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# The Daily Star

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Saraswati  
Puja today**

The Saraswati Puja will be celebrated in a befitting manner by the Hindu community throughout the country today. Devi Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and learning is generally celebrated by the Hindu student community, reports BSS.

**PM visits ailing  
B Chowdhury**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday visited Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Hadrudzo Chowdhury who was undergoing treatment at Suhrawardy Hospital here. Prof. Chowdhury left yesterday for Singapore Mount Elizabeth Hospital for further treatment, reports BSS.

**Indian Republic  
Day reception**

The Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh and Mrs. K. Raghunath hosted a reception here yesterday evening on the occasion of 43rd anniversary of the Republic of India. Agriculture, Irrigation, Flood Control and Water Development Minister Major General (Retd) Majidul Haq, political leaders including Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Abdus Samad Azad, high civil and military officials, journalists, diplomats and elite of the city attended, reports BSS.

**Australian envoy  
hosts reception**

Australian High Commissioner R. K. Gate held a reception yesterday on the occasion of the Australian National Day. The reception held at the Australian High Commission Recreation Centre was attended, among others, by Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, political leaders, diplomats, high civil and military officers, journalists and elites, reports UNB.

**Babri Mosque demolition**

## Dhaka terms Delhi's reaction to JS resolution disappointing

Bangladesh yesterday termed the Indian reaction over the resolution adopted by the parliament on the Babri mosque incident as "regrettable and disappointing," reports UNB.

In its resolution on January 20, the Bangladesh parliament condemned the razing of the historic mosque and demanded reconstruction of the demolished mosque at its original site.

"The resolution of the Bangladesh parliament can in no way be construed as interference in the internal affairs of India," a Foreign Office spokesman in Dhaka said.

The Indian government promptly issued a statement rejecting the resolution, saying: "It is a totally unacceptable interference in our internal affairs."

When his attention was drawn to the statement of the Indian government, the

spokesman said that the statement could be "justified neither by intent nor by the substance of the resolution adopted by the Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad."

The Indian statement addressed the effects resulting from the incident but totally ignored the cause," he added.

The spokesman asserted that the resolution of the Bangladesh parliament can in no way be construed as interference in the internal affairs of India, adding "it was a legitimate expression of concern by people's representatives through a democratic method."

"Its basic motivation was to assist in the process of restoring calm and communal harmony in India so as to help contain the ripple effect in the region."

The spokesman said, "Emotional frenzy unleashed by bigoted and fringe elements inevitably spreads across borders affecting all concerned."

It made it clear that the resolution did not denounce the Indian government or its any acts or policies, merely called for the implementation of the Indian Prime Minister's declaration to rebuild the mosque at its original site as a step contributing to peace and harmony.

Pointing out the gross misrepresentation in the Indian statement, the spokesman said that singling out the ruling BNP party as indulging in public denunciation of India's policies and actions is both biased and baseless.

Rejecting the Indian charges of extensive damage to property, untold suffering and deep insecurity, he said, "There is total transparency in the situation in Bangladesh and any objective observer can ascertain the truth."

Reiterating the consistent position of Bangladesh on the situation, the spokesman said that while condemning those

responsible for demolition of the mosque it had repeatedly called for "utmost restraint and tolerance in keeping with the traditions enjoyed by Islam."

He pointed out that the government had taken unprecedented steps to maintain calm and law and order in the volatile atmosphere resulting directly as a reaction from events in India.

Explaining the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy, the spokesman said, Bangladesh considers the maintenance of constructive, cooperative and friendly relations with India a vital imperative of its foreign policy and shall continue to strive towards this end.

"Its policy has always been transparent and in keeping with norms and principles of international behaviour that are not only a constitutional commitment but beyond reproach in practice," he said.

## Hartals called to disrupt development : PM

RANIRBUNGLOW (Mafnami), Jan 26: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called upon the people irrespective of caste and creed to participate in politics of production for economic emancipation of the masses, reports BSS.

Addressing a public rally here Begum Zia said her government wants self-reliance of the country in all fields with people's participation.

She said the defeated political forces who do not believe in people's welfare, are out to disrupt the development process by giving hartal programmes. She urged the people to remain alert about those who are engaged in acts of terrorism, keeping the people hostage.

The Prime Minister stressed the need for utilisation of the country's manpower and other resources through hard work and honesty to bring smile on everybody's face. She sought peoples' cooperation to implement the 19-point programmes of BNP to achieve the desired goal of self-reliance.

Begum Zia said, "If we want

progress and prosperity of the country, politics of hartal and siege needs to be stopped. "She said with the restoration of democracy the government has taken necessary steps for the exploitation of the mineral resources like coal and hard rock to improve the condition of the masses.

Presided over by Rabeya Chowdhury MP, the meeting was also addressed among others, by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Energy and Mineral Resource Minister Dr Khondker Mosharrar Hossain, Manjur Ahsan Munshi MP, Kamaluddin, Alhaj Janab Ali, A Latif, Alauddin Ahmed, Shah, Mohammad Selim—all local leaders.

