

Inside Today

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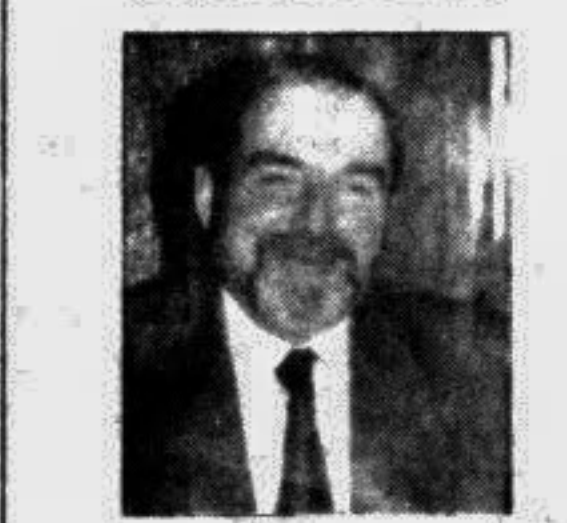
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NEWS BRIEFS

Seminar at JU today

By JU Correspondent

A seminar on student politics and development of Bangladesh will be held today (Sunday) at the Senate Hall of the Jahangirnagar University. Organised by the World University Service (WUS), the key-note paper of the seminar will be presented by the Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof. Kazi Saich Ahmed. Speaker of the House, Sheikh Russak Ali will be the chief guest, while Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Prof. Mohammad Shahjahan will chair the seminar.

Arms recovered

CHITTAGONG, Jan 30: A special team of the Doublimooring police recovered one light-gun, one cartridge and two daggers from the possession of one person at Ambagan here today, reports BSS.

123 more held on various charges

Police arrested 123 people from different parts of the city in last two days on various charges, a DMP press release said.

One killed, 100 injured in pouira poll violence

By Staff Correspondent

Violence and alleged vote-fraud marked the fifth Pourashava elections in the country Saturday leaving at least one person killed and 100 others injured.

Results of 40 pourashavas out of a total of 89 were unofficially announced, according to the latest report from the Election Commission in Dhaka at midnight last night.

Polling in five centres in four pourashavas was postponed due to the violence.

The postponed centres were Mathpara Government Primary School of Munshiganj pourashava, Abalpur Government Primary School centre under Magura pourashava, Aran

Chandra High School and Noakhali College Centres of Noakhali pourashava and Bangshi Bangalee High School centre of Sharishabari pourashava in Jamalpur district.

According to a press release of the Election Commission, polling in 89 pourashavas was held peacefully barring some stray incidents at one or two places.

Our Correspondent in Munshiganj reported: One person was killed and another 20 injured in bomb blasts and firing at the Mathpara High School Centre during the pourashava election.

The victim was identified as Abdul Matin (48) who died on

the spot. Rokimuddin, driver of the district police superintendent was critically injured in a bomb blast and admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The other injured persons were admitted to the Munshiganj Sadar Hospital.

The bloody clash between the supporters of the BNP and the Awami League candidates began after the Food Minister Shamsul Islam and Deputy Minister for Cooperatives and LGRD Abdul Hye arrived at the Mathpara centre.

The enraged supporters of the AL candidate alleged that the ministers were influencing the people to vote for the BNP

nominee.

Altercations between the supporters of the two candidates ensued later resulting in gunfire and bomb explosions. Police whisked the ministers from the spot. However, the car of the Deputy Minister was damaged.

Our Jessore Correspondent said that four candidates for the chairmanship of the Jessore pourashava Sunday have called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city protesting terrorism, alleged vote-rigging and a minister's influencing voters in favour of the BNP candidate.

The hartal call came at a

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Women voters queue to cast their votes at a pourashava polling centre in Munshiganj yesterday. - Star photo

Reconciliation meet on Haliahar Guilty to face upto death sentence, says Naval chief

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 30: Naval chief Rear Admiral Mohaiminul Islam said here today that the navymen, now facing court-martial over the Haliahar incidents, could get up to the death sentence if their direct involvements were proved.

The Naval chief disclosed this at a reconciliation meeting of the local people of violence-torn Haliahar and Navy officials at Chittagong City Corporation office here.

The meeting, organised in a bid to normalise relations between the local people of Haliahar, affected by the

atrocities unleashed by a section of Navy men, and the Navy personnel of the Chittagong Naval Base, was attended by the Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, Naval Chief Rear Admiral Mohaiminul Islam, Member of Parliament from Doublimooring constituency Amir Khasru Mahmood Chowdhury, some local chiefs of Haliahar area and Navy and police officials.

Addressing the meeting the Mayor urged for restoration of the pre-violence situation in Haliahar area with a view to

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PM's visit to France put off

Star Report

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has postponed her February 2-5 visit to France citing the necessity of her presence at home during the time to deal with domestic affairs, Foreign Ministry officials said.

Begum Zia was scheduled to depart midnight Monday. The decision of putting off the trip was conveyed to the French Embassy in Dhaka at 1.30 Saturday morning, the Ambassador said.

