

# SC Bar resolution

From Page 1 Col 4

Illegal actions.

If the resolution is not honoured and the new judges take oath then the association will have to decide on the next course of action," Barrister Ahmed pointed out.

The next course of action, he said, would most likely be a boycott of the courts of the new judges by the lawyers. "The Supreme Court Bar Association does not adopt a resolution for nothing," he cautioned.

Meanwhile, government ministers and senior BNP leaders held a series of meetings regarding the crisis created by the SC Bar Association resolution among themselves and with the Prime Minister.

A delegation of lawyers representing the government also called on the Chief Justice yesterday.

However, details of the outcomes of these meetings were

## Food for hungry

From Page 1 Col 4

He said, quantity of food wasted in the North can feed all the hungry people in South Asia.

Gustave Speth in his speech said sustainable food security is one of the fundamental challenges facing Bangladesh.

"Agricultural output must be tripled and people must have the income to buy it," he said. "Failure on any of these fronts will lead to unprecedented tragedy."

He said, the immediate needs of the hungry in Bangladesh must be met.

He stressed the need for generating more resources, creating jobs, developing a sustainable agriculture and checking the population boom to achieve food security in the country.

Dr Atiq Rahman of the BCDS speaking on the occasion said that since the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992, the GFPE has been promoting the linkages between poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

# 25th anniversary of ORS

From Page 1 Col 7

Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) on behalf of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B).

She also released commemorative postage stamps on the occasion.

The ICDDR,B organised the function to award the six organisations for their outstanding contributions to the development of the ORS, internationalising the solution, and also to international health and population research.

BRAC Executive Director Fazle Hasan Abed, Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, UNICEF Executive Director James P Grant, UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth, USAID Assistant Administrator Margaret Carpenter and WHO Director for Control of Diarrhoeal and Respiratory Diseases Dr James Tulloch received the awards on behalf of their respective organisations and spoke on the occasion. Citations were also read out prior to the delivery of each award.

The UNFPA Chief Nafis Sadik, ministers, members of the parliament, diplomats, representatives of the international organisations, researchers and the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) were present at the function.

Speaking on the occasion, Begum Zia underlined her government's continued efforts for improving the health-care system of the country.

She said that Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in the health sector with the assistance of different international organisations, governments of the friendly countries and various NGOs.

"The government of Bangladesh has given priority to the health sector," she said. "We have a firm commitment and political will for the implementation of an effective health programme."

She pointed out that upto 1993, 77 per cent of the country's children have been brought under the immunisation programme and 85 per cent of the rural households gave tubewells within a radius of 150 metre.

The number of users of the family planning methods has also shot up to 40 per cent, Begum Zia added.

The Prime Minister hoped that the ICDDR,B would continue to research in the health and family planning sectors for evolving newer and more appropriate technologies.

Begum Zia, while seeking

not available at the time of writing this report late last night.

Earlier, in a hurriedly called press conference at the Supreme Court Bar auditorium, Vice Chairman of the Bar Council Dr Kamal Hossain said the appointment of new judges without consulting the Chief Justice is unprecedented and beyond imagination when the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed in the Constitution, as per Articles 94, 95 and 116.

In any country where democracy functions, he contended judges are appointed in the name of the President in consultation with the Chief Justice and that it would be a distortion of the Constitution if it is done according to whims and caprices.

Recent developments in the judiciary had generated anger among the legal practitioners, he said. "The demand for separation of the judiciary from the executive is now a national issue," and independence of the judiciary is above all controversies.

Along with Barrister Ahmed and Dr Hossain, others who attended the press conference included Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, S R Pal, Mohammad Amirul Islam, Barrister Shawkat Ali, Shudhanshu Shekhar Halder, MP, and Mahbubul Alam.

When their attention was drawn to the Information Minister's remark in Parliament yesterday about the Chief Justice, Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed said as per rules of procedure, MPs cannot make derogatory remarks, even in Parliament, against the Judges.

Barrister Ishtiaque requested Parliament members not to make such comments because these tantamount to 'contempt' in the trial analysis.

"If worst comes to worst, we will have to start a constitutional battle and the consequences will not be good," he told a questioner.



