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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina returns tomorrow

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will return home tomorrow after attending the National Breakfast Prayer in the United States. Hasina left Dhaka on February 1 to attend the Prayer in Washington at the invitation of the US Congressional Executive Committee, the host of the annual function, reports UNB.

60 thatched houses gutted in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Feb 5: At least sixty thatched houses were gutted in a fire that broke out at Daulatbad under Pahartali police station here today. According to police and fire brigade sources, the fire originated from the electric short circuit, from one of the houses and engulfed the other houses. Seven units of the fire brigade extinguished the fire after nearly one hour battle.

JP meet to review post-polls situation

The City unit of the Jatiya Party (JP) will hold a post-polls workers' meeting today to review the situation. They faced during the January 30 city corporation elections. JP mayoral candidate for the Dhaka City Corporation Col (Retd) A Malek, who is also the City Unit President will address the meeting at 2:00 pm at the Institute of Diploma Engineers.

67 more Rohingyas go home

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 5: Another batch of sixty-seven Rohingyas refugees voluntarily went back to their homes in Myanmar raising the total number of repatriated refugees to 52,603. Official sources told BSS here tonight that this 128th batch was seen off by the local UNHCR representatives and Bangladesh officials through Jumnapara transit camp at Teknaf here today.

SC Bar asks CJ not to swear in new judges

The Supreme Court Bar Association is likely to boycott the courts of the nine newly appointed High Court Judges, according to association sources yesterday.

A delegation of the Bar Association also called on Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at his official residence last evening and urged him not to conduct oaths to the new judges, nor entrust them with any judicial duties. Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, a member of the delegation, informed this correspondent.

Appointed through a gazette

Star Report

notification on Thursday, the nine judges are scheduling to take their oaths of office today. However, sources said the Chief Justice may place the issue before a Full Court meeting today.

The Bar Association delegation met the Chief Justice and discussed matters relating to the appointment of the new judges "without consultation with the Chief Justice".

"We have requested him not to deliver the oaths," Barrister Ishtiaque Ahmed told The Daily Star last night.

Earlier the association, in a

resolution adopted at an emergency meeting, rejected the appointments of the new judges and demanded the cancellation of the order. It appealed to the Chief Justice not to swear in the new appointees to the Bench and authorised a 15-member committee to convey the message to him.

Terming the appointments as 'unconstitutional and undemocratic' the resolution also urged the Prime Minister to relieve Law Minister Mirza Gohar Haliz of his responsibilities, for what it said, his

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Opposition walkout marks JS opening Heated debate over Lalbagh incident, CJ's remarks

By Staff Correspondent

The planned Opposition walkout and the president's call for united efforts of the ruling party and the Opposition to consolidate democracy marked the opening day of the 13th session of the present Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

The major opposition parties, including the Awami League (AL), and the Jatiya Party (JP) legislators, had walked out of the House moments before President Abdur Rahman Biswas stepped onto the Speaker's podium to the herald of bugle and the national anthem at 1:30 pm.

The Jamaat-e-Islami, the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) MPs listened to the

President's 32-page printed speech.

However, before the MPs of the AL, the JP, the Ganotantri Party (GP) and the Gono Forum left the House, the session witnessed a heated debate between them and the treasury bench on issues like the post-polls violence at Lalbagh in the capital and Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed's recent observations on the separation of the judiciary from the executive wing of the state.

In the beginning acting Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad accused the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of its direct involvement in the Lalbagh incident which

claimed the lives of six persons. The Opposition leader also demanded immediate adoption of a condolence resolution condemning the incident and blaming the ruling party for it.

On the other hand, the treasury bench, ready to adopt a resolution condemning the incident, refused to entertain the Opposition claim for the ruling party's involvement in the incident.

The treasury bench leaders, including Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda and Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, argued that legal canons did not permit the House to identify anyone as a criminal in a subjudice matter.

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A munajat being offered at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday seeking divine blessings for the departed souls of eminent personalities who died after the 12th session of Parliament.

