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## NEWS BRIEFS

### DU Hons admission test from Feb 26

The first year honours admission test of different units of Dhaka University will begin on February 26. The written test of 'GHA Unit' (Combined Group) will be held on February 26 (Friday), 'KHA Unit' (Arts Group) on March 4 (Thursday), 'KA Unit' (Science Group) on March 5 (Friday) and 'GA Unit' (Commerce Group) on March 6 (Saturday), reports UNB.

### Hossain Ali's birth anniversary today

The 70th birth anniversary of late Hossain Ali, a former ambassador, will be observed today. Hossain Ali was the first to hoist the national flag of Bangladesh at the then Pakistan mission in Calcutta in 1971 while he was the Deputy High Commissioner there, reports UNB.

### American President's Day celebrated

Ambassador William B. Milam held a reception here yesterday evening to celebrate American President's Day. Arranged at the Gulshan residence of the US Ambassador in Dhaka, the reception was attended by ministers, leaders from BNP, Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party, reports BSS.

### Textile fair ends today

The six-week long Textile Fair organised by the Ministry of Textiles ends today. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated the exhibition on January 13 at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, reports UNB.

## Thousands rounded up ahead of BJP rally

NEW DELHI, Feb 22: Police arrested Monday more than 6,400 politicians, religious leaders and supporters of a right-wing party that plans to defy a government ban and hold a rally which authorities fear will stoke Hindu-Muslim hatred, reports AP.

The government outlawed the Bharatiya Janata Party's rally, to be held Thursday at a large park near Parliament, to avoid another round of communal riots that left 1,800 people dead nationwide.

The right-wing party was blamed for going back on its promise of safeguarding Ayodhya city's Babri Mosque and instead egging on Hindu zealots Dec 6 to destroy the 16th century mosque.

On Monday, police prevented hundreds of BJP workers from boarding buses and trains for New Delhi, United News of India reported.

The arrests have not deterred truckloads of jubilant party workers from arriving in the capital for the rally that the BJP hopes will draw 2 million people. To avoid arrest, they were not carrying party banners.

The Hindu party's president, Murli Manohar Joshi, claimed police held 100,000 workers, often without specific charges, UNI said. Independent confirmation was not available.

The BJP said the arrests were still continuing but the party was determined to make a success of Thursday's rally.

The arrests are reaching the 100,000 figure,' BJP spokesman K R Malkani said, adding that most arrests... which began four days ago... had taken place in states ruled by Prime Minister Rao's Congress (I) party.

'It shows the government is panicky and provocative,' Malkani said.

The workers were held only on an assessment of the law and order situation, said Vittal Gadgil, spokesman for the governing Congress Party of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

The government refuses to believe the BJP assurance that the rally will be peaceful because it made a similar promise about the December religious ceremony at Ayodhya.

BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee told a group of editors the party is willing to hold the rally outside the capital if the government gives permission.

The BJP has grown from an obscure group to become the nation's second largest party in Parliament mainly by whipping up Hindu sentiments and building on Hindu-Muslim resentment.

Police raided houses across New Delhi before dawn Monday and arrested about 200 people, most of them BJP members, on charges of breaching the peace, Press Trust of India said.

Police also arrested thousands of people in nearby states to prevent them from

heading toward the capital, raising the number of people arrested since Sunday to about 6,400, UNI said.

Police will seal the Boat Club lawns and post 200,000 policemen from Tuesday to prevent the rally at any cost, the agency said quoting unnamed Interior Ministry sources.

President Shankar Dayal Sharma urged the nation 'to counter the communal propaganda' but his speech on the opening of Parliament was boycotted by the BJP and criticized by other opposition parties as disappointing.

AFP adds: BJP today demanded fresh elections, saying the government had been paralysed because of infighting in the ruling Congress (I) party.

'If the country is to come out of its present state, then there is really no option to a fresh poll and fresh mandate,' Lal Krishna Advani of the BJP told a news conference in Delhi.

