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NEWS BRIEFS

**PM takes iftar
 with BDR men**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday attended an iftar party hosted by Director General of BDR Major General Mohammad Anwar Hossain BP, at Peelkhana. Ministers, Parliament Members, Chief of Army Staff and high civil and military officials were, among others, who attended the iftar, reports BSS.

**Special Kuwaiti
 envoy due today**

A special envoy of the Amir of Kuwait arrives here today with a message for the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, official sources said, reports BSS.

**DESA snaps 1510
 illegal lines**

DESA disconnected 1510 power lines at some areas of Mirpur yesterday, according to a DESA press release here. The lines were disconnected on the grounds of illegal use of power and having an outstanding arrear of Taka five lakh. The drives carried out at Mirpur Sec 1 Block 'D', Sec XI Block 'A', Sec XIII and Gabtoli Market, reports BSS.

**HC vacation
 bench formed**

The Chief Justice has constituted a vacation bench for hearing and disposing of all urgent cases during the vacation of the High Court from March 14 to 27, a High Court Division press release said.

Shetri, Iftar Timings			
Ram	Mar	Shetri	Iftar
16	11	—	6.12 pm
17	12	4.51 am	6.13 pm

Reminiscent of 1954 incident : Majid

Angry AL MPs try to force Speaker to allow discussion

Noisy protests, shouts and walkout by opposition Awami League marked the proceeding of parliament yesterday (Wednesday) over the discussion on alleged corruption by the ministries of Works and Energy, reports UNB.

The House plunged into a total pandemonium as some angry Awami League MPs, led by opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim, left their seats and rushed up to the podium to demand of the Chair to allow discussion on the reported corruption on the two ministries.

The unprecedented noisy scene witnessed by this parliament took place at about 5-30 pm when Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni gave the Energy Minister the floor to make a statement under rule 300 on the allegation of corruption in his ministry.

The Awami League MPs raised hue and cry urging the chair not to allow any statement by the Minister on the issue on which Mohammad Nasim and four other opposition MPs gave a notice to discuss the matter.

They also pointed out that Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali had already accepted the notice and assured discussion under rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure.

But Deputy Speaker Panni paid no heed to the opposition's plea and stuck to his decision allowing Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain to read out his statement.

At this stage, Mohammad Nasim was seen rushing up to the podium of the Speaker to register his protest. Nasim was followed by Whip Anzuz Haq, Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder, Prof MA Mannan and Mirza Azam who also raised storm of protests.

Some 25 to 30 Awami League MPs were seen standing in the passage leading to the podium. They raised a chorus of condemnation 'Tui Razakar, Tui Razakar.' Deputy Speaker was the target of their denunciation.

Two Sergeants at Arms stood up at that point of crisis.

Meet with jute workers inconclusive

Govt defers talks with SKOP to March 12

To the utter surprise of the SKOP leaders, the government yesterday deferred the planned meeting with them hours before the talks were scheduled at 4 pm on the March 15-16 nationwide shutdown.

The Labour and Manpower Ministry in an official letter to the SKOP yesterday noon unilaterally rescheduled the proposed government-SKOP dialogue for March 12 at 3 pm at the earlier decided venue, the office of Manpower Training Bureau at Kakrail.

However, the government opened talks with the labour leaders of jute-textile-cotton mills by holding two separate sessions with them on the day.

In another development in the Wage Commission controversy, the government yesterday convened an emergency meeting of the Tripartite Committee, comprising representatives of the government, employers and workers.

SAARC leaders

confirm participation in Dhaka summit

COLOMBO, Mar 10: Leaders of seven South Asian nations have confirmed their participation next month in a summit which was postponed twice due to unrest in the region, Foreign Ministry officials here said today, reports AFP.

Arrangements were being made in Dhaka to stage to seventh summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on April 10 and 11, officials said.

The SAARC charter requires the participation of heads of state or government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for them to stage a summit.



