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The Daily Star

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VOL. 1 NO. 76 REGD. NO. DA 781

CHAITRA 19, 1397 BS,

DHAKA WEDNESDAY APRIL 3, 1991

RAMADAN 17, 1411 HIJRI

10 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 3.00

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US Treasury Department has identified 52 'front' companies and 37 middlemen in Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's worldwide financial and arms trading network.

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Court gives Premadasa a new ethnic headache

A gesture of conciliation to the Tamils from the Government of Sri Lanka has been frustrated by the Supreme Court which has ruled an ethnic quota plan unconstitutional.

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Prophets on the Pavement



Palmists, astrologers and assorted fortune-tellers thriving on the gullibility of commonman.

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Health

The Carora Cow, bred in Venezuela, has the potential to increase dramatically the supply of protein in developing countries.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Vacation Bench

The Acting Chief Justice has constituted a High Court Division bench of the Supreme Court for hearing all emergency matters during the April 7-25 vacation. During the period, Justice Mohammad Ismail Uddin Sarkar will hear, only emergency cases of the High Court Division from 11 am on April 9, 14 and 23 at his court number 7, reports UNB.

BNP, AL PP meet

The meetings of parliamentary parties of both BNP and Awami League will be held today (Wednesday) at the committee rooms of the Sangsad Bhaban. The ALPP will meet at 10 am while the meeting of BNP PP will be held at 4-30 pm.

Sugar price lowered

The government has refixed the price of sugar at Taka 25 per kilogram at godown level, reports BSS. Earlier sugar was sold at Taka 27.32 per kg.

Writ rejected

The writ petition challenging the election to the reserved seats for women in Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) was summarily rejected on Tuesday by a Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

Saifur calls for regional cooperation at ESCAP meet

Development of shared water resources urged

SEOUL, Apr 2: Bangladesh has called for multilateral assistance for the development of shared water resources for the benefits of the countries concerned, reports BSS.

Addressing the 47th annual session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), leader of the Bangladesh delegation and Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman said that ESCAP was mandated to undertake a study on the problems and prospects of the development of shared water resources as a follow up of Madrid Plata Action Plan.

This study was not focussed on any specific project but oriented towards the identification of the guidelines that might facilitate the endeavours of the concerned countries in

overcoming problems associated with the development of shared water resources, he said.

He said the matter was discussed in a number of sessions of the Commission but it was not possible to arrive at a consensus. He said Bangladesh would be happy if the matter was resolved in a spirit of co-operation and understanding recognising the need of such a study for the benefits of all member states.

The Finance Minister said because of the recent transition to full democracy, Bangladesh would expect increased cooperation from the member states of the region in the Commission's activities and programmes.

In this context, he referred

Call to set up regional water transport centre in Dhaka

From Mahfuz Anam

SEOUL, Apr 2: The newly-elected democratic government will follow a policy of deregulation and market-oriented economy, declared the Finance and Planning Minister of Bangladesh Saifur Rahman. "My government's role will be primarily concerned with infrastructure building, human resource development and poverty alleviation with priority to agriculture", Saifur Rahman was addressing the 47th

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Move to drop certificate cases against farmers

The new administration has initiated a move to drop certificate cases against farmers.

Banks are starting out the cases against farmers who took loans of upto Tk. 5000.

The BNP had committed in its election manifesto that agricultural loans of upto Tk 5000 and the interest on loans of upto Tk 10000 would be waived.

Most of the other political parties including the Awami League had also made similar commitments.

The present BNP government is actively considering implementing the commitment.

However, the banks have not received any instruction about the move from the government and are proceeding with the certificate cases according to normal practice.

By Shahiduzzaman Khan

The compilation of these cases by the Agricultural Credit Control Department of the Bangladesh Bank based on the statistics provided by Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Rajshahi Krishi Unnyan Bank and Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) will take some time.

Out of a total disbursement of agricultural loans amounting to Tk. 5,381 crore, overdue loans stood at Tk. 3,284 crore as of June 30, 1990, says a Bangladesh Bank annual report.

