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## NEWS BRIEFS

### One killed in road mishap

One person was killed in a road mishap on Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Raychour under Demra thana in the city Wednesday. The victim, a 32-year old male who could not be identified, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck while crossing the road at around 12.30 pm. His body was sent to Mitford Hospital for post mortem, reports UNB.

### Mostafiz in Bahrain

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman reached Bahrain Tuesday night from Rome on a two-day official visit to the island state. Foreign Minister of Bahrain Shaikh Mohammad Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa received him at the airport, reports UNB.

### Life term for killing wife

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 26: District and Sessions Judge today awarded life term to a young man, namely, Abdul Matin (17) for killing his wife Pushpa alias Julikha (15) on September 8, 1990 for dowry. Pushpa, married to Matin, son of Isaqueddin Bhuiyan of village Tarabaria in Ullapara upazila only a year ago, was 8 months pregnant when she was strangled to death, report UNB.

### 5 hurt as transport workers clash

By Staff Correspondent. Two rival groups of transport workers clashed at Mohakhali bus terminal Wednesday night leaving at least five people injured, one of them seriously. Of the injured, Arju, 20, who sustained cracker injuries, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital from where another two, Baichhu Mia and Halim were released after first aid, medical sources said. The clashing groups exploded several crackers while they made chase and counter-chase at about 8:30 pm.

## BNP national council by May

# Mere copying Zia's policies won't do : Khaleda

By Mahfuz Ullah

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has decided to hold its national council by May this year. The decision was taken yesterday at the concluding session of the two-day extended meeting of the party at Sugandha with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The session also decided to complete council sessions of different district committees by April in order to facilitate

timely holding of the central council. The last national council of the party was held in 1988.

The national council, however, will not elect new leadership for the party. The BNP constitution vests absolute authority in the party chairperson to nominate the central and standing committees.

The concluding session of the extended meeting heard categorical and very strongly

worded comments from the party chairperson.

Begum Khaleda Zia, while winding up the session, asked the party members not to seek any undue favour like free licences, free permits from the government. Otherwise, she cautioned, 'people will not forgive you.'

In an oblique reference to the comments from Awami League (AL) and Jamnat that they are extending support to

BNP, Begum Zia said, 'We did not come to power by having their support. People have voted us to power.'

If their support is necessary for the survival of a government, it follows they kept the autocratic government in power for long nine years, she added.

Stressing the need for strengthening BNP, Begum Zia said that the development

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QUEST FOR PEACE: Hundreds of men and women from Chittagong Hill Tracts ended up rallying in Dhaka yesterday after a 350-mile trek. — Star photo

## ZIA lacks drug detection facilities

By Chapal Bashar



### Heroin girl taken on remand

By Staff Correspondent

Lack of adequate preventive measures and shortage of manpower have turned the Zia International Airport (ZIA) in Dhaka into a transit point for the international drug traffickers in recent days.

A highly-placed government official confirmed this to The Daily Star Wednesday, while referring to the recent arrest at ZIA of an American girl, who was carrying a large quantity of heroin.

'We are aware of the problem and steps are being taken to prevent drug smuggling through our airport. However, we require more manpower and adequate modern facilities to cope with the situation', said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Since October last year, three cases of drug trafficking through ZIA were detected in which a total of about 37 kg of heroin was seized by the authorities.

An American teenager Eliadah McCord was caught at ZIA Tuesday night with three kg and 300 grammes of heroin. She was due to fly for Zurich by a British Airways flight, but failed to escape the watchful eyes of the security personnel before departure.

A major incident of drug trafficking through the Dhaka airport was revealed when a Nigerian citizen was arrested at Riyadh airport with 30 kg of heroin last year.

How the alleged trafficker managed to pass through ZIA with the huge quantity of heroin is still a big mystery. The case is under investigation both at Riyadh and Dhaka, said

the sources.

Experts of concerned international agencies believe that deadly drugs like heroin are being smuggled into Bangladesh through the Golden Triangle through land routes. The area called Golden Triangle, where heroin is produced, is located on the north of Burma and Thailand.

The absence of strict measures against drug trafficking at ZIA is facilitating the international gangs to smuggle drugs to other countries through this airport, said experts.

'Detection of three cases of trafficking in drugs through ZIA in five months indicates that the international gangs are active to use our airport for their heinous crime', said the official who suspects that there might have been other cases which could not be detected.

According to concerned authorities, lack of adequate number of narcotics officials and absence of modern drug-detection equipment and facilities are major obstacles to keeping proper vigil against trafficking in drugs.

Authoritative sources say that at least nine officers from Narcotics Control Department are required to be posted at ZIA to work in three shifts. But only two officers are posted there to do the job. Of the two officers, one has been assigned to do some additional duties outside the airport. So, virtually, now there is only one to look after the anti-drug operation at the international airport, the sources said.

