

Use
Touch

Facial tissue
Table Napkin
Memory Plate
Paper Clip

143/A, NEW BAILY ROAD, DHAKA, TEL: 417424

The Daily Star

The finest ice cream from Italy

Made with all natural ingredients and Italian technology.

dolce vita gelato
gelateria, ice cream parlour

54 Kemal Ataturk Ave.
Ground floor, Barani, Dhaka Ph. 607980

VOL. II NO. 19 REGD. NO. DA 783

MAGH 18, 1398 BS,

DHAKA SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1, 1992

RAJAB 26, 1412 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

Inside Today

Article

Fallout from Desert Storm

Palestinians are still counting the cost
Page 4

International



Govt captures FIS-controlled mosque, removes Imam

Kabul ready to improve ties with Islamabad
Page 5

Business

Interest waiver is no answer to loan recovery problem

DCCI calls for consensus to solve economic problems
Page 6,7

Feature

Banking and Finance
Foreign investment is still a mirage
Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Yoga and the policeman
Page 3

AL movement against Indemnity Act may be delayed

By Nurul Kabir

The Awami League (AL) holds an emergency meeting of its working committee today in a bid to work out the strategy to deal with the situation that could arise out of the ruling BNP's non-cooperation to the passage of the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill.

The working committee, according to sources, will chalk out strategies to be adopted both in and outside the parliament.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) has been convened tomorrow.

In the wake of the parliamentary committee's split decision on the AL sponsored bill, the original bill will be placed soon in parliament for discussion.

Whatever comes out of these meetings will require the approval of the party chief, Sheikh Hasina, who is now at-

tending her ailing brother-in-law in Singapore, said AL leader Shudhansu Shekhar Halder.

"We have already informed her about the ruling party's stance on the issue over telephone," Halder added.

The parliamentary committee in its concluding meeting on Wednesday failed to come out with a consensus as the BNP members differed with the key point — the trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family — on 'political' grounds.

Replying to a question a senior AL leader, who heads one of its front organisations told the Star last night that they would try to work out the strategy to energise our rank and file aimed at embarking on a movement to press our political demands including the repeal of indemnity act. He, however, ruled out any

immediate call for a general strike to press their demands, saying, 'for strategic reasons we require a bit of time to warm up our workers.'

'Above all the rainy season is not an appropriate time for launching an effective movement,' the AL leader added.

However, the months of February and March will witness some agitation against the government, the AL leader hinted.

According to insiders, the AL working committee meeting will discuss, among other issues, the means of pressing the government for granting autonomy to the electronic media as committed in the 'joint declaration of the three alliances'.

The agenda of the meetings also include such things as how to combat what it called BNP's tendency to use the administration as a tool for serving the party purposes.

Technical officers leaving Shipping Corporation

Continued desertion by on-board technical personnel has been crippling smooth commercial operation of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, reports UNB.

Authorities admitted that more than 200 technical officers left the state-run corporation during the last two years because of poor benefit package.

The Bangladeshi private shipping companies now offer more than double the BSC salary and offers by the foreign companies are even more lucrative.

A captain of BSC ship usually gets maximum 1200 US dollars a month, with a basic salary of about 250 dollars.

When a Bangladeshi private shipping company's pay-

ment to a captain range from 2000 to 2500 US dollars.

Because of low take-home-pay, the sources said, on-board officers of BSC often tend to show negligence to duties creating serious indiscipline in commercial operations of the corporation.

Schedule of ships are now very often disrupted by indifferent attitude of the technical

Dhaka-Delhi water talks tomorrow

Bangladesh and India will hold talks in Dhaka Sunday on the sharing of waters of common rivers, official sources
See Page 12 Col 5

personnel.

As a result, the fixed operating cost which now amounts to 5000 US dollars a day for a ship increases, putting severe strain on the financial state of the already-losing organization.

BSC, on several occasions, had to send replacement from the city and also to hire foreign officers following desertion of its vessels by Bangladeshi personnel at a number of foreign ports.

A number of ports even charged penalty to BSC for such desertion.

To retain its technical staff, the sources said, BSC is planning to recommend recruitment of technical personnel on contract basis with competitive salary.



