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TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

CTG PORT

# Capacity to treble as 4 cranes kick off today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Four sophisticated gantry cranes today come in commission at the Chittagong Port, which the authorities hope will soon treble the handling capacity of the country's premier seaport.

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain will inaugurate the operation of the portainers at a ceremony at the Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) this morning.

The cranes imported from Japan in last September at a cost of Tk 151 crore, inclusive of customs duty, could not be installed as the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA)

needed some civil works to be done and because of resistance from the stevedores and port workers, sources said.

The CPA officials, however, refused to admit that the commissioning of the gantry cranes was delayed due to opposition of the workers.

Port sources said each of the four rail-mounted gantry (RMG) cranes has the capacity of loading and unloading 30 to 40 containers an hour.

After formal commissioning, the cranes will load containers from the shore to anchored ships and vice versa.

Japanese industrial giant Mitsubishi supplied the cranes and also trained 21 local technicians to operate them. The number of ships calling at the port are also expected to increase after installation of the new cranes, sources said.

The Chittagong seaport handled about 7.5 lakh twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers last year. The number is expected to rise to 12 lakh within the next two years.

Some sources, however, say usefulness of these cranes would not live up to expectations unless a few infrastructure development

## Proceedings of 2 'graft' cases against Hasina stayed till Apr 6

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed until April 6 the proceedings of the two cases against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina for 'corruption' in purchase of frigates and appointment of foreign lobbies for the readymade garment sector.

After hearing a petition filed on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury fixed April 9 as the date for hearing the cases.

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud moved the petition for Sheikh Hasina. It was filed with the Appellate Division of the SC to

## BAIL CANCELLATION Show cause notice issued against Barisal magistrate, cop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Barisal court yesterday issued a show cause notice to a magistrate and policeman for violating higher court order over bail cancellation.

The District and Sessions Judge's Court also asked First Class Magistrate Gopal Chandra Das of Barisal Cognisance Court No. 1 and Assistant Sub-inspector Abdul Hamid to reply within February 2 why contempt charge would not be brought against them.

In the order, Judge Md Shafiquddin said the two not only failed to execute the higher court

# Saddam walks out in Iraq trial uproar

AFP, Baghdad

The setback-plagued trial of Saddam Hussein descended into chaos under its new judge yesterday, as the former Iraqi president left the court, his half-brother was ejected and the entire defence team walked out.

New Kurdish judge Rauf Rasheed Abdel Rahman, appointed from outside the chamber, attempted immediately to stamp his authority on the trial after the controversial resignation of his predecessor Rizkar Mohammed Amin.

His strict demeanour contrasted with the more flexible

approach of Amin and his headline approach led to the expulsion of half the defendants and the departure of all defence lawyers within minutes of the trial opening.

Saddam launched into one of the furious tirades against the court that have marked previous sessions, angrily pointing his finger at the judge and questioning the legitimacy of the tribunal.

"I want to leave the court," Saddam, red-faced with anger, told the judge, who replied that he could leave the court and then ordered the former dictator out.

"I led you for 35 years and you order me out of the court," retorted Saddam.

