

Striking doctors remain adamant

More patients left hospitals yesterday as the doctors continued their indefinite strike at the call of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA). The Health Minister, in another round of talks with BMA leaders yesterday, urged them to call off the strike as the government had accepted in principle their 21-point charter of demands. The BMA central committee, after talks with the Health Minister, started a meeting to review the minister's and proposal, and the on-going strike. The meeting was continuing till the filing of this report at midnight. Meanwhile, the doctors brought out processions and held rallies in different health

DCC polls diary



Public Meeting

By Staff Correspondent
With the clock ticking away, campaigning for the Dhaka City Corporation polls was expected to shift into a high gear this week. But the current chilly weather especially at night has dampened the spirit and enthusiasm of the supporters as well as the candidates themselves. Inside the make-shift roadside party election stalls most of the campaign craters, in their pullovers and jackets, were seen busy playing carom and sipping hot tea. Some even made bonfires in front of their camps to both ward off the cold and also, perhaps, to attract a warmth-seeking voter or two! Graffiti die hard. The painted slogans of candidates still remain on the city walls, flouting the accord reached by different political parties against writing on the walls. Interestingly, most of these slogans are ostensibly sponsored by the 'Elakabashi' (local people) who, it seems, don't care if their walls are defaced. Near The Daily Star office at Dhanmondi, Road No 3, this ghost sponsor identified himself as Baker Bhai — a protagonist of a popular BTB drama serial. Two siblings are vying for a commissioner post. One of them has the rooster for his symbol while the other has a 'Butterfly'. Yesterday, the processionists with the rooster were heard yelling: "What does the rooster eat?" "Butterfly, butterfly..." was the reply in unison.

Trial of Ershad to resume Jan 22

Upon a prayer by the defence counsel, Senior Special Judge Mohammad Abdus Salam yesterday fixed January 22 as the next date for the trial of former President HM Ershad and two others in a corruption case, report agencies. Former Works Minister Mostafa Jamal Haider and former Works Secretary Abdur Rouf are the co-accused in the case relating to non-payment of rents, amounting to Taka 31 lakh, of an abandoned house in Dhaka used as the head office of Ershad's Jatiya Party and installation of various facilities there by spending about Taka 81 lakh from the exchequer. The former president's counsel, Sudhir Kumar Hazra, who on an earlier occasion had refused to plead the case for being "denied of free access to his client (Ershad)," yesterday alleged that despite an order of the court, the secrecy of his meetings with his client is not being maintained and sought the court's intervention. Judge Salam allowed Hazra to talk with Ershad inside the courtroom by way of a brief recess during the proceedings, but the counsel expressed his inability to plead yesterday. Earlier, Ershad told the court that he had been harassed in the name of security. He alleged that he could not hold talks with his lawyers in privacy. "I would not have survived the torture and harassment had I not been a soldier," he said, adding that he is shadowed every moment in the jail. Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzak Khan told the court that Ershad was not an ordinary prisoner, but a former president whose security is very important to the authorities. Assuring that Ershad would receive all facilities permitted under law, Khan, however, stated that installation of electronic gadgets and surveillance equipment to monitor Ershad's movements in jail was within the jurisdiction of the authorities. He said those areas outside the purview of the court. Judge Salam agreed with the submission of PP Khan. Earlier, on the order of the Judge, two more chairs were brought to the dock where Ershad, Jamal Haider and Rouf were all standing because of the shortage of chairs. The Judge also extended the bail period of Haider and Rouf till January 22. The bails were scheduled to have expired yesterday.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam
Published by Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed at City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct). Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR DHAKA.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and her party's mayor candidate in the DCC polls Mohammad Hanif (L) waving at an election rally at Maghbazar in the city yesterday.

