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NEWS BRIEFS

BSF kills one Bangladeshi
 COMILLA, Mar 19: A Bangladeshi national was allegedly killed by the Indian Security Forces (BSF) at Tetabumti village in Burichang thana on March 12. BDR sources said Abdur Rahim (25) was shot and killed by BSF within the territory of Bangladesh when he was returning home from his relative house through Tetabumti village. BSF removed the body and returned it to BDR on March 14, reports UNB.

ADB chief leaves Dhaka for Manila
 Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Kimimasa Tsurumizu left here yesterday for Manila to continue his discussions with the government leaders and officials as most productive and meaningful, reports BSS.

Tsurumizu accompanied by his wife arrived here on Wednesday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh. During his stay he called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Agriculture Minister Majid ul Haq and Energy Minister Dr Khandokar Mosharraf Hossain.

7 killed in Thai bomb blast
 BANGKOK, Mar 19: A powerful explosion shook a rock grinding mill in northern Thailand's Chiangrai province today, killing seven workers and injuring two others, police said. They said the blast went off in an explosive storage room of the mill, near the Myanmar border, while its machinery was running to produce gravel used in road construction, reports Reuters.

Scooter bomb goes off in Bombay

Another bomb blast kills four in Calcutta

CALCUTTA, Mar 19: A bomb exploded at a busy railroad station in Calcutta today, killing four people and injuring 12 others, officials and witnesses said, reports AP.

The bomb went off at Sealdah, one of the two main railroad stations in the eastern metropolis, when a police patrol stopped a man and wanted to search his bag, said Railroad Spokesman Gautam Banerjee.

"The man became nervous and dropped the bag and it exploded," said Banerjee, who visited the station, used by an estimated 800,000 travelers a day.

Banerjee said only the would-be bomber was killed, but witnesses and other railroad officials said they saw four mutilated bodies lying on the platform. All were dead.

It was not immediately known if the blast was linked to the series of explosions that have rocked India in the past week.

Also today, a small bomb hidden in a motor scooter exploded in the crowded Khetwadi district of central Bombay. It caused no casualties and little damage, but it further disrupted life in this still-tense city, Press Trust of India reported.

Last Friday, 13 bombs exploded in Bombay, killing at least 317 people.

Five days later a bomb in Calcutta killed 86 people.

Friday's explosion triggered new fear in Calcutta and shut down a vital communication link between the overcrowded city of 12 million people with the suburban areas.

Banerjee said an estimated 100,000 commuters were stranded in the railroad station after the authorities suspected all train operation there.

Police are investigating links between Middle East-based criminals and suspects arrested in the serial bombing of Bombay.

The Bombay police commissioner said India is asking other countries for help in tracing a wealthy Muslim family that fled to Dubai around the time of the March 12 explosions.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), meanwhile, has assured India it will cooperate in the investigation of bomb attacks in Bombay and a police official said two main suspects would not be allowed to leave.

