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NEWS BRIEFS

Chhatra Moitree leader held

PABNA, Jan 24: General Secretary of the Edward University College unit of Chhatra Moitree Mahin Ahmed was arrested this evening for his alleged involvement in the attack on a local Shibir leader on January 22. Chhatra Moitree held a protest rally and brought out a procession in the town tonight demanding immediate release of Mahin, reports UNB.

Bakhrabad-Demra gas pipeline

The removal of condensate from the 69-kilometer Bakhrabad-Demra gas transmission pipeline was completed yesterday. This will facilitate normal supply of gas to the subscribers under the distribution area of Titas. The 16-hour pigging operation that ended yesterday morning was conducted by Bakhrabad Gas Systems Ltd, reports UNB.

Boy crushed under wheels

PABNA, Jan 24: A teenage boy was crushed under the wheels of a jeep at Chatmohor upazila of the district today (Friday), police and witnesses said. Zahurul Alam (12), son of Habibur Rahman of village Parshadanga, was knocked down by the jeep of Upazila Nirbahi Officer at the upazila headquarters at about 4 pm. UNO Kamruzzaman was driving the jeep, reports UNB.

Army officers jailed for massacre

SAN SALVADOR, Jan 24: A judge on Friday sentenced an army colonel and a lieutenant to 30 years in prison, the maximum, for their part in the 1989 massacre of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter, reports AP.

Curfew clamped : Army plans crackdown

Explosion in Kashmir police HQs leaves securitymen leaderless

SRINAGAR, Jan 24: Troops fanned out in Srinagar after a bomb exploded today in the office of Kashmir, state police chief Jitendra Nath Saxena, killing two constables and injuring Saxena and four other top security officers, reports AFP.

The secessionist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and Muslim Janbaz Force both claimed responsibility for the blast, which came as a controversial motorcade by Hindu fundamentalists entered the Muslim-majority state.

State officials said the Indian army had been 'authorised to enforce' an indefinite curfew imposed after the blast, which left the Kashmir police department and two main Indian paramilitary organizations leaderless.

Saxena's deputy Amar Kapoor, who survived the blast unharmed, told AFP that the time bomb went off 12:10 pm (0640 GMT) in the police chief's room when a meeting was being held to review security for Sunday's Republic Day celebrations.

The explosion triggered a major fire in the timber-built

complex in Srinagar's Batmaloo district and blew off the roof, police officer said, adding that firefighters were trying to douse the flames.

Besides Saxena, additional Director General of Police Ashok Patel, Kashmir chief of paramilitary Central Reserve Police force MK Singh, Border Security Police (BSF) chief M. Jafar and one other officer were injured, they said.

All the victims were whisked to a military hospital in Srinagar under tight security as elite BSF troopers were deployed in the Batmaloo district.

City residents were seen hurrying home in panic as police jeeps toured the city announcing the curfew amid speculation that the army was planning a major crackdown to flush out the bombers.

Muslim rebels, campaigning for Kashmir's secession, have previously killed or abducted police officers in the troubled region, India's only Muslim-majority state. But it was the first time that police headquarters had been attacked, officers said.

"It appears that the mili-

tant have infiltrated our (police) force", said a top officer, trying to explain how the bomb had been smuggled into the fortified building.

Initial reports had suggested that the complex was subjected to heavy rocket and gunfire. But Kapoor said, "It was definitely a time bomb."

"Saxena is hurt and is receiving fairly good (medical) aid", he said, adding that the police chief, posted in Kashmir two years ago, was not in a critical condition.

Reporters were not allowed to reach the blast site or the hospital.

The attack occurred two days ahead of the planned arrival of a Hindu motorcade, which, has travelled the length of the country.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Indian People's Party, sponsors of the journey, plans to unfurl the national flag in a Srinagar city square in a signal of Hindu defiance of Muslim secessionism and to stress national integration.

Kashmiri rebels have warned that they will not allow the BJP marchers to reach the

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Visitors at a book stall at the Shishu Ananda Mela (Children's fun fair) that began in the Shishu Academy premises in the city Thursday. —Star photo

Donors take stock of economy soon

Country's progress in implementing economic reforms and its current fiscal scenario will be assessed by donors' representatives here early next month, reports UNB.

