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NEWS BRIEFS

Five Additional judges

The government has appointed five Additional Judges of the High Court Division of Bangladesh Supreme Court for a period of two years, the five additional judges are: Md Sirajul Islam, Additional Secretary in Charge of the Law and Justice Ministry, Advocate Golam Rabbani, Advocate Mahfuzur Rahman, Advocate Md Ruhul Amin and Advocate Syed JR Mudassir Hossain, reports BSS.

SAARC Secretary General in capital

Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Secretary General of SAARC, arrived in Dhaka Sunday on his first familiarisation trip to member countries after assuming the office last month, reports BSS.

Team leaves for CIS today

A 20-member good will delegation of Bangladesh led by the State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan leaves Dhaka today for Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union) on a three week official visit. The visit is designed to renew the political and economic relation with the newly emerged independent states of the former Soviet Union, reports BSS.

UNDP project on cyclone shelters

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiated a project of US dollar 670,000 for preparation of a comprehensive master plan on multi-purpose cyclone shelter construction in the coastal areas, reports UNB.

World body takes over charge of relief operation for Rohingya refugees

UNHCR to appeal for global help



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Dolaikhal in the old city area yesterday. — Star photo

Troublemakers in public sector will be taken to task: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia warned Sunday that the troublemakers in the losing public sector enterprises would be strongly dealt with.

"...the country cannot be allowed to be destroyed by meeting the 'unjust' and 'illogical' demands of a small group of the people," she told a public meeting at Dolaikhal in the city.

Her audience replied shouting 'no' when Begum Zia asked them whether they were ready to pay extra taxes to fulfil the 'undue claims' by those who failed to increase production and make their industrial units profitable.

"How is it justified that people's money would be spent in running the enterprises that incur losses year after year," the Premier asked.

"Rather, we can utilise the

subsidy for setting up new industries to create more employment opportunities," she remarked.

Referring to 'anarchism' in the name of realising demands, the Prime Minister said, "Let us work together for next five years without raising any demand and calling hartal to lead the country to self-reliance by increasing production."

Arranged jointly by the Sutrapur and Kotwali thana units of BNP the meeting was also addressed by party Vice-President Choudhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiky, its city branch chief Lt Gen (ret'd) Mir Shaukat Ali, MP, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas, MP, State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain, MP, Selima Rahman, MP, Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal Secretary Shamsuzzaman Dudu

and local leaders.

The Prime Minister said that the past autocratic regime had conceded undue demands to cling to power and reiterated that her government would continue to work for the welfare of the masses without bowing to much pressures. She called upon the people to resist those who destroy public property in the name of movement.

On the problems being faced by the city dwellers, Begum Zia said that her government was aware of the problems and would try to resolve those by phases.

She also reminded her audience of the country's resource constraints and the shattered economy left by the autocratic regime.

With a view to increasing civic amenities and making the

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Seen from the Gallery

By Mahfuz Ullah

The Chinese are fond of siestas. So are the Bengalees and Italians. For the matter, rice eaters have a tendency to enjoy siestas. Experts say this is due to the intoxicating effect of rice. Whatever is the explanation, those who enjoy siestas would defend it to the last, even the politicians.

This was again displayed in the Sangsad yesterday as three members had rounds of siestas at three different times. It began with writer turned politician Abdul Halif. He was in deep sleep and was woken up by one of his colleagues.

Then it was Mohammad Nasim's turn. As Nasim had it, he was followed by Sudhansu

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From S Bari

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 16: The visiting officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today said that the agency would launch a world-wide appeal for funds to provide relief to the Myanmar citizens fleeing into Bangladesh.

Sri Wijeratne and Shamsul Bari, the UNHCR representatives to the Philippines and Malaysia respectively, visited four Rohingya refugee camps located in remote frontier areas here today and announced the UN body was taking over charge of the relief operations.

The UNHCR representatives are on an assessment mission to determine the extent of help needed by the Myanmar Rohingya refugees. They met with the local authorities to assure them of UN assistance.

As many as one lakh Rohi-

ngas are said to have escaped into Bangladesh following persecution by the Myanmar military authorities. The Bangladesh government, no longer able to deal with the vast number, has invited the UNHCR assistance.

Accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar Dauduzzaman Chowdhury and Civil Surgeon Dr Fazl Ahmed Khan, Bari and Wijeratne visited refugee camps at Dachuapalang, Marichhya and Dandama.

The UNHCR delegation deemed shelters as the primary concern after reviewing the situation of the camps, especially as the monsoon approaches.

"Funding is no problem," said Bari, "we must build emergency housing immediately."

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Remuneration of MPs doubled

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) yesterday unanimously passed an amendment bill that doubled the remuneration of the MPs and granted them pension.

