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NEWS BRIEFS

PM opens edn confce tomorrow

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate a conference on "Education for All: Social Mobilisation" on April 30 at 10.30 am at Shilpakala Academy. The inaugural speech of the Prime Minister will be directly broadcast by Radio Bangladesh from the conference hall of Shilpakala Academy, reports BSS.

Four snatchers arrested

Police Tuesday arrested four snatchers from Kamran ghar and recovered arms and money from their possession. The arrested persons are: Ayub Ali (22), Babul (22), Rokunuddin (23) and Sohel (23). Police recovered a hand bomb and a dagger from them. Police also arrested 91 people, 14 of them wanted criminals, in last 24 hours from different parts of the city, reports UNB.

JP public meet on May 11

Jatiya Party will hold a public meeting at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram at 3 pm on May 11. Central leaders of the party will address the meeting, says a party press release.

Citizens' meet today

A citizens' meeting will be held this afternoon at the central Shaheed Minar to condole the death of Satyajit Ray, the world famous film maker and writer. Sammita Sangkritik Jote will organise the condolence meeting in cooperation with Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies and Short Film Forum, reports BSS.

Myanmar non-committal over involving UNHCR Dhaka-Yangon accord on refugee repatriation

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

As the Rohingyas keep crossing into Bangladesh in thousands everyday, the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday signed a joint statement agreeing on their repatriation. At the same time officials of both sides also signed agreed minutes on the modalities saying the process would start by May 15. The two sides at the 'technical working group' meeting agreed that the process of repatriation would start not later than May 15, 1992 according to a Foreign Office statement that added 'The Myanmar side expressed willingness to start the process even before schedule and, if possible, to complete the

repatriation within six months of the date of commencement. Both the sides recognize the role of the UNHCR at various stages of the repatriation process," read the joint statement that the two ministers signed. The repatriation should be safe and voluntary... returnees should be settled in their own households and original places of residence to enable them to carry on their livelihood as members of Myanmar society', the joint statement said. It was agreed that Bangladesh would fully associate the representatives of the UNHCR in the repatriation process while Myanmar agreed that the services of the UNHCR

could be drawn upon as needed at an appropriate time. Talking to the press after the formal signing of the joint statement, Bangladesh Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman said that he hoped all refugees would return but added 'I will not forcibly push them back'. On the recurrent exodus from Myanmar, Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw told reporters 'We'll create a congenial atmosphere so that they don't come back'. Amid allegations of persecution by Myanmar authorities on the Rohingyas and the continuing influx, there is skepticism about whether the

Agreed minutes on repatriation modalities signed

By Staff Correspondent

The technical level working groups of Bangladesh and Myanmar after two rounds of talks on Sunday and Monday signed an agreed minutes yesterday detailing the modalities of repatriation. They discussed time schedules, logistics arrangements, reception procedures, communication arrangement etc and drafted proposals which after examination by the relevant authorities on both sides

Mojaddedi takes over as clashes continue

KABUL, Apr 28: Heavy fighting broke out again today in the Afghan capital Kabul shortly after moderate Mujahedeen leader Sibgatullah Mojaddedi assumed the interim presidency of the country, reports AFP. A rocket hit the Foreign Ministry, where minutes earlier Mojaddedi had taken over power from remnants of the former Soviet-installed government, as clashes resumed between his supporters and guerrillas of radical leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, witnesses said. Mujahedeen commandos in Camouflage battled and brandishing rocket-launchers and AK-47 assault rifles had thrown a tight security cordon for the ceremony, which began with the recitation of verses from the Koran.

