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The Daily Star

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Notice

In observance of holy Shab-e-Barat the offices of The Daily Star will remain closed on Wednesday, 19th Feb '92.
 Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper on Thursday, 20th Feb '92.
 -Management

NEWS BRIEFS

Youth beaten up on DU campus

A youth was beaten up by a group of students on the Dhaka University campus Tuesday noon suspecting him to be a police informer. The youth named Babu (27) came to Shamsunnahar Hall to meet her relative at about 12 noon. He was brought to the Jagannath Hall allegedly by a group of Chhatra League (A-A) activists at gun point and beaten up seriously. Police rushed to the spot and rescued the youth, reports UNB.

Textile fair extended

The textile fair has been extended till March 3. The decision was made in view of the growing interest shown by the public at the fair and requests of the stall owners. The fair will, however, remain closed for holy Shab-e-Barat and the Language Martyrs' Day, reports UNB.

4 dacoits held

CHITTAGONG, Feb 18: Chandgaon police arrested four alleged dacoits and recovered from their possession two lightguns and four cocktails near Karnaphuli Bridge here yesterday. The dacoits were arrested from a baby taxi along with the guns and cocktails. The dacoits confessed that they were going to loot cash amount of a nearby petrol pump, reports BSS.

Eventful JS winter session comes to a close

Treasury Bench claims success, Opposition regrets 'failure'

By Mahfuz Ullah with Nurul Kabir and Nazmul Ashraf

The fourth session of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad was protracted last night at 10.55 pm with the Treasury Bench boasting its performance and the Opposition responding critically.

The Winter Session of Parliament that began on January 4 continued for 45 days with 27 sittings.

During this period, the ordinances promulgated earlier

were converted into laws, the Opposition staged walkouts four times, the Treasury Bench suffered the taste of first defeat on a division vote and matters of national importance especially the border situation with Myanmar and the citizenship of Golam Azam, transport and teachers' strike were discussed. The members showed remarkable interest in the proceedings of the House, on

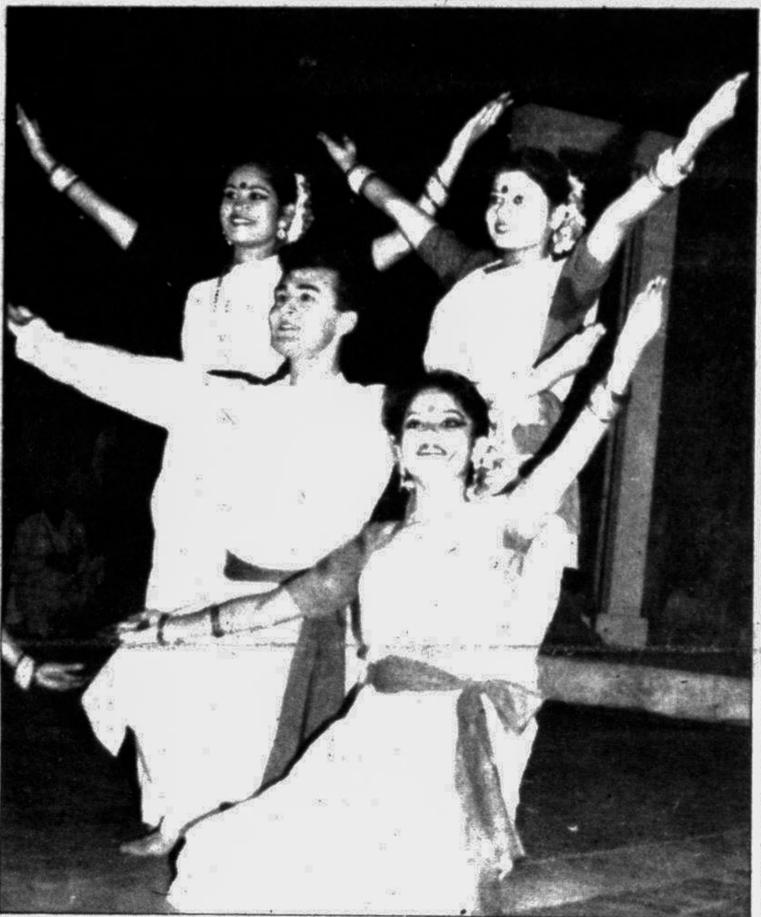
occasions became unruly and the Speaker excelled in running the affairs of the House.

The fifth session of Parliament began with a walk-out separately by members of Awami League and Jatiya Party protesting undemocratic activities of the government. On the same day the newly elected President of the Republic, Abdur Rahman Biswas addressed Parliament to fulfill

constitutional obligations under Article 73.

The defeat suffered by the government, though nothing unusual in parliamentary democracy, came on January 9 on a private members resolution to set up a marine police force. Moved by independent member Nurul Islam Moni, the resolution was adopted by 62 to 57 votes. The discussion re-

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It was TV drama artists' turn yesterday in the month-long cultural programmes at the Central Shaheed Minar in observance of the Amar Ekushey. —Star photo

Inflated assessment on nutritional standard by BBS US aid for agricultural research uncertain

US financial support for agricultural research in Bangladesh is at stake following exaggerated and misleading report on nutritional standard of commonman.