Under the amended act an MP will get a remuneration of Taka 6,000 per month while the amount was Taka 3,000 previously.

The other benefits the MPs will enjoy in addition to the remuneration, are Taka 1,500 as office expenses, Taka 1,000 per month as sumptuary allowance, Taka 48,000 per annum as telephone allowance and Taka 30,000 per annum as travelling allowance. Taka 75,000 per annum as discretionary allowance.

Arguments presented by the Treasury Bench to pass the bill seeking enhancement of the remuneration and increased benefits to the MPs

included added responsibility of the MPs as people's representative under a parliamentary form of government and the price hike of essential commodities resulting in the increase in the cost of living.

The question of granting a pension of Taka 1,000 per month to the MPs was put forward in the House by Awami League MP Advocate Asaduzzaman. While arguing in favour of this Asaduzzaman said that MPs should be given pension for their contributions in the field of politics.

According to another amendment moved in the House by the ruling party Whip Mahbubul Alam, the MPs enjoying the said benefits would include the Prime Minister, Ministers, Ministers of State, Deputy Ministers, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in

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Countdown to Shaheed Day

Star Report

While the Jubo League, the Communist Party, the Awami Muslim League etc. viewed the question of state language within a broad, socio-economic context, there were other groups which appeared to deny the inextricable relationship between a people's mother tongue and national identity, but yet campaigned for the right of Bengali to be a state language of Pakistan from the outset.

One such group, set up on September 2, 1947 by a few Dhaka University teachers and students, was the Tamuddun Majlis.

The Majlis, primarily a cultural organisation founded to cultivate Islamic culture in East Bengal, joined the state language debate on September 15, 1947 with a booklet entitled "Pakistan's State Language — Bengali or Urdu?"

In that booklet, the Majlis's secretary, Professor Abul Kasem penned a set of demands which called for both

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'Help establish people-oriented government'

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here yesterday that the government officials should utilise their merit and skill and help the democratic government fulfil its commitment to the people for establishing a dynamic, honest and people-oriented administration, reports BSS.

Calling upon the officials to be partners in development Begum Zia said we can achieve most of the desired goals in all aspects during the next five years which we could not attain in 20 years, if we work together with sincerity, honesty and dedication.

The Prime Minister was addressing the government officials at Osmani Memorial Hall. The officials, ranking from Deputy Secretaries to Secretaries, including the 657 newly promoted officials attended the function. State Minister for Establishment Nurul Huda and Cabinet

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RUCSU elections postponed

RAJSHAHI, Feb 16: Ensuing RUCSU and hall union elections, scheduled for February 25, were postponed today amidst growing tension on the Rajshahi University campus, reports UNB.

The postponement decision was taken at a meeting of the administrative council with Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Atul Hye Shibli in the chair.

"Activities relating to RUCSU election were halted as the process of submission of nomination papers was interrupted," said the RU administration. A fresh schedule will be announced later on.

The ruling BNP's student front, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, protested the election holdup by locking up the VC's residential office.

It also demanded resignation of VC Amanullah Ahmed, all Proctors, Provosts and Deans, Registrar, Student Adviser and RUCSU Returning Officer.

Pro-JSD (Inu) Chhatra

League (N-S), according to its last night's decision, enforced a dawn-to-dusk strike on the campus today, keeping the RUCSU and hall sangsad Returning Office under lock and key.

Owing to the bundh aimed to press for holding the polls back, only three panels of three residential halls could submit their nomination papers.

The strikers, who called for creating a congenial atmosphere before the voting, also allegedly barred the RUCSU election officials from working for the polls.

During strike hours vehicular traffic, including buses, were off the road. Picketers brought out procession in the campus areas.

Student wing of BSD (Mahbubul Haq), Chhatra Federation, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Chhatra Oikya Samity supported the campus strike.

Textile quota figures in Anwar-Kimble talks

CARTAGENE (Colombia), Feb 16: Commerce Minister M K Anwar had a fruitful discussion here on Wednesday with the leader of the US delegation to the UNCTAD VIII on major issues of US-Bangladesh relations including textile quota, assistance for domestic food-grain procurement and aid utilisation, reports BSS.

Welcoming the democratic transition in Bangladesh and appreciating the good record of aid utilisation, the leader of the US delegation and Deputy Under Secretary of State, Melinda Kimble, assured the Commerce Minister a continued US assistance to Bangladesh during the discussion at the convention centre here.

The Commerce Minister is leading the Bangladesh delegation to the UNCTAD VIII.

When the Commerce Minister raised the issue of US quota restriction on export of textile and clothing from Bangladesh, Mrs Kimble indicated that if the textile quota was removed after successful

conclusion of the Uruguay Round, a lot of restructuring would be needed in the USA.