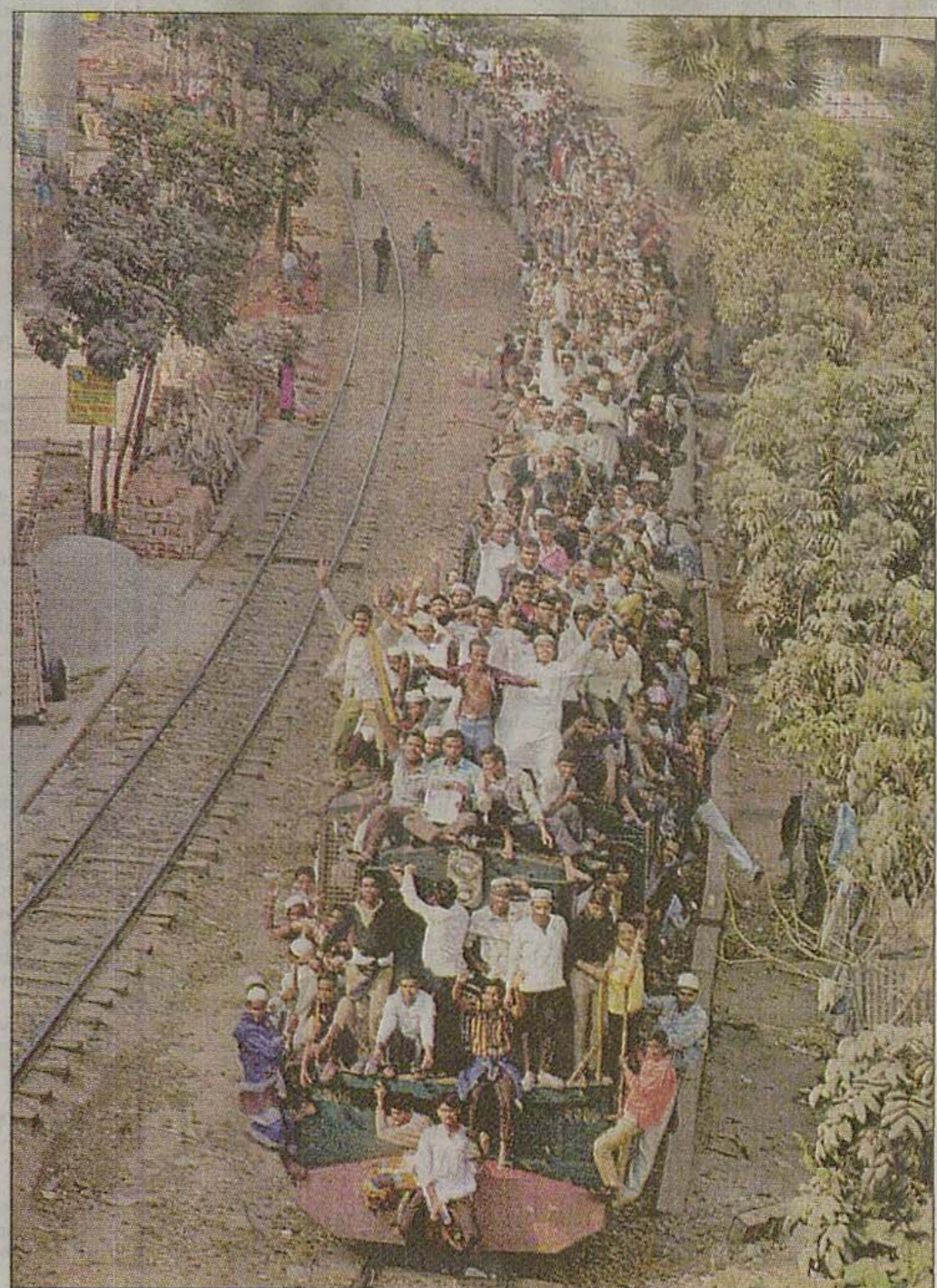
"I am the judge, you are the defendant. You have to obey me," said the judge.

Prior to the verbal exchange between Saddam and the judge, the defence lawyers walked out. Attorneys appointed by the court then arrived.

"Anyone appointed by you we reject them. This is my right, to give up my right to an attorney," Saddam said.

After further verbal exchanges, Saddam walked out, escorted by guards.

Shortly after the trial opened, Barzan Ibrahim Hassan al-Tikriti, half-brother of Saddam and one of



Thousands of home going devotees cram into a train after attending the three-day Biswa Jitema in Tongi that ended yesterday.

## Two rapists jailed for 30 years

COURT CORRESPONDENT

ADhaka court yesterday sentenced two youths to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping a 15-year-old garments worker in January 2002.

Judge Kaniz Akhter Nasrina Khanam of the Fourth Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression handed down the sentence in presence of the convicts Belal Hossain and Shah Alam.

The court also fined them Tk 1 lakh each, in default they have to suffer six months more RI.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of seven prosecution witnesses.

