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# The Daily Star

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Biswas takes Iftar with ulemas, imams

President Abdur Rahman Biswas had his Iftar with prominent ulemas and imams of different mosques of the city at the Bangabhaban Monday, reports BSS.

### RUTA procession protests terrorism

RAJSHAHI, Mar 23: Rajshahi University Teachers Association (RUTA) Monday brought out a silent procession at the Rajshahi University campus condemning last Tuesday's killing of Yassir Arafat Pitu and violence and demanding violence-free campus, reports UNB.

### 27 injured in Sirajganj clash

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 23: At least 27 people were injured, three of them seriously, when farmers clashed over an irrigation dispute at Trifalgati in Ullapara upazila today, police said. Hafizur Rahman (19), Saiful Islam (18) and Abu Taleb (28) were rushed to the General Hospital here with serious wounds, reports UNB.

### IOM team in city

A three-member delegation from the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) arrived in Dhaka Monday to ascertain the possible involvement of the organisation in mitigating the plight of the Myanmar refugees. The delegation led by Richard Cotcher, the IOM mission chief in Bangkok, met with Additional Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan at the Foreign Ministry soon after arrival, reports UNB.

### Sheri, Iftar timings

Ramzan March	Sehri	Iftar
18	24	6.19
19	25	4.38 6.20

# Trial body served notice for undermining court Govt threatens Azam with deportation

The Government last night issued a notice upon Prof Golam Azam to show cause why he should not be deported from Bangladesh and legal procedures be taken against him for violating Constitution provision by becoming Aamir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh, it was learnt, reports BSS.

He has been asked to explain his position by 10 am today (March 24, Tuesday). The notice said that he had violated the Constitution provision and became Aamir of Jamaat-e-Islami despite being

a foreign national. The Government also issued separate notices on Mrs Jahannara Imam, Convener of the '71 Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Coordination Committee, and other members of the committee to show cause why legal action should not be taken

against them for constituting so-called 'Gano Adalat' to try Prof Golam Azam on March 26 in Dhaka thus tarnishing the image of the courts by taking law in their own hands and creating a law and order situation in the country. Their action has also challenged the very effectiveness of the courts set up under the constitutional provisions. Their actions would also create anarchy and give rise to a serious law and order situation, the notices said.

They have been also accused of obstructing the normal functioning of the democratically elected government by constituting the so-called 'Gano Adalat'.

They have been asked to explain their position within 24 hours of getting the notices.

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Prime Minister back from US trip  
 Myanmar must take back its citizens



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia alighting from plane at Zia International Airport yesterday. — Star photo.

## Prime Minister back from US trip Myanmar must take back its citizens

By Staff Correspondent

Returning home from a five-day visit to the United States with a promise of international help to resolve the Rohingya refugee problem, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said on Monday that Myanmar must take back its citizens who have become a burden to Bangladesh.

"We want to resolve the problem diplomatically through peaceful negotiations so that the Rohingya refugees can return to their homeland," the Prime Minister said while briefing journalists on the outcome of what she said a very successful visit.

Asked whether she saw any military threat from Myanmar on the refugee issue, Begum Zia said "You know they have kept a preparation. But we don't know what the preparation is for. However, we hope the problem will be solved through peaceful negotiations."

The Prime Minister who discussed the Rohingya refugee problem with US President George Bush and UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali said that they identified it as an "important problem and assured us of all cooperation to resolve it."

She said that the UN Secretary General would send his Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator Jan Eliasson to

questions related to her visit. Begum Zia declined to comment when a reporter referred to the political situation that has arisen from the move to hold a public trial of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Golam Azam.

However, she replied to a question on Bangladesh's problem of sharing water with India. Asked if she considered taking the issue to international forum the Prime Minister said "We are holding talks with India bilaterally. If the need arises we will do everything."

Replying to a question on the subject of her talks with the US Defence Secretary, Begum Zia said she had thanked him for the humanitarian services of the US Task Force that was dispatched to Bangladesh to help the survivors of last year's devastating cyclone.

She told another questioner that Bangladesh believes in peace. This, she said, was reflected in Bangladesh's sending of troops to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war and its joining the UN peace keeping forces in Namibia, Yugoslavia and Cambodia.

When a reporter asked how she felt when President Bush thanked her for Bangladesh's sending troops to the US-led

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## Dhaka, Pyongyang sign accord to set up JEC

Bangladesh and North Korea (DPRK) yesterday signed an agreement to set up a Joint Economic Commission (JEC) to promote and identify different areas for further economic, trade and technical cooperation, reports BSS.

It was signed after the talks between Bangladesh side and the visiting DPRK delegation here Monday noon at the NEC conference room. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, leader of Bangladesh delegation and the DPRK delegation leader and minister Chong Song Nam signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

Economic relations division secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury was present at the talks.

