

Govt plans to train young writers

Good news for new young writers!

The government plans to 'train' every year 40 writers between ages 20 to 30 in some creative areas of Bangla literature.

According to the plan, adopted recently by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, a group of 40 promising new poetry, drama and fiction writers would be provided a six-month 'training' beginning July every year, by the country's eminent literary figures.

The six-month course, spreading over three separate two-month sessions, would include academic lectures on literary issues, computer training and printing technology.

During the training period, each of the 40 chosen participants would receive a monthly allowance of Taka 3,000.

According to the proposed programme, a total of four trainers (poetry, drama, fiction and computer) would be appointed on contract basis and each of them would be paid Taka 7,000 per month. A project director would also be appointed to coordinate the programme. He would receive a monthly allowance of Taka 10,000.

The training programme for the writers — the Young Writers' Training Project — would be implemented under the supervision of the Bangla Academy.

Professor Jahannara Begum, State Minister for Cultural Affairs, told this correspondent last night that the project had been planned with a view to supporting potential writers both intellectually and financially.

She was optimistic that the government bodies concerned would not hesitate to approve the project soon.

"I am optimistic that the first batch of these writers would start receiving training from July this year", the minister said.

The budget session of Parliament, scheduled next month, would require to approve the Taka 1.5 crore project for the first batch of novice writers.

According to the project proposal, 40 books, written by new young writers after the training would be published under a tripartite agreement between the writer concerned, the Bangla Academy and the publisher.

Samad refutes Mostafiz

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Abdus Samad Azad yesterday refuted Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman's contention on the question of the SAARC leaders' visit to the national mausoleum, reports UNB.

"Without seeking apology to the nation for disregarding the sacrifices of 30 lakh martyrs" the Foreign Minister came out with some lame excuses for excluding visit to the mausoleum from the programme of the SAARC heads of state or government, he said.

In a statement, the Awami League Presidium member said it is not true that itinerary of the 7th SAARC summit was endorsed by the 6th summit held in Colombo.

As the host country, it was the responsibility of the Bangladesh government to prepare the national programmes during the 7th summit, Azad said, adding that no member states would have opposed such programme.

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister and the Foreign Secretary will have to take the responsibility for their lapses, Azad said.

He pointed out that the sudden decision on April 11

for a visit to Zia's mazar by the summittees did not create any obstruction to the "so-called decision" of Colombo summit.

No SAARC leaders thought of visiting Zia's mazar or expressed their desire for such programmes in last one year until the Dhaka summit, he said.

Azad, also the President of AL Foreign Affairs sub-committee, said the question of visiting the mazar of the "dreamer" of SAARC was not raised in 1985 when the first summit was held in Dhaka.

He also mentioned that the SAARC leaders had visited the national mausoleum at Savar during the first summit and paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition alleged that the BNP government had "deliberately" undermined the spirit of the Liberation War and the joint declaration of the three alliances.

Azad demanded that the BNP government should tender "unconditional apology" to the nation. Otherwise, the Bengali nation will give appropriate reply to this attitude of BNP towards the Liberation War and its martyrs, he said.

Private sector

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achieve the objective of export-oriented development, is not a science but an art," Mr Buchi added.

Deregulation, Buchi said, does not mean not to have regulations but to bring about regulations related to the market and not to provide protection.

On reform in labour relations, he noted that more flexibility is needed in this area. He noted that trade unions in Chile were allowed to conduct collective bargaining on an individual company basis but were barred from exerting monopoly power.

"You cannot have a system where unions can force a sector to become uncompetitive in a market economy," he added.

With a per capita income of 3000 US dollar, Chile's gross domestic product stands at 40 billion dollar while the growth rate in 1992 stood at 10 per cent. Capital Formation increased from 13 per cent of the GDP in 1984 to 21 per cent in 1992.

Buchi went on to caution that structural adjustments alone would not benefit the economy unless other coherent reform measures are initiated along with it. "You put all the pieces (reform measures) together and then you will see the energy of the common people will start to move the economy."

He strongly stressed the need for a consensus on the reforms among the political leadership with a "minimum critical agreement with checks and balances."

"The real exercise of democracy is to be able to provide the answers to the questions of the moment," Buchi added.

Buchi also stressed a complimentary rather than an adversarial relationship between the private sector and the government for succeeding in the privatisation process.

