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VOL. 1 NO. 96 REGD. NO. DA 781

BAISAKH 13, 1398 BS,

DHAKA SATURDAY APRIL 27, 1991

SHAWAL 12, 1411 HIJRI

10 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 3.00

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia being presented a copy of a book published by the Bangla Academy after she inaugurated week-long Baishakhi Folk Festival on Friday morning. —Star Photo

## PM asks for steps to inspire young writers

# Foster own culture to stop infiltration of alien culture

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Friday called for going back to the roots of our national culture instead of misleading the greater segment of the population by cheap entertainment and throwing them out of the classical cultural activities, reports BSS.

Addressing the inaugural session of a week-long Baishakhi Folk Festival at Bangla Academy, she said, "We must have to know our culture thoroughly to resist infiltration of distorted alien culture." She argued all to take a pledge for creating a link between the classical and people's cultures.

Education Minister Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury and Bangla Academy Director General Prof Harun-ur Rashid also spoke on the occasion while Chairman of the Academy Gazi Shamsur

Rahman presided. In an open-hearted statement Begum Zia said the present government did not consider education and culture as subjects to be guided by the whims of any individual. "We do not think that cultural institution is a means to patronise any favoured person", she added.

Begum Zia said all efforts for economic development would fail unless education and culture were integrated. If the persons who would work as driving forces were not properly educated, the precondition of development would not be fulfilled.

Begum Zia said the present government would revive the realistic programmes for mass education initiated by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. She said he primary and higher secondary education systems would be restructured to make

the basic educational institutions strong.

Begum Zia said because of the unrealistic policy in the past the country's education sector was now in disorder. "We must have to overcome this, otherwise, all our development would be in jeopardy, she said.

The Prime Minister said that differences of opinion in cultural arena reflected the ability of intellectual wisdom and youthfulness of a nation. So it was natural that differences of opinion existed in our cultural arena. But, she said, we have commonness in such differences which is allegiance to the country and its soil.

Begum Zia said if anyone did not uphold this allegiance, he would be rejected by the soil of this country.

The Prime Minister said "We are an inseparable entity. —Star Photo

## US troops to stay as long as needed: Bush Iraq disbands Popular Army

BAGHDAD, Apr 26: Iraq said today it was disbanding its one-million strong Popular Army, reports Reuter.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said the ruling Revolution Command Council (RCC) took the decision on Friday. The Defence Minister should take the necessary steps to ensure that it was carried out.

The Popular Army, formed before Iraq's 1980-88 war with Iran, draws its strength mainly from 16 and 17 year-olds, who are under the age of conscription, and men over the age of 45. It has a small symbolic force of women.

Some Popular Army members served in Kuwait during Iraq's seven-month occupation which ended when US-led Allies drove Baghdad's troops out in February.

Meanwhile, President George Bush said on Friday that US troops would stay in northern Iraq for as long as it takes to help Kurdish refugees and he again urged the ouster of Saddam Hussein, saying "It's

only terror that's keeping him in power", reports Reuter.

"They're going to stay there as long as it takes to make sure these refugees are being taken care of, and not a minute longer," Bush said in reference to the US troops providing security along with other allied forces at relief camps being constructed in northern Iraq.

In a brief impromptu news conference following a tree-planting ceremony at the White House, the President said he expects no further trouble from Iraqi forces near the camps — and he reaffirmed in forceful style his off-stated desire that Saddam, Iraq's President, be overthrown.

Alluding to reports from Baghdad that Saddam's government and Kurdish leaders are working out an agreement on autonomy for Iraqi Kurds, Bush said such a deal would solve "only part of the problem."

"There will not be normal relations with this man as long as I'm President of the United States", he added.

"His people don't like him — it's only terror that's keeping him in power. History will show you that these things manage to take care of themselves, and I hope it happens soon because we want him out of there."

Bush also said he expects no further complications in the refugee relief operation following the withdrawal of Iraqi security forces from the town of Zakho, where the first allied refugee camp is now being built in hopes of luring thousands of starving, disease-ridden Kurds down from mountain hideaways along the Turkish border.

The Kurds, a large non-Arab minority in Iraq, fled there and to Iran to escape Iraqi armies that crushed a Kurdish rebellion against Saddam after the Gulf war.

Critics accused Bush of helping to foment the unrest by calling for Saddam's ouster during the war, in which allied forces drove Iraqi armies out of Kuwait.

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## Sher-e-Bangla's anniversary of death today

The 29th anniversary of death of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq will be observed today (Saturday), reports BSS.

Different socio-cultural organisations have chalked out programmes in observance of the day.

The programmes include

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## Absconding JP MPs may take oath by Apr 29

The three absconding MPs of Jatiya Party are likely to take oath by April 29, it is reliably learnt.

The absconding MPs are: former prime minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, former ministers Anwar Hossain Monju and Sardar Amjad Hossain.

They are now hiding in the city, sources said. Anwar Hossain is likely to take oath this morning, the sources added.

# A cyclone is brewing up

By Staff Correspondent

A cyclonic storm which is persisting over the Bay of Bengal for the last three days is likely to intensify into a severe cyclone before taking a firm course, say weathermen in Dhaka.

Cyclones formed over the Bay during this time of the year normally hit either the Andhra coast in India or curve towards the Akyab coast in Burma. Occasionally, they also hit the Bangladesh coast, a senior weatherman told The Daily Star Friday.

By Friday evening the cyclonic storm became stationary over the southeast Bay and adjoining southwest Bay, about 1,215 kilometres southwest of Chittagong port.

