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## NEWS BRIEFS

### PM opens nurses training centre today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the Nurses Training Centre in Netrokona today, reports BSS.

The Nurses Training Centre is one of eight centres funded by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at a total cost of 6.3 million US dollars.

### Hasina visits B Chowdhury

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited Suhrawardy Hospital to see ailing Deputy Leader in parliament Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury and her party MP Tabibur Rahman Sarder. She stayed there for sometime and enquired about their welfare. Awami League leaders Mohiuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Momtaz Hossain and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin accompanied Sheikh Hasina, reports UNB.

### DCs' conference tomorrow

A two-day conference of Deputy Commissioners will be held here on Wednesday. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the conference at the cabinet conference room in the Secretariat at 8.30 am, reports UNB.

### Open market of handicrafts

The weekly open market of handicrafts and cottage industry products will begin from next Friday. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), will organise the market on the road in front of Motijheel Ideal School near Pir Zangi Shah Mazar, reports BSS.

### Partial solar eclipse Dec 24

A partial eclipse of the sun will take place on December 24. It will begin at 4:20.7 am and will end at 8:40.7 am and the magnitude of the eclipse will be 0.843 and the greatest eclipse will occur at 6:30.7 am. This eclipse will not be visible anywhere in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

## Mob forces Mirpur police to free 14

By Staff Correspondent

A mob laid siege to Mirpur police station Monday morning and forced police to release 14 people they brought to their police custody Sunday night.

Earlier Sunday night, police raided different areas of Mirpur and Kalyanpur areas and picked up about 48 people.

Of the total 34 were released on the same night while 14 others were kept in the custody, according to a source.

Hundreds of people began marching towards the Mirpur police station in processions at about 11 am and laid siege to the police station until they

got release of 14 nabbed at 1 pm, witnesses said.

A number of processionists also chanted slogans on behalf of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal (JJD), both students and youths wings of the ruling party, witnesses said.

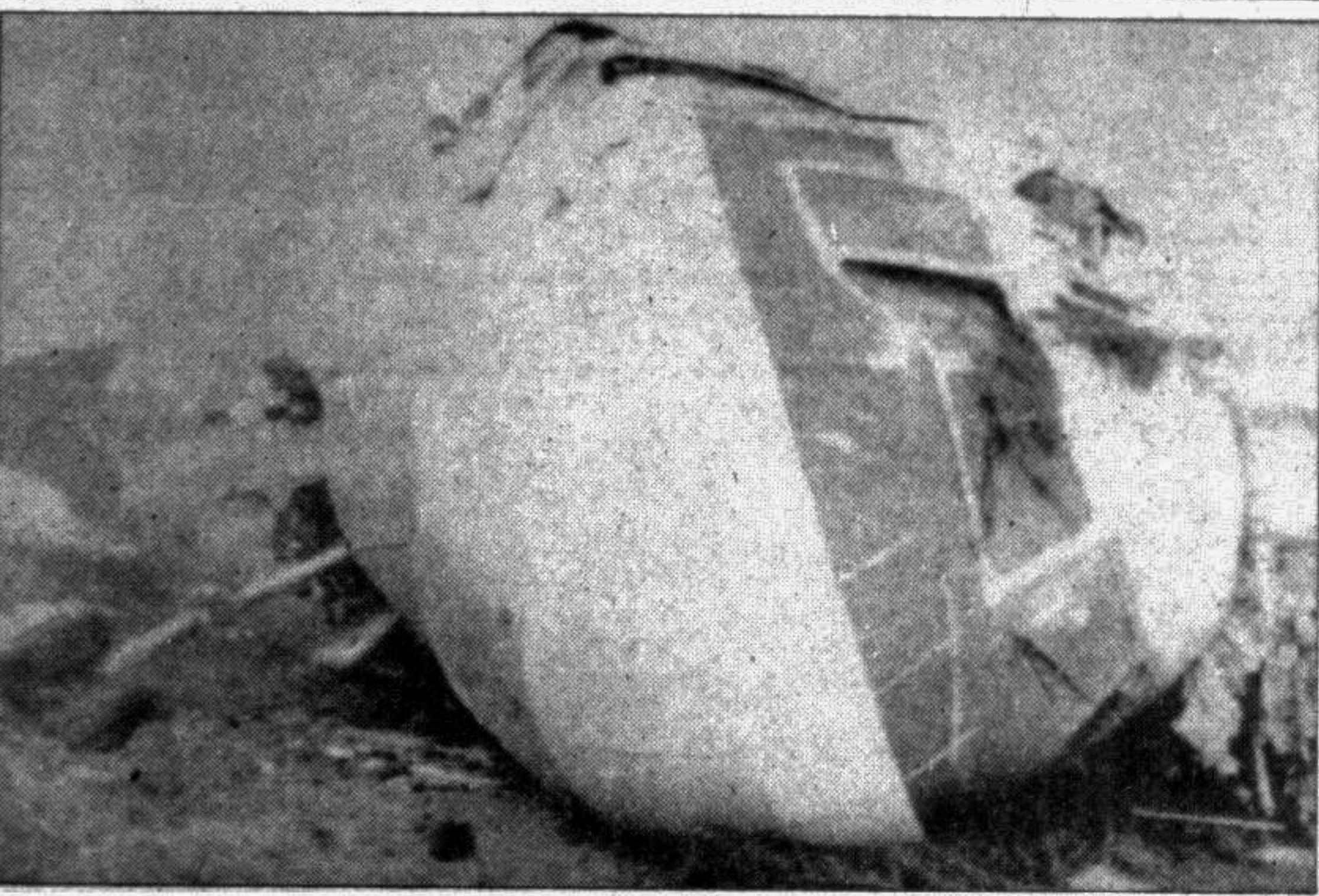
A source said police picked up the persons from different areas of Mirpur and Kalyanpur for the backdrop of increased criminal activities. Residents of those areas are learnt to have lodged complaint about disturbances in the recent days, the sources added.

