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NEWS BRIEFS

SAARC TCA meet in
Islamabad Apr 17-18

The 13th meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on Agriculture (TCA) will be held on April 17-18 in the Pakistan capital Islamabad. All the member states of the SAARC will participate in the meeting. The TCA will consider matters relating to agriculture projects, meeting of the counterpart scientists and recommendations of the Governing Board in regard to SAARC Agriculture Information Centre (SAIC), reports UNB.

Justice Rahman
off to New Delhi

Justice M H Rahman, the senior Judge of the Supreme Court, left Dhaka for New Delhi yesterday for attending the international conference on shaping the future by law. The conference is organised by the Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the UNICEF, reports BSS.

Train derails
in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Mar 20: Two bogies and a passenger compartment of the mail train from Chapainawabganj were derailed today at Baharmpur near Court Station resulting in minor injuries to 10 people. Witnesses said the slow moving train was derailed at about 12 noon due to loose track, reports UNB.

BAU first year
classes

From Our Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, Mar 20: The first year classes under all faculties of the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) will begin from March 23.

Diarrhoea claims
3 more in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 20: Diarrhoea claimed 3 more lives and attacked 118 persons in Patharghat and Barma thanas of Borguna district during last 24 hours ending this evening.

According to official sources, the most affected areas are Patharghat, Barma, Amtail and Sadar thanas of Borguna.

BNP bags Magura-2 seat

From Munir U Ahmed

MAGURA, Mar 20: BNP candidate Kazi Salimul Haq Kamal was unofficially declared winner of today's by-election in the Magura-2 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad by a handsome margin over his nearest rival the Awami League candidate.

With this victory in Magura, the BNP's strength in the 330-seat parliament now stands at 174 (including two indepen-

dent and one NAP) against the AL's 91.

Earlier, the BNP won another by-election in Bhola where Mosarrar Hossain Shahjahan won the seat freed by AL's Tofael Ahmed.

In Magura, 1,45,430 ballots were cast out of a total 2,06,624 votes. Of the total votes cast, 911 were deemed invalid. The voter turnout was 70.40 per cent.

The three centres where polling was postponed were: the Kullia High School centre under Sadar thana (1,938 votes), the Hatbaria Govt Primary School under Shalika thana (2,288) and the Baroichora Govt Primary School, also under Shalika thana (1,587 votes). The Election Commission is likely to announce a fresh date of re-polling in these three centres



Kazi Salimul Haq Kamal

AL rejects election, calls hartal Mar 23

From Staff Correspondent

MAGURA, Mar 20: The opposition Awami League rejected the poll results in Magura-2, alleging rigging and violence during balloting and demanded re-polling in the constituency.

The party also called a half-day nationwide hartal on Wednesday (March 23) and demonstrations in Magura and Dhaka on the preceding two days to protest the alleged rigging.

"The election has been rigged heavily and we reject it," AL chief Sheikh Hasina told reporters at a post-election press briefing here.

"It is now proved that no election can be held under this government. So we want fresh elections under a care-taker government," the AL chief said at the crowded press conference at the AL candidate's city residence, just two and a half hours after the balloting was completed.

Sheikh Hasina said the AL had won the seat since 1994 without any break, a fact which had shaken the ruling party.

She alleged that out of the 19 unions that comprise the constituency, the BNP activists had captured 13 and rigged the polls.

Sheikh Hasina also accused the Chief Election Commissioner of helping the BNP implement the 'blue print' by leaving Magura ahead of the crucial polls.

She also alleged that the Deputy Commissioner and Police Super had used their official positions to favour the ruling party. None of the 45 mobile magistrate courts was provided with a transport for carrying out duty, she added.

AL central leader Tofael Ahmed, MP, Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, Mohammad Nasim, MP, K M Jahangir, MP, Harun ur-Rashid, MP, Khan Tipu

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CEC Rouf denies having spoken to the press

By Anwarul Huq and
Nurul Kabir

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Abdur Rouf yesterday denied having spoken to any member of the press prior to his departure from Magura Saturday evening.

