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NEWS BRIEFS

Zia's birthday tomorrow

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its front organs will observe the 57th birth anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman in a befitting manner all over the country tomorrow. The programmes include Milad Mahfil, discussions and cultural function, placing wreaths and offering Faicha at Zia's Mazar, reports BSS.

Jalil acting AL General Secy

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman left Dhaka yesterday for Nepal to attend a seminar of lawyers. Party Joint Secretary Mohammad Abdul Jalil will act as General Secretary during his stay abroad, reports UNB.

Sherpur tele-link disrupted

SHERPUR, Jan 17: Telegram and telex communication between the district and other parts of the country remained disrupted for the last five consecutive days. Official sources said, the technical department could not restore the communication line as they failed to detect the root that caused the disruption, reports UNB.

Four arrested under Anti-Terrorism Act

Police arrested four people under the Anti-Terrorism Act from the city last week (January 10 to 16). Eight people were named in three cases filed under the Anti-Terrorism Law in different thanas of the city during the week, a police press release said. Police rounded up another 51 people from different parts of the city yesterday on various charges, reports UNB.

Two robbed in city

By Staff Correspondent
 Within a span of only 15 hours from Saturday night to Sunday noon muggers snatched two persons and snatched their cash while police foiled another attempt at Doyel Chatter near the Curzon Hall of Dhaka University.
 Police arrested one Mahfuzur Rahman on the same spot at around 11 am Sunday when he along with another accomplice tried to rob belongings of a woman.

Allied forces bomb Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Jan 17: Allied aircraft raided the Iraqi capital this evening, reports AFP. Iraqi anti-aircraft guns opened up against them, filling the night sky with tracer rounds. Three explosions were heard followed by anti-aircraft firing and several huge columns of smoke could be seen rising in the center of Baghdad, a witness said. Navy ships also launched more than 30 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a military site, south of Baghdad, said a senior Pentagon source. Earlier, AP said, US-led forces shot down an Iraqi MIG

warplane and attacked an Iraqi defense system after being challenged over the northern "no-fly" zone designed to protect Iraqi Kurds, the White House said Sunday, reports AP. There were no coalition losses and the action was taken after provocations from Iraqi military units, said presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater. Iraq, meanwhile, made a new offer Sunday to allow UN flights into the country, saying it would permit planes to fly from Bahrain if the United Nations would prevent allied flying in the southern "no-fly" zone.

But in a nationally-televised speech, Saddam defiantly told his people Sunday that "the aggressors will fall in their evil purposes." Saddam's address marked the second anniversary of the Jan 17, 1991 start of the Gulf War, in which US-led multinational forces ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait. Iraq, in defeat, agreed to abide by UN resolutions that would guide its future military conduct. Sunday's clash over northern Iraq was the first since Friday, when two US F-111 planes came under Iraqi anti-aircraft fire in the northern

"no-fly" zone, set up in April 1991 to protect Kurdish rebels. Allied planes bombed Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries Wednesday. US Defense department officials have warned that a new Allied attack on Iraq will be more devastating than the air strike on missile bases carried out Wednesday. "If you're going to do it, you're going to do it big this time," one of the officials was quoted as saying in today's editorial of the Washington Post. The paper said it had spoken to four senior Pentagon officials. Today's New York Times

and the Cable News Network meanwhile reported that US warplanes had planned to bomb Iraqi targets on Friday but called off the operation because of reservations from British Prime Minister John Major. Tensions rose further after flights by UN weapons inspectors were banned and Iraqi teams last week repeatedly raided Kuwait for military equipment abandoned at the end of the war. Fitzwater said three incidents Sunday prompted the shootdown — while in Baghdad, the Iraqi News Agency reported that Iraqi air

defenses "repulsed enemy targets" three times near the northern city of Mosul. Fitzwater said Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries fired on coalition flights monitoring the northern "no-fly" zone. He also said Iraqi war planes violated the zone and one was shot down by a US F-16 fighter. President Bush spoke with British Prime Minister John Major, French President Francois Mitterrand and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Fitzwater said. Meanwhile, in his speech Sunday, Saddam slammed

