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VOL. II NO. 42 REGD. NO. DA 783

FALGOON 13, 1398 BS,

DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26, 1992

SHABAN 21, 1412 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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## Two-day extended meeting begins in city

# BNP highcommand under fire

By Mahfuz Ullah

The leadership of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) other than Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday came under strong criticisms for political inertia.

The thana-level leaders of the party made angry comments and put forward 'constructive' suggestions to build the party while deliberating on the first day of the two-day extended meeting of the party.

The meeting began at 3 pm at Sugandha with Khaleda Zia in the chair.

About 1600 representatives from all over the country and leaders of the front organisations attended the meeting aimed at reviewing the party activities since it assumed power in September last year following the return to parli-

mentary democracy. Begum Zia, party sources say, listened to the comments of grassroots leaders and was seen smiling as the party subalterns enjoyed the freedom of expressing their dissatisfaction and emotion.

Sources further say ministers and Members of Parliament were criticised for failing to maintain a good relationship with the workers who were in the street upholding the party flag and fighting the autocratic rule for long nine years.

Some of them said that the ministers, in cases, 'fail to recognise the workers of the party and pay attention to people not loyal to BNP,' the sources added.

According to sources, the thana-level leaders also criticised the party Secretary

General for failing to confirm dates of council sessions of different district committees even after repeated reminders.

These leaders expressed annoyance for what they termed 'no activities of the party for about a year.' They observed, a meeting of this nature 'should have been called much earlier.' Some of the leaders, insiders say, even went to the extent of proposing a change in the leadership of the party and demanded that the Cabinet be made subordinate to the party command.

Some of the speakers suggested that the party Secretary General should not hold a Cabinet position but might enjoy ministerial protocol.

Abdus Salam Talukder, the Secretary General of the party,

in his opening remarks said that the failure to organise the party was not the responsibility of the leadership alone.

Referring to different newspapers reports about impending change in the Cabinet and party leadership, Talukder termed those reports 'baseless.'

Fazlur Rahman Patal, the State Minister for Communication, who was conducting the meeting defended the position of the ministers by saying that they also took part in the movement against autocracy. Insiders said, because of his 'unwanted advocacy' for the ministers the participants began muttering and at one stage he was relieved of the responsibility of conducting the meeting.

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## KAFCO threatens to rupture Dhaka-Tokyo ties

By Toufique Imrese Khalidi

Japan has taken serious exceptions to Bangladesh's stand on Karnaphuli Fertilizer Factory (KAFCO) project that could ultimately ruin relations between the two countries.

The KAFCO project is now taking on 'serious proportions' posing threat particularly to the 'bilateral economic cooperation' between Bangladesh and Japan, according to an official message from the Bangladesh Ambassador in Tokyo.

'The situation has unfortunately developed at a time when most nations are competing for their share of assistance from Tokyo which is now world's financial capital

and at a time when Bangladesh has stood to gain because of increasing good will due to our recent political developments and economic policy,' the message, dated February 7, 1992, meant for the Foreign Minister, said.

Mohammad Abu Hena, the Ambassador, apprehends 'adverse impact of KAFCO' on some 'vital areas' — '(1) financial assistance for Jamuna Bridge (2) pledge in the ensuing Paris Consortium Meeting (3) VVIP visit to Japan' — in the near future.

Referring to his deliberations with senior officials in Japan during recent months, the Ambassador said that 'they

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## South Africa make debut today

SYDNEY, Australia, Feb 25: Defending champion Australia will be under pressure when it faces South Africa in a historic World Cup match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday, reports AP.

The Australians lost their opening World Cup match against co-host New Zealand in Auckland on Saturday and cannot afford another defeat.

The South Africans have not yet played in the tournament, but their return to the international arena has ensured a sell-out 45,000 crowd.

The teams last met in an official international 22 years ago, when South Africa wrapped up a 4-0 test series win with a victory in Port Elizabeth.

No South African team has toured Australia for 28 years. (Details and more World Cup stories on Page 10.)

## 'Govt welcomes private efforts for public welfare'

'Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said Tuesday that the government would appreciate any non-government effort, aimed at the welfare of people and would extend support to every possible sector in this respect, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister was addressing a function held to mark the inauguration of the National Centre for Hearing and Speech. The centre has been established by Society for Assistance to Hearing Impaired Children (SAHIC) in collaboration with Andheri Hill of Germany at Mohakhali.

Begum Zia said half of the hearing impaired population were children and juvenile. One of the major reasons for deafness of the children and juvenile was the absence of proper treatment, she said adding that but deafness could be checked and cured through timely treatment.

She expressed hopes that the concerned organisation would come forward with more enthusiasm in providing

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## Italy may help build Rupsha bridge

ROME, Feb 25: Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti has said, the government and the people of Italy had goodwill and fondness for Bangladesh and Italy would do everything possible to help the government of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Andreotti said this when Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman met him yesterday.

Italian Prime Minister responded positively to the Bangladesh Foreign Minister's request for Italy's help in constructing a bridge over the Rupsha river. Italy has already pledged to finance the preliminary feasibility study for construction of the bridge.

