

AB Bank's notices on 4 Beximco companies

By Staff Correspondent

The Arab Bangladesh (AB) Bank has served notices on four Beximco companies to realise about Tk 120 crore in outstanding loans.

Last week, the bank told Salman F Rafieman, Sohel F Rahman, Iqbal Ahmed and M A Quashem, all of whom are its past or present directors, to pay the amount within two months, according to sources.

If they fail to do so, they

See Page 12 Col 7

Advisor to BNP chief arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Abdur Rab Choudhury, former MP and advisor to BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, was arrested from a court premises in his home district Laximpur and sent to the district jail.

The arrest was made after the district court rejected Choudhury's prayer for bail in a case filed against him in connection with violence during the last general elections, BNP sources in the city said last night.

See Page 12 Col 2

HC order on writ challenging Anup Chetia's extradition today

By SC Correspondent

The High Court today will pass an order on the question of issuance of rule nisi upon the writ petition filed challenging the proposed extradition of Anup Chetia, Secretary General of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice A M Mahmudur Rahman and Justice Zahir Ahmed yesterday after hearing the writ petition as motion fixed today for order.

Anup Chetia alias Golap Barua was arrested on December 21, 1997 by the police from his rented house at Mohamadpur in the city.

It was learnt from the news report that the Indian government requested the government

See Page 12 Col 7

Inside Today Article

What's Beyond Khaleda-Hasina

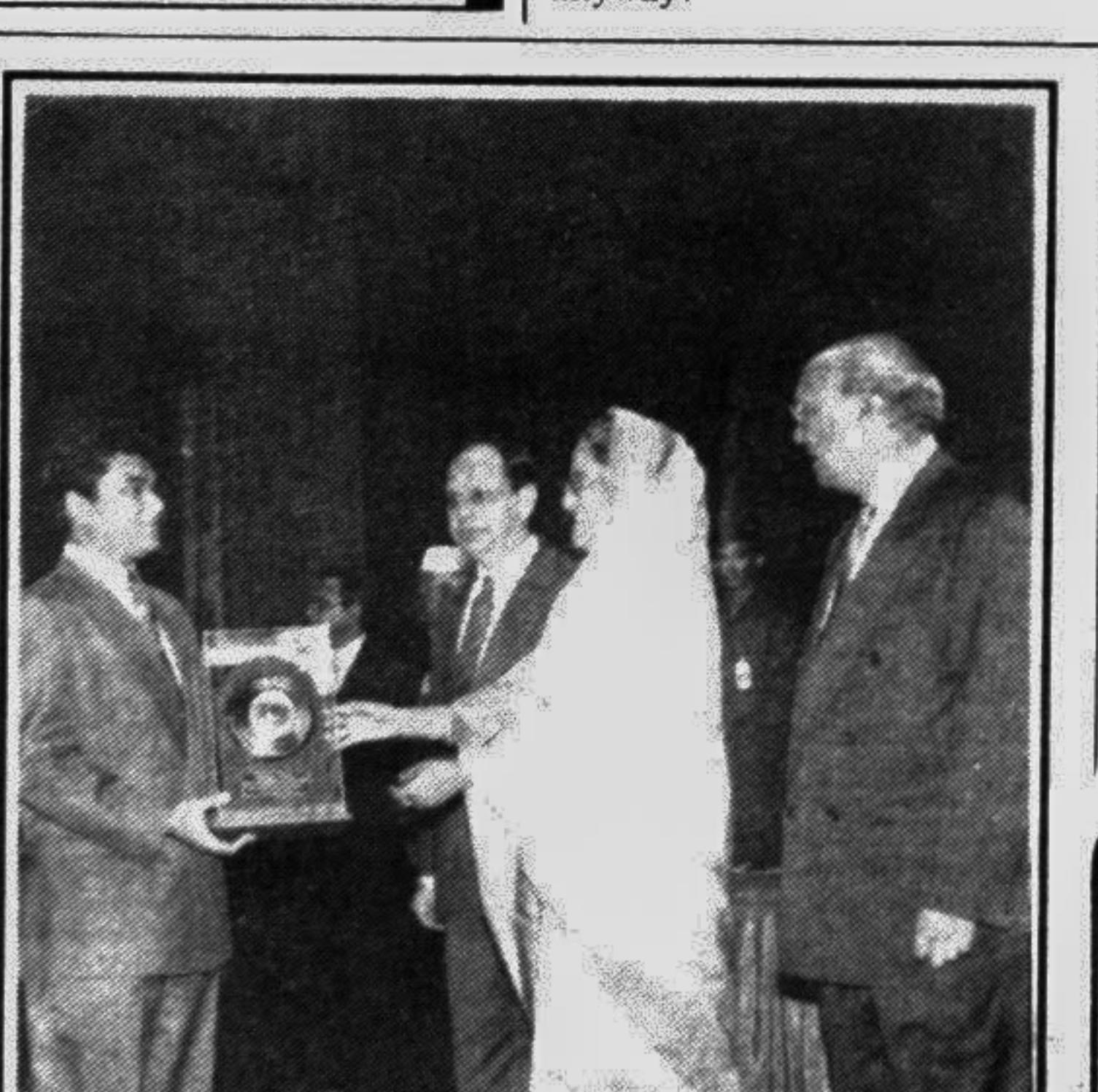
Column : Perspectives by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