Chaired by Professor Iqbal Mahmood of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, participants at the seminar also included parliamentarians, politicians, diplomats, industrialists and former ministers and senior civil servants.

"We are facing a major change in the world which is pushing for a more open economy," he said. "How you combine all those policies, to

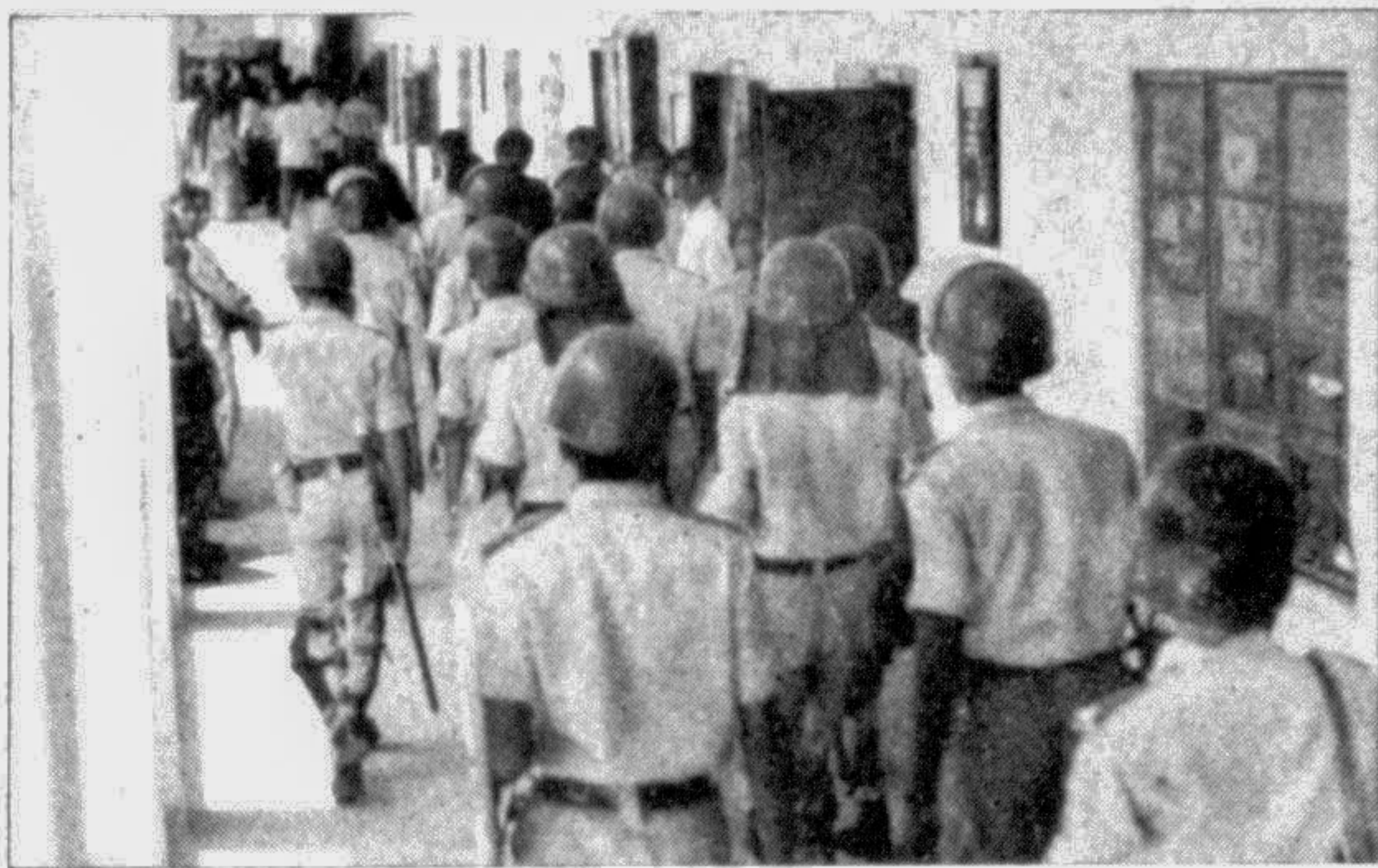
Latifur Rahman went on to identify the policies which could help improve return on manufacturing investments as: Labour discipline and productivity; realistic exchange rate and tariff structures; sound public investments on infrastructures and development of human capital.

