

### Banks' minimum statutory cash requirement lowered to 9pc

Star Economic Report

The central bank on Wednesday lowered the minimum statutory cash requirement for the scheduled banks in a move to augment credit flows.

Under the new arrangement, the scheduled banks will be required to maintain nine per cent of their deposit liabilities in the form of cash with Bangladesh Bank. Until this announcement, the requirement was 10 per cent of demand liabilities of the scheduled banks.

A press release of Bangladesh Bank said the new requirement will increase the lendable funds by the banks by about Taka 2,000 crore. This step will augment flow of bank credit to the private sector and thus help stimulate economic activity, the bank noted in its press release.

### Oath taking

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have been requested to attend the ceremony in time to take oath as the Member of Parliament, the release added.

The MPs-elect belonging to the Jatiya Party will take oath or affirmation as members of the 5th Jatiya Sangsad on March 30, Sangsad official sources told BSS Wednesday.

### Hasina

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architect of independence and father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She accused that history of liberation was being distorted and the state media like Radio and Television was being used for this type of propaganda.

The Awami League President called upon all pro-liberation forces to unite and give up petty interests to safeguard the independence and sovereignty. She said if we fail to materialise the aspirations of the masses reaching the fruits of independence to them then we have to answer to the posterity.

Sheikh Hasina accompanied by central leaders of the party placed floral wreaths at the spot where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman first unveiled the plaque. She later placed wreaths at the main altar of the memorial.

Thousands of people from different strata of the society gathered at the Bangabandhu Bhavan to pay their respect to Bangabandhu. People who placed wreaths at the portrait of the leader also went round different rooms of the Bhavan and saw mementoes of the late leader.

### Mass media

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ral people about different subjects including agriculture. The Prime Minister also stressed flourishing national culture, heritage and film industry to prevent the "aggression of alien culture."

Referring to VCR craze and intrusion of foreign films, Begum Zia said "we must improve the standard of our films to curb it."

She also underlined external publicity to project the country abroad and activating various departments of the Information Ministry to deliver good to the people.

Referring to the publication of an objectionable report in India's Anandabazar Patrika against Bangladesh's independence, the Prime Minister asked the Ministry officials to keep vigil on such anti-Bangladesh activities.

Begum Zia also urged them to cooperate with the government in its efforts to fulfill its pledges to the people.

State Minister for Information Nurul Huda and Information Secretary Mohammad Nasruddin were also present on the occasion.

Nurul Huda asked the officials of the Ministry to work effectively so that the new government could fulfill its pre-election commitments to the people.

Terming Begum Zia's leadership as the driving force in the nine-year-long anti-autocracy movement, he urged all to devote themselves to implementation of people's hopes and aspiration.

Information Secretary Nasruddin briefed the Prime Minister on the structure and function of the Ministry of Information.

He also congratulated Begum Zia on her assumption of the charge of Information Ministry.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia takes salute at a rally by juvenile organisations at the National Stadium Tuesday on the occasion of Independence Day. — Star photo



AL leader Sheikh Hasina placing wreaths at the National Memorial Tuesday. — Star photo

### US assistance to continue, Milam tells Khaleda

The US Ambassador, Mr. William B Milam, Wednesday assured Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of his country's continued development assistance to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The US Ambassador, who met Begum Zia at her residence, congratulated her on assuming the office of the Prime Minister.

During the one-hour meeting, Mr. Milam discussed matters of common interest and mutual cooperation.

He appreciated Begum Zia's determination to weed out corruption from the administration as well as society and to establish an efficient pro-people government.

The US Ambassador also put on record his appreciation of Begum Zia's efforts for improving the lot of women.

### Orientation

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Rules of Procedure so that they can utilise the time in parliament in a systematic manner.

Retired and serving officials of the Parliament Secretariat will work as resource persons at the orientation programme.

The programme is considered important since most MPs are new faces.

An overwhelming majority of the MPs belonging to BNP including Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia are new faces in parliament.

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder said they are yet to determine the exact number of freshers in parliament.

All MPs from the eight constituencies of Dhaka city are newcomers. In greater Comilla, all but Col (ret) Akbar Hossain and State Minister for Information Nurul Huda are freshers.

But most MPs of Awami League had been in parliament earlier. A party source said they are yet to determine the number of new faces.

Sixteen out of 18 Jamaat MPs are newcomers. Only Kazi Shamsur Rahman and Latifur Rahman were elected to the parliament before.

Similar, four out of five MPs belonging to the Communist Party of Bangladesh are freshers. Only Dabirul Islam was elected before.

During the day-long orientation programme the new MPs will be made familiar with the rules under which the house functions. They will be acquainted with parliamentary practices, conventions and etiquettes.

