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## NEWS BRIEFS

**CEC addresses**  
**nation today**

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Muhammad Abdur Rauf will address the nation today on the eve of the ensuing Paurasava election. His address will be broadcast over radio and television simultaneously at 7:30 pm, reports UNB.

**Hansenne leaves**  
**Dhaka**

Director General of the International Labour Organisation Michel Hansenne left here yesterday evening after a two-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

**BUET student dies**  
**of diarrhoea**

A fourth year student of Electrical Engineering Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) died yesterday at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Md Monturuddin Munir, who was undergoing treatment at the hospital for some days died of diarrhoeal disease after midnight Tuesday. Meanwhile, Awami League backed BCL, JCD, Chhatra Union and EUCSU in separate statement accused the attending doctors of negligence of duty, reports UNB.

**Two children**  
**burnt to death**

SATKHIRA, Jan 27: Two children were burnt alive while their parents were enjoying television programme in a neighbour's house keeping them locked inside their hut at village Parulia in Dewatta thana Tuesday midnight. Parulia Union Parishad Chairman Badsha Moliah said Khokon (8) and his elder sister Khuki (12) burnt to death while sleeping, reports UNB.

**JS selection**  
**body meets**

The selection committee of the Jatiya Sangsad, constituted to amend some articles of the Constitution, met yesterday at the Sangsad Bhaban. The president of the committee and Law and Justice Minister Mirza Goleam Haif was in the chair, reports BSS.

## Ogata to visit Dhaka soon Rohingya repatriation resumes next week

By Farid Hossain

The repatriation of Rohingya refugees, postponed over disputes with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), will resume by early next week, a senior official said Wednesday after talks with Myanmar officials.

"We hope that the UNHCR officials will participate in the process of repatriation that will start again by Jan 31 (Sunday)," Omar Farooq, Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong told reporters after the 13th round of Bangladesh-Myanmar repatriation talks at Cox's Bazar Circuit House.

At the hour-long talks Farooq led an 11-member delegation, while the 11-member

Myanmar team was headed by Muang Aung, Director General at the Immigration and Manpower Department.

Bangladesh sent home more than 17,000 from an estimated 265,000 Rohingya refugees until Jan 15 when the repatriation was put off amid UNHCR and US allegations that many were sent forcibly. Dhaka, however, denied that anyone was forced back home.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman is currently in New York where he held talks Tuesday with UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Earlier, he met with US State Department officials.

Speaking on condition of

anonymity a western source said that the UNHCR was expected to send a senior official to Dhaka next month for a fresh look into the refugee situation and their repatriation.

No specific date has been set for the planned visit by Werner Blatter, Director at the Asian Bureau of the UNHCR. Blatter, who was in Dhaka last month at the height of tension between Dhaka and the UNHCR, would also discuss with Bangladesh officials the possibility of UNHCR chief Sadako Ogata's visit to Bangladesh. Dhaka has invited her for the visit to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation.

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Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman (left) talking with the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (right) Tuesday. — AFP photo

## Move for US embargo on garments

### ILO offers tripartite talks

ILO Director General Michel Hansenne yesterday said his organisation could convene a tripartite meeting to resolve the problem arising out of a move for US embargo on import of Bangladeshi garments allegedly produced with child labour, reports UNB.

He, however, told reporters at a press briefing here that such a negotiation could be held if the concerned countries were interested.

Replying to newsmen, he said earlier the International Labour Organisation had tried to convene a meeting of developing countries facing the same problem to discuss and find a solution.

"But the meeting could not be held as many of the developing countries declined to attend it," the visiting ILO chief said, adding they even do not want to raise the issue.

A proposed American law, "Child Labour Deterrence Act," prescribes serious punitive measures against foreign industries using workers under the age of 15.

A strong campaign is being carried out by industrial and labour lobbies in US Congress to let the law go through in the next session.

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan who was among others present

at the briefing later told journalists that the campaign was nothing but an "international conspiracy" by foreign manufacturers to hurt Bangladesh from overseas market.

He said some helpless children only do side works, they were not engaged in production in factories. The government is trying to bring them out into better environment and provide educational facilities.

Mannan Bhuiyan informed newsmen that counter campaign against the US move had already started in America to portray the real situation.

The DG said ILO was ready to provide all cooperation, including fund raising for training and orientation, in developing labour situation in the country.

He, however, said the reasons for industrial unrest in Bangladesh were more political than industrial. He attributed the low flow of foreign investment here to political unrest.

Held at the state guest house "Padma" the conference was also attended by Labour Secretary Dr Shah Mohammad Farid, Ali Taq of ILO headquarters, ILO Director in Bangladesh Werner K Blenk and Director General (UN) at

the Foreign Ministry Afsarul Kabir.

The ILO DG, who was a veteran politician of Belgium, arrived here on January 25 to discuss various trade union problems with Bangladesh leaders and officials and try to find out ways and means of resolving those.

During the visit, he called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and employers and workers' associations and discussed various aspects of the country's labour situation.

When asked about the relations of employers and workers, the ILO executive said it was not bad but there was still lot of scope to develop the relations. "It's upto the government."

