



Esho he Baishakh :: Chayanats' new year's function at Ramna Green. More pictures on page 3. — Star photo

Ershad : Jail

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Sheikh Hasina, however, demanded in parliament Ershad's transfer to the Central Jail in 12 hours' time.
Ershad's transfer to the Central Jail was delayed as the renovated 'purano hajjat' was damaged during the jail revolt. Fresh step was taken to renovate the damaged room for Ershad's internment.
Security measures also came under fresh review in the wake of the jail revolts.
Ershad's transfer to the Central Jail was expedited after Prime Minister Khaleida Zia was allocated the Home Ministry which was earlier retained by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.
The deposed president is facing charges in the special tribunals for keeping unlicensed arms at his cantonment residence and possessing a cash of Taka two crore which was disproportionate to his known sources of income. The Bureau of Anti-corruption has instituted several cases against Ershad for abusing power and squandering state funds. These include bungling in the purchase of ATP

aircraft, allotment of RAJUK plot valued Taka four crore to fake aggrieved persons at nominal prices, approving over a dozen unnecessary foreign trips of his wife at the cost of state funds and undertaking frequent trips to the Pir of Atrashi by government helicopters.

A three-member commission set up to investigate into the allegations of corruption, malpractices and misuse of power by deposed president Ershad and some of his ministers presented the first part of its report to the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on March 31.

The commission headed by Justice Ansaruddin, in the report, said it had examined 53 allegations against him so far and found sufficient prima facie evidence in respect of 43 allegations.
Earlier, six former ministers of Ershad's cabinet were shifted from Dhaka Central Jail to different other jails.
Major political parties and APSU had been demanding Ershad's transfer to the Central Jail from Gulshan sub-jail.

Mizan protests shifting of Ershad to Central Jail

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Shah Moazzem Hossain, Acting Chairman and Secretary General respectively of Jatiya Party Friday expressed their surprise and protested over shifting of former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad to the Dhaka Central Jail from the Gulshan sub-jail, reports BSS.
In a joint statement, the two Jatiya Party leaders criticised the authorities for transferring ex-President Ershad, who is also the Chairman of Jatiya Party, to the Central Jail only one day after the Eid-ul-Fitr festival separating him from his wife and son. They expressed their concern at the security of Ershad in the jail.

Iraq submits weapons list to UN

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 19: Iraq still has ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, Iraqi UN ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari said on Thursday, but added he did not think it was in possession of any biological weapons.

He told Reuters details were contained in a letter he had submitted to the office of the UN Secretary General, in accordance with an April 3 Gulf War ceasefire resolution which calls for the scrapping of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Anbari was unable to give details of the types and numbers of weapons and no copy of the list was made public.

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Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial offices: 28/1, Toynebe Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: Editorial & News: 863036. Commercial: 863035. FAX: 246023-4. GPO Box No. 3257 GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.

Big fire

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units of the Fire Service rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after half an hour struggle.
Fire Service sources said their timely intervention saved the densely populated area. The cause of the fire and the extent of damage were yet to be determined. However, the owner of the establishment said the fire was caused by an electric short circuit and property worth Tk 12 lakh was damaged.

Another big fire on Thursday at about 2 pm gutted a large number of thatched houses and shops in Taltala-Agargaon area. The fire was reported to have originated from an unauthorised shop selling petroleum products.

Six fire fighting units from Mirpur, Mohammadpur and Tejgaon rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after 35 minutes. According to a Fire Service source, 30 shops and 23 houses were destroyed by fire and the extent of loss was estimated at about Tk 8 lakh.

Train accident

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formed immediately after the accident held the drivers of the incoming train responsible for the accident as they violated the signal. Driver Khata-mullah and assistant driver Mohammad Ishaq of the incoming train have been absconding since the accident. Both of them have been put under suspension by the authorities.

Communications Minister Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed, State Minister for Environment, Forestry and Livestock Abdullah Al-Noman, State Minister for Textiles Maj (ret'd) Abdul Mannan, Railway Secretary Nurul Momen Khan and other high officials of the Railway visited the spot.

As directed by the Communications Minister, another investigation committee headed by the Divisional Commissioner was constituted in this regard. But no deadline was fixed for the committee to submit its inquiry report.

Each of the wounded persons was given a cash of Taka 5000 along with necessary clothes.

Police dispersed a mob when they attempted to set fire to the incoming train.