The Foreign Minister apprised the Prime Minister of the endeavour of the govern-

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## Hill people start long march today

The tribal and non-tribal people will stage a demonstration in the capital today (Wednesday) to demand end of killing and restoration of peace in the country's hilly districts.

Organisers said that a long march which began Monday by several thousand hill people from Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban districts will end today in Dhaka followed by a rally at 11 am in front of the Jalya Press Club.

Prime Minister Begum

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## Foreign NGOs can work among Rohingyas Refugees put economy under pressure

By Staff Correspondent

With the official count of Rohingya refugees swelling to 80,000 and another 1,000 coming daily, a Foreign Office spokesman said on Tuesday that the situation has become difficult creating tremendous pressure on the economy of Bangladesh.

Briefing journalists the spokesman said Bangladesh's appeal for international help has received 'prompt and positive response.'

But the refugee wave has strained Bangladesh's limited resources.

'The situation has become difficult creating tremendous pressure on the economy,' he said.

The spokesman added that Bangladesh had already approached the UN Secretary General, the UNHCR and the World Food Programme of help Bangladesh solve the refugee problem.

The number of refugees is increasing and the unofficial estimate has already put it at more than 1 lakh 12 thousand.

According to the

spokesman about 40,000 refugees are now living in six camps opened by the government which is distributing food through Red Crescent Society.

So far, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees granted 1.1 million US dollars with the European Commission announcing an emergency aid of 647,500 dollars. The World Food Programme has granted 1.9 million dollars.

The spokesman said two Amnesty International members will arrive on Thursday to interview the refugees who say they fled a military crackdown in Arakan, the western province of Myanmar.

The activists from the London-based human rights group will visit the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

He said the government revising a previous stand has decided to permit foreign NGOs to work among the refugees.

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## Killers have no party, no politics: Hasina

BAGERIAT, Feb 25: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina Tuesday criticised the government for failing to arrest the killers of Chhatra League leader Maniruzzaman Badal, reports UNB.

'Government's killing agents' planted in the organisation were responsible for Badal's murder at the Dhaka University, she told a meeting at Rayenda High School ground in Swarankhola-upazila this afternoon.

The meeting, commemorating the death of Chhatra League Organising Secretary, was addressed, among others, by Badal's father and Swarnkhola Thana Awami League President Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Munnujan Sufian, Dr Mozammel Haq MP, Sheikh Harunur Rashid MP, Mostafa Rashidi Suja MP, Abdul Khaleque Talukdar MP, Mukul Bose and Sheikh Abdullah.

Hasina said, 'Killers are hated animals, they have no party, no politics... after enquiry, whoever is found guilty of the murder will be expelled from the party.'

The Awami League chief earlier visited the mazar of Maniruzzaman Badal to place wreath and offer feteha there.

Accusing the ruling BNP of

planned terrorism to disrupt the educational system, Hasina said she had suspended Chhatra League activities at the Dhaka University to help restore academic atmosphere.

'But Prime Minister Begum Zia did not respond to the initiative and ban Chhatra Dal activities there.'

She said the government party is talking of eliminating terrorism but at the same time giving protection to identified terrorists.

The opposition leader called for recasting the government's policies and programmes for revitalising the economy. Otherwise, she warned, wrong policies pursued by the government will lead to further economic crisis.

In the absence of proper planning, she said, the government could not utilise even 10 per cent of foreign aid during the current fiscal year.

Dwelling on foreign policy, she accused the government of playing 'subversive role' to please its foreign masters.

On her way from Gopalganj to Bagerhat, the Awami League chief addressed wayside meetings at a number of places, including Mollarhat, Nashukhali Bazar, Fakirhat and Morelganj.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Trade fair at Jeddah hotel

JEDDAH, Feb 25: A seven-day long Bangladesh Single Country Trade Exhibition-1992 began at a city hotel here Tuesday. Dr Rabea S Dahlan, Assistant Deputy Governor of Makkah, inaugurated the Trade Fair, first of its kind, designed to promote Bangladesh exports to the Kingdom, reports BSS.

### One electrocuted

Mohammad Nousher, a thirty-year-old man died after he received injuries due to electric shock at his residence at around 9.30 pm Monday. Nousher was rushed from his Mohammadpur residence to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) immediately but died there at 11 Tuesday morning, UNB reports.

### Housewife commits suicide

A young housewife allegedly committed suicide at her residence early Tuesday. DMCH sources said that Sufia Begum (30) hanged herself from the ceiling at her residence in Mirpur, Section 6 at around 2 am. Her husband Poreh (30), a rickshawpuller was reportedly absconding after the suicide, reports UNB.

### Examinees attack CU teachers

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 25: Six university teachers were injured, one of them seriously, when a group of examinees attacked a vigilance team at a degree college here today, officials said.

Jasimuddin Ahmed, a lecturer of Marine Science Department of Chittagong University, and five other teachers were injured in the attack as the teachers tried to stop some degree examinees from taking unfair means at Paharali Degree College.

The examinees also ransacked the college office, the officials said.