Acknowledging that there is no clear blue-print or model for this purpose, the MCCI president added: "But what has been found to be a common sustaining factor is a strong socio-political consensus of using private enterprise as a force for economic change."

"Expanding private investment is perhaps the most important short-term economic issue for Bangladesh," observed Christopher R. Willoughby, the World Bank resident mission chief, while addressing the inaugural session of the seminar.

He noted that the growth of private sector investment in Bangladesh has been slower than expected. He hoped that the experience of Chile, which succeeded relatively well in its economic reform efforts, may provide some pointers to Bangladesh.

Introducing the key-note speaker at the seminar, Mr Willoughby noted that Hernan Buchi, as a cabinet member of the Chilean government for nearly 15 years, was involved in two major economic reform efforts in that country.



Police chasing students in the Arts Faculty Building of Dhaka University during a raid yesterday. — Star photo

2.09 kg gold recovered at ZIA: 3 held

By Staff Correspondent

Customs and intelligence personnel recovered 2.09 kilograms of gold ornament and arrested three people late Friday from the Zia International Airport.

One of the arrested included a security guard of the Civil Aviation Department, officials said.

Customs said that they arrested the guard Shahjalal and recovered 85 pieces of gold chains weighing 510 grams.

He was arrested by the Customs officials when he was suspiciously moving about the Customs area at about 2 am Friday night.

Minutes after the arrest of the Civil Aviation Guard, Customs officials arrested two passengers for misdeclaration and recovered more than one-and-a-half kg of gold from their possession.

Officials said that Giasuddin and Jamal Hossain, two passengers of the Biman flight BG 075 from Singapore, were arrested for possession of illegal quantity of gold.

Giasuddin was carrying 896 grams of gold while Jamal Hossain was found carrying 688 grams.

Four snatchers caught red-handed

A group of people yesterday (Saturday) caught red-handed four snatchers in front of RAJUK Bhaban in the city and handed them over to police, reports UNB.



Sheikh Hasina addressing a discussion meeting on Mujibnagar Day at the Awami League central office yesterday. — Star photo

IJC session begins Apr 20

The nineteenth session of the International Jute Council (IJC) will begin here on April 20, reports BSS.

The four-day IJC session will be attended by representatives from five exporting and twenty-two importing countries of the Dhaka-based International Jute Organisation (IJO), representatives of UN and international organisations, trade associations and member countries.

The council will consider the recommendations of the committee on projects, now on a three-day session here, relating to project proposals, pre-project activities and project ideas and outlines.

3 get 17 yrs RI

A special tribunal yesterday sentenced three youngmen to 17 years rigorous imprisonment each for possessing illegal arms, reports UNB.

Special Tribunal and Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Ahmed Mina convicted S M Habbibullah alias Habib (30) of Dakhin Peererbag, Mirpur, Talebur Rahman Taleb (25) of 62, West Rajabazar, Tejgaon and Abdul Matin (28) of 72, Maddhya Peererbag, Mirpur, Dhaka.

SKOP programme to rally support

By Nazmul Ashraf

In a bid to ensure maximum participation of various social forces with its planned 72-hour shutdown, due to begin May 11, the Sramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP) has drawn up a 21-day plan to drum-up support for its programme, competent sources said yesterday.

The programmes, scheduled to begin from today, include public meetings, bilateral talks, way-side rallies, processions and mass contacts.

According to some influential SKOP leaders, such programmes were needed to ensure that the political parties, their front organisations and different socio-cultural bodies supporting the SKOP actively participate to enforce the shutdown. Poor response from the political parties scuttled the mid-March 48-hour strike of the trade unions, the organisers admitted.

Despite its declared support for the failed labour strike last month, the main opposition Awami League did not deploy its workers to enforce the programme, the SKOP leader lamented. An AL leader explained that opposition by some influential party leaders-cum-industrialists to the labour bodies' demands the last time had tempered the AL's support to the SKOP call.

The SKOP, during its 21-day support-seeking programmes will meet their counterparts in the AL, Five-Party and the PDF on April 21, 22 and 28 respectively.

The strike organisers will call on the CBA leaders of the BADC at 11 am today (Sunday).

