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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### PM takes iftar with journalists

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia hosted an iftar party at Sugandha yesterday evening in honour of the editors and journalists of national dailies and news agencies. The Prime Minister exchanged greetings with the journalists and enquired about their well-being, reports BSS.

#### Hasina returns

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina returned to Dhaka yesterday afternoon after a two-day visit from her home town Gopalganj. The Opposition leader went to Tungipara Thursday to offer fete at the mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and attend different programmes marking the 73rd birth anniversary of Bangabandhu, reports UNB.

#### BAU reopens Mar 30

Classes of the newly-admitted first year degree students of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) will begin on April 5. The university will re-open on March 30 after Ramadan vacation. Residential halls will, however, open for the students March 29 morning, reports UNB.

#### Gas Field profit

Bangladesh Gas Field Company Limited has earned a net profit of Taka 18.77 crore during the 1991-92 financial year. This was stated at the 37th annual general meeting of the company held yesterday with Chairman of the company's board of directors and Petrobangla C K M Abdullah in the chair, reports BSS.

#### Sehri, Iftar Timings

Ram	Mar	Sehri	Iftar
26	21	-	6.17 pm
27	22	4.41 am	6.18 pm

### Tension along frontier

## Lunthin men cross into Bandarban, kill one

By Staff Correspondent

Myanmar border guards infiltrating into a Bangladesh village shot dead one person and wounded another five triggering tension along the frontier, sources reached by telephone said on Saturday.

The raid by up to 25 guards of Lunthin, Myanmar's border security force, occurred on Friday night at the Kumbodia village under Asartak mouza of Naikhongchari in Bandarban district, border officials said. It was not immediately

clear why the Lunthin guards made their early night infiltration into Bangladesh. The incident took place three miles into Bangladesh border and not far from Adarshagram Rohingya refugee camp that has about 15,000 inmates. Officials quoting witnesses said the Myanmar forces opened fire after villagers spotting them shouted for help. Some of the villagers ran towards a BDR camp on the outskirts of the village. The

Lunthins fired at least 60 rounds with automatic weapons.

The Lunthin guards fled in darkness through jungles after BDR troops from the camps fired back and chased them.

The man killed by Lunthin was identified as Nurul Kabir, 65. The wounded were taken to hospital.

Bangladesh tightened its security along the border following the incident. See Page 12 Col 1

## Sarbahara group quits armed struggle

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesher Sarbahara Party (BSP), one of the several outlawed Maoist groups, Saturday renounced its 22-year underground armed struggle and decided to do open politics.

The armed struggle is now a terrorist act, we corrected ourselves and have come to the people," Sirajul Haq Bhuiyan alias Mamun, General Secretary of the newly-formed Sarbahara Party of Bangladesh, told a press conference at the National Press Club.

Mamun acknowledged that his party still possessed some weapons which, he added, would be surrendered to the authorities shortly.

He declined to disclose the number of weapons but said that their arsenal included light machineguns to country-made conventional firearms.

The 40-year-old leader from Madaripur, failed to ex-

plain how he held the press conference keeping illegal weapons but said that they had negotiation with the government for 'open politics'.

The press conference of the party of proletariats was followed by an iftar party attended by the newly-formed rightist National Democratic Alliance leader Anwar Zahid.

Mamun claimed that a date was fixed to hand over the weapons but the authorities did not receive the arms on the date.

He said that from now on there would be no underground Sarbahara Party in the country but informed sources said that two to three more factions were still active in the armed struggle in different regions especially in the southern and the western districts.

It was one of the offshoots See Page 12 Col 4

## Lailatul Qadr tonight

The holy Lailatul Qadr, the night of nights, will be observed after sun set today throughout the country with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports BSS.

On this night of the holy month of Ramadan, the holy Quran was revealed by almighty Allah to show correct path for his best creation-human beings.

Muslims of all ages both male and female will seek the mercy of almighty Allah through nightlong prayers, zikir, azkars, namaz-e-nafla.

Milad mahfil and special munajat will be offered in all mosques and different areas of the city seeking divine blessings of almighty Allah for the peace, progress and prosperity of the nation and unity and fraternal relations among the Muslim 'ummah'.

People will also offer feteah at the graves of their near and dear ones and the mazar of Muslim saints.

President Abdur Rahman See Page 12 Col 8

## Georgia downs Russian plane in Abkhazia

TBILISI (Georgia), Mar 20: Georgia shot down a Russian air force plane over the rebel region of Abkhazia on Friday and its leader warned Moscow against repeating 'the mistakes of Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia,' reports Reuter.

'It is time to stop before it is too late,' local journalists quoted Eduard Shevardnadze as saying in the Abkhazian village where the plane fell, killing its pilot.