Page 4

Focus

River-bordered capital city needed decentralisation; and Grameen shashidhara. Dealing with disputes

Page 5



We are happy to announce that MBM has been awarded the National Export Trophy-Bronze in the Ready-made Garments Sector for the year 1995-96.

On this happy occasion we thank our valued business associates and well wishers for their cooperation and support in achieving this National Honour.

We hope all of you will share our joy and happiness on this auspicious occasion.

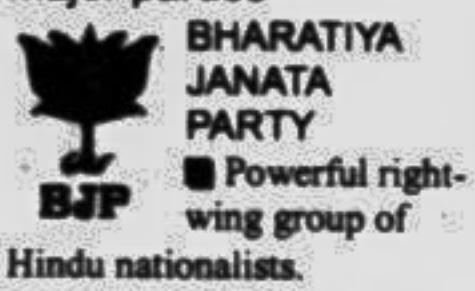
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India goes to polls from today

India's election

The world's largest democracy goes to the polls Monday for the second Parliamentary vote in less than two years. At stake are 543 elected and two appointed seats in the lower house of India's parliament. A simple majority is needed to govern.

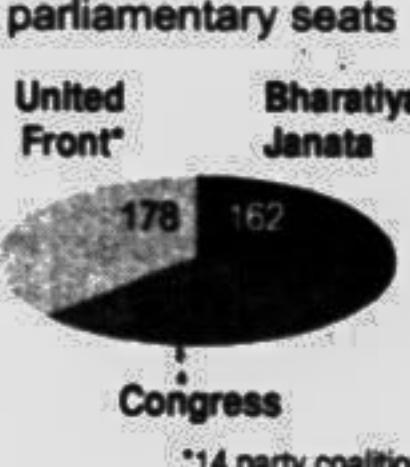
Major parties



CONGRESS PARTY
■ Ruled India for 45 of its 50 years of independence.
■ Emphasizes self-reliance
■ Promised to restrict the entry of foreign goods.
■ Led by 71-year-old Atal Bihari Vajpayee, known as a moderate in his party.

UF ■ United Front
■ Coalition of centrists, leftists and regional parties.
■ Closely associated with the campaign to end British rule.
■ Weakened in recent years due to corruption scandals and internal rifts.
■ Led by 83-year-old Sitaram Keri.

Current parliamentary seats



Elections facts

■ More than 600 million eligible voters — any one at least 18 years old.
■ Turnout is usually about 50 percent in Indian elections.
■ Voting will be spread across different regions Feb. 16, 22 and 28, and March 7.
■ Polling is often staggered in India so organizers can deploy workers and security in stages.

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Feb 15: The heat and dust of a frenzied two-week campaign over, India prepared for the first phase of staggered general elections tomorrow to elect a new parliament in less than two years with all opinion polls pointing to yet another hung House.