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### Ershad's case

From Page 1 Col 7

lenged at any time at the Higher Court and did not require the adjournment of the Tribunal.

He said that there should be no bar on the continuation of the proceedings.

The second petition of the Defence Counsel Shahadat Hossain threw doubt on the impartiality of the Tribunal saying that the Tribunal seemed more inclined to accommodate the Prosecution than the Defence.

Defence Counsel also said that several petitions for time were rejected by the Tribunal without any convincing reason.

The petition under Section 526 of the Criminal Procedure Code demanded the adjournment of the tribunal for at least four weeks to enable the petitioner move to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

The petition also apprehended that undue haste was adopted by the Tribunal to deny the accused the right to challenge the legality of the order passed by the Tribunal Judge on March 19.

After the petition was submitted and a verbal approach made, the Judge Mohammad Habibullah asserted his position and said that there should be no doubt about the fairness of the trial in his Tribunal.

He said that the Tribunal had accommodated the Defence several times and as such the allegation on the inclination of the Tribunal to accommodate the prosecution more than the Defence did not stand.

Judge Mohammad Habibullah said that the trial would be impartial and that no one should doubt it.

He asserted, "The trial will be fair, the trial will be fair and the trial will be fair."

The Judge in his observations said that the doors of justice have always remained open in this country and if the Defence had any grievances it could always go to other courts.

He said that he would have nothing to say if a Higher Court stayed the trial of Ershad at his Tribunal.

Judge Mohammad Habibullah further said that proceedings of the Tribunal had been adjourned several times on pleas from the Defence to ensure a fair trial to the accused.

When the petitions were rejected Barrister Shahadat Hossain and his team wanted to stage a walkout from the Tribunal.

The Judge at this point said they could do so if they did not want to defend the accused.

The Defence Counsel however agreed to proceed with the case.

The tribunal then took up the hearing of a prosecution witness when both prosecution and defence lawyers debated on the procedural aspect of the evidence.

Prosecution witness number one Muhammad Nurul

Alam, Officer in Charge of the Cantonment Police Station was examined.

After witness number one was examined by the Attorney General, the Defence Counsel again verbally pleaded for allowing time to hear from the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on the judgement of the Tribunal, which was given on March 19.

At this stage the Judge adjourned the court till April 2.

Attorney General Aminul Haque, Deputy Attorney General Amrul Kabir Chowdhury, and Hasan Arif appeared before the Tribunal on behalf of the state while Kazi Shahadat Hossain, Sharif Ahmed and Rezaul Karim and Mufizur Rahman appeared on behalf of the accused.

The Attorney General Aminul Haque said the case attracted the public since the accused was in power for about nine years. He compared the charges against Ershad with those of Tanaka, former Prime Minister of Japan who was involved in Lockheed Scandal of receiving a huge kickbacks.

This is for the first time the head of the state is in the dock, Attorney General said.

Several new faces were found in the observers' gallery of the court yesterday. Of them were Ershad's former Adviser-in-charge of the Planning Ministry A. M. A. Muhih and two bright young lady lawyers.

### 11 killed in Orissa riots

BHUBANESWAR, Mar 27: The official death toll in four days of Hindu-Muslim rioting in Orissa has risen to 11, and a regional political leader accused Hindu hardliners today of engineering the violence to win votes in a May general election, reports Reuter.

The angry shopkeepers aided by others attacked the camp of the reserved police at the Bheramara High School and assaulted the policemen. The police opened fire to disperse the mob resulting in death of two of the attackers including Sukhchad Pramanik, a shopkeeper and wounding several others. The other body could not be identified.

Police also allegedly smashed a number of shops. The injured persons including three policemen, were admitted to Kushiya Hospital. Twenty two persons were released after first aid.

The Deputy Commissioner, Kushiya, when contacted over phone, confirmed one death. He said ten persons, five of them police, were injured in the incident. He said the situation in Bheramara was normal, but reports said shops were closed and a tense situation was prevailing. Angry mob held up two trains Rupsa Up and Rupsa Down demanding en-

quiry into the police firing. It was learnt that administration held meetings with local political leaders to pacify the situation.

When asked, the DC said he did not think today's incident would affect the election in Kushiya-2 scheduled for March 28.

State Minister for Social Welfare Tariqul Islam said here tonight that the incident that happened in Bheramara between the members of public and police had no political link.

It was due to altercation between members of the law enforcing agencies and the public, he told newsmen here in the evening. In the incident one person was killed due to police firing, he added.

The State Minister visited the scene of the incident at Bheramara.

### PDB

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daos, iron rods and hockey sticks wounded six PDB employees including four sub-assistant engineers, they added.