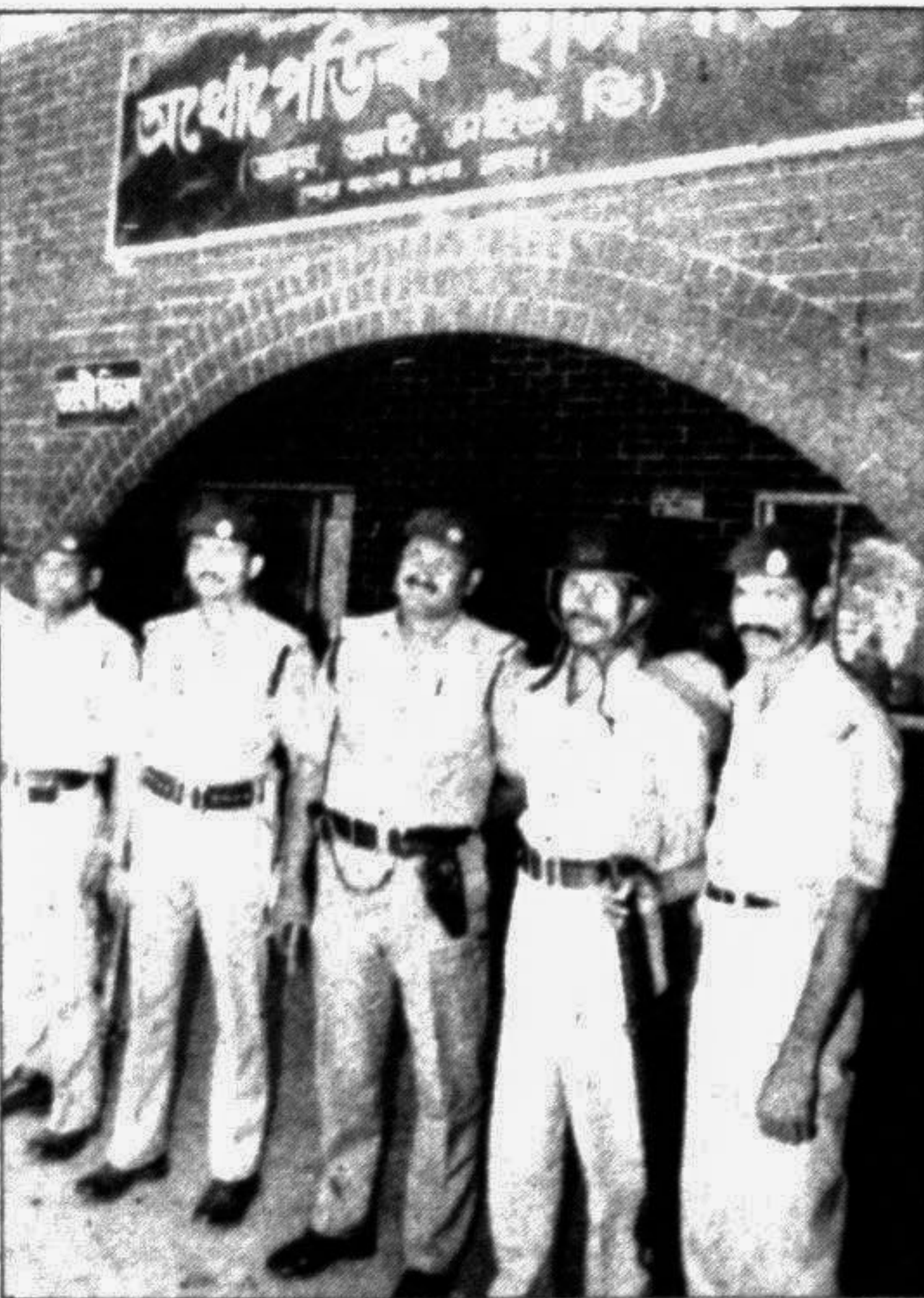
'The mistakes of Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia must not be repeated,' he said, referring to Soviet invasions of the two states.

Georgia has accused Russian troops in Abkhazia of backing separatists who were driven back after trying to storm the regional capital Sukhumi this week.

But Russia says its forces are neutral in the conflict, which has killed several hundred people since August.

Moscow says Georgian forces have been attacking Russian bases in the volatile Black Sea province and has vowed to retaliate if the attacks continued.

Shevardnadze said the Russian Air Force Sukhoi SU-27 plane was shot down early on Friday by Georgian troops



Police maintain vigil at the Orthopaedic Hospital in the city with the strike by the hospital's Class Four employees passing its eighth day yesterday. — Star photo

### Chief suspects leave Dubai

## Bombay police trace route of smuggled explosives : 2 held

NEW DELHI, Mar 20: Police have traced the route of the explosives smuggled into India and arrested two men on Saturday who transported them to Bombay where they devastated the city, reports AP.

