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 VOL. IV NO. 29 REGD. NO. DA 781

The Daily Star

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MAGH 30, 1400 BS, DHAKA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1994 SHABAN 30, 1414 HIJRI

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Dhaka Day by Day

Privatisation Board has tendered only 5 units

By A Special Correspondent

The Privatisation Board has tendered only five enterprises in 1993. It has before it a list of 42 enterprises for privatisation. The Board's tenure is for five years and will expire in November 1998.

Initially set up in the Planning Commission, the Board has been redesignated as an autonomous body under the Cabinet Division. The Board has been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing a list of enterprises owned fully or partly by the government for sale. It is not clear whether this list is intended to substitute the list of 42 enterprises identified for privatisation in 1991.

The 1991 list was prepared on the basis of recommendation made by a working committee on divestment in the

Ministry of Industries. It included 28 enterprises which were to be sold outright to the public sector and another 14 enterprises whose shares were to be divested.

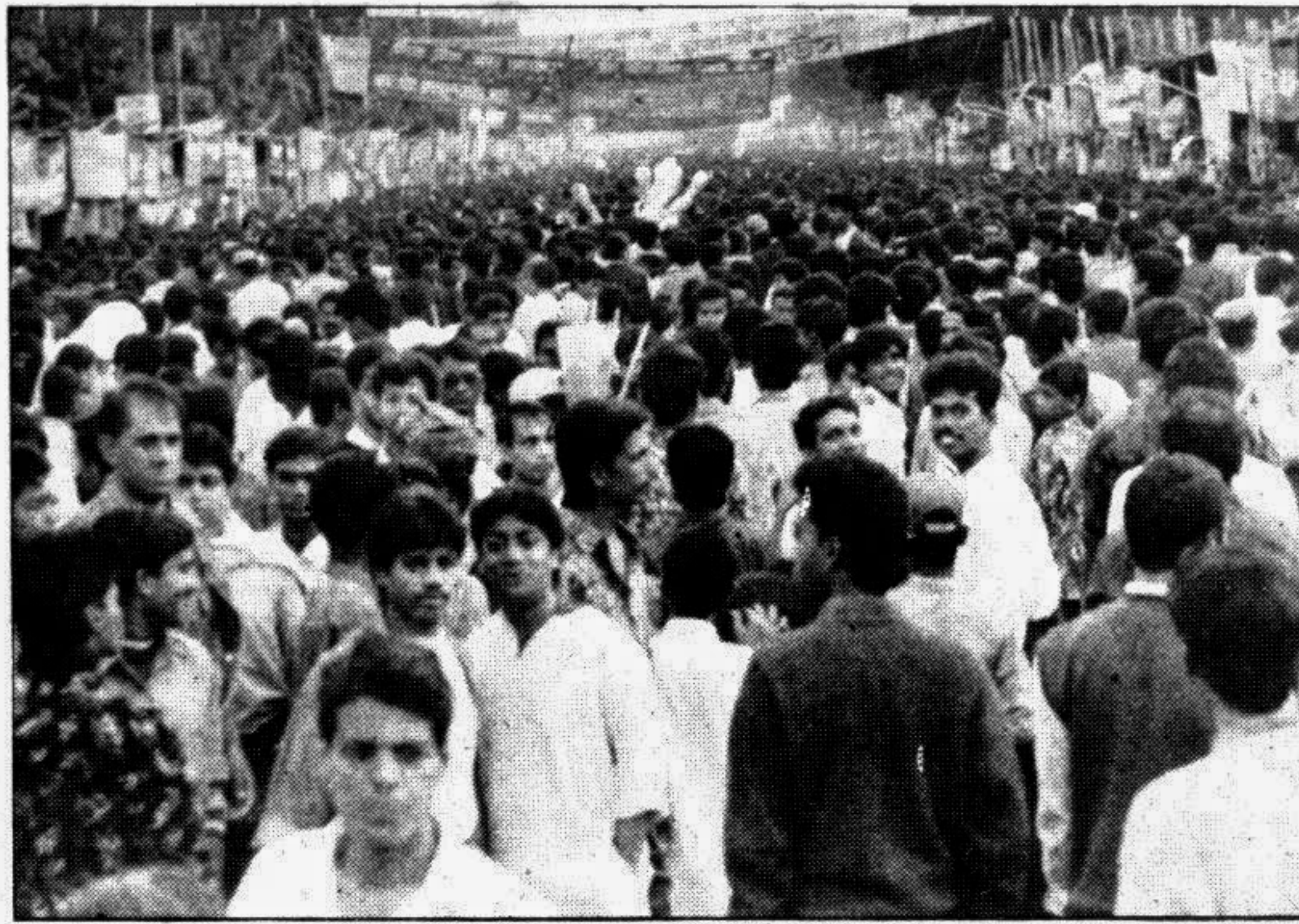
Most of the first year of the Board's existence has been spent in finalising its administrative set up. During this time tenders for purchase of public enterprises were floated by the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Textiles. Fourteen enterprises were offered by this time which was followed by issuance of tenders for five enterprises by the Privatisation Board.