She urged the people to come forward to invest in small and cottage industries as total dependence on government can not help achieve the desired goal of self-reliance.

Begum Zia said the government will extend all-out help to dairy farms, poultry farms and fish cultivation projects. She said the country has to meet its milk requirement. See Page 12 Col 6

## Comilla-Ashuganj power sub-station opens

COMILLA, Jan 26: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said establishment of accountability at all levels of government activity was imperative to consolidate democracy and ensure development of the country, reports UNB.

"Officers and employees of power sector have a greater responsibility in this regard," she said inaugurating the Ashuganj-Comilla 230 KV National Grid Transmission Line and Sub-Station at Harindhara here this afternoon.

Besides supplying more power with higher reliability to greater Comilla and adjoining areas, the project will also transmit more power to Feni and Chittagong and bring stability in the National Grid Power System.

The Tk 2,400 million project of the Power Development Board (PDB), which started in February 1991, has been implemented with a financial assistance of Tk 2,170 million from Germany.

"Balanced development is precondition to making the hard-earned democracy mean- See Page 12 Col 1



People running for cover after a bomb explosion near Farmgate in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

## Violence-free hartal

By Staff Correspondent

A six-hour hartal was observed peacefully in the capital and elsewhere in the country Tuesday.

The Awami League called the dawn-to-noon hartal throughout the country except Chittagong to protest the alleged attempt on life of its chief Sheikh Hasina in Chittagong January 24.

In Chittagong half-day hartal was observed Monday.

Awami League leaders alleged that masked gunmen took an attempt on the life of the party chief at a public meeting at Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong Sunday.

In the capital, normal life was marred during the hartal from 6 am to 12 noon yesterday.

No major untoward incident was reported from any part of the city during the hartal hours. Some crackers were

blasted at Farmgate, Chankharpole, Gulistan and Moghbazar in the city.

A number of processions were brought out in support of the hartal from different points in the capital.

General Secretary of the city unit of the AL, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya led a procession from Bangabandhu Avenue while Begum Matiya Chowdhury MP and Advocate Shahara Khatun led separate processions at Rampura and Farmgate respectively in the morning.

All transports in the city excluding a few rickshaws and BRTC buses stayed off the roads during the six hours. BRTC buses were escorted by police vans and the VIP roads were open to rickshaws.

Inter-district bus services from Mohakhali, Sayedabad See Page 12 Col 7

## 50 rounded up Attempt to hold rally in Sind for repatriation of Biharis

KARACHI, Jan 26: Pakistan police made several arrests Tuesday as it foiled an attempt here by some 50 to hold a rally outside the provincial assembly in support of the repatriation of Pakistanis in Bangladesh, witnesses said, reports AFP.

The demonstration was called by the Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik (MIT), a group claiming to represent Urdu-speaking migrants from India.

The rally was to have taken place outside the provincial assembly while it met to discuss the repatriation of the Pakistanis, known as Biharis, at the demand of the main opposition People's Democratic Alliance led by former premier Benazir Bhutto.

## Muslims hoist black flags, call it a 'black day' Kashmir rebels fire rockets at Republic Day venue

NEW DELHI, Jan 26: India displayed its military muscle at a Republic Day parade attended by British Prime Minister John Major today as Muslims shaken by last month's destruction of a mosque called it a 'black day', reports AFP.

In Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, Muslim secessionists fired two rockets at a Republic Day venue in Srinagar and ordered residents to hoist black flags, police said. Three militants died in skirmishes in Kashmir.

Major, who is on an official visit here, was chief guest at the colourful parade along New Delhi's main avenue, where tens of thousands got a glimpse of India's latest military acquisitions and cultural diversity.

Nearly 5,000 securitymen guarded the venue and the parade route, snipers lurked on rooftops and spectators were

frisked and made to pass through detectors for explosives.

Commandos ringed Major, Rao and Sharma.

Meanwhile screaming Hindus are butchers, thousands of Muslims streamed out of a mosque here today to protest the republic day celebrations as a black chapter in the country's secular history.

Muslim religious leaders strung out black flags and streamers across the sprawling Jama Masjid, New Delhi's largest mosque, as some 5,000 Muslims shouting anti-government slogans broke through police cordons, witnesses said.

"Muslims prepare yourself to defend your homes and our sisters from the Hindus," the religious leaders said over loudspeakers as the protesters clogged traffic and tried to march to parliament to hand

over a letter.

"We want to tell the world that the Indian constitution had broken down. Rule of law does not exist anymore in India," said Ahmad Bukhari, the Deputy Imam or priest of the Jama Masjid.

The Prime Minister (Narasimha Rao) is a butcher. The Home Minister (S. B. Chavan) is a butcher," yelled the protesters, accusing the federal government of fanning the Hindu-Muslim riots.

Sikh militants battling for a homeland in Punjab set off in an overnight attack aimed at disrupting republic day ceremonies in the northern state, no one died in the blast.

An Indian news agency said police arrested some 60 Muslim community leaders in Faizabad, near Ayodhya, for launching an anti-Republic Day protest march.

