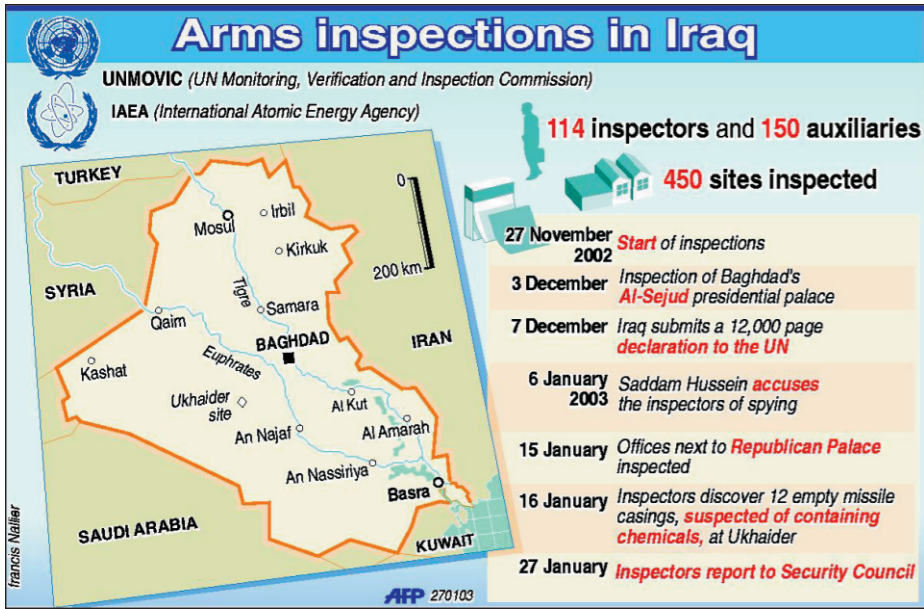


Bush girds US for war

Baghdad warns of Kuwait strike if attacked



AFP, REUTERS, Washington

President George W Bush was to prepare the United States for war against Iraq in a crucial State of the Union address last night, with key ally Britain backing charges that Baghdad was in "material breach" of its UN obligations.

In his most important speech of the New Year, Bush will appear in the House of Representatives chamber at 9:01pm EST and speak before a joint session of Congress and a national television audience, the biggest bully pulpit possible to him.

Bush will face the task of convincing wary Americans that Iraq represents such a threat that US troops may be required to attack that nation, 12 years after his father won the Gulf War but left Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in power.

But amid the mounting US threats to wage war on Saddam, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz warned Iraq would attack the 150,000 US forces gathering around his country if Washington launched a strike on Baghdad.

"We will of course retaliate against the American troops wherever they start their aggression on Iraq."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

FOR PEACE AND HARMONY



Representatives of Muslim, Christian, Hindu and Bouddha communities in the country lead a prayer for world peace at the World Trade Centre conference at a city hotel yesterday.

Dhaka still baffled by terror-risk list inclusion

Morshed Khan tells BBC

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan has said Dhaka still wonders why Bangladesh has ended up on the US terror-risk list.

"We do not say that they drop us from the list, but we wonder what prompted the US action," the minister, now visiting Washington, told the BBC on Monday.

Morshed said Bangladesh, being a moderate democratic country, is in action as peacekeepers in troubled zones across the globe. More importantly, Bangladesh is a party to the US-led war on terrorism.

"It is obviously unacceptable to us. We expect Bangladeshis who visit or immigrate to the US are not harassed over there," Morshed said.

The foreign minister said the US authorities had told him that Bangladesh was not the first nor

would it be the last on the list.

If the US includes all countries on the terror-risk list at one go, it would be unwieldy for them. For this, they were advancing in step by step, he added.

Morshed said it would only be clear after a few weeks when asked whether he was pleased about the talks he had had in Washington with White House security advisors on the issue.

He however affirmed that there has been no discussion on the current Iraq crisis.

Meanwhile, UNB reports that a security advisor to the US government assured Foreign Minister Morshed Khan of considering his request for general amnesty and special consideration for Bangladeshi nationals in the United States relieving them of immigration

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Improve campus atmosphere, PM urges DU teachers

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the teachers of the Dhaka University (DU) to work sincerely from their respective positions to further improve the academic atmosphere at the country's highest seat of learning.

She made the call when a delegation of DU teachers led by Vice-Chancellor Prof S M A Fayez called on her at the PMO in the afternoon.

In response to a number of demands raised by the teachers during the meeting, the prime minister assured them of resolving the existing problems of the teachers and students.

More than 30,000 students, including over 10,000 female students, are now studying at the Dhaka University.

The DU teachers delegation included pro-vice chancellor Prof A F M Yusuf Haider, treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan, proctor ASM Atiqur Rahman, deans of faculties, chairmen of different departments,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Union Parishad polls Gunfight, ballot paper snatching mark 4th day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violence left over 100 people injured in different parts of the country on the fourth day of the Union Parishad polls.