Concerned scientists told UNB yesterday that receipt of an agreed US fund amounting to Tk 36 crore to support agri-research in the current fiscal (1991-92) was uncertain because of an inflated assessment of common people's nutritional standard by the

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Only Tk 5 crore out of the fund has been released, they said.

They said the BBS estimated average daily calorie intake at 2,215 against a standard level of 2,700 calorie.

"It's based on incomplete data," one of the scientists said and put the calorie intake level below 1,700 which is mainly derived from rice and wheat.

The operational fund for agri-research comes from the counterpart funds created out of open-market sale of wheat provided by the United States under PL-480.

Annual allocation for research in the field ranges between Tk 20 and 40 crore. Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) carries out the research, with particular emphasis on nutrition standard of commonman, spe-

See Page 12 Col 4

Palestinians to boycott ME talks

JERUSALEM, Feb 18: Palestinian leaders threatened today to boycott Middle East peace talks next week in protest at Israel's detention of two members of their negotiating team, reports Reuter.

Nothing is sure about the process going on in a normal way. It is not clear whether we will participate or not in the session of talks on the 24th team leader Faisal al-Husseini told a news conference.

The US brokered talks resume in Washington on February 24. Israel, Lebanon and Syria said earlier they would join.

The Palestinians demanded the United States put pressure on Israel to release the delegates and stop what they described as harassment of their negotiators, according to AP.

Despite the peace conference, Israel is still escalating its measures from settlements

to deportation where it is impossible to continue in a successful peace process, Hussein said.

Hanan Ashrawi, the delegation spokeswoman, said the arrests, stepping up construction of Jewish settlements and planned deportations were Israeli attempts to torpedo the US backed talks.

It has become very clear that the whole peace process is being placed in jeopardy by these Israeli actions, she said.

"The whole peace process cannot remain subject to unilateral actions by Israel."

The Palestinians are "suspending" their travel plans until Hussein can discuss the issue with PLO leaders and Jordanian negotiators, Mrs Ashrawi said.

Neither she nor Hussein said the Palestinians had decided to cancel their participation. Mrs Ashrawi said the release of the two delegates

likely would lead the Palestinians to leave for the talks.

She said the Palestinian negotiators had asked the American and Russian co-sponsors of the talks to exercise "firm intervention" on behalf of the arrested delegates.

The talks began with a conference in Madrid, Spain, in October. Two sessions have been held since in Washington, one delayed when Israel failed to appear and the second delayed by a Palestinian protest over Israeli orders to deport 12 Palestinians.

Syria and Lebanon are also negotiating with Israel. The Israeli army confirmed that the two delegates, Mohammed Hourani and Jamal Shobaki, both from the West Bank city of Hebron, had been arrested and jailed.

The two were placed under "administrative detention," a procedure under which they

can be imprisoned for up to a year without charges, said an army spokesman who cannot be identified by name under military regulations.

Mrs Ashrawi said the arrests show the Palestinians are being subjected to "a complete pattern of oppression which... shows the inherent error and weakness of having a population under occupation negotiate with the occupiers."

She said Hourani, 32, was arrested Jan 9 soon after the Palestinians submitted his name as a negotiator. The delegation has unsuccessfully pressed for his release.

Shobaki, also 32, was seized Sunday, she said. She noted that Shobaki, a teacher at a technical college, had been scheduled to attend the last session of the talks Feb 10 but was blocked from leaving for Jordan by Israeli officials.

The army confirmed the arrest dates.

Tornado strikes Maheshkhali, Kutubdia

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 18: A tornado lashed two upazilas of the district killing two people and injuring hundreds, according to a first hand report.

The storm, with a wind velocity of 72 mile an hour, struck the Maheshkhali and Kutubdia upazilas of the district damaging more than 400 thatched and tin-roof houses. Officials said Abdul Karim

(34) of Dhalghata union and Rahamat Ali (25) of Matarbari unions of Maheshkhali upazila lost their lives when walls collapsed on them during the storm.

The storm also moved down standing crops of the two upazilas and damaged salt fields.

Details were not immediately available.

Commentary

A dangerous way to fight terrorism

by Mahfuz Anam

The anti-terrorist bill proposed by the government in Parliament Monday is a clear case of the medicine's being worse than the disease. The bill is so wide in its scope, so all encompassing in its reach and so draconian in its character that it is more likely to end up curbing the democratic rights of the citizens rather than punishing the terrorists.

The most frightening aspect of the proposed bill is its potential capacity to subvert the due process of law. The punishment, the bill prescribes varies from seven years minimum to the death sentence. This punishment is to be meted out by special tribunals that are supposed to hold summary trials. The crimes for which the bill prescribes these harsh punishments include snatching of money (No 1), obstructing movement of daily necessities (No 9), causing obstruction in carrying out relief (No 11), interference in any construction or development work (No 12), etc.

What is difficult to understand is why a bill designed to curb terrorism be made so large in scope. It groups the terrorists together with pick-pockets and neighbourhood thugs.

