

# Delhi to fence off border with Pak-held Kashmir

JAMMU, Feb 17: India plans to fence off parts of its border with Pakistan in the northern state of Kashmir to prevent cross-border arms smuggling by Muslim militants, officials said here Friday, reports AFP.

Engineers will also install floodlights along the zone to help Indian security forces patrol the country's border in Kashmir, the officials said.

They did not say when the operation would begin but added that almost 200 kilometres (120 miles) of border territory between the Akhnour and Paharpur sectors would be fenced off at a cost of 100 million dollars.

The sources said a survey showed that cross-border smuggling of weapons by the rebels was continuing into Indian held Kashmir, adding that without the fencing off of the region it would not be possible to close the 'loopholes.'

Indian security forces have also agreed to increase the number of their frontier posts from the 60 at present to 150, the official sources said there, Kashmir's winter capital.

A line of control stretching 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) demarcates the two zones of divided Kashmir, heavily guarded by tens of thousands of troops from both countries

## Jyoti for ouster of Cong (I) from Delhi

AGARTALA, Feb 17: The West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu today said that his party would raise the voice of unity of all secular, democratic and left forces to oust the Cong (I) from Delhi, reports PTI.

Addressing a gathering, organised by the ruling CPI (M) on the eve of the fifteenth State Conference of the party, Basu said that the Cong (I) was alienated from the masses due to corruption and unpopular policies. He said the result of recent assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka had shown that the Cong (I) was routed from the masses and the people wanted an alternative.

Basu, also a politburo member of CPI (M), said that the voices for unity of secular, democratic and left parties would be raised in his party congress to be held in Punjab in April next.

He said that a strong unity of those parties could easily defeat the Cong (I).

## Garments workers' ultimatum for Eid bonus

Garments workers in the city yesterday reiterated the demand for payment of Eid bonus by February 26 and their resolve to go for 'Gherao' programme from February 27 in case of failure by the factory owners, reports UNB.

Addressing a rally marking the "Eid Bonus Day" at the Noor Hossain Square in the afternoon, leaders of National Garments Workers Federation also demanded payment of the current month's salary to the workers by February 26.

Otherwise, the workers will be forced to go for greater agitation, they warned.

The federation leaders also demanded immediate re-opening of New Delta Garments at Dholaipar and clearing of outstanding salaries and allowances for three months.

The rally was addressed by federation general secretary Amirul Haque Amin, Shamsun Nahar, Alam Kabir, Alamgir Rohny and Safa Begum.

## Fundamentalists rally for death to Pak blasphemers

LAHORE, Feb 17: Muslim fundamentalists chanted "Death to blasphemers" outside Lahore High Court in Pakistan on Thursday as it heard an appeal by two Christians against death sentences for blasphemy, reports Reuter.

More than 50 demonstrators outside the court also damaged the car of main defence lawyer Asma Jehangir, witnesses said.

But one of two judges hearing the case said "The court will not be impressed by any pressure built up outside and will strictly go by the law."

A lower court convicted the two Christians, 40-year-old Rehmat Mashi and 14-year-old Salamati Mashi last week on the charge which they denied, of blasphemy against Islam, Prophet Mohammad (SM).

One of a group of lawyers wanting the court to uphold the death sentences made abusive remarks as Jehangir, a human rights activist, stood up to argue her case.

on either side of the frontier.

New Delhi, which administers the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, accuses Islamabad of training and arming Muslim guerillas in the Pakistani zone of the Himalayan province.

Pakistan denies the charge, saying it only extends moral and diplomatic support to the Muslim secessionist drive, which has left more than 10,000 people dead since 1989 when the rebellion gained momentum.

India fenced off parts of its 850 kilometre (510 mile) border with Pakistan in Punjab when Sikh separatism reached its peak in the northern state in the late 1980s.

## Sec 144 imposed on Ullapara

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 17: The district administration has imposed Section 144 on Ullapara thana headquarters from 6 am tomorrow to avert clash between supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, reports UNB.

The directive came as both the groups declared their meetings at the Kawk High School ground here on 9 am tomorrow. Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Saydee is scheduled to address the Jamaat meeting.