An estimated 27 crore people are expected to exercise their franchise in the first phase of balloting for 222 of the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies in 15 states and five union territories that will decide the electoral fortunes of Prime Minister I K Gujral, his immediate predecessor H D Deve Gowda, senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Murli Manohar Joshi, Defence Minister Samajwadi Party president Mulayam Singh Yadav, Bihar strongman Laloo Prasad Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party president Kanshi Ram, among others.

Polling in the remaining constituencies will be held on Feb 22, 28 and March 2. Mostly, it will be a straight contest between BJP and Congress, between Congress and

See Page 12 Col 3

Legal status of Hasibur being examined: Speaker

By Nazmul Ashraf

In this regard, a smiling Speaker said the judges also take a long time for disposal of cases.

Elected on the BNP ticket in the last general election, Swapna joined the government of national consensus as a deputy minister on February 9. BNP expelled Swapna on charge of anti-organisational activities more than three hours before he took oath of office.

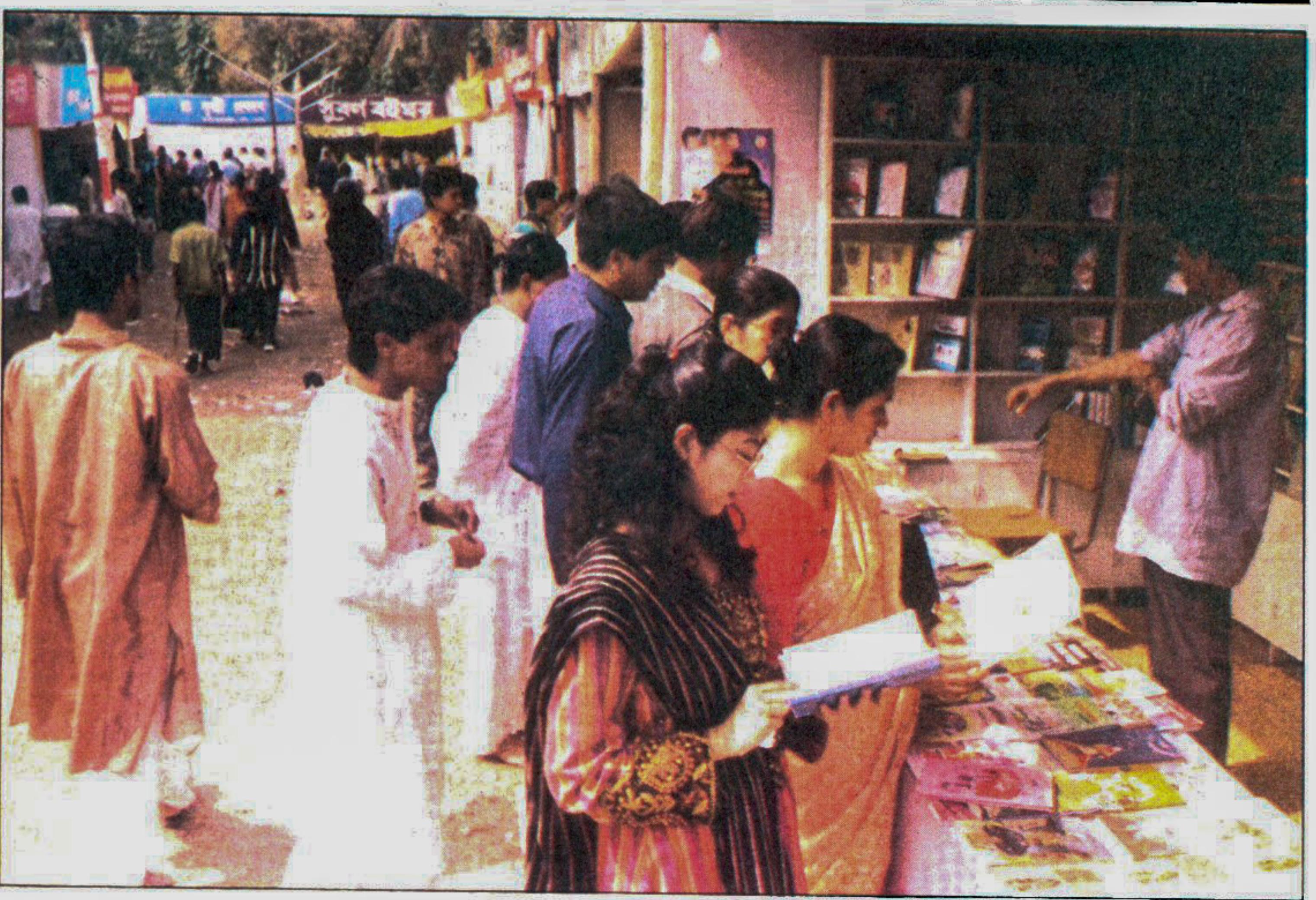
Humayun Rashid Chowdhury further said that the law section of the Sangsads Secretariat was minutely examining various laws relating to the va-

