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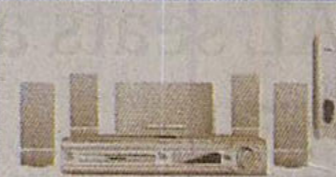
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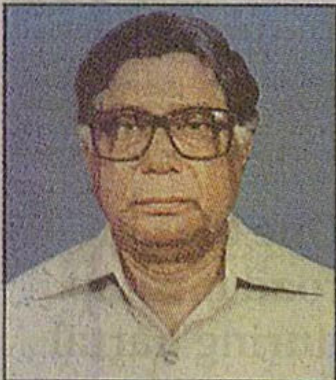
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TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS



Shamsul Islam passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Former industries minister and incumbent BNP lawmaker from Manikganj-4 Shamsul Islam Khan, 80, died of old-age ailments at Lab-Aid Cardiac Hospital in the capital yesterday afternoon.

He left behind his wife, a son and two daughters and a host of relations to mourn his death.

The first namaz-e-janaza for Shamsul will be held at the city's

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AL's ultimate goal to spoil polls: PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday blamed the Awami League for what she said was its bid to avoid election under the caretaker government by not accepting the independent and neutral Election Commission (EC).

The opposition has taken the stand when the country is going well on all fronts, she said, castigating her political rivals for taking recourse to hartal.

"The party is enforcing hartals without any reason or issue only to create unrest and halt development as well as foreign investment," she said at a public meeting on Kalaroa Pilot High School premises in Satkhira.

Khaleda said the AL's ultimate plan is to spoil the upcoming gen-

eral elections as the party does not stand any chance of winning.

On the opposition claim that the ruling BNP is conspiring to win the next election, she said, "We are the largest party, people will vote for us again keeping in mind the development activities we are running."

The premier said when the country is advancing towards self-reliance, conspiracy is on not only against the ruling four-party alliance but also against the country and its future generations.

She criticised the AL for not doing any development work during its tenure.

Describing various development activities during her two terms, she said the BNP has performed best for the farmers and in agriculture sector.

The premier minister said Islam is

the religion of peace and there is no place for those who blast bombs in the name of Islam.

She further said these elements will never be allowed to succeed. The ruling alliance is against the bombers and is determined to capture and punish them.

Khaleda apparently blamed the opposition parties for sponsoring terrorism, saying they have hatched conspiracy to oust the elected government and capture power through the back door.

The opposition leaders are repeatedly saying bombing would stop if the government resigned, Jamaat was ousted from the government and caretaker government was reformed, she explained.

The premier blasted the opposition for carrying out campaigns

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14-party asks PM to meet demand for reforms soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition alliance yesterday urged the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to meet immediately the demand for reforms in the electoral systems for the next general election to be held in a free and fair manner.

Addressing a press conference at the AL's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, the alliance Co-ordinator Abdul Jalil reiterated that the opposition parties will not take part in the election until the demands for reforms and resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) as well as the newly appointed election commissioners are not met.

Jalil, also general secretary of AL, accused the CEC of conspiring to bring the four-party alliance to power again.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

23 killed in Nepal Maoist clash

Parties vow to continue protests against king

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Seventeen Maoist guerrillas and six security personnel were killed in the deadliest gun battle in restive Nepal since the rebels ended a four-month-old truce three weeks ago, an army officer said yesterday.

The news came as an alliance of Nepali opposition parties vowed to continue their protests, just hours after police in Kathmandu clashed with crowds demanding that King Gyanendra restore democracy to the Himalayan nation.

The seven-party alliance called for a nationwide general strike on Thursday.

The army officer said the bodies of the 17 dead Maoists and some of their weapons had been recovered from the site of the overnight clash

at a remote village in Makawanpur district, 100 km east of capital Kathmandu.

"We suffered six casualties," he said.

Another officer said clashes had also taken place in Syangja in western Nepal but gave no details.

The latest violence comes a week after the guerrillas carried out coordinated attacks around the capital, killing 12 policemen.

At least 73 people have been killed in insurgency-related violence since the Maoists, fighting a 10-year revolt to overthrow the monarchy, ended a unilateral ceasefire on Jan. 2 after Gyanendra's government failed to respond.

The Maoists made no immediate

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Put an end to voter list crisis

BChy, Kamal ask govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB)

President Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday at a press briefing demanded that the government put an end to the present crisis over making voter list through cancelling the recent controversial recruitment in the Election Commission (EC).

"The Chief Election Commissioner should resign voluntarily in the wake of present controversy over his activities," Kamal Hossain told the press briefing after a discussion between the two leaders at Gulshan in the city.

He also urged the government to accept the 'national demand' for the EC reform with a view to letting the EC independently arrange a free and fair election.

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JOURNO BELAL KILLING Prime accused sent to jail on surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Shahabuddin Lashkar alias Dhira, prime accused in journalist Belaluddin murder case yesterday surrendered to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rahman Mia who sent him to the district jail after rejecting his bail petition.

A ward level leader of Jamaat, Dhira is one of the six charge-sheeted accused in Belal murder case. The five other accused are outlaws Hasan, Shadhin, Miraj and Goda Yunus and Shibir activist Ekhlis. Ekhlis was released on bail last month while others are in jail.

The High Court (HC) granted Dhira ad interim bail for three months after his arrest from Dhaka last year.

After expiry of the ad interim

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Commoners cross a three-kilometre-long dried up stretch of the Jamuna river in Bhupur in Tangail after taking a short boat trip. A ferry ghat was situated here before the Jamuna Bridge was open to public.

Charges framed against 6 Bogra JMB men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A Bogra court yesterday framed charges against six Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) men including its chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman and operations commander Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai in one of the August 17 blast cases.

Judge KG Mostafa of Special Tribunal-4 yesterday framed the charge under Explosive Substances Act in presence of the only arrested

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2 cops hurt in gunfight with outlaws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two policemen including an officer-in-charge (OC) were injured in a gunfight with Biplobi Communist Party (BCP-Laltu) cadres at Bharat in Gangni upazila in Meherpur early yesterday.

Police said Gangni police led by OC Abdul Malek raided a house at the village around 9:45pm following information that cadres of BCP were in a secret meeting.

The firefight triggered off when police cordoning the house

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NEW GAS FIELD DEVELOPMENT Cairn wants long-term market guarantee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cairn Energy Exploration (Bangladesh) Ltd wants long-term market guarantee from Bangladesh before it starts developing new gas fields in Sangu and Hatia.

"The government of Bangladesh should ensure that the supply and demand of gas produced in the country will match," said Sir Bill Gammell, chief executive officer (CEO) of Scotland-based oil company Cairn Energy PLC at a news conference in a Dhaka hotel yesterday.

He is visiting Bangladesh to

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Cairn Energy CEO Sir Bill Gammell

Prayer Timing		
January 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-43	5-47
Esha	7-15	7-45

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