## Commentary

# Will the PM emerge stronger?

By S M Ali

If there is a single positive outcome that turns the extended meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) into a success, it would be a long-awaited thrust of the ruling party towards firm policy directions, in all different fields.

The on-going two-day meeting, the first one of this size to be held since the party assumed power last March, has raised great expectations, inside the organisation and outside, about the future course of action of the administration of Begum Khaleda Zia.

These expectations are seen against the backdrop of simmering discontent within the parliamentary party of BNP, reported divisions within the leadership and a reshuffle in the cabinet.

The discontent within the parliamentary party came into a sharp focus last week over the Prevention of Anti-Terrorism Bill which, much to the dismay of the leadership of the ruling party, many BNP MPs privately described as 'worse than a black act'. The bill now lies before a special committee for 'scrutiny', which may well pave the way

for some kind of a consensus between the ruling party and the opposition, Awami League (AL).

The deliberation at the EC meeting would give an opportunity to the BNP leadership to admit its mistake in the drafting and, indeed, in the presentation of the bill. It can, then, assure the back-benchers at the Sangsad that, in future, they would be fully consulted, in advance, on proposed legislations, and thus defuse the rising tension inside the parliamentary party.

However, there is a danger that the leadership may take a tough line in defence of its handling of parliamentary affairs, in the name of party discipline, and cause further deterioration in the morale inside the ruling party.

For the average BNP member, inside or outside the Sangsad, it all boils down to the question of inner democracy within the organisation, sustained by a broad-based decision-making process within the parliamentary party, and increased interaction between individual cabinet members and MPs belonging to the ruling party.

If such a discussion runs its

course, many individual ministers will — and indeed should — face strong criticism for their poor performance, with the administration, as a whole, coming under fire on issues ranging from campus violence to continued stagnation in the economy. In all probability, BNP members, outside the Sangsad, will voice strong disapproval of the increase in the remunerations of MPs and the introduction of other privileges.

How Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia handles the situation remains to be seen. My own guess is, she will emerge stronger from the two-day meeting, with increased support at the grassroots level. With this support, she can go for a much-awaited reshuffle of the cabinet and, in short, set her house in order.

If a wind of change blows through the ruling party, it will indeed have a positive effect on the political system as a whole and probably set the pace for the deliberation at the extended meeting of the opposition Awami League, due to be held on March 1. Like BNP, AL also needs changes in the way it functions, inside the parliament and outside.



## Million-dollar birthday

LOS ANGELES, Feb 25: Elizabeth Taylor, one of Hollywood's most enduring stars, celebrates her 60th birthday on Thursday in typically grand style. She has rented the Disneyland Theme Park for a million-dollar bash with 1,000 guests, reports Reuter.

The Disneyland Company has gone all out to accommodate Taylor and her friends, dressing the park in a medieval theme. Gourmet food from around the world will be served on the finest China set on deep purple tablecloths,

# 'Dhaka should try a self-imposed moratorium on aid'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh, after decades of aid-dependent 'development disasters', should now try a self-imposed moratorium on external resource inflow to force upon itself a 'no-aid' development strategy.

This was advocated in a key-note paper on 'Bangladesh in Tomorrow's World: Challenges and Outlook' by Dr Iftekharuzzaman at a seminar jointly organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and Alliance Francaise on Tuesday.

Bangladesh, in defining its

position in the emerging new world order, faces two inter-related challenges of sustaining and institutionalising democracy and initiating a process of sustainable participatory development putting the interest of the people at the 'core of all policy and decision-making', he said.

Thus, the fundamental policy thrust for the country should be to count on what it can 'bargain and earn' by projecting its actual potential and capability, he added, instead of what it may 'deserve and obtain because of its impedi-

ments.' Held at the Institute's auditorium, Additional Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan was the moderator while French researcher Jean-Alphonse Bernard of the National Foundation for Defence Studies commented on the paper.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, who is the Research Director at BISS, pointed out that proper initiative was lacking to mobilise internal resources in the country due to the over-dependence and ready availability of external aid and assistance. 'Even the urge for mobilisa-

tion of internal resources for development comes from time to time out of external pressure or when there is a realisation now and then that the availability of external resources may shrink,' he said while noting the stiff conditionalities imposed by the donors.

Arguing that the whole idea that Bangladesh cannot survive without external aid inflow may be a myth, he said, the fact that the country was unable to develop a self-sustaining economy without foreign aid has never been seriously

justified. Saying that the moratorium on the 'narcotic dependence' on foreign aid is essentially a political choice, he called for placing the issue on national referendum to allow the people to make the choice.

The aid-oriented external policy pursued so far, Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, must gradually be shifted towards trade and investment-oriented diplomacy. The target must be to replace aid by trade and investment as the source of resource inflow into the country which must be critical in

achieving self-reliance in the long-run.

Commenting on the keynote paper, Jean Bernard, while noting that the non-aid scenario is a rather questionable approach to self-reliance, pointed out that the quality of foreign aid could not be questioned without questioning the type of development being pursued.

Taking part in the discussions, French Ambassador Serge Degallaux termed it a 'very dangerous concept' said it is a rather simplistic ap-

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