During the fiscal year 1989-90, BKB disbursed Tk. 262 crore as agricultural loans. Till March this year, Tk. 208 crore farm loan was also disbursed by the BKB.

The recovery of agricultural loans this year has shown an improvement. Upto March,

1991, Tk. 308 crore was recovered as against Tk. 312 crore last year.

BKB has the highest amount of overdue loans which amounted to Tk. 1476 crore upto March this year as against Tk. 1082 crore last year.

Explaining reasons for low rate of agricultural loan recovery, a highly placed BKB official told The Daily Star that borrowers are reluctant to pay the money back to the bank as they know for certain that the government would waive the loans and their interests.

The BKB official said the branch managers are obliged to start certificate cases against time-barred loans. According to regulations, if they (bank managers) fail to do so, they may be penalised or face punishment.

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Two witnesses questioned in Ershad's arms case

Recovered goods State assets: Defence No gift items recovered: CMM



Deposed President Ershad — his shattered confidence, perhaps a bit bolstered by Advocate Sirajul Haque's appearance before the tribunal in his defence — waving to newsmen covering his trial on Tuesday.

— Star photo.

By Staff Correspondent

The cross-examination of two prosecution witnesses marked the resumption of the arms case trial of deposed President Ershad yesterday.

Five pistols, two of them made of gold, three double-barrel guns and 365 bullets were also produced as exhibits of the case which is being heard by a Special Tribunal.

The prosecution witnesses cross-examined were the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Cantonment Police Station Nurul Alam, with whom the FIR was lodged by DC North (Police) Shamsur Ali and the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Azizul Haque Bhuiyan, who headed the committee formed for preparing an inventory of the goods recovered from the Sena Bhavan, the official residence of the deposed President.

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Golden pistols shown as exhibits

By Staff Correspondent

Five pistols, two of them made of 18 carat gold, three double-barrel guns and 365 bullets were produced as exhibits before the Special Tribunal trying deposed President Ershad in an arms case.

One hundred bullets of each of the two golden pistols are one 9 mm and another 7.65 mm and other arms were recovered from Ershad's Sena-bhavan residence.

The 18 carat gold pistols, not on the list of the 'Toshakhana', were presented by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, according to CID police.

Of the other three pistols one was given by Chief of Army Staff of Brazil but that two was not deposited to the 'Toshakhana'. The sources of two other pistols were not known.

Three double-barrel guns which were recovered from his house one broken condition.

Of the other 265 bullets 11 were bullets of 303 rifle, 22 were 0.38 bore, 50 were 0.22 bore (big size), 50 were 0.22 bore (small size), 100 were 0.32 bore pistol bullets.

At one stage of prosecution Ershad wanted to impress the tribunal that he did not know the use of pistols which were recovered from his house. He asked Attorney General who was showing the pistols to the judge to give him one.

When it was given him he tried to unlock the pistol but pretended failure. Later the CID investigation team unlocked the pistol and opened it before the judge.

Transfer of power

Concerned parties should settle the issue, Shahabuddin tells AL leaders

The Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said that the question of transferring power to the sovereign Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) should be sorted out by the concerned political parties in the coming session of Parliament, reports BSS.

The Acting President said this while meeting a 6-member delegation of Bangladesh Awami League at President's Secretariat Tuesday morning. The Awami League leaders who include Abdus Samad Azad, MP, and Tofael Ahmed, MP, raised the question of transfer of power to a sovereign Parliament as it was pledged in the joint declaration of the three alliances of the political parties in November last year.

An official release said the Acting President reminded the delegation that on a number of occasions he had explained the provisions of the Constitution vis-a-vis the joint declaration.

He told them that the matter should be sorted out by the

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Hasina demands implementation of joint declaration

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Tuesday demanded implementation of the 19th November joint declaration to fulfil the democratic aspiration of the people, reports UNB.