— PID photo

Sonali Bank reduces 25 rural branches

By M Anwarul Haq and Inam Ahmed

The Sonali Bank, the country's biggest nationalised commercial bank (NCB), has at long last merged 25 of its rural branches with other nearby branches with immediate effect.

The action is part of the government's financial sector reform programme aimed at reducing the losses of the NCBs and making them more viable.

The merger of the Sonali Bank's branches was to be effective from last Thursday.

The branches which have been merged are: The Falda Bazar Branch merged with the Bhuapur Branch, Ratanpur Krishi Branch with Ghatal Branch, Niamatpur Branch with Karimganj Branch, Barulia Krishi Branch with Mirpur

Cantonment Branch, Noabazar Branch with Suagazi Branch, Chatki Bazar Branch with Farazikandi Branch, Fakirir Hat Branch with Juidia Marine Academy Branch, Gunagari Branch with Khanbahadur Bazar Branch, Sonapur Mip Branch with Sonagazi Branch, Sundalpur Krishi Branch with Kalumandir Bazar Branch, Charbanshi Krishi Branch with Hyderganj Branch, Mirganj Branch with Charchat Branch, Bhawanipur Bazar Branch with Atrai Branch, Khubzpur Krishi Branch with Chanchkar Branch, Kaler Para Krishi Branch with Khunat Branch, Bharat Khali Branch with Khakhata Branch, Raghunathpur Krishi Branch with Nawabganj Branch, Nazipur Krishi

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5 killed as bus plunges into Padma

RAJBARI, Feb 5: At least five people were killed and another was injured when a minibus plunged into the river Padma while nearing a launch at Daulatdia terminal for transporting newspapers early today, reports UNB.

Five bodies were recovered from the ill-fated bus. The dead are Abed Ali, 50, and Zakia Begum, 16, of Rangpur, Mabiya Khatun, 12, and Bazlur Rahman, 20, of Faridpur and Shahera Khatun, 9, of Thakurgaon.

The remaining passengers managed to swim ashore.

Local people with the help of the BIWTA men salvaged the minibus.

The Deputy Commissioner and the Police Super of Rajbari visited the spot.

The bodies were taken to the morgue here for autopsy.

'Ensure food for the hungry'

By Staff Correspondent

People-oriented participatory approach to development is the only way of ensuring food security of the people.

This view was expressed in a lecture session on 'Sustainable Food Security for Poverty Alleviation' organised jointly by the Bangladesh Centre for Development Studies (BCDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Forum on Environment and Poverty (GFEP) in the city yesterday.

Dr Mohammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank taking part in the discussion delivered by the UNDP Administrator, James Gustave Speth, said 'Poverty

can be eliminated within a certain time frame if we decide to do so.

"It is the responsibility of the world community to ensure food to two billion people going hungry," Dr Yunus said, "I hope this will be the dream of us all."

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman speaking on the occasion said, the government was striving hard for food security within the quickest possible time through participatory planning.

In this connection, he called for actions both at the global and regional levels to solve environmental problems

like withdrawal of water in the upstreams which will affect the agricultural production of Bangladesh.

"We are taking steps for poverty alleviation, food security and environmental protection, but everything is not in our hand," he said referring to the water sharing problem.

State Minister for Planning, Dr Moeen Khan, said the government has already started a participatory planning process for the Fifth Five Year Plan and taken steps to alleviate poverty, improve human resources and achieve food security.

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'Judiciary functioning independently'

Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday laid importance on the independence of the judiciary, saying the judiciary was now functioning independently in the country, reports BSS.

"The judiciary is completely independent. We have total confidence in the judiciary," she categorically said.

Intervening in an unscheduled debate in the House yesterday noon, Begum Zia called upon all the legislators to run the House as per Rules of Procedure.

The Prime Minister expressed her deep shock and grief at the death of elderly

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Discussion on Lalbagh carnage Feb 13

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) will take up for discussion the issue of the post-polls violence in the city's Lalbagh area on February 13.

The incident left six people killed. The schedule for a discussion on the issue was decided at a meeting of the Parliament's Business Advisory Committee, comprising members from both the treasury and Opposition benches, yesterday evening.