The victim along with her

## 2 Ctg JMB men give confessional statements

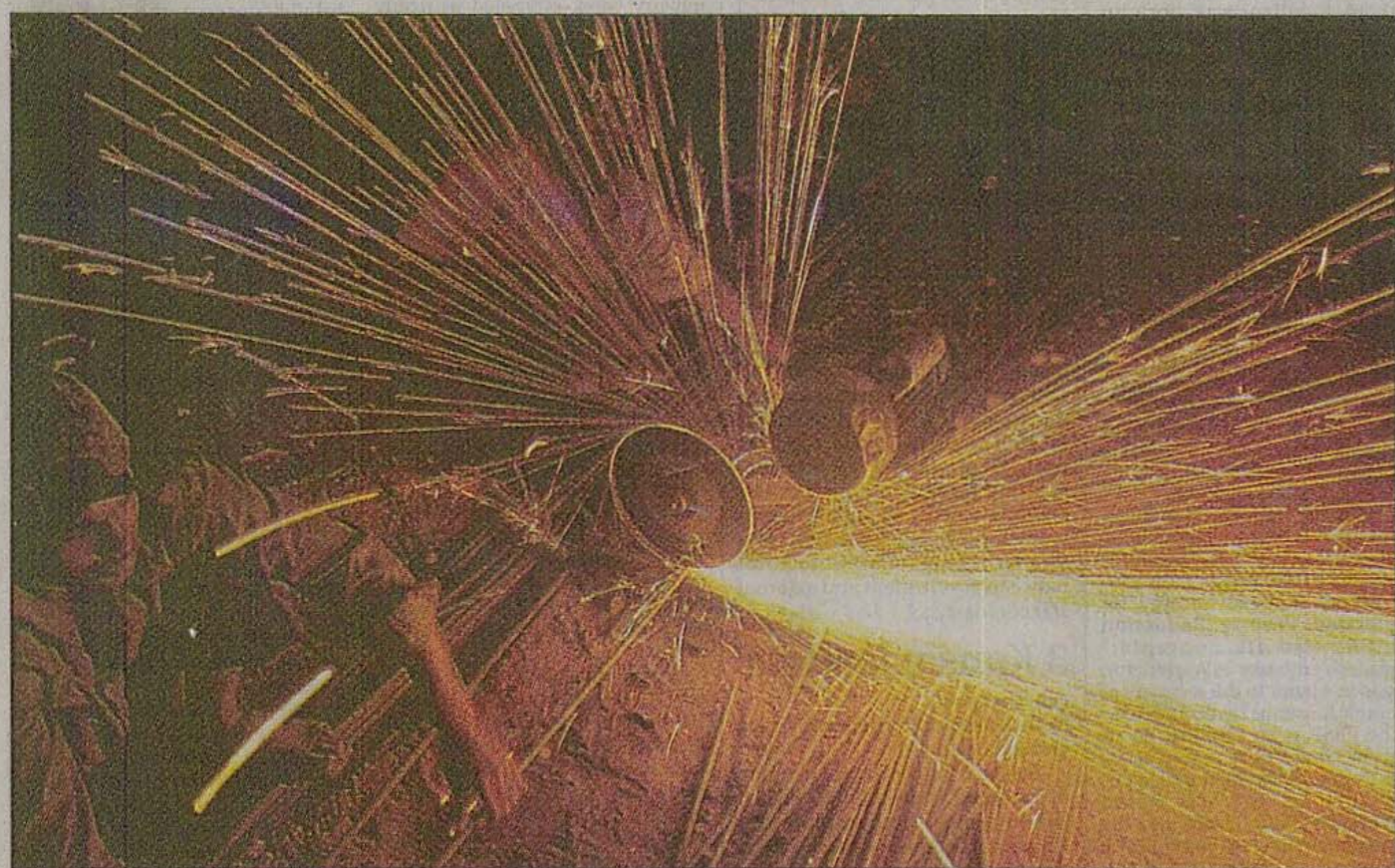
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operatives, including the outfit's Chittagong divisional chief Mohammad alias Javed Iqbal, yesterday gave confessional statements before a court.

