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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**One killed, 15 hurt in Sylhet clash**

**From Staff Correspondent**  
SYLHET, Feb 28: One person was killed and at least 15 others were injured in a clash between two rival groups of villagers at D. dhupati Baraker under Churnughat thana of Habiganj district this morning. The clash took place over the ownership of a bamboo cluster in the village. Abdul Karim, 35, received serious injuries and died on way to the Sylhet hospital.

**Iran deploys Hawk missile near Gulf**

WASHINGTON, Feb 28: Iran has deployed Hawk anti-aircraft missiles on island bases near the mouth of the Gulf, increasing worries about Tehran's capability to interdict oil shipping in the waterway, the top US general said today, reports Reuters.

**One killed in Magura clash**

MAGURA, Feb 28: One person was killed and four others were injured in a clash between two groups at Khor-dahulbari village in Mohamadpur thana of the district today. The victim was identified as Sabur Ali Mia, 45. He died on the spot. Police said the incident occurred when cows of Isharat Ali damaged crops in the field of Modasser Ali, reports UNB.

**Sehri, Iftar Timings**

Ram	Mar	Sehri	Iftar
28	1	-	6:05
29	2	5:01	6:05
30	3	5:00	6:05

**Another 25000 not getting wages**

## 25000 Bangladeshis deported from Saudi Arabia

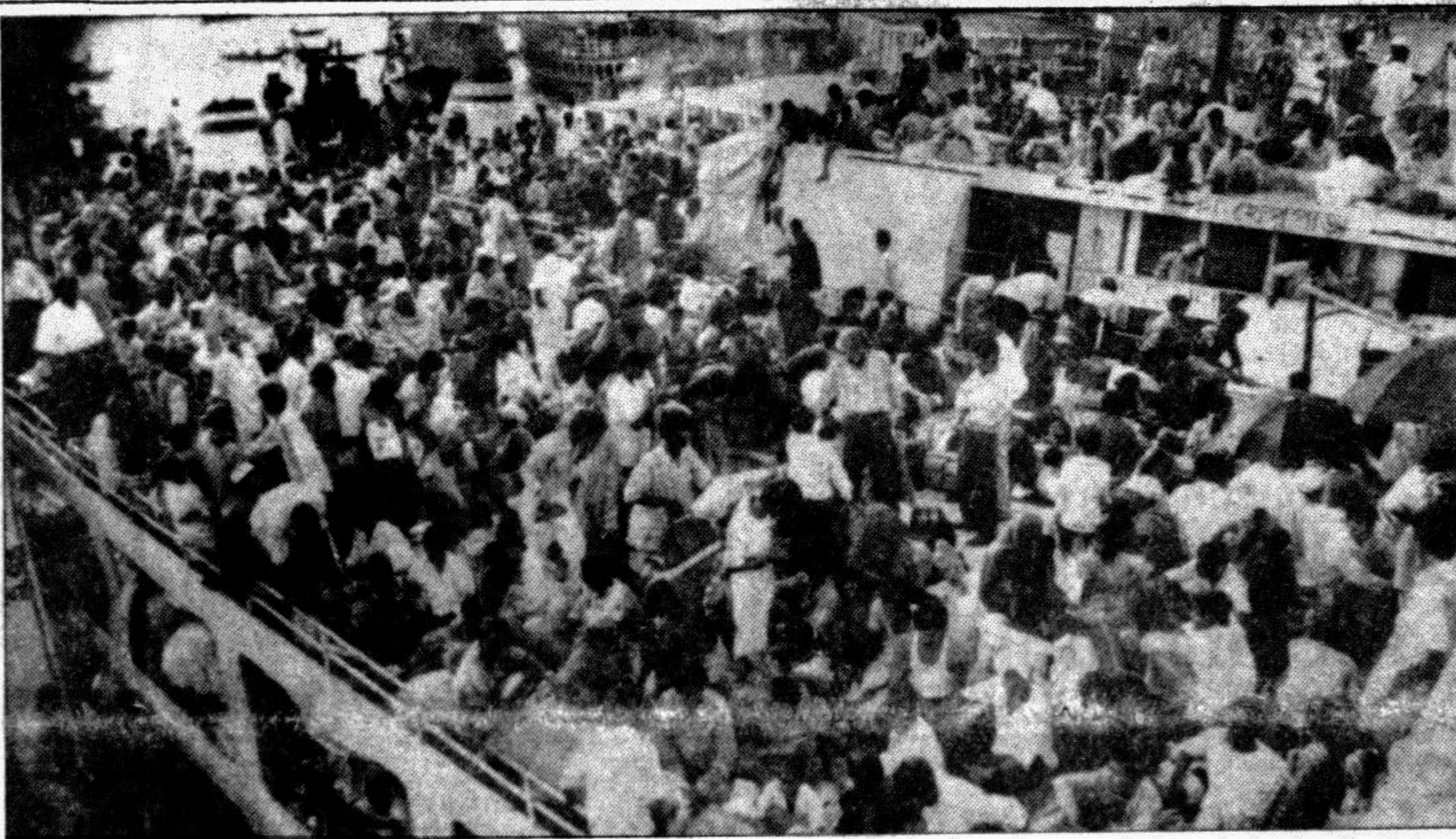
By Morshed Ali Khan and Reaz Ahmad

Nearly 25,000 Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia are not getting their wages while another 25,000 were deported from the Kingdom recently, an authoritative source in the Ministry of Labour and Manpower said yesterday. A high ranking delegation is expected to visit the Saudi capital at the end of March to discuss these and other issues relating to immigrants' welfare. The five-member delegation comprising representatives from the ministries of Home and Foreign Affairs, Manpower Bureau and the BAIRA (Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies) will be led by the