Saturday evening a group of

gangsters beat up a sub-inspector of Mirpur police and snatched his pistol with 16 bullets at Khilgaon area while the police officer was returning to Mirpur police station.

When contacted Mirpur police said that they raided several places in Mirpur Sunday night and picked up several persons on suspicion and later released all of them after they had given bonds.

Mirpur police, however, declined to give the number of people picked up Sunday night but did not deny that a group of people surrounded the police station Monday morning.



The cockpit of the Dutch Martinair DC-10 lies on its side after crashing at Faro Airport, Portugal yesterday.

## 52 killed as Dutch plane crash-lands in Portugal

FARO (Portugal), Dec 21: A chartered Dutch jet carrying more than 300 holiday travellers split in two and burst into flames Monday while trying to land in a storm at this beach resort. At least 52 people were killed and 23 were missing, an airport official said, reports AP.

Smoke poured from the wreckage of the Martinair DC-10 and hampered efforts to remove bodies from the burned fuselage, TSF radio reported.

The front of the DC-10 was largely intact, but the middle and tail section crumbled in the fire. Wreckage was strewn

across 400 meters (yards).

There were reports of survivors struggling out of the burning wreckage as much as an hour after the accident, Portugal's LUSA news agency said.

A survivor described the panic as people tried to flee the aircraft.

"There was screaming and people falling over each other," passenger Marius Jungertus told Dutch NOS television. "I saw a stewardess with blood pouring from her head. There was blood everywhere."

"Those of us who got out of the plane ran as hard as we

could — people were running in all directions," Jungertus said. "We got to the terminal and there was nothing there, no one to help us, just people screaming all over the place."

Rescue workers were searching through the scorched mid-section and tail of the plane, which was still clouded in smoke by mid-afternoon.

Forty-two survivors were at the Hotel Ibis in Faro, receptionist Elsa Gomes said.

The pilot, whose name was not immediately available, was among those who survived the crash.

## Rao defeats vote of no-confidence

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today defeated a no-confidence vote in parliament and threatened to ban religious propaganda in the nation's politics, following violent Hindu-Muslim riots, reports Reuters.

Rao's Congress Party and its Marxist-led left front ally voted 334 to 106 to defeat the motion brought by the opposition Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha (lower house).

The BJP proposed the motion after Rao sacked four state governments controlled by the party and arrested some of its leaders following the ri-

ots in which over 1,000 people died.

The riots began after a Hindu mob tore down a mosque on December 6 in the northern town of Ayodhya, claiming it stood over the birth place of the god-king Rama.

Rao accused the BJP of misusing Rama's name to win elections.

"If a party takes Rama as its spokesman, it creates an unequal playing field for those who do not use religion in politics. In my view the constitution does not allow unequal fights," Rao said.

Former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh's

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## Benazir sick, cancels travel plans

KARACHI, Dec 21: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto is indisposed and has been advised to rest on the eve of a parliamentary session to be addressed by the President, a spokesman at her villa here said today, reports AFP.

She has "cancelled" all her travel plans on her doctors' advice, the spokesman at the seaside Bilawal House said, but he refused to confirm that Bhutto would be unable to attend the session.

Bhutto was to chair a meeting of the component chiefs of the multi-party People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) in Islamabad early today, but sources said the top hierarchy waited there in vain.