Mohammad, 25, son of Maulana Abdul Awal of Khurushkul in Cox's Bazaar, was also placed on a five-day fresh remand after being shown arrested in another bomb blast case filed with the Bakolia Police Station.

He along with Sitakunda regional commander Delwar Hossain was produced before the court at around 3:15pm.

Mohammad confessed that he along with other JMB members were trained on shooting, blasting bombs and spying at Baghmara in Rajshahi.



Workers using a metal cutting machine on SS Khaled Road in Chittagong without wearing any protective glasses and gloves. The sparks may harm pedestrians as well.

## 66 killed in Poland roof collapse

AP, AFP, Katowice, Poland

The number of people killed when an exhibition hall roof collapsed in southern Poland has risen to 66, rescue officials said yesterday.

"Sixty-five bodies have been identified, and a 66th body is still in the rubble," said Janusz Skulich,

head of rescue operations. "It's unlikely that there are any more victims," he added.

Regional government spokesman Krzysztof Mejer told AFP earlier that about 90 of the injured were still in hospital after the catastrophe, which occurred on

## 3 Kansat leaders refused bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A magistrate's court yesterday rejected bail to three Pally Bidyut Samity Subscribers' Development Association (PBSSDA) leaders of Kansat in Chapainawabganj, sparking fresh tension in the locality.

Magistrate Sarwar Mushid refused bail to PBSSDA convenor Golam Rabbani and joint convenors Jahir Chowdhury and Monirul Islam Manna.

They were arrested on January 22 on charge of instigating people to raise voice against local Pally Bidyut Samity that led to the January 4 police firing, in which two youths were killed.

The arrests triggered more protests resulting in the killing of another seven people in police firing on January 23.

"The administration has not become too weak to release an accused in the face of movement,"

ADC (General) of Chapainawabganj Ferdous Alam told The Daily Star.

Hearing the news, locals gathered at different points on Chapainawabganj-Sona Mosque Road and chanted slogans against the district administration.

Meantime, the indefinite strike demanding cheaper and uninterrupted power continued for the third day yesterday, suspending activities at Sona Mosque land port for seven days.

Thousands of people including a good number of women led by Rabbani's wife Shamima Akhter Parul marched seven kilometres in a protest procession to Shibganj upazila nirbahi officer's office. They also held a rally in Kansat and demanded release of the three leaders.

Local administration is yet to clear the barricades put up by protesters on the road, fearing

## Govt playing with voter list to retain power

Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government is playing with the voter list and the election process to retain power as they are facing low tide.

Hasina, president of Awami League (AL), was addressing a function at the Engineers Institute marking independent lawmaker Shamsuddin Ahmed's joining AL.

"BNP and Jamaat know that people don't want them again...if people get the chance to exercise their franchise freely they'll give an appropriate answer to the alliance for their misdeeds," she said.

"The country and its people are not secure under the alliance government. We've to remove the government from power at the earliest through a mass movement," Hasina said urging the people of all strata to unite resisting the alliance rule.

She also urged the party activists and the supporters to join the 'Dhaka Long March' on February 5.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Hamas mulls using militants in army

Says it won't recognise Israel

AP, Ramallah

The leader of Hamas suggested Saturday that the Islamic group could create a Palestinian army that would include its militant wing responsible for scores of deadly attacks on Israelis in the aftermath of its crushing victory in parliamentary elections.

Israeli officials condemned the plan, demanding that Hamas renounce violence. Palestinian security officers, including loyalists from the defeated Fatah Party, said they would never submit to Hamas control.

"Hamas has no power to meddle with the security forces," said Jibril Rajoub, a Palestinian strongman.

The Hamas chief, Khaled Mashaal, reiterated that Hamas would not recognise Israel. He also indicated attacks on Israeli civilians would continue, accusing the alliance rule.

"As long as we are under occupation then resistance is our right," he said.

Angry police stormed the parliament building in Gaza and armed militants marched into Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' compound in Ramallah to demonstrate their rejection of Hamas' authority. Their defiance raised fears of a spike in violence between Palestinian factions.

Clashes have already broken out between the two sides. Hamas gunmen wounded two policemen in Gaza early Saturday in what authorities said was a roadside ambush. The attack came hours after another firefight wounded a Hamas activist and two police officers, one of whom was in a coma Saturday.