Replying to the impact of rapid growth of private sector industries on the relations, he said "the more will be industrialisation the more will be production which help develop the relations."

Referring to the half-day hartal he witnessed on Tuesday, Hansenne said "you have so many political strikes. These are not good, neither for the country nor for the industries."

## Ghali assures all help in tackling Rohingya crisis

United Nation's Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has assured Bangladesh of all possible cooperation from the world body in tackling the Rohingya refugee problem, reports UNB.

Ghali appreciated the steps Bangladesh was taking to resolve the refugee issue and conveyed his best regards to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

According to a message received in Dhaka yesterday, the UN chief's assurance came when Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman met with Ghali at the United Nations headquarters on Tuesday.

The Foreign Minister briefed the UN Secretary General on the latest situation regarding refugee repatriation. During the discussion, Mostafizur thanked Ghali for his personal interest in the matter and invited him to visit Bangladesh.

The 45-minute meeting also discussed global issues, including Bosnia-Herzegovina and peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Mozambique. Ghali lauded Bangladesh's contribution to a number of ongoing UN peacekeeping operations and hoped such cooperation between Dhaka and the world body would continue.

UN Under Secretary General Jan Eliasson also called on the Bangladesh Foreign Minister at his hotel suit. They had further in-depth discussion on the stalled repatriation of an estimated 2.65 lakh Myanmar Muslims sheltered in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Permanent Representative to UN Ambassador Humayun Kabir was present on both the occasions.

Earlier, the Foreign Minister visited the permanent mission of the country at the UN headquarters and discussed the officials.

The Foreign Minister is expected back home today (Thursday).

## Fresh riots leave 3 dead in Delhi, Bombay

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Mobs of Hindus and Muslims destroyed a mosque and a temple and burned down dozens of shops on Wednesday in a new outburst of communal violence that left one person dead, reports AP.

Two people were also injured in Old Delhi, one of the few areas of the capital where Muslims form a majority. Thousands of police took over the streets and immediately imposed a curfew.

Hundreds of miles to the southwest, at least two people were killed Tuesday night in Bombay when a mob of Muslims attacked Hindu worshippers in the streets. The violence occurred hours before Prime Minister John Major of

Britain visited Bombay.

In Old Delhi, thousands of steel-helmeted policemen fanned out across the narrow streets of the crowded business center on Wednesday to control the Hindu-Muslim mobs.

At least 15 fire trucks fought blazes, including one that raced through a paint store, news agencies reported.

In Bombay, Muslim men hurled stones, soda bottles and light bulbs filled with acid at Hindus returning home after praying in the streets of Malad neighbourhood Tuesday night, according to Press Trust of India. The attackers also set fire to some homes.

Seven people were reported killed in the violence. See Page 12 Col 8

## Separate science ministry likely

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government was actively considering to form a separate ministry for science and technology, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister was addressing the inaugural function of the 16th National Science and Technology Week at the Science Museum in Agargaon area of the capital. The theme of the week is "Science and Youth Community."

Begum Zia said her government had attached importance to proper coordination of research and application in the science and technology sector. She mentioned the

See Page 12 Col 4

## A party is creating indiscipline : PM

MYMENSINGH, Jan 27: The Prime Minister today accused "a certain political party", obliquely referring to the Awami League, of creating indiscipline in national life and damaging public property, reports UNB.

Gripped by internal conflicts and squabbles, they are creating indiscipline and disrupting the national progress", Begum Khaleda Zia said apparently referring to the January 24 Chittagong incident in which rival Awami League groups were engaged in shootout at a public meeting.

The Prime Minister, on her day-long tour of the district, was addressing a huge public meeting at the local Credit House ground here this afternoon.

She blamed the vested quarters for "obstructing the national progress when BNP is trying to march ahead with its politics of production and development."

"We have fallen far behind due to the nine years of autocratic rule... Now is the time to build the country unitedly", she said calling upon the people to resist those trying to hinder the development process.

Referring to different development programmes in the communication, education, health, agriculture and other sectors being implemented by the present government, Begum Zia said BNP does not believe in politics of tall talks.

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## Industrialisation seen key to quick progress

By Staff Correspondent  
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has said rapid industrialisation is the key to quick progress.

She was addressing the inaugural session of a regional seminar on Investment Promotion and Enhancement of the Role of Private Sector in Asia and the Pacific held at the National Economic Council (NEC) auditorium Wednesday.

It was jointly organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), ESCAP and the government.

"The success of industrialisation depends largely on technology," Begum Zia said. "We have to be active in inventing appropriate technology and

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## Nat'l Baul Music Festival begins

SONARGAON (Narayangan), Jan 27: A three-day national Baul Music Festival, jointly organised by Bangladesh Folklore Parishad and Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation, began here this afternoon amid enthusiasm, reports BSS.

Some 40 bauls — members of a mystic folk cult — from different parts of the country are taking part in the festival being held at the foundation premises here.

Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry Islamuddin Malik inaugurated the festival which was directly broadcast by the Radio Bangladesh for one hour from 4 pm.