## Long-marchers in city, decry Shantibahini atrocities

By Staff Correspondent

Several hundred hill people wound up a cross-country long march Wednesday and staged a demonstration in the capital to protest the indiscriminate killing by the tribal insurgents.

Tribal and non-tribal men and women, who converged in Dhaka from hilly districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban after a 350-mile trek, also held a peace rally in front of the Jaytra Press Club.

The marchers also submitted memoranda to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and to the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme calling for the help to stop atrocities by the so-called Shantibahini insurgents in the country's south-eastern districts.

The long march, which began on February 24, was organised by the Chittagong Hill Tracts National Coordination and Peace Council (CHTNCPC).

The marchers carrying banners and placards shouted: 'Try the insurgents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts', 'Bangalee-Pahari are brothers', and 'Give equal rights to the tribals and non-tribals in the hilly districts.'

However, some of the protesters said that they trekked to Dhaka aboard six hired bus from Khagrachari to wind up the 'long march'.

The peace rally, presided over by CHTNCPC Convener Saiful Islam Dildar, was addressed by

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## Rohingya refugee issue

# Dhaka briefing foreign missions

Bangladesh Wednesday began a process of briefing the foreign government on the severity of the Myanmar Muslim refugees' problem as greater number of refugees are pouring into the country.

Heads of mission of about twenty countries, mostly European and that of Canada, Australia and Japan were given a graphic account of the worsening refugee problem. Foreign Office sources told ISS.

Additional Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan explained to the diplomats the magnitude of the refugee issue saying refugees at the rate of 500 to 1000 are crossing into Bangladesh territory.

Wednesday's briefing of the heads of mission at the Foreign Office was the first of the series that the government has planned to keep the foreign government abreast of the situation.

The process falls in line with Dhaka's latest flurry of diplomatic activities on the 'Rohingya' issue.

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## PM reviews situation

# Move for meeting with KAFCO shareholders

Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The Prime Minister last night met with senior officials to discuss the KAFCO crisis.

The meeting, held at the PM's residence, was attended among others, by the Principal Secretary to the PM, the Finance Secretary, the Energy Secretary, the Industries Secretary, and the Foreign Secretary, according to a source.

The outcome of the meeting could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, two Bangladesh senior officials are in London to arrange a meeting between the foreign shareholders of KAFCO and Bangladesh authorities, according to official sources.

Sources say the foreign promoters of the project have gathered in London to discuss their 'future course of action' in view of Bangladesh government's refusal to accept the

'inequitable' aspects of the agreement.

HK Murshed, the chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), and Dr Kabir, a NBR official, are representing Bangladesh government in what sources termed a covert mission.

Murshed, a lawyer, is a former foreign secretary of Bangladesh.

It has been too difficult for the Bangladesh government to withstand pressures from the shareholders as their firms are from potential donor countries including Japan, Denmark, UK, the Netherlands.

The present government could not endorse any irregularities of the past regime, the Hongkong-based Far Eastern Economic Review in its latest issue quoted Finance Minister Saifur Rihman as telling a

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## Three Left parties set to merge

By Nurul Kabir

Three left-leaning political parties of the country have completed almost all the necessary preparations for forming a single party.

The Workers Party of Bangladesh, the United Communist League (UCL) and the Samyabadi Dal (SD) are likely to emerge as a single entity under the banner Workers Party of Bangladesh, sources close to the parties said.

The new formation will uphold Marxism-Leninism as its guiding ideology and work for a 'people's democratic revolution' in the country under the leadership of working class.

A 55-member central committee will be formed comprising 21 members from Workers Party, 25 from the Communist League and 9 from Samyabadi Dal while a 19-member Politburo will have 7 members from Workers Party, 9 from Communist League and 3 from Samyabadi Dal.

Amal Sen of the Communist League and Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers Party are expected to be made the president and general secretary of the united party.

All the three parties will hold their respective party congresses by mid-April aimed at holding the 'unity congress' on May 4.

The front organisations of the parties will hold their unity conferences separately, following the unity congress.

Detailed procedures about the unification of the front or-

ganisations, however, will be outlined only after the emergence of the single party in the first week of May.

The leaders of the political parties have, meanwhile, prepared a joint declaration to be presented at the unity congress.

Analysing the present political situation in the country the joint declaration said, 'Despite the fall of military junta through a mass upsurge and return to the parliamentary form of government, the undemocratic nature of the state machinery has remained unchanged.'

The declaration goes on to say, 'As both the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP) and main opposition in parliament Awami League (AL) represent interests of the imperialists, they can not afford to bring about any democratic change or welfare-oriented reform in the country.'