Advani, the BJP's shadow premier, described mounting dissidence in the Congress (I) as 'a virtual civil war' and added, 'turmoil in the Congress means instability in the country's polity.'

The infighting in the ruling party also spelled doom for India's sweeping economic liberalisation, initiated after Congress (I) President PV Narasimha Rao became the Prime Minister in June 1991, Advani said.

### Company Act

## Private sector wants amendments

By Inam Ahmed

The private sector of the country views that some urgent amendments should be made in the existing Company Act for bringing savings into the corporate sector through the capital market.

The donors particularly the World Bank and Asian Development Bank have also reportedly been forcing the government to either promulgate a new law or amend the existing one to ensure the interest of investing public and improve company law administration.

The need for change in law has become necessary as the existing one, promulgated in 1913 can not now play an effective role in mobilising savings to corporate sector through sale of shares and debentures.

The Ministry of Commerce had recently referred the Bangla version of a company law drafted in 1986 to the business chambers and Institute of Chartered Accountants

(ICA) for their comments. The chambers have already submitted their comments and proposals for introducing a new law will soon be placed before the Jatiya Sangsad.

However, the chambers feel that since the introduction of the new law will take a long procedural delay, some amendments in the existing one should be made urgently for revamping the capital market.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in its comments to the Commerce Ministry felt that in the draft Company Act, 1992, the power given to a single shareholder or debenture-holder for filing application to the court can be misused so as to discourage formation of public limited companies.

The MCCI feels that the provision should be made that application to the courts can be made by share or debenture

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### First day of Ramzan tomorrow

As the Ramzan moon was not sighted anywhere in Bangladesh yesterday evening, the first day of the month will begin after sunset today, an Islamic Foundation press release said, reports BSS.

The decision was taken by the Moon Sighting Committee that met here Monday evening.

The committee reviewed reports received from different parts of the country and further decided that holy Shab-e-Qadr would be observed on the night of March 21, the press release mentioned.

### Shantibahini kidnaps 3

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 22: Shantibahini men Sunday morning abducted three tribal businessmen at gunpoint from Sundannya Karbarpara village in Khagrachhari district as the victims refused to pay toll money, officials said.

The security personnel

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### Opposition reacts to dropping of JS question and answer session

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition members reacted strongly in Parliament to the non-inclusion of the question and answer session in the day's proceedings yesterday.

Terminating a violation of their rights as members, they noted that according to the Rules of Procedure the question and answer session could not be dropped without the directive of the Speaker.

Government ministers provide written answers to queries from the members and also answer supplementary questions during the session. Normally, the first hour of every working session of Parliament is allotted for the question and answer.

The matter was resolved only after Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali informed the House that as the Parliament Secretariat was expecting prorogation by February 18, they were not prepared with the printed materials for the session.

The issue was raised by

See Page 12 Col 7

### Hartal deters pace of development: PM

KULaura (Moulvibazar),

Feb 22: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today cautioned the people against the vicious impact of frequent hartals and called for all irrespective of caste and creed to work unitedly for a rapid economic development of the country, reports UNB.

The nation which poured blood to earn independence must strive to make the freedom meaningful by establishing a progressive and prosperous society," she told a mammoth public meeting at Nabin Chandra High School ground here this afternoon.

Begum Zia underscored the need for speedy and massive industrialisation and steady growth of agriculture to fight hunger and poverty as well as solve unemployment problem.

She stressed the need for a balanced development across the country to reach the fruit of democracy, restored in a nine-year struggle, to the people and fulfil their hopes and aspiration.

Presided over by thana BNP President Abdur Rahim, the meeting was also addressed by

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Khaleda Rabbani MP, Special Assistant to BNP chairperson Abu Harris Chowdhury and Vice President of the Student Union of Kulara College Abdul Muhiit Sohel.

