

### Power workers begin 72-hour strike from tomorrow

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Dhaka Electric Supply Workers Union has decided to go on a 72-hour strike from 6 am tomorrow (Monday) demanding realisation of its five-point charter of demands including the implementation of the agreement of September 25, 1991 between the government and the union.

The decision was announced at a rally of the union held Saturday at 11 am in front of the National Press Club.

The five-point demands of the Dhaka Electric Supply Workers Union include separate wage-scale for the workers of DESA (Dhaka Electric Supply Authority), introduction of overtime system in the new wage-scale and suspension of the activities of the REB (Rural Electrification Board) in the DESA areas.

The rally presided over by Yakub Ali Bhuiyan, President of the Union was addressed by General Secretary Ashraf Ali Khan, Organising Secretary Sardar Anwarul Haq and Nurul Islam Bhuiyan, among others. The rally was followed by a procession.

### 3 sector corp'n workers call off strike

Trade union leaders of three sector corporations called off a 48-hour strike, scheduled to begin today after negotiation with the authorities, reports UNB.

The strike, planned to protest government move to privatise public enterprises, was withdrawn following "fruitful" discussion between the trade union leaders and Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan at the ministry yesterday afternoon, officials said.

The leaders of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC) and Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) reached an agreement with the government, which provided the staffs with some interim benefits and decided to continue the talks on the disinvestment move.

On behalf of the government, Industries Secretary Dr Ekram Hossain signed the agreement.

Jainal Abedin, Acting President, and Iskander Ali, General Secretary of BCIC Workers' Federation, S A Wahab Mridha, Acting GS of BSEC Employees and Workers' Federation, Md Alauddin and Md Baduzzaman, President and GS respectively of BSFIC Sramik Federation, and BSEC Federation President Abul Kashem initiated it on behalf of the unions.

A combined action committee of the three public sectors called the strike to press for implementing their 9-point demand which included cancellation of government's disinvestment policy.

The agreement said "in light of 5-point understanding of the government with the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), all permanent workers of BCIC, BSEC and BSFIC shall get an advance payment of Tk 1,500— including Tk 500 for the current 1991-92 fiscal upto January and Tk 200 each month from February to June 1992 as interim arrangement."

Only the seasonal workers of the sugar industries will be given Tk 800 in advance (Tk 500 for February and Tk 300 for March), which will be adjusted with the arrears of possible wage hike by the Wages Commission in the current fiscal year.

Encashment of 100 percent leave will be recommended to the Wages Commission for implementation, while regularisation of office assistants, assistant accountants with enhanced pay-scale will be given due consideration, it said.

Exemption of two months' advances given to workers during the last April cyclone will be placed before the government, it said.

### Protest against hartal call

CHITTAGONG, Feb 8: Chittagong chapter of Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Oikya Parishad today brought out a silent procession in protest against today's hartal call by Jatya Sramik League on the day of Saraswati Puja. BSS.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at the Laxmipur College ground yesterday. —PID photo

## Deepsea trawler workers' strike on

**By Staff Correspondent**

Workers of the deep sea fishing trawlers observed their strike for the second consecutive day Saturday to press home their 10-point charter of demands.

About two thousand workers of 18 deep-sea fishing trawler companies belonging to the Deep-sea Fishing Trawlers Workers Union went for strike Friday to realise their demands including increase in wages by 50 per cent, increase in on-board allowance to Taka 15 hundred from Taka 8 hundred, free medical services for the workers and stoppage of forcing the workers to work extra hours without breaks or overtime compensations.

Meanwhile, Michael, D Boggs and Victor E Thorpe, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary of the Brussels-based International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions have sent a cable to the Labour Minister and the Minister for Fisheries urging them to take "necessary measures to make the employers association to bargain in good faith" with the workers' union in order to reach an agreement.

They have also protested the alleged violation by the owners of OLO conventions by forcing the workers to work 20 hours a day without breaks or overtime compensation.

In another message, Borje Svensson, the General Secretary of the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers has called upon the Labour Minister to intervene to settle the dispute according to the ILO conventions.