Dr Kamal Hossain addressing a press conference of the Supreme Court Bar Association at the Bar auditorium yesterday evening. Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury and Barrister Ishtiaque Ahmed are seen on his left. — Star photo

## Strike observed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Feb 5: Industry ground to a halt, office workers stayed home and angry demonstrators burned effigies of Indian leaders Saturday as Pakistan observed a nationwide strike to protest Indian attempts to subdue Kashmiri separatists, reports AP.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto accused India of widespread human rights violations.

She called the strike to show solidarity with Kashmir's Muslim militants, many of whom want independence. Others want union with Islamic Pakistan.

## JU VC denies

From Page 1 Col 5

Continuation of classes and hampering of development activities were due to the decisions of the teachers' association and the joint committee."

"This is how the image of the teachers is being tarnished before the nation. This is truly regrettable," he added.

Referring to summoning the Senate session, he remarked that in the interest of the democratic process, the election of the registered graduates to the Senate should be held before the session.

He added that a section of the teachers are opposed to such an election of registered graduates lest they are from an opposing political camp. They also seek to take advantage of having to deal with a limited number of members in the Senate.

He also noted that contrary to the allegations, a number of meetings of the Syndicate have been held during the past five months and the last meeting was held on November 11.

He also categorically said that no ad hoc appointments of teachers were made during his short tenure.

He added that new admissions could not be made due to accommodation problems in the residential university.

He appealed to teachers, employees, students, guardians and people from all walks of life to help him continue the pace of development of the university, so that the students do not suffer.

## Sonali Bank

From Page 1 Col 3

Branch with Pabna Branch, Damudhar Branch with Phultala Branch, Bazer Bhangra Krishi Branch with Phultala Branch, Molla Teghrir Branch with M S Road Branch, Hatus Haripur Branch with Kushtia Branch, Dahakula Branch with Madhupur Branch, Harishankarpur Branch with Hat Gopalpur Branch and Chinra Bazar Branch merged with Keshabpur Branch.

According to a highly placed source in the Finance Ministry, 100 more branches of other NCBs will also be merged shortly.

"About 700 branches of the NCBs are now incurring losses," the source disclosed. "The government does not have money to subsidise them."

The Finance Ministry had earlier formed a committee to recommend steps to make the NCBs profitable. The committee had accordingly recommended that at least 100 branches from the four NCBs should be merged immediately.

More banks are likely to follow very soon Sonali bank's decision regarding the merger of branches.

When asked about the fate of the employees of the merged banks, the source said "they would be rationalised within the system."

"Those who have reached the retirement age will go away and new manpower will not be hired," he said.

"Unless the branches are merged to make them viable, the banks will continue to be sick," he added.

## Ctg city unit

From Page 1 Col 8

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder is likely to issue the formal notice today (Sunday) dissolving the Chittagong city committee and asking at least five mid-ranking local leaders to show cause why they should not be expelled from the party for anti-organisational activities.

Currently the city committee in Chittagong is headed by Badrul Anwar as acting president after Abdullah Al-Noman was inducted in the cabinet.

Meeting sources said that rivalry between two ministers was also discussed in the meeting and the Prime Minister was reported to be very critical of the whole situation.

# Heated debate in JS

From Page 1 Col 4

killings and the government's reported silence on the issue of the independence of the judiciary.

With Samad Azad on his legs, the bugles blew heralding the President's immediate entrance into the House. The acting leader, along with his colleagues in the JP and GP, quickly walked out of the House.

Azad later finished his speech in a hurriedly called press conference in his Parliament chamber. With Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim and Matia Chowdhury of the AL and Suranjit Sengupta of the GP present, the Opposition leader told newsmen that they had walked out protesting the Lalbagh incident and the Information Minister's 'aspersions' against the Chief Justice.

Besides, Azad said, they had no intention of listening to the President who had played a controversial role during the country's Liberation War.

Suranjit, branding the President as a 'gazetted anti-liberation element', told the newsmen that they had, therefore, boycotted his presidential speech.

The JP leaders, in a separate press briefing, told newsmen that they had boycotted the President's speech because of his assent to the 'undemocratic' Anti-Terrorism Bill and his role in defending the government.

Meanwhile, the Speaker adjourned the House after the President had finished his address at 2:35 pm. The House will resume at 4 pm on Tuesday.

