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The Daily Star

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NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleda hosts Iftar party

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Wednesday hosted an iftar party for the leaders of political parties and diplomats at her Sugandha office. Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, some ministers and high officials attended the iftar, reports BSS.

List of refugees handed over

The eighth installment of the list of Myanmar Muslim refugees numbering 7,966 was handed over to the Embassy of Myanmar here Wednesday for necessary action by Yangon authorities, according to a Foreign Office spokesman. The list of 46, 973 Rohingya refugees have so far been handed over to the Myanmar authorities with the eighth installment, he said, reports BSS.

Rafeuddin new ESCAP chief

BANGKOK, Apr 1: United Nations Under Secretary General Rafeuddin Ahmed took up his new post today as head of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), a UN statement said. Ahmed, 59, a native of Pakistan, replaced S A M S Kibria as chief of the Bangkok based regional body, reports AFP.

Meet on open university held

A high-level meeting was held here yesterday to discuss matters relating to the proposed open university and make recommendations to the cabinet. Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar presided over the meeting, said an official handout, reports UNB.

Sheri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	April	Sheri	Iftar
27	2	4:28 pm	6:21 pm
28	3	4:28 pm	6:21 pm



Police investigators at Shitol departmental store soon after the dacoits fled with the loot.

— Star photo

About 50 shoppers also robbed Gunmen loot departmental store

By Staff Correspondent

Gunmen looted over Taka 15 lakh 13 thousand and 285 worth of goods, including gold ornaments and also cash, from a departmental store near Hatirpool in the city. The dacoits also robbed the in-house shoppers of their belongings in a daring heist Wednesday evening. Five persons were injured in the incident.

About two dozen men, armed with revolvers and sten-

guns, burst into the Shitol Departmental Store at the Sonargaon Road at around 7.30 pm.

At gunpoint, they then looted gold ornaments watches, sarees, cosmetics and cash and also robbed about 50 shoppers present in the store during the raid lasting half an hour. It could not be immediately known how much they robbed from the customers. They escaped in a red pri-

vate car and a jeep firing shots and blasting crackers while doing so.

According to M Munir Hossain, a salesman in the store, gunmen numbering about 24 forced their way into and took control of the store cornering the salesmen and the buyers and keeping them hostage.

Another salesman said that several of the gunmen had earlier entered the shop in the

guise of shoppers and brandished their weapons when their accomplices entered the shop and took control of the entrance.

The gunmen took off with 180 tolas of gold, 135 watches Taka 1,19,000 in cash and sarees and cosmetics worth about Taka 60,000, the store owner, M Shakil claimed.

Witnesses said that the armed men also held the 50 or

Golam Azam may be declared stateless

By Asiuzzaman

Jamaat-E-Islami's controversial chief Golam Azam may be declared a stateless person in a government bid to defuse growing tension surrounding him, a well placed political source hinted Wednesday.

"Azam will very soon be treated as a stateless person under the Citizenship Act formulated during Pakistan rule in 1953," the source said adding "The ministry of law and the Home Ministry are preparing necessary papers."

The source who declined to be identified told The Daily Star that a representative of the Law Ministry had talks with the leaders of the Jamaat-E-Islami over the issue.

A retired Judge is said to be negotiating between the government and the Jamaat.

The source said that Jamaat leaders are still insisting on the restoration of their leader's citizenship which they said "was a promise of the gov-

ernment of Begum Khaleda Zia."

Minister of Law and Justice Mirza Golam Hafiz when contacted over telephone declined to comment on the issue saying "I will not reply now."

The government is also keeping in touch with the 'Chatak Dalal' (Nirmul Committee) for trial committee members for a 'reasonable' solution to the crisis, the source added.

The committee is learnt to be firm in its stance that the opinion of the 'public trial' should be implemented that Azam should be charged under the International Criminal Act 1973, supported by the Constitution.

The other political parties and alliances that have supported the committee discarded the world 'expulsion' from their public speeches and replaced it with punishment.

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PM assures security of newsmen

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Wednesday assured all-out support of her government for ensuring security of newsmen and newspaper offices, reports UNB.

The assurance came when representatives of the Committee to Resist Attack on Newspaper Offices and Protect Freedom of the Press called on Begum Zia at her office in the morning.