Baishakh

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organisations held befitting programmes to bid farewell to the old year of Bengali calendar with gratitude and welcome the new year 1398 with fresh pledges to build the country anew.

Traders and business community observed 'Halkhata' festival by entertaining customers with sweets to mark the opening of a new counts book.

In the capital Dhaka, the day's programme began with the traditional musical function at the Ramna Green by Chhayanat, a cultural organisation.

The function enthralled hundreds of people who gathered at the Ramna Green in the morning.

A huge colourful procession portraying the Bengali folk culture and tradition was brought out in the city.

Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS), cultural wing of BNP, held a discussion meeting and cultural function at the Ramna Green.

LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder and State Minister for Jute attended the function. A week-long 'Baishakhi meila' which began at Azampur Girls' School premises last week, concluded on Monday.

The day was a closed holiday. National dailies brought out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day while the Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television put up special programmes.

Five-party

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Ahmed, Abdullah Sarkar, Bimal Biswas, Sharif Nurul Ambia, Siddiqur Rahman and Saiful Huq.

The leaders said illegal take-over must be done away with to facilitate smooth working of elected governments in future.

They discussed the law and order situation including the jail revolts and called for maintenance of peace and order in all spheres of national activities.

Prime Minister assured that her government would take effective steps to maintain law and order at all cost.

The alliance leaders urged the Prime Minister to take up socio-economic programmes for rehabilitation of the outlawed Sarbahara party members.

They also demanded recognition of martyrs of the last nine-year anti-autocracy movement as national heroes and rehabilitation of their families.

Nomination invited

Punjab, Assam polls postponed

NEW DELHI Apr 19: India's autonomous Election Commission announced today it was postponing elections set for next month in the troubled states of Punjab and Assam, citing security consideration, reports AFP.

The panel said in a statement Friday night that a revised election schedule for the two insurgency-hit border states would be announced shortly.

The decision came after the government expressed its inability to provide additional security forces to the states in view of security needs for the India-wide polls to parliament.

After a careful consideration of the suggestion tendered in the government communications on the need for postponement of polls in Punjab and Assam, the Election Commission has decided to postpone the poll, the statement said.

The statement was released about two hours after chief Election Commissioner TN Seshan had strongly indicated a postponement of the Punjab and Assam polls.

He said federal Home Secretary RK Bhargava had suggested the postponement and that the commission would give the request "the most careful consideration."

Punjab and Assam were to join the rest of India in the May 20, 23 and 26 elections of choose a new federal parliament and to elect new legislatures for the two states now governed directly by New Delhi.

President Ramaswamy Venkataraman formally flagged off the world's largest democratic exercise Friday, inviting 500 million Indians to elect their representatives to federal parliament next month.

A presidential notification cleared the way for the elections on May 20, 23 and 26.

In northern Jammu and Kashmir and in Punjab and Assam no elections will be held.

The first formal process for elections to the 10th parliament began with the issue of this notification, the presidential spokesman said. Filing of nominations was to be made later Friday.

Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu,

West Bengal, Haryana and the Federal territory of Pondicherry will hold local elections on May 23, officials said.

A total of 196 parliamentary constituencies will go to the polls on May 20 and 101 on May 23, with the remainder on May 26, the notification said.

The presidential notification came an hour before the Election Commission invited contestants to file their nominations, officials said, adding that the poll panel will begin scrutinising applications from Saturday.

The last date for the withdrawal of candidature April 29, the commission has said.

Hindu-Muslim clash in Calcutta: 25 injured

NEW DELHI, Apr 19: At least 25 people were injured today in a rare case of Hindu-Muslim fighting in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta that forced police to open fire, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says AFP.

Police arrested 43 men following the violence, which erupted after a bomb exploded during a prayer meeting by Muslims celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr, triggering a pitched street battle between Muslims and Hindus.

The news agency said "Two groups from different communities" attacked each other with stones and other missile, and the clash rapidly spread to adjoining residential areas, forcing the police action.

PTI said police fired into the crowd after baton charges and tear gas failed to end the clashes. But officials gave no breakdown of the injuries, and it was not known if the bomb blast caused any damage.

Though Hindu-Muslim riots are common in India, they are a rare occurrence in West Bengal, the Marxist-administered eastern province of which Calcutta is the capital.

PTI quoted West Bengal Home Secretary Manish Gupta as saying that the situation in Calcutta was "under control" and that a large contingent of armed police had been deployed in the violence-hit areas.



