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IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT: Defeated DCC mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas (R) and mayor-elect Mohammad Hanif (L) offering each other sweets when the former called on the latter at his Nazira Bazar residence yesterday. The visit was later reciprocated in the evening the same day. —Star photo

First batch of Chakmas return home by Feb 22

CHITTAGONG, Feb 2: Repatriation of Chakma refugees from India will begin on February 15, according to a decision finalised today by Indian and Bangladesh officials, reports UNB.

The first batch of 2,000 refugees will return home from camps in Tripura through Ramgarh and Matiranga borders in Khagrachhari district by February 22.

Official sources said the decision was finalised at a joint meeting of officials of Bangladesh and India at the Ramgarh Government Rest House in Khagrachhari.

In the two-and-a-half-hour meeting, the Indian officials



Benazir Bhutto (L) and Turkish PM Tansu Ciller

Benazir, Ciller visit Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Feb 2: The prime ministers of Pakistan and Turkey, Benazir Bhutto and Tansu Ciller, visited besieged Sarajevo today to prod the world's conscience about the killing of civilians in Bosnia, reports Reuter.

"We appeal to the world community to halt the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina," the two women said in a joint statement.

"Rarely in the annals of human history has a nation been subjected to such merciless savagery in the full view of the world."

The statement added: "It is shocking that this appalling human tragedy is being enacted in the heart of a continent which prides itself on its commitment to human rights and respect for human dignity."

Kashmiris call strike Saturday

SRINAGAR (India), Feb 2: Four Indian paramilitary troops were among 15 people killed in overnight violence in Kashmir where Muslim leaders called for a shutdown on Saturday to coincide with a general strike in Pakistan, reports AFP.

Four paramilitary troops, seven Muslim rebels and four civilians died in separate gunbattles across the disputed Himalayan state since Tuesday, an official spokesman said today in this Kashmir summer capital.

handed over a list of 2,000 refugees who will be repatriated in the first batch.

Bangladesh side was led by Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachhari Yar Mohammad, SP Abul Hashem, BDR 16 Battalion Commander Major Omar Faruq, TNOs of Ramgarh, Matiranga and Panchhari Saidul Huq, Anwar Hossain and Mohammad Shahabuddin respectively were in the team.

The Indian side was led by South Tripura's District Magistrate Chandra Sekhar Chatterjee, SDO of Shabrum and Omarpur Sukuram Dev Barma and SK Rakesh were with him.

The meeting decided that the refugees would be received at the old SDO Bungalow of Ramgarh and Talabchhari in Matiranga thana.

The much-delayed repatriation is going to take off following hectic groundwork done by a committee of parliamentarians who brokered peace with representatives of the outlawed Shantibahini in the troubled Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Earlier, the repatriation was scheduled to begin on June 8 last year but failed to get underway as a Refugee Welfare Association based in the Tripura camps vowed to stall it until their 13-point demands were met.

Mourning procession in city for Lalbagh dead

CMM orders confiscation of 16 accused's property

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, yesterday ordered the confiscation of the property of 16 absconding persons accused of killing six people in a post-polls violence at Lalbagh in the city on Monday.

The absconders include Alhaj Abdul Aziz, the main accused. Police yesterday sealed off the border and Zia International Airport (ZIA) to prevent Abdul Aziz and others from leaving the country, according to a Detective Branch source.

Meanwhile, a procession was brought out in the city yesterday to mourn the deaths of the six persons.

The processionists, wearing black badges, paraded the city streets beginning from the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue. The mourning procession passed through Topkhana Road and the Dhaka University area and dispersed at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Repolling in 28 centres Feb 9

Repolling in 28 centres of the Dhaka City Corporation will be held on February 9, Election Commission announced last night, reports UNB.

The voting will take place at the same places from 7 am to 6 pm.

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Central leaders of the Awami League, including Abus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Abdul Mannan, Tofaej Ahmed and Amir Hussain Amu led the procession.

Addressing the mourners at the Shaheed Minar, the acting president of the Awami League Abdul Mannan urged the people to face the post-election situation with patience and courage.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina is now on a visit to the US.

