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NEWS BRIEFS

Satyajit Ray receives Oscar
 CALCUTTA, Mar 16: Film maestro Satyajit Ray today personally received the Special Oscar Award at his nursing home bed with some improvement in his condition, his family sources said, reports PTI.

Jt meeting of city BNP today
 A joint meeting of the President and General Secretaries of Thana and Ward committees of Dhaka city BNP and its front organisations will be held today Tuesday at 3 pm at the BNP city office, reports BSS.

More EC relief for Rohingyas
 The European Economic Community (EEC) has given another half a million ECU about six lakh 70 thousand US dollars as emergency relief assistance in the form of food, blankets, tents, medicines for the Rohingyas refugees to be channelled through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), official sources in Dhaka said reports BSS.

65 hurt as rival groups clash
 SIRAJGANJ, Mar 16: Sixty five people were injured, 12 seriously, as rival groups of villagers clashed in Sadar upazila today. Two groups of people of Hornahata and Dumur villages in Boguli union clashed after some weavers damaged an irrigation channel in Hornahata, leaving at least 50 people injured, reports UNB.

Schri and Iftar timings

Ramzan	March	Schri	Iftar
11	17	6.15 pm	
12	18	4.45 am	6.15 pm

India, US to hold joint naval exercises

NEW DELHI, Mar 16: The navies of India and the United States will conduct joint exercises, the government announced Monday, signalling the start of closer military relations between the two countries, reports AP.

United News of India news agency reported Deputy Foreign Minister Eduardo Feleiro saying that the exercises will not be held in Indian coastal waters. It did not elaborate.

India is trying to forge closer military and political relations with the United States after the demise of the Soviet Union, a former ally and once India's major arms supplier.

Feleiro was making a statement in Parliament on last week's visit to Washington of Jyotindra Nath Dixit, India's top civil servant in the Foreign Ministry.

Dixit held wide ranging talks on trade, non-proliferation treaty and copyright, irritants in India-US relations.

The United States has been urging India to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation

Treaty, but New Delhi has consistently refused, saying it is discriminatory against developing nations.

India has also rejected a US proposal to hold a five-nation conference to discuss security issues, including non-proliferation, in South Asia.

"India is committed to nuclear non-proliferation on a global basis and a regional approach will not be a solution to the problem," Feleiro was quoted as saying by UNI.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 and experts say its scientists can make a bomb. India says its nuclear capability is for peaceful purposes.

Indian navy has 52,000 personnel and most of its ships, aircraft carriers and submarines are Soviet built.

AFP from Delhi adds: India's Navy included in its fleet today a locally-built missile-armed corvette rated one of the fastest of its type in the Indian ocean, reports AFP.

Minister of state for Defence S Krishna Kumar commissioned the INS Vipul at

the western Indian port of Bombay, calling it a proud moment for the Navy. The Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Thirty-five more vessels including corvettes and frigates are on order with defence shipyards, Kumar was quoted as saying.

Pakistan party raised the veil on its nuclear weapons programme at the weekend, acknowledging it had a nuclear capability but maintaining it was for peaceful purposes only, reports Reuter.

Defence Minister Ghous Ali Shah said on Sunday Pakistan had been compelled to go nuclear because of India's security crackdown in disputed Kashmir, a major cause of tension between the two traditional foes.

Pakistan had explained to the United States it could not sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) without India doing so because it would upset the equilibrium in the region. India exploded a nuclear device in 1974.

PM leaves UK for US today

LONDON, Mar 16: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia arrived here this morning en route to Washington for a five-day visit to the United States at the invitation of President George Bush, report BSS.

She was greeted by Sir David Multhead, a representative of her majesty's government at the Hillingdon VIP suite of the Heathrow Airport.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to UK, Rezaul Karim, senior officials of the high commission and BNP leaders in UK were also present at the airport to greet the Bangladesh leader.