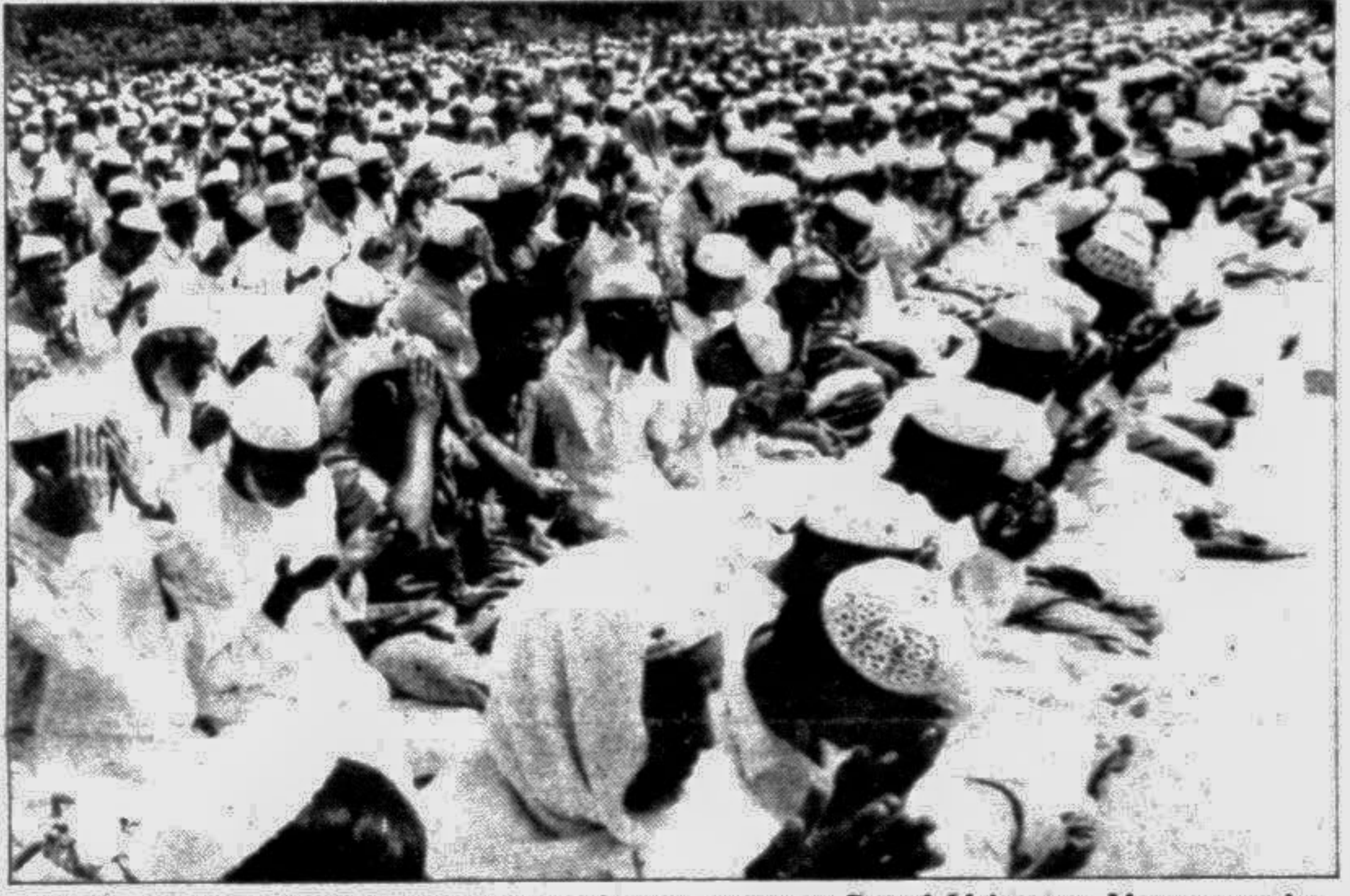
"They are in Dubai and we know where they are," a Dubai police source said when asked about the Memon brothers, who have been accused by New Delhi of involvement in last week's blast.

"We have instructed all entry points not to allow them to leave," he added, while refusing to make any further comment.

Police arrested two people Thursday accused of parking the explosive-laden vehicles that devastated two crowded market places a week ago, said Commissioner Amarjeet Singh Samra.

Singh said the two men told interrogators that they were each paid 5,000 rupees (dhs 160) to handle the vehicles, without knowing that they were packed with explosives.

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A large number of people attended the Friday prayer at Baitul Mokarram Mosque on the occasion of Jumatul Wida, the last Friday of the month of Ramzan, yesterday. —Star photo

Jumatul Wida observed

Jumatul Wida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramzan, was observed in the city as elsewhere in the country yesterday with due religious fervour, reports BSS.

Muslims of all ages offered special prayers in all mosques throughout the country seeking divine blessings of Almighty Allah for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country and for the unity and fraternity of the Muslim Ummah.