Earlier Story on Page 5.

## Cancer vaccine by year-end

LONDON, Jan 26: The first human tests of a vaccine designed to prevent cancer will start at the end of this year, the British Cancer Research Campaign (CRC) announced Monday, reports AFP.

CRC researchers believe viral vaccines will become one of the main methods of cancer prevention during the next century, the Financial Times reported.

The new vaccine stops infection with the Epstein Barr Virus (EBV), which is known to cause several types of cancer.

Recent evidence suggests that viruses are responsible for at least 20 per cent of all cancers—possible 5 million cases a year worldwide, the report said.

EBV does most damage in China where it causes 60,000 deaths a year from cancer of the nasal cavity, and in tropical Africa where it leads to several thousand cases a year of Burkitt's lymphoma, a childhood cancer, the newspaper See Page 12 Col 2

## Moscow for dialogue with Iraq Yeltsin criticizes US 'tendency to dictate'

MOSCOW, Jan 26: Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Monday criticized the United States for what he termed as a recent tendency to dictate its terms to the international community on the Iraqi and Yugoslav questions, reports AFP.

Yeltsin, speaking to reporters before his official visit to India on January 27-29, said Russia favoured a peaceful settlement to the Iraqi crisis.

"We are in favour of a political dialogue with Iraq leaders," Yeltsin said.

"It seemed to me that the new US President was also inclined to proceed from that policy," he stated, adding that Russia was respecting UN resolutions.

CIS Commander-in-Chief Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov on Monday voiced disapproval over US air raids on Iraq, stating that not all peaceful means had been exhausted for restoring rela-

tions with Baghdad.

"In my view, not all means have been exhausted to restore peace in the Gulf region including actions that could have been initiated by the United Nations and its Security Council," Shaposhnikov told a news conference.

In Baghdad UN nuclear experts set off today on the first inspection of 1993 in their drive to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations has the names of 80 firms which contributed to Iraq's nuclear programme and Baghdad claims this represents 90 per cent of its foreign suppliers, the head of inspection team said at the start of a new mission here Monday.

Earlier, the UN Security Council decided Monday to renew the worldwide trade and travel embargo against Iraq, despite recent overtures by the government of Saddam Hussein.

## Geological Survey official held for smuggling out documents

Special Branch (SB) police late Monday night arrested Khandker S M Habibur Rahman, a deputy director of the Geological Survey, allegedly on charges of treason, according to a police source.

Rahman was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Tuesday and taken on police remand for questioning.

A top level police source said that Habibur Rahman was charged with sending secret state documents to a foreign country. The SB and two other intelligence agencies were questioning Rahman in this connection, the source added without giving details.

## Gold haul at ZIA Three on police remand

By Staff Correspondent  
Three persons, one of them a foreigner, arrested in connection with Monday's gold smuggling were remanded to the Detective Branch (DB) of police Tuesday for four days for questioning.

All three—a Russian Vladimir I Linkin and two Bangladeshis Ambrose Gomes and SM Ratan—were produced before a city magistrate in the Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate's court Tuesday afternoon.

On a prayer of seven-day police remand by DB, the magistrate granted four days remand for questioning.

Customs officials seized nearly two maunds of gold from two 'diplomatic' consignments at the airfreight godown at Zia International Airport (ZIA) Monday.

The consignments were sent to the Russian Mission in Dhaka from Darby Impex Enterprise of Singapore. The Customs officials See Page 12 Col 3

## Number of guest birds dwindles

By Shamsad Mortuza

Hundreds of birds wheeling and turning form a black blur against the clear blue wintry sky. Soon the birds sweep low over the lakes of the Jahangirnagar University where hundreds of others rest.

The birds are scattered all over the place: Teal, Laser Whistling Teal, Pintail, Snipe, Pintail Snipe, Greenshank, Whimbrel... one does not need to bother for names when they are worth watching.

In every winter birds from the cold countries move into the tropical countries. For them there is no border, no no-fly zone. These birds migrate in search of warmth. See Page 12 Col 4



Guest birds in Jahangirnagar University campus.

—Star photo

## Law for direct election of Mayors soon

By Nazmul Ashraf

The government is drafting new laws providing for direct election to the posts of mayors of the country's four city corporations, official sources said.

The laws are also aimed at making some other changes. The Local Government Ministry has already drafted the Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Act 1993 that has been approved by the Cabinet, ministry sources said adding that similar bills for the Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi city corporations were being prepared.

All the four bills are likely to be tabled in the Jatiya Sangsad in its current session, they said.

According to the proposed amendments, the city corporations would be renamed as

Municipal Corporations. The ousted government of Ershad had preferred to call the municipalities in the country's four divisional headquarters Municipal Corporation.

The BNP government changed the four Municipal Corporations into City Corporations through passing of separate bills in Parliament.

The amendments suggest that the Mayors be elected directly by the voters and that the post of Deputy Mayor be abolished.

There is no provision in the proposed amendments for women commissioners who are nominated by the government under the existing law.

Instead, reserved seats for female commissioners, to be See Page 12 Col 2