The owners association, on the other hand, termed the workers strike illegal and sought the government cooperation to evacuate the officers from the trawlers as well as the hostages of some unruly crew.

Admiral M H Khan Chairman of Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association (BMFA), appealed to the government yesterday to take immediate measures including engagement of law enforcing agencies to protect the trawlers, the property on board, the life of captains working there and enable the owners to unload and export the valuable products.

## Cyclone shelters

From Page 1 Col 3  
Society and Japanese Red Cross Society were read on the occasion.

The Prime Minister urged the people to construct 'earth fort' (matir killa) on voluntary basis in the coastal areas so that cows, goats and poultry could be saved during the cyclone. "We want to see that you are working together in protecting your lives and property", she added.

She also called upon them to plant more trees in the premises of houses, schools, colleges and madrasahs saying "many of you could save your life taking shelter on the trees".

Referring to the April 29 cyclone of last year, the Prime Minister said the government had taken immediate steps to provide relief to the distressed people. She said the friendly countries abroad had also come up with help. The government had thought of taking permanent and effective security measures considering the havoc of the cyclones and other calamities in the coastal areas, she said.

She sought cooperation of the local people to make the government efforts successful. The Prime Minister thanked the government, the people and the Japan Red Cross Society for extending financial help for the construction of the cyclone shelter in the area.

Mostafizur Rahman said the government was trying utmost to change the lot of the people through taking up various welfare programmes. She said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had rushed to the cyclone hit areas on hearing the news.

Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal said the Red Crescent Society would construct six such shelters in Hatya District.

Toshio Saiki said the Japan Red Cross Society had been supporting Bangladesh Red Crescent Society for a long time in various humanitarian programmes and projects. He said the Japanese government would be joining the programme of shelter construction and a study team would come soon from Japan for that purpose.

In another meeting at Laxmipur college ground Begum Khaleda Zia Saturday called upon the people to work together, irrespective of party affiliations, to give democracy a permanent shape as well as ensure national development.

Begum Zia said "you should come forward in the same spirit and zeal with which you had ousted the autocratic regime".

The meeting was also addressed by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, State Minister for Textile Abdul Mannan, Advocate Khairul Anam, MP, Salahuddin Kamran, MP, Zainul Abedin Farooq MP, Begum Halima Khatun, MP, Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal MP, Carl Olof Coderblad, Swedish Ambassador to Bangladesh, Shamsul Alam district BNP President.

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Begum Khaleda Zia said wherever she went people came up with problems which meant there had been no development during the last nine years. She said, we have to develop the country utilising our limited resources.

Referring to the local problems, the Prime Minister said additional funds would be provided to the municipality so that it would take up construction work of roads. She said the north irrigation project would be started in due course. She also assured that a stadium, a bus terminal, degree college and a fire brigade station would be set up in the area.

Coderblad praised the development efforts of the democratic government headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. He said Sweden would provide assistance to Bangladesh in its development activities.

Earlier Begum Zia laid the foundation stone of district Judge Court and district Bar library buildings.

### Move to try 'war criminals' to be geared up

**By Staff Correspondent**

The Ekatturer Ghatok, Dalai Nirmla Committee (EGDNC) is planning to involve overseas Bangladeshis in the movement seeking trial of the country's 'war criminals'.

Contacts with these Bangladeshis are to be established soon in a bid to popularise the demand abroad.

The EGDNC has termed the 'collaborators' during the War of Liberation including Jamaat-e-Islami chief Professor Golam Azam 'war criminals'.

Committee sources say they are compiling information including newspaper clippings and leaflets for future distribution among Bangladeshis living abroad especially in the United States and Great Britain. The other objectives of the programme is to organize support for the cause.

The EGDNC, formed with 101 leading citizens of the country, earlier announced that a people's court would be set up to try these 'criminals'. The trial is scheduled to open with that of Golam Azam on Independence Day (March 26).

Meanwhile, the EGDNC has planned a massive rally in the capital later this month to mobilise support for the movement. Similar rallies will be held in four divisional headquarters beginning March.