But heavy exchanges of artillery fire around an embattled bridge in the south of the city coincided with the handover of power, which came a day after the 14th anniversary of the communist coup that led to the country's civil war. The shelling, followed by the clashes near the Foreign Ministry, broke a lull in two days of heavy fighting between guerrillas owing allegiance to Jamaati-Islami faction commander Ahmed Shah Masood, an ethnic Tajik, and his rival Hekmatyar, a Pashtun. Witnesses said fighting also erupted around the Interior Ministry, which had been under Hekmatyar's control. Mojaddedi is backed by Masood, who was also on his way to Kabul, according to his party in Pakistan. See Page 12 Col 1



Myanmar Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw addressing a joint press conference after signing the agreement yesterday. Sitting on his right are Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman and Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury. — Star photo

Economy improves, ADB report says

Star Special

The economy of Bangladesh has improved following different economic reforms introduced by the present government. Besides, the economy is forecast to grow by 4.7 per cent in 1992 and 5.2 per cent in 1993. This has been stated in the Asian Development Outlook, 1992 published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The fourth in an annual series since 1989, the Outlook will be available for public use on May 1 this year. The Outlook is the ADB's annual survey of economic progress in its developing member countries in Asia and the Pacific. The current issue deals with an in-depth analysis of rural poverty in Asia. Referring to the recent economic growth and prospects in Bangladesh the report said that the momentum of growth would depend on speedy implementation, intensification and continuity of the reforms that have already

been initiated. While some positive results of reforms are already evident, the reforms likely will yield more benefits in future, the report added. Discussing the growth situations in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the report said that economic growth in India would be constrained by tight monetary and fiscal policies and a balance-of-payment situation. The growth rate for India has been forecast to be 4.6 per cent during the current year and the next year. The economy of Pakistan, according to the report, will grow by 6.7 per cent in 1992 and 7.2 per cent in 1993. However, the report cautioned "to sustain the higher growth rates, it will be necessary not only to press ahead with current policies, but also to extend these policies into the areas of trade policy and agriculture." According to the report, the economy of Sri Lanka was See Page 12 Col 6

People will discard conspirators: PM

BRAHMANBARIA, Apr 28: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today expressed the belief that the people would totally discard those who wanted to destroy democracy and make the country dependent on others, reports BSS. "Those who disrupted the development and democratic process in the past had to face downfall, she said adding the elements who now wanted to destroy the democratic process would have to face political elimination. The Prime Minister was addressing a big gathering in Brahmanbaria Government College premises. Begum Zia said a certain quarter which did not believe in democracy wanted to hinder the development process to make the country a case of bottomless basket. Begum Zia called upon the people, including the freedom fighters to get themselves involved in the on-going uplift activities to achieve the cherished goal of self-reliance for the country. She said "It is very regrettable that when local and foreign investors are getting encouraged to set up industries in our country, some vested quarters are out to destroy sta-

bility and disrupt the industrialisation process." She said the new industrial policy had created encouragement in the economic field. She expressed her belief that the policy would be the catalyst in the speedy industrialisation of the country which in turn would greatly solve the unemployment problem. Begum Zia said all our development efforts would go in vain if the rate of population growth was not checked. She said "we have to motivate the people especially those who are lagging behind, to practise small family norms." The Prime Minister formally switched on the pump to the water flow into the 7 km Lauai Khal (canal) at the Sarail in the district. The canal, dug in two months, would facilitate irrigation and solve water logging problem in 14 villages. It would solve water stagnation problem on 6000 acres and provide irrigation facilities on 2000 acres. The Prime Minister also addressed a public meeting organised on the occasion. She called upon the people to take part in the canal digging programme spontaneously. She said the programme was taken up by late President Ziaur

Rahman and the present government had restarted it with an aim to make the farmers of the country self-reliant. She called upon the people to take part in the tree plantation programme of the government to maintain the ecological balance. The meetings were addressed, among others, by State Minister for Shipping Harun-ur-Rashid, Farida Rahman MP, Asiya Rahman MP, Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan MP, Mian Abdullah Wajed MP, Wali Ashraf MP, Jubadal President Abdullah Al Baki, student leader Zahurul Huq and Takhir Hossain Jasim. The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of a 50-bed modern hospital. Begum Zia also inaugurated the 300-line container exchange of telephone. T and T Minister Keramat Ali was present on the occasion. The Prime Minister talked to the T and T Minister over telephone after the inauguration of the exchange. With this addition in the lines, the district now has 1000 lines. The cost of setting up this exchange was Taka 85 lakh. The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of Niaz Mohammad Khan Stadium.

