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The Daily Star

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 36, MOTUHELL C.A. DHAKA

VOL. II NO. 85 REGD. NO. DA 784

CHAITRA 30, 1398 BS,

DHAKA MONDAY APRIL 13, 1992

SAWAL 9, 1412 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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NEWS BRIEFS

**More leaders
 greet Biswas**

More world leaders have fel-
 icitated President Abdur Rah-
 man Biswas on the holy oc-
 casion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

The messages were sent by
 King of Saudi Arabia and cus-
 todian of the two holy mosques
 Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud,
 Turkish President Turgut Ozal,
 Tunisian President Zine El-
 Abidine Ben Ali, Saudi Crown
 Prince and Deputy Prince
 Minister Abdullah Bin Abdul-
 llaziz al-Saud and Egyptian
 Foreign Minister AMR Mossa,
 reports BSS.

**Chinese CP team
 due today**

A six-member high level
 delegation of the central com-
 mittee of the Chinese
 Communist Party led by Jang
 Guang Hua, Deputy Chief of the
 International Liaison Commit-
 tee of the party, arrives here
 today at the invitation of Prime
 Minister and BNP Chairperson
 Begum Khaleda Zia. During
 their eight-day visit to Bang-
 ladesh the Chinese delegation
 will meet Prime Minister
 Begum Khaleda Zia and other
 BNP leaders and exchange
 views on bilateral, interna-
 tional and other matter of
 mutual interest, reports BSS.

**Baishakhi Mela at
 Dhanmondi Club**

Baishakhi Mela 1399 will be
 held at Dhanmondi Club
 ground under the auspices of
 design centre of BSCIC. The
 Mela will continue for seven
 days from 1st Baishakh (April
 14) to 7th Baishakh (April 21),
 Reports BSS.

**Nakshi Kantha
 exhibition**

A two week-long exhibition
 of Nakshi Kantha will be in-
 augurated at the Shilpakala
 Academy tomorrow. The ex-
 hibition will be organised jointly
 by the Academy and Bang-
 ladesh Rural Advancement
 Committee (BRAC) on the oc-
 casion of Pahaia Baishakh, re-
 ports UNB.

JS summer session opens Speaker's decision on Golam Azam likely

By Staff Correspondent

The summer session of
 Jatiya Sangsad will either
 adopt a resolution or get a
 decision from the Speaker on the
 Golam Azam issue.

This was stated by the
 Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali
 yesterday while allowing a
 three-hour general discussion
 on 'Golam Azam and people's
 court' on the opening day of
 the session.

Opposition Awami League
 leader Tofael Ahmed, Jatiya
 Party leader Mizanur Rahman
 Chowdhury, Jamaat-e-Islami's
 Maulana Abdus Sobhan and
 treasury bench member Col
 (Retd) Akbar Hossain took part
 in the inconclusive debate
 which will continue today
 when the session resumes at 4
 in the afternoon.

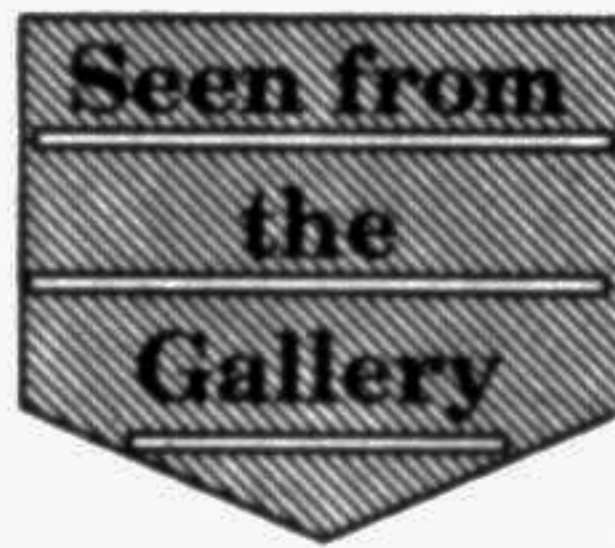
Earlier, Speaker Shaikh
 Razzak Ali, armed with his
 residuary powers under rule
 316 of the Rules of Procedure,
 allowed three-hour general
 discussion in response to ad-
 journment motions moved by
 as many as 47 MPs on the
 question of Golam Azam and
 the 'people's court' verdict.
 Prior to the start of formal
 discussion on the issue, leader
 of the opposition Sheikh
 Hasina told the chair that the
 nation had already pronounced
 their decision on the matter.
 Now it is the parliament's turn
 to implement the decision,
 she added.