## 3 ordinances placed in JS

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz in parliament yesterday introduced three ordinances promulgated by the President since the House was prorogued two months ago, reports UNB.

These are: The Bangladesh Industrial Enterprises (Nationalisation) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1994, the Financial Loan Court (Amendment) Ordinance, 1994 and the Institute of Post-graduate Studies in Agriculture Ordinance, 1994.

## Obituary references

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed obituary references on six eminent persons, including one member of the Sangsad and three former parliamentarians, who died after the prorogation of the last session, reports BSS.

The persons on whom obituary references were made were Advocate Mohammad Asaduzzaman MP, former parliament member - FI, Sergeant (ret) Mohammad Fazul Huq, Mrs. Mahmuda Khatoun and Mr. Chai Khai Roaja - a noted lawyer and Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury and a noted film-maker and cultural personality Abdul Jabbar Khan.

After a lengthy debate on the issue of obituary references and a brief discussion on late Asaduzzaman, Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali moved the resolutions on six persons for the second time, which the house passed unanimously.

# The Midnight File

## Kohl warns Russians not to adopt imperialist policy

MUNICH (Germany), Feb 5: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl warned Russians today not to adopt an imperialist policy, saying they must foster trust among their neighbours without thought of creating spheres of influence or interest. But Kohl said that the NATO military alliance must take seriously Russian fears of encirclement and isolation. "Therefore NATO seeks to develop security cooperation with Russia and Ukraine, leading to a new relationship, a real and stable partnership," he told the opening of a conference of some 200 Western defence and security specialists, reports AFP.

## China suspends ties with Burkina Faso

BEIJING, Feb 5: China has suspended diplomatic links with the African state of Burkina Faso in retaliation for its recognition of Beijing arch-rival Taiwan, state radio reported today. China's ambassador to Burkina Faso delivered a 'strong protest' and announced the suspension of ties along with all other bilateral arrangements, the radio said, reports Reuter.

# US ambassador-designate to Dhaka faces Senate

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: President Clinton's nominees to be ambassadors to Bangladesh and Nepal went before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee February 4, where the acting committee chairman suggested that their nominations should sail through the Senate, says a USIS press release.

"Get yourselves packed -- you'll be on your way in a fortnight," Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Democrat from New York) told the nominees - David N. Merrill, to be ambassador to Bangladesh, and Sandra L. Vogelgesang, to be ambassador to Nepal.

Saying he expects the Senate, possibly as early as February 9 to confirm, Moynihan called on both diplomats to encourage cooperation among the South Asian countries.

During the confirmation hearing, Moynihan discussed social and environmental problems common not only to Bangladesh and Nepal, but to much of South Asia, among them overpopulation, deforestation and erosion.

He also decried the continuing ethnic troubles and border troubles in Bangladesh, and wondered aloud how democracy could ever be achieved with the continued socio-economic problems throughout the region.

Merrill expressed his agreement, emphasising that America's most important export may well be ideas.

He told committee members that Bangladesh 'shares the same long-term interests' with the United States: 'strengthening its democratic institutions, moving toward more open market-based economic systems, and achieving sustainable economic growth, which permits significant numbers of people to move above the poverty line.'

About his new assignment, Merrill said, "Indeed, I cannot

## PM on judiciary

From Page 1 Col 5

parliamentarian Mohammad Asaduzzaman and said that the Treasury Bench did not differ with any discussion on the obituary reference to Asaduzzaman.

"We severely condemn all killings. We severely condemn the killings in Lalbagh. We are shocked at this very sad incident," the Leader of the House said and added it was a subjective matter. She, however, said a discussion on this matter may be held in the House later on.

"Today is the first sitting of the year of the Jatiya Sangsad. Now we should go back to the order of the day," she told the House.

The Leader of the House pointed out that leading businessmen like Humayun Zahir and Mona Bhai had been killed in the past but no one (opposition) had tabled any obituary reference in this House and no one wore black badge.

She also criticised the Opposition for accusing the Treasury Bench for the unfortunate incident of Lalbagh, saying it was a subjective matter and investigation was going on and no one should accuse anybody directly before the verdict of the court.

Pointing to the newspaper reports on the Lalbagh incident, the Prime Minister said the newspapers had now been enjoying absolute freedom and that was why they could publish it without getting any telephone calls.