Begum Zia is due to meet the representatives of the business community and prospective investors as well as some Bangladeshi community leaders residing in London, later this afternoon. A group of Bangladeshi journalists and newspaper editors based in UK will also have a meeting with the Prime Minister at her hotel.

Begum Zia leaves here for Washington tomorrow morning to begin her 5-day visit to the United States.

10 banks surveyed, nine found undercapitalised

By S Y Bakht

Nine out of the ten commercial banks surveyed in the country, by a private financial institution recently, are undercapitalised.

Based on the balance sheet figures as of December 31, 1990, the study found that two of the largest Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs), Sonali and Janata failed to earn a profit during the period.

Three of the seven private sector selected banks, City Bank, Arab Bangladesh Bank and United Commercial Bank (UCB) respectively, topped the list in terms of after-tax profit earned.

The other banks included in the study were Agrani Bank, Uttara Bank, International Finance and Investment Bank (IFIC), National Bank Limited (NBL) and the Bank for Small Industries and Commerce (BASIS).

The latest figures for 1991 were unavailable as the approved balance sheets are expected to be out in May next.

Among the NCBs, the survey noted, Sonali Bank's undercapitalisation by 5.90 per cent was the highest while that of Agrani Bank, by 2.69 per cent was the lowest.

Uttara Bank, among the private banks, had the highest under-capitalisation by 5.01 per cent and that of City Bank, by 2.49 per cent, was the lowest. BASIS was the only bank among the ten in the survey, overcapitalised by 9.18 per cent.

A total of 24 banks are operating in the country including four (NCBs), three specialised banks, ten private banks and seven foreign banks.

The nationalised and specialised banks are fully owned by the government while it holds 40 per cent equity in the IFIC, 30 per cent in BASIS, 10.44 per cent in Uttara Bank and 5 per cent in all local private banks.

Three of the ten banks surveyed to be out in May next.

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BENSON & HEDGES
 WORLD CUP 1992

Keen race for last semifinal berth

SYDNEY, Mar 16: England, New Zealand and South Africa already are assured of World Cup semifinal spots. For the West Indies, Australia and Pakistan, the agony continues reports AP.

The two-time champions West Indies face Australia in their final first round match in Melbourne on Wednesday.

Pakistan, who have won their last two games to keep their hopes alive, play unbeaten tournament leaders New Zealand in Christchurch.

There are various possible permutations with the West Indies currently on eight points, Pakistan on seven points and Australia on six points.

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Bangabandhu's birthday today

By Staff Correspondent

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had he been alive, would have turned 72 years old today.

The birth anniversary of the Bangabandhu is being observed today amid a demand to repeal a constitutional provision that bars the trial of his killers in

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Trial of killers a must for rule of law: Hasina

Democracy and rule of law cannot function truly without holding trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, says Sheikh Hasina, reports UNB.

In a message on the occasion of the 72nd birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today, Hasina said Awami League would continue its crusade for achieving economic well-being of the people by implementing the ideals of the Liberation War.

She recalled how Sheikh Mujib had led the nation to independence after struggling ceaselessly with the Pakistani military junta and said he had formulated extensive economic programmes to reach the fruit of independence to the deprived multitude in the war ravaged country.

But enemies of democracy, humanity and progress, Hasina said, assassinated the "father of the nation" along with the members of his family with an "evil design" to thwart the

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Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya brought out a silent procession from the DU campus Monday to mourn the death of student leader Raju and marched through different city streets. — Star photo

36000 Rohingyas arrive in 5 days

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 16: Over 36,000 Rohingyas entered the country during the past five days, as influx of Rohingyas Muslims from Myanmar continues unabated, official source said on Monday, reports BSS.

The total number of Rohingyas Muslim refugees now officially stands at 1,60,083 but the unofficial estimates put the number at over two lakh.

About 45,000 refugees have so far been sheltered in ten camps while the rest are spread over Ukhaia, Ramu, Teknaf and Naikongchhari areas of Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

The district authorities here have decided to open another refugee camp here to accommodate the refugees.