Besides, the committee decided that the House will spend 20 working hours on the vote of thanks on the presidential speech. Of the 20 hours, the committee has allocated nine hours for the treasury bench while the Opposition will enjoy the rest of the time.

The committee members also agreed to continue the session until the 7th of next

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JU VC denies JUTA charges

By Staff Correspondent

The Acting Vice Chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University Prof Abul Hossain yesterday refuted the allegations levelled against him by the Jahangirnagar Teachers Association (JUTA).

In a detailed statement, he said "The allegations contained factual anomalies and as such may create confusion in the minds of the public."

Referring to the existing stalemate created in the academic and administrative environment, he said: "The Vice Chancellor has been blamed in a (JUTA) press conference on February 2, although the administrative stalemate, discon-

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Some CU teachers, students to boycott today's convocation

CHITTAGONG, Feb 5: A section of teachers and students of the Chittagong University will boycott its convocation tomorrow protesting the government move to amend the University Ordinance-1973, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to be the chief guest at the convocation, the first since the university was established 26 years ago.

Campus sources said some 100 teachers known as the 'pro-liberation teachers' group would boycott the function. All-Party Students' Unity except the Jatiyatadabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) has extended support to the teachers' programme.

61 die in Sarajevo shelling

SARAJEVO, Feb 5: A shell slammed into Sarajevo's main open air market today, killing 61 people and wounding at least 140 in the worst single atrocity of Bosnia's 22-month civil war, reports Reuters.

A flood of wounded men, women and children overwhelmed medical teams at hospitals where the survivors lay moaning on the floor in corridors as doctors counted the growing toll.

The wounded were carried in blankets aboard commandeered private cars. Mangled corpses were brought on trucks.

The shell hit a table in the middle of the market in Sarajevo's battered old town, crammed with people bartering food and clothes, at about 12:30 pm (11:30 GMT).



President Abdur Rahman Biswas addressing the 13th session of the Fifth Parliament yesterday.

— PID photo

President addresses JS Strengthen democracy thru' united efforts

By Staff Correspondent

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday described the Jatiya Sangsad as the 'focal point of all national activities' and urged upon all, irrespective of political affiliation, to show their 'earnestness, sincerity and firm determination for giving democracy an institutional shape.'

"This Sangsad is the nursing home for consolidating the democratic spirit of the future. Democracy is not consolidated only in the hands of those in power. Its future also lies in the sincere efforts of the opposition," Biswas said.

The President was delivering his customary address to the members of Parliament on the occasion of the inauguration of the 13th session of the JS, the first of the new year.

The President, while deliv-

ering his 32-page address, touched upon democracy, development, administrative reforms, industry, trade and a number of subjects and also spoke about the foreign policy of the country.

Economy

Biswas referred to the various economic programmes undertaken by the present government and said, "Hard work, restoration of financial discipline and enforcement of rules in financial institutions by the present government has reinvigorated the economy."

The President said that the open market policy propounded by the government has brought about widespread reforms and have helped build an atmosphere of confidence

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Evolve low cost methods to preserve our health: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the international community to continue its support to health research for producing low cost drugs and evolving methods for mutual benefit of both the developed and developing countries.

"We must put in more efforts to evolve low-cost methods and inputs to preserve our health," she said while addressing a function in Dhaka to mark the 25th anniversary of the Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS).

Chief of the UNICEF and

senior executives of the UNDP, WHO and USAID gathered at the International Conference Centre to celebrate introduction of the ORS, a simple solution that now saves the lives of one million children every year.

The Prime Minister, who attended the function as chief guest, also distributed awards to the representatives of the Government of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations

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Ctg city unit of BNP dissolved

By Asiuzzaman

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has dissolved its Chittagong city unit committee and also taken disciplinary actions against some mid-ranking leaders and workers, party sources said.

The standing committee, the highest policy-making body of the party, last night took the decision in a meeting presided by chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, the source added.