Anwar briefed Mrs Kimble on the recent developments in Bangladesh. He said the people of Bangladesh had gone through trials and tribulations and were able to establish democracy under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The Commerce Minister said the people of his country valued democracy and human rights and the government was committed to implement measures for poverty alleviation and human resources development. More resources were necessary to meet the high aspirations of the people. He said, adding the government expected adequate support and assistance from the United States and other friendly countries. Additional resources flows would enable the government to increase the purchasing power of the people, he said.

He told Kimble that in spite

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Salinity threatens Sundarbans

By Inam Ahmed

The mangrove forest of the Sundarbans is dying and with it the Royal Bengal Tiger, the pride of the country is facing extinction.

Scientists and experts say that the increase in salinity in rivers and soil resulting from the withdrawal of the Ganges waters at Farakka is causing the disaster.

The eastern part of the Sundarbans where the back mangrove species like Sundari, Bain and Amur trees are being replaced by basic mangroves like Garan and Kakra is the worst hit. The changing phenomenon is best manifested by the gradual dying of the Sundari trees.

About 17 per cent of the Sundari trees have already fallen in this 'top dying process' that scientists attribute

to the rise in salinity.

The change of mangroves will destroy the habitat of the deer and other animals tigers prey on, scientists said adding that the lack of food will lead to a decrease in the tiger population. The handful of tigers that will fight for life will turn into man-eaters, they said.

On the other impacts on wildlife, experts say that the presence of sharks in the rivers will increase with the increase in salinity.

The numbers of reptiles will also increase in the area as the new environment will be suitable to them.

The highest tolerance level of salinity for drinking water is 500 micro mhos and 2000 micro mhos per centimeter for agriculture. But figures show that with the increasing with-

drawal of water at Farakka, the salinity level has far crossed the limit.

During 1978 and 1982 when the first agreement on water sharing was enacted, the minimum discharge of the Ganges at Harding Bridge was between 30,000 and 45,000 cusecs. At the time, the maximum salinity at Khulna was between 1300 and 14,000 micro mhos per centimeter. Figures show that the salinity has been increasing since then, during 1989 and 1992 when there was no agreement on the Farakka, the salinity level reached its peak. In 1989, it was a highest of 28,000 micro mhos and 25,000 micro mhos in 1991.

The Minister for Environment, Abdullah Al-Noman while talking to this

correspondent said the only solution to the salinity problem lies with the increased flow of water at Farakka. He said that unless the flow was increased, the problem would intensify further.

The salinity problem has not only hit the Sundarbans but also spread to other parts of Khulna. In the last ten years, the salinity belt has moved about 100 miles upward threatening the industries and the availability of drinking water in the southern region.

The Khulna Newsprint Mills and the Goalpara Power Plant already have to import fresh water to run their units from outside.

Scientists project that the Jessore and Khustia region will also fall prey to the salinity

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড

ঢাকা

আমদানিকারকদের জন্য দ্রুত পণ্য খালাস ব্যবস্থা

আমদানিকৃত পণ্য দ্রুত খালাসের জন্য সরকার একটি বিশেষ ব্যবস্থা প্রবর্তনের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন। এই ব্যবস্থার অধীনে যদি কোন আমদানিকারক যেসব নিম্ন বর্ণিত পরিদর্শন কোম্পানীসমূহের অন্তর্ভুক্তিক ফেরেশনের সদস্য, নিম্নবর্ণিত তালিকার পরিদর্শন কোম্পানীসমূহের মধ্যে যে কোন একটি দ্বারা পণ্যের পরিমাপ, স্তনাবলী, মূল্য, আমদানি বাণিজ্য যোগ্যতা ও এইচ.এস. কোড সম্পর্কে প্রত্যয়নপত্র সংগ্রহ করেন তবে শুধু কর্তৃপক্ষ সাধারণভাবে উপরি-উক্ত বিষয়সমূহ পুনঃ পরীক্ষা ছাড়াই শুল্ক ও কর আদায়পূর্বক পণ্যের চালান খালাস প্রদান করিবে। পরিদর্শন কোম্পানীকে প্রদত্ত ফি আমদানিকৃত পণ্যের আদায় মূল্যের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হইবে না। কোন পরিদর্শন কোম্পানী মিথ্যা প্রত্যয়নপত্র প্রদান করিয়াছে প্রমাণিত হইলে সেই কোম্পানীকে পরিদর্শন কাজের অযোগ্য ঘোষণা করা হইবে। এই বিষয়ে আরও বিস্তারিত জানিবার জন্য সম্পৃক্ত জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড কর্তৃক জারীকৃত আমদানিকারকদের জন্য দ্রুত পণ্য খালাস আদেশ, ১৯৯২ দেখা যাইতে পারে।

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