Party stalwarts

From Page 1 Col 5
hara, Shajahanpur, Badda, Nayapaltan and Maghbazar areas, urged the people to vote for the 'bicycle' in the January 30 Dhaka City Corporation polls. Hundreds of residents came out on the street and greeted her. Meanwhile, Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the Opposition in no way hampers the development activities of the country, as claimed by the BNP government. "The ruling party is accusing the Opposition to cover its own failures," she told an election meeting near Mouchak in the city yesterday afternoon. Hasina continued her hectic campaign in favour of her party's candidates for the January 30 election of Dhaka City Corporation, walking down different areas of Ramna, Gulshan and Mirpur thanas yesterday. The AL chief, along with her party's mayor candidate Mohammad Hanif, knocked the doors of different houses and canvassed for votes. While visiting the areas of Tejgaon, BG Press Colony, Nakhapara, Badda and Mirpur, Hasina urged the electorate to vote for the 'fish', the election symbol of Hanif. She warned that any attempt at rigging would be resisted and called upon the people to remain alert in the polling stations. Hasina was accompanied by AL general secretary Zillur Rahman and party leaders Mohammad Nasim MP, Sheikh Selim MP, A S M Feroz MP, Shahjahan Khan MP, Amir Hossain Amu and Akhtaruzzaman. BNP secretary general Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday addressed a public meeting at the Bahadur Shah Park in the older part of the city and urged the city dwellers to vote for Mirza Abbas.

He said that the citizens have accepted the policies and programmes of the BNP, a fact reflected in the results of the last parliamentary polls. The BNP won all the eight parliamentary seats in the city in 1991, he added. Mirza Abbas himself attended a meeting of the Titas Gas Employees' Oikkya Parishad at the Kawran Bazar office premises where Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was the chief guest. Abbas also continued a door-to-door campaign in Nayabazar, Islampur and Shakhariabazar areas of the city. Central and front organisation leaders also took part in different campaign programmes in their respective zones. The ruling party has divided the city into eight zones as part of its campaign strategy. Similarly, the Awami League and its front organisations held public meetings and processions in favour of Mohammad Hanif. AL general secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday campaigned for Hanif at the Cantonment area. Abdur Razzak, MP addressed a rally in Demra, while Mozaffar Hossain Paltu spent his day campaigning at the Motijheel and Sabujbagh areas. Hanif continued his door-to-door campaign at Malibagh yesterday. Party organising secretary Mohammad Nasim, MP and A S M Feroz, MP campaigned at the Gulshan diplomatic enclave. The Jamaat held a rally at Demra to project mayoral candidate A T M Azharul Islam. Party Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami addressed the rally. The Jamaat leaders also exchanged views with the lawyers of the Supreme Court. The 10-party back candidate Manzurul Ahsan Khan addressed a series of rallies at Rampura, Mouchak and Hazaribagh areas. Rashed Khan Menon MP, Sharif Nurul Ambia and left party leaders addressed the rally. The Jatiya Party conducted its campaign in Kawran Bazar, Patlakhan Lane, Mirpur and other city areas.

PM for positive role by opposition

SREEPUR (Gazipur), Jan 18: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today stressed the need for a positive role of the opposition parties for industrialisation and unhindered production in all sectors of the economy at a time when the government is striving for achieving self-reliance, reports UNB. She mentioned the remarks by foreign entrepreneurs, acclaiming the liberal industrial policy of the present government but deploring the negative practices of the Opposition, such as hartals, blockades and other disturbances. These negative practices have been identified as the core cause of the dearth of foreign and local investment in the country," she pointed out while addressing a big public meeting at the Sreepur Degree College ground in the afternoon. "Peace, stability and the co-operation of all are essential for implementing the development programmes initiated by the BNP government," the Prime Minister said. "The country's economy has improved a lot in the last three years. We are moving towards self-reliance. This is not enough... we have to strive further to achieve our goal." Presided over by BNP Vice Chairman Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui, the meeting was also addressed by State Minister for Science and Technology Prof Abdul Mannan, Begum Farida Hassan MP, local BNP president Khandaker Abdus Salam, Jatiyatabadi Ulema Dal president Maulana Ruhul Amin, JCD president Fazul Huq Milon and other local leaders. Local leaders raised various demands and urged the Prime Minister to fulfil those to improve the condition of local people. She assured the people of meeting their demands and resolving all problems in phases. Begum Zia announced that the present 31-bed local health complex would be upgraded to a 50-bed clinic and an ambulance would also be supplied. The Prime Minister assured that Sreepur thana would come under the rural electrification network and the educational institutions would get additional financial support. After the meeting, Begum Zia distributed cattle among the distressed people. She also talked to the villagers and asked them to undertake self-employment activities.