The exact picture of the progress in privatisation is yet somewhat unclear. Out of the 42 industrial enterprises marked for privatisation only three have actually been priva-

used, according to a report prepared by the Board. Sale of another two enterprises have been approved by the government.

Apart from the cases of these five enterprises and one textile mill, the privatisation exercise has remained limited to bureaucratic paperwork. The same Privatisation Board report says that sale of Metalex Corporation has been postponed and privatisation of four other enterprises have remained held up due to legal and technical complications.

In the textile sector bids for purchase of eight textile mills have been received by the authorities so far. Sale of one textile mill has been approved. Bids for six mills have been processed for submission to See Page 12 Col 7



A LONG WAIT: Thousands crammed the main thoroughfare in front of the Bangla Academy, the venue of the Ekushey book fair, which proved too small for the record crowd yesterday. — Star photo

Fire scares visitors at book fair

By Staff Correspondent

Thousands of people thronged the Bangla Academy premises yesterday to spend their weekly holiday at the Ekushey book fair.

According to book stall owners the rush of people yesterday far outnumbered the total attendance of the previous ten days.

However, the day's fun was marred to some extent when a fire broke out in some of the book stalls, creating panic among the visitors and the shopkeepers alike.

But thankfully, the Fire Service people managed to smother the flames before they got out of hands.

As many as 900 book stalls have been set up in and outside the Bangla Academy — the traditional venue of the annual fair. One third of the stalls, however, sell non-literary See Page 12 Col 6

Attorney-Gen likely to meet PM today

By Staff Correspondent

Attorney General Aminul Haq is likely to officially meet the Prime Minister today, informed sources said.

Government sources, meanwhile, said, should Haq insist on submitting his resignation after his meeting with Begum Zia, it was likely to be accepted.

"Haq has already prepared a letter of resignation addressing the President but has not submitted it," a source at the Attorney General's office said.

In the letter which he intends to submit Haq has reportedly said: "The prevailing situation in the office does not permit me to continue as Attorney General."

The AG office source, however, refuted reports published

in a section of press Friday that Advocate Haq had already submitted his resignation.

"The submission of the letter depends on the outcome of the meeting with the Prime Minister," he added.

On two previous occasions Haq had offered to resign but was persuaded by the Prime Minister to stay on.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister held a closed-door meeting with some of her senior cabinet colleagues last night to discuss the situation arising out of the Attorney General's threat to quit.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Thukder, Information Minister Nazatul Huda, See Page 12 Col 4

First prize goes to Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Feb 11: Syed Abdul Kahhar alias 'Kala Manik' (Black Diamond) became the talk of the town Friday after he won the Taka 15-lakh cash prize in the second draw of the Sports Development Fund Lottery.

A shop owner in Katiabazar area in the town, Kahhar almost swooned as he saw the number of his ticket in the results of the draw published in today's newspapers.

Hundreds of people went to his house at Palashpole to see him as he greeted friends, relatives and wellwishers.

Kahhar said he would invest the prize money in his business.

The authorities have deposited his ticket to the local treasury and deployed police to ensure his safety.

Ramadan begins tomorrow

The holy Ramadan begins tomorrow as the Shawal moon was not sighted in any parts of the country yesterday, the Moon Sighting Committee said, reports BSS.

The committee at a meeting held at the Islamic Foundation reviewed reports received from different parts of the country and the weather office and came to the conclusion that the Shawal moon was not sighted in any parts of the country.

Therefore, sehri has to be taken from tonight and the first Ramadan will fall tomorrow, the committee said.

Presided over by Religious Affairs Minister Mohammad Keramat Ali the meeting was attended by all members of the committee including Secretary of the Religious Affairs Ministry Abdul-Hamid Chowdhury.

Sharp rise in prices of essentials

By Staff Correspondent

Prices of essentials, specially meat, started rising sharply in the city markets on the eve of the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan yesterday.

The price of beef jumped to Tk 65-70 per kg from Tk 55-60, while that of mutton climbed as high as Tk 125 per kg from the usual price of Tk 90 to 100 in the city markets.

A medium size chicken, which was selling at no more than Tk 50 to 60 some weeks ago, was being sold at Tk 70 to 80.