Official sources said that a total amount of Taka 71 lakh had so far been sanctioned for the relief operation.

The government had also distributed 250 metric tons of rice, 170 metric tons of wheat among the Rohingyas Muslim refugees.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has distributed 746 metric tons of rice, 181 metric tons pulse, 69 metric tons

of edible oil, six and a half metric tons of salt and 7507 blankets among the refugees at different camps.

Some non-government organisations are also engaged in relief operation among the refugees.

Fifteen medical teams have been working almost round the clock at the camps, the source added.

The sources informed that most of the refugees now pouring in from across the border were sick. Many of them are suffering from malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea and other diseases, a relief official said.

The sources said, so far 55 refugees died of various diseases at different camps.

Meanwhile, NLD (Arakan) leader Mraza Linn and Arakan Islamic Front leader Nurul Islam today accused the Myanmar authorities of gross violation of human rights. They said that Magh youths had been used for uprooting Arakan Muslims from their ancestral homes. They appealed to international community to compel Myanmar government to stop atrocities on its citizens.

GCO parade in support of today's programme

By DU Correspondent

Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) will hold countrywide demonstrations today (Tuesday), demanding the arrest and trial of those responsible for the killing of Moht Hossain Raju who was gunned down on the Dhaka University (DU) campus Friday evening.

GCO's programme includes a rally in front of the National Press Club at 10 am today.

Raju, a student of the Department of Soil Science, was shot dead near the TSC while he was taking part in an anti-terrorism procession of GCO following a gunfight between the ruling party-backed Jatayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Awami League supported Chhatra League (S-A).

Earlier yesterday, GCO, a left-leaning alliance of eight students' organisations, brought out a mourning procession and held a grand rally at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The GCO procession started from the 'Aparajeyo Bangla' of DU and marched through the campus and city roads.

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JP meet today: High command may come under fire

By Mahfuz Ullah

In an attempt to consolidate the organization and straighten out 'petty' differences, the Jatya Party (JP) is having its two-day extended meeting of the Central Committee beginning in Dhaka this morning.

All members of the Central Committee, former ministers, former and sitting members of Parliament, and candidates who lost the last general elections and presidents and secretaries of all district committees have been asked to attend the meeting to be held at the Dhaka District Sports Association (DDSA) auditorium.

Party sources say, about 300 leaders of the party representing different tiers are expected to attend.

The meeting will be virtually the first such congregation of leaders since the ouster of the party from power in December 1990. Another extended meeting of the party was held but failed to yield any result as most of the leaders were behind the bar.

The meeting, among other things, is expected to deliberate on the prevailing political situation, attitude of the party

to the Government especially Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the holding of national council and the political course of action to be followed in future.

Insiders say, leading workers of the party are unhappy about the way the present leadership 'compromised' on the action programme launched after the party's meeting had been spoiled on February 29. They particularly refer to the failure of the leadership in giving a call for hartal on March 1.

The 'mid-level' leaders and workers at grass-root level, according to sources, are also 'unhappy' about the initiatives so far taken by the party high command to press the demand for release of former president Ershad. Besides, they are also critical of the party leadership for 'doling out financial benefits to areas and workers of liking.'

Commenting on the situation, a senior leader of the party preferring anonymity said that the question of abandoning the hartal programme would come up for discussion.

But, he added, 'the call for hartal was given on the spur of moment as we heard that about five people were killed, whereas the reality was different.'

Referring to 'petty' differences the leader said: "JP is a top-heavy organization. It is a party where we are accommodating three former prime ministers and contradictions to certain degrees are nothing unnatural."

Brushing aside the criticisms, Maudud Ahmed, Vice-Chairman of the party told The Daily Star that at the meeting the district leaders would talk more and they might refer to certain things which should not be misconstrued as 'differences of opinion.'