The biggest Jumatul Wida congregation was held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque where thousands of Muslim devotees offered their prayers.

Muslims from far flung areas of the city and around it converged at the national mosque to offer their prayers. The congregation was so big that people had to offer their prayers on north and southern roads of the mosque.

See Page 12 Col 4

Rohingya repatriation

Myanmar may allow UN officials

YANGON, Mar 19: General Than Shwe, Chairman of SLORC and Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar has said that there is an 'open invitation' for UN Under-Secretary General Jan Eliasson or his representatives to visit Myanmar anytime, reports BSS.

He told this to the visiting Bangladesh Minister of Communication and special envoy Oli Ahmed at the Dragon House here today.

Oli Ahmed earlier proposed that Eliasson or his representatives be allowed to make a follow-up visit to expedite the process of repatriation of Myanmar refugees from Bangladesh.

The visiting Minister expressed satisfaction at the process of repatriation of refugees under the April 28, 1992 joint statement.

The minister also proposed that to help co-ordinate the process of repatriation in both sides of border and to meet

the demand of international community Myanmar government my agree to the stationing of a small contingent of UNHCR personnel in their side of the border.

The minister conveyed the greetings and good wishes of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the government and the people of Bangladesh to the Prime Minister, the government and the people of Myanmar.

He reiterated the abiding desire of Bangladesh to maintain and strengthen the existing cordial and friendly relations with Myanmar and to resolve all outstanding issues as in the past through dialogue and understanding.

General Than Shwe reciprocated the sentiment of Bangladesh minister and conveyed his greetings and good wishes to Begum Zia and to the government and the people of Bangladesh.

See Page 12 Col 8



Emazuddin appointed DU VC

President Abdur Rahman Biswas who is also the Chancellor of Dhaka University, yesterday appointed Prof Emazuddin Ahmed the Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University for four years, reports BSS.

Prof Emazuddin Ahmed was elected to the three-member panel for the post of Vice-Chancellor securing the highest votes of the Senate on March 17.

See Page 12 Col 1

17 more die, 1669 attacked

Diarrhoea situation remains critical

Overall diarrhoea situation in country's 14 districts continued to be critical as it claimed 17 more lives and attacked some 1,669 people in 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday, reports UNB.

The latest deaths brought the toll from the epidemic to 1,266 since early January, according to the Diarrhoea Control Room sources in Dhaka.

More than 87,339 people have been attacked by the water-borne bacteria across the country, particularly in Laxmipur and eight southern districts, control room sources added.

Unofficial sources believe the death figure and the number of people attacked would

be much higher with those not reported from remote areas.

Of the fresh deaths, four were in Laxmipur, another four in Patuakhali, two in Barguna, one in Pirojpur and two each in Jhalakati, Bhoala and Barisal.

District-wise break-up of attacks during the last 24 hours is: Barguna-252, Pirojpur-124, Bagherhat-69, Patuakhali-183, Khulna-136, Jhalakati-183, Bhoala-149, Barisal-186, Narayanganj-63, Gopalganj-42, Kishoreganj-72, Netrokona-13 and Laxmipur-193.

There was, however, no report of attack in capital Dhaka yesterday.

So far, the highest number of 253 people died in Pirojpur district, followed by 192 in

See Page 12 Col 8

Pak Defence Minister arrives next month

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Pakistan's Defence Minister Ghous Ali Shah will visit Bangladesh sometime next month to discuss military cooperation, official sources said.

Both sides want the visit, agreed in principle during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's August 9-11 tour of Pakistan, to take place after the SAARC summit, scheduled for April 10-11, the sources said.

Officials are yet to decide the dates for which consultations are on.

Earlier, the Pakistani press had reported that the minister would come last September.

The two countries, however, reached accord on the visit at a later period but it was deferred amid tension in the region in the aftermath of the Babri Mosque incident, one source said refusing to be named.

