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NEWS BRIEFS

AL tour programme

Central leaders of opposition Awami League will begin extensive organisational tour across the country from March 20 to drum up public support for the party's political and economic programmes. Besides organisational matters, the Awami League leaders are likely to project the BNP government's 'inefficiency' in tackling the situation in different socio-economic and political fields, reports UNB.

Ray suffers from breathlessness

CALCUTTA, Mar 15: Ailing film maestro, Sattajit Ray, suffered from 'mild breathlessness' throughout the day, and therapeutic measures, were taken to keep the situation under control, according to his family, reports PTI.

Dr Masoom Raza dead

BOMBAY, Mar 15: Noted Hindi and Urdu poet, novelist and leading screenplay-dialogue writer of Hindi films, Dr Razi Masoom Raza, died at the Hinduja Hospital here today, following a heart attack, he was 64, reports PTI.

Shri and Ifar timings

Ramzan March	Shri	Ifar
10	16	6:14 pm
11	17	4:46 am 6:15 pm

46 trains withdrawn on ADB advice

16000 surplus Railwaymen face voluntary retirement

By Sohel Manzur

The government plans to provide an opportunity to the 16,000 surplus staff of the Bangladesh Railway to go on voluntary retirement along with all allowable benefits to reduce expenses and cut down losses of the department.

This was disclosed by the Communications Minister Col (rtd) Oli Ahmed in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star Sunday.

The plan was initiated in response to the recommendations by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to reduce the operating loss of the department which stood at Taka 146 crore during the 1990-91 period.

The minister, however, ruled out any possibility of terminating the surplus staff in the department and said that the government had in the

meantime withdrawn 46 trains from various branch lines as per the suggestion of the ADB.

The government was however actively considering continuing operating the trains on the non-profitable branch lines under public service obligation guidelines of the railway department he said, adding that the Finance Minister had agreed in principle to provide the required funds.

Referring to the various cause behind the enormous loss incurred in the railway sector, the Minister said that the government had taken several measures to reduce the operating expenses and increase the income in the sector.

The measures included formation of 'local railway advisory committee' at 83 railway

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Dhaka University teachers brought out a silent procession on the campus Sunday demanding trial of Golam Azam, the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, for his anti-liberation role. — Star photo

'Public trial' of Golam Azam Varsity teachers mobilise support

By DU Correspondent

In support of the 'public trial' of Golam Azam, a group of Dhaka University teachers Sunday brought out a silent procession on the campus.

The Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) organised the procession which was led by its President Professor ASM Faiz.

Several hundred teachers of the University took part in the procession which marched through the DU campus and dispersed at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The teachers also held a rally at the Shaheed Minar which was addressed, among others, by the DUTA President and DUTA General Secretary Dr Saidur Rahman.

Speakers at the rally called upon the teachers community to help hold the 'public trial' of Golam Azam successfully which has been organised by the 'Coordination Committee for the Annihilation of the Killers and Collaborators of 1971' on March 26 at the Suhrawardy Uddyan.

The teachers also carried a banner that read: 'We want Golam Azam's trial.'

JU Correspondent adds: The Jahangirnagar University unit of the Committee for the Implementation of Spirit of the Liberation War and Annihilation of the Killers and

Collaborators of 1971, was formed Sunday on the campus.

Prof Anu Muhammad of Economics was selected the Convenor of the committee.

The committee expressed its solidarity with the National Co-ordinating Committee and the planned 'public trial' of Golam Azam on March 26 at Suhrawardy Uddyan, Dhaka.

The committee, with representatives from 17 students and cultural organisations, will work to mobilise public opinion against Golam Azam in the Savar upazila.

The committee has members from Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-A), Bangladesh Chhatra League (N-S), Shamajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF), Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Jatiya Chhatra Dal, Jahangirnagar, Theatre, Gram Theatre, Bibartan Sangsad, Kranti Natom, Pothikrit, Banglar Mukh, Jahir Rathin Film Society, Bangladesh Photographic Society, Jahangirnagar University Journalists' Association and Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association.