Kuala Lumpur meet Consensus on key issues of draft declaration

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 28: Consensus has been reached on the key issues to be taken up at the Earth Summit in Brazil in June and the final draft of Kuala Lumpur Declaration is now ready, reports Bernama. The declaration is better than expected, said Malaysia's Science, Technology and Environment Minister Law Heng Ding who is chairing the meeting which started Monday. Senior officials of 54 developing countries had worked for four days, one day more than scheduled to arrive at the consensus, despite a five-hour black-out that hit the venue, Crown Princess Hotel, during a thunderstorm late Sunday evening. The main sticking point in the officials' marathon meeting, that of the question of the financial mechanisms to emerge from Rio, was finally ironed out and the Ministers had their draft ready when they started their meeting early Monday. Editorial on page 4

'Zia created crisis' Mujib govt gave CHT autonomy: Hasina

KHAGRACHARI, Apr 28: Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina today called for overall development of the Chittagong Hill Tracts by resolving prevailing problems which she blamed on the Zia government, reports UNB. Sheikh Mujib's government gave autonomy to the CHT, but the Ziaur Rahman government created the problems, she said addressing an extended meeting of leaders and workers of the district Awami League at Circuit House this morning. Hasina called for finding out the causes of the present problems in the Hill Tracts. Certain quarters are responsible for creating discrimination between the tribals and the non-tribals. "We don't differentiate between Bangladeshis and Paharces. Our aim is to restore peace and discipline in Chittagong Hill Tracts and ensure development of the people there," she said. She asked each of her party workers to plant trees in the

Hill Tracts now facing threat of deforestation. Hasina came here Monday to visit a cluster village, Logang, where deaths and destruction occurred on April 10 as a result of the tribal-non-tribal strife. She said Chittagong Hill Tracts is endowed with natural resources, that should be explored for its development. The opposition leader alleged the government had failed to run the country because of its inefficiency. "It has no idea about the problems facing the people." She asked her partymen to work unitedly for strengthening the organisation. In this context, she said Awami League had announced its economic policy to bring about emancipation of the deprived people. The meeting was presided over by Dost Mohammad Chowdhury, President of the district Awami League. Party leaders Begum Matia Chowdhury, Iy Rahman, Kalpa See Page 12 Col 8

Refugees scared to go back

By Sabir Mustafa

TEKNAF: Usun Johar likes Bangladesh, even when his home is a dusty, overcrowded camp named 'Dumdumia-2', perched on the foothills by the roadside facing the river Naf. Johar can see the flatlands of Myanmar on the eastern shore of the Naf and the imposing, mist-shrouded hills beyond. But he has long stopped thinking about the friends he left behind in his home village in Maungdaw district of Rakhaine province, once known as Arakan. "I like it here, I want to stay here", Johar's eyes sparkle as a shy grin pushes back his

chubby, round cheeks. There is no military here, no soldiers, that's why I like it here." Usun Johar is no militant. He is just six years old, one of seven children of a poor Rohingya farmer who took shelter in this camp with a 40,000 population, five kilometres north of Teknaf, a month or so ago. Haunting memories of Sena Julum or military repression cut across generations among the refugees, the vast majority of whom are Muslims with a local dialect of Bangla as their mother tongue. Syed Alam, a 66-year old

farmer from the village of Haisoratha in Maungdaw fled across the river Tuesday last along with his son. "I have been suffering in Arakan for as long as I can remember", Alam says, his wrinkled, bearded face full of anger and anguish, "I can't make you understand how painful it has been, my son." Despite having fertile land and fishing equipment, Alam and his family were pushed to the verge of ruin and starvation by Myanmar troops who regularly took away their crops and stole whatever fish they could catch in the sea.