Leaders of the Five-Party alliance called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia Friday —PID photo

Japan-Soviet summit

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promise to return the two islands in 1960 when Tokyo signed a US-Japanese security treaty.

Turning to the internal situation in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev said the country faced a real risk to its economic security and political stability, adding that "firm action" was needed to save the state.

But, he said, "You mustn't confuse firm action with dictatorship."

"On Tuesday the state council would hold a special meeting to draw up a treaty of union which aims at establishing a new federation among the Soviet republics.

Reuter adds Gorbachev and Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu would talk for eight hours of summit talks late on Thursday, but neither side got what they initially hoped for.

Gorbachev came seeking massive financial help to revive his country's hamstrung economy but ended up almost empty-handed.

Kaifu entered the talks determined to regain some or all of four islands off Japan's northern coast that were occupied by Soviet forces in the closing days of World War II. All he extracted from Gorbachev was a pledge to carry on negotiating.

Gorbachev told reporters afterwards: "We broke a deadlock, but there is still a lot of work to do ... a lot to think

about."

Kaifu, at a separate press conference, said: "It is one achievement. It is such a contrast from earlier days that we clearly confirmed the issue of the four islands."

A senior Japanese official told reporters early today: "If you ask me if there was any concrete advancement in the negotiations I have to say no. The outcome is a draw." "It was a good compromise," one Soviet official said.

Gorbachev arrived on Tuesday for the first visit to Japan by a Kremlin leader. Three rounds of talks with Kaifu were planned. But it rapidly became clear the Kuril Islands issue would prove difficult to resolve and three extra rounds were arranged.

The Soviet side offered to reduce its military presence on the islands start what it described as mutually profitable economic activity there, permit Japanese to visit them without visas, and increase exchanges between islanders and Japanese.

The Japanese side, however, merely agreed to discuss the points in the future and refused point blank to start any immediate infusion of Japanese aid.

The joint declaration, signed immediately after the two men ended their final late night session, recognised that there was a dispute and committed both to working towards a formal peace treaty on

World War II.

It also laid out the Soviet proposals and recorded that Japan agreed to talk about them at a future, unspecified date.

A Japanese official who took part in the talks said no aid would be released until a peace treaty formally ending World War II had been signed. The communique said only that the two sides would work towards that goal.

But he said Japan was pleased that the islands were named and their ownership was now formally in question. "We have been trying for decades to put this on paper," he added.

A second gain for Tokyo was that the territorial question formed the core of negotiations to undertake to conclude a formal World War II peace treaty.

Thirdly, the official said, Japan managed to win mention of the Japan-Soviet 1956 joint declaration, if only indirectly, in the final summit document.

In 1956 Moscow agreed to hand back two of the islands in return for conclusion of a peace treaty, and to negotiate on return of the others. But when Japan signed a defence treaty with Washington in 1960, Moscow repudiated those pledges.

In their latest joint declaration, the Soviet Union proposed to reduce over five years its military presence

The Midnight File

US accuses Iraq of cheating

WASHINGTON, Apr 19: The United States Friday accused Iraq of cheating on an inventory of its chemical weapons and missiles submitted to the United Nations as required by the Gulf war cease-fire agreement. "The declaration delivered in New York shows clearly that the Iraqis have significant stocks of chemical munitions, ballistic missiles and warheads for these missiles, but the responses appear to fall short of reality," said state department spokesman Richard Boucher, reports AFP.

Gorbachev visit Nagasaki

NAGASAKI (Japan), Apr 19: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, visiting the Japanese city of Nagasaki devastated by a U.S. atomic bomb in 1945, expressed hope on Friday that the world would one day be rid of all nuclear weapons, reports Reuter. "I would like to emphasize... once more my adherence to the idea of a nuclear-free world, step by step, together with the other nuclear powers," he said during a stroll in Nagasaki's peace memorial park where the bomb fell.

PLO team to talk to Baker

TUNIS, Apr 19: The Palestine Liberation Organisation has given the green light for a Palestinian delegation to meet US Secretary of State James Baker in Jerusalem today, PLO sources in Tunis said. But the group will be reduced to three men who will hand memorandum to Baker, the sources said, reports Reuter.