The source declined to say when the visit had been scheduled, but indicated a time around late last year or early this year.

Talk of defence cooperation is being heard after Begum Zia's visit during which the issue came up for discussion at the official meeting between prime ministers.

Shah was part of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's team at the talks. Begum Zia herself is the Defence Minister.

Officials, however, do not say about the nature of cooperation.

See Page 12 Col 4

UN convoy arrives Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica

SARAJEVO, Mar 19: A long-awaited convoy of aid arrived safely Friday for the desperately hungry people in the eastern Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica, UN officials said, reports AP.

The report from officials in Belgrade was confirmed by ham radio reports received in Zagreb, Croatia. The reports said the convoy arrived at 5 pm (1600 GMT).

"The people all crowded around and were joyous," said John McMillan of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva. However, he added, "We need to get another one in right away." The 16 vehicles had mostly food and medical supplies, but also carried plastic sheeting for weatherproofing buildings.

Earlier, Serb forces had launched an intense artillery barrage on Srebrenica. In the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, shells slammed into a crowd waiting for bread, injuring at least 16 people.

Serb forces were closing in

on Srebrenica, where UN officials reported shells falling at the rate of one a second.

The Srebrenica convoy, halted at Mali Zvornik on the Yugoslav-Bosnian border for nine days, was allowed to proceed after the commander of UN forces in Bosnia agreed to a Serb demand that it not include an armed escort, officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Belgrade said.

The convoy left Mali Zvornik earlier, but was stopped again by an armoured personnel carrier on the Yugoslav side of the border.

It was not immediately clear why Gen. Philippe Morillon of the UN agreed to the Serbs' demands, which he had earlier rejected. But UN officials have increasingly emphasized the desperation in Srebrenica.

UNHCR officials had been worried what would happen if the convoy hadn't gotten through.

"If this convoy does not reach Srebrenica very soon,



Abdur Rouf CID continues interrogation of former defence officials

By Staff Correspondent

The CID officials Friday continued interrogation of former chief of Defence Forces Intelligence (DFI) Brigadier (Retd) Nasiruddin and a retired naval officer Lieutenant Commander A H M Mahmud arrested in connection with a customs officer murder.

See Page 12 Col 1

Fire in three districts

Two children killed, 400 homeless

Two children were burned to death and over 400 people were rendered homeless when three fires destroyed about 28 dwelling houses in Narayanganj, Barisal and Sirajganj during the last two days.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent said: A fire burned 15 tin sheds at Baburail in the town yesterday leaving over 300 members of 50 families homeless. Nobody was, however, injured in the incident.

The fire, believed to have been originated from a gas oven, swiftly engulfed the area.

Members of three Fire Service units from Mandopara, Hajiganj and Padogala stations reached the spot 45 minutes after the fire broke out at around 1 pm and put it out, according to victims.

The fire fighters could not estimate the loss immediately. However, the affected peo-

ple put the loss at Taka six to seven lakh.

Before the firefighters' arrival, neighbours came to the aid of the victims trying to control the fire.

Most of the victims took refuge to their relatives' houses while the remaining ones were found lamenting the loss of their belongings on the spot.

UNB adds from Sirajganj, three children of a family were roasted during their sleep at village Khalpara in Tarash thana Thursday night.

Hazera Khatun (7), Hasina Khatun (5) and Hossain Ali (6) fell victim to a fire which originated from a lamp and engulfed the entire house, according to the villagers.

The mother of the three children, Asadunnessa, was forcing her Esha prayer at the time of fire. Neighbours rushed to the scene and rescued Asadunnessa with critical burn

See Page 12 Col 7

Shopkeepers abort anti-smuggling drive in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 19: A contingent of anti-smuggling task force personnel this morning retreated from city's 'Mimi Super Market' after seizing only 14 pieces of Indian sarrees when shopkeepers fought them back throwing brick-bats, official sources here said.