The four-hour meeting at the Telgaon office of the Prime Minister identified organisational weaknesses, factionalism and anti-party activities by a section of mid-ranking local leaders as the major causes for the party's debacle in the

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Rafiq writes to CEC for copy of Hasina's letter

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah has requested the Chief Election Commissioner to give him a copy of the application which the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina was stated to have submitted to the Election Commission, apprehending rigging in 140 to 144 centres in Dhaka city on the eve of the city corporation elections, reports BSS.

In his application to the Chief Election Commissioner, the Works Minister said in course of her discussion with the newsmen on January 29 Sheikh Hasina stated that she had reported that the BNP would rig the elections at 140 to 144 centres in Dhaka. He said he did not know whether Sheikh Hasina in her application had mentioned the names of these 140-144 centres but she had mentioned many of the names

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Post-polls carnage Freezing of Aziz's bank accounts ordered

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, yesterday ordered freezing of all bank accounts of Alhaj Abdul Aziz, the main accused in the Nawabganj post-polls carnage.

The Detective Branch (DB) yesterday again took Alhaj Abdul Majid — 66-year-old father of Aziz — on police remand for further interrogation.

Alhaj Majid was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at the end of a three-day police remand yesterday.

বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন

ঋণ পরিশোধের সর্বশেষ সুযোগ

মাত্র ৪টি অরিজিনাল কিস্তি জমা করে কিস্তি পুনর্নির্ধারণের সুযোগ যারা এখনও গ্রহণ করেননি, তাদেরকে আবারও স্বরণ করিয়ে দেয়া হচ্ছে যে, আইনগত ব্যবস্থা এড়াতে হলে আর দেরী না করে এখনই কিস্তি পুনর্নির্ধারণের সর্বশেষ সুযোগ গ্রহণ করতে পারেন।

* কিস্তি খেলাপী গ্রহীতাদের নাম পত্রিকায় প্রকাশের জন্য তালিকা প্রস্তুতির কাজ চলছে।

- পুনর্নির্ধারিত কিস্তির উপদেশপত্র না পেয়ে থাকলে ১৫ই ফেব্রুয়ারীর মধ্যে সংশ্লিষ্ট কার্যালয়ের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করার পরামর্শ দেয়া হচ্ছে।
- ইতিমধ্যে কিস্তি পুনর্নির্ধারণের সুযোগ গ্রহণ করেছেন, তাদেরকে ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯৯৪ মাস থেকে নিয়মিত কিস্তি পরিশোধের জন্য সর্বোচ্চ ৭.৮ লাখ টাকা ঋণ পাওয়া যাবে। ঢাকায় কর্পোরেশন ভবন এর নীচ তলায় অবস্থিত জনতা ব্যাংক শাখায় এ সম্পর্কিত প্রশ্নোত্তর পাওয়া যাবে।
- নিয়মিত ঋণ পরিশোধকারীদের জন্য বর্তমান অর্থবছর হতে ইনসেন্টিভের ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে।

নতুন গ্রাহকদের সুবিধা

- (ক) এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট লোন কীমঃ জমির মালিক না হয়েও আপনি বাড়ীর মালিক হতে পারবেন। এইচবিএফসি এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট ক্রয়ের জন্য ঋণ দিচ্ছে। অনধিক ১৩০০ বর্গফুট (কমনস্পেস বাদে) আয়তনের নির্মিত এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট ক্রয়ের জন্য সর্বোচ্চ ৭.৮ লাখ টাকা ঋণ পাওয়া যাবে। ঢাকায় কর্পোরেশন ভবন এর নীচ তলায় অবস্থিত জনতা ব্যাংক শাখায় এ সম্পর্কিত প্রশ্নোত্তর পাওয়া যাবে।
- (খ) যৌথ মালিকানাধীন পুটে ঋণঃ যৌথ মালিকানাধীন পুটের ক্ষেত্রে একাধিক ব্যক্তির নামে ঋণ দেয়া হচ্ছে।

ঝগের কিস্তি সময়মত পরিশোধ করুন এবং অপরাধে ঋণ গ্রহণের সুযোগ দিন