Only a 'people's democratic revolution' under the leadership of working class could ensure democratic rights of the people, the declaration maintains.

But the 26-page declaration has not, however, said anything on communalism and fundamentalism.

Evaluating their role in the last nine years of struggle against autocracy, the declaration, however, admits that the parties ignored the importance of mobilising the oppressed sections of the people politically.'

Price-hike, terrorism and chaos have made people's life miserable but Begum Zia is trying to rule the country viewing everything wearing the spectacles of Ershad', she said.

The Opposition Leader alleged that the administration has been threatening the professional groups, including teachers, who are agitating for realisation of their respective demands.

'The ruling clique is trying to shift its failures to others and has resorted to repression of its opponents to divert attention', she said. 'People will resist whims and caprice of the BNP government at any cost.'

Criticising the so-called anti-terrorism bill, Hasina said that through this black law, the government wants to consolidate its power by stifling the voice of the people and the opposition.

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## Euphoria sweeps

### South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 26: Government came to a halt, pupils threw aside their books, and office workers ignored their paperwork Wednesday as white South Africans celebrated their cricket team's World Cup victory over Australia, reports AP.

'It's more than cricket that's at stake,' said one woman on a radio call-in show reflecting the significance South Africans attached to their country's stunning World Cup debut at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

South Africa was barred from world cricket competition for 21 years because of its apartheid policies and was excluded from the four previous World Cup tournaments.

President F W de Klerk, whose political reforms led to the lifting of sports and other sanctions, was presiding over a Cabinet meeting when word came of the win. The meeting stopped while de Klerk wrote

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## BNP propaganda against opposition to cover up its failure: Hasina

BAGERIAT, Feb 26: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina today charged the ruling BNP for unleashing repression and false propaganda against the opposition to cover up its failure and inefficiency in running the government, reports UNB.

'We have extended cooperation to BNP in running the country but its ineptitude is pushing the nation towards darkness', she told a joint meeting of leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations at the local Circuit House premises.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, pointed out government's failure in handling problems of the professional groups as well as in salvaging the economy and halting price-spiral and lawlessness during the last one year.

'Price-hike, terrorism and chaos have made people's life miserable but Begum Zia is trying to rule the country viewing everything wearing the spectacles of Ershad', she said.

The Opposition Leader alleged that the administration has been threatening the professional groups, including teachers, who are agitating for realisation of their respective demands.

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## Pilots' contract renewal: Biman, BAPA officials meet today

By Asiuazzaman

A meeting will be held between the Biman management and Bangladesh Airlines Pilots' Association (BAPA) today (Thursday) to resolve almost a year-long crisis over the renewal of contract with the pilots.

'We have already been continuing a partial work abstention since November and if the talks fail we can go for further action programme,' a BAPA source told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

The source, however, declined to disclose their planned actions saying that it was not yet finalised as some of the leading BAPA members were now outside the country.

A Biman source said that the pilots were doing their normal duties but some of them were just avoiding the over time duties.

'There was no dislocation

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# Palestinians ridicule Israel's self-rule proposals

WASHINGTON, Feb 26: Arab-Israeli peace talks are mired again in a dispute over the Palestinians' future, reports AP.

Eager to prove they mean business, Israeli negotiators on Tuesday handed the Palestinians 'rather elaborate ideas' for self-rule on the West Bank and in Gaza.

Chief Israeli negotiator Eliakim Rubinstein told reporters: 'We hope the Palestinians will be seriously considering them.'

But at a cross-town news conference, Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinians, ridiculed the 10-page document, which Israeli sources said contained specific functions Palestinians would take over.

She said the proposals were preposterous, designed to perpetuate Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and to foster apartheid, or racial, separation.

The dispute went to the core of the purpose of the negotiations.

Israeli officials insisted that a two-page, self-rule plan the Palestinians gave them last month was a prescription for a Palestinian state. It called for transferring to Palestinian authorities legislative, executive and judicial powers — attributes of statehood, the officials said.

The Bush administration and Israel have both ruled out

a Palestinian state as an option in the current negotiations.

Even selecting the site for the next round of talks is a problem.

Rubinstein said only his government had responded to a US request for suggested locations.

'It's a pity time has to be wasted on such things,' he told reporters.

Still, Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese delegates all were re-

turning to the State Department on Wednesday for more talking.

Jordan, in fact, proposed the round be extended until March 11.

That's not likely, Rubinstein said he was duty-bound to forward the recommendation to Jerusalem. But he said the current negotiations by then would be two weeks old and the Israelis ought to be going home to consult.

This round was marked by a

threat by Secretary of State James A Baker to withhold US backing for \$10 billion in loans Israel seeks from commercial banks unless the settlements are halted.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said in response that settlement activity would not stop even for one day.

This is the fourth round of negotiations since October.

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