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Holiday Notice

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (Sunday) on the occasion of 'Shaheed Day'. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Monday).

NEWS BRIEFS

10 hurt in Magura bus mishap

MAGURA, Feb 20: At least 10 people were injured, three seriously when a bus turned turtle and fell into a roadside ditch near Mandartala village in Sreccpur thana on the Magura-Kamarkhali road Saturday, police said. The seriously injured Abdul Hai (48), Mohammed Firoj (30) and Anjura Begum (35) were admitted to the Magura Sadar Hospital. The accident occurred when a passenger loaded Dhaka bound bus, coming from Jessore overturned and fell into a ditch when it tried to overtake a speedy truck, reports UNB.

Christopher in Damascus

DAMASCUS, Feb 20: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Damascus today, third stop on his regional tour to try to restart stalled Middle East peace talks. Christopher flew into Syria from Jordan where he had talks with King Hussein and discussed Israel's expulsion in December of 415 Palestinian activists. He has also been to Egypt. The deportation led to suspension of the peace talks. Christopher will have talks with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara later today, reports Reuters.

## Nation pays homage to language martyrs



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia placing wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar one minute past midnight Saturday. — Star photo

### PM distributes Ekushey Padak '92 Work hard to fulfil martyrs' dreams

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday distributed the award among the recipients of Ekushey Padak for the year 1992 with a call to the nation to work hard for fulfilment of the awareness and sensibility of the language Martyrs Day, reports UNB.

Addressing the impressive award distribution ceremony at Osmany auditorium, she described the recipients of the award as the illustrious sons of

the soil and said they had been bestowed with the rare honour for hard work and dedication in their respective fields.

Those who received the award are Dewan Mohammad Azraf and Mobassher Ali for literature, Emajuddin Ahmed and Khan Mohammad Saleq for education, Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Ataus Samad for journalism, Shahnaz Rahmatullah for music, Armajad

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### Shaheed Minar at zero hrs

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police in consultation with Dhaka University authorities enforced a new route plan prohibiting vehicular movement near the Central Shaheed Minar and its adjoining areas from 6 pm Saturday till 2 pm Sunday.

The areas which came under the order include Nazimuddin Road, Babupura Road, Azimpur, Dewan Bazar Road, Mymensingh Road, TSC, Nilkhet, New Market, Peelkhana, Lalbagh, Plassey, Chakbazar, Abdul Gani Road, Topkhana Road, Park Avenue, Bakshibazar, Dhakeshwari and Doyel Crossing.

### Armed vandals desecrate Shaheed Minar

By Staff Correspondent

A group of unidentified armed youngsters vandalised the Central Shaheed Minar Saturday just hours before the nation began paying homage to the martyrs of the historic Language Movement.

Witnesses said that the armed hoodlums desecrated the Central Shaheed Minar and spoiled the paintings following a brawl with the students of the Institute of Fine Arts, who were working in the area.

The vandals set afire a part of the huge 'red sun' that erated the backdrop of the Shaheed Minar to symbolise the rise of a new nation.

