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NEWS BRIEFS

Cabinet meet held

The regular weekly meeting of the cabinet was held yesterday at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair. Ministers, State Ministers in charge of different ministries and divisions attended the meeting, said an official handout without giving details, reports UNB.

Magura polls: BNP nominates Kamal

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday nominated Qazi Saleemul Haq (Kamal) as its candidate for the parliamentary by-election in Magura-2 constituency. The nomination was decided in the BNP standing committee meeting held here in the evening with BNP chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, reports BSS.

Varsity teachers' strike tomorrow

Teachers of all universities in the country will go on a strike tomorrow in protest against government move to amend the University Ordinance, 1973. All examinations will be exempted from the strike, called by the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA), said a press release signed by DUTA General Secretary Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, reports UNB.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Rmdn	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
03	15	—	6.00 pm
04	16	5.10 am	6.00 pm
05	17	5.10 am	6.01 pm

Watermelons — a most sought after fruit during the month of Ramadan — have appeared in the city markets but the prices are exorbitant. — Star photo

Chakma refugees return home from today

From Staff Correspondent

homesteads in the CHT between February 15 and 22, official sources said.

Out of this, the first batch consisting of 100 families will return to Bangladesh through the Ramgarh border post of the Khagrachari hill district.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmad and the governor of India's Tripura state Romesh Bhandari will be present to witness the beginning of the repatriation, which has been a source of irritation between the two South Asian neighbours.

According to official sources, elaborate arrangements have been made by the Bangladesh authorities to welcome the homecoming of the tribal refugees encamped in Tripura.

The repatriation is the outcome of the tripartite agreement recently concluded among the representatives of India, Bangladesh and the Tribal Refugees' Welfare Association.

The repatriation of Chakma refugees was stalled twice earlier despite all arrangements to receive them — initially in

1987 and later on June 8, 1993.

Over 50,000 tribal refugees fled across the border in 1986 at the instigation of the outlawed Shantibhagini and took shelter in camps in Tripura in India.

Meanwhile, the local authorities at Ramgarh and Tabalchhari have erected temporary shelters for the tribals before their final rehabilitation in their own homesteads in different areas of CHT.

Reception committees and tribal rehabilitation committees have been formed to conduct the process smoothly, official sources informed. Besides, the authorities stepped up security in Khagrachari to ensure peaceful repatriation of the Chakma refugees.

Section 144 has been imposed there from February 4 to 24 in a bid to maintain law and

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India operates most unsafe N-plants

WASHINGTON, Feb 14: CBS 60 Minutes, which has a very large nationwide audience, today charged that India is operating the most unsafe nuclear plants in the world without inspection by the Atomic Energy Agency, reports PTI.

The programme dovetails with US government policy of demanding full scope safeguards in India and depriving the Indian armed forces, if they can, of any modern missiles on the ground that what India does is destabilising vis-à-vis Pakistan.

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WB reviews reforms next month

By Inam Ahmed

A mid-term evaluation meeting between the government and the World Bank (WB) prior to the Aid Group meeting is expected to take place in Washington in the second week of next month to discuss the country's economic reforms, project implementation and future strategies.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will represent the Bangladesh side at the review meeting, according to an authoritative source.

The Bangladesh Aid Group meeting is scheduled to be held on April 19-20 in Paris.

According to sources, the utilisation of foreign aid, the capacity of the country's implementation agencies and reforms in the civil service will come up, among other issues, for discussion at the Paris meeting.

The government is working on the meeting, a highly placed source said. "We have

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Bangladesh off to fine start in ICC Trophy

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh posted a hand-some seven-wicket win in their opening ICC Trophy cricket championship match which was completed in the Kenyan capital Nairobi yesterday.

Having bowled out the Argentines for 120 on Sunday before rain forced the game into a second day, Bangladesh cantered to 123 for the loss of only three wickets in 35.2 of their stipulated 50 overs.

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Opener Athar Ali topscored with 41 to earn the man-of-the-match award, followed by his opening partner Jahangir Alam who made 37.

The start of play was delayed by half an hour due to wet conditions following heavy overnight drizzles.

Bangladesh, seeded second in the 20-team competition which offers the top three finishers berths in the next World Cup, play East Africa in their second group game today.

Pak special envoy arrives today

A special envoy of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrives here today to deliver a message to her Bangladesh counterpart Begum Khaleda Zia, official sources said, reports UNB.