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## Saifur seeks over \$400 m ADB loan

The visiting delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) yesterday met with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and discussed the progress of implementation of the on-going ADB-financed programmes in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Saifur said the progress of the reforms are satisfactory and they were yielding tangible results.

He underscored the need for further enhancing the ADB's lending size to Bangladesh and said that the Bank's lending programme should be above 400 million dollar.

The Finance Minister said the macro economic management is being stabilised, internal resources collection is going ahead of the budgeted target and other financial sec-

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## DU students clash over using classroom

By DU Correspondent

At least five persons were injured when students of two departments of Dhaka University clashed over the using of a classroom yesterday morning.

A number of classrooms were ransacked and police fired about 30 tear gas shells to bring the agitated students under control.

The students of the Department of Economics and the Department of Finance and Banking clashed in the Lecture Theatre (LT) just behind the Arts Building of the University.

The students of both the departments have called a day long strike today (Tuesday) to protest the clash.

A B M Masrur Hossain, a

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## Gen Noor Uddin leaves for Cambodia

Chief of Army Staff Lt. General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan left Dhaka yesterday for Bangkok on his way to Cambodia to see Bangladesh Army troops deployed as UN peace keeping force in that country, reports BSS.

He is leading a military delegation.

During his stay in Cambodia, General Noor Uddin will visit the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) headquarters at Phnom Penh and will call on the UN special representative Akashi and the UN forces Commander General Sanderson.

The chief of army staff will return home on December 25.

## One refugee killed as Rohingyas clash with police

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 21: A Rohingya refugee was killed and another 30 persons including six policemen, three officials and a camp-in-charge were injured in a clash between police and refugees today morning.

The clash ensued when the refugees of Balukhali No 2 camp obstructed officials taking them to a transit camp to be sent back to Myanmar. The Rohingyas attacked officials with sticks, daos and knives. Police opened fire to stop them.

The clash that started at 10 am lasted for about one hour and 16 shots were fired during the time.

The refugee who died after being taken to Rabeta Hospital was identified as Abu Shama, while the name of the camp-in-charge was Zakir Hossain.

UNB adds: Police, after the fighting, raided the camp and rounded up 80 Rohingyas in this connection.

Violence flared up in the morning when anti-repatriation elements attacked 100 Rohingyas of 25 families boarding trucks for the transit camp at Teknaf to return home in Myanmar, officials said.

The Rohingya troublemakers, allegedly led by Mustafiz Majhi, also ransacked the

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## PM opens art show at Shilpakala

## National art gallery under consideration

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said that the government was actively considering establishment of a national art gallery, reports BSS.

She expressed the hope that with the establishment of the proposed art gallery, the long felt demand of the city dwellers would be met. The creation of opportunities for improving professional skill of the artists was also under the active consideration of the government, she added.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the month-long 10th national fine art exhibition at the Shilpakala Academy in Dhaka.

Begum Zia called for cooperation of all to promote the

national culture and resist the infiltration of alien culture.

A nation is known by its culture which reflect the values and aspirations of the people, she said.

The Prime Minister said the growth of culture is the yardstick of development of a nation. Language, literature, arts and music are the ingredients of culture, she said.

Presided over by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Professor Jahanara Begum, the function was also addressed by Cultural Secretary Islamuddin Malik and Director General of Shilpakala Academy Mobarak Hossain Khan.

Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed prizes to four for

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## Face opponents politically, Khaleda asks BNP men

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the BNP members to work for strengthening and expanding the party base to realise the expectations of the people for which they had voted BNP to power, reports BSS.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia was delivering the winding up speech of the two-day Executive Committee conference of the party at her Sugandha office.

Begum Zia said the quarters, which could not raise any credible issue against the democratic government were making unnecessary issues only for hindering the present process of development.

The defeated force of nine years of anti-democratic movement were resorting to terrorism to tarnish the image of the democratic government. She said a political party had join the hands of the autocrats as part of its conspiracy against the democratic government.

The Prime Minister said, "We have to face them politically and for this we have to strengthen the base of the party."

The Prime Minister said, BNP was the largest political party that was dear to the people. The party workers had to work at the grass root level to make it stronger and bigger to realise the people's aspira-

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## Fahd warns ulemas against using mosques to attack govt

MEDINA (Saudi Arabia), Dec 21: King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has warned his country's religious leaders against using their mosques to attack the government, the Saudi press agency reported today, reports AFP.

"The pulpits are reserved for very specific business and should not be exploited by some to harm others," the King said Saturday in the western Holy City of Medina in a speech to religious leaders.

"Our doors are open to all those who wish to criticize" the government's policy, he said, but added that he was surprised that clerics had resorted to cassettes and publications to express their criticism.