A tense situation was prevailing at Ullapara due to the campaign of tomorrow's meetings. Meanwhile, at least five people were injured in a clash between supporters of the rival groups on Thursday.

**2 muggers held in city**

By Staff Correspondent

Two muggers were caught ransomed from Iqbal Road in Mohammadpur yesterday.

According to police three muggers snatched a gold chain from a lady and ran away. When the attention of policemen on duty was drawn by the victims they caught two of them.

The lady had just got down from an autorickshaw near her residence when the three muggers brandishing a Chapin snatched her gold chain.

**One gets life term in Barisal**

By Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 17: Sessions Judge Barisal S. M. Abdus Samad has convicted Monir Hossain in absentia for killing one Zaman and sentenced him for life today.

The judge also fined Monir TK 3000 and in default to suffer more two months RI.

Monir was found guilty of shooting Zaman to death in broad day light at Gala Bazar under Uzirpur (hana) Barisal district on January, 20, 1992. Monir is absconding since then.

Six other accused were acquitted.

## IOM to look into Bangladeshi workers' issues

The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) will look into the problems faced by the Bangladeshi workers abroad, James N Purcell, Director General of the IOM, said here yesterday, reports BSS.

"My visit to Bangladesh has enabled me to know better about the problems of Bangladeshi migrant workers," told newsmen at the airport before leaving here, ending a three-day visit.

Purcell was accompanied by Yahaya Maroofi, special adviser to the IOM.

They were seen off by Labour and Manpower Secretary Dr Shah Mohammad Farid and Director General of the Bureau of Manpower A Sattar Khan.

The Geneva-based IOM rendered valuable assistance to Bangladesh in the wake of the Gulf crisis by organising the repatriation of a huge number of Bangladeshis stranded in Kuwait and Iraq.

The organisation works for congenial conditions for the migrant workers on a global scale.

The IOM Director General said Bangladeshi workers were making a great contribution to their country and added that the government here was also sparing no efforts to avail the opportunity of sending its work force abroad.

The visit and talks with different quarters have will result in greater collaboration between the IOM and Bangladesh, Purcell said.

The IOM has already involved itself in several projects here including training and education to nurses. Many trained nurses, have also been offered jobs in Malaysia.



BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar speaking at a roundtable on the 'Present Political Crisis: wherein Solution' organised by the Bangladesh Study Centre at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. — Star photo

# Round-table discussion on impasse

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people in general were concerned over the present political scenario and they wanted to get rid of this 'abnormal situation'.

"It is a matter of political decision. There is no constitutional barrier to holding either by-elections or general elections," he said.

Dr Kamal said political crisis could not be resolved by sending it to the court. Uncertainty would surface again if the court wanted resolution of the issue in Parliament, he argued.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said it was a great sacrifice on the part of an elected prime minister that he announced his intention to resign though she enjoyed majority support in Parliament.

But the opposition questioned the clarity of the announcement made by ruling party leaders on December 28, he said, adding "I am sorry to say none from the Opposition raised the question on the day."

He, however, said BNP was ready to sit across the table with the Opposition to find out a solution in the line with Prime Minister's announcement.

Prof Chowdhury said the decision of the Opposition to resign from Parliament was a wrong decision since they had responsibilities given to them by the electorate and they did not discharge those. They have responsibilities to enact necessary laws and pass the annual budget which are essential to run the country," he said, adding they could not quit whenever they wanted.

He also criticised the main opposition party for 'forging an alliance with the Jatiya Party, former autocrats and the Jamaat-e-Islami which opposed the independence of the country'.

Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed, later, reacted saying it was the BNP which contacted Ershad in the jail before the 12th amendment to the Constitution.

And BNP came to power with the support of Jamaat, he added.

"We sat in Parliament together, but we never saw each other after our resignation from Parliament," Tofael said. He, however, admitted that they tried to isolate Jamaat from the BNP which used the party for their ends.

Badruddoza Chowdhury stressed the need for preventing false voting by issuing identity cards and taking stern measures against hoodlumberism and use of black money to ensure free and fair elections.