Addressing workers and leaders of the city Awami League at an Iftar party at the Awami League central office, she said any retreat from the joint declaration would be tantamount to betrayal with the people's democratic movement.

"Our movement will continue till parliamentary form of government is restored" on the basis of the joint declaration, she said.

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Ershad takes oath as MP today

By Staff Correspondent

Ousted President Ershad, elected MP, in February 27 polls, will take oath this morning at 9 am, according to Ershad's lawyer Sirajul Haque. Advocate Sirajul Haque told the judge to adjourn the court today as his client is scheduled to take oath.

Later when asked Ershad said he could not contact acting chairman of Jatiya Party Misan Chowdhury about the

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All set for JS session

The first session of the fifth Jatiya Sangsad elected on February 27, begins at 9 am on April 5 at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Sangsad Bhaban.

The Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, will address the inaugural session.

The Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat has completed all preparations for holding the session and made sitting arrangements in consultation with the BNP and Awami League, Sangsad sources said.

The order of the day will be officially announced today.

As soon as the Sangsad meets, the members will elect the new Speaker and Deputy Speaker. A five-member panel of chairmen will also be constituted on the opening day.

The House will go into a brief recess after the opening. As the House resumes with the new Speaker, the Leader of the House and the Prime Minister

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Huda still adamant: BNP, AL undecided

Star Report

Awami League and its allies in parliament may not raise any objection if outgoing Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury presides over the inaugural session.

But Ganatantri Party leader Suranjit Sen Gupta remains firm on his decision not to accept such a situation as Chowdhury has threatened to adjourn the House indefinitely.

Although BNP is still undecided over the issue, indications are there that finally BNP may accept the constitutional position which provides for the outgoing Speaker to preside over the opening session of parliament.

Some Jatiya Party leaders told The Daily Star that Shamsul Huda Chowdhury should not go to a hostile House to chair the session. But Chowdhury is learnt to be adamant to exercise his constitutional right. Jatiya Party sources

hinted that Chowdhury may finally change his decision to avert controversy. He designated the Chief Election Commissioner to administer oath to newly elected members of parliament. He may do the same to help smooth transition to democracy, said a close aide of Chowdhury.

When asked, an MP belonging to Awami League said, it depends on the Treasury Bench to decide who will preside over the inaugural session. But, since BNP has already accepted the constitutional amendments made in the illegal fourth parliament by nominating women members for the reserved seats, they should not oppose the outgoing Speaker to preside over the inaugural session.

However, political observers believe that a consensus may emerge today to end the deadlock over the issue

Diarrhoea claims 100 in coastal areas



Diarrhoea patients, mostly children, have been admitted to ICDDR, B Mohakhali.

—Star Photo

Star Report

The diarrhoeal diseases have claimed more than one hundred lives in seven coastal districts of the country during past few weeks, sources said on Tuesday. The epidemic has reportedly affected about 5,000 persons of the districts— Patuakhali, Barguna, Noakhali, Khulna, Bhola, Pirojpur and Barisal.

Official sources have, however, confirmed 90 deaths and 4,000 affected by diarrhoea.

Excessive hot climate, drinking of contaminated water and eating of junk foods are the main causes of horrible break out of the diarrhoeal epidemic, the Civil Surgeons of the affected districts said.

The Civil Surgeon of Patuakhali told The Daily Star over telephone that 28 persons had died and more than 450 were affected in six upazilas of the district since it broke out in late January.

The situation recently turned serious with two more latest deaths on Sunday.

Although there was no report of casualty during last two days, some people have been affected afresh.

Sixty-five medical teams have been working round the clock in the affected area. "The situation is improving but not under control," the Civil Surgeon added.

The Civil Surgeon of Barguna said, also over telephone, that 21 persons had died and 2224 people had been affected in three out of five upazilas of the district during last three

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Major disruption in power supply feared

By Chapal Bashar

Disruption in power supply, leading to widespread loadshedding, due to inadequate electricity generation is apprehended.

