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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 Daulatabad 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

By Staff Correspondent

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 Rohingya 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 Bangladeshi officials through Jummapara transit camp at Teknaf here today.

SC Bar asks CJ not to swear in new judges

Star Report

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

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.

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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'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.

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Opposition walkout marks JS opening

Heated debate over Lalbagh incident, CJ's remarks

By Staff Correspondent

President's 32-page printed speech.

However, before the 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.

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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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.

In the beginning acting Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad urged the House to identify anyone as a criminal in a subjudice matter.

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

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 Jatiyatabdhi 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 Reuter.

The wounded were carried in blankets aboard commandeer 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).

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 Moyeen Khan 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.

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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 Bhupur Branch, Ratanpur Krishi Branch with Ghatali Branch, Niamatpur Branch with Karimganj Branch, Birulia Krishi Branch with Mirpur

Branch, Noabazar Branch with Sivagazi Branch, Chatki Bazar Branch with Farazkandi Branch, Fakirnir Bazar Branch with Jildia Marine Academy Branch, Gunagar Branch with Khanbadur Bazar Branch, Sonapur Mip Branch with Sonagazi Branch, Sundalpur Krishi Branch with Kalumandir Bazar Branch, Charbanshi Krish Branch with Hyderganj Branch, Mirganj Branch with Charchagh Branch, Bhawanipur Bazar Branch with Atrai Branch, Khubzipur Krish Branch with Charchik Branch, Kaler Para Krish Branch with Khunat Branch, Bharat Khali Branch with Khakhat Branch, Raghunathpur Krish Branch with Nawabganj Branch, Nazirpur Krish Branch with Mirpur

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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.

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For more details, see Page 12 Col 1

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