The Prime Minister once again warned the people against the politics of 'anarchy and destruction' being pursued by a particular party.

'The party, having no programme for welfare of the people, has resorted to the politics of hartals and arson,' she said, adding 'hartal deters the pace of development... it pushes the country back.'

When the Prime Minister asked the crowd if they liked hartals, thousands of hands waved overhead amidst a roar: 'No, No.'

She urged the people to maintain peace and order which is 'prerequisite to development.'

She also requested the people to fight smuggling for a sound growth of the national economy.

Begum Zia made a fervent

See Page 12 Col 4

### Pledge to fight communalism marks Ekushey observance

By Staff Correspondent

The nation paid homage to the language martyrs Sunday reiterating its pledges to resist communal and anti-liberation forces.

The day was a public holiday and the national flag was hoisted half-mast atop public and private buildings.

Thousands of bare-foot people, wearing black badges and carrying flower bouquets, poured into the Shaheed Minars across the country to honour the heroes of the 1952 Language Movement which sowed the seeds of the independence in 1971.

In Dhaka all roads led to the Central Shaheed Minar from midnight Saturday despite vandalism by a group of unidentified youths in the minar area hours before the day's programme began at zero hours.

The major opposition parties blamed that the vandals who set the symbol of the sun in the background of the minar afire and disfigured the graffiti opposite the minar were Jamaat-Shibir-Jubo Command activists. But some quarters alleged that they were supporters of a faction of pro-Awami League Chhatra League and that they stormed the minar following an altercation — over closing the roads near it — with the persons entrusted with the responsibility of decorating the minar.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was the first to place wreaths at the minar at one minute past midnight Saturday.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor, in keeping with the tradition, followed the premier.

Leader of the Opposition

See Page 12 Col 4

### DU initiates probe into Shaheed Minar desecration

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday constituted a nine-member committee to investigate the desecration of the Central Shaheed Minar Saturday afternoon by a group of unidentified youths.

The committee headed by the Treasurer of the University Professor Shahiduddin Ahmed will submit its report within a week.

A group of unidentified armed youths damaged the decorations and spoil the graffiti in and around the Shaheed Minar a couple of hours before the nation began paying homage to the martyrs of the historic Language Movement of 1952.

The other members of the probe committee include Professor K M Mohsin, Professor Sayed Ur Rahman, Dr Badrul Alam, Professor Md Moshihuzzaman, Professor Abu Zafar Mahmud, Professor Shahadat Ali, Professor Ziauddin Ahmed and the Proctor of the Dhaka University M Shajahan Mina.

### JS to discuss desecration of Shaheed Minar today

By Staff Correspondent

The recent desecration of the Central Shaheed Minar will be discussed in parliament today.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday said that the discussion would take place as per provision of rule 68 of the Rule of Procedure and will be included for discussion in today's proceedings in the Jatiya Sangsad.

He gave the ruling in response to a number of call attention notice and adjournment motions moved by both Treasury Bench and Opposition members seeking to discuss the issue.

A group of unidentified armed young men had vandalised the Central Shaheed Minar on Saturday evening hours before the nation paid homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952.

### Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee Geneva Camp, Mohammadpur Dhaka

## Appeal



Asrar M. Nasim Khan

Stranded Pakistanis Leader and Chief Patron, SPGRCAI-haj M. Nasim Khan has seriously been suffering from various diseases and old-age complications. His kidney is also affected. Now undergoing treatment at Rabita Medical Centre, Dhaka. Attending doctors suggested treatment in a foreign country. But financial constraints has become the hindrance. As he is the heart and soul of Stranded Pakistanis, therefore, for the sake of humanity we appeal to Government of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Makka-based Rabita Al-Alam-Al-Islam, Voluntary Organisations, and all other sympathisers and generous persons to come forward with helping hands to save the life of our leader, who always fought for the oppressed and devoted himself to the cause of suffering humanity irrespective of caste, and creed and colour.

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