During his two-day stay, Khaled Selim, senior-most Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, will also call on Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman and Foreign Secretary Muftiul Rahman Osmany.

Islamabad is sending special envoys to different capitals to explain its resolute stance on the Kashmir issue and the present explosive situation in the valley in the wake of struggle for independence of the Kashmiri Muslims.

Aminul Haq apologises to press

Attorney General Aminul Haq yesterday offered an unqualified apology if his conduct had hurt the journalists or the newspapers, reports NFS.

In an exclusive interview with the NFS, the Attorney General also expressed his gratitude to the press for all the cooperation he had earlier received while carrying out his duties.

Serious confusion prevailed in the press regarding his reported resignation. Last Thursday Aminul Haq announced his decision to resign to a group of newsmen in his office. He called on the Prime minister two days later and a confusion arose when he issued statement to the press following his meeting with the PM. His statement apparently contradicted all the news reports published on the issue.

Haq said, "I did not say anything regarding my resignation after what had happened since February 10." The actual submission of resignation and the expression of one's intention to resign are not the same thing," he said. "My statement (Saturday) created the confusion in the sense that it contained some wrong words, for which I myself am responsible," Haq reportedly told NFS yesterday.

Daring burglary at Dhanmondi

By Staff Correspondent

Robbers attired in military fatigues burgled the house of a lawyer in the city's Dhanmondi area last night.

In the 10-minute heist, the five robbers took away a VCP and gold-ornaments from the son of the lady of the house. They also ransacked two rooms, searching for money, said an occupant of the house.

The burglars, led by a middle-aged man, also included a young girl aged about 20.

Witnesses said, thieves entered the house at Road No 15 (Old) by an auto-rickshaw and two motorbikes, the types usually used by policemen. They barged into the first floor of the two-storeyed building at around 8:15 last night, witnessed added.

The house owner, advocate AM Nuruddin Ahmed, and his two sons were at a nearby mosque for their tarabi prayers. Only Nuruddin's wife and a maid were at home.

The thieves confined Mrs

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Winter to continue till end of Feb

The prevailing winter is likely to continue till the end of February, senior weather expert told UNB yesterday.

"After that a slow process of transition from cold to warm weather is likely," Sajedur Rahman, Deputy Director of the Met office said.

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He said the transition period in April-May is also vulnerable for cyclone in the Bay.

"Till end of February, on occasion there will be light to dense fog leading to poor visibility and may hinder riverine traffic," the weather expert added.

The Board of Directors of the bank has made it mandatory for the countries to formulate the National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) before receiving soft credits from the bank.

The World Bank had earlier cautioned that all funds to Bangladesh would be suspended if the draft was not prepared in consultation with the public and presented before June 30, sources said.

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However, the NEMAP draft could not be okayed because of outright rejection by environmentalists.

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NEMAP takes off soon to meet WB deadline

By Masud Hasan Khan

The National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) takes off soon amid a flurry of government activities because of a June 30 deadline set by the World Bank drawing near.

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US likely to begin imposing trade bans on Japan today

WASHINGTON, Feb 14: President Clinton's administration on Monday weighed a range of possible trade sanctions against Japan in the aftermath of last week's collapse of trade talks. The White House said the first could come as early as Tuesday, reports AP.

The United States was expected to impose high tariffs on Japanese made cellular telephones Tuesday as an initial — but very specific — form of retaliation.

"It's under review now," White House Press Secretary Dee Myers said Monday.

She said that US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor was poised to make an an-

ouncement on the phone is-sue Tuesday.

The move stems from long complaints by the Motorola Co. of the United States about dif-

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ficulty selling its cellular phones in Japan.

Administration officials said that such a move would only be an opening step and that more

WASHINGTON, Feb 14: President Clinton said today the United States was reviewing all its options in trade sanctions against Japan. We are reviewing all our options. We haven't ruled anything out, he told reporters in the Oval office, reports Reuter.

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sanctions could follow.

Laura D'Andrea Tyson, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, said there will be a series of meetings and a series of actions."

But, speaking at a White House briefing on the economy, Tyson shrugged off suggestions that the United States was on the brink of opening a trade war with Japan.

"We should not be talking about a trade war now. There has been no action taken, she said.

Administration officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said that President Clinton was considering issuing an executive order renew-

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