## South Asian Forum for **Human Rights formed**

A South Asian forum has been formed at a meeting in Kathmandu to facilitate interfaces and interaction between non-government and intergovernmental initiatives on human rights, reports UNB.

The South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) came into being after deliberations at a two-day seminar February 18-19, according to a message received here Monday.

The main activities of the SAFHR as adopted include holding of annual People's SAARC at the time of SAARC summit, publication of a regular newsletter on human rights activities and problems of the SAARC countries, organising regional training courses and monitoring human rights abuses.

People's SAARC will seek to represent the views of nongovernmental organisations and the common people of the region. A different theme will be selected each year and any NGO member can work on that subject during the year and present their findings at the People's SAARC.

Victims of human rights abuses will also be invited to express themselves before it and its recommendations will be presented to the SAARC

The theme, chosen for the Peoples' SAARC to be held in Kathmandu at the end of this year, is the situation of aborigines or indigenous people. This is to complement the fact that the United Nations has designed 1993 as Year of the Indigenous Populations.

A constitution for the SAFHR was adopted and the working committee formed with representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bodos sign

peace accord

with Delhi

India, Nepal, Pakistan and Shri Lanka, the ex officto Convenor and the interim Secretary Ocneral of SAFHR and the Director of Informal Sector Service Centre.

INSEC (Informal Sector Service Centrel, a Kathmandubased non-government organisation, will be the secretariat

Opening day's sessions were chaired by Justice PN Bhagawati, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. Anita Mir, a journalist from Pakistan, served as Secretary

The SAFHR seminar decided to begin work towards drawing up a Charter of Human Rights for the SAARC region and appointed a five-member committee for this purpose. It was also decided that the fo rum would be concerned with working towards a commonality of issues that affect the region at the forthcoming World Congress of Human Rights.

ted statements on three important issues, drawn up by the "South Asian Initiative Meeting of Peoples' Plan of the 21st Century" (PP21) held in

The second statement

The third drew attention to the plight of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and India.

### Armedmen stab two, snatch Taka 1.15 lakh

NEW DELIII, Feb 22: A peace accord signed Saturday ended a prolonged tribal insurgency in the northern Indian state of Assam, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports, AFP. The agreement came as the

culmination of several months of talks between representatives of New Delhi, the Assamese administration and the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), in the oil and tea-rich state's main town, Guwahati.

The agreement provided for an autonomous council of Bodos to be launched from March 7, with a separate legislature and executive.

The council is to have 38 subjects concerning the social economic and cultural development of the Bodo-dominated region the news agency said.

## From Page 1 Col 3

holders representing at least 10 per cent of share capital or debenture.

The MCCI also proposed that provisions should be made to prohibit loans, or any financial assistance by the company to any director or person for the purpose of purchasing any shares to be issued by the same company or by its holding company.

However, it feels that the restriction should be relaxed in case of private limited companies with the provision that such loans should not exceed 50 per cent of the paid-up value of the shares held by

The MCCI also viewed that the law's requirement on branches of the foreign companies to make out balancesheet and profit and loss accounts in the proposed way may be held against the investment climate in the coun-

In view of the need for change, a company law reforms committee was formed in 1977. The terms of reference of the committee included formation of company, disclosure of information by public limited companies protection of interest of investing public, and formation of companies with foreign investments.

The committee submitted its report in October, 1981 and a new law was drafted in 1986 in English by the name

of company ordinance, 1986. However, various organisations like MCCI, and Institute of Chartered Accountants pointed out some anomalies and offered proposals for amendments. On the basis of the proposals, another committee was appointed to look into the amendment proposals and submit its comments.

But after the fall of Ershad, the 1986 ordinance was translated in Bangla incorporating some proposals by MCCI and

of the new forum.

for the seminar.

The SAFHR seminar adop-

Kathmandu February 16-17.

The first statement condemned communal violence, wanton destruction of religious places and the political manipulation of religious feelings of

called for immediate release of the long-interned Myanmar leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, recognition of the democratically elected people's representatives and support for the rights of the tribal people.

BY DMCH Correspondent Muggers stabbed two per-

sons and looted Taka 1.15 lakh in two separate incidents at Bijoynagar and Elephant Road in the city Monday.

A group of armedmen snatched Taka one lakh from a staff of Crescent Cigarette Company while he was on is way to deposit the money at Kawran Bazar branch of AB Bank at around 9:30 am Monday

While the armedmen were fleeing after exploiting crack ers local people captured one Mohiuddin and handed him over to Motifheel police.

