

## CARE to help take care of Rohingyas if asked by govt

By Staff Correspondent

President of CARE International Philip Johnston said in Dhaka on Wednesday that his organization will consider helping the Rohingya Muslim refugees if invited by Bangladesh government.

"We will examine the question of providing assistance to them (refugees) if the government (of Bangladesh) asks us to do that," Johnston told The Daily Star.

CARE, a US-based international relief organization, has a network in Bangladesh with more than 1,600 staff.

Johnston, currently on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, said CARE helps refugees "as long as they are in need — no matter if they are pink, brown or black, Muslims or Buddhists."

He, however, said that he was not fully aware of the problems of Rohingya refugees who have fled into Bangladesh to escape Myanmar (Burma) military government's atrocities.

Asked what kind of help CARE may provide to the refugees, Johnston said "it depends on what sort of problems we are dealing with."

He said the problems of food, shelter, sanitation and healthcare become the prime concerns in a refugee situation.

Johnston said CARE is always in favour of responding to the needs of the refugees wherever and whenever such situation arises. The CARE, he said, is helping Sudanese in Kenya, Somalians in Ethiopia and Ethiopians in Somalia.

CARE provided food, water, tents and blankets to about 240,000 refugees during and after the Gulf War, he said.

Meanwhile, sources at the Foreign Office said Bangladesh is not thinking of international aid for the Rohingya refugees at this stage.

International relief organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), can not get involved into refugees unless permitted by the country of their shelter.

The government this week started limited relief work for the Rohingya refugees setting up tents and distributing food and medicines.

Later at a press conference, Dr Johnston spoke of CARE's relief operation after last year's cyclone in Bangladesh and the organisation's disaster preparedness programme.

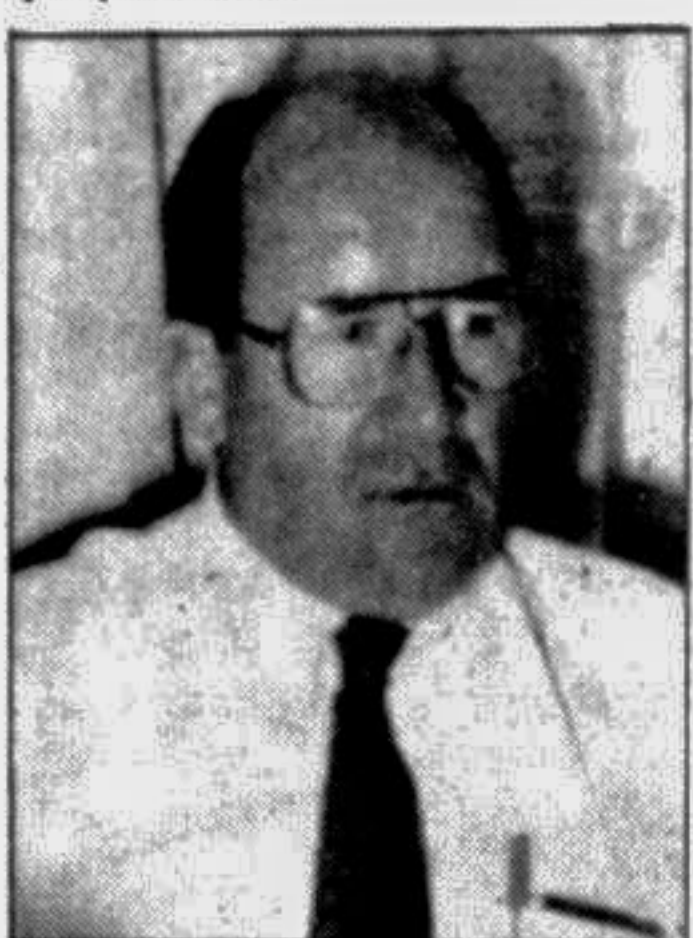
After the cyclone, CARE distributed food supplies to 400,200 people, helped pump

saltwater out of 1,500 ponds to use them for drinking water in the coastal areas and distributed 55,000 tons of wheat to nearly two million people who lost crops and livestock, he said.

Dr also — Johnston the Chief Executive Officer of CARE responsible for policy, administration and fund-raising programmes — said CARE had approached the government for installing radio communication network in the country for disaster preparedness.