More explosives were missing, and Bombay's police commissioner offered a reward of 100,000 rupees (dhs 3,000) for discovering them.

Massive security measures were in force in major Indian cities in fear of more bombing.

Guards with mirrors checked the chassis of cars driving up to the doors of major hotels. Police barricades slowed traffic. US airlines, following a travel warning from the State Department, have cancelled flights, and interna-

tional conferences were called off.

Bombay Commissioner Amarjeet Singh Samra said as many as 30 people may have been involved in setting the

#### Bomb blast in Jabalpur

NEW DELHI, Mar 20: A crude bomb exploded today in the central Indian city of Jabalpur but no casualties were reported, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

The home-made device, which caused minor damage, triggered a brief panic because of the recent bomb attacks on Bombay and

bombs on March 12 that gutted skyscrapers, office buildings and hotels, killing 317 people and wounding 1,100.

Saturday's arrests brought to 13 the number of people in custody for investigation into the bombs that ripped across India's financial and commercial hub.

Samra said the plastic explosives were smuggled by sea to a point south of Bombay about one month ago, then they were taken to a storehouse in New Bombay, a satellite city.

They were brought into Bombay on March 11, he said, where they were packed into recently bought cars, motor scooters and suitcases. See Page 12 Col 4



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia with the recipients of the Independence Day Award '92 at Osmany Memorial Hall yesterday. The Prime Minister is seen with (from left) Dr Shamsul Alam, Prof Zaker Hossain while Sumita Raihan, widow of Zahir Raihan is on her right. — Star photo

### Independence Day Award '92 distributed

## Independence, responsibility interrelated : Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated her call to the political parties and the people to contribute their best to the nation-building activities for development and progress with the same spirit that had inspired them in the struggle for Liberation War, reports BSS.

Awarding the 'Swadhinata Dibas Puroskar 1992' (Independence Day Award) at a simple ceremony at Osmany Memorial Hall auditorium, the Prime Minister said the success of the ongoing development activities under a democratic set-up would depend on peace, discipline and stability.

'Independence and sense of responsibility are interrelated,' she said, adding that it was not only the sole responsibility of the government but

also of all political parties and citizens to uphold democratic spirit and safeguard independence.

The Prime Minister appealed to all to unitedly carry out development activities so that 'we can present our future generation a happy and prosperous nation.'

'In 1971 our competition was who could sacrifice his life before others. Now our competition should be who could render more services to the country and bring welfare for its people. Only then the self-sacrifices of the martyrs will be successful and independence will be meaningful,' she said.

The Prime Minister distributed Swadhinata Dibas Puroshkar 1992 among persons and an organisation for

their remarkable contribution toward different fields of national life. The recipients were: Prof Kazi Zaker Hossain in Education, Zahir Raihan (posthumously) in Literature and the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRRI) in Science and Technology. Each of the recipients was given a gold medal, Taka 25 thousand and a certificate.

Dr Shamsul Alam, Director General of BRRRI, and Mrs Sumita Raihan received the awards respectively on behalf of BRRRI and Zahir Raihan.

Introduced in 1977, the Swadhinata Dibas Puroshkar is the highest national award of the country. This award is given each year to give recognition of the contribution of different individuals and

See Page 12 Col 6

## Fire kills 3 in Pabna

PABNA, Mar 20: Three people were killed and property worth about Tk 5 lakh was gutted in fire that devastated 58 houses in two villages in sadar thana Friday night, reports UNB.

Fire broke out at Shimulchara where a minor girl Resma, 4, cows and 13 goats were roasted. Eight houses and 15 mounds of paddy were damaged, police said.

Mofjul (12) and Ayan Uddin (62) were killed at Dashpara where fire gutted about 50 houses, 30 tons of paddy and 25 cows.

Firemen brought the blaze under control after two hours. Another report from the district adds: A grocery owner, Ali Reza (25), was stabbed by armed miscreants at Abdul Hamid Road in the town today.

Police said a group of youngmen demanded Tk 500 as toll from Reza. As he refused, they stabbed him.

A Rajbari reports says: Two gay girls suffered severe burns in a devastating fire that gutted 400 houses at the Daulatdia Ghat brothel early today.

Officials and local people said some 2,000 inmates of See Page 12 Col 8

## Tussle in CPB over party assets

By Nazmul Ashraf

A large number of CPB leaders are contemplating forming a Trustee Board to vest in it the authority on all movable and immovable assets of the 45-year-old party, reliable sources said.

The move has been prompted by the apparent death of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) with the discontent between party reformers and hardliners reaching its peak recently.