At the end of the rally, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abus Samad Azad led a *munajat* seeking divine blessings for the country.

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A healthy gesture

By Staff Correspondent

In a happy instance of democratic etiquette, defeated mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas and the mayor-elect Mohammad Hanif visited each other's residences in the capital yesterday to exchange greetings.

Awami League leader Hanif warmly embraced his BNP rival in Sunday's Dhaka City Corporation mayoral election Abbas soon after the latter's arrival at his Nazira Bazar residence at about 11 in the morning.

Abbas, accompanied by his wife Ferdousi Abbas, garlanded Hanif amid cheers and applause by the supporters of both the leaders on the road adjacent to Hanif's house. Then they entered the house hugging each other.

During their hour-long talks there, Hanif and Abbas treated each other with sweetmeats to

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Saifur, Matin's ouster demanded

BNP leaders get flak for debacle

By Special Correspondent

The leadership of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came in for severe criticism at a post-polls review meeting of the party's leading workers of the Dhaka city held yesterday.

Faced with strong censure for his 'negative' role during the campaign for a commissioner candidate of the party in Sunday's Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) elections, a ruling party MP left the meeting. A demand for the resignation of two cabinet ministers was also voiced by some speakers.

The meeting, summoned by the BNP's election conducting committee for the DCC polls, was attended by MPs of Dhaka city. Besides the presidents, general secretaries and organising secretaries of the BNP's thana and ward committees, office-bearers of all front organisations of the party in the city and the commissioner candidates themselves also attended.

The soul-searching discussions, chaired by BNP's city president Mir Shawkat Ali, were aimed at finding the causes of the dramatic defeat of the ruling party in the Corporation polls. The meeting, attended by about 400 partymen, began at about 11 am at the party's Naya Paltan central office but was later shifted to the Prime Minister's

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Ghali against lifting arms ban on Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 2: Breaking ranks with the United States, the UN Secretary-General said Tuesday he believes lifting an arms embargo against Bosnia's Muslims would only escalate the war, reports AP.

"This can be dangerous because it will provide more arms in the region and open (the way) to more war in the region," Boutros Boutros-Ghali told a news conference.

The United States, with support from Muslim countries, failed last summer to get the UN Security Council to lift the embargo. The idea was that Muslims would be able to defend themselves better against attacks by Serb and Croat forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

European nations with thousands of peacekeepers in former Yugoslavia opposed the move, saying their troops would be endangered and humanitarian deliveries would be jeopardized.

NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleda greets new Libyan PM
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated Abdul Majid al-Qoud on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Libya. In a message, the Prime Minister expressed her confidence that under Al-Qoud's leadership the bilateral relations existing between the two fraternal countries would be further strengthened, reports BSS.

JCD Khulna Unit President expelled
 An emergency meeting of the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) held here yesterday expelled Khulna district JCD President Chanchal Mahmud from the organisation for his anti organisational activities and working against its interest. The meeting, presided over by JCD president Fazlul Huq Milon, also cancelled Chanchal Mahmud's primary membership, reports BSS.

Storm lashes Sirajganj
 SIRAJGANJ, Feb 2: Five people were injured in a violent storm that lashed villages of three thanas in the district early today, witnesses said. The storm with a velocity ranging from 40 to 50 km per hour damaged more than a hundred thatched houses and standing boro crops in Kazipur, Ullapara and Shahjadpur thanas, reports UNB.

Cold wave claims four in Pabna
 PABNA, Feb 2: Cold wave claimed four lives including two babies in Sadar thana here during the last 24 hours, unofficial sources said. The dead were identified as Mahela Bibi, 62, of Chamarpur village, Tota, 2, of Pargobindapur village, Bipul, 1, of Mahmudpur and Tofazzal Bepari, 70, of Sarajraipur village.

Commentary

Polls verdict of far-reaching consequences

by Mahfuz Anam

Those who continue to say, inspite of repeated evidence to the contrary, that because majority of our people are illiterate, they cannot be trusted to vote wisely in elections should, once again, eat their words. This time, hopefully forever. For once again, given the chance to vote in a free and fair election, our electorate has voted most wisely.