"We have already asked permission from the government to set up a strong and effective radio network to improve communication facilities," he said adding that the communication network, besides its use during the emergency situation, could also be used for development efforts.

Giving an account of the future CARE programmes in the country, he said the organisation plans extensive health care training programme for its field-level staff and an integrated programme for Chittagong district for improving living conditions of the people there.



Philip Johnston — Star photo

Assistant Country Director Lisa Dean, also present at the press conference said that the list of the future CARE programme also includes income generating programmes at poor households, agricultural implants, aquaculture and agro forestry. Responding to a query, she said they were planning afforestation programmes in the coastal belt of the country.

The CARE CEO is in Bangladesh for preparing a report on the disaster management programme which would be submitted to several donor agencies supporting CARE.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia witnessing the combined winter exercise of the army at Bhaduria, Dinajpur yesterday. Army Chief Lt Gen Noor Uddin Khan was also present. —PID photo

## Four killed, 100 injured

From Page 1 Col 5

Our correspondent from Comilla reported that two persons died and over 25 others sustained wounds when the Supporters of rival candidates clashed at a centre in Ziarkandi Union of Daudkandi upazila at about 2 pm. The dead were identified as Abdul Bari (40), assistant teacher of Baghairampur Primary School and son of Chan Mia of Village Gopalpur and Nur Mohammad (19), son of Abdul Awal Sarker of the same village. Polling at the centre was suspended. Of the injured seven were hospitalised. A case was filed in this connection.

Traffic movement on the Chittagong-Dhaka highway remained suspended for two hours as clashes spread.

According to our Cox's Bazar correspondent, Nurul Haq, an ex-member of Ali Akbar Dail Union, was killed during exchange of gunshots between two rival groups of people one mile away from Kabi Jasmuddin under the Ali Akbar Dail Union of Kutubdia thana High School Centre at 4.15 pm. Several others were also hurt in the armed clashes between the supporters of Nurul Alam and Nurul Bashar, both candidates in the elections.

Nurul Haq was the son of Haji Bashir Ahmed of Village Ali Akbar Dail. Polling at the centre, however, continued.

According to the election control room in Dhaka, elections to some centres in Rangpur, Narsingdi, and Magura districts were also marked by violence. A mob attacked the Barabell centre of Gangachhara thana under Rangpur district and snatched four ballot paper books. Police, however, recovered those later and polling continued.

At the Uttarkhalia Primary School centre of the same thana, a group of unruly elements reportedly beat the presiding officer in the morning. Ballot boxes were also taken out of the centre during the incident. Police fired 12 shots in the air to bring the situation under control. Voting at the centre was suspended following the untoward incident.

At the women's booth of Gangachhara's polling centre of Alamthi centre, ballot paper books were also snatched from the booth. Police, however, recovered the papers.

At Faridpur clashes, police firing and arrests were reported from some places of 17 unions in Nagarkanda upazila of the district, official sources said.

They, however, added that the percentage of voter turnout in the upazila was satisfactory.

Police opened fire at Bahirdia centre of Ramkantaup union when chairman candidate MA Haashem and his associated allegedly forced into the centre to cast false votes.

Authorities postponed the polls in Bahirdia centre at 1 pm.

Police arrested an assistant presiding officer at Kodalia centre of Nagarkanda Union in connection with vote-rigging.

Sporadic clashes between the supporters of rival candidates were also reported from Baitupara in Pabna Union and Talma Primary School centre of Talma Union, both in Nagarkanda upazila of Faridpur district.

Chairman candidate Alaf Hossain of Ramkantaup Union and 11 people were injured in the clash at Talma Primary School centre.

Yusuf Chowdhury (52), injured in the clash at Baitupara, was admitted to Nagarkanda upazila health complex.

At Sherpur, union parishad polls in 37 centres of eight unions of Nakla upazila were held peacefully.

According to reports reach in here, elections were held peacefully in 56 centres of 10 unions of Amtali upazila of Borguna district and in 19 centres of four unions in Chagalnaya upazila of Feni district.

UNB adds: The Sirajganj authorities postponed voting in two centres of two unions following violence like the snatching of ballot boxes, seals and ballot papers.