In her brief speech, the
 Awami League chief reminded
 the House that this parliament
 was established through a mass

movement. So it must enact
 law to execute the people's
 verdict on Golam Azam.

In their pre-discussion
 speeches, Shajahan Siraj of the
 JSD, Rashed Khan Menon of
 the Workers Party, Salahuddin
 Kader Choudhury of the NDP,
 and Moudud Ahmed of the
 Jatiya Party sought guidelines
 from the Speaker on dis-
 cussing the matter.

Taking the floor, infor-
 mation Minister Nazmul Huda
 opposed opening of the
 discussion saying both the
 issues — Golam Azam and the
 people's court — were sub-
 jective. The Speaker differed
 with Huda and allowed the
 discussion urging the mem-
 bers to deliver constructive
 See Page 12 Col 1



By Mahfuz Ullah

It was pleasing to see them
 after a break of 53 days and
 most of them were in white,
 wearing the traditional pajama
 and punjabi. It was probably
 the Eid trend or just a protec-
 tion against the humid and un-
 bearable heat.

But the MPs, as they en-
 tered the House were in a
 jovial mood, exchanging greet-
 ings and embracing each
 other. The white, neverthe-
 less, was no symbol of any
 peace initiative.

Everyone, specially those in
 the gallery, had in mind that
 they would be joining a politi-
 cal battle soon, to settle the
 issue of Golam Azam.

The galleries were full of
 visitors and the attendance in
 See Page 12 Col 7

Drought turns for worse in Kurigram

By S Y Bakht

KURIGRAM, Apr 12: A pro-
 longed dry spell and a contin-
 uing heat wave have worsened
 the drought in recent days
 threatening standing crops
 throughout the district.

Temperature in the district
 is hovering over the mid-30
 degree Celsius level for more
 than a month. Residents in the
 Sadar upazila pointed out that
 there had been no rainfall in
 the area for nearly six months.

The scorching sun that
 baked the ground had wilted
 standing crops in the region as
 ponds, streams, rivers have
 dried up and the sub-soil water
 level has receded making irri-
 gation difficult.

The situation is being ag-
 gravated due to the short sup-
 ply of diesel and loadshedding.
 According to Water Deve-
 lopment Board officials, the
 water level in all three major
 rivers, Dharla, Teesta and
 Brahmaputra, running through
 the district has fallen sharply
 in recent weeks severely af-
 fecting irrigation in the area
 and also navigation.

District agriculture depart-
 ment officials said that the
 broadcast Aus, Ropa Aman,
 wheat, Boro, jute and other dry
 season crops will be severely
 affected if there is no rainfall
 within the next few days.
 See Page 12 Col 7

Saudi Prince donates \$1 m for Rohingyas Riyadh to help create world pressure

Visiting Saudi prince
 Khaled Bin Sultan Bin Abdul
 Aziz Sunday assured that Saudi
 Arabia will always stand by the
 side of Bangladesh under any
 circumstances, reports UNB.

The assurance came when
 the Saudi prince, now on a 4-
 day visit to Bangladesh, called
 on Prime Minister Begum
 Khaleda Zia at her office
 Sunday morning.

Prince Khaled said that his
 country would create an inter-
 national pressure for early
 return of Rohingya Muslim
 refugees to Myanmar.