At the talks, two technical committees were formed to work out the details of bilateral cooperation. These are economic and technical sub-committee and trade and investment sub-committee. Stressing the need for new areas of cooperation, the DPRK minister said the people of North Korea were keen to see progress under the leadership of democratically elected government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. "We are eager to further expand and strengthen economic, trade and technical cooperation with Bangladesh", he said.

The DPRK minister also met Majid-ul-Haq, Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control. They decided to extend areas of cooperation for agriculture development of the two countries. Preservation of perishable agricultural items like potatoes, vegetables, modernisation and mechanisation of agricultural equipment and irrigation methods had been identified as the main areas of cooperation between the two countries.

The ambassador of North Korea Kang Dal Son and senior officials of Bangladesh and North Korea were present on the occasion.

General Majid-ul-Haq proposed to set up a separate joint agriculture commission between the two countries for better cooperation in the field of agriculture which was appreciated by the visiting minister.

## The luggage returns but...

By Masud Hasan Khan

The luggage returned but not the man to whom it belonged.

This is the story of a member of the three-man TV crew that covered Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's five day visit to the United States that ended Monday.

Mostafa Kamal Pasha, a sub-assistant engineer of Bangladesh Television, darted out of his car and disappeared into a busy New York street on Saturday as the Prime Minister's entourage was about to leave the Plaza Hotel for New York airport en route to London.

Colleagues, stunned at Pasha's inexplicable move, hoped that he would surface at the airport at the last moment.

When Pasha failed to appear the colleagues left his passport with a Bangladesh protocol officer carrying his luggage back home.

Those who witnessed Pasha mingle with the New York crowd heard him saying "wait a moment, I've left my handbag at the hotel."

It's not clear if Pasha has used the VIP trip to stay back permanently in the US. However, some members of the entourage speculate that Pasha might have followed the footsteps of Abdul Quddus, also a BTV engineer, who went to the United States with Raushan Ershad in 1989 and never returned home.

## WB wants public enterprises to be autonomous

Wide-ranging autonomy that will ensure Public Enterprises (PE) to operate as "full commercial entities" has been suggested by the World Bank to rationalise their staggering losses, reports UNB.

"Though autonomous in theory, PEs are still de facto under government control and government interference is the rule rather than the exception," says the bank in its economic appraisal report, prepared for next month's Aid Bangladesh Consortium meeting in Paris.

PEs should be allowed to operate autonomously as commercial enterprises, and to be made accountable for their decisions and performance, it says.

A system of "rewards and penalties" needs to be introduced in monitoring production and financial outcome of PEs, recommends the bank.

One of the penalties, it suggests to consider, is the removal of top management if the enterprises fail to meet performance targets within a stipulated period, such as 2-3 years.

Huge operating losses of public sector corporations and lack of initiative on the part of the government in rationalising the burden was heavily criticised in the bank report. Available indications say the

Aid Club members, who usually depend on assessment by the World Bank, are likely to raise the issue in the Paris moot — much to the embarrassment of the government.

The report points out that all the 38 public corporations together registered a net loss of Tk 1,110 crore in fiscal 1990-91, which is 31 per cent of the total project aid disbursement to Bangladesh.

Most prominent losers are Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (loss of Tk 360 crore), Power Development Board (Tk 230 crore), Railway (Tk 170 crore), Bangladesh Jute Corporation (Tk 140 crore) and Bangladesh Biman (Tk 80 crore).

Lack of managerial autonomy, revenue pilferage, over staffing and overtime, and lower prices and tariffs have been pointed out by the bank report as major reasons for staggering poor performance by the public sector enterprises.

Nearly all revenue-earning corporations suffer from revenue pilferage and irregularities in the collection system, the report says. "This usually arises from collusive deals between employees and consumers."

Revenue pilferage and irregularities in the collection system could be minimised with a rigorous system of

checks and detection followed up by exemplary punishment, recommends the report.

On the labour situation, the report observes that labour is the most "intractable" problem now confronting the PEs. Because of "politicisation of trade unions" normal labour rules are unenforceable and labourers are "beyond control," it further notes.

Overstaffing afflicts nearly all PEs, almost 50 per cent in Railway and BADC, says the bank report adding, "it is often linked to nepotism and other irregularities."

To enforce credit discipline, suggests World Bank, PE borrowings from the banking system must be against their "credit worthiness," with no government guarantees.

According to the report, about 90 per cent of the PE financing, which totalled Tk 2,670 crore in 1990-91, came either direct from the government or as borrowings from nationalised banks under government guarantee.