The wounded persons include driver Bachhu Mia who was admitted to the PG Hospital with serious injuries. Besides, the sub-assistant engineers A. K. M. Zahidul Huq, Abdul Kader, Shamsu Mia and Ayub Mia and lineman Abdur Rab were given first aid, the sources said.

The PDB employees were attacked when they tried to disconnect the illegal electric lines used for electric heaters causing repeated disruption of power supply in the area. Use of heaters have put three transformers out of order, PDB sources informed.

Despite repeated requests by the people of the area to restore electricity, the PDB authorities are yet to take steps in this regard. The PDB authorities said they were afraid to send electricians to the troubled area. They were denied help from the police to restore the electric lines, they alleged.

Police denied the allegations of the PDB men saying we offered our help to ensure security for the repairing men but they did not avail the opportunity.

Police are yet to take anybody into custody in connection with the clash although a case was filed with Mirpur thana immediately after the clash.

A section of Natunbazar slum dwellers along with the local people called on PDB officials of Mirpur power control room Wednesday. They urged the PDB officials to restore the electric lines immediately. But the PDB officials are still afraid of sending their electricians there following the Monday's armed attack.

Another meeting between the PDB officials and the local people is scheduled for this morning to find a way out of the problem.

Slum sardar Salam Sikder was alleged to have been involved with in various terrorist acts in Kalyanpur area at different times to his credit.

He was absconding since the clash occurred. Police could not trace him till Wednesday night.

### Comilla jail

From Page 1 Col 6

could not be immediately known. The situation was however brought under control by the law enforcing agencies. The prisoners had returned to the lockups.

The Deputy Commissioner and other high government officials stayed in the jail till filing of this report at night. An unconfirmed report said one or two prisoners might have escaped the jail. Police however did not confirm the report.

### Police firing at Bheramara

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The angry shopkeepers aided by others attacked the camp of the reserved police at the Bheramara High School and assaulted the policemen. The police opened fire to disperse the mob resulting in death of two of the attackers including Sukhchad Pramanik, a shopkeeper and wounding several others. The other body could not be identified.

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### JP support

From Page 1 Col 8

hibiting engagement of lawyers other than those enlisted with it frustrated the move.

Later Ershad wanted to appoint another lawyer Azhar Ali, who hails from Fabna and is now practising in London to defend him. But he is also not enlisted with the Bar Council in Bangladesh.

When contacted, Advocate Sirajul Haque told The Daily Star that he was ready to defend any case as he is a professional. He said, he and former Attorney General Barrister Rafiqul Huq called on the deposed President at his Gulshan sub-jail on Tuesday. Earlier, Ershad sent a proposal through the Home Ministry to Advocate Sirajul Haque to defend his case. Sirajul Haque prepared his case but refused to appear publicly. He said, no contract had yet been signed with Ershad regarding his fees and other facilities.

It is learnt Awami League President Sheikh Hasina requested Advocate Sirajul Haque to resign from the party if he wanted to conduct the case.

But Sirajul Haque denied that Sheikh Hasina had made any such request. He said the party president could issue a show cause notice on him.

Sirajul Haque further said the deposed President told him that if he agreed to conduct the case he would request his party (Jatiya Party) to support Awami League's demand for parliamentary form of government. Sirajul Haque said the message had already been communicated to the Awami League leaders. The party leaders are seriously considering the proposal of Ershad, he said.

When asked, ousted President Ershad, who appeared before the tribunal on Wednesday told the reporters that he would not make any comment on it at the moment.

On the other hand, many Awami League leaders said, the Jatiya Party support to the Awami League move for amending the constitution to revert to the parliamentary form of government will not make the required two-third majority in parliament for such an amendment.

### BNP PP

From Page 1 Col 8

people. Jamaat and smaller parties may initiate a compromise formula to avert any crisis in the inaugural session.

The Parliamentary Party may also nominate its candidates for the offices of speaker and deputy speaker. Former President Mohammadullah, and bureaucrat-turned-politician Abdur Rouf Chowdhury are the aspirants for the post of speaker. There is a strong lobby in favour of Mirza Golam Hafiz also as Mohammadullah is facing a case in a court. Sheikh Razzak Ali, State Minister for Law and Justice, and Abdur Rahman Biswas of Barisal are being tipped as deputy speaker. Delwar Hussain is likely to become chief whip. There will be three whips including a woman.

The Cooperative Act, the civil and criminal laws may be amended during the inaugural session.

Ordinances promulgated since August, 1990 will also be produced before the house for approval.

The house will elect a speaker and a deputy speaker, pass an obituary reference and discuss the Acting President's inaugural address. Since most of the BNP MPs are now, the BNP Parliamentary Party meeting is also expected to give them brief guidelines in respect of their participation in the proceedings of the house.