Secretary of Labour and Manpower Ministry. The delegation will discuss matters ranging from non-payment of wages to Bangladesh workers to problems of employment visa and residence permit fees, according to official sources. About 25,000 Bangladeshi workers who went to Saudi Arabia through government channels under a three-year contract have been deprived of their wages for the last one year. Their Saudi employers, who are mostly construction contractors, claim that the Saudi government is yet to pay their bills which is causing the delay in payment of wages.

The delegation will also focus on the recently increased employment visa and residence permit fees. The employment visa fee which was Saudi Riyal 50 has been raised to SR 1000 and residence permit fee (AKAMA) from SR 300 to SR 1000. The issue was already discussed at an informal meeting between Labour Minister Mir Shawkat Ali and his Saudi counterpart at the Labour Ministers' Conference in New Delhi recently. The Saudi minister assured support for solving the problems of Bangladeshi workers in his country. A total of 25,169 Bangla-

deshi workers who were termed 'overstayers' in the Kingdom by the Saudi authorities, returned to Bangladesh in phases from January '94 to February 18 this year. Of those, 15,638 returned through deportation camps in Jeddah under the supervision of the Director General of Saudi Immigration, during January to October last year. The remaining 9,531 'overstayers' returned home following a general amnesty in November last which promised a free passage back to the country. The last batch of these deportees returned this month. See Page 12 Col 8