Officials said the assessment would be made during a mid-term review of the current year's reform package under ESAF (Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility) programme agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, agencies which, speak for Western donors.

Bangladesh is to receive 345 million SDR (Special Drawing Rights), equivalent to 450 million US dollars, from the IMF to cushion implementation of the three-year ESAF programme (1990-91 to 1992-93). The country is now implementing the second year's programme.

A six-member IMF team, led by one of its Division Chief

Ichiro Otani, will be visiting Bangladesh February 4-17 for the mid-term review. World Bank men will also join the Fund team.

Sources said the joint Fund-Bank team would assess the implementation of PPP (Policy Framework Paper), current fiscal's agreed recipe for economic reforms in Bangladesh.

Performance criterion for the terminal year (1992-93) of the three-year ESAF programme will also be discussed.

Outcome of the forthcoming review, the sources said, would be of great importance to the country as far as future aid is concerned as it may influence the donors' attitude in the coming Aid Club meet.

With ESAF mid-term review in the offing, officials here admitted, many of the sectoral reforms are yet to be implemented as per PPP schedule.

Although the revenue bud-

get, major concern of IMF, is moving well in line with the receipt and expenditure targets, the slow pace of development expenditure is likely to be questioned during the ensuing review.

Privatization of potentially viable public enterprises, including jute and textile, within the current fiscal was a major criterion in PPP but progress in this field was still dismal.

World Bank and bilateral donors, in recent months, repeatedly pointed at the slow pace in privatization.

The government is also lagging in meeting the target for realisation of default loans from hundred largest borrowers as envisaged in the PPP.

Reduction of system loss in the power sector and rationalization of operational loss of the Railways, the two major performance targets, were yet to show any satisfactory result.

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Govt firm to face any situation, power workers warned

The government yesterday night expressed the hope that the two labour organisations of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) would withdraw their proposed strike on January 26 in the greater interest of the country, reports BSS.

The Minister of Power, Energy and Mineral resources in a press note affirmed that the government was determined to maintain the distribution of power in the country and face any situation. Strongly disapproving the strike-call the government sincerely expressed the hope that all the dutiful officials and employees of BPDB and DESA would extend their all-out support to the present democratic government in its positive programmes and in the interest of the development of Power Sector.

The press note said that at a time when the government was going to implement programmes in the interest of Power Sector it could not give indulgence to undesirable activities of the two labour organisations as they were contrary to the national interest.

The press note said the government had been watching with regret that the two labour organisations of BPDB and DESA had been carrying out various undesirable activities for the last few days in the name of movement. The government was always sympathetic to the legitimate demands of the employees of the two organisations.

It has taken necessary steps for the consideration of their demands within the legal framework and capacity of these two organisations. It added.

It further pointed out that the government had taken ini-

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Price policy may hit garment exports

By Inam Ahmed

Foreign buyers are showing increasing reservation in buying ready-made garments from Bangladesh due to the government policy stipulating that the local content of the garments should have at least 30 per cent of the export price.

The government in its current import policy directed that the local value addition should be at least 30 per cent which refers mainly to the cutting and making charge (CM) that the local manufacturers get. Earlier, the local content proportion was 25 per cent.

Some big US buyers have already informed the local garment industries that the new decision would affect their import from Bangladesh. The recent recession sweeping across the globe has already hit garment sales in the USA, the biggest buyer for Bangladesh garments. In 1991, retail sales had their lowest increase of 0.70 per cent in 30 years in the USA.

The buyers feel that the size specifications for garments both for gents and ladies have increased significantly in the last four years. This has resulted in an increase of fabrics per dozen for all garments up to four yards. The price has also shot up by between one US dollar and four dollar per dozen. The buyers said they would not pay higher CM charges for the same job simply because of increase in fabrics.