Another reformer quits Yeltsin's cabinet

MOSCOW, Jan 18: Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov submitted his resignation Tuesday, becoming the second major reformer to step down amid signs that President Boris Yeltsin is backing away from radical reforms, news agencies reported, reports AP. In another signal that Yeltsin is changing course, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said Tuesday that Russia needs to maintain a "military presence" in the Baltic states and the other former Soviet republics to protect Russian interests. Both developments appear to have come in direct response to the strong showing of communists and ultranationalists in last December's elections. The ruble tumbled to a record low Tuesday amid the uncertainty over Russia's economic future. Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, the architect of Russia's free-market reforms and the favourite target of hard-liners, quit on Sunday, warning that recent government decisions had put the course of reforms in danger. Fyodorov's departure, which had been expected after Gaidar's announcement, was reported by the ITAR-Tass news agency and radio Echo Moskvy.



An AFP file photo showing French General Philippe Morillon (left) with UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata at Sarajevo airport during the latter's visit to Bosnia in January last year.

It's neither peacekeeping

From Page 1 Col 7
neer, the highest military award, by the French government for his bold service in Bosnia. He also proposed a declaration on the rights of communities, like the universal declaration of human rights. He hoped the Serb, Croat and Bosnian leaders currently meeting in Geneva would arrive at a political solution to the problem. "We need some real will from these leaders, but I am afraid they are prisoners of the most extremist groups among them. My hope is that it's not too late yet." The French delegation at the seminar, which began January 14, also includes Brigadier-General Rene Delhomme, Commander-in-Chief of the French Armed Forces in New Caledonia, Colonel Joseph Leonard, Defence Attache to Bangladesh, Lt. Col. Christian Ramade, Staff Officer to the French Pacific Command in Tahiti and Captain Prigandier, aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Delhomme.

Matia urges enrgs to save nation from 'crises'

By Staff Correspondent
Awami League leader Begum Matia Chowdhury MP Tuesday called upon the engineers to come up with innovative ideas for the development of the country. She said the engineers have a lot of things to do for the nation as the country has been facing a number of crises in mobilising resources for development. Matia Chowdhury was addressing as the guest of honour at the Jabbar Memorial Lecture organised by the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) on the occasion of its 38th Convention yesterday in the city. She said, the energy crisis is now acute in the country and as such the people are not feeling encouraged to set up new industries. The government has been telling the people about self-employment through the setting up of micro industries. But they are not being provided with required infrastructure, she said and questioned how can the people set up industries in such a situation. Matia also alleged that a number of innovative ideas could not be materialised because of bureaucratic complications. The Awami League MP criticised the government for what she said keeping the people in 'illusion' by taking ambitious programmes and not doing anything in the long run. She called upon the government to take pragmatic programmes for the development of the country. She further alleged that the government on the one hand was saying about transparency of the administration but on the other hindering the smooth functioning of the parliamentary committees. These things will not be allowed to continue any more, she said, adding that all the professional groups would have to come forward along with the political parties to make an end to such situations. The function, presided over by M F A Siddiqui, former President of the IEB was also addressed, by M A Mannan, Managing Director, Prestressed Concrete Products Ltd and M A K Azad, Honorary General Secretary of the institution.