The company manager Shahabuddin Sikder lodged a case with Motifheel police. But the money was yet to be recov ered, said police.

In another incident, one 35-year-old Swapon was stabbed and robbed of Taka 15,000 at Elephant Road in the city Monday evening.

Swapon was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with a severe stab injury on his hand.

#### Temperature falls

By Staff Correspondent

Freak weather forced people to bring out their winter cloths again as the mercury dropped suddenly yesterday. Temperature slumped by 5

to 6 degrees Celsius over the country except in Rajshahi division on Monday from what it was the previous day. "It is normal weather of the

season as the winter is not yet over," one meteorological official said adding that "clear sky and westerly wind flow brought cold which may continue for several days."

In Sandwip and its adjoining areas temperature fell by 6 degrees Celsius to 13.5 degrees while the lowest temperature of the day was recorded in Dinajpur at 10.6 degrees on Monday.

In Dhaka the lowest temperature on Monday was 15.7 degrees Celsius - a fall from 17.6 degrees on the previous

### Shantibahini

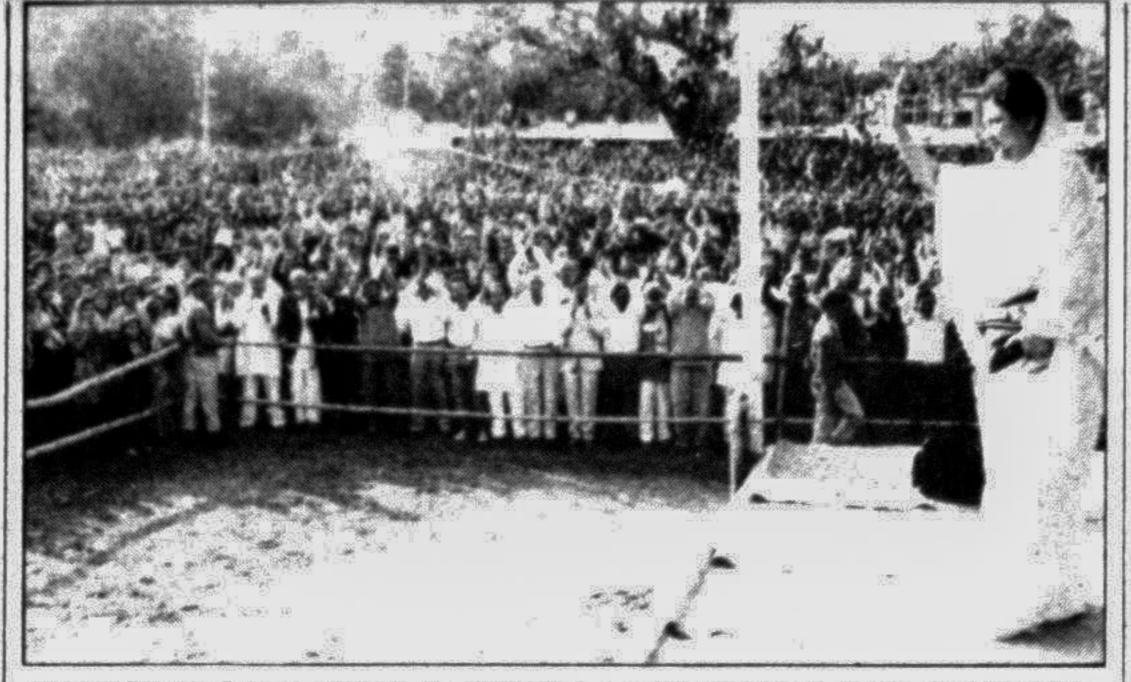
From Page 1 Col 4 later began a manhunt but till writing of this report today they could not trace them,

sources said. According to official sources, the armed insurgents numbering about 10 demanded ransom from the tribal people of the village. As the villagers refused to pay the ransom, the insurgents kidnapped the three at gunpoint. They are: Nignoo Kumar Tripura (50), Magna Kumar Tripura (45). and Champak Kumar Tripura

Editor: S. M. Ali

**Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam** 

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting in Nabin Chandra High School ground in Kulaura, Moulvibazar yesterday. - PID photo

#### TV artiste found dead

By DMCH Correspondent

A TV artiste Bilkis Begum Sumi, 30, reportedly commit ted suicide at her New DOHS residence Saturday afternoon.