King Fahd has taken all
 necessary steps to help
 Bangladesh in this regard, he
 said. "We will try for a perma-
 nent solution to the Rohingya
 refugee problem", the visiting
 prince added.

Recalling the participation
 of Bangladesh troops in the
 Gulf war against Iraq, Prince
 Khaled — who was a com-
 mander of the joint forces
 against Iraqi invasion of
 Kuwait — said he was happy to
 see for himself the country and
 people who fought shoulder to
 shoulder with the Saudi forces.

He lauded the efficiency
 and discipline of Bangladesh
 forces displayed during the
 war.

Prince Khaled also an-
 nounced a personal donation of
 one million US dollar for the
 Rohingya Muslim refugees.
 This is apart from other Saudi
 aid.

Begum Zia said the visit of
 the Prince will strengthen the
 existing ties between the two
 countries. She said Saudi
 Arabia is a close friend of
 Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi soldiers, she
 said, are not only efficient in
 war fields, but also in other
 fields of humanitarian tasks. In

this context, she mentioned
 the army's role during cyclone
 and other natural calamities
 when they stood by the people.

The Prime Minister
 thanked King Fahd for assis-
 tance to the Rohingyas refugees
 as well as for the Muslim
 Ummah as a whole. She re-
 called the Saudi hospitality
 during her visit last year.

Principal Secretary to the
 Prime Minister, Hasan Ahmed,
 and Chief of Army Staff Lt
 General Nuruddin Khan were
 present during the meeting.

Suggestion for cut in job quota for FFs

By Staff Correspondent

The Public Service Com-
 mission (PSC) has proposed to
 reduce the quota of freedom
 fighters and increase the quota
 of women for entry to different
 government jobs.

This has been stated in the
 Annual Report of the PSC for
 1991 placed in the Jatiya
 Sangsad yesterday.

Analysing the number of
 freedom fighter candidates
 appearing for the civil service
 examinations in different years
 the report observes that their
 availability has fallen from 7.4
 per cent in 1982 to 0.08 per
 cent in 1989-90.

Over the period under re-
 view seven examinations were
 conducted by the PSC and the
 quota reserved for freedom
 fighters remained at 30 per
 cent.

Justifying its arguments for
 reducing the quota of the free-
 dom fighters, the report says
 See Page 12 Col 3

'Torture' on Ershad Rule issued on govt

A division bench of the
 High Court yesterday issued
 rule on the Home Secretary to
 show cause within two weeks,
 why the alleged 'torture, cru-
 city and ill-treatment' being
 meted out to former President
 HM Ershad now in prison
 should not be declared un-
 lawful, reports BSS.

A writ petition was filed by
 S M Abdus Salam, a Tadbirkar
 of the former President was
 filed challenging 'illegal and
 unlawful solitary confinement'
 of H M Ershad in the Dhaka
 Central Jail.

The bench comprised
 Justice M Abdul Jalil and
 Justice Kazi Ebadul Haq.
 The court also ordered the
 respondent why he should not
 withdraw his order of solitary
 confinement of the former
 President.

Moudud Ahmed and Kazi
 Shahadat Hossain appeared on
 behalf of the petitioner while
 Deputy Attorney General Sha-
 hjanah Ahmed appeared for
 the state.

Major obstacles to Afghan peace removed: Sharif

ISLAMABAD, Apr 12: Prime
 Minister Nawaz Sharif said
 Saturday that the make up of
 an interim council replacing
 the present Kabul regime
 would be finalised soon to the
 satisfaction of the Afghan peo-
 ple, reports AFP.

"All major obstacles to the
 Afghan peace have now been
 removed" and both Pakistanis
 and Afghans would soon hear
 the good news, he said.

"We are very close to
 achieving the objectives of the
 Afghan Jihad (Holy War), Sharif
 told reporters here.

Meanwhile sources in
 Pakistani military intelligence,
 which for 13 years extended
 assistance to the US-backed
 Afghan Resistance, said there
 would not be any name on the
 council which did not occur on
 the lists various Mujahideen
 parties provided to the UN.