Hamas won 74 out of 132 seats in parliamentary elections Wednesday to Fatah's 45. The militant group's victory threw the fate of international aid to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority in doubt and darkened the chances for a peace deal with Israel.



## Federer wins Aussie Open

AFP, Melbourne

Roger Federer won his seventh Grand Slam final and his second Australian Open title with a commanding four-set victory over unseeded Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis here Sunday.

The Swiss world number one overcame dropping the opening set against the rising 54th-ranked star to claim a 5-7, 7-5, 6-0, 6-2 victory in 2hr 46min to remain unbeaten in all the Grand Slam finals he has contested since his first success at 2003 Wimbledon.

Federer became the first player

## 200 shanties gutted in N'ganj fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 200 shanties and a kitchen market were gutted in a fire at the Chadmari slum near Charasha in Narayanganj yesterday leaving hundreds of people homeless.

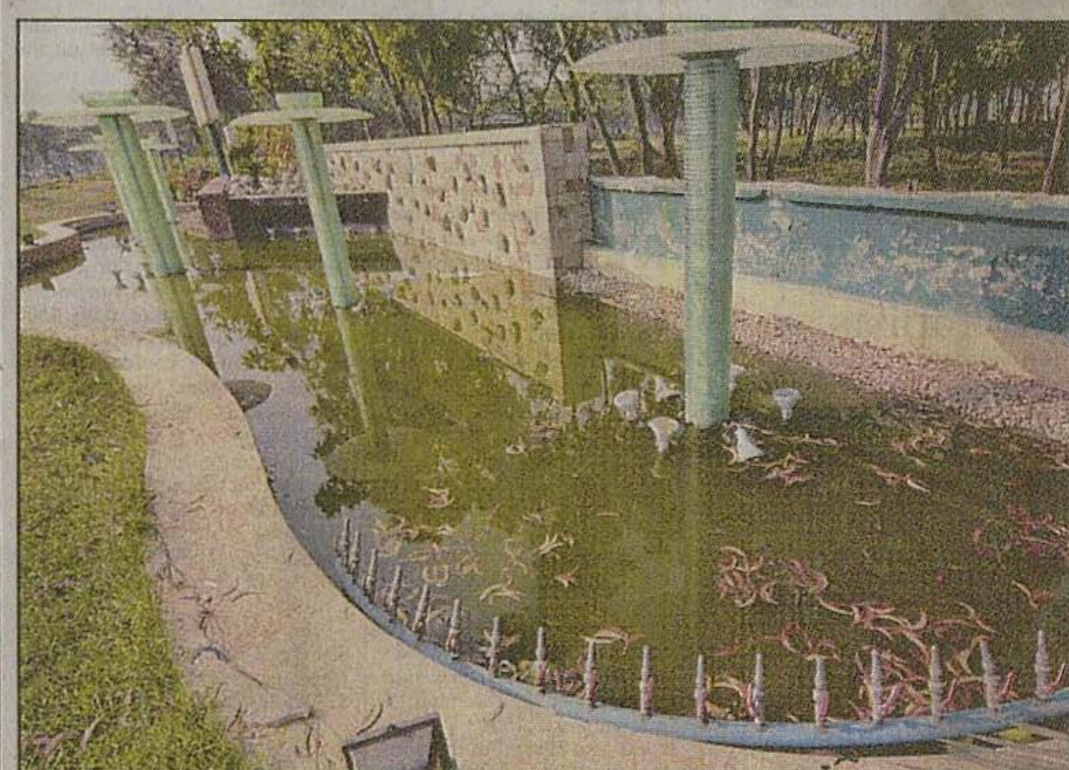
Around 10 people were injured and a huge amount of rejected clothes from the garments industry were reduced to ashes.

Locals said the fire originated at an earthen oven in a shanty and spread quickly throughout the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Prayer Timing		
January 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



This fountain was built on Bijoy Sarani in the capital as part of the city's beautification project ahead of the 13th Saarc Summit last year. Since then it remains uncared for.

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