The leaders of the EGDNC are now touring the country as part of their 'contact the people' programme. They are forming branches of the committee in different areas of the country.

Besides, EGDNC's mass-signature collection drive is going on. It has opened signature collection books at Shahid Minar, Bangla Academy book fair, Dhaka University campus and in its office at Topkhana Road. The signature collection will continue till February 21 and sponsors are expecting to collect 10,000 signatures in support of their demand.

## Solanki

From Page 1 Col 5

point toward an attempt at destabilization of the situation along the border and an exacerbation of an already tense situation," Solanki told a news conference.

## Yangon

From Page 1 Col 7

These sources believe that Yangon may play for time, try out the patience of the authorities in Dhaka and even agree to more flag meetings and exchange of visits "to keep Dhaka in good humour."

There are many reasons why Yangon will do everything possible to avoid a war with Dhaka. For one thing it will give the UN Security Council a chance to enter the scene and probably treat Myanmar in the way it treated Iraq. "What's more, it can touch off an uprising in Arakan," say these sources.

## Degree exams

From Page 1 Col 7

the Works Minister, Aminul Huq, the State Minister for Law and Shafiqul Alam, the Education Secretary.

Sources close to the striking teachers said during the meeting the teachers had urged the government to accept their demand in principle pending implementation at a later stage.

Referring to a similar incident during late President Zia's time, the teachers urged the government to phase out the implementation of economic benefits claimed by them, the sources added.

When contacted, Kazi Faruq told The Daily Star that despite our repeated requests and an open mind to settle the issues the government had showed negative attitude.

Around 17500 non-government schools, colleges and madrasahs are closed due to the teachers' strike.

Some private schools and colleges in the capital remained open defying the strike that began January 18.

But all the non-government institutions observed the strike strictly after February 1 and stopped all activities.

The government assured a solution to the non-government teachers' problems when some opposition MPs Thursday raised the issue in Parliament.

Taka 125 crore is needed to meet the demands of the non-government teachers and employees.

The teachers and employees have been demanding for the solution to these problems for about 6 months, but the government has not yet shown any inclination to meet their problems, the leaders of the non-government teachers, said.

The teachers' 15-point charter of demands includes the award of new pay scale for the non-government teachers, revival of the Teachers' Welfare Trust, promotion of the experienced teachers in due time.

## The Midnight File

### Troops open fire in Algeria

ALGIERS, Feb 8: Security forces opened fire in Algiers today as Muslim fundamentalists, undaunted by heavy casualties, went back on the streets to pursue their campaign against the country's new military-backed rulers. Gunfire rang out in at least three suburbs of the capital on Saturday and supporters of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) set fire to vehicles commandeered for barricades, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

### Assad, Hrawi hold talks

DAMASCUS, Feb 8: Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and his Lebanese counterpart Elias Hrawi met here today to coordinate their stand ahead of the next round of bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks. The Lebanese President, accompanied by Foreign Minister Fares Boueiz, arrived at Damascus airport earlier the same day and was greeted by Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam, reports AFP.

### One in a million at best

NEW HAVEN (Connecticut), Feb 8: The odds that two people will have DNA patterns that match is one in a million at best Yale University researchers reported Saturday saying their study bolsters the use of DNA fingerprints in criminal cases. Yale scientists analysed the DNA patterns of almost 7,000 people by comparing how frequently a match occurred. According to the study published in the journal Science, in 7.6 million pattern comparisons, researchers found just one match, reports BSS.

## Shaheed Day

From Page 1 Col 8

Pakistan Constituent Assembly from Comilla, had proposed on Feb 23 that Bengali should also be a state language.

Khwaja Nazimuddin was joined by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, who revealed his inherently communal frame of mind by branding Dutta's proposal as an attempt to create division among Muslims.

"At first I thought the proposal was innocent. But now I think that the motive behind the proposal is to create divisions among Pakistanis, and obstruct Muslims from establishing unity among themselves through one general language," Liaqat Ali Khan said during a debate on Dutta's proposal on February 25, 1948, according to Badruddin Umar's three-volume "East Bengal's Language Movement".