Cantonment police said that they recovered the body of Sumi on the day and sent it to the Forensic Department of the Dhaka Medical College where autopsy was performed on the same day.

Sumi's husband Moinul Islam, a businessman, lodged an unnatural death (UD) case with Cantonment police sta-

Police said that in the first inquest report, it was said that Sumi committed suicide by taking poison. But police are yet to receive the autopsy re-

# PM: Development

From Page 1 Col 7

call for the student community to groom themselves to shoul der future leadership of the

Referring to the develop ment programmes undertaken by her government, she sought cooperation of all classes of the people in implementing them to achieve self-reliance of the

In this respect, she reiterated her government's com mitment for working to meet people's five basic needs food, clothing, shelter, education and medicare.

The Finance Minister told the meeting that frequent workstoppage through hartals made mobilisation of resources both at home and abroad diffi-

He claimed that the country was experiencing stability in price situation under the present government.

Earlier at another big public meeting at Baralckha thana in Moulvibazar district, the Prime Minister assured that the Haor Development Board would be reconstituted for promotion of pisciculture in greater Sylhet.

The Jattya Mahila Sangstha will also be recast to enable women, who constitute 50 percent of the population of the country, to engage themselves in massive ways in nation building activity, she de-

Begum Zia was accorded a warm reception on her arrival here. People from all walks of life lined up along both sides o the 5-km road from the heltpad to the Dak Bungalow to greet the Prime Minister. Hundreds of school children waved mini-flags welcoming





AL Chief Sheikh Hasina with partymer. (top) and BNP leaders (above) placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar Sunday. — Star photo

#### Extortionists kill businessman

JESSORE, Feb 22: A man was killed and a minor boy received serious injury when a group of toll collectors resorted to violence to collect toll from a shop at Naldanga Road in the town tonight, police said, reports UNB.

The victim, identified as Khurshid Alam (30), was killed on the spot when his fouryear-old son Ayon received serious wounds from bombs and was admitted to the Jessore Sadar Hospital.

Sources said a group numbering 6 to 7 youths went to Mosharraf welding shop and demanded Tk 5,000 as toll for picnic purpose, but the owner refused to give them the toll.

As a result, the youths opened fire and blasted several bombs in and around the shop at about 8:30 pm. Panicky passersby ran helter-skelter for safety.

But Khurshed was killed and his son received wounds when they were passing by the shop riding a bicycle, police sources said.

#### Ekushey observed attraction of the month in From Page 1 Col 8

and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths at 6:45 in the morning.

Men, women and children poured into the Shaheed Minar premises and placed wreaths at the foot of the mi-

The large altar of the minar was fully covered with flowers from the mourners by the early morning Sunday. People had to wait in long queue for hours to reach the minar.

Several hundred police and volunteers were busy controlling the crowd.

Ruling and opposition parties, student, teachers, work ers and professionals organizations and cultural bodies then placed wreaths. Apart from placing wreaths

at the Shaheed Minar the day's programme included seminars, symposia, discussions and cultural shows. Bangla Academy has organised a month-long book fair and held series of discussions

and cultural functions.

Academy's programme at its

own premises were the main

Special prayers and milad mahfils were also offered for peace of the departed souls of the martyrs.

The newspapers brought out special supplements and the Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television put up special programmes highlighting the day's significance.

#### Bank timing during Kamzan Changed office timing of

Bangladesh Bank and all scheduled banks has been announced for the month of Ranzan, reports UNB.
According to the new time

schedule, bank offices will function from 9 am to 3:30 pm from Saturday to Wednesday with a 15-minute break from 1:15 pm for Zohr prayer. On Thursday, office hours

will be between 9 am and 12:30 pm without any break. Banks will remain open for

transaction from 9 am to 1 pm everyday from Saturday to Wednesday and between 9 am and 11 am on Thursday.

### Opposition MPs criticize President's speech in House

By Staff Correspondent

Parliament last evening witnessed a discussion on the President's speech with the Treasury bench MPs' apprectating the address and the opposition MPs' criticizing it. President Abdur Rahman

Biswas addressed the House January 3, opening day of the first session of Parliament in 1993, and the Business Advisory Committee of Parliament had decided to have a 22-hour discussion on the speech.

A total of eight MPs belonging to both the Treasury bench and the Opposition took part in the discussion on the presidential speech.