Talking to The Daily Star at his Election Commission office last night, the CEC observed that the press reports published Sunday claiming that he had left Magura the day before apprehending unfair means in the by-election were unfounded.

A section of newspapers carrying a UNB creeded news item said the CEC had left Magura with a note of doubt about the fairness of Sunday's by-election. The news item claimed, "Justice Rouf expressed his doubt in remarks he made in front of journalists and leaders of political parties after the BNP [had] refused to send nominees to the proposed [all party] vigilance

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AL lodges protest with CEC

Awami League Advisory

Council member Shah AMS Kibria yesterday petitioned the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) for action against alleged irregularities in the Magura by-election, reports UNB.

In a letter to the CEC, Kibria alleged that ruling BNP supporters, some equipped with arms, captured a number of polling centres, prevented voters from casting votes and assaulted minorities in some villages. Some of the injured people have been hospitalised.

A good number of voting centres in Shalikha and Mohammadpur thanas were occupied by the BNP workers preventing voters from exercising their franchise freely, he said.

On the basis of initial reports, Kibria named the worst-affected polling centres where 'gross irregularities' had been committed till 11:30 am. The centres are Sandra, Nowkola, Krishnapur, Talchari, Vattaul, Thapara, Kalibari, Satakhali, Dhaneswargati, Singrabazar and Aminbazar in Shalikha tha-

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soon. However the results of these three centres would not affect the final results because the margin separating the two main contestants is 33,625 votes.

Balloting continued from 8 am to 4 pm without break and the returning officer announced the unofficial results by midnight last night.

Polling continued generally peacefully in almost all the centres barring some serious incidents in three centres, where the respective polling officers declared the polling postponed.

Polling was briefly interrupted in four centres for some time due to disturbances but resumed later.

At the Baroichora Government Primary School centre, the presiding officer was

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To ease rising interest crunch Early repayment of debts planned

By Inam

Ahmed

about 300 million US dollars,

which should be paid off the soonest.

One reason behind this early repayment move is that the government has now quite a comfortable forex reserve and can afford to part with some of it to avoid high interest amount accrued to the principal amount. The forex reserve now stands at around 2.5 billion US dollars.

On the other hand, management of this huge forex reserve has become a problem for Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi Bank deposits its reserve with other commercial banks abroad against which it gets interests. But recently, the

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Surya Sen's birth centenary today

By Staff Correspondent

The birth centenary of the legendary anti-British revolutionary Surya Sen will be observed today.

The observance committee formed to celebrate the centenary of 'Masterda' — as he was popularly known — will bring out a procession from the National Press Club at four this afternoon. They will also pay a floral tribute to the valiant hero who stunned the British colonial rulers by temporarily storming and capturing the Chittagong armoury, the reserve police lines and the telegraph and telephone office in 1930.

Although Sen was later captured and hanged in January, 1934 by the British yet the short-lived success of his bravado was enough to spark a

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Dhaka reaffirms opposition to racism

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has reaffirmed Bangladesh's unequivocal opposition to racism and racial discrimination in all their forms, reports UNB.

In a message on the occasion of the International Day for Elimination of Racism and Discrimination today she said:

"We are, today, witnessing unfolding of a new chapter in our struggle against apartheid, the most abhorrent form of racism, South Africa, which has been once the most entrenched bastion of racism, is in the threshold of a historic transformation. We hope multi-party elections scheduled for next month will usher in a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa, ending one of the darkest chapters in human history."

But she lamented that the menace of racism and racial discrimination might not disappear with the dismantling of apartheid alone.

"Today, we are witnessing

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North, South agree on restructured GEF

By Chapal Bashar

taken in developing countries for which about 800 million US dollars were spent.

According to informations available in Dhaka, the participants of the Geneva meeting unanimously adopted a document for the Establishment of Restructured Global Environment Facility.

