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# The Daily Star

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## We've accepted all Opposition demands: PM

DINAJPUR, Feb 28: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today urged the Opposition to return to parliament and solve the problems through discussion in the House, reports UNB.

"We've already accepted all their demands, including the 4-point. If they've anything more, they can raise those in parliament and solve through discussion," she said, addressing a public meeting at Bara Math in the town.

The Prime Minister, however, questioned: On what national issue the Opposition has boycotted parliament? People have elected them as MPs to raise their (people's) problems in the House, she said.

Referring to the Prime Minister's question-answer session See Page 12 Col 2

## Political leaders yet to take steps for peace on campus, says President

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday reiterated his call to the political parties to come forward to bring back congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions, reports UNB.

"I again want to attract the attention of the politicians to come forward to save the country from ruin, otherwise we would be identified to the world community as a neglected, unwanted and below-standard nation," he said.

The President was addressing See Page 12 Col 6

### NOTICE

We have short-listed the applicants for the posts of trainee Sub-editors, Reporters and Business Depts. Selected applicants will be intimated by post during the first week of March '98. The Management of The Daily Star is thankful to all the applicants for their interest but regrets that only limited numbers could be accommodated.

—Management

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Ruling AL and opposition BNP leaders holding second round of talks at the Speaker's chamber at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. — Star photo

## BNPPP authorises Begum Zia to take decision Both BNP, AL optimistic: Next round of dialogue today

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP lawmakers yesterday authorised party chief Begum Khaleda Zia to take a final decision about their return to parliament on the basis of the outcome of next round of dialogue today with the ruling Awami League.

The adjourned meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party, during a one and half-hour discussion on the progress made so far in the AL-BNP negotiation, gave the mandate to Begum Zia, also Leader of the Opposition in the House. The meeting that began on February 20 concluded yesterday.

The Speaker-mediated dialogue between the AL and the BNP is due to resume at 10 this morning, coinciding with the resumption of current session of parliament.

Top AL and BNP negotiators made further efforts yesterday to narrow down their differences to facilitate BNP's return to the House at the nearly two-hour talks at the Speaker's chamber. But they could not resolve the two 'vital' issues the BNP was insisting on.

Their ruling party counterparts, however, made guarded comments saying they were optimistic of BNP's return to the House.

"The talks, held in a very cordial atmosphere, progressed to a large extent today and I found it positive. It appeared to

have a reasonable expectation for a solution but I can't guarantee it," said the Speaker.

Senior BNP leader M Saifur Rahman said that the government's hesitation to meet some of the party's demands still persisted. "But there has been some positive assurances from the government in today's dialogue on the matters," he said expressing his optimism about a positive outcome of the negotiations.

Asked if they could find a solution, he replied: "We'll be able to say when we meet again tomorrow."

In this regard, Saifur Rahman pointed out that both government and the opposition were obliged to make the parliament effective. "The sooner

### JS session resumes today

The Jatitya Sangsad session will resume at 10:00 am today after a 9-day recess. The session was adjourned on February 19 on the occasion of Ekushey, reports UNB.

The AL-BNP dialogue that began on Friday resumed at around noon yesterday.

Emerging from the talks, top BNP negotiators told newsmen that the government showed positive attitude towards resolving the opposition's de-

mands. "We hope, we'll be able to give the nation a good news shortly... After today's talks, we can also

be able to say when we meet again tomorrow."

In this regard, Saifur Rahman pointed out that both government and the opposition were obliged to make the parliament effective. "The sooner

## Another hung parliament looming

### Indian polls wound up

NEW DELHI, Feb 28: India's epic national elections, staged after two years of crippling political instability in the world's largest democracy, wound up today with the prospect of another hung parliament looming, report agencies.

The impression was confirmed by a snap exit poll indicating the Hindu nationalists, the country's largest party that hoped to form its first stable national government, would fall short of a majority.

That could pave the way for its major rival, the once-dominant Congress, to launch an anti-nationalist coalition, analysts said.

Around half of 145 million eligible voters took part in today's final phase of nationwide balloting, election officials said.

With 537 out of 545 parliamentary seats decided after three weeks of voting, counting begins Monday, with the main results expected Tuesday.

The Election Commission said today's voting was overwhelmingly peaceful in 131 of 545 parliamentary constituencies, across 10 of the country's 25 states.

Tight security was in force after 55 people died in violence on two previous polling days earlier in the month.

India, facing economic stagnation after two years of minority coalition governments, is electing its fifth government since early 1996.

One exit poll broadcast by the private TVI television station gave the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies a lead that was far smaller than expected over the Congress.

