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A library is thought to
 be a university's heart
 needing utmost care
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NEWS BRIEFS

Jubadal leader shot at
 A student of Siddeswari Degree College was shot at Friday night at village Shekharagar in Sirajdikhan upazila in Munshiganj district. Mr Apollo (22), also a Jubadal leader of Sirajdikhan upazila, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with serious injuries late night, Friday. A rival group attacked him while he was returning after campaigning Union Parishad election for a candidate, reports UNB.

EPZ project at Savar progressing
 SAVAR, Jan 4 : Work on a Tk 58 crore Export Processing Zone at Savar is progressing steadily as fifty per cent earth-filling on the project site has been completed. Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan who visited the project site today said that a large number of foreign investors have shown interest in the new EPZ at Savar being built on 74 acres of land to accommodate at least 90 industrial units. The project is expected to be completed by 1993, reports UNB.

Saifur off to Manila
 Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman left Saturday for Manila on a 5-day official visit to the Philippine. He is leading a 3-member delegation. In Manila, Rahman will have meetings with his Filipino counterpart James Estanislau and top executives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), reports UNB.

Sunken boat's crew rescued
 CHITTAGONG, Jan 4 : Bangladesh navy ship Tanveer during routine patrol yesterday salvaged all the three crew members of a sunken boat, reports BSS.

JS winter session gets off to a stormy start

AL, JP stage walkouts

By Staff Correspondent

The winter session of Jatiya Sangsad went off to a noisy start on Saturday morning with the Awami League and its longtime rival Jatiya Party storming out of the House to protest what they said undemocratic activities of the government.

The walk-outs, staged separately, came minutes before the opening speech of President Abdur Rahman Biswas, who called for consolidating the newly restored democracy.

"1991 was the year of introducing democracy. Let

1992 be the year of consolidating and upholding democracy," the President said in the New Year's first session.

As the MPs from AL and JP walked out of the House, a section of the opposition comprising Jamaat, CPB, JSD, Workers Party, NDP and Islami Oikya Jote and two Independent Members remained to listen to President Biswas, who was Speaker of this parliament until his election last October the titular head of state. Suranjit Sengupta of Ganatantri Party and Abdul Hafiz of NAP were not present in the House on the day.

The Treasury bench, led by Leader of the House Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, listened with rapt attention to the President as he quoted from a 1979 parliamentary speech of late President Ziaur Rahman and called for creating a new parliamentary democratic tradition.

Explaining his party's walk-out Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Acting President of Awami League Abdus Samad Azad told reporters that they were protesting the 'ill activities of the BNP Government.'

Specifying the alleged ill activities, he said the government was by passing parliament through issuing ordinances, attacking the AL and Chhatra League workers and the Prime Minister was violating the protocol virtually enjoying the status of Head of State.

Samad Azad said the President proved himself partisan in his opening speech by projecting what he said the programmes of the BNP gov-



President Abdur Rahman Biswas addressing the winter session of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. — PID photo

Consolidate democracy : Biswas

Seen from the gallery

By Mahfuz Anam

The unusual chill of an exceptionally bright wintry day made an equally unusual contrast to the heat that was generated within minutes of the Speaker's calling to order the Fourth Session of the Fifth Parliament yesterday morning. The Honourable Speaker's eloquent beginning soon gave way to a series of points of order which ranged from the banal to some very interesting ones, and which later ended with the Awami League and the Jatiya Party's staging a walkout - each giving different reasons for the move, but all of them relating to the President's address to Parliament.

It was a pity that the very first address of the very first democratically elected President after the restoration of democracy, should have faced such a large walkout. I personally feel that such a rebuff could - and should - have been avoided if not for the sake of the person, at least for the sake of the office, which as we know is titular and as such requires very delicate and cau-

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called for taking a fresh vow in the new year to consolidate and uphold democracy, reports BSS.

"1991 was the year of introducing democracy let 1992 be the year of consolidating and upholding democracy," the President said while addressing the inaugural sitting of the winter session of the Jatiya Sangsad.

He reminded the Sangsad members that democracy takes speed with help of the ruling party and the opposition. It is thus the equal responsibility of all parties and opinions to give democracy an institutional shape, he added.

President Biswas said the nation had taken politics from the streets to parliament and 'so, now, parliament is the centre of all national activities, being the highest forum of the nation.'

In his about one-hour address the President touched upon the major areas of national development, including economy, education, health, communication, agriculture, defence and foreign policy and said the whole nation is looking eagerly to this parliament to build a self-reliant, happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

The opposition Awami League and Jatiya Party members, staged walk-out separately before the Presidential speech.