A single sentence French Embassy press release issued in the morning said, The Government of Bangladesh has informed the French Embassy today that the official visit of the Honourable Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to France, which was planned from the second to the fifth of February,

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UNHCR official due Feb 6 Rohingya repatriation resumes tomorrow

Bangladesh and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees are expected to reach a comprehensive agreement soon on 'safe and voluntary' return of Rohingyas, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, the repatriation, stalled in mid-January after the return of more than 16,000 refugees, resumes on Monday, officials said yesterday.

About 40 refugee families who were interrogated by local UNHCR representatives are awaiting repatriation at the transit camps at Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, they added.

Foreign Office sources said yesterday Warren Blatter, Director of the Asian bureau of the Geneva-based UN refugee agency, would visit Bangladesh in the first week of February in connection with a broadbased agreement.

Detailed modality of UNHCR involvement in the process of repatriation of the Myanmar refugees is likely to be worked out during his forthcoming 4-day visit beginning

February 6, the sources said. Blatter's trip is likely to be followed by a visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata.

Head of the local mission of UNHCR yesterday talked the situation with Foreign Ministry officials.

The UNHCR local representatives who unilaterally withdrew from the agreement with Bangladesh government on their participation in the repatriation have resumed their activity.

The government and the UNHCR officials here signed an agreement last October 8 facilitating the UN body's representatives to oversee the repatriation of some 2.65 lakh refugees which began in September under bilateral arrangements between Dhaka and Yangon.

But the UNHCR representatives dissociated themselves from the agreement in December due to some "misunderstandings and misgivings", which have now cleared.

Ekushey book fair begins tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The Amar Ekushey Boimela (book fair to commemorate the historic Language Movement) and other programmes of the Bangla Academy will begin tomorrow (Monday) at 4 pm in the Academy premises.

Director General of Bangla Academy Mohammad Harun-ur-Rashid announced the programmes at a press conference Saturday at the conference room of the Academy.

Justice Habibur Rahman will inaugurate the book fair, organised by the Academy in cooperation with Bangladesh Pustak Prokashak O Bikreta Samity.

Prof Harun-ur-Rashid said

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Malaysian trade centre opens in city Feb 13

Star Report

A Malaysian trade centre will open in Dhaka next month to promote bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Malaysia.

Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad will formally inaugurate the centre February 13 during his three-day official visit to Bangladesh. Dr Mahathir arrives here February 12.

The trade centre, first of its kind in Bangladesh, is being set up by Malaysia-Bangladesh Venture Ltd (MBV), a joint venture company established recently by some private sector enterprises of Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur.

The purpose of the MBV is to boost bilateral trade and provide more business opportunities to the private sector.

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Tk 10 cr BOL expansion scheme

By S Y Bakht

Bangladesh Oxygen Limited (BOL) is going to undertake a Tk 10 crore expansion scheme to meet the increased demands for its products.

This was revealed by Patrick J J Rich, the visiting chairman and chief executive of the BOC Group Plc, the United Kingdom-based parent company of BOL.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Rich also disclosed that the company has produced

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3-day US trade show opens

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman yesterday opened the three-day exhibition on the US business in Bangladesh with a call for stronger trade linkages between Dhaka and Washington.

Co-hosted by the US Embassy in Dhaka and the American-Bangladesh Economic Forum (ABEF), the US Trade Show is designed to display the range of products and services offered by the American companies in Bangladesh.

The ABEF, an association of US companies and their agencies doing business in Bangladesh, says the trade show, which the organisers

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Khaleda tells rallies in Mirpur 'Vote BNP nominee for politics of production'

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the electorates in Mirpur to vote for "Sheaf of paddy" her party's election symbol, in the February-3 by-election to carry forward the current development process against the destructive politics of an opposition party, reports BSS.

Addressing three election rallies in different places of Mirpur, she said there exists two different political trends in the country - one is the politics of production, development, building the country and safeguarding the national independence and the other is the politics of corruption, hartal, siege, chaos, anarchy and paralysing Parliament.

Begum Zia said her party represents the former political trend and called upon the voters of Mirpur to elect Syed Mohammad Mohsin, BNP nominee in the Mirpur by-election,

to help continue the government's development activities.

The Prime Minister, on her second-day of election campaign, addressed rallies at Gabtali playground, Kalyanpur Natun Bazar and Aporba Juba Sanga playground in Mirpur.

On her arrival at the meeting places, Begum Zia was greeted by thousands of party supporters, who flashed victory signs and chanted slogans extending their cooperation to the BNP government. Carrying colourful banners, posters, portraits of Shaheed Zia and Begum Zia, the supporters yelled "go ahead Begum Zia, we are with you."

The election rallies were addressed among others by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Mayor of Dhaka Mirza Abbas, State Minister for

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Only 7pc coastal belt people have safe shelter: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government is determined to provide the people of the country's coastal belt and offshore islands with proper and adequate shelters to protect them against the recurring onslaughts of cyclones and tidal surges, reports UNB.