The cyclonic storm's becoming stationary is an indication that it is gaining more energy (moisture) and becoming stronger. It will brew further, the weatherman said. He said till Friday evening the

cyclonic storm was far away from Bangladesh coasts. The movement of the cyclone was very slow. It is expected to be well within the grip of weather forecasters of Bangladesh in a day or two, he said.

The cyclonic storm which was detected in the form of a depression on Wednesday beyond the southern expansion of the Bay moved northwards on the following day. On Friday it initially moved westwards before becoming stationary.

Met Office forecast says it is likely to move in a northwesterly direction. Maximum sustained wind within 56 kilometres of the cyclone centre is about 65 kilometres per hour rising to 87 kilometres per hour in gust or squalls.

The maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted Distant Warning Signal Number Two.

## 23 more die of diarrhoea

By Staff Correspondent

The diarrhoeal death toll rose to 707 on Friday with the reports of 23 new deaths in different parts of the country.

Of the 23 new deaths, 14 were recorded in the northern area while there were 7 deaths in the southern districts. Three died in Rajshahi, Jessore and Chandpur. Two died in Jhenidah while one each died in Netrokona, Naogaon and

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## AL proposed Constitution amendment bill

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League will propose amendment of 30 articles of the Constitution for reversion to the parliamentary form of government.

The English text of the proposed amendment bill on Page 6

Abdus Samad Azad, a presidential member of AL and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament), has given a notice to the Parliament Secretariat in this regard. The bill prepared for the purpose

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## Congress-I fields Rajesh Khanna for Delhi seat



NEW DELHI, Apr 26: The suspense on the nominees of the Congress-I for five of the seven seats in the capital was broken on the last day of filing nominations with the party deciding to field cine actor, Rajesh Khanna, former foreign secretary, Ramesh Bhandari and three former MPs, reports PTI.

The candidates for the seats in the capital were among the

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## AL asks Shahabuddin to ensure fair by-polls

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League has invited applications from the intending candidates for the by-elections to the vacant seats of the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament).

The by-elections to 10 vacant seats of the Sangsad will be held on June 11.

A meeting of the party's parliamentary group on Friday decided that the prescribed forms for application would be distributed from the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue on May 30. The applications must be submitted to the party office by 9 pm, on May 2, the meeting said.

AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The meeting said the Prime Minister and other ministers belonging to BNP should refrain from holding public meetings, using government facilities and exerting influence on the people during the by-elections. Because, it said, the February 27 parliamentary polls were held under a neutral government headed by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who still remains as head of the gov-

ernment. The meeting demanded that the charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs be handed over to the Acting President or to any neutral person so that the members of the law enforcing agencies can carry out their duties during the polls without any fear or favour.

The meeting urged the Acting President to see to it that the coming by-elections are held freely and fairly. Sheikh Hasina on Friday asked the "Minister in charge of Home Ministry" to stop what she said the white terror unleashed by the ruling party across the country.

Otherwise, she warned, the government will have to bear all the responsibilities.

In a statement, the Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament alleged that the activists of ruling BNP created a reign of terror as soon as the election was over and resorted to attacks on Awami League leaders and workers in different districts, including Bhola.

Hasina expressed her condemnation and anger at the attack on Bhola District Awami

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HRIDOY AMAR NACHERE: A dancing duo at the inaugural function of Tagore Music Conference, in the city yesterday. —Star photo

# Gorbachev, Yeltsin join hands to end labour unrest

MOSCOW, Apr 26: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and rival Boris Yeltsin tried to path together a consensus today behind their new-found partnership in the face of labour unrest and political opposition, reports Reuter.

Gorbachev was due to report to the Soviet parliament on his recent trip to Japan, but deputies said they expected he would also address the country's deepening crisis and his negotiations with Yeltsin.

Yeltsin held a series of behind-the-scenes meeting with reluctant labour leaders and opposition members of parliament to win support for a joint declaration with Gorbachev that could help break the country's political paralysis.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin have been locked in a power struggle for 10 months but a joint declaration issued Wednesday appeared to close the gap between the rival political leaders.

"Boris Yeltsin is deeply convinced that now we cannot allow a head-on clash, that the only way out of the crisis is compromise," a parliamentary deputy who attended one of the meetings told the daily Moskovsky Komsomolets.

And Yevgeny Arapov, Deputy Head of the Independent Russian Trade Union Federation, said Yeltsin had met secretly with the federation leaders to discuss the joint declaration, which called

for a halt to strikes. Arapov declined to give details of the meeting but said it would not dissuade workers from a planned one-hour warning strike and other protests today.

On Thursday, Yeltsin told the independent Interfax news agency that an important document would be signed at the weekend that would allow an "elegant" end to the eight-week miners' strike.

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## Green Delta Never Looked Back .....



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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Student beaten to death in S Korea

SEOUL, Apr 26: A South Korean student died today after being severely beaten by riot police during violent street clashes, hospital officials said. Seoul's Severance hospital identified the student as Kang Kyung-Bae, 20, a freshman studying Economics at Myongji University, reports AFP.

### Velayati holds talks with Faisal

RIYADH, Apr 26: Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati met late Thursday with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, to discuss the post-Gulf war era and developing bilateral ties, officials said today, reports AFP.

### Cory urges Imelda to admit looting

MANILA, Apr 26: Philippine President Corason Aquino today urged Imelda Marcos to admit to looting the country during her late husband's 20-year rule if she wanted to be allowed back home, reports Reuter.

### Kidnapper's pledge

MUZAFFARABAD (Pakistani), Apr 26: A Kashmiri militant leader pledged on Thursday not to kill two kidnapped Swedes but threatened more abductions to draw world attention to a separatist revolt in Indian-controlled Kashmir, reports Reuter.