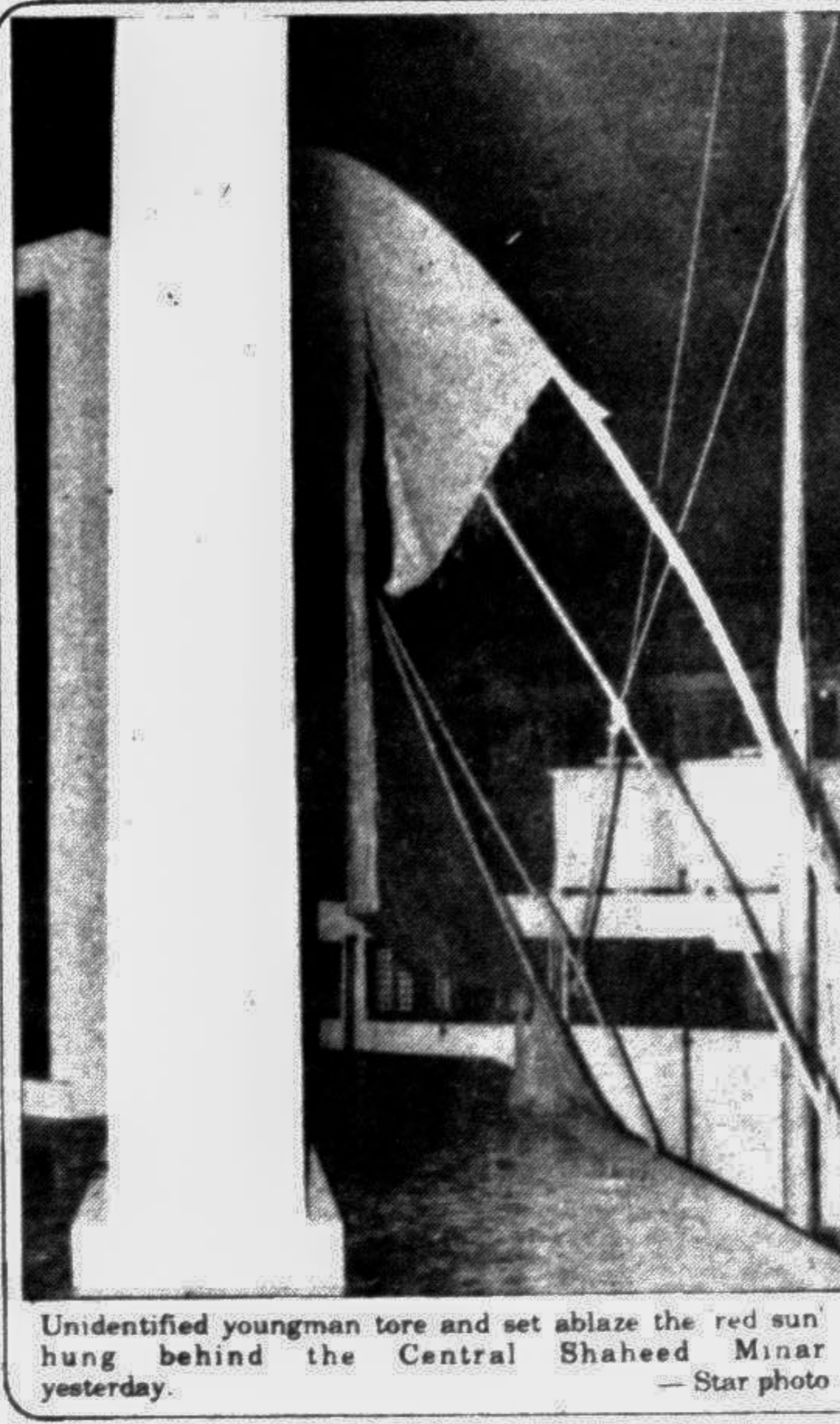
They also smeared the paint-and-brush work on the wall facing the Central Shaheed Minar and the 'alpina' at its pedestal and on the roads around it.

According to witnesses, the armed attackers also beat up the student painters.

The incident, witnesses said, took place at around 5 pm when a group of young men riding on several rickshaws attempted to cross a roadblock set up by the student painters to do the decoration work in front of the Shaheed Minar.

A heated argument ensued when the Art Institute students asked them not to spoil

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Unidentified youngman tore and set ablaze the red sun-hung behind the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

The nation observes 'Amar Ekushey' today (Sunday) to pay homage to the martyrs of the 1952 Language Movement and renew pledges to translate their ideals into reality.

The supreme sacrifice of Salam, Rafique, Barkat, Jabbar and many other sons of the soil on this day in 1952 was aimed at making Bangla the state language instead of Urdu as was conspired by the then Pakistani rulers.

The valiant sons of the soil were martyred while leading a procession towards the then provincial assembly in the Jagannath Hall premises to protest the conspiracy.