Mutual trust and respect between the government and the Opposition parties were a must and for this more interaction in Parliament was needed, he said.

Tofael Ahmed said the Opposition never wanted to dislodge the present elected government before completion of its tenure. "We have demanded formation of a caretaker government at the end of the tenure of this government."

Referring to the Prime Minister's offer to resign, he said the condition of not calling hartals and strikes was not acceptable to the opposition. "If our demand was met, no question of going for such programmes would arise," he said.

He said elections could not be free and fair under those who could not afford to lose a single parliamentary seat. The Election Commission held elections to 300 seats without any problem in 1991, but the Chief Election Commissioner himself had to leave Magura apprehending rigging in the polls, he said.

The by-election in Magura indicated what would happen in future, he said. Under the present circumstances, free and fair elections were not possible without a caretaker government, he stressed.

"If we can reach a consensus on this, we can bring necessary amendments to the Constitution after the elec-

tions. We just wanted to have a culture of free and fair elections," he said.

Abdus Salam Talukdar regretted that the crisis prevailed even after the announcement of the Prime Minister to resign 30 days ahead of the elections. In a democratic culture, problems should be resolved in Parliament. If the opposition came to the House, the ways and means of holding free and fair elections could be discussed there, he said.

Talukdar rejected the Opposition argument that elections would not be free and fair without a caretaker government. "What is needed now is to strengthen the Election Commission and make the electoral process foolproof," he said.

Dr Kamal Hossain said the political crisis was worsening though the government and the opposition came closer on December 28 and the Prime Minister offered to resign. This situation should not be allowed to continue, he said adding there must be an understanding as to how the next elections would be held. Holding of by elections would not resolve the crisis, he said.

Khandaker Delwar Hossain said solution to the crisis could be found if the politicians reached a consensus. Sovereignty of parliament should be upheld for the cause of democracy as well as the country, he added.

Haider Akbar Khan Rano supported the concept of caretaker administration.

Dr Kabir Uddin Ahmed, an economist, said the politicians should have a democratic attitude. Lack of it would create distrust and confusion among the political parties, he said.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury of Awami League called for immediate elections to overcome the present political crisis. It was a political crisis which could be resolved through understanding among politicians, he said.

## JU convocation by end of Apr

By JU Correspondent

The first convocation of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) is likely to be held between April 20 and 27.

Official preparations are going on in the full swing in this regard but the final date is yet to be fixed.

About 4,304 graduates, 3,555 post-graduates 14 M Phil and 7 Ph D holders are eligible to attend the convocation.

The graduates (session '87-'88) and post graduates ('90-'91) will receive certificates while the students who were awarded the Ph D and the M Phil degrees before December 31, 1994 will only attend the convocation.

Earlier the authorities extended the date for submission of applications due to poor response. Till last week only 2050 students registered their names, sources said.

The move for holding the convocation was taken in 1980. But the efforts failed because of deteriorating political situation.

The students of the university were demanding holding of the convocation since long. A third-year student of Physics Department told this correspondent that "we should also hold the Silver Jubilee festival along with the first convocation of the university."

Talking to The Daily Star, the JU VC Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury said, "We have already posted letters to the registered graduates for their cooperation and initiated a massive campaign for the programme."

## Zia Parishad RU, Satkhira units' activities banned

All activities of the Rajshahi University and Satkhira District units of the Zia Parishad have been postponed for indefinite period, a press release of the parishad said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The decision came at an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the Zia Parishad held on Thursday with parishad president Kabir Murali in the chair.

## Tories lose deposit in Welsh polls

ISLWYN, Wales, Feb 17: The Tories, in a humiliating fourth place, lost their deposit early today, as the opposition Labour candidate easily held the South Wales seat vacated by Neil Kinnock, now a European commissioner, reports AFP.

Labour's Don Touhig romped home ahead of the Welsh nationalist Plaid Cymru candidate in second place.

The Liberal Democrat was third and the Conservative Robert Buckland, with a mere 913 votes, trailed in fourth place.

Labour's margin of victory was 11,631 down on former party leader Kinnock's massive majority of 24,728 at the last general election in 1992.