At least 25 people, including two policemen, a presiding officer and a polling officer, were injured in clashes between rival groups at Rajapur and Dukribera unions in Belkuchi upazila of the district.

Miscreants also took away ballot boxes, papers and seals from Kadamthali centre in Rajapur union and Kalyanpur centre in Dukribera union.

Elections in other unions of Sirajganj district were reported to be peaceful.

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## 'Country needs strong, trained army to protect independence'

BHADURIA (Dinajpur), Jan 22: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today witnessed a combined winter exercise of army of Bogra area, reports BSS.

She was received by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan. She was introduced to the senior officers there.

Area Commander Major General Sadequr Rahman Chowdhury briefed the Prime Minister on the activities of the army in the area and the on-going exercise.

Addressing the officers and members of the army Begum Zia said the country requires a strong and trained army to protect the independence and sovereignty.

Begum Zia said proper democratic system and its stability are the pre-requisites for economic development of a nation. She said democracy has been achieved and it should be given a permanent shape and stability.

She said the army is part of the people and the overall development of the country is linked with the betterment of all.

Begum Zia called for vigorous training to improve standard and skill and said only modern equipment and number cannot make the army efficient.

She urged them to devote to training, imbued with the spirit of patriotism, honesty, devotion and sincerity.

## Foggy weather countrywide

By Staff Correspondent

Deep fog blanketed most of the country on Wednesday disrupting normal life for several hours in the morning.

Meteorological sources said that the foggy weather would continue for another one or two days over the country.

A trough of low and westerly disturbance from the Arabian Sea caused drizzles in several places. Met official said, adding that moisture in the weather has caused fog.

In the capital fog enveloped most of the areas forcing the vehicles to put the headlights on. Transportation became slow and the office-goers had to wait for a clear weather.

Traces of rain coupled with cold breeze made the weather chilly although the temperature was comparatively high.

Minimum temperature recorded at Dhaka was 14.4 degree Celsius. The Met Office said light rainfall was recorded at Faridpur, Madaripur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Khepupara, Khulna, Satkhira, Jessore and Bholah.

## Drama stage in Dhaka within current Plan period

A 500-seat drama stage would be set up in Dhaka city within the current five-year plan, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahannara Begum said in the Jatiya Sangsad Wednesday, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Mohammad Shamsudouha (CPB-Nilphamari), the state minister said the construction of the drama stage was under active consideration of the government.

She, however, said there was no programme of the government to establish such drama stages in the country's district headquarters, where the respective Shilpakala Academy branches were being used for such cultural activities.

Replying to a supplementary question whether the government was repealing the controversial Performing Arts Control Act, Prof Jahannara Begum said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had already assured the drama activists that the government would give sympathetic consideration to their demand.

She said the Prime Minister had already sought opinion of the Law and Justice Minister on this issue and a decision would follow soon.

## The Midnight File

### FIS leader arrested

ALGIERS, Jan 22: Algeria Muslim fundamentalist party said Wednesday its leader has been arrested as the government announced that all assembly around mosques had been banned. The Islamic Salvation Front announced that its acting President Abdul Kader Hachani, was arrested at 5.30 pm (1430 GMT) in Bachjara, a suburb of Algiers and a party stronghold, reports AP.

### US, DPRK hold rare meet

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 22: US and North Korean officials on Wednesday began their highest-level meeting since the Korean War in a climate of improving relations and hopes for resolution of a dispute over nuclear weapons. Arnold Kanter, undersecretary of state for political affairs, and Kim Yong Sun, director of the International Department of North Korea's communist party, did not speak to reporters as they arrived for the talks Wednesday morning at the US mission to the United Nations, reports AP.

### Indo-Pak PMs to meet soon

ISLAMABAD, Jan 22: The Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India will meet in Switzerland for talks on improving relations bedeviled by a Muslim uprising in disputed Kashmir, a government spokesman said today. A foreign ministry official told reporters Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif would meet his Indian counterpart Narasimha Rao at the three-day annual meeting of the world economic forum in Davos starting on January 31, reports Reuters.

### US aid for former Soviet Union

WASHINGTON, Jan 22: President Bush said Wednesday he will ask Congress for \$600 million in new aid for the former Soviet Union and challenged other countries to "pull together to win the peace in this post-Cold War era". The new aid would put American assistance over \$5 billion. Bush announced his proposal in a speech at the opening of a conference of 47 nations exploring strategies for speeding food, medicine and other assistance to the former Soviet republics known as the Commonwealth of Independent States, reports AP.