Addressing the leaders of trade and industry, the industries minister said the government would recast economic policies focussing on developing the country's human capital so that every able-bodied individual could be converted into a productive and self-supporting asset. The capital investments will be encouraged to tap the country's economic potentials in full and establish closer links among big, medium and small-scale industries, he added.

The minister said the country would not be able to alleviate poverty and achieve the goal of self-reliance without effective efforts for an accelerated pace of industrialisation. The government, he added, appreciates fully the need for strict adherence to the rules of the game for an open and competitive market economy.

He reviewed the industrial activities in the past several years with a pessimistic note. There has hardly been any progress in the industrial sector and this is evidenced by the declining share of industries in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the eighties, he observed.

He said a number of differences exist between the private sector and the World Bank over some provisions of the draft industrial policy. A meeting will be held on March 30 to iron out the differences, and the members of the World Bank appraisal team will be present at the meeting, he added.

In his speech, the industries secretary said the new industrial policy was at its final stage of approval. After examination by the Minister himself, it will be placed before the cabinet for approval soon, he added.

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### The Midnight File

#### Golden Triangle bases bombed

BANGKOK, Mar 27: The Thai military launched an artillery and aerial bombardment against two bases occupied by the private armies of rival drug warlords just inside Burma today, police said. Two Thai Air OV-10 counter-insurgency aircraft bombed the bases and an artillery barrage lasted several hours. The bases were on fire but no casualty figures were available, reports Reuter.

#### 10,000 demonstrate in Yslavia

BELGRADE, Mar 27: More than 10,000 people staged demonstrations in the capital of the central Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia - Herzegovina today, demanding an end to official controls on the media, witnesses said. Earlier this month two people died in Anti-communist demonstrations in Belgrade, also in support of Media Freedom. Witnesses said the protesters - including journalists, actors, intellectuals and students - rallied peacefully outside the Bosnian Assembly in Sarajevo. Police did not intervene, reports Reuter.

#### Arafat proposes buffer zone

TORONTO, Mar 27: The PLO chairman Yasser Arafat has proposed the establishment of a UN buffer zone between Israel and Palestine (the Israeli occupied territories) under a new plan for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a Canadian daily has reported. Under the plan, this zone, where the UN blue helmets would be stationed as long as they wish would be taken from the Palestinian territory and the Palestinians would accept the UN forces, Arafat told the Sunday edition of the Toronto Star, reports TAP.

### Independence day

From Page 1 Col 4

rostrum to take salute. The Prime Minister entered the stadium at 8-25 am amid applause of the thousands of people - men, women and children thronging the stadium.

On the other side of the gallery, big pieces of cloth of different colours were intricately woven symbolising the National Martyrs Monument while two giant-sized rainbows with several lotus flowers atop them were also displayed.

Begum Zia was escorted to the presentation line where several thousand smartly dressed boys and girls representing about 80 schools and organisations stood in solemn silence.

The three and a half hour rally was witnessed by cabinet ministers, diplomats, political leaders, high civil and military officials.

From the rostrum, the Prime Minister witnessed the march-past presented by the smartly dressed participants in a most disciplined manner.

Sea scouts, Sea Guides of Bangladesh Navy School, Air Scouts, Central Kachi Kanchar Mela, Kishore Ansars, Al Amin Orphanage, Sir Salimullah Orphanage, Azad Sena, Vagranusa Noon School, Moghbazar Girls High School, Azimur Girls High School and Chander Hat were institutions prominent in the march past.

After the march past, the participants filed past the rostrum depicting Bangladesh culture, heritage, the War of Liberation and the struggle for democracy.

The struggle for democracy was presented through an impressive cultural programme.

Begum Zia was visibly moved by the depiction of the sacrifices made by youths like Shaheed Nur Hossain for the cause of democracy.

The Prime Minister smiled and clapped when she saw the

little boys and girls pass the rostrum in the dress as you like' display depicting fishermen, new bridges and grooms, bairagis, village headmen, Razakars, blind-folded Pak army, boat race, king and queen, street urchins, tribal life, day labourers and Freedom Fighters.

Various socio-cultural organisations arranged discussion meetings at different places in the city.

Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangkritik Sangha held a discussion meeting at Shilpakala Academy in the afternoon.

Newspapers brought out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day. Radio and Television put out special programmes.

Improved diet was served to the inmates of jails, orphanages and hospitals.

While placing wreaths at the National Monument at Savar on the day, the Five-Party Alliance convenor and BSD convenor Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan urged the government to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the nation taking into consideration the spirit of the Independence Day.

The Independence and National Day was observed at the University of Dhaka with due dignity and solemnity on Tuesday.

The Dhaka University authorities, the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) and the All-Party Students Unity (APSU) observed the day with their separate programmes.

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