The supply of chicken has also declined sharply in the recent weeks. The small number of chickens of any size sold in the markets has gone out of the buying capacity of the commonman.

Prices of ginger and garlic are rising slowly but steadily. A kg of Indian garlic sold for Tk 36 a week ago now sells at Tk 40 and the ginger, which was sold at Tk 25-26, sells at Tk 28 now.

Gram, the hottest item among the essentials during this month of fasting, now sells at Tk 30 per kg. Only a month ago it was sold at Tk 18.

The price of sugar also made a sharp rise by Tk 4 per kg in the retailers' markets. Sugar now sells at Tk 32 per kg. The prices of other essentials are also on the rise.

"Within a few days, the See Page 12 Col 7

23 envoys visit Ghorasal Power Station

GHORASAL, Feb 11: Heads of 23 foreign missions based in Dhaka today visited the Ghorasal Power Station Complex to have a first hand knowledge of the power generation system in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The visit took place at a time when the entire country, including capital Dhaka, has been put under staggered loadshedding for last two weeks due to insufficient power generation.

The diplomats visited the thermal power station at Ghorasal, about 60 kilometres north-east of the capital, on their way to Sreemangal at the invitation of the Foreign Ministry.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Foreign Secretary Muefleh R Osmany and Commerce Secretary A H Mofazzal Karim accompanied the diplomats.

PDB Chairman Kazi Golam Rahman received the distinguished visitors at the complex, the second largest of the country having 530 megawatt installed capacity in its four units. The capacity will rise to 950 MW by 1996 when two more 210 MW units will be added to the complex.



The National Rose Society arranged its annual Rose Festival '94 at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday. — Star photo

JU students vacate halls

By JU Correspondent

The students of Jahangirnagar University vacated their dormitories yesterday morning in pursuance of a decision of the syndicate.

All the seven dormitories were locked by 10:30 am yesterday after the students left their halls. Special buses were arranged to ferry the students to different parts of the capital.

The university and the halls were closed down for an indefinite period following a series of armed clashes between two rival factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of the BNP.

The feuding factions — known as locals and non-locals — occupied two halls of the university.

The non-locals, who stormed the Al Bertini Hall and forced their rivals out on Monday, were escorted out of the campus by the police at around 11 yesterday morning.

To protest the syndicate's decision to close down the university, the Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikkyo (GCO) brought out a procession on the campus but the GCO activists reportedly faced resistance from the local JCD men.

Two rounds of gunshots were heard early in the morning near the Mir Mosharraf Hossain Hall where the local JCD men were staying.

The Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) in a press release issued by its president Belal Chowdhury and general secretary See Page 12 Col 8

'90pc aid under FWP utilised in Bangladesh'

By Staff Correspondent

Things are improving gradually in rural Bangladesh because of the Food For Work (FFW) and the World Food Programme (WFP) said in Dhaka yesterday.

The WFP, which has the largest programme in Bangladesh, recorded a 90 per cent utilisation of its aid in this country, Catherine Bertini said at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton.

She said, some 450,000 rural women are the beneficiaries of the VGP programme, while the FFW programme covers road, water management, fisheries and forestry sectors.

The WFP's assistance to Bangladesh is about 60 million US dollars annually.

Bertini, who was in Dhaka to attend the UN Joint Consultative Group on Policies (UN-JCGP), met the newsmen after visiting some of the project areas.

Salauddin Ahmed, Deputy Executive Director, WFP, J M Powell, Director, Policy and Public Affairs, Gaston Eyben, Country Director and Marian Read, Adviser, WFP were present at the conference.

The UN Executive said the FFW and VGD programmes are part of global efforts to eradicate poverty and these programmes have made notable successes in Bangladesh.

"High population growth in See page 12 Col 2

Govt to cut local funds for projects next year

By Inam Ahmed

The local currency allocation for development projects in the next fiscal year and beyond would be curtailed because of limits on raising revenue and financial problems arising out of it, according to highly-placed sources in the Finance Ministry.

A number of line ministries had requested the Planning Commission for large chunks of local currency component for the upcoming rolling investment programme (1994-96).

But the Finance Ministry observed that such large amounts of local currency component would lead to financial crisis and therefore, this trend must be stopped.

This year, the government had augmented the local currency allocations of a number of ministries and agencies by over Taka 500 crore. But this has led to financial mismanagement in the projects, sources said.

"The local currency component is treated as reimbursable project aid (RPA) which is mainly used for local procurement, duty payment for imports for projects, local salaries, etc.