The poll said the BJP and its allies would win 208 seats, the Congress and its partners 171 seats and the incumbent United Front coalition would win 140. The poll had a margin of error of 10 seats.

Another exit poll commissioned by the Doodarshan state television channel forecast the BJP would win about 90 of 150 seats in the north and dominate Uttar Pradesh, the political heart of the country.

The Congress, inspired by a campaign by Sonia Gandhi, widow of former premier Rajiv Gandhi, would win 26 seats, just ahead of the outgoing United

## Gangsters terrorise Shell, Cairn officials in Feni

Star Report

Gunslinging gangsters yesterday terrorised a team of oil company executives including the top officials of Shell Oil and its British partner Cairn Energy and the British High Commissioner, barring them from visiting a village in Feni.

The gangsters fired three rounds of gunshots in front of the team forcing them to leave Feni without visiting their destination in Farshuram thana.

According to one of the members of the visiting team, a convoy of 10 motor vehicles carrying about 15 oil company executives from Shell, Cairn, Brown and Roots and video crews were heading towards Durgapur area under Parshuram thana of Feni district from the Feni airport at around noon.

The team was attending a private function organised by

the local Director of Shell Oil. When the convoy had reached Fulgazi Bazar bridge point, some six youths on two motorcycles blocked their way and fired a round of gunshot. When the convoy stopped, they told the visitors to turn back immediately.

Then the terrorists threw a soft drink bottle on the glass of a car and fired two more gunshots. The convoy immediately turned back and returned to Feni Airport.

The gang, allegedly belonging to the cadre of a powerful local Awami League leader, earlier ransacked the arrangements made for the function by the local Director of Shell Oil in Durgapur.

Sources in Chittagong said that the attacks were a result of political conflict between the Shell Oil official and the

Awami League leader. The Shell Director is reportedly a strong supporter of BNP.

No case has been filed in this connection till filing of this report last night.

Dr Mark Moodi Stewart, Managing Director of the Committee of Managing Directors of the Royal Dutch Shell Group and Bill Gammel, chief of Cairn Energy, who were on a 3-day visit to Bangladesh from Thursday, had to cut short their tour programme by a few hours following the incident.

Dr Moodi Stewart was scheduled to inaugurate a primary school and Bill Gammel a clinic in Durgapur.

The team earlier went to the off-shore Sangu gasfield, now being developed by Cairn-Shell and Brown and Roots, and a gas processing plant. The members See Page 12 Col 1

## Task Force report on banks TU leaders take fat fees to 'manage' loans

Star Report

The trade union (TU) leaders of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) act as the key persons in both sanctioning of new loans and in rescheduling loans, according to the recently submitted Task Force report on TUs.

The leaders take fat fees from clients for lobbying for them. They also flex their power in the postings of executives in the high levels of loan management and administration divisions.

The report cited the case of a deputy general manager (DGM) of a big NCB. The managing director (MD) of the bank had transferred the DGM on the 'believable' allegation that he regularly received money from businessmen.

For this, the MD, as a strategy, had received the permission of the chairman of the bank. But this transfer order had never been executed, rather

the same chairman had later advised in writing to stay the transfer order.

A new MD of the bank later had also ordered transfer of the same DGM at which the CBA of the bank staged angry demonstrations. Later, the chairman once again advised through another member of the bank's board to cancel the transfer order.

The report further said it was 'perceived beyond doubt' that the TU is involved in loan issues specially in Sonali and Janata banks.

The report also said managers of some branches of banks pay regular tolls to the TUs, or they face transfers. The branch managers think that high officials up to the rank of GM, DGM and even MDs are also involved with this vested quarter. The bank managers collect the money from loan appli-

cants.

## Rohingyas demonstrate against repatriation

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 28: The situation at a Rohingya refugee camp in the district has become volatile again as several thousand refugees refused to take their weekly ration today, demanding government commitment for their 'non-repatriation'.

Local administration tightened security measures, enhancing the number of policemen around Kutupalong camp in Ukhiya thana, but refrained from using force, said a Relief and Repatriation Ministry official.

Meanwhile, official talks between Myanmar and Bangladesh on Rohingya repatriation are scheduled to be held in Dhaka later this month.

A small number of militant refugees, reportedly having lethal weapons in their possession, took position inside Kutupalong camp and demonstrated throughout the day yesterday to See Page 12 Col 1

## 5 electrocuted in Comilla

COMILLA, Feb 28: Five labourers of Palli Biddyt Samity-2 were electrocuted while replacing electric wire at Pathankot village in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Police identified one of the bodies as Abul Kasem, 42, of Junglepur village in Sadar thana.

Witnesses said the labourers died instantaneously as the wire which they were replacing came in contact with a live wire of PDB.