Following an exchange of gunfire between the criminals and the law enforcers, the election authorities postponed voting in five polling stations in Noakhali and Brahmanbaria yesterday.

Police fired gunshots to disperse the miscreants when they were snatching away ballot papers from four polling centres - Nazirhat High School, Nabogram Registered Primary School, Nalua Bhiyarahat Junior High School and Nalua Primary School - in Noakhali.

Stuffing, snatching of ballot papers and ballot boxes, attack on election officials and capturing of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

polling centres were reported from many other places. Police rounded up 30 people, including two UP chairman candidates.

Voting took place in 152 UPs yesterday.

In an incident of post-poll violence, some 50 people were injured in Digholdi union of Narshingdi sadar upazila yesterday, while 50 others were injured in Songachha UP of Sirajganj and Shailokupa of Jhenidah in pre-poll violence on Monday night.

At least 20 people, including a chairman candidate, were injured when a group of armed men, allegedly belonging to the ruling BNP, attacked them at Abudpur bazar in Shailokupa upazila Monday night.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

To escape arrest...

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Advocate Shamsuzzaman Zaman, a mayoral candidate in the Sylhet City Corporation polls, took shelter in a room of the Sylhet District Bar Association building number-1 to avoid arrest yesterday afternoon.

He is a former organising secretary of Sylhet district BNP, who was expelled from the party.

Police made an all-out attempt to catch him from the court area yesterday afternoon, but failed. Later, the police took position at all the gates and entry points of the district judge's court.

The officer-in-charge of Sylhet PS went to the bar building to arrest Zaman, but he was not allowed by the bar officials to get in. They told the police that a written permission of the district judge was needed to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Showcase on Prothom Alo, Jugantor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued showcase notices on the Prothom Alo and The Daily Jugantor in connection with reports on the court order in a case concerning the BGMEA election.

The HC asked the editors, publishers, reporters concerned and editorial writers of the two dailies to explain why charges should not be brought against them for maligning the court. They will have to appear before the court Saturday morning.

A Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury passed the order.

The court felt that the newspapers misquoted the judges dealing with the BGMEA election case.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 29		5-42 pm
Jan 30	6-41 am	

Prayer Timings		
Jan 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-45	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-52
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Key jobs on contracts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has given contractual appointments to more than 150 officials in the civil administration, including 23 secretaries.

Contractual appointee secretaries are now running important ministries like the LGRD and cooperatives, finance, establishment, communications, education, water resources and environment, and the Prime Minister's Office.

Some of the top bureaucrats even got a third term, and it has created serious resentment. The officials said that most cabinet ministers have been opposing the contractual appointments because the process is creating an impasse in the administration.

Highly placed sources said even the prime minister had expressed her dissatisfaction over such growing number of contractual appointments, and last week she delayed signing new contracts of some secretaries.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Officials and political activists having strong links at Hawa Bhaban, a power centre of the ruling BNP, are giving clearance to those contractual appointments.

Officials at the PMO said that one of the two political secretaries and an assistant private secretary to the PM are handling the matter.

Source said some secretaries, who have already been awarded contractual appointment, had to agree to give more 'business facilities' to the ruling party men before they were selected.

They said the officials, who are seeking extension of their services, have to maintain contact with Hawa Bhaban through a particular assistant private secretary.

"There is no way to get extension, promotion or good posting without the clearance of the APS concerned, and thus the officials are forced to go to the most junior officer, an assistant secretary," said a top bureaucrat.



A police officer tries to snatch a poster from a Swadhinata Chikitsok Parishad member during a demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

37 die in Kolkata highway crash

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

At least 37 people burnt to death yesterday morning when their luxury bus collided head-on with a truck packed with flammable paint at Panchala, a town about 25 kilometres off Kolkata.

Unofficial sources, however, put the death toll at 45. Fourteen people were seriously injured while two others escaped virtually unscathed.

According to eyewitnesses, the Kolkata-bound bus, which had started off from Baripada in Orissa, hit the Kharagpur-bound truck on the national highway six near Uluberia in Howrah at around 5:30am.

Local Forward Bloc MLA Sailem Das alleged that the fire brigade and the police arrived at the spot an hour and 45 minutes after the accident. "We could have saved a few lives had the rescue personnel been on time."

However, Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya defended

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

the fire brigade. "The weather was foggy. The drivers of the fire truck had to drive carefully to reach the spot."

"The 14 injured, including two children, are in a critical condition. Doctors fear 12 of them may die any time," Dr. Uttam Das of the Uluberia General Hospital said. "Most of them have 80 per cent burns. It will be a miracle if they survive."

AFP adds: the truck driver and his assistant, who was in the passenger's seat, died instantly after the accident.

The domestically built Tata truck was carrying paint, which caught fire after the crash. The collision knocked the bus off the highway into a ditch.

"More than eight bodies were mutilated and charred and couldn't be identified," said police superintendent Rajesh Kumar, who supervised rescue work. "Some of the injured may die as they suffered

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3