## UZ repeal bill

From Page 1 Col 4

Despite repeated attempts, Suranjit failed to have the floor and speak on the bill.

Law Minister Mirza Gohar Hafiz intervened the opposition members were insisting on raising a full dress discussion before the bill was introduced. He quoted relevant rules of procedures to say none has the right to discuss the bill at this stage.

The bill provides that all assets and liabilities of the upazila parishads will be vested with the government.

It further provides that all officials and employees of the upazila parishads will be absorbed in government or autonomous bodies. However, services of an employee can be terminated if he is unwilling to be absorbed on terms and conditions offered by the government.

The upazila system was introduced during Ershad regime in 1982 against stiff opposition from major political parties including Awami League and BNP who had boycotted the first chairman election held in 1985. The second election to upazila parishads was held in early 1990.

There was widespread allegation of abuse of power, corruption and nepotism against upazila chairmen.

In the objectives of the bill, the Minister said inquiries proved most of those allegations to be true. This showed that hopes and aspirations of the people were not reflected in the upazila system for which it was introduced, he added.

Another report adds: Opposition MPs yesterday accused the BNP government of politicising the administration by appointing its partymen to key posts of different local bodies.

The accusation came when LGD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar sought leave of the chair to introduce the Bills relating to the Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi City Corporations, Pouroshava, Union Parishad and Cooperative Society.

Sudhangsu Shekhar Halder, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Tofael Ahmed, Abdur

### Jail

From Page 1 Col 8

lay in disposing the cases of under-trial prisoners is a big factor for the overcrowding. There are prisoners, awaiting trial not only for months, but for years as well.

In contrast, the number of jail wardens has remained low. According to officials the 700 wardens in the central jail are not adequate to look after the 5,000 inmates.

The problem of overcrowding came to limelight when prisoners convicted by Ershad's Martial Law staged a revolt in the Dhaka Central Jail Dec 29, 1990.

At least seven prisoners were killed during the three-week revolt that also spread to jails in Chittagong, Comilla and Jessore.

Following the release of some prisoners convicted during martial law, the number of inmates in the Dhaka Central Jail came down to 3,941 in February last year. Since then new prisoners pushed the number up to 5,000.

Jail officials insisted that the congestion in the Central Jail could be eased through shifting of the jail to the planned sites at Gazipur and Keraniganj.

Razzak, Mohammad Nasim and Mohammad Shamsudouha opposed the bills.

The opposition MPs said the ruling party violated the constitutional provisions by giving appointment to the post of Mayors of the country's four city corporations.

They referred to Article 59 of the Constitution which calls for effective participation by the elected representatives of the people in all tiers of the local administration.

Defending the bills, the LGD Minister said the opposition MPs' argument is not related to his bills which only sought to extend the term of the city corporations from three years to five years.

The Minister however refuted the allegation that the government is politicising the administration.

Law Minister Mirza Gohar Hafiz introduced the two bills, Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan one and State Minister for Irrigation Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan introduced one bill in the House yesterday.

In all, 12 bills were introduced in the House. They are: The Investment Board (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganisation) (Repeal) Bill, 1992, The Pouroshava (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1992, Local Government (Union Parishads) (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1992, The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 1992 and the Water Resources Planning Bill, 1992.

All the bills were introduced by voice vote.

### Mukim

From Page 1 Col 6

Ismail Hossain gave the verdict in the arms case filed against Mukim Gazi and his accomplices with the Gulshan police station October 9, 1989.

Khan Sayfur Rahman and Abdus Sattar Siddiq solicited in the court as defence lawyers while APP Nurul Islam Babul moved on behalf of the prosecution.

Mukim Gazi and his accomplices snatched away two rifles and 17 bullets from patrol police in the Khilkhet area in the city on the day.

Mukim Gazi, an accused in several criminal cases, was arrested escaped several times so far.

### X-ray film

From Page 1 Col 6

In a written reply to a question from Kazi Abdur Rashid (AL-Gopalganj) the Health Minister said coronary care units were functioning in eight medical college hospitals and a full-fledged intensive care unit was installed only in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He also said that there were no separate ward named premature baby care unit in any medical college hospital.