Farida Rahman of the BNP hailed the President for a 'timely speech that covered almost all the important aspects a nation should attach important to'.

The Treasury bench MI while speaking on the government efforts to stop smuggling told the House that the licences of the lozenge factories and the jewelry shops set up in the border areas in Satkhira should be cancelled.

Farida observed that the owners of the lozenge factories and the jewelry shops were actually involved in smuggling sugar and gold.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi of the Jatiya Party accused the President of making an untrue statement in the House. The JP MP said. The

President in his speech claimed that the parliamentary polls held February 27 was a peaceful and neutral one", but in fact the election, although held in a peaceful atmosphere, was not neutral." In a bid to back his claim

the JP MP argued that the JP which virtually appeared to be third largest party in Parliament was denied the right to conduct its election campaign through the stateowned electronic media. Whereas, the JP MP added, a large number of insignificant

manifestos over radio and tele-Abdus Shahid of the Awami League (AL) told the House that the presidential speech failed to reflect the real situa-

political parties were allowed

to broadcast their election

tion in the country. The AL MP pointed out that when subsidies on agricultural inputs had been withdrawn by the government, the President claimed that the inputs were made available to the peasants during the BNP rule.

The AL MP also observed that the country had been made a market of Indian commodities.

MPs participating in the deliberations on the presiden tial speech also included, Miah Abdullah Wazed and Sham suddin Ahmed of the BNP. Prof. Abdul Mannan of the AL and Shajahan Chowdhury and Shakhawat Hossain of the Jamaat

The House was adjourned at 8-50 pm to resume at 3 this afternoon.

#### JS discussion on city corporation bills concludes

The four amendment bills seeking to provide for direct election of the Mayors and the Commissioners of the City Corporations came up for discussion for the second day when the Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting, after three days recess yesterday evening, reports BSS.

The House rejected all the amendments brought by the opposition either to circulate the bills to elicit public opinion or sending them to the select committee for scrutiny following yesterday's discussion by six opposition mem-

With these six members the total number of participants on the four amendment bills rose to 35. Further discussion will follow when the clausewise amendments to the bills come up later.

The bills are: The Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, The Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill and The Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill. The bills also seek to rename all the four city corpora-

tions as the 'Municipal' corporations, abolition of the post of 'Deputy Mayor' and provision for reserved seats for women commissioners, who will be elected by the Mayor and elected commissioners in each corporation. Winding up the debate,

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder defended the bills, saying that the main spirit of these amendments were to ensure participation of the elected representatives in the affairs of the cities.

# The Midnight File

#### Major to meet Rushdie

LONDON, Feb 22: British Prime Minister John Major 'would be happy" to meet with author Salman Rushdie condemned to death by Iran for allegedly blaspheming Islam with his book, the Satanic Verses, Downing Street said today, No date was mentioned. Rushdie on Sunday had pleaded for such a meeting, saying Iranian hit squads were out to kill him, reports APP.

#### Pakistan ready to reopen talks with India

ISLAMABAD, Feb 22: Pakistan and India moved closer today to reopening talks on their nine-year old confrontation over the Stachen Glacier in Kashmir. Speaking in the Senate in Islamabad, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Siddique Kanju said Islamabad "ready" to hold bilateral talks with New Delhi on the issue, reports AFP.

## Question-Answer session

From Page 1 Col 5

Awami League member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim on a point of order when Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni already began the day's proceedings with members speaking on the City Corporation Amendment

Referring to Rule 41, he said that the question and answer session could not be dropped under any circumstances without the Speaker's consent. If a decision had been taken earlier by the Speaker, an announcement should have been made to inform the members.

Saying that the session is a right of every member to ask important questions relating to their constituencies or about national issues, Sheikh Selim pointed out our rights have been violated, we hope that you will protect our rights.

Works Minister Barrister Rafigul Islam Mian took the floor and noted that the Speaker had proposed dropping the question and answer session from the rest of the winter session proceedings, to accommodate the discussions on the President's speech, during a meeting of the **Business Advisory Committee** meeting held last week.

Noting that he was present at the meeting, the Minister said The Speaker gave the order under Rule 41 to provide increased time to discuss the President's speech".

But the ministers statement was immediately contradicted by Jamaat-e-Islami parliamentary party leader Maulana Mattur Rahman Nizami. He said that the Works Ministers statement was incorrect.