## NZ minister

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The Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to be in Auckland to attend the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in November to be hosted by New Zealand.

"We would very much like the Bangladesh Prime Minister to be in New Zealand," Sir Robin said.

Sir Robin met Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman yesterday evening. He will meet Minister for Commerce and Information Shamsul Islam Khan today.

"We in New Zealand take interest in Bangladesh," said Sir Robin.

He said that his country was keen to know how Bangladesh had restructured its economy because his own country also did the same over the past ten years.

Acting Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed received Sir Robin at the airport.

He said that during the talks with Bangladesh ministers he would like to discuss how the two sides could help each other in increasing the trade between the two countries. "We will also discuss investment," he said.

Sir Robin said he was the first minister from New Zealand to visit Bangladesh since New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk visited Bangladesh.

Replying to a question Sir Robin said that New Zealand had a clear anti-nuclear stance for the South Pacific and added his country would favour the adjoining oceans also to be nuclear free.

Sir Robin, who arrived from New Delhi, was accompanied by senior officials, Neil Walter, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicholas Bridge, New Zealand high commissioner in Bangladesh based in New Delhi, Neil Robertson, deputy director, South and South-East Asia division, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mrs Jennifer Snell, principal private secretary to the minister.

## Mississippi Senate votes to outlaw slavery

JACKSON, Mississippi, Feb 17: The Mississippi state Senate voted unanimously to outlaw slavery on Thursday by approving ratification of the 13th amendment to the United States constitution — 130 years after the act, reports Reuter.

The measure now goes to the state's house of representatives. If it is approved there too, Mississippi will join the rest of the country in embracing the abolition of slavery.

The vote, which took place without discussion, is only symbolic. But Senator Hillman Frazier, a member of Mississippi's legislative black caucus, says the endorsement is important anyway.

"I think it's very important for us to show the world that we have put the past behind us," he said.

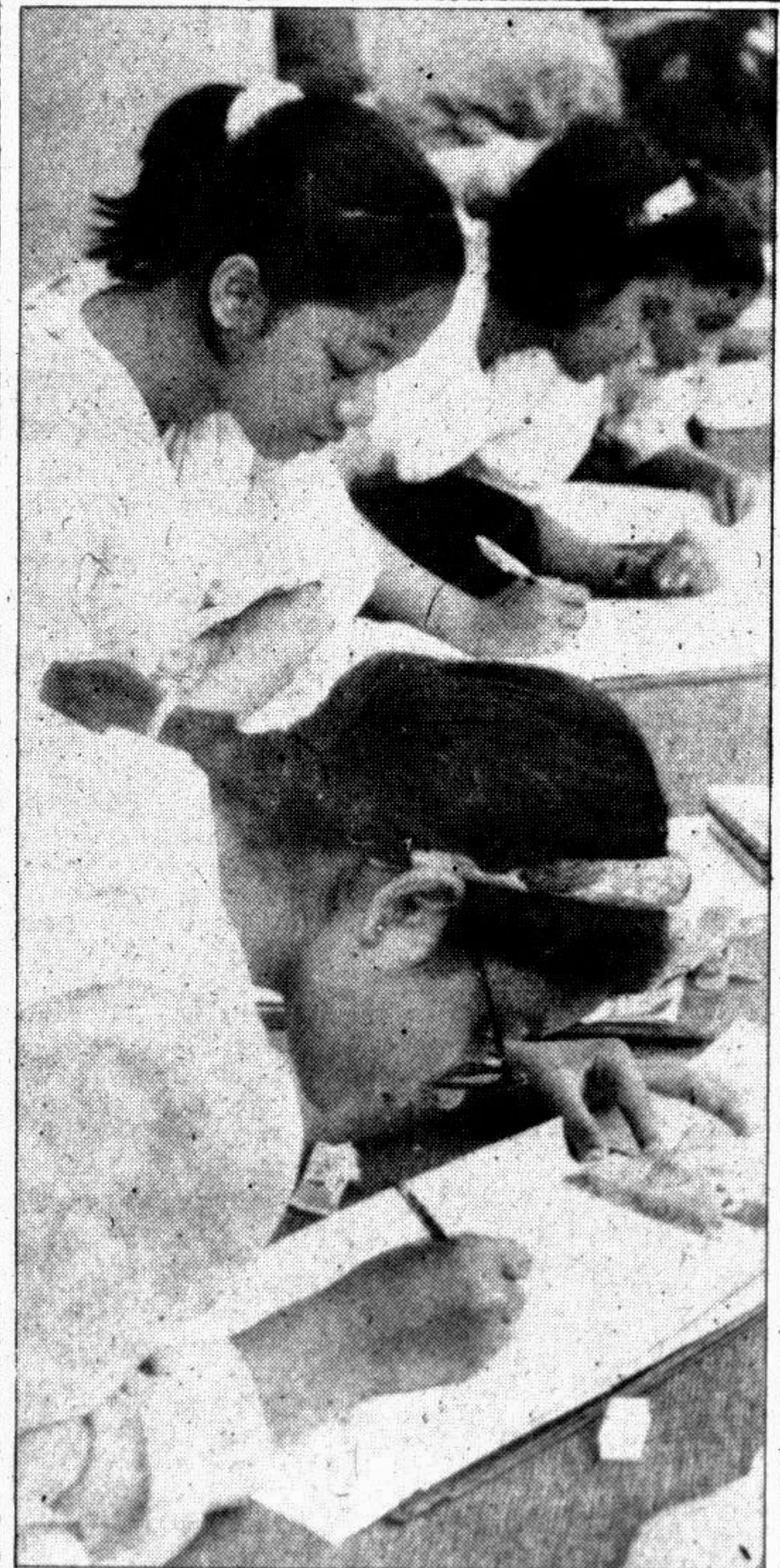
The 13th amendment was ratified in 1865, a year after the end of the civil war. At the time, Mississippi rejected the measure because the legislature was ruled by white embittered by the confederacy's defeat.