He, however, said that necessary measures were being taken to set up such units in those medical college hospitals during the current Fourth Five-Year Plan period.

## Rohingya head count runs into snag

From Staff Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 22: Authorities today began distributing foodgrains and cash as relief to thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees at different makeshift shelters in the district.

At Dachupalang camp, some 20 kilometers from here, district officials doled out half a kilogram of rice and flour to each person and Taka 100 in cash to each Rohingya family that fled its homeland in the face of continued Myanmar military repression.

Officials said that the government allocated a total of 80 metric tons of wheat and rice and Taka one lakh for distribution among the refugees.

The government relief operations got started at Maricchia, Dachupalang and

other shelters in the district in addition to relief efforts by some non-government voluntary organisations.

Meanwhile, a government head count effort which began early this month faced difficulties amid the continued influx of Rohingya Muslim refugees from across the border.

Some 5,000 refugees crossed the border in the past four days with another 200 arriving today, officials said.

They said they were facing particular problems in counting the refugees who increase everyday. Identification of the refugees has also become difficult as a good number of them have merged with the district's floating populace, the officials added.

## Seen from the Gallery

From Page 1 Col 5

Sardar Sakhawati Baki, a Treasury Bench MP, was not ready to accept the saying "what's in a name." As the presiding Deputy Speaker wrongly pronounced his name as "Sakhawati" to raise question he sought to correct the Deputy Speaker's mistake. He said quite often his name is uttered wrongly. The Deputy Speaker, Mr Pannil, soothed his "discontent" by saying "only the names of friends are pronounced wrongly."

Farida Hasan, one of the women MPs, was given a chance to put up a supplementary question but she failed to get the message. Without putting a question she rather came in aid of the Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare in justifying why Sunamganj should have more health complexes.

But as the Deputy Speaker tried to press her to put a

question she went on repeating her plea. Meanwhile, as someone tried to pull her leg the Deputy Speaker intervened. "Come on, be generous, let a lady speak."

Suranjit Sen Gupta, the lone MP from Ganaitantri Party, can be a hard nut to crack if he decides to be so. Though his appearance in the House yesterday after a long stay abroad on health ground was welcomed by the Speaker it was difficult for him to cool down Mr Gupta.

Mr Gupta, joined by other angry opposition members, was insisting on permission to get the floor. The Speaker also insisted that Mr Gupta not speak. The battle went on for quite some time but eventually Mr Gupta had to give in.

But it was not the same for the other opposition leader Mr Mizan Chowdhury who also joined yesterday's session after a long absence.

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## 'Bangabandhu's name demands proper mentioning by head of state'

The House took up the discussion on President's speech after the legislative business was over with Awami League member Prof. Abdus Sahid initiated the discussion, says BSS.

Earlier, Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury proposed that the House be adjourned because the Treasury Bench have some urgent meeting.

Opposition Awami League, however, asked the Speaker to go with the order of the day.

Taking part in the discussion, Prof. Abdus Sahid (AL-Moulvibazar) criticised the way the President mentioned the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He said as the undisputed leader of the liberation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu demanded proper mentioning by the head of state.

Prof. Sahid said he failed to get any proper idea of the aims and objectives of the government from President's speech. He said the speech lacked any concrete action programme of the government to remove prevailing frustration throughout the country.

Dhirendranath Debnath Shambhu (AL-Barguna) said it was unfortunate that President of the country, who was expected to be non-partisan, delivered his speech like a member of the ruling party. He said it would not be an exaggeration if the speech was described as a BNP pamphlet.

Shambhu also criticised the manner Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's name was mentioned by the president in his speech and said the manner was derogatory.

## Canal for food

From Page 1 Col 8

Referring to the smuggling, Begum Zia said this was hindering the pace of industrialisation. She called upon the people to resist the smuggling to help flourish local industries.

Dwelling on local problems the Prime Minister said steps would be taken to construct Khulna Rupsha Bridge to facilitate easy communication in the areas.

Earlier, Begum Zia laid the foundation stone of Gulchehar-Entaz Memorial Complex at Melex Kurakathi. The complex will have a two-bed eye hospital, a day-care