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The Daily Star

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Cuddlepies and snugglepots



The rich keep their pets in almost as good a condition as Queen's Corgies with medicine and sometimes food that have been imported. Page 3

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Iraqi rebels formed an eight-man body of religious leaders to run government and pleaded to reject Baghdad's authority as riots rocked country. Page 5

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Prospect of rural-based industries

Task Force on Strategies and Role of Small and Rural Industries has recommended re-organisation of BSCIC. Page 8

National

Pre-polls political commitment stands in way to loan recovery. Page 9

NEWS BRIEFS

Wage Board Award implementation stayed

A Division Bench of High Court Division on Sunday stayed for two weeks the implementation of the Wage Board Award for journalists and other employees of the newspaper industries, a press release of Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad said Sunday night.

Chinese military team in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Mar 17: A Chinese military delegation led by General Xudin, Deputy chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army, arrived in Pakistan today for an eight-day visit, officials said, reports AFP.

Starvation death in Tripura

AGARTALA, Mar 17: Eight persons including three children have died of starvation in the kalaganapara village in Khedacherra Panchayat in north Tripura district which is facing acute food crisis

Shahabuddin calls meeting of BNP, AL, 5-party leaders: Khaleda regrets

Star Report

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has invited 10 political leaders including BNP chief Begum Zia, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and two leaders of the Five-party Alliance to a meeting today at 5-30 pm at Bangabhaban.

The invitation letters sent to the leaders did not mention any agenda. BNP sources told The Daily Star that the invita-

tion was probably for an 'iftar' party at Bangabhaban.

But Begum Zia has regretted the invitation due to her pre-occupation, according to party sources.

A BNP source said the Acting President has sent the invitation to Begum Zia to attend an 'iftar' party.

Awami League sources told BSS that Sheikh Hasina is going to meet the Acting

President today at 5-30 pm on an invitation extended to her. She accepted the invitation, BSS said.

When contacted over telephone, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar said the invitation is probably for an 'iftar' party and Begum Zia will not be able to attend the party due to her previous engagements. He also said that none of BNP leaders will attend it as

the invitation has been addressed to the chairperson alone.

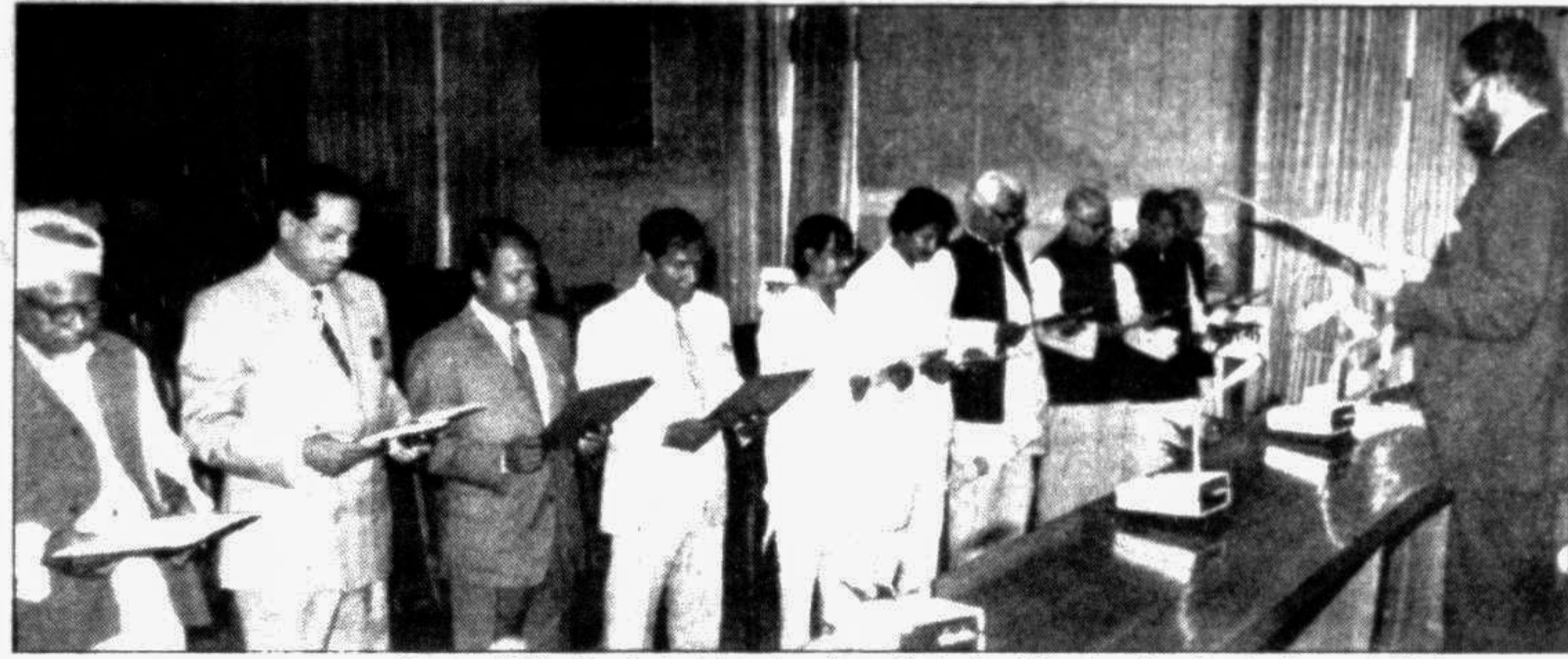
The Acting President is learnt to have extended the invitation to Begum Zia and three other leaders of her party, Sheikh Hasina and three other leaders of Awami League and Rashid Khan Menon and Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan of the Five-party Alliance on Sunday. Political party sources said

