned lyricist and music director, died of massive heart attack Tuesday afternoon at the Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, reports UNB.

Donald Siegel dead

NIPOMO (California), Apr 23: Donald Siegel, who directed such classic action films as "Dirty Harry," "The Shootist" and the original "Invasion of the Body-snatchers," has died after a long illness. He was 78, reports AP.

Biman-Saudia to reduce 'labour fare'

Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Saudia have proposed to reduce the 'labour fare' from Dhaka to Jeddah and Riyadh, reports UNB.

Kamal off to US

Eminent lawyer Dr. Kamal Hossain left for New York Tuesday on a 10-day visit to the United States. He will serve as member of an international tribunal in the Yale

Opposition parties in JS to work unitedly on parliamentary form Strategy to pressurise BNP

By Moinuddin Naser

Members of all the opposition parties in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) with the exception of the Jatiya Party have agreed on a joint strategy to pressurise the BNP into bringing a bill changing the form of government to a parliamentary one.

Ten of the 11 opposition parties in the Jatiya Sangsad in a meeting on Tuesday with Leader of the Opposition Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina decided to work unitedly on the basis of the proposed Constitution amendment bill, notified to the Parliament Secretariat by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad on April 14.

Held at the Sangsad Bhaban office of the Leader of the Opposition, the meeting was

attended by Jamaat leader Matur Rahman Nizami, Baksal leader Abdur Razzak, CPB leader Shamsuddoha, NDP chief Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, JSD leader Shahjahan Siraj, Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, Gonotantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta and Islami Oikya Jote leader Maulana Obaidul Haque.

The leaders agreed at the meeting to wait a while for the introduction of a bill by the Treasury Bench to facilitate backstage parleys and dialogue in order to arrive at a consensus on such a vital issue.

Awami League General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury told The Daily Star that all the political parties except the Jatiya Party have agreed to support the parliamentary

form of government to make the parliament more powerful and effective and end one-man rule.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, in his notice to the Parliament Secretariat on April 14 said that his party would like to bring a bill amending the Constitution on the private members day, in accordance with Rule 72 of the Rules of Procedure.

The draft bill, which was submitted proposed a lot of substantive changes in the Constitution through an amendment bill. The bill, named the Constitution (Eleventh Amendment) Bill, 1991 proposes that the President of the country would be elected by the Members of Parliament as per the second

schedule of the Constitution, which again would require further amendment. The election of the President would be conducted by the Election Commission.

In the proposed bill, the Awami League has suggested amendment to Articles 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 66, 72, 73(a), 88, 92(a), 119, 122, 123, 124, 141(a), 142, 145(a), 147, 148 and the Second, Third and Fourth schedules of the Constitution.

In the objects and aims of the proposed bill, Abdus Samad Azad stated that it was necessary to handover power to a 'sovereign' parliament to make the government accountable to the parliament. It said that the parliament was

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BSF action an encroachment on sovereignty

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) witnessed stormy scenes on Tuesday over the adjournment motion on the killing of Bangladesh nationals by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in Meherpur.

The participants in the discussions strongly condemned the BSF killing saying that it amounted to an encroachment on the sovereignty of Bangladesh.

The motion was however talked out as the members grew restive and attempted to take the floor in unison to express their resentment over the incident.

In the process, the two-hour time limit, set for discus-

sion on an adjournment motion, expired.

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina could not make her speech nor could the Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury get the opportunity to take part in the discussion.

Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was not present in the Sangsad on the day because of her visit to the diarrhoea-affected areas.

Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali gave the floor to the Leader of the Opposition but she pleaded to bring the House in order so that she could

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Matin pioneers division in Jatiya Party

Star Report

A disgruntled group of Jatiya Party led by Dr M A Matin, a former deputy prime minister of Ershad government, has disowned the present leadership of the party. The group has taken initiative to reorganise JP with a view to uniting the nationalist forces.

The group held a meeting Tuesday evening at the residence of Dr Matin and decided to mobilise JP leaders from all over the country in Dhaka on May 3 at an 'Eid reunion.' In this gathering, the group will finalise its future course of action.