The Dainik Azad launched a lively attack on Nazimuddin, terming his comments "irresponsible" and an "assault on the privilege of this country's elected representatives".

"We do not know when the Khwaja Sahib conducted a referendum among the people of East Pakistan. In our opinion, his comments had no truth in them. It is our belief that, if there was a referendum in East Pakistan then 99 per cent of the votes would go in favour of Bengali," the Azad commented in its Feb 28 editorial titled "Bengali Language and

Pakistan", adding that "By making such an irresponsible comment on such an important issue, he did not only harm East Pakistan's fundamental interest, but also eroded the privilege of representatives. But will it be so easy to sell out East Pakistan's interests?"

Neither Azad nor Maulana Akram Khan probably knew it at the time, but it certainly was not to be so easy to sell out the Bengalee people's fundamental interests, as the years following Dhirendranath Dutta's proposal and Liaqat-Nazimuddin's rebuttal were to prove.

By calling Dutta's proposal an attempt to create division, the government gave itself an excuse to ignore and disregard the demand for Bengali, but it also closed the door on justice and reason, said an editorial in the Calcutta-based daily, the Itihad edited by Abul Mansur Ahmed on Feb 28, 1948.

### TODAY'S PROGRAMME

A discussion on Problems in Compiling a Bangla Dictionary will be held today at 4:30 pm at the Bangla Academy.

Professor Mohammad Abdul Quayum will present a paper in the discussion to be participated by Prof Abul Kashem Chowdhury, Prof Jahangir Tareq and Dr Siddiqua Mahmuda.

Dr Shiva Prasanna Lahiri will preside.

## Nervous Myanmar junta

From Page 1 Col 7

surge. According to a source, each university teacher may be held responsible for the political conduct of 25 students.

"The junta is unmistakably nervous about a possible upsurge," says a Thai analyst, "but it manages to keep this mood under control."

Can nothing bring about a change in Myanmar? The question is repeatedly asked here.

One answer is, a pressure from all six members of ASEAN would be taken seriously by the junta in Yangon. At this moment, only Malaysia has spoken up clearly in favour of democratisation of Myanmar.

President Corazon Aquino has also expressed her support for a change, but she has done so only after her Foreign Minister Raul Manglapus who recently visited Yangon referred to the situation inside Myanmar in what a diplomat has described as "exceptionally moderate terms."

Three major ASEAN members — Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia, maintain strong trade links with Myanmar.

Diplomatic sources here believe that even if all the ASEAN members bring collective pressure on the military junta in Yangon to seek a solution of the stalemate, there may be only a marginal change in the situation, without any move towards democratisation.

For Myanmar, the strongest supporter is still China, political analysts here say, as Beijing has so far provided \$1.2 billion worth of arms to Yangon in recent years, to replenish weapons it had obtained in the late eighties from East European countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Yangon has been meeting its arms bill with Beijing, largely in barter trade and only 25 per cent in cash, according to one source in Yangon. But this fact cannot be verified from any other independent source.

The same diplomatic source says that Yangon is in the process of raising the size of its armed forces to reach 300,000 men by the end of this year, an increase of some 50,000 between now and December.

By all accounts, the economic situation remains bleak, as one source puts it. In the black market, one US dollar now fetches as much as

90 kyat as against the official rate of only six. Two years ago, the rate was 60 kyat to a dollar.

To all appearances, the country remains self-sufficient in food. But once a major exporter of oil, Myanmar may well be running short of energy.

Several western private oil companies which have received concessions for drilling, are pumping in large funds to boost Myanmar's energy reserves. Ironically, as a Thai analyst points out, these companies belong to countries, including the United States, which have called upon Asian countries to cut off their trade with Myanmar.

"Why blame the private sector in Singapore and Bangkok for trading with Yangon when Washington cannot keep its own oil companies away from Myanmar?" he asks.

If these companies cannot produce more oil in the shortest possible time, the country will be in serious trouble. That can force the junta to look for a retreat, says one diplomat in Yangon contacted over telephone.