the Acting President did not consult any one before inviting the leaders.

Political analysts saw a deeper crisis in the event of a stalemate over transfer of power. Some of the veteran political leaders criticised Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed for hurriedly calling the meeting without doing ground work. They held that this will

complicate the overall political situation and people have already started viewing the post-election political developments with suspicion.

Meanwhile, accepting the invitation, Sheikh Hasina has urged the Acting President to invite the representatives of BKSAL, CPB, NPA(Mozaffar) and Ganatantri Dal to attend the meeting alongwith her.



Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf administering the oath to the MPs-elect Sunday in Sangsad Bhaban.

— Star photo

BNP, Jamaat members take oath today 12 MPs sworn in

By Staff Correspondent

Twelve Members of Parliament were sworn in by the chief Election Commissioner Justice M. A. Rouf at the No. 1 Committee Room of the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) on Sunday.

MPs-elect of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami are likely to take oath today (Monday).

A Parliament Secretariat source said, Jamaat members are likely to take oath before the MPs-elect of BNP, the majority party in Parliament.

Sunday's swearing in function was simple but impressive although the MPs-elect

taking oath filled only one of the thirteen rows of chairs in the room. The press gallery was full.

The MPs-elect entered the room looking quite content and with smiles on their faces.

Mohtuddin Ahmed MP-elect and the President of Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSAL) brought with him a grand daughter witness the function.

Of the 12 members who took oath, four BKSAL Members had not taken part in any election under the Ershad government.

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BCL-JCD gunfight rocks DU campus

By Staff Correspondent

APSU rally today

By DU Correspondent

The All Party Students Unity (APSU) will hold a rally today in front of the National Press Club demanding immediate trial of the deposed President Ershad and his associates.

The APSU will also hold a students rally at the Aparajito Bangla monument premises on March 21 demanding freedom of speech of the individuals and press, separation of judiciary from the administration and abrogation of all undemocratic amendments and black laws.

The decisions were taken in a meeting of APSU held at the DUCSU building yesterday.

The meeting reviewed the post-election political situation in the country and expressed grave concern at the delay of trial of Ershad and his corrupt collaborators.

Supporters of Awami League-backed Chhatra League (BCL) and BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) exchanged over 100 rounds of gunshots on the Dhaka University campus on Sunday night.

None was reported injured in the incident.

Campus sources said, the firing started at 8.30 pm and continued till filing of this report at 11.30 pm.

No reason for the armed clash between the two student groups could be known immediately.