The government uses the RPA amount from its own source for which the authorities later claim reimbursement from the donors. For this easy nature of spending, there is a propensity of spending local currency instead of utilising

Fresh clashes leave 50 hurt in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 11: Fresh clashes between the supporters of the BCL and JCD left some 50 people, including two policemen, injured in the town today, police and witnesses said, reports UNB.

Of the injured, 10 were admitted to the Sirajganj General Hospital in critical condition. They were: Mujibur Rahman, 50, Abdul Khaleque, 35, Motaleb, 20, Yusuf Ali, 18, Hasmat Ali, 20, Anwar Hossain, 60, Babu, 22, Motahar, 20, Hena 20, and Saiful 30.

Police today arrested seven people of both the groups for their involvement in the clashes. The arrested were identified as Sanowar, Sunil, Sukur Ali, Majnu, Biswanath, Alim and Mithu.

Today's clashes started from 10 am as a sequel to Thursday's violence in which 70 people were injured, police said.

Changed social stratification breeds various problems

By Staff Correspondent

A seminar on crisis in family life has observed that the 'upper and lower' classes in the society were fast changing while the middle class was struggling hard to retain its values and traditions.

Speakers at the seminar in the city yesterday pointed out that poverty, urbanisation, migration of people from the rural areas to the cities, and spread of crime had shattered the society resulting in an assortment of problems.

The small thanas in the cities have grown into large urban centres, family bonds were getting relaxed, oriental or Eastern values were no longer

taught in the family, youngsters had no ideals and often fell prey to drug addiction, and crime was taking an all-pervasive shape in the society, the speakers said.

The Association for Correction and Social Reclamation organised the seminar on "Crisis in Family Life — its Nature and Consequences in the Society" at the BIRDEM auditorium in Dhaka.

Former Inspector General of Police Dr M Enamul Huq, Dr Hakim Sarker, of the Dhaka University and Professor M A Munib of the IPGMR presented three papers in the seminar.

Dr Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, Dr Rangal Sen of Dhaka University and ATM Giasuddin, Director of the Social Welfare Department took part in the discussion.

Alamgir M A Kabir, president of the association, chaired the seminar.

Dr M Enamul Huq, in his paper, pointed out that the rich and poorer sections of the society were more prone to crimes while members belonging to the middle class were rather more law abiding and respectful to social conventions and customs.

See Page 12 Col 8

OIC offers to send 10,000 troops to Bosnia

JAKARTA, Feb 11: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has offered to send 10,000 troops to join UN peacekeepers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Indonesia's official Antara news agency said today, reports Reuter.

"Within the UN system, we offer 10,000 troops which will come from Malaysia, Jordan, Pakistan, Egypt," Pakistani Foreign Minister Asfeg Ahmad Ali said, quoted by the agency.

Ali is chairman of the OIC's contact group on Bosnia-Herzegovina, which met informally in Jakarta on Thursday on the fringes of a meeting of the 110-member Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Ghali authorises spl envoy to order NATO air strikes

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 11: Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Friday gave his special envoy the authority to order NATO air strikes around Sarajevo and approve close air support for UN personnel throughout Bosnia, reports AP.

In a letter to the Security Council, Boutros-Ghali said Yasushi Akashi, his special representative to the former Yugoslav republics, would be the key UN official in carrying out the NATO mandate to conduct possible air strikes against Serbs besieging the Bosnian capital.

Boutros-Ghali said he was instructing Akashi and through him the force commander of UNPROFOR (UN peacekeepers), to finalise with the commander-in-chief of Allied Forces in Southern Europe detailed procedures for the initiation and conduct of air strikes.

Meanwhile, Bosnian Serb forces besieging Sarajevo handed over their first heavy weapons to UN forces in line with Wednesday's truce agreement, UN sources said.

FRANCE, Feb 11: A French aircraft carrier left for the Adriatic Sea Friday for duty that could include NATO-initiated air strikes against Bosnia. Meanwhile, the United States will send eight F-15E bombers to Italy, a military official said today, reports AP.

Writ delays confirmation of Hanif's win

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court's stay order on repolling in three city centres is delaying the official announcement of Muhammad Hanif's certain victory in the Dhaka mayoral election.

The relevant rule of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) polls prohibits the official announcement of results by the Election Commission without the consolidation of results of all polling centres.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Abdul Jalil and Justice Ruhul Amin issued a rule nisi on Monday asking the Election Commission not to hold repolling in the three centres following a Writ petition filed by the BNP-backed Commissioner candidate of Ward no 57 challenging the cancellation of results of three centres on the Dhaka University campus.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Rmdn	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
—	12	5:12 am	—
01	13	5:12 am	5:56 pm
02	14	5:11 am	5:57 pm