Unlike previous occasions, the SKOP, this time, has decided to bring the river transport under the purview of the May strike and a SKOP-rivercraft workers' meet has been scheduled for April 27.

The 21-day programme ending May 8, the deadline set for the government to announce implementation of the accord it signed with the SKOP earlier will be followed by review meetings about the programme.

However, the labour leaders expressed their willingness to respond to any call for a dialogue with the government regarding implementation of the government-labour bodies' agreements.

The government had signed, in late 1991, separate accords with the SKOP and the Action Body on their demands.

The SKOP has also decided to observe May Day by holding a grand rally at 4 pm on the day in the capital.

Mujibnagar Day

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Mujibnagar adds: The Day was also observed here in a befitting manner, renewing the demand for making the place second capital of Bangladesh.

As part of its 23rd Mujibnagar Day programme, Awami League held a meeting here, attended by party General Secretary Zillur Rahman and other central leaders.

Mujibnagar introduced Bangladesh to the world community and brought recognition, Zillur Rahman said.

It is the responsibility of the government to observe the Mujibnagar Day, he added.

The Awami League leader told the meeting that his party already placed a resolution in parliament seeking to make Mujibnagar the second capital of Bangladesh, set up an international check-post there and upgrading Mujibnagar to a full-fledged thana.

It was addressed, among others, by Convenor of Mujibnagar Day Observance Committee Prof Abdul Mannan MP, party central committee member Mukul Bose, Abdul Awal MP, Meherpur District AL President Hisaduddin and other leaders from different districts.

Earlier, the leaders placed wreaths at the mausoleum.

Meantime, 92 teachers of Dhaka University in a statement Saturday strongly condemned the restrictions imposed by the government on holding a rally at the Suhrawardi Uddyan on April 14.

They termed the government attitude 'heinous' and demanded installation of a plaque at the park to commemorate the call for independence by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The statement was signed, among others, by Prof Mahtabuddin Ahmed, Bulban Osman, Ajay Ray, M Shahiduzzaman, Dr Anwar Hossain, Dr A K Azad Chowdhury, K A M Saaduddin, Lalit Mohan Nath, Hiranmoy Sengupta, Shahadat Ali, Dr Sheikh Abdus Salam, Khandaker Ashraf Hossain, Dr Arefin Siddiqi, Q A I M Nooruddin, Dr Sakawat Ali Khan, Dr Durgadas Bhattacharya and Selim Ahmed.

HSC examinee killed in road mishap

Faridpur, Apr 17: An HSC examinee was killed and 25 others were wounded when a bus skidded into a wayside ditch at Kalkhola in Sadarpur thana today. The dead was named Shahin, 20, a student of Rajendra University College, reports UNB.

Police raid 3 DU halls: five held

By DU Correspondent

Police in a pre-dawn raid on the three residential halls of the Dhaka University yesterday arrested five persons and recovered some arms and ammunition.

Police raided the Zahurul Huq Hall, Salimullah Hall and Jagannath Hall at about 5.45 am yesterday, sources said.

The police action followed shooting at a student leader Friday near the Salimullah Hall. He belongs to a faction of Chhatra League (M-I) known as Montu group.

All five persons — Bishawjit, Saidur Rahman, Abdul Matin, Tariqul Islam and Habibur Rahman — were arrested from the Zahurul Huq Hall, police sources said.

During a two-hour raid the police recovered one pistol, one revolver, one SMG, three magazines and about 42 rounds of ammunition from the arrested persons.

Besides, police also recovered one revolver loaded with six rounds of bullets, one SLR magazine and a telephone set abandoned near a water drain nearby Zahurul Huq Hall.

The police sources said that three separate cases were filed in this connection.

DU tense

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year student of Management.

The BCL (M-L) brought out a big procession on the campus and held a rally at the Aparajit Bangla of the university yesterday morning to protest the attack on their leader.

The rally was addressed by its leaders Masum Ahmed, Abu Taher, Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury, Mizanur Rahman Arzoo with vice president Shakhwat Hossain Shaku in the chair.

The BCL (M-L) leaders alleged that the killers of Dr Milon were unleashing terror on the campus.

The leaders, however, alleged that the Awami League backed BCL (M-I) sheltered all the terrorists involved in the killing of Dr-Milon. These elements were responsible for the shooting.