Their sacrifice later proved a milestone in our quest for liberation and subsequent struggles against autocracy and misrule.

The day's programmes began with the placing of wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar two minutes past zero hours Sunday amid the strains of the famous song 'Amar Bhayer Roktey Rangano Ekushey February, Amiki Bhulitay Pari.'

In separate messages on the

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### New route near Shaheed Minar till 2 pm today

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police in consultation with Dhaka University authorities enforced a new route plan prohibiting vehicular movement near the Central Shaheed Minar and its adjoining areas from 6 pm Saturday till 2 pm Sunday.

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### 9 get Ekushey Padak '93

By Staff Correspondent

The Ministry of Culture yesterday announced the decision of the government to award Ekushey Padak 1993 to nine persons for their contributions in various creative pursuits, reports BSS.

The recipients of the award include Maniruddin Yusuf and Rabeya Khatun in literature, Shaheed Prof Mofazzal Haider Chowdhury, a martyr of Liberation War in Education, Mohammad Asafudaulah and Ustad Fazul Huq in music, Begum Dilara Zaman, playwright, Rafiqunnabi, fine arts, Jewel Aitch, magic and Reazuddin Ahmed, journalism.

The Cultural Affairs Ministry said that each padak will carry a testimonial, a gold medal of three carat gold and a cash award of Taka twenty thousand.

### Bangla Academy Award '92

By Staff Correspondent

Imdadul Huq Milon and Muntazir Mamun have been selected for the Bangla Academy Literary Award, 1992.

Director General of the academy announced their names for awards yesterday in the afternoon.

The awards will be given formally by the Director General on February 22 in the afternoon.

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## Seventh SAARC summit may be held Apr 10-11

Star Report

The twice-postponed Seventh SAARC Summit is likely to be rescheduled for April 10-11, official sources here said yesterday.

The seven-member nations are now engaged in consultations on the new dates and most of them have already agreed to the new schedule, the sources said.

The chief executive of the seven-nation forum have toured the countries and discussed with the officials, the new schedule, although the responsibility formally lies with the current chairman, President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka.

Secretary General Ibrahim Zaki has just completed his tour of Pakistan after meeting with officials of Nepal, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

A formal announcement of the new dates will, however, come from Colombo. The announcement is expected shortly.

Earlier, President Premadasa had written to the member countries calling for an early holding of the summit. Immediately after the second

postponement, he had reportedly suggested that the meeting of the heads of government be held in February.

However, Dhaka had said that it would not be able to host the event until after March 26 for 'practical reasons' such as the holy month of fasting that begins Tuesday, March 26 is Bangladesh's National Day.

Host officials say that it would take about two weeks to remodelise for the summit.

Meanwhile, senior officials of the six other countries will converge on the city ahead of the summit to give final touches to the Dhaka Declaration, SAARC diplomats here said.

The summit, originally scheduled for December 12-13 and then rescheduled January 13-14, was postponed in the wake of the developments emanating from the December 6 demolition of the 16th century Babri Mosque.

On both occasions, Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao expressed his inability to come due to the crisis that has virtually threatened his political future.

## Unite against fanatics, their associates: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for a greater unity of patriotic people to preserve at any cost the language, culture and tradition of the Bengalee nation as well as values of the Liberation War, reports UNB.

Speaking at a discussion marking the Shaheed Day in front of the Awami League office in the evening, she also called for a united struggle against communal forces and their associate — the ruling party.

"The entity, culture and tradition of the Bengalee nation are facing crises", she said. "Let's unite against fanatics and anti-liberation elements for truth and justice and consolidating the spirit and values of the Independence War at any cost."

The discussion was also ad-

ressed by former Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Dr Anisuzzaman, novelist Syed Shamsul Haq, Advocate Gazul Haq and party's General Secretary Zillur Rahman.

Deputy opposition leader Abdus Samad Azad, Amir Hossain Amu, Qamruzzaman, Abdul Momin Talukdar, Obaidul Qader, Mohammad Hanif, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury and a number of party MPs were present on the dias.