Furthermore, according to party sources, the move by the reformers, dominating the CPB central bodies, has also been fuelled by mounting confrontations between the rival groups — one trying to stick to the communist line and the other wanting to restructure the party in the line of the country's social realities abandoning the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

With the apparent dissolution of the party, awaiting approval of delegates during its May conference, the headline group, determined to protect the traditional party with its communist name and character, were now active to keep the property of CPB across the country under its control, in-

siders said. The reformers on their part plan to utilise the assets, donated by dedicated party leaders at different times, for the welfare of deprived masses.

Presently, the central office of the CPB in the capital is the prime attraction for both the sides.

According to CPB central leaders, the party owns its central office on several acres of land in Purana Paltan, the weekly Ekota, a printing and computer processing centre and a partnership in the Jatya Sahitya Prokashani, a publication house in the capital and several pieces of land in the district towns of Chittagong, Rangpur, Comilla and Barisal, housing party offices there.

The planned Trustee Board, likely to be named after the party's dedicated leaders like Mont Singh and Mohammad Farhad, would run voluntary and welfare-oriented organisations in the fields of education, health and other social sector, planners informed.

The Board would also work for the well-being of the families left by the party's late See Page 12 Col 1

### Avail facilities by banks to rehabilitate sick units : PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called for availing the facilities offered by banks for the rehabilitation of sick industries, reports BSS.

She was speaking as the president at a meeting that reviewed the progress in rehabilitation of sick industries held at the International Conference Centre (ICC) here yesterday.

In this context, the Prime Minister said the concerned financial institutions have already been advised to extend assistance for rehabilitation of See Page 12 Col 1

### BTMA demands tariff protection

By Staff Correspondent  
Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) Sunday demanded tariff protection and other measures to make the spinning units of the country viable.

Speaking at a press conference at Hotel Sonargaon the Chairman of BTMC, Wali-Ul-Islam demanded imposition of anti-dumping measures against import of yarn and said import duty on yarn should be raised to 30 per cent instead of the present 15 per cent.

'It has come to our knowledge that moves are underway to withdraw total import duty on yarn,' the BTMA Chairman said, 'this would simply destroy the spinning sector.'

Other demands of the owners of private sector spinning mills comprising 54 units include allowing a maximum of 10 per cent wastage for imported yarn used in knit and hosiery industry and raising See Page 12 Col 6

### One shot dead in Barisal

From Our Staff Correspondent  
BARISAL, Mar 20: One person was shot dead near Thana Parishad at 7 pm today by some miscreants.

Eye witnesses said Yunus Khan, 45, Health Assistant of Barisal Sadar Thana was shot by a group of miscreants numbering six while he was purchasing cigarettes. Bullet pierced into the left side of his chest and he died on the spot.

Police said the miscreants were workers of the Sarbahara Party. The body was sent to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for post mortem.

### Extortion : DMP opens hotlines

By Staff Correspondent  
Faced with an alarming rise in the incidents of extortion, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) authorities have opened hotlines and requested the city-dwellers to report illegal toll collection.

The telephone numbers opened for extortion report are: 509922, 509933, 509944 and 410061/222 and 410061/333 of DMP exchange.

In a public announcement Saturday, DMP announced that these numbers would receive information on extortion and assured the citizens of prompt actions.

'All are requested to inform police over telephone as soon as anyone illegally demands money from private houses, market places, shopping centres, commercial houses and from the autonomous organisations,' DMP announcement said.

### Tripartite accord to construct 135 cyclone shelters

A tripartite agreement was signed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, donor agencies and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society for construction of 135 multipurpose and cyclone shelters in the country's coastal areas at a cost of about Tk 70 crore, reports UNB.

Officials said Stephan Davey, Under-Secretary General of IFRC, Geoffrey Danis, Director of the International Relations of the British Red See Page 12 Col 7

### Feasibility study of Ganges barrage

## Accord with a foreign consultancy firm soon

Bangladesh is to sign an agreement with a foreign consultancy firm for the feasibility study of Ganges barrage shortly.

A draft of the agreement and other related documents have been made ready to facilitate the formal signing of the agreement.

Confiding this to UNB, a highly placed source of the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control said that India's non-cooperative attitude with regard to sharing the flow of the Ganges and other common rivers has driven Bangladesh to a desperate situation, compelling her to go for the Ganges barrage.

Giving a specific instance of the remorseless withdrawal of

the Ganges water unilaterally by India in clear contravention of all norms and laws regulating management of international waterways, the source said that the dry month flow of the Ganges at Harding Bridge has registered a sharp fall well below 11,000 cusecs this year, hastening the process of desertification in the north and south-western districts of Bangladesh.

Negotiations with India during the past 20 years have failed to yield any result. As such, Bangladesh government has decided to build Ganges barrage near Pangsha in Rajbari district to divert the flow of the Brahmaputra to the Ganges through the Gorat.

The barrage, which will be See Page 12 Col 8