Riyadh categorically dis-

missed the allegations and denied the existence of such a conflict. King Fahd on Saturday alluded to the newspaper article, saying "you have learned or read what is being said currently overseas about our country."

In October, a Saudi opposition source said in a confidential document made available to AFP in Paris that significant numbers of the Saudi religious hierarchy had called for major reforms.

The document called for a strong indictment of the country's political, economic and social conditions and recommended radical changes in various areas.

The paper said the retirement of seven clerics, attributed to old age and failing health, was a result of the conflict.

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## Cabinet okays seed policy

The cabinet has approved the national seed policy proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture, reports BSS.

The approval was given yesterday at the regular weekly meeting of the cabinet held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The seed policy aims at making the best quality seeds of improved varieties of crops conveniently and efficiently available to the farmers with a view to increasing crop production, farmers' productivity and per capita farm-income and export earning.

In order to remove the apparent inconsistencies of the Seed Ordinance of 1977 with the National Seed Policy, the cabinet also approved the draft of a bill proposing amendments thereof.

The cabinet was also apprised of the implementation status of the decisions taken in the cabinet meetings till November last.

## Port workers in Khulna, Mongla go on strike

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 21: Some 4000 workers in Khulna and Mongla Ports began strike for an indefinite period paralysing watercraft movement in all the 25 river routes of the district.

However, a section of workers defied the strike call and joined their duties.

All the fishing trawlers, tugs, cargo vessels and barges remained anchored at different river ports in the district during the strike.

Loading and off-loading operations at the Mongla Port came to a complete halt.

At present there are 16 ships in the port waiting for loading and unloading of goods.

However, no untoward incident was reported from Khulna and Mongla.

## BNP central council by April next

The central council meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party will be held by April next, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the party held here yesterday with the BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The meeting directed the Dhaka City Unit and the district units of the party to hold their respective council meetings within the date fixed for central council meeting of the party.

Decision was also taken at the meeting to observe "organisational week" from February 8. The programme of the week includes holding of rallies, public meetings and launching of membership drives.

## Russian Deputy FM in city

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Fridrikhovich Kunadze arrived here yesterday on a four-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman greeted him at the airport upon his arrival in the afternoon.

"It's a goodwill visit to commemorate the 20 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between Dhaka and Moscow," an official said.

The Russian Minister will hold talks with the Foreign Secretary today (Tuesday) covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and

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## British Home Minister due Dec 29

British Home Minister Kenneth Clerk will pay a four-day official visit to Bangladesh from December 29, reports UNB.

Official sources here said yesterday Clerk will discuss with his Bangladesh counterpart Abdul Matin Chowdhury bilateral matters.

Immigration issues and problems of narcotics and terrorism will prominently figure in the talks.

The British Minister is expected to call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

## US child labour bill threatens garments industry

Country's garment industry faces a serious threat as the United States is poised to make a law prohibiting import of goods produced abroad using child labour.

A bill, titled "Child Labour Deterrence Act-1992", introduced in the US Congress by Senator Tom Harkin and some other Senators in August, is most likely to be enacted in the next session of American parliament early next year.

Highly placed official sources told UNB that the

Bangladesh Embassy in Washington had recently informed the government of the forthcoming US law as well as its dire consequences on the country's garment sector substantially manned by child labourers.

Most worrisome facet of the proposed act, sources said, is a provision that will force the US government to start a campaign to encourage its trade partners to enforce an international ban on import of commodities produced by

child workers aged under 15.

The bill notes that children constitute 11 per cent of the workforce in many Asian countries.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington cautioned country's garment sector might fall victim of the proposed legal restrictions as allegations have been made time to time by several quarters in United States about child labour in Bangladesh, particularly in garment industry.

In 1991, AFL-CIO, an

American trade union, petitioned the US government for suspending Bangladesh's eligibility for American GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) on the ground of use of child labour. The trade union hammered on "deplorable" child labour situation in Bangladesh's garment sector.

Many human rights groups in USA have also vented concerns about the employment of children in Bangladesh garment sector.

Garments now fetch about 1200 million US dollars a year and 52 per cent of the exports go to US market alone.

Sources said Ambassador Abul Ahsan, Bangladesh envoy to USA, in a letter to key government officials, has cautioned these trade unions and human rights groups might step up their campaign for ban on import of Bangladesh garments soon after the law is enacted.

Ahsan suggested the authorities in Dhaka should take ur-

gent steps to remove child labour from export-oriented industries.

He recommended rules might be framed immediately barring those garment exporters and manufacturers employing child labour from entitlement to US textile and apparel quotas.

Meanwhile, sources, quoting despatches by Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, said US buyers had started feeling shaky about Bangladesh gar-

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