Presided over by noted folklorist and President of the Folklore Parishad, Dr Ashraf Siddiqi, the inaugural session was also addressed by convener of the Festival Organising Committee Mustafa Zaman Abbas.

Dr Ashraf Siddiqi, in his speech, said baul music is a part of the thousand-year old tradition of the country. The baul music preaches universality, equality and fraternity, he said.

The festival began with the opening song "Makkah Madina jetha hotte hajir/ Tomara name aami rahi musafir..." by 83-year-old baul Khaleq Dewan from Bamansur, Keraniganj, who is regarded as the "Guru". See Page 12 Col 6



Abdur Rahman Bayati at Baul Song Festival in Sonargoon yesterday. — Star photo

## Laldighi incident: Injured BCL activist dies

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: An activist of pro-Awami League Chhatra League today succumbed to his injuries he received during shootouts on Sunday at Sheikh Hasina's public meeting at Laldighi Maidan, reports UNB.

Chittagong Medical College Hospital sources said Abdul Momin (25), identified as a Chhatra League activist of Doublemuring thana unit, died at the hospital today (Wednesday).

He had received bullet wounds in the shootout at Laldighi Maidan between rival factions of the Awami League.

The namaz-e-janaza was held separately at Chittagong Government Commerce College and Laldighi Maidan.

Later the body was sent to his village home at Parashuram thana of Feni district for burial. Hearing the news of Momin's death, BCL supporters brought out a procession in the port city demanding arrest and trial of the terrorists.

None, however, has been arrested so far in connection with the Laldighi Maidan incident.

Meanwhile, our Staff Correspondent adds: Tension brewed in Chittagong port city when the death news of Momin spread.

The Chhatra League leaders have given a call for half-day hartal in Chittagong on February 2 in protest against the attack on Momin that led his premature death.

## Police continue interrogation of geological survey official

By Staff Correspondent

The Deputy Director of Geological Survey of Bangladesh was being interrogated by the Special Branch (SB) until Wednesday night.

The Deputy Director Khandker S M Habibur Rahman is on three-day police remand for questioning on charge of transferring secret state documents to a foreign country. Rahman was arrested late Monday night on treason charge and was being interrogated by the SB and two other intelligence agencies.

A police source said that some other persons might have link with Rahman but he refused to give any details.

## CEC warns against violation of election procedures

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Muhammad Abdur Rauf yesterday sounded a tough warning against violence or corrupt practice during the ensuing paurasava elections and parliamentary by-election in Mirpur constituency.

In an exclusive interview with the United News of Bangladesh (UNB), Justice Rauf said the Election Commission is determined to ensure free and fair election where the electorates could exercise their right of franchise without any fear or influence.

He said the Election Commission has taken extra precautionary measures for ensuring fair voting in 91 paurasavas (municipality) on January 30 and parliamentary

by-election in Mirpur (Dhaka-11) constituency.

Adequate number of security forces including paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles will be deployed at each polling stations to maintain law and order.

Army will be kept on full alert to assist the law enforcing agencies in checking any election violence.

Listing measures for fair voting in the paurasava and parliamentary by-election, Justice Rauf said Magistrates would be posted at each polling booth, number of polling stations has been increased by 30 per cent, adequate polling booths have been arranged and Presiding Officers and other election officials upgraded.

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## Mirpur by-election Arches, banners vanish

By Staff Correspondent

Big arches, erected along the streets in various parts of Mirpur in support of the candidates contesting the February 3 by-election to the Dhaka-11 (Mirpur) constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad, were yesterday dismantled following an instruction of the Election Commission.

The Election Commission (EC) in a press statement issued Tuesday reminded the candidates of the relevant clauses of the Public Representation Ordinance of 1972 concerning expenditure during election campaigns and instructed the candidates to remove the arches and banners.

Warning of stern punitive action, as provided by the

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## Yeltsin for Soviet-era friendship with Delhi

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived on what he called "sacred Indian soil" Wednesday, hoping to solve a nagging debt issue and seal a \$500 million arms deal, reports AP.

Yeltsin told reporters on his arrival that he wanted to revive Moscow's Soviet-era friendship with New Delhi as part of a broader effort to stem criticism by Russian hard-liners who say he is too pro-Western.

During the three-day visit, Yeltsin, Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and their aides plan to sign at least 10 agreements, including a friendship pact to replace one between India and the former Soviet Union.

At the top of the agenda is a dispute over how much India

owes Russia, and efforts to revive bilateral trade, which fell from \$3.5 billion in 1990 to \$1.3 billion last year.

Yeltsin, discussing efforts to balance Russian foreign policy, said that immediately after the Soviet collapse he concentrated "on relations with the United States to resolve certain issues, especially nuclear issues."

"Now, we need to turn to other powers with whom our relations have fallen to unacceptably low levels," he said.

"In recent years, our ties with India have weakened. So we need to introduce new dynamism into the relationship," he said, noting that within recent months he has "visited South Korea, China and India", that is our Asian neighbours in the region.