A reliable source said the meeting at Dr Matin's house was attended by among others, ATM Giasuddin, Mesbahuddin

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Drought-hit areas are most affected : 35000 attacked

600 die of diarrhoea in 28 districts



A mother with her child attacked with diarrhoea at the ICDDR. —Star photo

Star Report

Diarrhoeal diseases which have already claimed nearly 600 lives are spreading fast in other parts of the country, official sources said on Tuesday. Most of the areas are drought-hit.

Thirteen more districts were affected Tuesday raising the number of the stricken districts to 28. None of the districts had a drop of rain during the last two months.

According to the official figures till Tuesday afternoon 511 people died of diarrhoea and more than 35 thousand were attacked with it across the country.

A pre-midnight official report recorded 45 deaths on Tuesday. The number of affected people was pegged at 2534. But the unofficial figures are much higher than that of the government.

The stricken districts are Patuakhali, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Barisal, Barguna, Bhola, Noakhali, Satkhira, Bagarhat, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Magura, Nawabganj, Comilla, Bogra, Pabna, Natore, Kushtia, Lakshmipur, Jessore, Rangpur, Faridpur, Jhenaidah, Chandpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Nilamari and Ja-malpur.

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Reazuddin Ahmed

The first adjournment motion on the killing of Bangladesh nationals by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in Kushtia triggered off a heated discussion in the House on Tuesday.

The motion was talked out amid noise and confusion.

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina could not speak on the motion as the Jatiya Party members were shouting to draw the attention of the Deputy Speaker to give the floor to Masud Ahmed.

The Deputy Speaker adjourned the House as the stipulated two-hour time period for the motion expired.

It was not a good day for Sheikh Hasina. She requested the Speaker to defer the discussion and also made a futile attempt to defer the discussion on the plea that the concerned Minister (The Prime Minister) was not present in the House.

The mover of the motion Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury

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Misunderstanding on water sharing will end, hopes Majid-ul-Haq

Agriculture and Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister Majid-ul-Haq on Tuesday said that the misunderstanding on sharing of the Ganges water would come to an end soon, reports BSS.

He was talking with the visiting Indian Secretary for Water Resources Dr M A Chitale who called on him at his office.

Bangladesh High Commissioner in India Farooq Ahmed Chowdhury and Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh K Srinivasan were present on the occasion.

Majid-ul-Haq said that a historic agreement on sharing of the Ganges water was signed

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India yet non-committal

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh and India discussed the whole gamut of river-water sharing with special emphasis on the Ganges, Teesta and Brahmaputra during the secretary-level meeting between the two countries that began in Dhaka Tuesday.

The two-day meeting is being held as a follow-up of the last meeting at this level held in New Delhi in October last year.

M A Malik, Secretary Flood Control, Irrigation and Water Resources is leading the six-member Bangladesh team at the meeting while Dr M A Chitale, Indian Secretary of Water Resources is the leader of his country's three-member delegation.

The first-day's talks lasted for about six hours.

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Millers level price of salt fixed at Tk 3

Government has approved the salt policy for the current year and fixed the millers level price of salt at Tk 3 and Tk 3.25 per kg at Cox's Bazar and Chittagong respectively, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Council of Ministers Monday night to help boost the local production of salt and reduce its import.

The meeting held at Bangabhaban with Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in the chair was at-

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CU shut down again

CHITTAGONG, Apr 23: The Chittagong University (CU) authorities today extended closure by 10 more days hours after reopening the campus after long four months, fearing re-eruption of violence, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a hurriedly called Syndicate meeting at 5-30 this afternoon following an urgent government directive dispatched from the capital.

The CU officials said the Education Ministry, fearing

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Intensify efforts to control diarrhoea : Khaleda

Monday's accident

Six more die in hospital

By Staff Correspondent

Six more injured passengers of the Dhaka-bound bus which met an accident at Dhamrai on Monday died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) pushing the death toll to 57.

Of the six, five died on late Monday night and one died on Tuesday evening. None of the dead could be identified. An old man of about 60 died on Tuesday evening.

Meanwhile, six bodies were brought to DMCH for post-mortem from Dhamrai.

The accident, worst of its kind in recent-time, occurred

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Tuesday visited the diarrhoea affected areas of Chatkhill, Bhola Sadar, Char Borhanuddin and Barisal sadar, to see the situation there, reports BSS.

During the visit, the Prime Minister held joint meetings of the local administration, officials of the health services and the local elite and reviewed the overall diarrhoeal situation in these places.

