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NEWS BRIEFS

JS body on Foreign Affairs meets

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs held a meeting Saturday at the committee room of the Jatiya Sangsad with Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman in the chair. The meeting discussed the latest situation of the Rohingya refugees and upcoming visit of Myanmar Foreign Minister U Ohn Oyaw. The meeting was informed that till Saturday morning, 1,96,219 Rohingya refugees have been registered, reports BSS.

DU classes resume

The classes of Dhaka University resumed Saturday after 18 days of Eid-ul-Fitr vacation. The Administrative Building and library also worked Saturday. The University was closed on March 18 on account of Jumatal-Wida, Shabe-e-Kadr and Eid-ul-Fitr, reports BSS.

Hasina greets John Major

Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina Saturday felicitated British Prime Minister John Major on the 'magnificent victory of his Conservative Party in the Thursday's general elections in Britain. "We consider it as a well-deserved personal triumph for you... we hope that your continued stewardship would usher in a new era of affluence, peace and progress for the friendly British people," she said in a message of greetings to Prime Minister John Major, reports BSS.

'Plea to offer Esteskar Namaz'

Bangladesh Secrat Mission President Moulana Shah Abdus Sattar Saturday appealed to the Muslims to offer 'Esteskar Namaz' for rains. In a statement, the Secrat Mission chief urged the Muslims to assemble in an open field of their respective area and say 'two-rakat' Esteskar prayer in jamaat, reports BSS.

Saifur pleads for Tk 1800 cr fresh taxes

The exchequer needs at least Tk 1,800 crore in fresh taxes in the coming budget in addition to the current fiscal's revenue projection, said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday, reports UNB.

The additional revenue has to be collected to meet inevitable spending by the government, he said while addressing the 13th meeting of the Consultative Committee of the National Board of Revenue.

The Finance Minister sought suggestions from the private sector on how this additional amount could be taxed in a rational revenue structure.

Representatives from all the leading chambers and trade bodies across the country attended the day-long meet in the conference room of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

NBR Chairman Nurul Hossain Khan and senior officials of the Board were present to answer to the private sector people who repeatedly asked for various exemptions and recast of the tax structure.

Saifur Rahman agreed with the private sector trade body leaders that income tax slab and duty structure need to be made more reasonable and pragmatic.

The BNP government is pledge-bound to support export-led growth, he said, and necessary rationalisation was being worked out in tariff structure.

But, at the same time, he pointed to a chronic apathy of country's businessmen to pay tax.

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Khaleda tells party MPs on Azam issue BNP respects both people, rule of law

Leader of the House Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has made it clear to her party MPs that the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) would uphold the spirit of the War of Liberation and the rule of law.

Begum Zia made the assertion Saturday while addressing the meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party.

Party sources said that she gave enough indications to the MPs that the BNP would neither go against the decision of the court on Golam Azam nor would it show any disregard to the public sentiment. 'BNP is not above the sentiment of the people' she said emphatically.

Begum Zia, according to sources, refuted the 'so-called accusations' of breaching commitments made by the Jamaat against her party and observed that the support extended by the Jamaat to the BNP was 'no charity'. Jamaat, she said, before supporting the BNP desperately tried to work out a formula with the Awami League and the Jatiya Party but failed.

About 160 MPs of the ruling party attended the three-and-a-half-hour meeting presided over by Begum Zia. Senior party leaders were present and

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AL to press Sangsad for executing Mar 26 verdict

Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) Saturday decided to press the Treasury Bench in Parliament for executing the March 26 verdict of "People's Court" on controversial Jamaat leader Golam Azam, reports UNB.

The decision came at the ALPP meeting held in the conference room of the Leader of the Opposition at Sangsad Bhaban Saturday evening.

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who returned home from abroad yesterday chaired the meeting. It was attended, among others, by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim and Matia Chowdhury.

Briefing reporters, opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim said the meeting discussed in detail the major political and socio-economic issues, including Golam Azam, Indemnity Ordinance, Myanmar refugees, drought in northern region, diesel crisis, price-hike of commodities and law and order situation.

He said ALPP would be cajoling the government party to execute the verdict pronounced in the People's Court that Golam Azam deserves capital punishment for his war crimes.

Replying to a question, he said Awami League had talks with other opposition groups in parliament to initiate a united move on this vital question. Parliament sits today (Sunday).

Nasim told a questioner that Jatiya Party was requested to come out with a clear cut decision on the Golam Azam issue.

Experts say 'Jamaat also violated Constitution'

By Nurul Kabir

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh has also violated the Constitution of the country by electing Golam Azam, a foreigner, its Ameer as he (Azam) has violated the Constitution by being the chief of the party said legal experts.

Golam Azam, a Pakistani citizen, was elected to the top post of Jamaat by the party's Majlis-e-Sura (executive committee) last December.