Police officials visited the spot and sent the bodies for autopsy. A case was filed with Kotwali police.

## Book Fair ends: Total sale may reach Tk 4 cr

By DU Correspondent

People in their thousands rushed to the Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy premises on the concluding yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the three-week book fair on February 7.

Agami Prokashani was adjudged as the best decorated stall out of a total of 185 stalls. Pearl Prokashani and Shandhani Prokashani were adjudged second and third respectively.

Former Chief Adviser in the caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman distributed prizes among the winners at the concluding ceremony yesterday at the Academy premises.

Organisers estimated that the total sale at the fair could reach Tk 4 crore. The highest sale was recorded at Tk 23 lakh at the stall of Bangla Academy. See Page 12 Col 5

## Transit route to remain open: Nepalese envoy

By Staff Correspondent

Nepal's land transit route to Bangladesh through India will continue to remain open.

This was stated by Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Lok Bahadur Srestha yesterday.

The transit route completed six months duration yesterday after its formal opening on September 1, 1997.

The Nepalese envoy said that the transit route from Nepal's Kakarvitta to Bangladesh in Bangladesh passing through a stretch of Indian territory has been opened permanently after the permission accorded by the Indian authorities. "Only its modalities were to be reviewed See Page 12 Col 3

## Urgent Caution Notice No. 8 For House Construction in Rupnagar 1st Phase Project Area

Urgent Notice No. 7 was earlier issued through different daily newspapers for construction of houses at respective plots of the allottees concerned in Rupnagar 1st Phase Project Area. But no notable response is being found in matters of house construction. All concerned are cautioned for 8th time that for not constructing houses as per approved plan as yet, after receiving plot allotment in the said project in 1985 and taking physical possession thereafter, miscreants are getting involved in various anti-social activities in the empty plots leading to apprehension for decline in overall atmosphere of the area and deterioration of law and order situation, posing a serious threat to the local residents.

Under the circumstance, those who have not started constructing houses as yet on the allotted plots of the said project, are once again cautioned to construct houses as per approved plans on their respective plots immediately, otherwise the authority will be bound to take legal action as per the terms and conditions of allotment/lease document to cancel the allotment letter.

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DFFP-3641-19/2  
G-351



Visitors crowding the Ekushey Book Fair on the concluding day yesterday. — Star photo

## 'Set up bio-gas plants to overcome fuel shortage'

By Staff Correspondent

Currently only 2.5 per cent of the population have access to the use of natural gas.

About 70 per cent of the population mostly use firewood and other fuel for cooking purposes.

This was disclosed at a seminar on 'Future of Biogas Technology and Our Environment' held yesterday at the Academy for Planning and Development (APD).

project director of LGED's slum improvement project, said "We know that we can never supply natural gas to all the consumers, so it is time that we think of an alternative technology that is cost-effective as well as environment friendly. Widespread use of biogas would help supplement existing shortage of fuel for cooking and also reduce dependence on use of firewood."

The seminar was organised by Bangladesh Society for Con-

servation of Environment (BSCE).

"Bangladesh, through trial and error process, established about 2000 biogas plants compared to our neighbouring country India's over two million plants," Gofran said.

"Once a plant is in operation except regular maintenance there is no extra cost needed to run the plant. The fuel can be either human excrete or cowdung. The anaerobic process of gas, See Page 12 Col 7

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

### Caution Notice

It is hereby notified for General information that a number of Private individuals/organisations have started or are operating medical education programs by establishing Medical/Dental College/Medical Institute on Private initiative without Prior Permission of Govt and BMDC and have given or are giving advertisement in various media including newspapers for admission of students. According to provision of BMDC Act-1980, operating medical education course or training and offering any kind of Degree, Diploma, Licence or Certificates to that effect without the approval of Govt./BMDC is prohibited and is a punishable offence. There is provision of imprisonment up to 2 (two) years and fine for such offence. As such all concerned are sternly cautioned not to start/operate medical education course and offer any kind of Degree, Diploma, Licence or Certificate to that effect in violation of the provision of the said Act. Hence the proper authority has been instructed to take necessary legal action under the said Act against the offenders.

All are also cautioned so that no one is deceived by getting admitted to such so-called Medical Educational Institute without Govt approval and recognition. Any one who may have got himself/herself admitted or get admitted to such so-called educational institution will do so in his/her own responsibilities and the Government or the authorities concern will bear no responsibility in this regards.

Any one seeking to know about Govt recognition/approval of Private medical institution may contact with the DG Health or BMDC.

**By order of the Authority**  
**M Abul Kashem Madud**  
Sr Assistant Secretary  
Phone : 869730

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G-335