In these meetings, Begum Zia was apprised of the latest situation in the diarrhoea affected areas.

The concerned officials told the Prime Minister that the present situation in diarrhoea affected areas was under total control. There was no dearth of necessary medicines in the affected areas.

Addressing the meetings, the Prime Minister called upon the concerned officials for intensifying their activities in containing diarrhoeal disease in the affected areas.

She particularly urged the local and foreign non-government voluntary organisations to come forward in supplementing the government efforts to combat diarrhoea.

The Prime Minister also urged the party leaders and workers to play a pioneering role in serving the people at the time of their distress.

Begum Zia said people's expectation of the BNP government was very high since it was the people's government.

She said the BNP government which stood always by the side of the people, would remain with them in the future too.

The Prime Minister pointed out that public money and national resources were used for gaining personal or coterie interest during the last nine years of the autocratic rule. Such a situation must not continue in the country.

She said the government would consider expanding the

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2232 troops sent to Saudi Arabia

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh has sent 2232 soldiers to Saudi Arabia in response to a request from the Saudi government following the Gulf crisis.

Replying to a question from Rashed Khan Menon (Bakerganj) of the Workers Party on Tuesday, Agriculture Minister Maj Gen (Retd) Majedul Haq told the House that no formal agreement had been signed with the Saudi government to this effect. The signing of the agreement was not possible due to the situation prevailing at the time of despatching the troops, he said.

The minister said the troops are now stationed in the north-eastern region of the Kingdom. Headquarters of the Bangladesh troops are located in the Dahrn city.

Replying to another question from Mizanur Rahman Manu (AL-Dinajpur) Majedul Haq said none of the Bangladesh troops was killed

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About 5 cr people are landless

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for Land Jamiruddin Sircar told the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) Tuesday that the number of landless people in the country was 4.50 crore according to 1983-84 statistics.

Replying to a written question of Mosharraf Hossain (Awami League) the Minister said that the number of landless people was rising by 2.5 per cent a year.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), the number of landless families now stands at 90 lakh, the Minister added.

Replying to a supplementary question of Rashed Khan Menon about the causes of the high annual increase in the number of landless people (2.5 per cent) compared to the country's population growth of 2.3 per cent, the Minister said that this was due to the heavy

influx of people to urban areas in search of food and employment.

The Minister said that natural calamities, river erosion and unemployment are responsible for the substantial increase in the landless population.

Replying to another question, the Minister said the government was considering to form an all-party committee at the village level for saving the farmers from the exploitation of money-lenders.

He said the committee will be formed with the members from the front organisations of the BNP, Awami League, Workers Party and respectable personalities of villages.

Replying to another question of Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury (Jatiya Party), the Minister said there are 559 cluster villages in the country accommodating 20,820 families.

One bill passed, 4 introduced

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) on Tuesday passed the Eastern Railway Servants Group Insurance (Amendment) Bill providing for enhancement of group insurance benefits of Railway employees.

Four other bills were introduced in the House on the day.

Awami League members Salahuddin Yusuf, Sudhansu Sekhar Haldar, Asaduzzaman, Principal Nazrul Islam and independent member Nurul Islam Mont spoke opposing the Eastern Railway Servants Insurance (Amendment) Bill.

In reply Communications Minister Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed

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Akali Dal splits

NEW DELHI, Apr 23: A powerful section of India's main Sikh political party broke away today and declared it will fight elections in troubled Punjab on its own, reports AFP.

Prakash Singh Badal, a former Chief Minister of the northern state, announced in the Punjab capital of Chandigarh he was leading his faction away from the Shiromant Akali Dal (SAD).

Badal charged SAD leader Simranjit Singh Mann with misleading Sikhs failing to unify Sikh political factions and hobnobbing with the government, the news agency said without elaboration.

The SAD was formed in January after the merger of

three Sikh parties, including Badal's under the leadership of Mann, seen as the Sikhs' most influential politician in the Punjab, wracked for the past eight years by a bloody secessionist movement.

Mann had declared then that the new party would work for the single aim of achieving self-determination for the Sikhs, who slightly outnumber Hindus in the state of 17 million people.

The breakup faction would contest elections to Punjab's 13 seats in the Federal Parliament and the 117 member State Assembly independent of the SAD. Badal was quoted as saying.

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