White House hails UN-Iraq accord

WASHINGTON, Apr 19: The White House on Friday welcomed an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations to establish centres for refugees in northern Iraq and said it does not view the plan as a rebuff to President George Bush. The plan "appears to provide a basis for the U.N. to take over the operation we will establish" by sending in U.S. troops, said presidential spokesman Martin Fitzwater, reports AP.

Kurds open talks

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The accord, which is valid until the end of this year, stresses respect for Iraq's sovereignty and political independence.

The American plan for camps run by the US military for Kurds near the Turkish border, by contrast, has been criticized by Iraq as interference in its internal affairs.

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has said the positioning of foreign military personnel in Iraq poses legal problems. He has said no UN peacekeeping troops will patrol the camps unless there is a Security Council resolution authorizing the move.

The UN has appealed for 178 million dollars to help the most vulnerable people in Iraq and a further 400 million dollars for refugees on the Turkish and Iranian borders.

AFP said Allied commanders discussed the plight of Kurdish refugees with Iraqi officers today, but no agreement was reached on the setting up of camps. US General John Shalikashvili said.

"No other meeting is scheduled. We will solve the problems through other channels," Gen Shalikashvili said after the 45 minute-long talks.

Setu, Baby

From Page 1 Col. 5

their residences in the city hours after Khokan was killed at Zahurul Huq Hall. Both of them were repeatedly present at the hall room when Khokan was shot. Police could not arrest any other person in connection with the murder till Friday night.

Nothing about the girls' three-day interrogation by police ending on Thursday was available since the investigation officer of the case remained out of the city till Friday night. The investigation officer left Dhaka for further investigation of the case. Police are looking for a four-man gang, believed to have been involved in the killing, police sources said.

Meanwhile, a five-member committee has been formed by the Zahurul Huq Hall authorities to find out details about the occupation of Room No 404 in which the murder occurred. Dr Ashrafuddin Ahmed, a house tutor of the hall, is heading the committee which has started functioning after Eid.

According to a source, the room was allotted to a student, but it was allegedly used by some outsiders like Khokan. Three or four rooms of the hall are still occupied by outsiders, the source said.

Eid

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special "munajat" was offered for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country as well as greater unity of the Muslim ummah.

The Acting President hosted a reception at Bangabhaban in the evening.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia, leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, cabinet members, MPs, chiefs of the three services and the elite attended the reception.

Earlier, the Acting President also hosted a reception for the diplomats of Muslim countries and exchanged Eid greetings with them.

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The talks were held at this town 500 meters (yards) inside Iraq.

The allied delegation was headed by Gen Shalikashvili, commander of the allied relief operation, along with a French, a British and a Canadian Lieutenant Colonel. They met with two high-ranking Iraqi officers.

The meeting had originally been scheduled for noon (0900 GMT), but was put back until 6:00 pm.

UN force to stay in Kuwait

The head of the UN peace-keeping mission said Friday his forces won't be fully deployed on the Kuwait-Iraq border for weeks, leaving in question who will shelter the 50,000 refugees there in the meantime.

The remarks by Austrian Maj Gen Gunther Greindl suggested US forces may remain for several more weeks in a narrow strip of southern Iraq, where they have been running refugee camps for Iraqis fleeing civil unrest in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

Greindl said some United Nations military observers were scheduled to arrive Saturday in Kuwait City and would be sent soon to the UN-established buffer zone straddling the Kuwait-Iraq border.

"The moment we have military observers and vehicles available, we will establish an immediate presence in the demilitarized zone," Greindl told a news conference.

FAO assistance pledged

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations would extend all assistance to the present government to help improve the condition of the people of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This was stated by the FAO Regional Director for Asia and Pacific A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan when he called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia at her residence Friday.

Khan conveyed the greetings of Director General of FAO Edward Saahas to the Prime Minister. He apprised the Prime Minister of the programmes taken by FAO to help Bangladesh in its effort for progress.

The Prime Minister briefed Khan of her government's commitment to people and programmes for the uplift of the country.

FAO Resident Representative in Bangladesh Peter Myers was present on the occasion.

Meets Hasina

Another reports says: Obaidullah Khan also called on Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at Bangabandhu Bhaban Friday.

The Awami League President member and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad, party General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury and FAO Representative in Bangladesh Peter Myers were present on the occasion.

Khan apprised Sheikh Hasina of the future programme on Food and Agriculture of FAO in Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina appreciated the role of FAO in promoting the socio-economic condition of the people of Bangladesh and called for continuation of its role in the country.