## 2 policemen killed in Manipur

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Gunmen killed two policemen today and wounded five others who were guarding sealed ballot boxes in a legislative election in the eastern state of Manipur, a news agency reported, reports AP.

United News of India (UNI) said the gunmen appeared to be militants of the Kuki tribe, who are engaged in a fierce turf war with the Naga tribe in the remote state bordering Burma.

The agency said the police unit stationed at the polling station battled the militants for two



The National Museum organised a handwriting competition for the children and juvenile in observance of Amar Ekushey at its premises yesterday. — Star photo

# The Midnight File

## LTTE blames Kumaratunga for impasse in peace process

COLOMBO, Feb 17: The LTTE has accused the Chandrika Kumaratunga government of adopting a hardline position and refusing to resolve the urgent day to day problems of the Tamil people, thus creating an impasse in the peace process. "Having given primacy to military, concerns over and above the existing plight of the civilian population, the government has blamed the LTTE for raising unreasonable demands," the LTTE newspaper said, reports PTI.

## Arafat rejects Israeli offer

JERUSALEM, Feb 17: PLO chief Yasser Arafat on Friday rejected an Israeli offer to let him administer a second West Bank City, while Islamic militants threatened to attack Jewish settlements and army posts with anti-tank missiles. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday offered Arafat to let him start running the West Bank town of Jenin, with Israeli troops remaining for the time being. The offer was a bid to break the deadlock on expanding self-rule to the West Bank, reports AP.

# Sporadic gunfire despite fresh truce in Chechnya

NAZRAN (Russia), Feb 17: Russian and Chechen military commanders agreed today to extend their shaky ceasefire until Sunday, even though their battling forces continued to violate the previous agreement, reports AP.

In the Chechen capital, Grozny, Russian forces captured the elder brother of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported. Dudayev has already lost a son, who was killed in the fighting last month.

Bekmurza Dudayev, 50, has remained at or near the president's side since the Chechen war started on December 11, the agency said.

"It quoted as its source an aide of Russian Khasbulatov, the Chechen-born former Speaker of Russia's lower parliamentary house, who heads an anti-

Dudayev faction.

Despite sporadic gunfire, three Red Cross trucks carrying 20 tons of food delivered their first shipment of humanitarian aid to Grozny. There were reports of gun and artillery fire in Grozny and a village to the south.