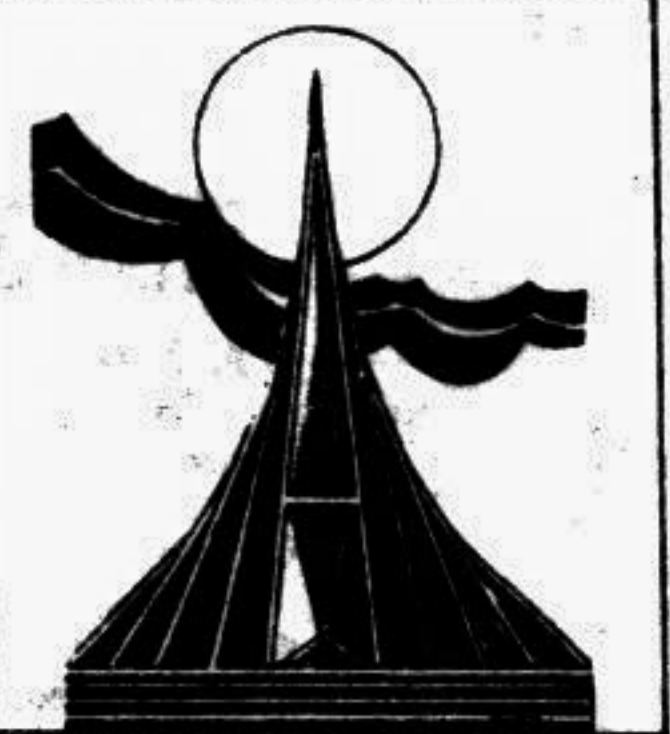


For the past couple of days there has been a made rush at the city's Sadarghat launch terminal of people leaving for their village homes to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with their near and dear ones. — Star photo

**Ironic anniversaries**

Star Report

The end of February and the beginning of March marks two important, but contrasting, milestones in the country's move towards a democratic polity. Today, sadly, completes one full year of the boycott of Parliament by the Opposition members. On the other hand, February 27 marked the fourth anniversary of the election of the Fifth Parliament. On this day last year, the Opposition parties walked out of a Jatiya Sangsad session, thus starting an indefinite boycott of the august body. Ironically, the present Parliament was constituted four years ago through, what is widely acknowledged and acclaimed, perhaps the most free and fair elections. That election, under an interim government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, marked a watershed in the country's history after starting for nearly nine years under an autocratic regime. On March 1, 1994, the Opposition members walked out in protest against a derogatory comment of the then information minister during a general discussion on the Hebron massacre in the West Bank by a fanatic Israeli Jew. The Treasury Bench member had termed the Opposition members as 'neo-Muslims' following an Opposition demand to pass a resolution condemning the killing of the Palestinian Muslims. The Opposition immediately demanded an unconditional 'apology' from the out-spoken minister, who aggravated the situation by offering only 'regrets'. The walkout was soon converted into a full-scale boycott of Parliament following the See Page 12 Col 1



**Looking Back at**

**March towards Independence**

Part of our history was in the process of being made in the month of March, 1971. Crucially eventful, immensely charged with mounting mass agitations and pressing political moves accompanied by fast-spreading public speculations mixing memories with desires, the month of March was marching towards the eventual birth of Bangladesh as an independent, sovereign state. Indeed, "life is lived forward but understood backward," as Kierkegaard justly puts it. And we take this opportunity to look back at March 1971, day by day, in terms of recounting some of the crucial events, incidents and experiences that characterized those turbulent, history-making days. From tomorrow on, we will be devoting a portion of Page 4 of The Daily Star, everyday till March 31, to recounting those days chronologically. March 1, 1971: In the general elections of 1970, the Awami League, the predominant political party from the eastern wing of the then Pakistan, obtained the overwhelming majority of seats in the Pakistan Parliament. To discuss constitutional issues and facilitate a smooth transfer of power to the elected representatives of people, a National Assembly session was scheduled to begin from March 3, 1971. But, on March 1, 1971, Yahya Khan, the then President of Pakistan, declared the postponement of that national assembly session, posing the first major blow to the democratic process of the country, in response to which, See Page 12 Col 6

## US won't reduce troop strength in E Asia

WASHINGTON, Feb 28: A Pentagon report released today said the US must remain the pre-eminent power in the Asia-Pacific region for the rest of this century and during the next and be strong enough to prevent the rise of any "regional hegemonies", reports PTI. The report, by a senior Clinton administration defence official covers East Asia. It is the first of a series of regional security reviews asked for by Defence Secretary William Perry. Reports on other regions will follow. Washington's decision not to cut its troop strength in East Asia was praised today by those relying on the security blanket. Others saw it as a necessary evil to balance China's influence, according to AP. Joseph Nye Jr., US assistant secretary of defence for international security affairs, said Monday that Washington believes stability in East Asia and the Pacific depends in large measure on a continuing US military presence. "There will no longer be a drawdown of troops," as foreseen in the early 1990s, Nye said. Former Indian Foreign Secretary SK Sirigh said the news wasn't really news. "What the US is doing is reassuring their friends," said Singh, who frequently writes columns on foreign policy. "Particularly happy with the fact that 100,000 US troops will remain in the region was South Korea, home to 37,000 of them. Plans to trim the presence were put on hold in 1991 as tensions began mounting over North Korea's nuclear programme. The presence of American troops could deter a possible attack by North Korea," said Lee Soo-hang, an analyst at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, a South Korean Foreign Ministry think-tank. See Page 12 Col 6