The situation has aggravated following discontinuation of production in four units at two major power plants for a long time. The power generation has declined to below 1700 megawatt (MW) while the installed capacity of 20 power plants is about 2000 MW.

The demand for electricity is growing rapidly and the maximum demand during peak hours now stands at over 1650 MW. Just one year ago, the maximum demand was 1509 MW.

According to PDB authorities, the demand and supply position of power is now almost at the break-even point. "In case of failure in generating or transmitting power from any of the existing plants, disruption in supply is inevitable leading widespread loadshedding", says an authoritative source.

The country has already started experiencing loadshedding from the beginning of the year. There was loadshedding in different parts of the country for several days in January when power generation was affected due to suspension of gas supply to Ashuganj and Ghorashal power plants. Consumers were affected by another major loadshedding for three days at the

beginning of Ramadan.

This happened due to failure in power generation at the 210 MW unit of Ghorashal power station for mechanical fault.

"If all the units of PDB's power stations would remain in order it would be easier to handle power disruptions utilising the surplus output," says an expert.

Two units of Khulna power plant, capable of producing a total of 1700 MW, have remained closed for about one year and it needs overhauling and repair. In Ashuganj a 64-MW unit has remained out of order for one and a half year for mechanical problems while another 50-MW unit of the same plant was closed four months ago for the same reason. And the closure of these four units for a long time is considered as the main reason for the shortage in power transmission.

When contacted, concerned authorities said the responsibility for overhauling and repairing of those four units lies mainly with their foreign manufacturers. Moreover, there is shortage of funds and spare parts, causing delay in repair works.

A new power station at Bagbari (Pabna), with a capacity of producing 71 MW, is expected to be commissioned at the end of May. But this will not improve the situation since there is no possibility of commissioning more power plants

Albanians protest poll rigging: Three killed

TIRANA, Apr 2: An opposition Democratic Party leader and two other people were shot and killed during an anti-communist demonstration early Tuesday against alleged rigging, opposition officials said, reports agencies.

The Communist Party headquarters was burning and government tanks had moved into the streets in the northern town of Shkodra, Democratic Party representatives in Shkodra told a journalist in Tirana.

Arben Broci, a local opposition leader, was shot in the back as he tried to disperse the early-morning protest outside Shkodra's Communist Party headquarters, said Democratic Party spokesman Genc Pollo.

Broci apparently was shot by somebody inside the building, Pollo said.

The slayings marked the first violence linked to Sunday's election, the first multiparty balloting in the Balkan country in more than

60 years. The Democratic Party won all major Albanian cities, including Shkodra, but lost the elections.

In addition to Broci, two other people were fatally shot and a teen-age boy was wounded, journalist Ben Ruka of the opposition's semi-weekly newspaper quoted party officials as saying.

The dead were identified as Bujar Zerberi and Besnik Ceka, Ruka said. It was not clear whether they were opposition officials or protest partici-

pants. A 14-year-old boy, Shkelgim Lisi, was seriously hurt. Ruka quoted the Shkodra officials as saying.

Robert Koli, First Secretary of the Communist Party in Tirana, confirmed that two people were killed and twelve injured in the northern city of 70,000. Leaders of the Democratic Party, which claimed to have won about 72 seats in the 250-seat parliament, convened an emergency meeting in Tirana to discuss

the unrest and demanded a police investigation.

Albania, Europe's last remaining stronghold of Stalinist rule, is struggling to emerge from nearly five decades of repression and international isolation. The elections were called and opposition political parties allowed after a huge emigration movement and street protests.

Sunday's election marked the first time the ruling communists who seized power in 1946, faced an opposition

challenge. They won about two-thirds of the seats.

The violence confirmed the fears of Democratic Party leader Sali Berisha and economist Gramoz Pashko, who appealed to their disappointed supporters on Monday to be calm.

The shootings took place at 7:00 a.m. (0500 GMT), Ruka said, during the second demonstration in Shkodra in two days to protest the communists' overall victory on Sunday.