SAYING WITH FLOWERS: A competitor at Ikebana evening organised by Japanese embassy and Asia Bunka Kailan Dosokai at hotel Sonargaon yesterday evening. —Star photo

Countdown to Shaheed Day

Star Special

February, according to English calendar, is the second month of a year. To Bengalees in Bangladesh, it is the month of grief and guts. For on the 21st day of this month, Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and others embraced martyrdom in their prime for the mother tongue — Bangla (Bengali).

That was 40 years ago, in 1952. But a grateful nation still remembers the makers of history and will do it forever, for the blood they spilled flowed through all past democratic movements culminating into the 1971 Liberation War.

The Pakistani guns that silenced the Language Martyrs in 1952 were finally surrendered on Dec 16 of 1971 to Mukti Bahini (Liberation Force), whose members owed their inspiration to the martyrs.

The Bengalees, the majority, wanted, from the rulers of Pakistan after its 1947 independence, a recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages. Bangladesh was then East Pakistan for eastern wing of Pakistan dominated by the rulers in West Pakistan. The rulers responded with bullets when hundreds of students poured into Dhaka streets on Feb 21 defying Section 144 that banned public gathering of more than four people.

As the nation begins observance of the Ekushey February (21st February) from today, the focus will be on efforts to strengthen the fledgling democracy and build a robust economy.

The pride that the nation inherited from the Language Martyrs has enriched our culture, literature and music. What still remains to be achieved is sustained freedom — a freedom from hunger and political oppression. Though the fall of autocratic regime of ousted President Hussain Muhammad Ershad has led to the establishment of a democratic government, economic freedom is what the nation has to work hard for.

The Central Shaheed Minar, the monument for the Language Martyrs, has already been spruced up for the Ekushey February with the government, political parties, cultural organizations drawing up programmes for the month.

Bangla Academy begins its traditional month-long programme to mark the day with a children's painting competition today.

Poetry festival begins today

The 6th National Poetry Festival-1992 organised by Jatiya Kabita Parishad begins at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University, reports UNB.

Poet Sufia Kamal will inaugurate the two-day festival at 10 am while poet Shamsur Rahman will chair the opening session.

This year's slogan of the festival is 'Kobita Rukhbe Moulabadi' (poetry must resist fundamentalism).

The Parishad will bring out a procession from the mazar of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam prior to the opening of the festival.

Rain, storm lash city, kill one

By Staff Correspondent

A sudden storm followed by rains that lashed the city as well as some parts of the country last evening had at least one killed and several injured.

UNB adds: Sabir (28) was killed at about 8 pm when a live electric wire fell on him near Jenny Packaging at Demra in the city during a rainstorm Friday, hospital sources said. He was returning to his home at Sekdi Bhangra Press in Demra.

When contacted, Met Office Director N Hamiduzzaman Khan Chowdhury said the rain last evening was little more than is usual at this time of winter. "It was caused by westerly disturbances."

He predicted an early monsoon this year like last year. The country may also have 'Kalbaisakhi' earlier than the first part of March when it usually appears.

Referring to weather chart, the Met Director said that 'Kalbaisakhi' this year may occur in latter part of February with heavy downpour accompanied by thunderstorm.

According to latest Met
See Page 12 Col 3

NEWS BRIEFS

1 dies, many hurt as youths clash

Our Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed and several others were injured when two groups of youths clashed at Hazaribag in the city late Thursday night.

Dharmondi Police raided the area and arrested eight persons. The youths exploded crackers and stabbed several persons during the half-an-hour clash.

The arrested persons were Mizamur Rahman, Pannu, Alam, Mokbul, Mobarrok, Romesh, Amir Ali and Rafiq, Dharmondi Police said.

Fire at Tongi market

From Our Correspondent

Gazipur, Jan 31: At least eight shops, and one restaurant were gutted as fire broke out at Mafipur Co-operative Market at Tongi Friday afternoon. The origin of fire could not be ascertained. Two units of Fire Brigade from Tongi brought the fire under control after an hour of struggle. Goods worth about Taka 10 lakh were damaged.

Shantibahini kidnaps one

RANGAMATI, Jan 31:

Outlawed Shantibahini abducted Muhammad Rafiq, a local labour leader from Uluchari in Sadar upazila of the district this afternoon, local administration said.

Security forces, in last two days, recovered some arms and ammunition from hideouts of the Shantibahini in Kayenda and Moghan mousas of Sadar upazila, sources said today (Friday). The captured arms include one SMC, one SMO, two grenades and two detonators, reports UNB.

