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The Daily Star

Let us devote our efforts to ensure free and fair polls on February 27. Cast your vote judiciously and allow others to exercise their rights.

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Bush not in a hurry



US marines are moving into attack positions ahead of an expected assault on Iraqi troops. **Page 5**

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Gulf war casts a shadow over ASEAN

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Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Do foreign wives, accustomed to the life of the cosmopolitan cities of the world, find it irksome in Dhaka? **Page 3**

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Onion prices fluctuating

City consumers are baffled at the fluctuating prices of onion and garlic. **Page 8**

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Environment

China acts to stop march of the desert. **Page-6**

Baghdad willing to study unconditional ceasefire

US rules out pause in war

US President George Bush announced Tuesday that aerial bombing of Iraq would continue for some time till a date was fixed for land offensive, according to agencies.

President Bush's announcement came after he held exclusive talks with the Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell who had just flown back to Washington from a visit to Saudi Arabia.

The United States on Monday ruled out a pause in the Gulf war ahead of ground fighting with Iraq.

Washington also said it welcomed a new flurry of peace initiatives as long as they did

not promote an unconditional ceasefire.

After several weeks of aerial bombing of Iraqi targets, President George Bush and

Monday, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saddam Hammadi said his nation was willing to study any call for an unconditional ceasefire in the Gulf war

- ★ Aerial bombing to continue: Bush
- ★ Jaguars hit Iraqi artillery
- ★ Iraq claims thousands of civilian deaths
- ★ Iraq vows to fight on
- ★ Iraqi airforce being decimated
- ★ Syrians to take part in battle for Kuwait
- ★ Premakov in Baghdad

his senior officials are considering when to launch a ground war to force Iraq out of Kuwait. Speaking in Tunisia on

— a move not supported by the United States. Baghdad radio said earlier on Monday it would never ac-

cept a ceasefire in the Gulf war and urged the people of Arab states aligned against Baghdad to revolt against their rulers.

Meanwhile, two formations of French Jaguar warplanes attacked Iraqi artillery positions in southern Kuwait today, a French spokesman said.

"It was in a zone where we have already worked and where there is more work to be done," General Claude Solanet told reporters.

For the second day running, a French reconnaissance plane photographed parts of Iraq where French forces might fight in a ground offensive, he said.

Iraq claimed that thousands

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Economic coup attempt against Gorbachev

MOSCOW, Feb 12: Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov said in an interview published today that forces in the West tried to overthrow President Mikhail Gorbachev last month in an attempted economic coup, reports Reuter.

Pavlov told the trade union daily Trud that he knew of plans to flood the country with billions of roubles to oust the Soviet leader and do away with communist rule.

"There is nothing unique in it. Such actions have been carried out in many regions of the world in order to change a political system and oust inconvenient politicians," Pavlov said.

"President Gorbachev was getting in someone's way" added Pavlov, who was Soviet Finance Minister before being appointed Premier last month.

"I can assure you that in this matter, not days but hours played a role. We were threatened with a loss of economic independence, a kind of an-

nexation, quiet and bloodless," he said.

Pavlov said it was known a major injection of money into the Soviet Union had been prepared. This was done by different means, including the buying of 100 and 50 rouble notes.

"This (campaign) was joined by bank organisations in our country and a number of private banks of Austria, Switzerland and Canada. I will not name the banks, although I know their addresses," he said.

Asked where the Western banks had obtained such huge sums of Soviet roubles, Pavlov said, "I still don't have the right to tell you about this and many other things, because the financial war which has been declared against us is still going on. And war is war."

Pavlov said the government had only averted financial catastrophe by withdrawing all 50 and 100 rouble notes late last month, a deeply unpopular move throughout the country.

The Ordinance amending the Newspaper Employees (Condition of Services) Act-74 must be withdrawn immediately.

And the final Wage Board award must be announced without further delay.

Repeal all black laws including Special Powers Act-74.

Twentyfour-hour taken strike will be observed in all newspapers and news agencies of the country on February 17. No newspapers will come out the next day.