Sharif, downplaying opposi-
 tion voiced by some hardline
 guerrilla leaders, said most
 resistance chiefs had endorsed
 the UN plan.

The UN Secretary General
 Boutros Boutros-Ghali an-
 nounced in Geneva on Friday
 that the 15-member "pre-
 transitional" council would re-
 place the government of
 President Najibullah who had
 already agreed to step down by
 the end of this month.

"We have overcome all ma-
 jor obstacles and only modali-
 ties are to be finalised," Sharif
 said.

"We should all pray for the
 success of the plan," he said,
 describing it as Pakistan's
 "very big achievement."

500 houses gutted in Lalbagh

By Staff Correspondent
 About 500 thatched houses
 were gutted in a devastating
 fire that broke out in a slum at
 Shaheed Nagar, Lalbagh in the
 city Sunday night.

The fire, originated from a
 house in the slum at around
 9.40 pm, and spread to the ad-
 joining homesteads.

Fire Service men from five
 stations rushed to the spot and
 brought the blaze under con-
 trol after half an hour.

Two hurt as Jamaat, trial body supporters clash

By Staff Correspondent
 Two persons were injured
 and several shops and vehicles
 damaged in a clash between
 two rival groups of political ac-
 tivists at Mogbazar in the city
 Sunday.

The injured persons were
 identified as Ripon and Abdus
 Salam, activists of Bangladesh
 Chhatra League and Juba Leag-
 ue respectively.

4 Jamaat leaders held in Habiganj

HABIGANJ Apr 12: Police
 arrested four leaders of the
 district Jamaat-e-Islami, in-
 cluding its Ameer Syed Shah
 Alam, Saturday night, reports
 UNB.

Three others arrested are
 Advocate Abdus Shaheed,
 Noman ibne Anjum and Md
 Abdul Jalil.



OFFLIMITS: Police blocked JS-bound processions of trial body near Bangla Motor (top) and of Jamaat near Sonargaon hotel yesterday (above). —Star photo

Urban children get more govt jobs

By Staff Correspondent

Children of under-privi-
 leged parents are continuously
 falling behind in the race to
 get government jobs.

Over a period of five years,
 the number of children of par-
 ents having an income of less
 than 2500 taka a year has
 fallen by more than 50 per
 cent.

This was stated in the an-
 nual report for 1991 of the
 Public Service Commission
 (PSC) placed in the Jatiya
 Sangsad (parliament) yester-
 day. State Minister for
 Establishment Nurul Huda

placed the report.
 The commission's findings
 have been based on the per-
 formances of the candidates
 seeking entry to the most
 coveted jobs in the civil ser-
 vice.

According to the report,
 the number of children com-
 ing from families of service
 holders and peasants is in-
 creasing gradually. The proba-
 bility of their getting jobs
 stood at 72 per cent in 1990
 which was 60 per cent in
 1984. As against this, the
 number of children coming

from families of businessmen
 has fallen.

The number of children
 coming from an urban back-
 ground is increasing in gov-
 ernment service against a de-
 creasing number of children
 coming from a rural back-
 ground, the report says.

In the past, the report ob-
 serves, the ratio was in favour
 of children graduating from
 rural high schools against chil-
 dren graduating from urban
 schools.

The students of Dhaka
 See Page 12 Col 8

Plea to execute public trial verdict by Apr 26

By Staff Correspondent

Several thousand support-
 ers of Ektattor Ghatak Dalal
 Nirnul Committee (or trial
 committee) Sunday marched
 towards the Jatiya Sangsad
 calling for the execution of the
 public trial verdict on Golam
 Azam by April 26.

Police barricaded the pro-
 cession near Hotel Sonargaon
 and allowed 10 representatives
 to hand over a memorandum
 to the members of parliament
 on behalf of the people.