Akheri munajat today

From Our Correspondent
 GAZIPUR, Jan 17: The akheri munajat (concluding prayer) of the Biswa Jitima at Tongi will be held at 12 noon Monday. Amcor of the Biswa Tablig Jamaat Maulana Enamul Hasan (Hajratji) from Delhi will conduct the prayer. Lakhs of people will seek the divine blessings at the Jitima. Meanwhile, on the second day of the Jitima today, thousands of Muslim devotees con-

JS discussion on demolition of Babri Mosque begins

A dastardly act, MPs say

The long awaited general discussions on the destruction of the Babri Mosque in India, was held at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday amid strong condemnation of the 'dastardly act' and bipartisan calls for the immediate rebuilding of the historic mosque in Ayodhya. Members of the House also blamed the Indian government for failing to take adequate steps to protect the 500-year-old mosque and also for failing to contain the communal violence which claimed hundreds of innocent lives. During the nearly two-hour-

By Staff Correspondent
 long discussions in which 13 members took the floor, speakers also blamed the "communal forces and miscreants" for damaging mandirs and threatening the minority community in the country during the aftermath of the destruction of the mosque in India. Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali, while opening the general discussion ruled that the discussions would be held for five hours spread into two days as per the earlier decision of the Business Advisory Committee. A total of 43 notices were

placed, of which 21 contained resolutions while the remaining 22 were only for holding a general discussion on the destruction of the Babri Mosque. Out of a group of nine notices with resolutions which had identical texts, the Speaker chronologically selected that of Jamaat member Maulana Muhammad Sakhawat Hossain's. Similarly, out of another four, the chair selected the notice of Awami League member Prof Rafiqul Islam's to be included in the general discussion. See Page 12 Col 3

Bangladesh, two other Muslim states behind riots: Advani

BOMBAY, Jan 17: A radical Hindu leader toured riot-scarred Bombay on Sunday and accused foreign powers of arranging the 10 days of Hindu-Muslim violence and arson that claimed more than 500 lives, reports AP. Lal Krishna Advani, a leader of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), said Muslim agents from Pakistan, Libya and Bangladesh organized the widespread rioting that reduced this seaside metropolis to a virtual inferno. Advani did not give any evidence to back his charge, but said the state government of Maharashtra, of which Bombay

is the capital, must examine the alleged role of the three Islamic countries in the riots. The state government has promised to probe the cause of the riots, which abated Saturday. There were no reports of any killings or disturbances in the city Sunday. The rioting swept low-income and fashionable neighborhoods alike, shutting down businesses and forcing thousands of migrant laborers to flee. It followed the destruction of a 16th century mosque by Hindu zealots in the north Indian town of Ayodhya on Dec



L.K. Advani

Rao drops 14 ministers

NEW DELHI, Jan 17: Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao announced a new council of ministers Sunday, apparently to reassert his authority that has eroded in the wake of nationwide sectarian riots, reports AP. Rao dropped 14 ministers, and in their place inducted four ministers of Cabinet rank and 10 junior ministers. Rao said the names of the dismissed ministers will be released after approval by President Shankar Dayal Sharma, the figurehead constitutional head. The first reshuffle of the 18-month-old administration follows the resignation of all



A PID picture shows Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia offering munajat after raising flag of Kushtia sector headquarter of the BDR, yesterday. The PM also addressed a public meeting in the district on the day but the PID did not supply us the picture.

AL urges India to reconstruct Babri Mosque immediately

Bangladesh Awami League Executive Council yesterday strongly condemned the ultra-communal forces of India for demolishing the Babri Mosque and urged the Indian government to reconstruct it without any delay, reports BSS. In its meeting here with party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the AL Executive Council also expressed its concern at the alleged resign to destroy communal harmony in Bangladesh and called upon all pro-liberation forces to resist unitedly such a move. In a number of resolutions, the AL Executive Council also expressed its deep shock at the death of five persons by police firing on January 4 at Benapol Border under Jessore district, a party press release said here last night. The council expressed its deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved families and demanded immediate inquiry into the incident by a judicial commission, the press release said. In another resolution, the council expressed its deep concern at the loss of lives and property following unruly activities of Navy men at Patenga, Halihsahar and Banartila in Chittagong recently. It demanded immediate inquiry into the incident by a judicial commission and exemplary punishment to those responsible for it. The AL Executive Council prayed for the peace of the departed souls and expressed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved families. The council also demanded compensations for the be-