Nongor Khela Ghar Ashar, a juvenile organisation brought out a procession in city yesterday demanding punishment to the attackers of a Fakirerpool businessman Mohammad Mubarrak who was shot Tuesday. — Star photo

Special Advisor to Mitterrand arrives Sunday

By Staff Correspondent

The Special Advisor to the President of the French republic, Anne Lauvergeon, is scheduled to arrive on an official visit to Bangladesh on Sunday.

This was announced by the French Ambassador Jean Michel Lacombe at a press briefing at his residence here on Wednesday.

During her stay here, Lauvergeon, who succeeded Jacques Attali as Special Advisor to French President Mitterrand, would call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman.

Ambassador Lacombe informed that Lauvergeon would be accompanied by a delegation of French officials.

Mitterrand hosts peace talks on Bosnia today

PARIS, Mar 10: French President Francois Mitterrand will host talks on the war in former Yugoslavia between international mediators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Paris on Thursday, Mitterrand's office said, reports Reuter.

A statement said the meeting, to be held on the eve of the renewal of peace talks in New York between the warring parties in Bosnia, had been called at the request of Owen and Vance.

The statement said that the Paris meeting would discuss what Serbia could do to help the peace process on former Yugoslavia and the acceptance of the Vance-Owen peace plan by Bosnian Serbs.

It is part of the constant and determined efforts of our country, as far as all parties in former Yugoslavia are concerned, to support the (Vance-Owen) plan... and the restoration of peace in this region, the statement said.

Former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and former British Foreign Secretary David Owen, now Lord Owen, head international efforts to mediate a peace settlement in Bosnia.

AP from Sarajevo says, Bosnian Serb forces backed by artillery reportedly closed in Wednesday on two more towns in eastern Bosnia, and a UN aid convoy was blocked for a second day.

Also Wednesday, six US Air Force cargo planes dropped 42 tons of food and medical supplies over Srebrenica, the UN said.



Contraceptive use increased remarkably, says Nafis

UNFPA Chief Executive Dr Nafis Sadik yesterday said Bangladesh made significant headway in the family planning sector but it should strive more towards containing the population boom, reports UNB.

She said a great deal has to be done in removing social backwardness if family planning programmes are to be effectively implemented.

The UN Population Fund Chief Executive was addressing a press conference at the State guest house Padma in the morning.

Projecting the success of the programme in Bangladesh, Dr Nafis said contraceptive use has increased remarkably in last five years. It has shot up to 40 per cent from 10 per cent in 1988.

Govt has betrayed workers: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the government of betraying the labourers by reneging on its agreement with SKOP, reports UNB.

The Awami League President, while welcoming thousands of workers of Orion Laboratories Labour Union and Nila Textile Mills Employees Union in Jatya Sramik League, called upon the government to implement the agreement signed with the workers.

Referring to "economic stagnation", Hasina said country's economy was on the verge of ruination for what she called failure of this regime.

"Mills and factories are being closed down, workers are being laid off, and the government is not doing anything to help them," she said.

Resist forces trying to hamper development: PM

GHATAIL (Tangail), Mar 10: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today warned against attempts to create chaos and conflict in national life and called the people for unitedly resisting the forces trying to hamper national development, reports UNB.

"People have to be vigilant to see that none can create indiscipline in national life and hinder the development process," she told a public meeting at Ghatail High School playground this afternoon.

Replying to the opposition which have branded the politics of BNP as "politics of failure," she reminded them that the people had brought BNP to power thrice for its politics of production and development.

"The country belongs to us and we all have the equal responsibility to build the country," she said seeking cooperation from the people to implement the government programmes aimed at welfare of common people.

She alleged that when BNP is proceeding with the development programmes a certain political party with its politics of hartial and destruction is trying to ruin the country.