Moreover, Bangladesh has

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Troops fire as FIS defies order

ALGIERS, Jan 24: Islamic fundamentalists defied Algeria's new rulers again today, urging troops to disobey officers if ordered to fire on the people, reports Reuters.

Security forces fired warning shots near a key Algiers mosque to enforce new rules cutting down the size of mass prayer meetings. The government said no one was hurt.

The Islamic salvation front, denied power by the scrapping of Algeria's first democratic general election, has long used Friday prayers to stir fervour for an Islamic state.

Today's prayer meetings were the first big Muslim gatherings since the authorities said they planned to outlaw politics in mosques.

In the packed Kouba mosque, which was surrounded by security forces, an FIS leader, Mohamed Said, told worshippers:

Fire no bullet...against a

brother even if your officers order you. Refuse that even at the cost of your life.

Outside, streets normally full of militants listening to the sermon relayed on loudspeakers were occupied only by paratroops at the mosque entrance and riot police with sub-machineguns.

At Bab el-Oued, another FIS bastion, police fired warning shots to disperse militants trying to erect loudspeakers and defy the order that areas around mosques must not be used for prayers, the Algerian news agency APS said.

AFP adds: The fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front today named Othmane Aissani, deputy chairman of its executive bureau, as its acting leader.

He takes over from Abdelkader Hachani, who was arrested Wednesday. Aissani's appointment was 'automatic,' the FIS said.

Most of the FIS's senior leadership is behind bars.

AP adds: Riot police and army units encircled mosques Friday in Muslim fundamentalist neighborhoods, seeking to deter possible protests against a crackdown on the militants' political movement.

Armoured vehicles brought at least 200 riot squad members, equipped with clubs, tear gas grenades and water cannons, into the area around Algiers Kouba mosque where an imam of the Islamic Salvation Front was scheduled to lead weekly prayers.

On Wednesday, the new military-backed government arrested the Salvation Front's acting leader, Abdelkader Hachani. Authorities also banned public assemblies around mosques and vowed to enforce a 1991 law against using mosques as a political forum.

Suburbs will be developed : PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here yesterday that steps had been taken to increase civic amenities in the suburbs to reduce population pressure on the metropolises, reports BSS.

She said the government under its scheme wanted to build up Uttara satellite town with all modern facilities and also develop the Greater Dhaka Metropolitan with all civic amenities in a planned manner.

The Prime Minister was addressing the foundation laying ceremony of Uttara High School and College. The institution will be established on 3.65 acres at an estimated cost of Taka 2.50 crore. The construction work of the high school is expected to complete on December 31 this year at a cost of Taka 1.13 crore. More than one thousand students will receive education in the school.

Begum Zia said the government had given utmost importance to education as it believed that the overall development of the country could not be achieved without educated people. She said the establishment of the Uttara High School and College would help greatly solve the problem of education in the area.

She said the government had derequisitioned Baddha areas for carrying out development work there. She said Uttarkhan and Dakshinkhan areas would be developed similarly.

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China, Israel restore ties ending 4 decades of animosity

BEIJING, Jan 24: China and Israel established diplomatic relations here today, ending four decades of animosity and paving the way for Beijing's participation in Middle East peace talks, reports AFP.

The countries' Foreign Ministers signed a joint communique at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse here, calling it a "historic" step in relations and a boost to international efforts to resolve peacefully the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said the rapprochement would help stem the flow of weapons to the Middle East. China is an im-

portant arms supplier to Israel's Arab neighbours, causing deep concern in Tel Aviv and in Washington.

"This is a milestone in relations between China and Israel. It turns a new page," Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said, adding it would have a "positive role in pushing forward the Middle East peace process."

The agreement will allow China to take part in the multilateral round of talks starting Tuesday in Moscow making it the last of the five permanent UN Security Council members to get involved.

Levy, whose government

had refused Chinese participation in the talks until ties were set up, called the agreement "a historic moment we have long awaited. This is the opening of a new era of cooperation and understanding."

Support from Beijing gives a large boost to Israel. Besides its arms sales and nuclear technology transfers to Syria, Iran, Iraq and Algeria, China has also been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

"I believe that the fact we are listening to one another will somehow stem this flow of arms" to the Middle East, Levy told journalists after talks with

Qian.