President Biswas paid

Influx of Rohingyas continues

Rangoon builds five helipads, renovates airfield at Mongdu

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 4 : Myanmar has completed construction of five new helipads and is reactivating an air-field at the bordering township of Mongdu, according to Bangladesh officials in the border area.

Meanwhile, no response on the proposed flag meeting on January 7 has been received by the Bangladesh side as yet, an official here said. He added that the Burmese side was 'probably buying time.'

The five helipads that were completed last week along the border in Burma are located at Chensori, Tombru, Tulatoli, Bolibazar and at Battola, Bangladesh officials in the border area said.

The Kaderbil air-field at Mongdu, built during the Second World War and later abandoned, is being renovated to facilitate air-communication between Arakan and Rangoon, the officials added.

The road distance between Akyab, the capital of Arakan, and Rangoon is about 400 miles. The Akyab-Rangoon Highway, also built during the Second World War, passes through a hilly and rugged terrain and is presently in extremely bad condition, according to sources.

The helipads and the air-field projects are believed to have been taken to set up an alternate and effective transportation system, the officials said.

Sources in border areas said Myanmar had so far deployed about 25,000 regular army troops along the border.

The influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh from the neighbouring Burmese state of Arakan continues unabated, according to the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation.

BSS from Cox's Bazar adds: At least 15 Rohingya refugees died at different camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts due to cold wave during the last two days, official sources said yesterday.

Most of the dead are children. Of them, 11 refugees died at Morichya of Ukhiya upazila under Cox's Bazar and the rest died at Natkhyanchhari of Bandarban district.

The victims are : Ayusha (four), Zamilia Khatun (six), Hasina (ten), Hakin Ali (five), Lal Mia (six), Ahmad Hossain (seven), Jubar Molluk (11), Faruq Ahmad (ten), Dhulachand (50), Dildar Mia (three), Sakina (seven) and Hafiza (two).

The names of the rest three victims were not available.

Police must earn confidence of people: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the police forces to remain vigilant for maintaining law and order and security to properly implement development projects taken by the government for country's progress and prosperity, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the Police Week '92 at the Rajarbag Police Line here Saturday morning, Begum Zia said the responsibility and duty of the police as law enforcing agency is very big in building a democratic society.

She said the police have to earn confidence of the people since people and police remain together under democratic system. 'Keep in mind, that people's expectation from

LPR facility not cancelled

The Ministry of Finance, in a press note issued in Dhaka Saturday said the facility of Leave Preparatory to Retirement (LPR) had not been cancelled, reports BSS.

Referring to a news item that appeared in the Daily Ittefaq yesterday under the headline "LPR Bait" (LPR cancelled), the press note said, the news item was completely misleading and misunderstanding had been created in the public mind in the meantime as a result, the press note said, provision had been made for treating the LPR period as a pensionable period and all the facilities during the LPR period provided by the government through different orders would also remain unchanged.

The maximum amount of the gross pension has been fixed from Taka 5,000 to Taka 8,200 with effect from July 1 of 1991. After the introduction of the new pay scale of 1991, the press note said.

Teachers go on strike from January 18

A nonstop strike in colleges, secondary schools and madrasahs across the country will begin on January 18, teachers announced at a grand rally Saturday, reports UNB.

Announcing the greater action programme, Bangladesh Federation of Teachers' Associations (BFTA) leaders said some 2.5 lakh teachers of both government and non-government colleges, schools and madrasahs would go on the strike for an indefinite period to press home their 15-point demand.

The BFTA demands include nationalisation of the services of non-government teachers, salary in the new national pay scale from July 1, 1991, higher scale for senior teachers, teachers' welfare trust, nationalisation of education and adequate supply of educational inputs.

Sheikh Amanullah, Chairman of the BFTA, also told the mammoth gathering of teachers in front of the National Press Club that they would observe a day-long work absence on Tuesday.

The federation's preparatory programme also includes exchange of views with various professional groups January 8-9, silent procession at district level on January 14, press conference on January 16.

Mukim, Arju on remand

Mukim Gazi and Lutfar Rahman alias arju, two under-trial prisoners who escaped from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court Hajat Monday and recaptured Friday were taken on a two-day remand by Kotwali Police Saturday.

Charges against Ershad proved: AG

The Attorney General Saturday submitted before the Special Court that amassing wealth beyond known sources of income and misappropriation of gifts by former president H M Ershad have been proved by the witnesses, reports UNB.