## Barings case remains a mystery Hunt for Nick Leeson on

MANILA, Feb 28: The hunt is on for a young British trader who disappeared, leaving a billion dollars worth of unanswered questions in the wake of the Barings PLC collapse, reports AP. But Singapore's surroundings are in many ways an ideal place to vanish into thin air. Authorities would like to question Nicholas Leeson to find out how a single trader could have gambled away enough in futures trades to bankrupt Britain's oldest merchant bank. Trouble is, Leeson, 28, and his wife Lisa, 23, have not been seen since late last week. No warrant had been issued for his arrest as of today. While Leeson is being actively sought in some Asian countries, others were slow to sound the alarm. Police in Singapore said they were investigating, and Malaysia said it was seeking the young trader. But South Korean authorities contacted by The Associated Press knew of the Barings case but seemed unfamiliar with the name Leeson. Filipino officials said it would take them more than two months to screen airport arrival cards because the immigration system is not computerized. Japan's Justice Ministry said there were no specific measures being taken to search for Leeson. Spokesman Yuryo Miyata said neither Singapore nor Britain had asked for special immigration-screening steps. Australia also said it had not received any requests to be on the lookout for Leeson. The federal police, the coast guard and immigration all reported no special alerts. It was impossible to know which way Leeson might jump, but already the trail as growing cold. Today a spokeswoman for the Regent Hotel in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur said Leeson checked in under his own name late Thursday and left the following morning. His posh condominium apartment in Singapore appeared abandoned, with newspapers piling up at the door. Witnesses said locksmiths opened the door for investigators from Singapore's commercial crimes department, but it was not clear whether the investigators took anything away. On the surface, it might seem problematic to escape Singapore, a regimented island city-state where gum-chewing is prohibited and failure to flush a public toilet is a crime. Not so. A causeway links the island with Malaysia, and dozens of Indonesian islands are easily accessible by boat. The Singapore airport is one of Asia's most efficient, with See Page 12 Col 3

## Govt must resign, says Hasina

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government must resign or it would be forced to do so through people's agitation, reports UNB. Parliament has lost its legitimacy after the resignation of 147 Opposition MPs and the government its moral right to stay in power," said the Awami League President. She was talking to the newly-elected office-bearers of Kotalipara thana and College units of the Chhatra League who came to meet her at her Dhanmondi residence. Blaming the government for widespread terrorism throughout the country, including educational institutions, Hasina alleged terrorists were on the gambol under the care of the government. "The whole society, including educational arena, is in the grip of terrorists." The country has been brought on the verge of ruin through immeasurable corruption, nepotism, politicisation, incompetence and vote See Page 12 Col 7

## North Korea ousts Polish military truce observers

SEOUL, Feb 28: North Korea forced Polish military truce observers to withdraw from their base today and then blamed the United States for the situation, reports AP. North Korea threatened earlier this month that if the Poles did not leave by today, they would face charges of 'illegal stay.' The South Korean news agency Yonhap reported. It was unclear what impact the expulsion would have US officials had refused to speculate on possible action in advance, hoping North Korea would change its mind. North Korea has been trying to dismantle the Korean armistice system so it can deal directly with the United States and drive a wedge between South Korea and Washington. A spokesman at the Polish Embassy in Pyongyang, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the officers left 15 seconds before the North's deadline and that he accompanied them to the capital. They were to go later to Beijing. The forced pullout completed North Korea's efforts to oust observers from former Communist allies that now are democracies. Poland and Czechoslovakia have represented North Korea in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Committee, which oversees the armistice agreement. The North has said neither country is really an ally any more. Czechoslovakia was pressured to withdraw in 1993. The American-led UN Command, which fought against North Korea in the 1950-53 Korean War, is represented by Switzerland and Sweden. North Korea alleged today that Washington destroyed the NNSC and that the Polish pullout "will be conducive to the promotion of the peace process in the Korean Peninsula." It implied that talks with Washington were the next logical step. "The US side... has reduced provisions of the agreement See Page 12 Col 6