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Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman receiving Saudi Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz at ZIA yesterday. —PID photo



Sit-in demonstration of female peasants in front of the National Press Club in the city Saturday. —Star photo

Woman peasants stage sit-in 14 more die of diarrhoea in southern districts

Bangladesh Kishani Shabha (forum for women peasants of Bangladesh) Saturday staged a one-day sit-in demonstration in front of the National Press Club demanding distribution of khas lands among the landless by the government.

The demonstration was attended by about 3000 female supporters.

Shabha president Dr Dolly Samsunnahar informed the press that the sit-in demonstration would continue till 10 am today.

She demanded that the Prime Minister should come to the demonstration place to receive the Shabha's 14 point memorandum.

The 14-point-demand asks among others that problems of poor landless peasants should be solved, equal rights be established for the women-folk and rehabilitation of them by providing government khas land.

The supporters of the Shabha belonging to the landless class, hailed from Barisal, Galachipa, Patuakhali, Bhola, Dinajpur, Mymensingh, and other far away places. Some tribal 'Sautal' supporters also came from Chapainawabganj.

Placards depicting women's

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Saudi Prince assures more aid for Rohingyas

Saudi Prince Khaled bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz said here yesterday that Saudi Arabia would provide increased relief to the Myanmar refugees, reports BSS.

Prince Khaled who arrived here on a four-day official visit also told newsmen at Zia International Airport, "I share the joy and sadness with the people of Bangladesh."

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman received him at the airport.

Asked if he was carrying any special message for the Rohingya Muslims, Prince Khaled said, "Our heart has always been with the refugees. He said the feeling of Saudi people was always with the people of Bangladesh in their hour of need."

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JS goes into session today

Parliament goes into its summer session at 3 pm today, which is expected to be a shortest duration lasting only four working days, reports UNB.

The session may witness some stormy debates on several major issues, including the controversial Jamaat chief Golam Azam, repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance, price spiral of essentials and deteriorating law and order.

Parliament Secretariat sources said that the business of the House on the opening day will include obituary references, election to the panel of the Public Service Commission Report-91.

A bill, titled "The Court of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment), 1992" is likely to be introduced (Sunday).

Decide fate of Azam in JS, CPB urges MPs

By Staff Correspondent

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Saturday urged all members of Parliament to take a specific decision on the trial of Golam Azam in the Jatiya Sangsad.

A meeting of the CPB Parliamentary Party in a resolution hoped that the Jatiya Sangsad which is accountable to the people would respect the people's verdict on Golam Azam.

Chaired by the CPB Parliamentary Party leader Shamsuddoha the meeting demanded of the government to execute the judgement of the people's court which pronounced the death sentence for war crimes.

Held at the Party Parliamentary Office, the meeting accused Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front of unleashing

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Govt to appeal against HC judgement on trial body

By Staff Correspondent

The government will appeal to the Supreme Court against the judgement of the High Court that directed the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) to grant anticipatory bail to the 24 sponsors of the people's court, a well-placed government source informed.

A petition on behalf of the government would be moved in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court after the verdict of a two-member High Court Division Bench is officially recorded and forwarded to the CMM Court, the source said on condition of anonymity.

The Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Anwarul Haq and Justice MA Karim gave its judgement on March 31 after a two-day hearing of a petition moved by the 24 persons.

The High Court, applying its inherent power, ordered the CMM Court to grant bail to the 24, after their formal surrender in the court, until the hearing of the case ends.

The CMM Court has no jurisdiction to grant bail on charges relating to sedition

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New UK cabinet

LONDON, Apr 11: Newly-elected Conservative Prime Minister John Major today named his new government, promoting his former rival Michael Heseltine to trade and industry, and sacking the home secretary, reports AFP.

Major replaced Home Secretary Kenneth Baker with Kenneth Clarke.

Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd kept his post as Foreign Secretary and Norman Lamont, who had appeared threatened over his handling of the economy, kept his post as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Two women received cabinet posts for the first time in the major reshuffle which affected a large number of cabinet posts.

Virginia Bottomley was promoted from Health Minister to Secretary of State for Health, replacing William Waldegrave, demoted for a gaffe during the election campaign.

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Jamaat warns Govt Release Azam, or face movement

By Staff Correspondent

The Jamaat-e-Islami has warned the government of a mass movement if its chief Prof Golam Azam is not released immediately and unconditionally.

The Jamaat also announced a march towards the Jatiya Sangsad today (Sunday) at 2.30 pm from its central office at Moghbazar to handover a memorandum demanding Azam's release.

The announcement came at a rally on "demand day" at Baiful Moharram north gate in which the Acting Ameer of the Jamaat, Abbas Ali Khan said that the government had bowed down to the public trial holders as none of the members were arrested even after

cases were filed against them.

He termed the public trial holders "anti-independence" elements and said that time would soon come when he would call for forming committees in every village and every area to resist "foreign expansionism".

The Secretary General of Jamaat, Matur Rahman Nizami who also addressed the rally said that if the government decides to deport Golam Azam, the people will not tolerate it. He alleged that the government arrested Azam only to please the opposition.

Nizami said that the public trial was a Zionist conspiracy against Islam and urged the

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