In item No. 6 the bill prescribes punishment for "...creating obstruction in the functioning of any educational institute...". Given our tradition

of student politics, is it realistic to make a law that will put away our students for seven years in jail for organising a demonstration or a strike in the campus? When trade unions call a strike, causing stoppage to production in industrial units (No. 6), then are they to be locked up also? Provision (No. 13), appears to be right on target and the bill should perhaps have confined itself to it.

The biggest flaw in the bill is that it is too broad. Because it is broad, it is necessarily vague—and there lies the danger.

There has to be a clear definition of who is and who is not a terrorist. Such a definition may not be obvious, but it is not impossible. Simply not it as "a terrorist" is one who is armed with lethal weapon and who threatens my life and property. His (or her) crime cannot be compared with disturbance in an educational institution, obstructing development work or hindering traffic.

To bracket hooligans with terrorists is to dilute the heinous nature of what terrorists do.

The government may very well say that while on the one hand it is asked to take tough measures against anti-social elements on the other when it has proposed concrete measures the opposition is crying foul.

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Anti-terrorism bill sent to JS body

SANGSAD DHAKA, Feb 18: The Prevention of Terrorism Bill seeking to provide death sentence for terrorism was referred to the Standing Committee on the Law and Justice Ministry before it was introduced in Parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, after hearing procedural opinion from both sides of the House, referred the bill to the Committee for Scrutiny and asked to return it to the House within 70 days.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and leaders of other parliamentary groups

See Page 12 Col 2

Anti-people steps of BNP will be resisted: Hasina

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina said in parliament Tuesday night that all anti-people steps of the BNP government will be resisted to preserve the hard-earned democracy of the country, reports UNB.

"We will support any steps for true well-being of the people but will resist black laws designed to curtail people fundamental rights", she said.

Participating in the discussion on the thanks-giving motion on the President's speech, Hasina dwelt at length on the country's economic, social and political situation which she termed grave.

She brought charges of inefficiency against the BNP government and said the problems are becoming more acute everyday as it failed to handle the situation.

"Unrest prevails everywhere... Donors feel hesitant to give aid because of low utilisation", said the Awami League President and Opposition Leader in Parliament.

The government had failed to utilise even 10 per cent of the total foreign aid in last one year, she alleged saying this discouraged the donors in disbursing fresh loans.

The opposition leader said that the BNP government is shedding crocodile's tears for

See Page 12 Col 1

Countdown to Shaheed Day

Star Report

The "logic" behind the appointment of SH Qureshi as the magistrate of Dhaka by East Pakistan's non-Bengali cabinet secretary Aziz Ahmed on Feb. 18, 1952 became clear two days later.

On the eve of the general strike, demonstrations and processions planned for Feb. 21 by the All-Party State Language Action Committee (APSLAC), the new magistrate issued a fateful decree:

"Because, it is being observed, that a section of the public in Dhaka are planning to organise meetings, processions and demonstrations; and

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Shab-e-Barat today

Shab-e-Barat will be observed in the country to night with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports UNB.

"The night of fortune" will be marked by night-long prayers seeking divine blessings.

Different social and religious organisations will hold Quran Khwari, Milad Mahfil and symposium on the occasion. The day (Thursday) has been declared a public holiday.

Radio Bangladesh and Television will put out special programmes highlighting the significance of the night—the "Lailatul Bara".

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Tuesday felicitated the people on the occasion of holy Shab-e-Barat, saying the holy night has once again given us the opportunity to get the blessings of the Almighty Allah.

In a message on the eve of

See Page 12 Col 5

Ministers won't draw raised salary this year

Ministers will not draw the enhanced salary and allowances during the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

This was decided at a cabinet meeting at Bangabhaban yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Parliament has passed a bill enhancing salary, allowances and other privileges of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Ministers, State Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPs with effect from July 1991.

Prime Minister Begum

See Page 12 Col 5

Govt, striking teachers begin talks

A discussion on the 15-point demands of the non-government teachers was held at a meeting of the central leaders of the liaison committee for teachers movement with State Minister for Education Principal Md Eunus Khan in Dhaka last night, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed various demands of the non-government teachers in a cordial atmosphere. Further discussions will be held today at 12 noon, an official handout said.

Education Secretary Shaful Alam, concerned high officials of the ministry, central leaders of the liaison committee Sheth Amanullah, Principal AKM

See Page 12 Col 3

Special Court order for confiscation of Ershad's money stayed

The single-judge bench of the High Court Division comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury Tuesday ordered that the confiscation of a sum amounting the Taka 1,90,81,565 and a Toyota Landcruiser jeep on the order made by a Special Court judge (trial court) in the case against former president HM Ershad, be stayed for a period of three months.

While admitting the appeal, Justice Chowdhury served show cause notice to the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka, as to why the operation of the order of sentence passed by the trial court should not be suspended pending disposal of the appeal.

Former President Ershad was convicted and sentenced to three years simple imprisonment on February 3 under

See Page 12 Col 5



Palestinian spokeswoman Hannan Ashrawi (left) and local leader Faisal Hussein in Jerusalem yesterday announcing the boycott by the Palestinians of the third round of ME peace talks. —AFP photo