The document, incorporating objectives and activities of the GEF, will be effective from July 1, 1994. The restructured GEF will have a secretariat at its headquarters to be located in Washington. The World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will act as implementing agencies of the GEF.

The Geneva meet also agreed to set up a 32-member Executive Council for the GEF which will meet twice a year to take major decisions and approve projects. However, the meeting witnessed hard and protracted bargaining between the countries of the North and

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Bar Council debars 2 lawyers for misconduct

By Staff Correspondent

Two lawyers have been severely reprimanded recently by the Bangladesh Bar Council for professional misconduct.

A tribunal of the council, headed by Razaul Karim Bhuiyan and Mahfuzur Rahman, both members of the Supreme Court Bar Association, guilty of professional misconduct and took the punitive measures.

A press release of the council, issued by its senior assistant secretary Taslimuddin Khan yesterday, said that as the legal adviser of the Dhaka Central Cooperative Bank Razaul Karim Bhuiyan was authorised to withdraw Tk 3,90,500 from the Rent Control Court. Bhuiyan withdrew Tk 3,63,000 on August 1988 and kept the matter secret from his client.

In the face of the bank's pressure, the advocate paid Tk 3,22,500 and charged the rest as his legal fees.

Acting upon a complaint by the bank, the Bar Council tribunal, with Advocate Ahmed Ali as chairman, debarred Razaul Karim Bhuiyan from the

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Pakistan closes its Bombay consulate

authorities."

The statement, carried by the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), said the decision was made because the consulate could not function effectively.

Pakistan had asked the Indian government to lease Bombay's Jinnah House, named after Pakistani founding father Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The Indian authorities had taken over the house after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent.

The spokesman said India first agreed to the Pakistani proposal, but then had "gone back on its commitment" to lease the premises.

The Indian authorities subsequently refused to facilitate the acquisition of suitable premises for the consulate, he said.

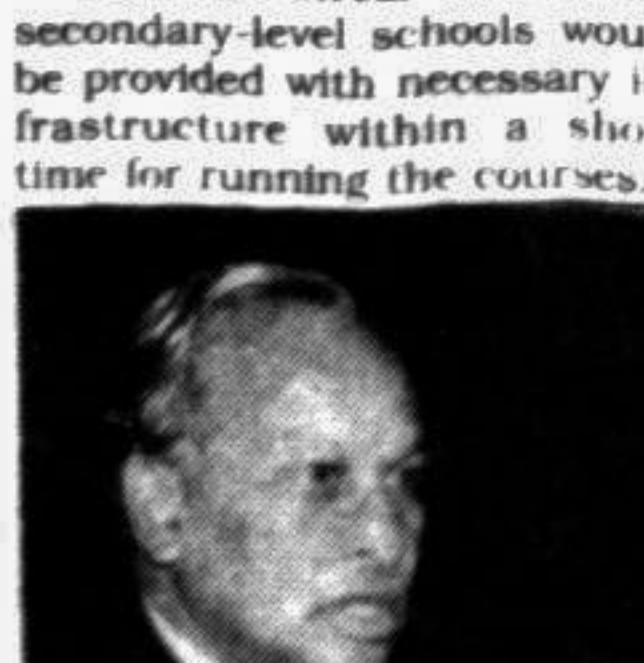
The Maharashtra state government had in effect "acted in a manner that made it extremely difficult to carry out its assigned functions," he said.

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Agro-science now compulsory in schools

By Staff Correspondent

Barrister Sircar said all the secondary-level schools would be provided with necessary infrastructure within a short time for running the courses.



the teachers and provide the schools with infrastructural facilities.

He said there are some 40 lakh students at the secondary levels. If all of them can be taught these subjects, they would be able to employ themselves even when they stop their studies.

Regarding the examination system, Sircar said of the total marks for each subject, 60 per cent would be for the subjective questions and 40 per cent for objective questions.