Tribunal at Rab's house to try Ershad

Hearing of govt appeal to vacate stay order today

Star Report

Government filed an appeal to the Supreme Court on Monday to vacate the stay order on further proceedings against deposed president Ershad in arms case. The hearing of the appeal will be held today.

On Monday, the High Court division of the Supreme Court stayed further proceedings against Ershad for one month and issued rule nisi on the deputy commissioner to show cause why the arms case

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Inadequate metre facilities major cause of systems loss

By Chapal Bashar

Fifty percent of the power consumers are using electricity virtually without meter facilities. Experts believe that the lack of adequate meter arrangements is one of the main causes of regular system loss in the country's power sector.

In September last year, Power Development Board (PDB)'s system loss exceeded 40 percent which was unrea-

sonably high and there was little change in it in the following months.

The PDB had the target to bring down the rate of system loss to a monthly average of 30 percent in the current 90-91 fiscal year. But it now seems difficult to achieve the target. According to PDB authorities, the average monthly system loss during first seven months

of the current fiscal year stands at 35.8 percent.

Statistics available from PDB show that the board has over 12 lakh consumers, among which about six lakhs are consuming electricity without meter facilities. A good number of the six lakh subscribers have no meter at all and are paying tariff at a fixed monthly rate.

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Firing on peace procession at Khulna: 7 hurt

KHULNA, Feb 12: Unidentified gunmen sprayed bullets on a procession early hours today resulting in injuries to 7 people at Bera, 4 km north of the city, hospital sources said, reports UNB.

According to the victims, a combined peace procession of Awami League, BNP, Muslim League and CPB came under a sudden attack by armed men when it was passing through Bera union at about 12-30 am.

The injured were identified as Hafizul (27), Alauddin (18), Farid Ahmed (35), Jamaluddin (21), Shahidul Islam (14), Sheikh Kamal (27) and Asaduzzaman (40).

The victims, undergoing

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Women's rights will be protected: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has promised that if voted to power, her party would take all-out measures to protect the interests of women.

"It is BNP government which launched various programmes to make women self-dependant by creating employment opportunity for them," she said and assured to do the same if her party won the ensuing polls.

Begum Zia was addressing an election meeting, organised by her party's women front, Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal, at Manikdi of Cantonment Thana in Tuesday afternoon.

Reminding that the women constitute half of our total population, the BNP chief said national development was impossible ignoring them. They must come forward and participate in various social activities for the betterment of themselves as well as the nation, she added.

Begum Zia claimed that only the BNP government properly evaluated the women and let them lead a dignified life since independence. On the contrary, she alleged, the two other regimes exploited the women and threw them into morass.

In this context, she said

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Cr PC sections amended

The government has amended some of the sections of Criminal Procedure Code of 1898 with a view to ensuring settlement of cases within specified time schedule in the Magistrate and Sessions Courts, reports BSS.

The amended sections of the criminal procedure code of 1898 are sub-section(1) of section 339 'B' section 339 'C' and section 339 'D'.

Following the amendment, no official gazette notification would be needed for order of appearing issued by court for trial in absence of the accused. Provision has also been made for its settlement within the specified working day instead of transfer of a case from one court to another and condition has been imposed for taking

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Don't cast vote for Jamaat: Hasina

JOYPURHAT, Feb 12: Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina today made a frontal attack on Jamaat-e-Islami accusing it of working against the country's independence and asked the people not to cast votes for the party in the coming polls, reports UNB.

She also did not spare BNP for what she said rehabilitating 'Al-Badars and Razakars' who opposed independence and butchered hundreds of the people during the war.

"Do not vote in favour of those who molested the country's women and caused asperity on Islam during the Liberation War and now contesting the polls with the symbols of 'scale' and 'sheaf' of

paddy', Sheikh Hasina told a big public meeting at Joypurhat Government College ground this afternoon.

Accusing late president Ziaur Rahman, she said he not only released those who opposed the country's independence but also absorbed them in his politics.

Sheikh Hasina also alleged that the founder of BNP embezzled a fund of taka six crore which was donated by Japanese government to the Awami League government for construction of Jamuna Bridge. She, however, did not elaborate.

