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# The Daily Star

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**Star Computer Special**

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### President, PM shocked at loss of lives in LA

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia have expressed shock at the loss of lives and property in the disastrous earthquake in Los Angeles, reports UNB.

"We are shocked by the news of severe earthquake that inflicted widespread devastation on the areas of Los Angeles," President Biswas said in a message to US President William J. Clinton.

### Two tele exchanges closed Jan 20, 27

By Staff Correspondent  
 The Magbazar and Gulshan digital exchanges will remain closed on the night of January 20 and 27 respectively for eight hours due to the extension work of the two exchanges. The Magbazar digital exchange starting with 83 digits will be closed from 10 pm on January 20 (Thursday) to 6 am on January 21 (Friday). Besides, the Gulshan digital exchange starting with 98 digits will be closed from 10 pm on January 27 (Thursday) to 6 am on January 28 (Friday).

### 28 Rohingyas go home

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 19: Another batch of 28 Rohingyas refugees voluntarily returned to their homes in Myanmar through Jummappara transit camp at Teknaf here today. Official sources told BSS tonight that with this 123rd batch the total number of repatriated refugees now stood at 52,298. Local UNHCR along with Bangladesh officials saw the refugees off while they were crossing the border.

### Arafat to meet Peres Saturday

JERUSALEM, Jan 19: PLO chief Yasser Arafat will meet Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Saturday when they go to Norway for the funeral of peace-broker Johan Joergen Holst, an adviser to Arafat said today. Ahmad Tibi told AFP that Arafat and Peres would try to overcome the stumbling blocks in negotiations on the launch of Palestinian self-rule.

### Condolence meet at Dhakeshwari Temple

The Mahanagar Sarbojoni Pujya Committee and the Bangladesh Pujya Uddapan Parishad will jointly hold a condolence meeting at the Dhakeshwari Temple Melangan at 4 pm today. The condolence meeting will be followed by a special prayer to pay due respect to the departed soul of Raj Ballav Paul. Paul, the Public Relations Secretary of the Pujya Committee and Deputy Treasurer of Pujya Parishad, died of heart attack on January 2, reports UNB.

## India erects barbed-wire fence along border

From Munir U Ahmed

KHULNA, Jan 19: The Indian government has started erecting a barbed-wire fence across 23 kilometres of the bordering area near Benapole in the country's Jessore district.

The Indian government, in the face of protests of the concerned panchayet (village government) leaders of the West Bengal state against the wire fencing, has already deployed additional contingents of the Northern Frontier Rifles to suppress any possible agitation in the area, sources said.

According to sources, the concerned Indian authorities have already started putting up pillars at every ten feet along the bordering areas of Khojadanga, Gopalpur canal, Ghonar Math, Haridaspur, Petrapol Bazar, Jayantapur Bazar, Katakhal, Dudher Beel, Raghunathpur and Bigha on the Indian side. Other than pil-

lars, all the necessary equipment have also been brought to the said areas, sources added. An Indian team conducted a survey along the Shutay border up to the bank of the river Ichhamati at Kaliyani on December 24 last. Following the survey, the Indian authorities have been erecting barbed-wire fences 150 yards from the 'zero point' of the Bangladesh border.

The Sub-divisional Officer (SDO) of Bangaon, while talking to the protesting panchayet leaders, observed that the state government of West Bengal had nothing to do with the fencing. "It is to be implemented directly under the supervision of the central government," the official said.

The panchayet leaders have reportedly demanded compensation from the Sub-divisional administration. The SDO, how-

ever, assured them that he would inform the central government about the demand.

According to sources, the Indian citizens living in areas five kilometres from the Bangladesh border will have to collect their identity cards from relevant authorities. The peasants in the area will need to show the ID cards to the patrolling BSF members at the gates along the fence for visiting their cultivable lands beyond the 5-km zone.

The government of India will bear 90 per cent of the expenses of the ID cards while the state government would bear the rest ten per cent, sources informed this correspondent.

The Indian government, in a bid to justify the measure to its own people, is propagating that the fence is needed to resist illegal entrance of people from Bangladesh into India.

## Zia's birthday observed

People from different walks of life yesterday converged at the mazar of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to pay homage on the occasion of his 58th birth anniversary, reports BSS.