Two other major attacks from shopkeepers were faced by the task force personnel during raids this month at Reazuddin Bazar and Apollo market in the city here that slowed down their drive despite regular influx of contraband Indian goods, sources also said.

See Page 12 Col 7

Aidid returns to talks as US troops move into Kismayu

KISMAYU (Somalia), Mar 19: A key Somali faction leader returned to peace talks on Friday, apparently satisfied by the deployment of a battalion of US troops to this city, reports AP.

The 500 members of a US quick reaction force moved into Kismayu on Thursday, ordered back after fighters of Mohamed Said Hirsi, known as Gen. Morgan, drove supporters of Col. Omar Jess out of the town.

Tuesday's clash prompted Mohamed Farrah Aidid, one of Somalia's chief warlords and a supporter of Jess, to pull out of peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Aidid had said he would not return until the situation in Kismayu was 'reversed.'

But Farouk Mawlawi, the UN spokesman in the Ethiopian capital, said Friday that Aidid had rejoined talks. The warlord met Friday morning with other faction leaders and UN officials.

Despite UN efforts to expand representation by including community leaders and intellectuals, Aidid's walkout demonstrated how much of a grip the warlords have on the peace process.

The talks were suspended after he left Wednesday, and committees met only informally on Thursday.

With Aidid back Friday, conference committees resumed discussion of issues including setting up transitional authorities that could ensure security for relief and development work.

Mawlawi had said Thursday that there was still hope an agreement would be reached by the end of the conference. But he conceded the talks were not likely to end as scheduled on Saturday. He would not say how long they would last.

Aidid had no immediate comment, and the reasons for his decision were not clear. But a UN fact-finding mission left for Kismayu on Friday, as he had demanded, and the US troops were charged with trying to end feuding in this dusty port.

Two weeks ago, the Americans had handed over peacekeeping operations in Kismayu to an 800-man Belgian force.

Six Syndicate members accuse RU VC of violating rule

From Staff Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Mar 19: A group of Syndicate members of the Rajshahi University accused Vice-Chancellor Prof Anisur Rahman of violating the existing rules of the university.

Six of the 15-member Executive Body said that the VC violated the university calendar by not convening any regular meeting of the Syndicate in February. According to the calendar at least one regular meeting should be held every month, they said.

The members elected to the Syndicate last January from different teachers category also submitted a memorandum to the VC accusing him on nine counts.

See Page 12 Col 3

A month after bloodbath—V

RU VC blames APSU for Feb 6 violence

From Asiuzzaman

RAJSHAHI, Mar 19: Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof. Anisur Rahman has blamed the University All-party Students Unity (APSU) for the February 6 violence.

Such a severe gunbattle could not have happened if APSU had not come into being, the Vice-Chancellor told The Daily Star in a 45-minute recorded interview.

"The APSU was formed to oust Shibir from the campus," Rahman said, "I think they (APSU leaders) thought that it was not possible to drive out the Shibir without unity," but hastened to add "they can answer well why they formed the APSU."

He said that 10 to 12 supporters of the Shibir were killed on the campus. Earlier the Shibir was so weak an organisation that its members would flee in the face of opposition chase.

"Can we call it democracy if (they) unitedly want to oust the Shibir?" he asked.

Prof Rahman said that it (crisis in the university) was not his personal problem, it was a problem of the society and the university would be reopened after the government ensured law and order.

"It is immaterial who is in this chair, today I am here, tomorrow another man will

See Page 12 Col 4

Democratic Forum national convention announcement now Mar 31

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Democratic Forum (BDF) deferred for the third time the announcement of the preparatory committee for the national convention expected to be held sometimes in May, Forum sources said Friday.

The Forum had announced to hold a press conference today (Saturday) to declare the committee but refused the date on March 31 for what it said the Forum convenor Dr. Kamal Hossain who is abroad for about two weeks had not yet come back.

Sheri, Iftar Timings

Ram	Mar	Sheri	Iftar
25	20	—	6.16 pm
26	21	4.42 am	6.17 pm