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Bill to toughen
environment
protection
law soon

An amendment bill will be placed in Parliament soon to toughen the existing environment-protection laws spelling stringent punishment for the trespassers, reports UNB.

This was stated by Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury while addressing a high-level meeting on environment protection at the Department of Environment yesterday.

Only formulating laws will not do, it should be properly enforced, she said stressing massive campaign and publication on the environment for creating public awareness about environmental pollution and its effect.

In this regard, she emphasised large-scale programmes. "Wage a social movement against environment pollution from respective positions so to

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1900 illegal
workers held
in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 2: Malaysia today sought the help of local employers in flushing out an estimated one million illegal workers, after arresting some 1,900 in an intense blitz a day earlier, reports AFP.

Deputy Home Minister Megat Junid Megat Ayob said he was disappointed with the poor response from illegal immigrants to the government's voluntary repatriation programme.

Only about 5,000 had registered themselves when an extended three-week offer to register illegal workers and for illegals to seek amnesty to return home without facing prosecution ended on midnight Friday.

"We are disappointed with their response towards our good intention. We've carried out a six month amnesty programme and offered them a trip home without being prosecuted," Megat Junid was quoted as saying by Bernama News.

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Announcement

Star Fashion '97 is available throughout the country at Tk 20.00 per copy. Please ask your hawk for your copy.

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Business

Take advantage of excellent investment opportunities in Bangladesh, ambassador urges Japanese entrepreneurs

39-point fall in DSE index
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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1750.99 (-2.19%)

Market capital Tk 13106.51 cr

Transactions in volume 297159

Transactions in value Tk 9.49 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 756.30 (-2.70%)

Market capital Tk 9931.18 cr

Transactions in volume 75025

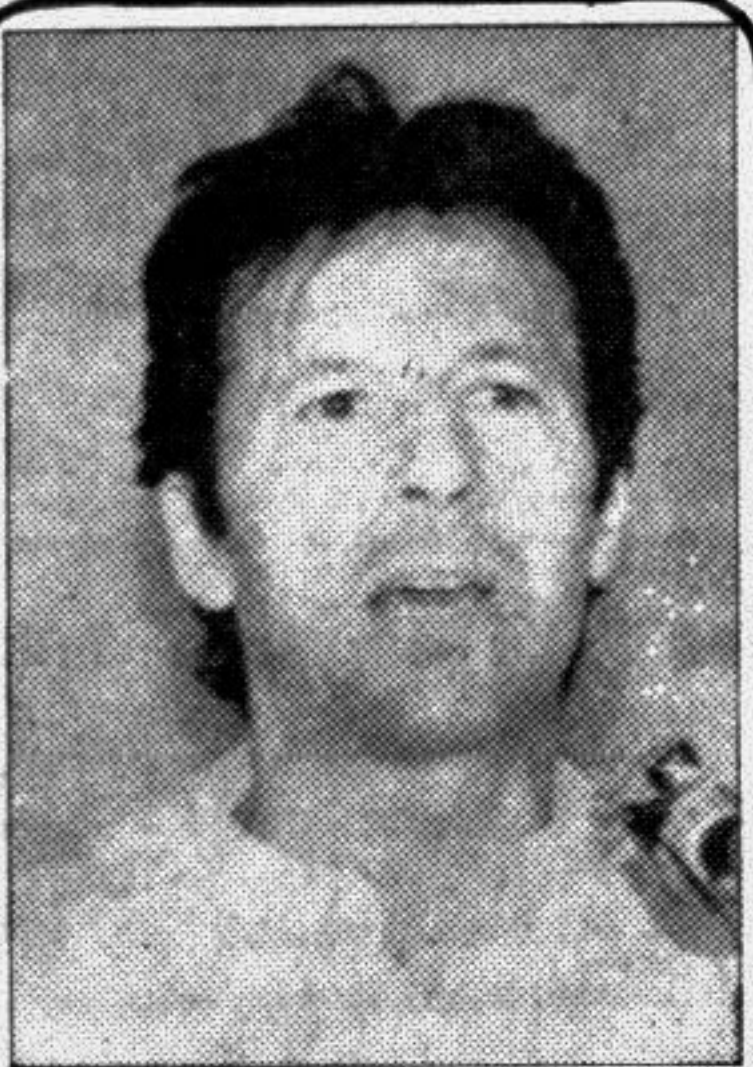
Transactions in value Tk 13614842

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
24	03	—	5:50
25	04	5:16	5:50
26	05	5:16	5:51

Pakistan goes to polls today

Benazir, Sharif set for showdown



Politics is a sticky wicket

KARACHI, Feb 2: The dream of cricket star-turned politician Imran Khan to rid Pakistan of corruption may be far from realisation as politics is a sticky wicket," AFP quoting his colleagues said.