Witnesses said, the first gunshots were exchanged the Chhatra League activists of Suryasen Hall and the JCD workers of Mohsin Hall. Later, the clash spread to adjoining Zahurul Haq Hall, Kabi Jasmuddin Hall, Ziaur Rahman Hall and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall. Most of the Chhatra League workers residing in Suryasen Hall, Jasmuddin Hall, Ziaur Rahman

Hall and Bangabandhu Hall and JCD workers of Salmullah Hall left their respective halls as the clash broke out. Besides, he panic-stricken general student, of those halls also fled the campus, hall residents said.

Gunshots on the DU campus were fired for the first time since the fall of the autocratic regime of Ershad through a mass upsurge in December, 1990. After the fall of the Ershad government, DU campus where armed violence was a regular phenomenon during the last nine years remained calm.

Sunday's incident is believed to be a fresh conspiracy against the unity of the All-Party Students Unity (APSU) which played the pioneering roles in dislodging the Ershad regime.

An APSU rally is scheduled today on the DU campus demanding immediate trial of the deposed president and his as-

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Independent MPs for BNP council of ministers

By Staff Correspondent

Three Independent MPs have said they will not join any party in parliament and will advocate parliamentary democracy which promises increased role for the MPs.

Talking to newsmen after the oath taking ceremony Sunday they said Bangladesh Nationalist Party which is the party majority in parliament should be invited to form the council of ministers.

They said appointment of a

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Khaleda to retain Feni seat, Ershad Pirganj

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia who has won five seats in the parliament elections will retain her constituency Feni-1, according to party sources.

Khaleda Zia will quit her two seats from Dhaka, one from Chittagong and one from Bogra.

The BNP MPs will take oath today and prior to that Begum Zia will have to intimate the Election Commission about which constituency she will retain.

Ex-President Ershad, who has also bagged five seats from Rangpur district will retain his Pirganj constituency where he polled comparatively less number of votes, according to party sources.

No compulsion on BNP to change form of govt, SC lawyers say

By Supreme Court Correspondent

The Joint Declaration of the three alliances puts no compulsion on the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), to introduce a parliamentary form of government.

A section of Supreme Court lawyers expressed the view

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Bangabandhu's 71st birthday observed

Children should know true history: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Amendment to the Constitution through which trial of Bangabandhu's killers was stopped.

Amami League, its front organisations and various socio-cultural organisations drew up programmes to observe Bangabandhu's 71st birth anniversary in a befitting manner.

Milad Mahlis were held at various places and prayers were offered for the salvation of the departed soul. Desistues were also held during the day.

Party workers and supporters started gathering at Bangabandhu Bhaban since morning. They garlanded the portrait of Bangabandhu and watched a day-long painting exhibition by children there. Sheikh Hasina distributed prizes among the winners.

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Holy Ramzan begins

Ramzan, the holy month of fasting and austerity, begins today (Monday) as the moon was sighted in the country on Sunday, reports UNIL.

The Moon Sighting Committee, after a meeting in the evening at the Islamic Foundation, announced that the moon of Ramzan was sighted all over the country.

Muslim devotees offered

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Prices of essentials go up

Star Economic Report

With Ramzan beginning today, prices of essentials in city markets have gone up.

Items used for 'iftar' have particularly registered a more pronounced rise in prices than others.

Brinjal which is used in making 'begun'—an item for iftar—sold Sunday at Taka 10 a kg. Only a week ago the price was Taka 5 to 6 per kg.

Gram, a common item for 'iftar' sells now at Taka 20 a kg while a week ago it sold at Taka 16 to 18.

The price of sugar has gone up to Taka 32 a kg from Taka 29. Soyabean oil was sold on Sunday at Taka 32 a litre

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AL leader joins JP

By Staff Correspondent

Former Awami League MP Asadul Haque Khashru joined Jatiya Party on Sunday at the Gulshan residence of Mizan Chowdhury.

Khashru, who was elected MP in 1986 from Narasingdi-5, was a central committee member of Krishak League - the Peasant Front of Awami League. He resigned from the primary membership of Awami League on March 14 and decided to join Jatiya Party for what he said, his 'political survival'.

Talking to The Daily Star at the residence of JP acting chairman Mizan Chowdhury Khashru said there is no last word in politics, but no one should remain associated with Awami League, when the party has become a forum of vested interests.