A mediator at the talks said it could take at least a month to halt all military operations in the 10-week-old conflict in the breakaway republic.

"It turned out to be not so easy to stop a war," Boris Agapov, vice president of Ingushetia, which is hosting the talks, told the Interfax news agency Thursday.

In Moscow, Muslim leaders from Russia, Chechnya and Ingushetia called for peace and warned that the war could turn into a religious conflict, the Interfax news agency said.

An atmosphere of pessimism prevailed for the new round of talks in Sleptsovsk, a town in the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia, after clashes violated a two-day truce which took effect Thursday.

The commanders agreed to extend the latest cease-fire until Sunday and to exchange bodies tomorrow.

There has been fighting all week in southern parts of Grozny and nearby villages, despite Wednesday's agreement and a limited truce two days earlier.

## Fake licences

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by them and their inability to control the vehicles have led to many road accidents here, the sources pointed out.

BRTA and traffic officials here admitted that there were fake driving licences made by brokers using forged signatures.

Such things mostly happened when the drivers got their licences through brokers, they said.

BRTA sources said some fake driving licences were seized when brought for renewal. If the traffic police became active, the fake licences could easily be traced, they added.

A senior official of traffic police, however, told this correspondent "We have been seizing fake driving licences but it is not possible to go for a massive drive without the cooperation of BRTA officials since the registration book is lying with them. If BRTA joins us in the operation on the roads and highways, we can verify the licences and other documents seeing the registration book and in such cases innocent persons will not be harassed."

Meanwhile, BRTA officials here dismissed the possibility of issuance of driving licence through 'back door' and said after the establishment of BRTA in September 1990, no irregularities took place in issuing licences. "We do it now if the candidates can qualify themselves in written, viva voce and field tests," one official said, adding "there were alleged irregularities in issuing licence and other documents before the establishment of BRTA."

## Hasina

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"We demanded resignation of this corrupt, ineffective and vote dacoit BNP government to establish the people's right to vote and food," Hasina told the rally organised by the US unit of her party.

She said the Awami League had launched its agitation to establish the people's rights and save the people and the nation from a "disaster." The people's problems will not be solved and their rights will not be protected keeping this government in power.

The Awami League chief accused the BNP government of taking anti-people steps from the very beginning of its rule and of introducing neo-feudal rule by destroying the hopes and aspiration of the people.

She said 147 opposition MPs were compelled to resign for "the anti-people role of the government that made the 5th national assembly inoperative."

The problems of the people increased manifold due to misrule, wrong decision and politicisation of the government," Hasina said.

She said downward trend of production, deteriorating economic situation, increasing poverty and unemployment and dependency on others are the reality in the country.

The rally, presided over by US Awami League president Nurul Islam Anu, was addressed, among others, by Dr Enaetur Rahim and MA Salam.

## Redwan's panel

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MEAs).

The posts were vacated through resignations of one-third of the EC members in accordance with the Trade Organisation Ordinance '94.

He was followed by his panel mates Abdus Salam Mursheidi (493 votes), Md Hanif Chowdhury (492), Atiqul Islam (464), Col (Retd) Anwarul Azim (438), Md A Moin (421) and Abul Quasem Haider (420). Noor-e-Alam Siddiqui (383) and Anisur Rahman Sinha (389) were elected from the other panel, the Nirbachani Forum.

Syed Manzur Elahi of Apex Group was the Chairman of the Election Board while Shafulah Chowdhury of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) was the member.

## Survey for oil

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British Gas had been disagreeing with the government on the terms for profit-sharing. If the negotiations do not end positively, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with British Gas would be cancelled and blocs 9 and 10 would be open for negotiations with any other interested company.

The PSC for bloc 15, submitted by Cairn Plc and Holland Sea Search and the agreement initiated on November 14 last, is now lying with the Ministry of Law and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for clearance.

The agreement with these two foreign companies would also allow them to set up a 40 MW power station in Chittagong hill Tracts region, utilizing natural gas from the Semutang Gas field. Bloc 15 covers the Chittagong region