The junta may also look for a retreat should anything happen to General Ne Win, now said to be 82, but in "reasonably good health."

The consensus among diplomats in Yangon is that while the General is not involved in the day-to-day administration of the country, nothing is done by the military junta against his wishes.

One good news to come out of Myanmar is that the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is also said to be in good health and spirits. According to one source, she is aware of what is going on in the country. "She has her own lines of communication with the outside world," says one source.

### Two killed in accidents

**By Staff Correspondent**

Two persons were killed in accidents in the city Saturday morning.

Both the victims were pedestrians. One was run over by a car at Manik Mia Avenue at about 7.45 am while the other was crushed under a train at Nakhapara Rail Crossing at about 9 am, police said.

## Transport strike

From Page 1 Col 5  
in the charter. Before the war started the price of diesel in the country was Tk 6.90 per litre.

The Secretary General of the Association Ashraf Khan said that an extended meeting of the central executive committee of the Association along with the district representatives would be held at 11 am today (Sunday) to evaluate the overall situation arising out of the strike.

"We'll sit tomorrow and convey the outcome of the meeting to the government," he said.

The Secretary General of the Association also resented the government press note issued Friday and said that "it aimed at misleading the people of the country through false information".

Transport Owners' Associations in different parts of the

### 50 Tigers killed in gumbattle

COLOMBO, Feb 8: At least 50 Tamil militants were killed in a fierce battle at Pulpanchikal in the eastern Batticaloa district yesterday, reports reaching here said. Eight persons, including an officer, were also killed in the ambushed troops returning after a six-day operation elsewhere in the province. PTL.

### Milon murder trial

From Page 1 Col 5  
engaged in anarchy on the roads near the Bangla Academy and the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka university on November 27, 1990, and when Dr Milon was going along the road on a rickshaw, he was shot dead by the accused. The doctors declared him dead after he had been taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Of the lawyers, Sirajul Haque, Amjad Hossain and Ramzan Ali Khan solicited on behalf of the accused while PP Abdur Razzak Khan APP Mahbub, Ahmed and APP Mohammad Mostafa moved on behalf of the plaintiff.

Late President Ziaur Rahman rehabilitated the persons opposing the Liberation War of the country in 1971 and his widow is just following her late husband's footsteps, Hasina said.

She, however, emphatically said that the trial of Golam Azam as war criminal must be held in the country.

Hasina also accused the government of practising capitulationist foreign policy which had virtually shattered the independence and sovereignty of the country.

country Saturday issued separate statements expressing solidarity with the ongoing strike.

The Secretary General of the Federation of Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association Amr Hossain Khan Saturday expressed his grave concern over the ongoing transport strike. In a statement, he said that the strike would severely affect the small traders of the country.

He urged the government to negotiate a settlement to the problem in the light of the country's present economic situation.

Our Rangpur correspondent adds: The strike began in the district paralysing the road communications. Hundreds of passengers were stranded in the different parts of the district on various routes because of the strike.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reports: Buses, trucks and mini-buses in the district went off the roads. No transport operated on the Dhaka-Kishoreganj via Bhatrab, Kishoreganj-Dhaka via Mymensingh, Kishoreganj-Shambhuganj, Kishoreganj-Chanta Ghat and on the Kishoreganj-Nikli routes.

However, a report from Pabna says that the transport strike was not observed in the district and road communications were normal. All district vehicles plied normally excluding the inter-city passenger buses.

### Hasina

From Page 1 Col 8  
University). The assassins of Badal are not being apprehended.

"There is no room for the killers, murderers and conspirators in Awami League. It is mysterious that the killing agents, even after their ouster (from Awami League), are not put behind bars", the AL chief told her party workers.

Sheikh Hasina accused the government of letting Golam Azam do politics and be the chief of a party violating the country's Constitution.

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The Hindu community observed Saraswati Puja yesterday. In the picture, a devotee at Dhaka Medical College mandap. —Star photo

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Published by S. M. Ali 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, Toynbee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX: 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.