Khashru, who failed to obtain Awami League ticket for the parliament election and

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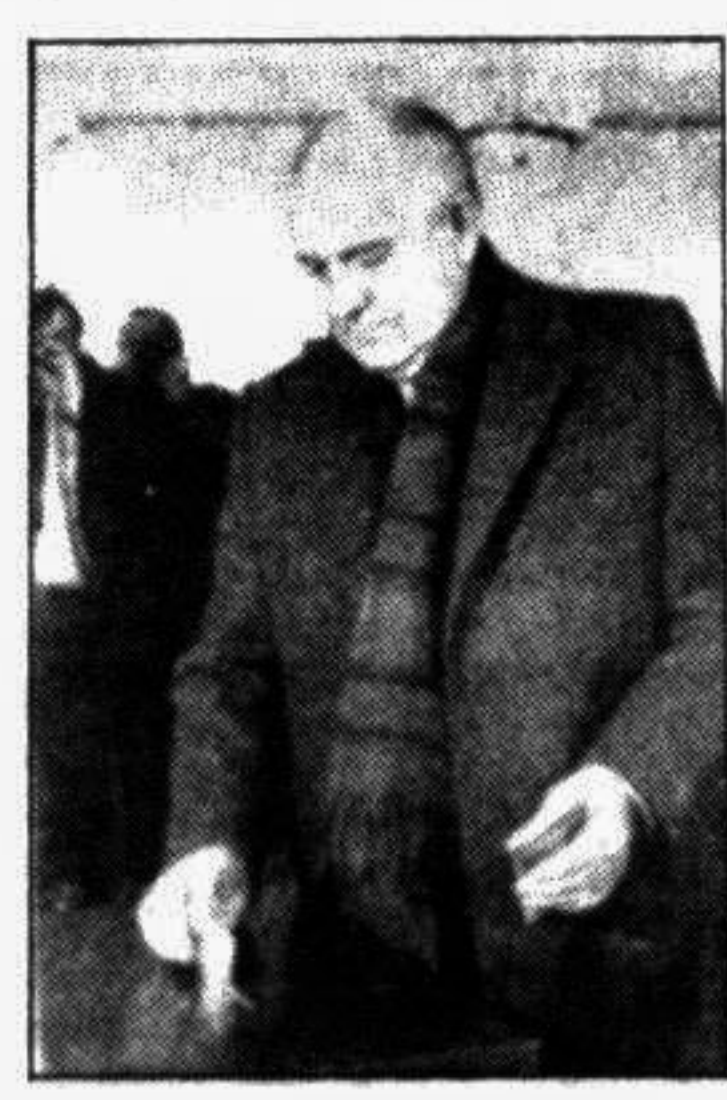
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Gorbachev, Yeltsin heading for showdown Millions vote in controversial referendum

MOSCOW, Mar 17: President Mikhail Gorbachev voted in a controversial referendum on a new-style Soviet state today and said a breakup of the Soviet Union would be a disaster for Europe and the world, report Agencies.

But, as nearly 20 million registered voters from Bering Strait to Byelorussia went to the polls to say "Yes" or "No" to the Kremlin's vision of a reshaped Soviet federation, Gorbachev and his rival Boris Yeltsin seemed heading for a major showdown.

If some mad man should arise to provoke a breakup of our union, that would be a disaster for this country, for Europeans, for the entire world,"



Gorbachev told reporters at a polling station near his Moscow home.

Across the capital Yeltsin, ex-Communist leader of the giant Russian Federation's Parliament said he believed Gorbachev aimed to preserve the Soviet system and the Communist Party and Government bureaucracy without fundamental change.

"I think it is impossible to improve the life of the people while preserving the system. It should be destroyed and a new one based on democratic principles should be created—a union of republics under collective leadership, Yeltsin declared.

Radio Moscow reported a

high turnout in the Far East and Siberia for the poll, which the official Tass news agency said voters were flocking to polling stations in the republics of largely Muslim Central Asia, and in Moscow election supervisors told reporters that predictions of a high abstention rate seemed premature.

The main question in the country's first referendum since it was formally created in 1922 is:

"Do you think it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which human rights and liberties will

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