The new Israeli embassy here unfurled the "star of David" for the first time today and China was preparing to send an Ambassador to Israel soon. The PLO also has an embassy here since China recognized Palestine as a state.

Israel recognized China after the communist take over here in 1949, a year after the founding of the Jewish state. But China refused to establish ties after the countries took different side in the Korean war.

Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng assured Levy in a meeting later that his Communist gov-

ernment "takes the view that the Israeli right to exist in the Middle East should be recognized."

The forging of relations with Israel was another diplomatic success in China's pragmatic diplomacy, which has also won renewed ties with southeast Asia, Formal ties with South Korea and South Africa are in the offing.

"No matter what differences we have in social systems, ideology and views on international affairs, it is better to have contacts than not to have contacts," the Chinese Prime Minister said.

Officials on hand at the signing ceremony, including Israel's Ambassador-designate to China, Zeev Sufort, applauded after Qian and Levy exchanged the joint communique and warmly shook hands.

The two sides raised their champagne glasses and extended the traditional Jewish toast 'to life' -- in Hebrew.

The Foreign Minister held 1-1/2 hour private talks that focussed on the Middle East situation. They also agreed to start gradually expanding links in trade, agriculture and technology.

Election to 513 UPs today

Another Union Parishad chairman candidate shot

JOYPURHAT, Jan 24: A union parishad chairman candidate in Panchbibi upazila of the district received bullet wounds on Thursday while resisting an armed miscreant who demanded money from him, reports UNB.

Seriously injured Abdul Mannan (35), who is contesting the poll from Kuashumba union, is under treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Election in the union is scheduled on February 5.

Police said an unidentified miscreant accosted Mannan when he reached near Chashkur on the Panchbibi-Kandia road on Thursday evening on way to an election campaign. The miscreant fired at Mannan when he declined to pay the money.

A BSS report says: Election to 513 union parishads of 66 upazilas under 52 districts will be held on the third day today (Saturday).

Polling will take place today in 158 unions of 19 upazilas under 13 districts of Chittagong division, 147 unions of 17 upazilas under 15 districts of Dhaka division, 136 unions of 19 upazilas under 14 districts of Rajshahi division and 72 unions of 11 upazilas under 10 districts of Khulna division.

Mass Uprising Day observed

By Staff Correspondent

Various socio-cultural and political organisations observed the Mass Uprising Day Friday with a call to implement the dreams and aspirations of the martyrs who laid down their lives in the movement.

The organisations also called for an united effort to root out all anti-liberation elements from the country and trial of the 'rajakars'. Speakers at discussion meetings on the day also called for national consensus for institutionalising the democracy.

UNB adds: Acting President of Awami League Abdus Samad Azad has asked the people to remain vigilant against any conspiracy to foil the present democratic process in the country.

"Conspiracy is on to foil democracy — frustrate all anti-democracy designs untied," Azad told a meeting at the party office yesterday evening. The meeting was organised in observance of the Mass Uprising Day.

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Four killed in separate incidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least four persons were killed and another injured in five separate incidents in the city in last two days.

One Mahtab Hossain, 40, was stabbed and robbed of his cash, passport and two return tickets to Italy at his residence at Mirpur-11 in the early hours of Friday.

A group of 7 muggers reportedly entered his house at about 6am stabbed him and decamped with a brief case containing Taka five lakhs.

Mahtab Hossain and his wife came from Italy on Wednesday.

He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with stab injuries on his abdomen, family sources said. A case was registered with Mirpur Police station in this connection, Police said.

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Niru taken on 3 days' remand

Sanaul Huq Niru, an accused in the Dr Milon murder case, was brought by detective police yesterday (Friday) of three days' remand for interrogation, reports UNB.

A former leader of Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal, Niru was arrested by a special squad of Detective Branch from the city on Thursday and produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday.

He was earlier chargesheeted in the murder case along with 13 others. Police so far arrested 10 of the 14 accused and four others are still absconding.