Leaders of Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad, Editors Council, BFUJ, DUJ, Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Press Samik Federation and Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Karmachari Federation formed the joint committee in a meeting on March 29 in the wake of attacks on several newspaper offices following the March 26 public trial of Prof Golam Azam in a people's court.

The 12-member committee includes Barrister Moinal Hussein as convener, Saraulah Noori and Reazuddin Ahmed as

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Salinity in Bhairab threatens KNM

By Inam Ahmed

The high level of salinity in the Bhairab river costs about Taka two crore each year to the Khulna Newsprint Mills (KNM).

The salinity in the river has reached a level which surpasses the tolerance level of the mill by a wide range.

It reached an alarming 3600 parts per million (PPM) on March 21 this year. The maximum tolerance level for KNM is only 40 PPM.

Mill sources said due to this rise in salinity, the mill has to fetch water for its plant from 30 miles upstream. Carrying of water by barges costs the mill Taka 125 for each ton of newsprint produced. The mill requires about 400 tons of water a day.

Other than the carrying charges of water, the salinity is also causing extensive damage to the machinery. The mill

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'People's court' organisers must face trial: Huda

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda urged all to refrain from any activity that "amount to interference in the established judicial system in the country and provokes people" to do the same, reports BSS.

Exchanging views with the editors of national dailies and news agencies at a meeting yesterday on the prevailing situation in the political arena arising out of the 'Gana Adalat', the minister said the present democratic government is determined to uphold the rule of law.

He said publication of various news items in the name of implementation of the 'verdict of the so-called people's court would certainly hinder the independent functioning of the judiciary.'

The minister said "Prof Golam Azam and the so-called people's court has been brought under the jurisdiction of the country's judicial system and those would be resolved through the application of existing laws of the lands"

Barrister Huda said newspapers should not publish anything that might affect the independence of judiciary and influence or obstruct the process of law.

He said publication of various news items in the name of implementation of the 'verdict of the so-called people's court would certainly hinder the independent functioning of the judiciary.'

The Information Minister

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UNDP report on human development in Bangladesh

Underemployment seen as brake on choices

By Mahfuz Ullah

The deprivation, in different spheres of life, suffered by the majority of people in Bangladesh places the country at the bottom in terms of human development in the region.

The reason for the low level of human development has been attributed to large-scale underemployment of the labour force and low wages.

This has been stated in the report Human Development in Bangladesh-local action under national constraints published very recently by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh country office. The report has been prepared as a follow-up to the Human Development Report being published yearly by the UNDP since 1990.

The UNDP has defined human development as a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical choices are the ones that can lead to a long and healthy life, to an education and to the enjoyment of a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect.

The international edition of the Human Development Report has already earned acclaim for the UNDP. In the report for 1991 the UNDP introduced a new indicator called Human Development Index (HDI) to measure the level of development achieved by a particular country. The HDI is strongly linked to the degree of freedom enjoyed by an individual citizen and it was observed that freedom was one of the pre-conditions to achieve development. The present country report was prepared

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UN Under Secretary General for Human Affairs and Secretary General's Special Envoy Jan K Eliasson at a Rohingya Refugee camp in Cox's Bazar listening to the harrowing tales from the women who have been violated by Myanmar troops. —PID photo

Privatise seed control: WB

World Bank has asked the government to move rapidly toward liberalisation and privatisation of production, import, improvement and marketing of improved seeds for boosting agricultural production in the country, reports UNB.

A WB report, prepared for the coming Aid Bangladesh Consortium meeting in Paris, says privatisation, as provided in the country's new seed policy, will work as a catalyst for agriculture intensification and developing a seed industry.

Suggesting reaffirmation of government's commitment to the seed policy approved by the National Seed Board in

1990, the bank report says it (policy) held the promise of far-reaching reforms at the operational level.

More than a year has elapsed since initial approval of the new seed policy, but implementation of the reform programme has stalled, noted World Bank, the sponsor of the Paris Consortium meet scheduled for April 21-22.

Following are the policy reforms suggested in the seed policy.

For seed production, the private sector should be encouraged to undertake breeding and multiplication, while BADC should concentrate primarily on producing founda-

tion seeds for a group of 'controlled' crops—rice, wheat, jute, potatoes and sugarcane.

The Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation should be phased out of seed multiplication by leasing farms to the private sector to carry out multiplication on a contract basis.

Registered private sector seed producers should also have direct access to breeder and foundation seeds from research institutions.

With regard to marketing, BADC should withdraw from upazila-level sales and serve only as a wholesaler to private

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'Exodus must stop'

From Masud Hassan Khan

DUMDUMIA (Cox's Bazar), Apr 1: United Nation Special Envoy Jan K Eliasson Wednesday said that he would request the Myanmar government to take appropriate measures to stop exodus of its citizens from Rakhaine (Arakan) province to Bangladesh.

The UN Under Secretary General for Human Affairs also said that he would inform Yangon the plight of the refugees known as Rohingya Muslims now living in different refugee camps in southeastern district of Cox's Bazar.

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UN ready to play catalytic role in finding solution

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 1: UN Emissary Jan K Eliasson said here today United Nations was ready to play catalytic role in finding negotiated settlement of the refugee problem provided Bangladesh and Myanmar make such a request.

Talking to BSS after his visit to some of the Myanmar refugee camps here, UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs said, "the main purpose of my visit is to

get a concrete view of the problem." Giving his immediate reaction of the plight of the refugees he said, "I had interesting and moving experience."

Describing his visit to Dechuspalong -2 and Dandama -2 refugee camps as very rewarding experiences and important, Eliasson said, "the figures I heard in reports are now translated into human

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'As none raised demand during JP rule...'

Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury called Wednesday for an early solution of the Golam Azam controversy, saying that any procrastination on the issue will only invite chaos and conflict, reports UNB.

The government has two choices - either to grant him (Golam Azam) citizenship or ban Jamaat's politics for making a foreign national its chief," JP leader told a group of journalists at his Gulshan residence on Wednesday evening.

Commenting on the situation arising out of the people's court verdict on March 26, Chowdhury said the ruling party had failed to take the 'right decision at the right time' the situation may deteriorate if the government fails to take immediate decision on this issue, he added.

The JP leader said the ruling BNP was divided on the question of Golam Azam and, as a result, the government was forced to detain him in jail.

He mentioned the sharing of seats between Jamaat and BNP, Jamaat's support to Begum Zia in forming the government after the last parliamentary elections, and the subsequent election of Golam Azam as the Anser of Jamaat-E-Islami.

The "undeclared understanding" between the two

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Li Peng's policy guidelines face no-confidence

BEIJING, Apr 1: Chinese Premier Li Peng's position looked increasingly tenuous today after top leaders delivered an effective no-confidence vote over his government policy guidelines, reports AFP.

The Presidium of the National People's Congress (NPC) decided Monday in a draft resolution that Li should alter his policy to include senior leader Deng Xiaoping's recent denunciation of hard-line Maoist errors.

In a related development the Chinese parliament's Presidium also deleted an anti-

western reference in a report made Saturday by China's top procurator.

Li's government work report, delivered March 20 to the NPC's opening session, failed to mention a warning by Deng that conservative Marxists posed the main threat to reform.

The NPC Presidium decided that the Soviet-trained Premier should add to his report: "We must guard against rightism, but most important is preventing 'leftism' as we eliminate all obstacles." A copy of the resolution was

obtained by AFP. The Presidium includes Deng and other top state, government and army leaders.

Deng's attack on conservatives, who have hindered reform since the 1989 Tiananmen square crackdown, was approved by the Communist Party Politburo at a meeting last month but was conspicuously absent from Li's report.

Deng, 87, made a series of policy-setting speeches in January and February that called for accelerated reform and gave the stamp of approval

to limited use of western-style capitalism.

Since then, Li, who favours conservative central planning, has become increasingly isolated from the new reform drive and his days could be numbered, analysts and diplomats here said.

That legislators should demand such a key change on so fundamental an ideological argument that has dominated much of the NPC session is viewed here as a massive rebuff to the Premier.

Politburo member Qiao Shi criticized Li's report last week, saying it was only an

'initial study' of Deng's instructions while a number of NPC delegates have also charged Li with not going far enough.

Qiao said the government report had been revised several times before it was delivered, indicating that strong resistance prevented the inclusion of Deng's attack on conservative ideology.

Li is the leader most closely associated with the military crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy movement and is disliked by many Chinese. Pro-reform economists have