I think the election result is good for the Awami League (obviously), it is good for the BNP (not so obviously), and it is good for democracy, and hence for the country.

I start with the last point, first. The election result is good for democracy because it establishes the fact that election is a viable and effective method of changing leadership. Example, of a popularly elected ruling party, experiencing such a frontal defeat, does wonders, in terms of confidence building, in people's minds that the vote is truly an effective weapon for cutting political parties and its leaders down to size.

This election has also strengthened the multi-party structure of our democracy, which by virtue of the relative strength of the BNP, AL, Jatiya Party and Jamaat, makes our system perhaps among the better ones in the developing countries. A victory for the ruling party, by reinforcing nagging suspicions about fairness, would not have strengthened the faith in the system, as this result has done.

Finally the Election Commission's capacity and credibility to deliver on the promise of holding free and fair elections, (with some

flaws, no doubt), stands largely vindicated. This, in turn, should take away much of the force from the demand for a caretaker government to ensure a fair and free general election, scheduled for early '96.

The election result is good for the BNP because, the party needed this rude awakening to come face-to-face with the fact that something rotten had set in, and that the sycophants who were censoring information to the Prime Minister, had succeeded in putting her in a make-belief cocoon. In fact, this BNP defeat could be compared to a mild heart attack, which results in the necessary precautions to avert the fatal one. But, this will only happen if the BNP delves deep into itself and finds out the

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Cold wave to sweep country

By Staff Correspondent

dull while the city traffic was thin for the best part of the day.

The temperature of the city yesterday oscillated between 17.2 degrees Celsius and 17.8 degrees as a result of the chilling rain.

According to the Met Office, a moderate cold wave is likely to sweep over the country during the next 72 hours and a moderate to severe cold wave during the following weeks of the month in the divisions of Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna and the regions of Sylhet and Comilla.

The weather forecast for the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Thursday) says, the night temperature is likely to fall by one to two degrees Celsius over the country.

Light rain or thunder-shower is also likely to occur today over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions and the regions of Comilla and Sylhet during this period. The weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere in Bangladesh.

According to the Met Office, the following cities and towns experienced rainfall yesterday: Barisal 12 mm, Bhola

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Annual meet of UN-JCGP in Dhaka Feb 5-8

By Staff Correspondent

The United Nations Joint Consultative Group on Policies (UN-JCGP) will hold the annual meeting of heads of its organisations in Dhaka February 5 to 8.

Never before has the UN-JCGP held such an important meeting outside its headquarters, New York and Rome.

The four-day high-level conference will be attended by UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth, UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant, UNFPA Executive Director Dr Nafis Sadik, WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini, IFAD President Fawzi H Al-Sultan and United Nations Director Miles Stoby representing all members of the JCGP.

At a press briefing in the city yesterday UN Resident Representative Eimi Watanabe said, the choice of Bangladesh

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SAARC chamber opens Feb 7

By Staff Correspondent

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an association of the apex chambers of the seven SAARC countries, will be inaugurated in Dhaka on February 7.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the SAARC Chamber as chief guest.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, SAARC Secretary General Yadav Kant Silwal and President of the SAARC Chamber SM Inam will also be present on the occasion.

About 50 delegates from seven SAARC countries are expected to attend the inaugural function to be hosted by the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

Credit Guarantee Scheme
FOR NEW ENTREPRENEURS OF SMALL INDUSTRIES

Credit programme for the new entrepreneurs of small industries has been started with effect from 1st December '93 under the Credit Guarantee Scheme of Bangladesh Bank.

Salient features of the Scheme are as follows :-

- 1) Only new investors /entrepreneurs will be considered under this Scheme;
- 2) Bangladesh Bank will provide guarantee for double the amount of capital invested by the entrepreneur (maximum 25 lacs taka).
- 3) This bank will provide credit equivalent to the amount invested by the entrepreneur without any collateral security.

Interested entrepreneurs are requested to contact branches of BASIC for the loan facilities under the above Scheme.

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