The BCL (M-L) also demanded release of their men arrested yesterday morning and arrest of the real miscreants within 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the AL-backed BCL (M-I), at a press briefing yesterday afternoon, alleged that Moazzem was shot as an upshot of the internecine feud among the killers of the former Organising Secretary of Chhatra League Monruzzaman Badal.

The BCL (M-I) leaders also added, an "identified terror group" fired the gunshots in front of the Teachers' Students' Centre (TSC) of the University on the first day of the Bengali new year Wednesday.

The BCL (M-I) conference was attended, among others, by its leaders Pankaj Nath, Alamgir Hossain, Dipak Bhoumik and Kamruzzaman.

Meanwhile the BCL (M-I) president Mohtuddin, Hasan Chowdhury and general secretary Iqbalur Rahman, in a joint statement yesterday, condemned the continuing violence on the Dhaka University campus and demanded arrest of the killers of Monruzzaman who died in 1992.

Some other students organisations yesterday brought out processions on the campus protesting the continuing violence.

The Midnight File

Sergeant, officer found guilty for beating Rodney King

LOS ANGELES, Apr 17: The sergeant who supervised the beating of Rodney King and the officer who delivered most of the baton blows in the videotaped assault were found guilty today of violating the black motorists' civil rights. Two other officers were acquitted in the case. Sergeant Stacey Koon and police officer Laurence Powell face up to 10 years in prison and fines of 250,000 dollars, reports Reuter.

Christopher wants delay in ME peace talks

DAMASCUS, Apr 17: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher telephoned an Arab meeting in Damascus today and discussed possibility of delaying the resumption of Middle East peace talks by five days until, April 25, delegates said. Palestinians have demanded the postponement of the talks, due to resume in Washington on Tuesday, insisting that the United States and Israel must do more to solve a crisis over Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians in December, reports Reuter.

Presidential rule in Caucasus

MOSCOW, Apr 17: Chechen President Zhokhar Dudayev today dissolved parliament and the government in the separatist Russian republic and imposed presidential rule, the Interfax news agency reported. Dudayev also announced a curfew from midnight until 5:00 am in the capital Grozny. Chechen Deputy Foreign Minister Geliakhanov told the news agency, reports AFP.

Ershad delegates power

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Ershad formally entered full-time politics.

That council session empowered Ershad with all-authority regarding party affairs and the constitution was drafted making the party chairman a veritable 'autocrat', the source told The Daily Star.

The source added that the party had accumulated enough funds to invigorate its 'Release-Ershad' movement but most of the moves failed because of 'insincerity' by some party stalwarts.

He alleged that these leaders took several 'anti-party decisions' by showing 'forged' letters of the jailed chairman and sometimes conveyed 'fake and imaginary' orders from Ershad.

"Possibly Ershad has realised this and therefore taken the decision to avoid misuse of his name," the source added.

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Contraband worth Tk 14 lakh seized

CHITTAGONG, Apr 17: Bangladesh Navy in co-ordination with the Customs authorities recovered contraband worth about Taka 14 lakh from a foreign ship at the outer anchorage last night, an ISPR press release said today, reports BSS.

SPGRC hails PM

By Staff Correspondent

The Stranded Pakistanis' General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC) Saturday hailed Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for raising the issue of the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis during her meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the SAARC Summit last week.

The SPGRC-led stranded Pakistanis living in and around Dhaka and Adamjeenagar brought out a truck procession in the city in observance of "SAARC Solidarity Week" yesterday and hailed Khaleda Zia for her policy of "Dal-Bhaat" for all.

The processionists, headed by SPGRC chief patron Alhaj M Nasim Khan, later in a statement hoped that Khaleda Zia would do her best to uphold the spirit of the joint declaration signed in Islamabad on August 12, 1992 by announcing a positive date of repatriation of 3,000 families in the first batch.

Benazir

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the country into such a difficult situation.

Bhutto is expected to leave for Islamabad on Sunday for consultations with her party leaders on the possible consequences of the present friction between President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Bhutto has been calling for the appointment of an interim government prior to early elections.

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D-288

Editor : S. M. Ali
Executive Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. **Editorial, News & Commercial Offices:** House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct) Fax No. 88-02-463035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM : DAILY STAR DHAKA.