The cultural organizations will arrange programmes in different parts of Savar area highlighting the necessity of the trial of Golam Azam.

The cultural organizations will arrange programmes in different parts of Savar area highlighting the necessity of the trial of Golam Azam.

Montu replies to showcase notice, pleads not guilty

By Staff Correspondent

Suspended Awami League (AL) leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu has given a reply to the showcase notice served on him by the party.

The party membership of Montu, the Chairman of the youth wing of AL and General Secretary of the party's Dhaka district unit, was suspended by the AL Working Committee on March 4 for his involvement in the 'anti-organisational activities and tarnishing the image of the party'. A showcase letter was also issued asking him to explain why he would not be expelled from the party.

Montu, when contacted last night, told The Daily Star that he had sent a 14-line letter to the party General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury by registered mail yesterday and a copy of the letter to the party chief Sheikh Hasina at her Minto Road residence at 7 pm by his personal peon.

Minto Road sources, however, denied receipt of any such letter till 11 pm last night.

According to sources, Montu has categorically denied allegations of his involvement in any activities detrimental to the party interests.

Sources close to Awami Jubo League (AJL) informed The Star that Montu, in his letter, had also urged the party high command to withdraw the charge formed against him.

Meanwhile, AL Working Committee in a bid to adopt a new economic policy for the party in the 'changed global situation' exchanged views with the leading economist of the country yesterday at Sheikh Hasina's Parliament chamber.

Most of them also maintained that 'active involvement' of the masses in the development process was a must for overcoming the present crisis of the country, sources said.

The AL Working Committee will meet today again at 3 pm to evaluate the suggestions they received from different sections of people on the proposed economic policy of the party during the last few days.

The economists who were present at the meeting with AL high command yesterday include Prof Rehman Sobhan, Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, Dr Nazrul Islam, Dr Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, ex-CSP Anisuzzaman, SM AL Hossaini, Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, ex-Secretary M Mantruzzaman, Dr Binayak Sen, Dr Sultan Hafizur Rahman, Prof Rezaul Haq Khandaker, Dr Latifur Reza, Nurul Haq and Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman.

Economic and Planning Affairs Secretary of Awami League Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser presented the outline of the party's draft economic policy, while AL chief Hasina presided over the meeting.

Fresh quake rocks Turkey

ERZINCAN (Turkey): A second major earthquake struck eastern Turkey on Sunday, just two days after a tremor that caused hundreds of deaths, state television reported, reports AP.

The second quake measured 6 on the Richter scale and occurred at 6:17 pm (1617 GMT), the television and semi-officials Anatolia news agency reported.

Power failed in the city and rescue operations were halted by the tremor, Anatolia reported. The second quake was felt over a broad area extending nearly to the Soviet border in northeastern Turkey and to Diyarbakir in southeastern Turkey.

There were no immediate reports on further damage of injuries.

Tents and emergency food aid poured into this city reduced to rubble by a major earthquake, but rescue efforts proceeded slowly Sunday and officials said they feared many bodies remained buried.

The minute-long quake hit Friday evening, flattening a quarter of this city of 150,000 in eastern Turkey that was rebuilt after a 1939 earthquake killed 32,000 people.

Red Cross officials, citing reports from the scene, said that as many as 4,000 people might have been killed across eastern Turkey. But only a few hundred bodies had been recovered till Sunday, officials said.

Two days after the disaster struck Erzurum, Erzurum and Bingol provinces, death toll figures continued to very widely. The official death toll was expected to mount as casualty reports trickled in from hundreds of mountain villages.

Two hundred buildings collapsed in Erzincan and 2,000

were damaged by the quake, which registered 6.8 on the Richter scale.

Gen Osman Ilgaz, in charge of the Turkish Army in the northeast, told Deputy Premier Erdal Inonu on Sunday that 320 bodies had been recovered, and 1,086 people were injured, Turkish news reports said.

A day earlier, officials and news reports had put the death toll at 578. There was no reason given for the discrepancy.