Bangkok meet takes up regional action plan for nutrition

From Chapal Bashar

BANGKOK, Jan 31: The regional meeting on nutrition for Asia and the Pacific called for concerted efforts by governments and the international community to stimulate sustained economic growth as a primary means to improve nutrition.

The five-day meeting of the Asian and the Pacific countries ended here today with the adoption of a final report incorporating a regional plan of action for alleviating poverty and malnutrition.

The regional plan will provide input for the Global Plan of Action to be formulated at the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) scheduled in Rome in December this year.

The Bangkok meeting, attended by 30 countries, was jointly sponsored by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and first of a series of regional ones, before the Rome conference.

Most of Bangladesh's proposals, including establish-

ment of national bodies and formulation of national nutrition policies, were accepted by the meeting and included in the regional plan.

The regional meeting in Bangkok emphasised that high-level political commitment was necessary for developing and sustaining effective efforts to address nutritional problems and stressed the benefits of providing overall policy guidance.

The meeting urged governments to establish high-level interministerial bodies to promote and coordinate efforts to improve nutrition in the diets of vulnerable groups.

The need for each relevant ministry or sector to develop a capacity for adequately incorporating nutrition into its activities was also underscored.

The meeting agreed that the root causes of household food insecurity in the region were poverty. The household food insecurity was in large measure due to lack of access to production resources, such

as land as well as insufficient purchasing power of the household", the final report of the meeting said, adding that the lasting solution was to enable the poor households to produce or procure adequate food by increasing their productivity and incomes.

The Bangkok meeting stressed the need for anti-poverty measures such as strengthening local leadership, investment in marginal areas and increasing community involvement and people's participation.

The meeting recognised the important role of women both as producers and consumers and urged that development programmes should pay particular attention to educating and empowering women in these roles.

On food subsidies and public distribution systems, the meeting recognised their importance in alleviating household food insecurity.

The final report of the meeting favoured identification
See Page 12 Col 4

Yeltsin's plea for merging SDI with Russian tech

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 31: Boris Yeltsin, speaking to an unprecedented Security Council summit, called today for merging the US Star Wars system with Russian technology to protect all nations from nuclear attack with a global anti-missile shield, reports Reuters.

Yeltsin's dramatic plea for creating a safer world is contained in a speech to be delivered to the leaders of all 15 UN Security Council members gathered in New York for a single day to search for a new world order to replace the dangers of Cold War confrontations.

It was a unique gathering of the high and mighty and the small and poor.

President George Bush, leader of the world's remaining superpower, Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, venturing to the world stage after bitter criticism for his crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators, and British Prime Minister John Major are attending, joined by the King of Morocco and leaders from France, Austria, Belgium, Cape Verde, Ecuador, Hungary, India, Japan, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Yeltsin, making his first major appearance to an inter-

national group since taking over as Russia's first democratic leader, said he wanted a global anti-missile shield, based on Washington's Star Wars system and incorporating Russian high technology.

"I think the time has come to consider creating a global system for protection of the world community. It could be based on a reorientation of the US strategic defence system to make use of high technologies developed in Russia's defence complex, he said.

Then in a comment that underscored how dramatically the world has changed in the course of a few months, he

said, Russia considers the United States and the West not as mere partners but rather as allies.

He said the post-Cold War United Nations must play a more active role and he proposed the setting up of a rapid reaction "mechanism" that could be used by the Security Council.

"I believe that we need a special quick response mechanism to ensure peace and stability. Upon decision of the Security Council it could be expeditiously activated in areas of crisis", he said without elaborating.

Russia late last year inherited the permanent Soviet seat on the Security Council, where it joined the United States, Britain, France and China.

The British Prime Minister was chairman of the day-long session with a break for lunch in the main delegates lounge beneath a huge tapestry of the Great Wall of China.

Like Bush, Major faces a tough re-election campaign because of economic woes and could benefit from a spell in the diplomatic spotlight.

Li hopes his meeting with Western leaders will end the quarantine imposed after the 1989 crushing of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

Britain, which holds the council presidency for January and organised the meeting, ran with the idea for a UN summit that French President Francois Mitterrand floated last year.

Japanese Prime Minister Kichii Miyazawa also participated in the session, taking time out from domestic political woes and renewing acquaintance with Bush, who paid a recent visit to Tokyo that did little to heal the trade rift between the two countries.

Renewed commitment to collective security, nuclear non-proliferation and disarm-

See Page 12 Col 1