Police raid RU halls Arms recovered, 29 arrested

From Our Correspondent
 RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, Jan 17: Police took 29 activists into custody and recovered huge number handmade weapons and some firearms in an early morning raid on three halls after an overnight clashes between rival students. Of the arrested, seven were from the Islami Chhatra Shibir and the rest 22 from the All-Party Students Union. Police sources said one of the arrested, Mukhlesur Rahman, an Islamic Chhatra Shibir activist, had been caught with a revolver and four

bullets. Rahman, a resident of the Sher-e-Bangla Hall, was arrested from the campus. Vice Chancellor Prof Anisur Rahman who visited different halls after the raid came under attack from angry all-party students. Students mostly belonging to the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal threw stones at the Vice Chancellor when he arrived at the Madar Box Hall. They abused the VC alleging he had acted in favour of the Shibir. The authorities, after an emergency meeting of the

Guard against politics of destruction: Khaleda

KUSHTIA, Jan 17: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today alleged that vested quarters were out to foil the government's efforts for national development and warned people to guard against their "politics of destruction", reports UNB. "You have to understand their motives and identify their masters who direct them", she told a public meeting organised by district BNP at the Kushtia Government College ground this afternoon. "They only want destruction and don't want the country's progress", Begum Zia said referring to the programmes of harkats. She expressed her firm belief that the vested quarters, trying to create indiscipline in national life, would be isolated

from the people. The Prime Minister called upon the people to dedicate themselves in nation-building activities, imbued with the spirit of patriotism and nationalism. "Strengthen the hands of the nationalist forces for alleviating poverty and successful implementation of the government's programmes to strengthen national economy," she said. Stressing the need for increasing production in fields and factories to achieve self-reliance, Begum Zia said it is only possible through hard work, patriotism and nationalist spirit. Referring to the natural resources like coal, hardrock and limestone available in the

Pre-discussion JS debate takes one hour

By Staff Correspondent
 Despite Parliament Business Advisory Committee's unanimous decision the day before on how to conduct the pre-scheduled general discussion on the demolition of Babri Mosque in India, the House yesterday entered into a pre-discussion debate on the 'appropriate way' of holding the deliberation. The one-hour unscheduled debate began when Tofael Ahmed MP of the Awami League (AL), standing on a point of order, told the chair that it was unfortunate that the ruling party, despite prior agreement, had backed out from moving a consensus resolution on the issue. Referring to a discussion

Diarrhoea claims 47 in Pirojpur, Bogra

PIROJPUR, Jan 17: At least 37 lives were claimed by diarrhoea and another 506 attacked during last 24 hours in the district, official sources said today (Sunday), reports UNB. This raises the official death toll to 156 and number of attacked 2,589 from diarrhoeal diseases in 16 days since the outbreak of the disease in Pirojpur district. Unofficial sources, however, put the diarrhoeal death toll at 45 and the number of attacked 560 in last 24 hours while 205 deaths and 3,006 attacked during the 16 days. Mathbaria, Bhandaria and Naripur were the worst affected thanas where 18 temporary medical camps and 58 medical teams were working.

Diarrhoea claims 47 in Pirojpur, Bogra

District officials including Deputy Commissioner, Civil Surgeon and Public Health Engineer, and local political leaders visited the affected areas. Another report adds from Bogra: Diarrhoea claimed 10 lives and attacked at least 500 people in the last two days in five thanas of the district. Reports reaching here today said with this the toll from the killer disease rose to 35 in 16 days. Officials confirmed 21 deaths in 15 days. Thanawise toll is as follows, Shibganj-4, Nandigram-9, Dhunat-Gabtail-11, Sariakandi-5, Sadar-2 and Kaliaho-4. Some 81 diarrhoea-affected patients were admitted into Mohammad Ali Hospital.