Teamates, who have witnessed his 22-year career, wished him luck in Monday's general elections and said he had the leadership qualities but added politics was a different ball game.

"Our political system is too polluted for a person like him. He has the determination,"

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ISLAMABAD, Feb 2: Pakistan goes to the polls for the fourth time in eight years to elect a new parliament tomorrow in a fresh attempt to put its fragile democracy on the road to stability, reports AFP.

The main battle is expected to be between the parties of former prime ministers and arch-enemies Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, which have dominated politics since the late 1980s when parliamentary democracy was restored after a decade of military rule.

The race includes a newcomer, cricket hero Imran Khan, leading his fledgling Movement for Justice in a spirited bid to present a third choice to the 56-million electorate in this nation of 132 million.

Most analysts and observers



Nawaz Sharif

rated Sharif, 47, president of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), as the front-runner, as the election campaign ground to a halt late Saturday.

Benazir, seeking a verdict from the people on her November 5 dismissal by President Farooq Ahmed Leghari on charges of corruption and misrule, is seen as trailing behind.

Her Pakistan People's Party received a major setback last week when the country's Supreme Court dismissed her appeal against the dismissal, upholding the serious charges levelled against her government.

In the last elections in 1993, Benazir's party won 86 seats against 68 for Sharif's PML.

February 3 will dawn with

See Page 12 Col 3



Benazir Bhutto

HC stays notification authorising Alamgir Mohiuddin's role in JS

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday ordered stay of the Cabinet Division notification authorising Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, technocrat State Minister for Planning, to function in Parliament on behalf of the ministries other than his own ministry.

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice Md Mozammel Haque and Justice Md Abdul Matin also issued a rule nisi upon the Secretary and Joint Secretary of the Cabinet Division, Secretary of Parliament Secretariat, Secretary to the Prime Minister and Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir to show cause as to why the notification relating to Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority and is of no legal effect.

The court made the order upon a writ petition filed by Barrister Nazmul Huda, a BNP MP and former Information

Minister. The Cabinet Division on January 16 issued the notification giving some ministers and state ministers the responsibilities for answering questions in Parliament relating to ministries other than their own.

Through this notification Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir was given the responsibility of the Ministry of Planning, President's Secretariat, Prime Minister's Secretariat and Cabinet Division.

On January 26 when Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir rose to answer question relating to ministries other than his own it was strongly protested by the members of the Opposition BNP alleging that Article 73 A of the Constitution was being violated.

In response to the said protest Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina first informed the House of the notification.

Article 73 A reads "every



Some HSC students of Lalmatia Mohila College who failed in HSC test examinations brought out a procession inside the college yesterday.

— Star photo

Women's college students stage protests in city

By Staff Correspondent

A few hundred students of Lalmatia Women's College and Dhaka Mohila College staged demonstrations separately yesterday protesting the college authorities' decisions regarding the students who failed to pass college test examinations to qualify for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations, 1997.

The students of Lalmatia Women's College demanded that the students who failed in the test examinations be given the chance to sit for the HSC final examinations. The students of Dhaka Mohila College accompanied by some guardians alleged that the college authorities were charging 'thousands of taka' from those who failed in the test examinations to allow them sit for the HSC final.

Earlier on the day, about 500 students of Lalmatia Women's College held a rally and brought out a procession on the campus, witnesses and police said.

At one stage they started pelting brickbats at window panes and attempted to damage a bus and a micro-bus of the college. However, women police deployed in and around the college following Saturday's violence there, tamed the agitated girls.

Later, the college authorities served a notice at about 1 pm assuring that the students who failed in the test examinations would be allowed to fill up registration forms to sit for the HSC final examinations. It calmed the girls who then left the campus. The college was closed for Eid vacation until February 14.

Some students of Dhaka Mohila College staged a demonstration on the college campus at Dhanmondi protesting that the college authorities were al-

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Ekushey '97 Lecture series begins, poetry festival ends

By Staff Correspondent

The month-long Amar Ekushey programmes entered the second day yesterday. Like in the past years, various socio-cultural and political organisations are observing the Ekushey through elaborate programmes with a renewed pledge to uphold the spirit of the Language Movement of 1952.