# Auranga granted

Hemayetuddin Auranga MP, facing trial in a murder case, was yesterday granted bail by the Additional District and Sessions Judge, reports UNB.

prosecution failed to produce the vital witnesses as yet and expressed doubt if prosecution will succeed in proving the charge against the accused. Auranga who returned to

Judge Kazi Habibul Awal in

his order observed that the

parliament on Awami League tieket in the general elections was charged for murder of Naik Ali Azam, an Army Intelligence official, in January 1980. The case was duly started but was soon stopped for indefinite period. After a lapse of more than

12 years the case was revived and Auranga was arrested on October 24 last year from the bar of hotel Purbani. Five witnesses have so far

been examined in the case. Advocate Sirajul Haq appeared for the accused while Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzaque Khan stood for the prosecution.

#### New alliance led by Mostaque formed

ance, a combine of 10 political parties, was formed Monday former President Khandaker Mostaque Ahmed as its chairman, reports UNB. Formation of the alliance

National Democratic Alli-

was announced at a press conference at Hotel Purbant in presence of leaders of the par-

Outlining the objectives, Anwar Zahid, Secretary General of the Alliance, said it is a first step towards forging unity of patriotic democratic forces to safeguard national independence by containing external aggressors and their agents.

The parties that joined the alliance are: Freedom Party led by Col (Rtd) Abdur Rashid, Democratic League led by Khandaker Mostaque Ahmed, Bangladesh National Democratic Party of Anwar Zahid, Krishak Sramik Party of A S M Solaiman, Islamic Democratic League of Advocate Shaffqur Rahman, Islamic Republican Party of Farmanullah Khan, Muslim Oikya Prokria led by Advocate Ataul Hug, Islamic Andolon of Major (Rtd) Jainul Abedin, Naya Gonotantrik Party of Advocate Abdur Rashid and Liberal Democratic Party of Hazrat Ali Shikdar.

Noting that he was also present at the Business Advisory Committee meeting. Nizami pointed out that it was decided at the meeting to include the question and answer session in the day's proceedings and only It was decided that it would

be laid, recorded and then allowed to go to press, Nizami said. Mr Selim is right, indeed the rights of the members have been violated. Jatiya Party member

Monirul Hug Choudhury also echoed the same sentiments. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad

acknowledged that it was decided at the Business Advisory Committee meeting to just lay the question and answers to save time. However, he added that as long as the members had not been informed about the de-

cision by the Speaker the ses-

sion should have been held on schedule. It is a right, it has been violated, he said, adding "as long as the Speaker did not provide a directive according to Rule 41, it should have been held".

Noting that he was unaware about the developments, Deputy Speaker Panni said that the Speaker would provide an explanation later and requested the members to allow him to continue with the proceedings.

After the session resumed following the Maghreb break, the Speaker provided an explanation about the misunderstanding. Noting that there was an

earlier tentative decision to prorogue the winter session on February 18, he pointed out to a circular dated January 24 is sued by the parliament secretariat, in which the question and answers were reallocated for different ministries upto

February 18. Thus, the speaker added, the secretariat was not prepared for holding the question and answer session beyond that date. They were not even

processed beyond February 18. He acknowledged that at the emergency Business Advisory Committee meeting last week it was decided to lay the question and answers to save time and allow discussion

on the President's speech, It was decided to reallocate the 30 hours of discussion and complete it as there was no other important matter before

the House. The oppositions time for discussion was reduced to 12 hours from 15 while that of the Treasury bench from 15 to

10 hours, he said. There is no question of suspension of the question and answer session, if it was ready we could lay it, he said, adding I hope the miscommunication

has been cleared.

#### Steps to reduce salinity in river waters soon

Necessary steps will be taken and policy will be formulated soon to reduce the salinity in river waters of south and south-western region of the

country, reports BSS. It was decided at the meeting of the parliamentary standing committee of the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control held at Sangsad Bha-

ban yesterday. Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid Ul Haq presided over the meeting.

#### Another sculpture on DU campus

A sculpture commemorat ing the country's freedom fighters was unveiled Monday on the Dhaka University campus, reports UNB.

The sculpture titled "Joy Bangla-Joy Tarunya", erected on the island near the Shamsunnahar Hall, was formally opened by Jahanara Islam, mother of Chhatra League leader Mizanur Rahman Mizan who was killed on the campus in October 1991.

by Alauddin Bulbul, the younger brother of renowned painter Sahabuddin. Chhatra League (M-I) assisted in the making of the sculpture.

The sculpture was crafted