Hasina recalled the role of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in establishing Bangla as the state language of the then Pakistan.

From his prison cell, Bangabandhu gave necessary directives for the language movement. He also fought for the identity of the Bengalee in the

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## Three killed as storm hits

### Rohingya camps

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 20: An early nor-wester today swept over the Rohingya refugee camps here leaving three persons killed and over 45 others wounded.

According to camp sources, Mohammad Ali (30) of Ghundhum camp number 3, Amir Hossain (86) and Maria Khatun (40) of Balukhali camp numbers 1 and 2 respectively were killed when a big tree fell on them.

The storm with a wind-speed upto 60 kilometres per hour left over 100 sheds of seven refugee camps severely damaged. Rainfall in the district between 6 am-6 pm today was recorded at 69 mm.

The damaged camps are: Ghundhum-1, 2 and 3, Balukhali 1 and 2, Kutu Palong and Jummapara.

Due to inclement weather, ferry between Cox's Bazar and Maheshkhali remained suspended during the whole day today.

Our Staff Reporter adds: The Friday night's storm which reportedly claimed over eight lives was an exceptional phenomenon, weather experts said as such pre-monsoon rain storm usually took place at the first week of March. Two storms have lashed different regions of the country Saturday and we think there will be more of such storms during this month, experts said.

From 6 am Friday till 6 am Saturday, the Met office recorded the country's highest rainfall of 118 mm at Rangamati.

## Ramadan moon likely to be sighted tomorrow

The moon of holy Ramadan, is likely to be sighted February 22 evening, said the Moon Sighting Committee yesterday, reports UNB.

The committee will meet at the Islamic Foundation at 6:45 that evening with State Minister for Religious Affairs and president of the committee Alhajj Prof M A Mannan in the chair.

All have been requested to inform the Islamic Foundation of the moon sighting by 6:30 pm over telephone or by any other means.

Contact telephones are: 239493, 254457, 230280, 239643, 236407 and 239631.

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Poland	Tk 806 US\$ 22	Tk 1612 US\$ 44
Qatar	Tk 598 US\$ 16	Tk 1196 US\$ 32
CIS	Tk 806 US\$ 22	Tk 1612 US\$ 44
Saudi Arabia	Tk 598 US\$ 16	Tk 1196 US\$ 32
Singapore	Tk 598 US\$ 16	Tk 1196 US\$ 32
Sri Lanka	Tk 598 US\$ 16	Tk 1196 US\$ 32
UK	Tk 806 US\$ 22	Tk 1612 US\$ 44
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## Exporters blame govt for ignoring suggestions

By Staff Correspondent

The private sector Saturday expressed their frustration over the non-implementation of the export policy and castigated the government for slow response to their suggestions for boosting country's export at the 23rd meeting of Export Promotion Council (EPC).

The private sector entrepreneurs observed that while the government repeat-

edly ignored their suggestions, it also had withdrawn a number of incentives earlier enjoyed by the exporters.

The areas of frustrations were the withdrawal of export promotion benefit (EPB), non-implementation of the provision for 100 per cent income tax rebate on income from export earnings, deduction of 0.50 per cent advance income

tax, and demands for permission to sell 60 per cent of the export earnings in the open market.

Addressing the meeting at Sheraton Hotel, the President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mahbubur Rahman said, "the current export policy aims at

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## Police ordered to seal off Delhi

NEW DELHI, Feb 20: Police have been ordered to seal off

India's capital next week to prevent hordes of Hindu nationalists from staging an anti-government rally, reports AP.

Interior Minister S B Chavan said Friday he feared a mass demonstration could spin out of control and reignite Hindu-Muslim riots.

At least 1,800 people died in communal fighting and police actions in December and January — the worst since In-

dependence in 1947.

The government banned rallies in the capital after the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party called for a mass demonstration on Feb 25 to demand the resignation of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's administration.

The rally, to be held on the lawns between Parliament and the Presidential Palace, would come three days after the legislative session begins its crucial budget session.