They laid wreaths at the mazar and offered munajat for the eternal peace of the soul of the late leader and progress and welfare of the country's people for which Ziaur Rahman had dedicated his life.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday placed wreaths at the mazar of her husband and offered Fateha.

Works Minister and BNP joint-secretary general Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia conducted the munajat seeking eternal peace for the departed soul. Divine blessings were sought for institutionalising democracy, ending poverty, raising employment and development of the country.

Cabinet and treasury bench members and leaders of the BNP and its front organisations were present.  
 Quran khwani, milad mahfil  
 See Page 8 Col 1



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, along with central leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, offering fateha at the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman in the city on his 58th birthday yesterday. — Star photo



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina addressing the concluding session of the 38th annual convention of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh at its auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Professionals' demands justified: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the on-going agitation of the Prokrichi and the 26 BCS cadres was in the national interest.

She was addressing as chief guest the concluding session of a national seminar on "Sustainable Development in Bangladesh: Issues and Options" organised by the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) on the occasion of its 38th convention.

"The demands of the professionals for restructuring the administrative system and ensuring independence of the judiciary are the reflections of their political consciousness," she said.

Maintaining that such consciousness can help build the nation, Hasina urged the professionals and the 26 BCS cadre officers not to shun their duty towards the people of the country.

"Bangladesh has very resourceful manpower but for some reasons, development is not taking place in the country."

The Awami League is trying to identify and solve the problems of different sectors," the AL chief said.

The Awami League is now concentrating on the education, system and has taken steps to eradicate illiteracy. She said and sought cooperation of the engineers and other professionals in this regard.

Sheikh Hasina expressed her full support for the recommendations that came out of the day-long seminar.

The seminar was also addressed by the President, World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO) William J Carroll as special guest. Professor of the BUET Dr M Anwarul Azim and General Secretary of IEB M A K Azad. The president of the IEB, Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury presided over the concluding session of the seminar.

While presenting some 18 draft recommendations for sustainable development in Bangladesh, Dr Anwarul Azim said, the government should finalise environmental impact

See Page 8 Col 8

## 'Approach to engineering edn must be changed'

By Staff Correspondent

World Bank Resident Representative Christopher R Willoughby yesterday said the approach to educating engineers must be changed to meet the growing demand for responsiveness from public services.

He said the engineering institutes have a lot to do in accelerating the pace of technical changes to suit the needs of Bangladesh.

Willoughby was delivering the key note speech at the Dr F R Khan Lecture organised by the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) on the occasion of its 38th annual convention yesterday.

The WB resrep said, emphasis should also be given to human management issues within the basic curriculum or in transitional courses before or at the time of recruitment into an organisation.

He also stressed the need for instituting a significant field assignment for the engi-

See Page 8 Col 7

## JS session summoned Feb 5

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has summoned the session of the Jatiya Sangsad at 11 am on February 5 at Sangsad Bhaban here, reports BSS.

A press release issued by the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat yesterday said it would be the 13th session of the fifth Jatiya Sangsad.

The EC in a press release says, under Section 171 (e) of the Bangladesh Penal Code, such entertainment is tantamount to bribing.

A first class magistrate may fine a person, guilty of violating the law, of upto Taka 10,000, the press release said adding, the accused person would be tried summarily under Section 160 of the Criminal Code. Any

See page 8 col 6

## City corps polls

Khaleda, Hasina will now turn to the other cities

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, after completing their campaigning for the city corporation polls in the capital, are now preparing to go out canvassing for their party nominees in the three other cities.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will address election rallies in Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi. She is scheduled to address rallies in Khulna on January 24, in Chittagong on January 24 and in Rajshahi on January 25.

According to BNP sources, See Page 8 Col 2

## Tender for purchase of Airbus Biman rejects all bids

By Asiuzzaman

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has rejected all the four offers by foreign companies to supply two Airbus for the national carrier, informed Biman sources said.

"Biman's board of directors, in a meeting last week, rejected the offers, saying 'none of the offers is technically or financially sound.' Chairman of the board Civil Aviation State Minister Abdul Mannan chaired the meeting.

Biman will soon float tender for purchasing two mid-haul Airbus 310-300 aircraft, the source added.