However, news reports said that some residents were burying victims without notifying the authorities first.

Over 9,700 tents were distributed in the area for up to 60,000 people estimated to have been left homeless by the quake, according to Turkish State Minister Erman Sahin.

But many people spent a second night sleeping outside in freezing temperatures. On Saturday night, desperate residents attacked Turkish Red Crescent vehicles that were distributing tents, the semi-official Anatolia news agency said.

The International Red Cross appealed Sunday for an initial 8.5 million Swiss francs (5.6 million dollars) to provide aid to the earthquake victims. Most of the money was needed for winter tents, it said.

AFP says: Pakistan is to send a planeload of relief goods as immediate assistance for victims of a devastating earthquake in Turkey.

It said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was in touch with Turkish government leaders and further relief goods would be sent as soon as more details were available.



Former First Lady Raushan Ershad entering the Special Court at Nazimuddin Road, on a wheel-chair flanked by one of her attorneys and relatives, in connection with hearing on a corruption case Sunday. — Star photo

Ershad, Raushan docked together

Begum Raushan Ershad, wife of former President HM Ershad appeared in a Special Court in Dhaka Sunday along with her husband in a corruption case of illegal transfer of Rajuk land and constructing a multistoried building at Kawran Bazar area of the city, reports BSS.

Raushan and HM Ershad are among a total of 20, who have been charged in this case in which the former head of state has been charged for misusing his official position and working in collusion with others to bring benefits amounting to about Taka four

crore to his wife Raushan Ara Begum and others.

Ershad, by doing so, has committed offence under Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947 and Article 109 of the Penal Code, the chargesheet stated. Sunday was the production date of the accused in the special case numbering 11 of 1992 in the Court of Special Judge Md Ismail Miah. 17 persons including Ershad and his wife appeared.

The FIR in this case was filed on 14.4.1991 and the chargesheet submitted on

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S Africans in semis

SYDNEY, Mar 15: South Africa continued their fairytale return to international cricket when they beat India by six wickets at the Adelaide Oval on Sunday and clinched a semi-final spot in the World Cup tournament, reports AP.

India made 180 for six in a

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PM leaves for US

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia left last night for a five-day visit to the United States beginning Tuesday at the invitation of President George Bush, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister was seen off at the airport by Law and Justice Minister Mirza Gohar Hafiz who accompanied her up to the gangway of the plane. Cabinet members, diplomats, chiefs of the three services, and high civil and military officials were present.

Begum Zia have wide-ranging talks with President Bush on bilateral matters, and regional and international issues of common concern during the visit, the first by a head of the government of Bangladesh.

The Myanmar refugee problem posing a threat to the stability in the region is likely to figure in prominently at the discussion to be held at the White House.

The planned talks between

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Police open fire on villagers near Rohingya camp: 3 hurt

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 15: At least three people were injured when police opened fire on local villagers near a Rohingya refugee camp at Dechuapalong Sunday, officials and witnesses said, reports UNB.

They said Police and Ansar forces posted at the camp fired 40 rounds and assaulted local villagers following a brawl with them.

Witnesses said the clash originated from a trifling incident in which a local farmer beat up some refugee children for stealing cucumbers from his land.

When the refugee children reported the matter, police on

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Surrender to people's court, 5-party asks Azam

By Staff Correspondent

The five-party alliance on Sunday asked Golam Azam the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, to 'surrender to the people's court to face trial.'

A meeting of the alliance, presided over by Convener Naim Jahangir, urged people from all over the country to attend the 'public trial' of Golam Azam on March 26 in Dhaka for his Anti-Liberation activi-

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Heroin ring Another Nigerian arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police Saturday arrested another Nigerian national from Zia International Airport, in connection with the sensational heroin case.

Ruhul Amin, Assistant Commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) police, told The Daily Star last night the arrested Nigerian Okenda Goddy was leaving the country for Bangkok with a passport of one Okal Godwin.

The airport immigration police nabbed Goddy following the confessional statements of

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