Provide correct information, Hasina tells ministers in JS

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina Sunday asked the Ministers to be accountable to the House by providing correct information while replying to queries of the MPs, reports UNB. She also demanded of the government to take decisions on development programmes in different areas on the basis of recommendations of the elected representatives. Hasina's exhortations came during the question hour in response to Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar's comment about the nationalisation of schools and colleges in different thanas. Replying to supplementaries from opposition members on the principle of nationalisation of educational institutions, Sircar said it is not mandatory for the government to take decision always as per suggestion of the MPs. The government will nationalise those institutions which it feels appropriate after proper examination, he added. The Education Minister's comment raised a hue and cry from the opposition benches. Taking the floor, Hasina said MPs are the elected representatives of the people and know better about the problems in their respective constituencies. So, the Minister should take note of the recommendations by the members of parliament. She also asked the ministers to provide the House with correct information while replying to the queries of the members.

Country has \$1.8b foreign currency reserve: Saifur

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said the country had a record foreign reserve of over 1.8 billion US dollar equivalent of nation's five months import bills, reports BSS. Rahman said that this quantum of foreign exchange reserve was now necessary as a safety valve against any shortage of funds for imports in the private sector within the present free market economy framework. Rahman was initiating a three-hour threadbare discussion on the national economy and review of project implementation with the World Bank local consultative group

yesterday at the NEC conference room. Outgoing ERD Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, World Bank Resident Mission Chief Christopher R. Willoughby, UNDP Resident Representative Charles H. Larisont, US Ambassador William B. Millan, Japanese Ambassador Toshio Saiki, German Ambassador Dr. Karl-Heinz Scholly-Sack and The Netherlands Ambassador H. Gajentaan also spoke. Pointing to the criticism of some of the politicians and economists on the record high foreign exchange reserve in the country, the Finance

Minister sharply reacted and said those politicians and economists had forgotten that during 1972-75 period there was very little or no reserve to meet the import requirements of the country. Referring to the wage issue raised by them, the Finance Minister said the government could not ignore the formidable opposition both in parliament and outside it and had to respect and honour opposition's opinion. Rahman made it very clear that Prime Minister Begum Zia had attached top priority to the education, health and

Halishahar revisited 'Our hearts are still burning'

From Nurul Alam
 CHITTAGONG, Jan 17: Liberation War' Jallil added in an angry voice and mood of retaliation, while talking to this correspondent who went to the trouble-torn area on the day of Prime Minister's visit there. Before Jallil could end venting his anguish another local named Aminul Hoque hastened to say that "Our anger and shock will not pass into oblivion even in 50 years as we can hardly absorb such a shock caused by the rampage unleashed by section of Navy personnel living in our vicinity". These are not only the sayings of Jallil and Aminul Hoque, many other affected locals who

stood amid the debris at Bandertila on the day of the Prime Minister's visit, echoed the same sentiment with a demand to shift the Chittagong Naval Base from their locality. As a result, the tension that brewed there following the two days of atrocities which left at least 18 people killed and over 200 injured, has not yet subsided even 14 days after the incident. Police and BDR have been guarding the violence-torn area to prevent any fresh violence. A police official on condition of anonymity said "situation in the Bandertila"

See Page 12 Col 1

Nirmul leaders want to turn the body into 'political platform'

By Staff Correspondent
 The Ekattorer Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Samannaya Committee leaders feel that the organisation should be turned into a common political platform to push the current movement to a logical end. The leaders said this at a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday. The committee organised the meeting to press for its four-point demand of the committee and maintain communal harmony. Mofazzal Hossain Maya chaired the meeting addressed, among others, by the Awami League leader Abdur Razzak, MP, JSD (Inu) leaders Kazi Aref Ahmed and Hasanul Huq Inu, CPB leader Nurul Islam Nahid, Mohammad Afzal of Ganatantri Party, NAP leader Ahmedur Rahman Azmi and