World Bank calls for political will to introduce competitive pricing and cost recovery for products and services of the Public Enterprises.

Problems of PEs cannot remain "insuperable," views the bank, if there is political commitment to reform at the highest political levels.

## Docs at refugee camps go without salary

From Farid Hossain  
 COX'S BAZAR, Mar 23: Doctors and health workers dispatched for the Rohingya refugees are unhappy because of non-payment of their salaries and other benefits for past three months.

Talking to this correspondent some doctors said they would be forced to leave the refugee camps if the salaries were not disbursed before Eid-ul-Fitr.

More than 150 doctors and health workers, drawn from Upazila Health Complexes in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Comilla, are working in the 11 camps set up for the Rohingya refugees who have fled into Bangladesh to escape the atrocities of Myanmar's military government.

The doctors said they were

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5,000 DCC workers not likely to get strike-period salary

By Staff Correspondent  
 Some 5,000 muster roll workers of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) have become the victim of this month's strike and would not get their salary of striking period, a DCC source said Monday.

"As they worked under 'no work no pay basis' so it is not possible for the authorities to pay that seven days' salary," a senior official of DCC told The Daily Star.

Some 10,000 employees of DCC went on a strike on March 9 demanding implementation of national pay scale for them. Five thousand of them, mostly cleaners and squad labourers, are not the permanent workers of the corporation.

"We employed fresh people in their place to keep the city clean and paid the freshers their daily dues", he said adding that "we can't pay twice for the same job."

The seven days' salary of 5,000 employees amounts to about Taka 15 lakh.

The employees were terminated but were reinstated

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Public trial Panel of Judges 'primarily finalised'

By Asiuzzaman  
 The panel of Judges to try Jamaat Ameer Golam Azam in the people's court has been primarily finalised by the National Coordination Committee for realisation of the spirit of the Liberation War and resistance to the killers and collaborators of 1971, committee sources said Monday.

Senior lawyer Shawkat Ali Khan or Shafique Ahmed may head the 15-member panel, the source requesting anonymity said adding that Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Gazul

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## With Azam's trial begins trial of all collaborators: Jahanara Imam

By Staff Correspondent  
 Jahanara Imam said Monday that the present movement to try Golam Azam in the 'people's court' was the beginning of a long struggle to try all those who collaborated with the Pakistan occupation forces during the War of Independence in 1971.

Jahanara Imam, convener of committee for realisation of

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## Jamaat hatching conspiracy to foil trial: Hasina

Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned against any attack on the pro-liberation forces and said such actions would not go unchallenged, reports UNB.

Hasina said Jamaat is hatching conspiracy to foil the trial and called upon all to remain vigilant against such act.

She was addressing a meeting organised by Gopalganj Mohila Awami League unit

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## Delhi to sack BJP govt if it demolishes mosque for temple

NEW DELHI, Mar 23: The Indian government Monday threatened to dismiss a state administration if it went ahead with plans to construct a Hindu temple at a site also claimed by Muslims, reports AFP.

Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan held out the warning in parliament here after the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian people's party) said it was committed to building the temple to the Hindu god Rama in the northern town of Ayodhya.

Chavan said the BJP-controlled government in Uttar Pradesh state, which administers Ayodhya, could not raise a temple for Hindu lord Rama by destroying the 16th century mosque in the riverside town.

"If any state government does not follow the centre's directive, there will be no alternative left but to take recourse" to constitutional measures and sack the provincial administration, the minister added.

He said he had no objection to the construction of the Rama shrine, "because I am also a Hindu and a religious person, but the temple cannot be constructed by demolishing the mosque."

"Nothing should be done to create an impression that you are moving slowly towards the demolition of the mosque", Chavan said in the Upper House, looking toward members of the BJP.

The statement came a day

after Hindu activists began breaking down parts of two Hindu temples, shops and houses near the disputed site in Ayodhya ahead of the proposed construction of a grand Rama temple.

Newspapers said the demolitions were carried out peacefully.

The proposed shrine would rest on a site which houses a mosque built by the Emperor Babar in the 16th century. Muslims who form India's

largest religious minority, say they will not allow the mosque to be shifted or damaged.

Hindus say the temple site cannot be changed as it is the birthplace of Rama. The row has sparked numerous Hindu-Muslim riots in India, leaving hundreds dead and injured.

But BJP leaders told parliament their party had taken power in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, on the promise of raising the shrine, and would keep the

pledge.

"We have a mandate from the people to build the shrine", said BJP MP S C Dixit, who is also a senior member of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or world Hindu council).

The remark triggered an uproar in the bicameral house.

Dixit's remarks led to protests from the MPs of the ruling Congress (I) party as well as centrist and left-wing MPs who have repeatedly called for talks to end the controversy.

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