The submission from Aminul Haq was made in the one-man court of district and sessions judge Mohammad Ali Khan when hearing of the corruption case resumed after more than a month.

The court heard deposition and cross-examination of 48 prosecution and 10 defence witnesses since the case started on March 20 last year. The inconclusive prosecution argument will resume today (Sunday).

The prosecution said evidences proved that Ershad who grabbed power overthrowing an elected president and ruled the country nearly nine years amassed wealth worth Tk 2,21,65,238 including a cash of Tk 1,90,81,565 beyond his life long known sources of income of around Tk 73 lakh.

The cash, mostly in bundles of 500 taka notes found wrapped in sarees and clothes in 22 trunks, was seized from Ershad's official residence Senabhaban soon after he was overthrown December 6, 1990 by a mass upsurge, witnesses said.

As the prosecution was placing all the legal points to hook the accused, Ershad seated in an armed chair in the dock was found totally unconcerned. Wearing a grey woollen coat with white stripe and spotted chocolate colour tie, the former president was reading the book 'Light the Golden Lamp', collection of his poems translated and published in several languages including English and French during his presidency.

Sometimes he was also talking with his counsels and exchanging notes with them.

The Attorney General referred to the defence wit-

nesses and said a disparate attempt was made by them to prove that the money belongs the Jatiya Party and was kept with the party chairman for ready payment against purchase of party house at Dhanmondi.

Defence plea that the Treasury does not accept cheque and that is why cash kept ready with party chairman does not hold good, said Aminul Haq. He quoted the Treasury Rule 33 and said payment to the government through the treasury may be made in cheque as well.

As for the other charge against the accused, the prosecution said the former president during his office received 120 items as gifts which he was supposed to deposit to the Government Toshakhana. Of those 31 items worth of over Tk 11 lakh were seized from the Senabhaban.

The other gift items earlier given away to his brother-in-law Mustafizur Rahman as

Transport owners give 48-hour deadline

PADNA, Jan 4 : Owners Saturday gave a 48-hour ultimatum to the government for resolving the deadlock in transport sector of the 16 northern districts, failing which they threatened to go into an indefinite strike from January 7, reports UNB.

The ultimatum came after a meeting of the North Bengal Motor Owners' Association held at its office here Friday.

Also on Friday, transport workers staged a sit-in in front of the Association office demanding appointment letters. About 600 workers took part in the demonstration while the transport owners were holding the meeting.

Chief Adviser of the Association Ihsay Islam told newsmen today that the workers are now demanding permanent appointment instead of daily and monthly basis appointment agreed upon during a tripartite meeting on December 20.

Syria, Jordan won't join talks

DAMASCUS, Jan 4 : Syria said today its Middle East peace negotiators were postponing their departure for talks with Israel in Washington because of Israel's decision to expel 12 Palestinians, reports Reuter.

A foreign Ministry spokesman said the Syrian delegation had been scheduled to travel to Washington today. The Palestinian team earlier postponed its departure while it waits for instructions from the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Jordan also decided to postpone the departure of its delegation to Arab-Israeli peace talks in protest at Israel's decision to deport 12 Palestinians.

The Jordanian delegation will not leave as planned on Sunday, officials today said, after Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian team to the peace talks said they too would delay their travel plans.

Xinhua says, Palestine today protested to the United Nations against Israel's decision to expel 12 from the occupied territories, saying the action would destroy the current peace process in the Middle East.

'We are greatly alarmed at the decision taken by the occupying power, Israel, and as announced by an Israeli army spokesman, to deport 12 Palestinian civilians living in the occupied territory of the West Bank and Gaza, including Jerusalem, Nasser Al-Kidwa, permanent observer of Palestine to the United Nations, said in a letter to the president of the Security Council today.

The expulsion, announced last night, was ordered by Defense Minister Moshe Arens on charges of terrorist involvement and put in jeopardy the Middle East peace talks scheduled to resume in Washington next week between Israel and delegations of Palestinians, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The letter pointed out that the Israeli action came at a time when Israel has intensified its aggression and human rights violations against the Palestinian people by prolonged curfews and stepped-up settlement activities on the occupied territories.

Meanwhile the United States has issued an entry visa to a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation official for Middle East peace talks in Washington, a Palestinian delegate said today.

Mamdouh Al-Aker told Reuters the US decision to issue a visa to Nabil Shaath, a senior aide to PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, eased the Palestinian delegation's feeling that Washington favoured Israel in the talks.

The decision came two days after Israel decided to expel 12 Palestinians.

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