The Bangla Academy yesterday began its fortnight-long lecture series on "Amar Shahitya Shadhanar Pachish Bachar: Shadinata Uttarkal" at its auditorium. Eminent litterateur Ahmad Rafique was the main speaker while Prof Kabir Chowdhury presided over the discussions.

Prof Monsur Musa, director of the academy delivered the address of welcome. The speakers included Dr Khandakar Muzammil Haque and Dr Rafiqullah Khan.

In his speech Ahmad

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Hasina urges expatriates to invest at home

WASHINGTON, Feb 2: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina apprised the expatriate Bangladeshis in America of major changes being effected by her government in country's socio-economic sphere and urged them to invest their money back home to support the drive, reports UNB.

"If you cooperate, we'll not be lagging behind and be able to face the challenges of 21st century," she told the expatriates who accorded a grand reception as the Bangladesh Prime Minister arrived in the US capital Saturday evening.

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Sub-regional group Foreign secys of 4 states likely to meet in March

Foreign Secretaries of the four countries of the planned sub-regional cooperation are expected to meet in Kathmandu in the last week of March to work out outlines for its founding, an informed source said yesterday, reports UNB.

The proposal for sub-regional cooperation, grouping Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Dhaka, has been mooted by a meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers in New Delhi in December.

India has already endorsed the proposed sub-grouping whose possible areas of cooperation are telecommunications, roads and transport, and trade and development of water resources.

Foreign Ministers of the four countries are also likely to hold a meeting to discuss the sub-

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Yasmin murder case Trial of 9 accused begins today

RANGPUR, Feb 2: The trial of all the nine accused in the Yasmin rape and murder case of Dinajpur will start here tomorrow at the Special Judge's Court, reports BSS.

Abdul Matin, District and Sessions Judge of Rangpur, will be the judge of the Special Judge's Court.

The charges against the accused persons were earlier framed by this Special Judge's Court in two parts. In the first part, charges have been framed against three main accused under Women and Children Repression Control Act (64) while all the nine persons have been charged under Section 201(34) BPC in the second part.

The accused persons included former Police Superintendent of Dinajpur Abdul Mutalib and medical officer of Dinajpur Dr Md Mohsin.

The trial of the three main accused — former ASI Moinul Haque, former constable Abdul Sattar and former police line driver Amritlal Barman — began last month and was adjourned on January 29. Next date of trial in this case has been fixed February 15. Out of 55 witnesses, 47 have so far testified.

Zobaida's bail prayer: HC rule on govt

By SC Correspondent

The High Court Division yesterday issued a rule on the government to show cause as to why Begum Zobaida Rashid, an accused in the August 15th, 1975 killing case should not be enlarged on bail.

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Justice Md Zainal Abedin also directed the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka to produce the confessional statement of Begum Zobaida Rashid recorded under

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The city's traffic situation has become almost unmanageable as Eid shopping is gaining momentum.

— Star photo

Worst traffic jam in city

By Staff Correspondent

The traffic situation in the city turned worse yesterday as frenzied Eid shoppers invaded the markets barely a week before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

It took exactly an hour to reach the Jatiya Press Club from Road No. 3 at 12-30 pm as traffic became virtually unmanageable in central Dhaka.

Its spill-over effects were felt in the city with the ubiquitous rickshaws, two-stroked auto-rickshaws, tempos and cars clogging the streets, lanes and by-lanes, fuming harmful black smoke.

Eid shoppers made the situation more difficult by parking their vehicles at random, occupying substantial parts of the roads.

Even the lanes marked for rickshaws only were turned into 'parking lots,' ignoring 'no parking' signs.

Overflowing traffic from around forced opening of the Abdul Ghani Road for all types of transports. Normally, rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, buses and push-carts are not allowed to ply on the road, catering to the mandarins of the secretariat.

But sheer necessities rolled

Govt helping Delhi to crush freedom struggle in NE India: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia said yesterday that the people will never allow Bangladesh to be used to suppress the struggle for independence in the seven north-eastern states of India.

"Bangladesh, which earned independence through a bloody struggle, can never support the suppression of people seeking independence," the Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad said, accusing the government of helping India materialise its plan by giving it a corridor in the name of transit.

Opening her party's membership-renewal-and-collection drive at her Minto Road official residence in the evening, Begum Zia commented, "Bangladesh always stands for independence struggle."

Reiterating the allegation that the government wanted to prolong its stay in power by serving India's interests, the opposition leader also came down heavily on the seven-month-old government of Sheikh Hasina on other issues involving the two neighbouring countries.

She also charged the government for planning to form a sub-regional forum which, she said, would jeopardise the country's sovereignty.