Commenting on the differences of opinion the former vice-president said, "A party like JP can have small crisis but it is nothing worrying." When asked to comment about JP's attitude to BNP, Maudud said, "We don't want the Government to fall before it fulfills its five-year term. But we will go ahead with our 10-

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'Public trial' of Azam Committee decides today on meet with Matin

By Staff Correspondent

The National Coordination Committee for implementation of the spirit of the Liberation War and annihilation of the collaborators is to decide today whether it will discuss the issue of the public trial of Colam Azam with the Home Ministry.

Jahanara Islam, convenor of the Committee, said that the members of the Committee would sit in a meeting today to decide on an invitation from the Home Ministry for a discussion on the planned trial.

She said "We received a letter from the Home Ministry Sunday and we will decide tomorrow Tuesday whether we should go to the ministry."

She said that the letter followed a telephone call from the ministry that admitted that the language of an invitation earlier sent to some individuals from the Home Ministry was indecorous.

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AL may finalise draft economic policy tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League Working Committee (ALWC) is likely to finalise its draft economic policy tomorrow.

The ALWC, after a series of discussions with the representatives of different section of people over the last few days, met yesterday to reach a decision on the policy to be adopted by the party.

According to sources, the party high command is going to take a policy, mainly based on free market economy.

Presided over by AL chief Sheikh Hasina the meeting was attended, among others, by Abdu Samad Azad, Tofael Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury, Shudhansu Shekhar Halder, Mohammad Nasim, Amir Hossain Amu and Ataur Rahman Khan Katsir.

City corporation, municipal employees join duties

All the striking workers and employees of four city corporations and 110 municipalities in the country joined their duties yesterday following withdrawal of their indefinite strike, official source in the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives said, reports BSS.

There was no untoward incident reported from any where and normal activities are in full swing in the city corporations and the municipalities, the source added.

In Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) all the striking employees including the five thousand master roll employees joined their duties and went into full gear to clean about 15,000 tons of garbage piled up during the seven day strike, a spokesman of the DCC said.

Yeltsin creates own army, names himself defence minister

MOSCOW, Mar 16: President Boris Yeltsin has signed a decree to create a separate Russian army, and named himself acting Defence Minister, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai told a news conference today.

Shakhrai said the decree aimed initially to set up a Defence Ministry which would initially be headed by Yeltsin. This would pave the way for Russia to create its own army.

But he made it clear that Russia had to completely abandon

its attempt to keep the armed forces of the 11 members of the Commonwealth of Former Soviet Republics under some form of joint control.

"The Ministry of Defence will work out proposals on setting up armed forces in the Russian federation, with a view that these forces are a part of the joint commonwealth armed forces and are subject to its operational command, he said.

All 11 members of the Commonwealth of

Independent States have agreed that the nuclear arsenal of the Former Soviet Union should be kept under joint control.

Russia had also lobbied for retaining a joint conventional army. But three republics — Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova — refused, pressing ahead with moves to set up separate conventional armies.

AP adds: Hard-line lawmakers who want to resurrect the former Soviet Union vowed Monday to defy the Russian

government and hold a session of the defunct Congress of People's Deputies.

"We have a place. If we are thrown out, we will have the Congress in the street," said Sazhi Umalatova, one of the organizers of Tuesday's planned meeting.

Organizers, who represent the hard-line Communist wing of the former Soviet parliament, favour the restoration of the Soviet Union and oppose the pro-market policies of Russian President Boris

Yeltsin.

Umalatova declined to say where the meeting would take place and how many of the former 2,250-member Congress would attend. But other organizers said 1,470 former lawmakers indicated they might come.

The prospect of an assembly of hard-liners, many of whom supported the failed attempt in August to oust Mikhail S Gorbachev, has unnerved the Russian legislature.

The legislature has banned

the Congress and ordered Moscow Mayor Gavril Popov and city police to prevent the deputies from gathering.

Russia's prosecutor-general, Valentin Stepankov, warned that Congress organizers could be prosecuted.

The hard-liners had indicated they planned to elect a new leader to seek the restoration of the Soviet Union, which has dissolved in late December following the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States.