Matia urges enrgs to save nation from 'crises'

By Staff Correspondent
Awami League leader Begum Matia Chowdhury MP Tuesday called upon the engineers to come up with innovative ideas for the development of the country. She said the engineers have a lot of things to do for the nation as the country has been facing a number of crises in mobilising resources for development. Matia Chowdhury was addressing as the guest of honour at the Jabbar Memorial Lecture organised by the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) on the occasion of its 38th Convention yesterday in the city. She said, the energy crisis is now acute in the country and as such the people are not feeling encouraged to set up new industries. The government has been telling the people about self-employment through the setting up of micro industries. But they are not being provided with required infrastructure, she said and questioned how can the people set up industries in such a situation. Matia also alleged that a number of innovative ideas could not be materialised because of bureaucratic complications. The Awami League MP criticised the government for what she said keeping the people in 'illusion' by taking ambitious programmes and not doing anything in the long run. She called upon the government to take pragmatic programmes for the development of the country. She further alleged that the government on the one hand was saying about transparency of the administration but on the other hindering the smooth functioning of the parliamentary committees. These things will not be allowed to continue any more, she said, adding that all the professional groups would have to come forward along with the political parties to make an end to such situations. The function, presided over by M F A Siddiqui, former President of the IEB was also addressed, by M A Mannan, Managing Director, Prestressed Concrete Products Ltd and M A K Azad, Honorary General Secretary of the institution.

IEB convention

From Page 1 Col 4
ment. She also went round different stalls set up as part of the convention. Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, in his speech, emphasised wider role of local expertise in nation-building efforts. He said the country's development strategies should be changed to cope with the changing times. The IEB President alleged there was lack of coordination between the government's five-year plans, the Annual Development programmes and technological planning. He suggested immediate formation of a National Technological Council - comprising representatives from the government, universities and the public and private industrial organisations. IEB secretary MAK Azad, in his speech called for a major overhauling of the country's administrative system. Ministers, MPs, and senior officials were present at the opening function of the five-day convention, being attended by thousands of engineers from home and abroad. There are a dozen foreign delegates from the United States, Britain, India, Pakistan and Nepal. Morshed leaves Tokyo for HK

Japan shows interest in development of Bangladesh

TOKYO, Jan 18: Special Envoy of the Prime Minister M Morshed Khan left Tokyo this afternoon for Hong Kong en route to Dhaka after completion of his week-long visit to Japan, reports UNB. Before leaving Tokyo, Khan described the visit as useful, saying everyone he met showed keen interest in the development of Bangladesh and assured full support and cooperation in making Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's forthcoming visit to Japan a grand success. JUTA to continue non-cooperation with VC By JU Correspondent Teachers of the Jahangirnagar University at a meeting yesterday decided to continue their non-cooperation with the acting Vice Chancellor to protest the delay in summoning the Senate session.

JUTA to continue non-cooperation with VC

By JU Correspondent
Teachers of the Jahangirnagar University at a meeting yesterday decided to continue their non-cooperation with the acting Vice Chancellor to protest the delay in summoning the Senate session.

The Midnight File

Crackdown on criminals in Sindh: 131 held

ISLAMABAD, Jan 18: Some 131 people, who were described by police as criminals, were arrested in a crackdown in Pakistan's southern province of Sindh, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said. The agency said police had seized unlicensed firearms, including rifles, pistols and revolvers, during the anti-crime drive in different parts of the province, which has been facing political and ethnic troubles, reports AFP.

Bush in Thailand

BANGKOK, Jan 18: Former US President George Bush arrived today for a three-day visit to Thailand at the invitation of one of the biggest agro-industrial conglomerates. Bush was greeted by Dhanin Chiravanonda, chairman of the Charoen Pokphand (CP) group. US Ambassador David Lamberston and the Secretary-General of Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, reports Reuter.

Pakistan for fresh talks on plebiscite in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Jan 18: Pakistan today told India that further talks on disputed Kashmir should focus on arranging a plebiscite to find out what Kashmiris themselves want, reports Reuter. The two sides this month held two days of talks which ended in stalemate when both countries refused to compromise their long-held positions on the former princely state. Two-thirds of the Himalayan region is ruled by New Delhi, the remainder by Pakistan. Islamabad accused New Delhi of repression in trying to quell a separatist revolt in Indian Kashmir in which more than 15,000 people have been killed. India charges that Pakistan has fuelled the uprising and insists Jammu and Kashmir, its only Muslim state is an integral part of India. Pakistan Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan told Indian High Commissioner SK Lamah that any future talks should discuss arrangements for a plebiscite "to ascertain the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir". Pakistan is pushing for a UN mandated vote on whether Kashmiris want to join India or Pakistan. New Delhi has rejected the plebiscite proposal. Khan said Delhi must take "visible steps" in Indian-held Kashmir to help the two sides come to an agreement. Pakistan has said it will have no more talks with India unless steps are taken to stop alleged repression.