"We have to build necessary infrastructures to provide shelters (during calamities) to the people of high-risk areas", Begum Zia said disclosing that only seven per cent people of the coastal belt and offshore islands have safe shelters.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating a 2-day national seminar on "Masterplan for Multipurpose Cyclone Shelters", organised and sponsored by the Planning Commission, UNDP and the World Bank.

Planning Minister A M Zahuruddin Khan chaired the inaugural session and team leader of BUET-BIDS Study Team on Multipurpose Cyclone

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Shibir activist beaten up: Clash on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

Assaults on two Shibir activists by unidentified youths led to a clash between police and a group of students at the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka University yesterday morning.

A Muktiyoddha Chhatra Command leader was injured and police lobbed several tear gas canisters to bring the situation under control, witnesses said.

Panic stricken students and others who had come to the TSC Janata Bank branch to procure application forms for admission in the DU Honours course this year scurried to safer places, witnesses added.

The trouble started at about 10.45 am when a group of unidentified youths held one Saifur Islam, a student of the Rajshahi Darus Salam Madrassa, termed him an Islami Chhatra Shibir activist and took him to the lawn inside the TSC building, witnesses said adding

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Accused mum on state secret smuggling

By Court Correspondent

Deputy Director of Geology and Survey Department Khandker SM Habibur Rahman, arrested under the Official Secrecy Act, 1923, declined to make a confessional statement to a Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday.

Habibur Rahman was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court at the end of a three-day police remand Saturday.

The accused was offered to make a confessional statement under Section 164 of the Cr PC before a Magistrate Faruq Ahmed Khan but the Deputy Director declined, according to a source.

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Hasina at Mirpur rallies 'Give befitting reply to BNP in Feb 3 by-polls'

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the people to take a fresh vow to re-establish the image of the Bengali nation for which lakhs of people embraced martyrdom in 1971 and which was being destroyed by certain political quarters with vested interest to make the nation crippled, reports BSS.

Addressing two election meetings at Mirpur Section One Primary School ground and another at Pallabi Section 12, Lal Maidan here yesterday the leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad said, Awami League which led the country to become an independent state, has now proved to be the lone organisation which could protect the hard-earned independence and make the country prosperous and stable.

Launching a bitter attack on the ruling BNP, the Opposition leader said that the people who had given votes to the

party have now become "totally frustrated" because during the last two years the BNP government had only offered the nation, "Terrorism, repression, inefficiency and disappointment".

She alleged that due to "corruption, nepotism and the worst kind of governance" Bangladesh had turned to be an Indian market during the BNP government. The Awami League President urged the people to give what she said "a befitting reply" to BNP in the February 3 by-elections through their mandate to the symbol of "Boat" and said that in the hands of the present government not only the spirit of liberation was threatened, but the quest for democratic practice and hope for establishing an ideal society was also shattered.

The largely attended meetings were presided over by

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One killed in Barisal police firing

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 30: One person was shot dead and 35 others were injured when Jatiya Party activists clashed with police in the town today.

Areas near the Central Shaheed Minar was under Section 144 since morning, which was imposed to avert possible clash between the supporters of Jatiya Party and BNP-backed Juba Dal. Both the organisations earlier announced to hold rallies at the same time at same venue today.

According to witnesses, over five hundred JP workers gathered in the morning and proceeded towards the meet-

ing place which was under Section 144. At one stage, the agitated JP workers clashed with police.

Police resorted to lathicharge and fired rubber bullets to disperse crowd. JP leaders alleged that police also fired about 25 rounds of gunshots. Nur Islam (20) a rickshaw puller was hit by a bullet and died on the spot near Aswini Kumar Town Hall.

Maidul Islam, a former MP, belonging to Jatiya Party was also injured in the clash. Jatiya Party called a dawn-to-dusk hartal tomorrow (Sunday) in Barisal town to protest police firing.

114 killed as train plunges into river in Kenya

NAIROBI, Jan 30: At least 114 people were killed today after a train carrying about 600 passengers plunged into a river near Mombasa, railway officials said, reports Reuter.

Officials said five coaches of a passenger train travelling to Nairobi from the coastal resort of Mombasa were washed away by raging floods at a bridge near Kashekani, on the mail route from Mombasa to the Lake Victoria port town of Kisumu.

"Four of the coaches were carrying at least 27 people each. The number of passengers in the fifth was not immediately known," a railway of-

ficial in Nairobi told Reuters. "Only one person has come out of the submerged coaches alive, with broken limbs," the official added.

"The death toll is certain to rise."

There were some very heavy rains. Floods covered the bridge, forced the train off course and the head and the following coaches were swept away," a railway official said by telephone from a monitoring unit in Mombasa.

appear the front coaches were immersed in water and it may have been too sudden for the driver to save the train."

Railway officials earlier incorrectly identified the train as a commuter service.

The crash was Kenya's worst train accident since the East African nation gained independence from Britain in 1963. At least 19 people died in a train crash in 1976.

Kenya railways said the accident occurred before dawn and a health workers said rescue operations were made difficult because information filtered to officials "too late to be of any use to many people."