The Awami League Chief arrived here from Rangpur dis-

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High price stalls sandbag export to Saudi Arabia

Star Economic Report

Bangladesh lost the latest opportunity for exports of sandbags to Saudi Arabia because of high price level set by the Jute Ministry for export registration, jute industry and trading circles said.

The Indian bidders for the Saudi market priced out Bangladeshi exporters. The latest Saudi order was for 10 million pieces of sandbags.

The Jute Ministry in October last decided that no export business for sandbags would qualify for registration if the sales prices were below the level set by Kendrio Bikroy Committee (KEBICO) (Central Sales Committee). The price

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Wage Board review body seen as ruse to buy time

By Staff Correspondent

Journalists, newspaper press workers and employees have demanded immediate announcement of Wage Board award.

Rezauddin Ahmed, President BPUJ, Amanullah Kabir, Secretary General BPUJ, Zahurul Huj and Ruhul Amin Oazi respectively president and general secretary of DUJ,

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Josna Akhter of BJMC --- an instant before hurling her javelin that sailed through the sky and travelled a distance of 37.94 metres to better her own previous mark of 37.86 metres on the second day of the 19th national athletics championships at the Army Stadium, Banani, yesterday. Story on page 7.

— Star photo.

Jamaat to meet basic needs

The Acting Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh Abbas Ali Khan, said in Dhaka Tuesday if voted to power his party would make all out efforts to meet the basic needs of the people namely food, cloth, housing, medicare and education, reports BSS.

In an address to the nation over radio and television in connection with the parliamentary elections of February 27, he outlined the seven main responsibilities of the government for the welfare of the people. He said only the progressive economy based on Islamic ideals could establish a

society full of justice and free from exploitation.

The second important responsibility of the Government, he said, would be to safeguard the national independence, motivate the people for protecting the territorial integrity and build Armed Forces. He pointed out that Bangladesh is surrounded by such a big country where extreme communal forces were gaining ascendancy day by day. Due to hegemonistic attitude of that big country the people of Bangladesh have been facing multifarious problems, he added.

Abbas Ali Khan expressed his party's determination to establish a strong government which would not be subservient to any country and which would build friendly relations with the neighbouring countries on the basis of equal status. Jamaat wants to build strong Armed Forces, he said. All males aged between 18 and 40 will be imparted military training as an auxiliary strength of the Armed Forces, he said adding all women from 18 to 30 years will be given self-defence training within the system of Shariat.

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True democratic consciousness still far off: Dewan Azraf

The sixteenth Annual General Meeting of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) began in Dhaka yesterday with a call to annul all the black laws including the Special Powers Act of 1974 and Printing Press and Publications Act, reports BSS.

The conference also called upon the caretaker government to announce the journalists' Wage Board award and withdraw the Newspaper Employees (Condition of

Services) (Amendment), 1991 Ordinance immediately.

Educationist Principal Dewan Mohammad Azraf was present in the inaugural function of the three-day conference as chief guest while DUJ President Zahurul Huj chaired it.

Held at the auditorium of the Jatiya Press Club, the inaugural session was also addressed by Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Rezauddin

Ahmed, its Secretary General Amanullah Kabir and DUJ General Secretary Ruhul Amin Oazi.

Deswan Mohammad Azraf said the newspapers played the greatest role in safeguarding the independence of our country. This is why efforts had been made time and again to suppress the newspapers during the British regime by enacting the Rowlat Act and these kinds of efforts continue.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Communications restored

Postal Communications with all the Middle Eastern countries except Iraq and Kuwait have been re-established, reports BSS.

Shots tried at poll candidate

CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: Miscreants allegedly fired two shots at Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, a candidate for Chittagong-15 constituency (Banskhali) in front of Sub Registrar's office at Kalipur under Banskhali upazila, here this evening.

Cholera in Kuwait City

CAIRO, Feb 12: Cholera broke out in Kuwait city as a result of food shortage and poor health care, the Iranian news agency IRNA quoted a Dubai-based 'Khaleej Times' daily as saying today, reports Xinhua.

Mandela-Klerk secret talks

CAPE TOWN, Feb 12: African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela met South African President FW de Klerk today for secret talks about a faltering pact on the suspension of armed opposition to white rule, government sources said.