A month after bloodbath—I No sign of reopening Rajshahi varsity soon

From Asiuzzaman

RAJSHAHI, Mar 10: Uncertainty looms large over the reopening of Rajshahi University as the authorities have taken no initiative even a month after the bloody violence that left five students killed and several hundred injured leading to its closure, informed sources said.

"The university authorities are apparently keeping their fingers crossed waiting for measures from the government," one source said Wednesday adding that "even the repairing of the damaged halls has not been started till date."

The authorities have not yet held any Syndicate meeting to review the situation or the possibility of resuming classes at the university, the source pointed out.

The university was closed since die February 6 following the clashes, dubbed the severest in the 40-year history of the university, between the activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir and the All Party Students Unity (APSU), that left five students killed and at least 500 injured.

Young maid murdered in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A maid-servant, Shefalt, 15, was murdered at a residence at Mirpur in the capital early Tuesday.

On an information a team of the Detective Branch (DB) of Police led by an Assistant Commissioner Nazrul Islam visited the house at 2/C, Avenue-1, House No. 18, Mirpur Tuesday evening and recovered the body of Shefalt from a bathroom.

Police immediately arrested Ummu Salma Islam, the housewife and remanded her in the police custody for interrogation.

Police suspected that Shefalt was tortured to death.

Fear of eviction haunts embankment people

By Inam Ahmed back from Sandwip

Every morning, 10,000 people on the Gupthachara 'bri bandh' (embankment) at Sandwip wake up from sleep with a fear that the night past may have been their last under a roof, in a sweet home.

They wake up with the feeling that they may be evicted today.

These people had settled along the 10-kilometre embankment on the east part of the island since 1985. Once they had their own lands, Today the sea has engulfed those forcing them to settle on the Water Development Board embankment.

Though life on the embankment had never been well, it could not be better given the fact that they had lost their own lands. The 1991 cyclone hit them, but being beside the embankment, the toll was not high.

Soon after the cyclone, different NGOs like Concern, Nijera Kari and Samaj Unnyan Sangstha came forward with relief.

Abul Kalam, a settler on the embankment said, "We, on the embankment did not get any support from the government. The lone NGO, Nijera Kari, helped us. They gave us house building materials and food."

Concern, a NGO, arranged the rehabilitation of the embankment people.

Yeltsin averts impeachment move

MOSCOW, Mar 10: President Boris Yeltsin's supporters fought off impeachment proceedings Wednesday as the hard-line Congress convened an emergency session on who should rule Russia, reports AP.

A motion to ask Russia's Constitutional Court whether Yeltsin was upholding the Constitution failed to win enough votes for passage.

Still, led by Yeltsin rival Russian Khasbulatov, the Communist-dominated Congress appeared ready to strip more of Yeltsin's executive powers and paralyze his government.

Jayalalita withdraws support to Rao govt

NEW DELHI, Mar 10: A long-time political ally Tuesday announced that it was withdrawing support to Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's fragile government in the Indian parliament, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP.

Jayalalita Jayaram, president of the opposition Tamil party, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), made the announcement in a late night statement in Madras, PTI said.

Jayaram, who also is Chief Minister of the government in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, controlled by her party, said the ruling Congress (I) Party leadership was conniving persistent campaigns against her and her government.

Jayaram, a film star-turned politician, has alleged earlier that Rao's party was indirectly supporting efforts to topple her government which took over in 1991.

"Therefore, the AIADMK is withdrawing its support being given to the Congress (I) in parliament," she said in Madras, Tamil Nadu's capital.

Ruling party officials declined comments.

Death of Bipa remains shrouded in mystery

By Staff Correspondent

Death of a minor — Sanjida Akhter Bipa — remained shrouded in mystery until Wednesday.

Police failed to make any headway in the investigation on the mysterious death of the Bipa even after three days of the occurrence.

Eleven years old Bipa died last Monday. She was reportedly found hanging from a ceiling fan by the neck at their Ring Road, Shyamoli, residence. She was rushed to Suhrawardy Hospital by a relative.