To the world outside, Johar and Alam are probably mere statistics, two of 2,28,000 Rohingyas who have fled to south-eastern Bangladesh since March last year. To Ohn Gyaw, the Myanmar Foreign Minister, these two representatives of three generations of Rohingyas are two more who have to prove their residence in Rakhaine 'before being considered' for repatriation. "I was born in Arakan, and so was my son Salmullah. We have documents to prove it too, but we don't want to go See Page 12 Col 5

ALWC meets to talk movement strategy

By Nurul Kabir

The Awami League Working Committee (ALWC) meets in an emergency meeting this morning to discuss shifting of the date of the party council and the strategy of the party for political movements in the near future, sources say. The controversial 'Montu issue' might also come up for discussion, sources added. The last extended meeting of the party decided May 30 for holding the central council of the party while April 30 was the last date for the district

units of the party to complete their respective councils. According to AL sources, a significant number of the district units of the party have failed to hold their councils within the deadline fixed earlier which pushed the AL leaders to discuss shifting the date of central council scheduled to be held on May 30. Apart from it, leaders of a large number of the district units of the party are busy in connection with the Paurasava See Page 12 Col 4

Two BCI directors detained

By Staff Correspondent
Special Branch (SB) police late Monday night arrested two directors of Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI) Limited from their respective residences under the Special Powers Act 1974. The two directors were identified by police as K M Faruque and Mohammad Faruque. They were arrested from Indira Road and Mohammadpur Housing Society respectively, a police sources said. The BCI Ltd had become inoperative last week because of a liquidity crisis caused by overdrawing of company funds by its directors, according to an earlier report. The arrested directors were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail Tuesday and given 120 days detention by the government, the source said. A high police official said that detention orders were issued against several other high officials of the company but he was tight-lipped about divulging their identities. UNB adds: Chief Metro politan Magistrate Tuesday issued warrants of arrest against 19 directors of BCI including its Chairman and Managing Director Mostafizur Rahman, for conducting unauthorised banking transactions.

BCL (N-S) groups fight gunbattle on DU campus

By Staff Correspondent
The two feuding groups of the JSD (Inu)-backed Chhatra League (N-S) again locked in a clash Tuesday using guns and cocktails on the Dhaka University campus. The gunfight began at about 1:20 pm and continued for about half an hour with around 100 shots being fired. None was, however, injured. Police intervened lobbing teargas shells and chasing the gunmen and managed to control the situation. The incident spread panic on the campus and students, teachers and employees of the university ran for safety. The first clash between the two groups took place Saturday following the assault on Shamim, an activist of the BCL (N-S), who belonged to BCL general secretary Shaif Ahmed-backed group, on the previous night. Campus source said that the Shaif Ahmed group took shelter in Mohsin Hall and another group in Suryasen Hall. According to BCL sources, Shaif Ahmed was ousted from the campus for his alleged involvement in the killing of BCL (N-S) central leader Abu Hasan Murad. Meanwhile, the political activities of the organisation was suspended on the Dhaka University campus Sunday following the recent incidents. Tension was prevailing on the campus as both the groups had taken up positions in two nearby halls with lethal weapons, campus sources said.

UNICEF chief arrives today

James P Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), arrives here Wednesday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS. The UNICEF Chief will call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Health and Family Welfare, Education and LGRD and Cooperatives, and other high officials. Grant will attend a commissioning ceremony of a salt iodization plant at a salt factory near Dhaka today.

OIC Secy General in city

Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Dr Hamid Algalib arrived in Dhaka Tuesday night to have a close look of the Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh, reports UNB. Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman received the distinguished guest at the Zia International Airport. Heads of diplomatic missions of Muslim countries were present. The OIC Secretary General is leading a 12-member delegation in his three-day official tour.