Formation of the planned forum would establish Indian dominance over the region and destroy the spirit of the seven-nation SAARC, she said.

Termining the recently signed Ganges water-sharing treaty as one protecting India's interests, Begum Zia said that despite signing of the accord, the country was yet to get water. "Rather, flow of water into the country was declining day by day."

Blasting the seven-month-rule by the AL government, she alleged that during the period

See Page 12 Col 3

Banks to pay duty drawback for textiles Govt to mobilise Tk 500 cr for composite textile mills

The government decided to mobilise Tk 500 crore for setting up composite textile mills and other backward-linkage industries for knitwear and textiles in private sector to face potential challenges, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Bank will take necessary steps in mobilising the fund, an official handout said.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting on export issue yesterday in the conference room of the Finance Ministry with Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria in the chair.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, State Minister for Jute and Textiles AK Faezul Haque, Finance Secretary, Commerce Secretary, Internal Resources Secretary, Banking Secretary, Jute Secretary and the Governor of Bangladesh Bank attended the meeting.

The meeting also decided that compensation in lieu of duty drawback for textiles would henceforth be paid directly by the commercial banks who will claim re-imbursement from Bangladesh Bank.

Necessary instructions in this regard would be issued from the central bank.

It also decided that the Ministry of Commerce would submit to the Finance Ministry a proposal seeking redress for any complications arising from non-availability of generalised system of preference (GSP) due to dispute regarding country-of-origin issue.

The Ministry of Finance will take decision on this matter expeditiously in consultation with the Bangladesh Bank.

Bangladesh enjoys GSP facility — 12 per cent duty exemption — in exporting ready-made garments to the European countries. The Commerce Minister has just concluded a trip to Brussels, the headquarters of the European Commission, to settle the dispute over country of origin.

Nine killed in Bhaluka road accident

By Staff Correspondent

Thirteen people were killed and 33 others injured in road accidents in Mymensingh and Narayanganj yesterday. Nine of them died in Bhaluka under Mymensingh district.

Our Mymensingh correspondent says: Nine persons were killed and 20 others injured, 12 of them seriously, in a road accident at Hazir Bazar under Bhaluka thana yesterday.

The accident occurred when a Sherpur-bound bus from Dhaka over turned after hitting a road side pole at about 1.00 pm. Seven died on the spot. They could not be identified.

One Mosharrar Hossain, 18, succumbed to his injuries at Bhaluka thana hospital. Thirteen passengers were admitted to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. Of them, one Idris Ali aged about 30 succumbed to his injuries.

The other victims now under treatment of the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital are Bilkis, 25, Abdul Jalil, 30, Su-

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Functioning of 47 DU committees stayed

The High Court yesterday issued a rule nisi staying the functioning of 47 committees formed by the Dhaka University Syndicate on November 12 last for appointment of teachers, reports UNB.

A High Court Division bench comprising Justice Mozammel Haque and Justice Abdul Matin issued the rule upon a writ petition filed by Prof Nurul Amin Bepari of Political Science Department.

The petitioner alleged that the committees for appointment of assistant professors and lecturers in the university's 47 departments and institutes were formed in contravention of law.

He accused the DU authorities of politicising the committees which are dominated by pro-Awami League Blue Panel having only five members in the DU Syndicate, out of 15.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared on behalf of the petitioner.

Separation of judiciary Bill to be placed in current JS session

The government has decided to introduce the much-discussed judiciary separation bill in the current session of Parliament which will resume on February 16.

Talking to UNB at the National Press Club yesterday evening, Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said a draft of the bill had been sent to the Law Commission headed by Justice A F K Munnim with a request for further scrutiny and sending it back to the ministry as soon as possible.

The draft prepared by an expert committee headed by the Law Secretary, suggested amendment to as many as 11 articles and fourth schedule of the Constitution.

It will require two-thirds majority to pass the proposed bill and we want to pass it through consensus in Parliament," Khasru said.

He said a copy of the draft bill had already been given to deputy opposition leader Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury for his perusal. More copies of the bill will be sent to former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali and other front-row opposition leaders.

When contacted, the radio control of Chittagong port confirmed the accident but could not give details.

Fishing trawler sinks in Bay: 3 crew missing

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 2: A fishing trawler sank in the Bay after it caught fire at around 11 am today, port sources said.

The 23 crew of the trawler, Hardford 7, jumped into the sea while 20 of them were rescued by other trawlers and three others remained missing, the sources said.

When contacted, the radio control of Chittagong port confirmed the accident but could not give details.