Three ministers campaign in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Jan 18: The three BNP ministers from Chittagong addressed an election meeting here this afternoon at Laidighi maidan in favour of their party's mayoral candidate Mir Md Nasiruddin. Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, Industries Minister Zahiruddin Khan and Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman called for electing Mir Nasiruddin as the mayor of Chittagong City Corporation for speedy development of this city. Oli Ahmed urged the people to be more conscious and cautious in casting their votes by justifying the overall background of the candidate. Oli announced that four double-decker buses would ply the roads of Chittagong from tomorrow. Besides, there are plans to establish a TV station, set up a park at Foyaz Lake, new railway station and a college of Home-economics in Chittagong, he said. Abdullah Al Noman termed Mir Nasiruddin as the symbol of development. He said, if elected, Nasir would turn Chittagong into a healthy city. Zahiruddin Khan said the people should not vote for those who in the past had betrayed and bluffed the people. The election meeting was presided by the acting president of Chittagong city unit Advocate Badrul Anwar and addressed by Mir Md Nasiruddin and other local leaders.

EC: Police

From Page 1 Col 5
congenial for free and fair polls, an Election Commission official told UNB. The letters were issued in pursuance of a unanimous decision taken at a meeting between the Chief Election Commissioner and representative of political parties on January 13. The parties are: BNP, the Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and the Left Alliance. The official said copies of similar letters would be sent to the Metropolitan Police and the City Corporation of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi today.

Zia's birthday

From Page 1 Col 8
Major (retd) Akhtaruzzaman and Md Moazzem Hossain Chowdhury (Social Service) and Haji Md Hanjula (Innovator). The award will be given in February on the occasion of publication of the book "Bangladesher Hredaya Kamal." The organisation will offer feteha at the mazar of Shaheed Zia today and will distribute winter clothes among destitutes tomorrow.

President's message

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called for building a self-reliant Bangladesh as dreamt by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. In a message on the occasion of 58th birth day of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman the president also called for consolidating independence and sovereignty of motherland. The President said our dear leader, who was a brave freedom fighter and declarer of independence, had imbued the countrymen with the spirit of Bangladeshi nationalism to build a self-reliant nation through united efforts. He said Shaheed Zia's 19-point programme for the welfare of the people was still lauded. He said the struggle to remove poverty and illiteracy from the society in the light of the thoughts of this great leader would have to be continued.

REB problems

From Page 1 Col 7
barrancement and, accordingly, efforts are underway to make the payments from domestic sources. Sources said, the PDB is delaying the line handing over process in the face of resistance from the unions. However, PDB officials say, the delay is mainly due to the assessment of assets and liabilities of the grid lines. The officials allege that the World Bank's local representatives looking after the REB have failed to convey the correct picture of the situation to the Bank's headquarters, causing the impasse. They say, the funds could be easily released if the REB's position had been correctly projected and its efficiency in fund utilisation and performance explained. The REB operates through 48 Pali Bidyut Samity (PBS). The REB's system loss for 1993 was 15.6 per cent.

Saifur

From Page 1 Col 5
From there, he will go to Paris to preside, over the Pay Fixation Committee meeting of the World Bank and IMF Board of Governors. Rahman was unanimously elected Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Brettonwoods Sister Organisations in Washington late last year. He became the first Finance Minister from South Asia to have been elected to the post after the Indian Finance Minister was elected some 40 years ago. Later, the Finance Minister is scheduled to go to Switzerland to address the World Economic Forum scheduled to be held from January 28 to 30. He is expected to return home on February 2.