## Zakat tragedy Vested quarter blaming me, says Abbas

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Former mayor of Dhaka Mirza Abbas MP yesterday alleged that a vested quarter were trying to implicate him in the incident in which five persons were killed Monday for their political and personal gains. Four children and a woman were killed and several others were injured in a stampede at a big gathering of Zakat seekers. **Editorial on page 4**  
ers at Motijheel Government Boys' High School premises in the city Monday morning. Mirza Abbas, who is also president of Jattiyatabadi Juba Dal, told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club that he did not know who had arranged the Zakat distribution programme in the school premises. He also denied the allegation of announcement over loudspeaker on his behalf for distribution of Zakat. "I never distribute Zakat through announcement over loudspeaker," Abbas said adding "we distribute Zakat from our house. We have a family tradition that every year we distribute Zakat among some distressed people and for this See Page 12 Col 8



A US marine (L) taking over from a Bangladeshi soldier at Mogadishu port yesterday, shortly after US and Italian marines landed safely in Somalia. — AFP photo

## US-led marines in Mogadishu to back peacekeeper pullout

MOGADISHU, Feb 28: Hundreds of US and Italian marines landed and took over Mogadishu's air and sea ports today, opening Operation United Shield to pluck the last UN peacekeepers out of Somalia, reports Reuters. The two-year UN mission, a failed test of international peace enforcement, came to a close as the UN special envoy left and its force commander handed over to the US marines. UN special envoy Victor Gbeho, who failed to broker peace between Somalia's warring factions, flew out of Mogadishu airport on a UN plane as more troops and armoured vehicles landed on nearby beaches, continuing their deployment which started at midnight. Marines dug in foxholes on the sea port perimeter without a shot being fired as Pakistani troops said farewell to Somalia. US officers said a total of 1,800 US marines and 400 Italians, backed by armour, were landing to protect and evacuate a rearguard of 1,500 Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops within days. The evacuation operation is supported by a six-nation flotilla of 32 ships and Super Cobra attack helicopters and huge AC-130 Spectre gunships bristling with heavy weapons. Lieutenant-General Aboo Samah, the Malaysian commander of the UN Operation in Somalia (Unosom), passed control over to US marine Lieutenant-General Anthony Zinni with a handshake. "Does this mean I'm an honorary Pakistani now?" said a helmeted US marine after a departing Pakistani UN officer pinned a green Pakistani contingent badge on his fatigues. The operation kicked off with two hovercraft landing in clouds of Indian Ocean spray by night on a beach adjacent to the UN held airfield disgorging troops and armoured vehicle. At the sea port, a team of Bangladeshi soldiers welcomed the first two landing crafts of marines to reach the flood-lit docks. In an embarrassing delay US marines in the first landing craft spent 45 minutes shouting at comrades from advance parties on the docks when choppy seas prevented them from getting a gang plank up. The forces landed in exactly the same spots where US led troops came ashore in December 1992 at the start of the ill-fated mission to bring Somalia food, peace and government. A total of 132 peacekeepers including Americans not under UN command were killed in Somalia over the last two years.

## Whip forced to leave party office in Khulna

**From Staff Correspondent**  
KHULNA, Feb 28: A group of JCD activists allegedly insulted Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Ashraf Hossain when he went to the city BNP office to attend an emergency meeting of the party this evening. They abused him and even threatened to assault him if he did not leave the party office. He later left the office. City BNP vice president Kazi Sikandar Ali Dalim was also reportedly insulted by some JCD activists in the party office on Monday. JCD leaders alleged that both the BNP leaders were responsible for the feuding inside the city BNP.