cation of one's seat in the parliament as well as relevant precedents at home and abroad.

Referring to a BNP letter sent to him on Thursday, requesting him to take necessary measures for publication of gazette notification for the vacating of Swapna's Sangsads seat, the Speaker said the main thrust of the legal examination was if the Opposition lawmaker had crossed the floor.

The BNP letter to the Speaker, written by Chief Whip of the Opposition in parliament Khandakar Delwar Hossain. See Page 12 Col 7

See Page 12 Col 3



Visitors crowding book stalls at the Ekushey Book Fair on Bangla Academy premises yesterday.

— Star photo by Sheikh Enamul Haq

A different book fair this year

By M M Aminul Islam

The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela continued to attract large crowds as it entered its second week yesterday.

This year the stalls have been restricted to only within the Bangla Academy premises. The authorities in the last few years had allowed stalls along the main road outside the academy premises — stretching from the Doel Chattar to TSC.

The usual festivity which used to centre around the traditional Ekushey Boi Mela has faded to a great extent with increasing police vigilance and strict maintenance of the time

See Page 12 Col 3

NBR chairman resigns 'under pressure'

By Staff Correspondent

resigned, Hannan said. "I re-signed on personal grounds. I am grateful to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister for assigning me with important duties." He refused to elaborate.

Hannan, who was on extension till April, suddenly took the decision and resigned at noon.

Before resigning he had talks with Finance Minister S A M S Kibria and conveyed his decision. Later, he handed over charge to Member (Excise) M S I Chowdhury, who is also due to retire on February 24.

When asked why he suddenly

See Page 12 Col 8

Akheri Munajat today

TONGI, Feb 15: The three-day Bisu Iftaar, the second fest of Mus next to Hajj eids, today with Akheri Munajat, reports UNB.

Maulana Saad Majeedbar or Maulana Zubair, members of the Sura of Biswa Tablig Jamaat, are expected to lead the Munajat before Zohr prayers.

About 25 lakh Muslims, including 3,000 from 61 foreign countries will take part in the Akheri Munajat seeking divine blessings for the Muslim ummah and world peace.

Devotees are still pouring in

See Page 12 Col 2

News Analysis

What's up AL's sleeves?

By Nurul Kabir

The recent induction of BNP legislator Hasibur Rahman Swapan into the cabinet of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has raised, along with raising eyebrows of many, at least a couple of logical questions in the country's political arena: What prompted the government to irritate the BNP, especially when the process of negotiations between the AL and BNP was still on for the latter to return to the House? Second, why did the AL high-command pick a BNP back-bencher, offering him a ministerial position, when the Awami League, with the support of Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, has been enjoying a comfortable majority over the BNP-Jamaat opposition in Jatiya Sangsads any way?



ICC chief arrives in city tomorrow

Star Business Reporter

Helmut O. Maucher, President, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the Chairman of the Nestle SA, Switzerland, will pay a visit to Bangladesh tomorrow.

Maucher is expected to arrive at Zia International Airport at 5:00 am on the day by his private plane.

During his one day stay, Maucher will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Mahbubur Rahman, President of ICC Bangladesh, and Chairman, Nestle Bangladesh Ltd., A Rob Chowdhury, Vice President, ICC Bangladesh, NJS Miller, Managing Director, Nestle Bangladesh Ltd. will accompany him.

Maucher will also call on the Minister for Commerce and Industries, Tofael Ahmed.

The ICC President will also attend a Luncheon Meeting with the members of ICC Bangladesh and the Bangladesh business

See Page 12 Col 1

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