Referring to the telephone calls widely known as the press advice of the autocratic regime, the Leader of the House said no one was now intervening in the freedom of the press.

## PM asks BDR to crack down on smuggling

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday directed the paramilitary BDR to crack down on smuggling, a stumbling block on way to the country's economic development, reports UNB.

"You have to check smuggling with an iron hand along side safeguarding the frontier of the country," she told the border guards while inaugurating the Bangladesh Rifles Week '94 at the BDR headquarters in the city.

Begum Zia said cross-border trade turns the country into the market of foreign goods harming the market of domestic products. As a result, local mills and factories are closed down, increasing unemployment.

The government conferred 'Bir Pratik' on two BDR men for their gallantry in discharging duties.

Begum Zia decorated constables Md Shahidul Islam and Md Tipu Sultan with the gallantry medals.

## Hasina's letter

From Page 1 Col 8

of these centres.

The Works Minister said in the interest of free and fair election the people wanted to know how she got the report of rigging by the BNP in those centres mentioned by her and actually what happened there.

Referring to the Rohingya problem, Biswas said "A favourable atmosphere has been created for the solution of the problem" and hoped that it will be solved soon.

The President also mentioned that the Farakka problem deserves priority as the economic and human aspects of the issue are inextricably linked with matters relating to human rights and balanced environment.

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The President said that Bangladesh continued to make a successful march in the field of foreign policy and there was a rapid increase in cooperation and communication with the world community for consolidating the country's independence and solidarity.

He also referred to the successful holding of the twice-postponed SAARC Summit and said it was a true reflection of late President Zia's efforts to consolidate regional cooperation.

## Lalbagh issue

From Page 1 Col 5

month and decided to hold the sittings during Ramadan from 11:00 am to 4:30 pm, with a break for the Zohr prayers.

Presided over by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, the meeting was attended by Irrigation Minister Majidul Huq, LGRD Minister Barmer Abdus Salam Talukder, Whip Mahbubul Alam Tara and Farida Rahman of the treasury bench. The Opposition bench was represented in the meeting by Abdus Samad Azad and Mohammad Nasim of the Awami League, Muntulul Haque Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party and Sheikh Anwar Ali of the Jamaat e Islam.

# President Biswas addresses Sangsad

From Page 1 Col 7

allocated about Tk 376 crore for 58 development projects for improvement of the secondary, higher secondary, technical and university education.

Referring to the liberalisation of the foreign exchange control market, he said, accumulated and unequal situation in foreign trade transactions are gradually being reduced and foreign investors were showing keenness in investing in the country.

He said that export earnings of the country had increased by 19.5 per cent during the last financial year.

**Development Activities**

The President mentioned the government's efforts in expansion of education, alleviation of poverty through development of human resources, setting up of export-oriented industries, disbursement of loans among youths and women to generate self-employment and widespread family planning programmes as steps to take forward the economy of the country and raise social standards.

Mentioning that the economy has become stronger because of increased mobilisation of resources, he said, it has been possible to raise the internal contribution to the Annual Development Programme (ADP) to 33 per cent. He also said that the objective of the present government was to reduce dependence on foreign assistance.

He also mentioned that the government has formulated a textile policy to ensure developmental in this sector and has also taken initiatives to restructure the jute industry.

**Education**

Considering the top priority of education, President Biswas said that the government has

derital cases and removal of complexities to streamline the country's overall judicial system.

Biswas said that with this end in view the Law Ministry has increased the salaries of the Supreme Court Judges, developed the court buildings and built registration complexes.

He pointed out that Tk 40 lakh has been earmarked in the current fiscal year to provide legal aid to the helpless justice seekers.

The transfer of the thana courts to the districts have been completed and the government has finished construction of 26 Judge Court buildings while another 15 are nearing completion. "The rule of law has now been established and human rights preserved in the country."

**Administrative Reform**

The President mentioned that steps have been taken for necessary administrative reforms "to build up a skilled, service-oriented and accountable administrative system."

Expressing appreciation for the Armed Forces, the President said, "Every member of this force has kept a stamp of devotion to duty, patriotism and awareness to his responsibility."

He said that the inclusion of Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel in the UN Peace Keeping Force and their laudable performance has enhanced their image to the outside world.

**Foreign Policy**

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