See Page 12 Col 6

Diarrhoea claims 20 more in Barisal

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 12 :
 Diarrhoea claimed 20 more
 lives in the district during the
 last 24 hours ending 6 pm to-
 day.

With this the total death toll
 caused by diarrhoea rose to
 114 in five southern districts
 of the country over the last one
 month. About 5,873 people
 were also attacked by the dis-
 ease during the period, official
 sources said.

The worst affected southern
 districts where diarrhoea
 broke out in an epidemic form
 are Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola,
 Perojpur, Jhalakati and
 Barguna.

Scarcity of pure drinking
 water, consumption of adulter-
 ated foodstuff and absence of
 health awareness among peo-
 ple are learnt to be the main
 reasons of the outbreak of di-
 See Page 12 Col 7

Opponents force Russian govt on verge of resignation

MOSCOW, Apr 12: Russia's
 reformist government teetered
 on the brink of resignation to-
 day, reports Reuter.

A major political crisis
 gripped the capital after oppo-
 nents inflicted a shock defeat
 on President Boris Yeltsin in
 the country's supreme legisla-
 ture.

Ministers conferred in
 strategy sessions to seek a way
 out of deadlock between
 Yeltsin's Liberal-backed admin-
 istration and a coalition of
 hardline Communists and con-
 servatives.

After a week of failure,
 Yeltsin's opponents scored a
 surprise victory on Saturday

night by voting to effectively
 strip him by July of his right to
 select ministers.

Aides said it was an issue on
 which the government might
 resign. Backers say the popu-
 list leader may tough it out
 and seek renewed support
 from the nation in a popular
 referendum.

Yeltsin kept the nation
 guessing and remained out of
 public view, but Russian televi-
 sion said key aides were meet-
 ing parliamentary leaders to
 find a way out of the crisis.

In a news commentary it
 said the government might
 have to step down by Monday,
 when the Congress resumes,

unless Yeltsin finds a way to
 safeguard his political pro-
 gramme.

The stakes are high: the fu-
 ture of controversial radical
 changes to create a free-mar-
 ket economy, backed by
 pledges of western cash aid
 worth billions of dollars.

Russia's first democrati-
 cally-elected President had
 looked secure after a series of
 political triumphs at the
 supreme legislature, the Con-
 gress of People's Deputies,
 meeting for the first time
 since the Soviet breakup in
 December.

But on Saturday the conser-
 vatives forced through a series

of resolutions watering down
 free-market reform plans.

Finally, in a stinging rebuff
 that touched off political alarm
 bells, they voted to curb his
 powers to appoint the gov-
 ernment by July.

Yeltsin, 61, was mysteri-
 ously absent from the grand
 Kremlin palace hall. A
 spokesman said Yeltsin, who
 has always denied health or
 drinking problems, was en-
 gaged on other matters to do
 with Congress.

Yeltsin has consistently said
 a strong executive presidency,
 which gives him rule-by-de-
 cree powers over the econ-
 omy, is essential to switch the

nation of 150 million people
 from communism to capital-
 ism.

His economic tsar, first
 Deputy Prime Minister Yegor
 Gaidar, suggested in a televi-
 sion interview that the gov-
 ernment would resign unless
 the decisions were reversed.

"In this web of minor cor-
 rections, compromises and
 populist decisions... You get a
 volte-face, a halt to the re-
 forms," said Gaidar, chief ar-
 chitect of the reforms.

"This government is not
 prepared to implement such a
 volte-face."

Radicals at the Congress, in
 recess on Sunday, said the

government might seek a
 popular mandate by calling a
 nationwide referendum to by-
 pass the conservatives.

"To put it bluntly, today's
 decision completely revises
 the course of economic re-
 form," Gaidar, 36, told re-
 porters. "This is the death of
 any hopes of serious coopera-
 tion with the outside world in
 healing our economy."

"If you try seriously to put
 into effect what the Congress
 agreed today... you must un-
 derstand that this is the road to
 the collapse of the financial
 system"

Deputy Prime Minister
 See Page 12 Col 6