Earlier, Biman's technical committee had recommended four offers, out of 10 bids, as technically viable whose sepa-

rate financial offers were later evaluated. Reports of both the technical and financial evaluations had been submitted before the Biman's board.

"In fact, none of the offers had fulfilled the requirements prescribed in the tender," one senior Biman official of the planning department said, adding: "The offers of the four companies were less faulty than other six." However, he declined to elaborate the specific reasons for which the bids were rejected.

Biman floated the tender in May last year, seeking offers to supply the Airbus. The tender was opened on July 15 and the technical offers were evaluated first.

The four firms which had been deemed technically fit were: Airbus Industries Ltd, France, Velos Air Lease Ltd, UK, Concorde Multitrade Inc., New York, USA, and Aircraft Leasing and Management Ltd, USA.

The source said that the Airbus manufacturing company had fixed the price of each aircraft at 68,38,000 US dollar, Velos at 55,000,000 dollar, Concorde Multitrade at 47,500,000 dollar for one and 49,750,000 dollar for another, while Aircraft Leasing Ltd had fixed the rate for each at 65,000,000 US dollars.

All the firms had also offered various financial benefits  
 See page 8 col 6

## PM asks missions abroad Launch aggressive economic diplomacy

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday underscored the importance of an aggressive economic diplomacy to boost export earnings and remittances and attract foreign investment, reports BSS.

"We are in the door-step of the Twenty First Century. The new century will be a more tougher, challenging and competitive one," she said adding "We have to survive in the midst of this competition and expand our overseas trade and economic cooperation."

Begum Zia was inaugurating a five-day conference on promotion of manpower export at the International Conference Centre in the city organised by the Ministry of Labour and Manpower.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also spoke at the inaugural session attended by the Bangladesh mission chiefs and labour attaches.

"Let us unitedly work for the development of our country and uplift of our people by playing our individual role," Begum Zia called upon the Bangladesh diplomats based in the Middle East and Malaysia. She also called for creation of employment opportunities abroad for the unemployed.

She reminded them that their diplomatic success would be evaluated on the basis of their achievements in the field of trade and economic cooperation.

"Your work will be evaluated on the basis of profit and loss. The people of the country would bear the cost of a mission as much as the country would gain financially from that mission. That is why we have decided to constitute, a commission to analyse the overall activities of our missions," she pointed out.

Begum Zia said initiatives would be taken to make the functioning and other activities of the missions more effective.  
 See page 8 col 6

## Another firm gets STOL licence

By Staff Correspondent

Another private firm was given the provisional air transport operating licence (PATOL) yesterday, raising the number of companies allowed to operate STOL (short take-off and landing) service in the domestic routes to four.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) issued a PATOL to Falcon Aviation after it belatedly met the necessary conditions for receiving a licence, one CAAB official said.

## BMA hints at progress in talks

By Staff Correspondent

The leaders of the agitating doctors hinted late last night that 'some progress' had been made in negotiations between the Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf and the BMA (Bangladesh Medical Association) vice chairman A B Bhuiyan yesterday.

The more than four-hour meeting between them resulted in a four-page hand written draft agreement regarding acceptance of some of the doctors' demands for immediate implementation by the government.

Bhuiyan informed his colleagues about the government proposal last night and an emergency meeting of the BMA's Executive Committee found the government attitude 'positive'.  
 Replying to a question, a  
 See Page 8 Col 4

## Bangladeshi woman dies in LA

An elderly Bangladeshi woman at her 68 died of heart failure in the aftermath of the earthquake in Los Angeles, according to a message received here yesterday, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC on further investigation learnt about the loss of life of the Bangladeshi.

Some 6 to 7 Bangladeshi nationals staying in Los Angeles have suffered minor injuries. There are also reports of some houses owned or rented by Bangladeshis have been affected by the natural disaster.



Covering the city walls with graffiti continues in defiance of a ban, oft repeated, by the Election Commission. The picture was taken yesterday. — Star photo

## Mob lynches muggers in city: 1 dies

By Staff Correspondent

An angry mob lynched three muggers in the city yesterday. One of them later died at a hospital after admission.

The three, trying to avoid arrest by the police, hot on their heels, ran out of luck when their autorickshaw got caught in a traffic jam on the Satmasjid Road, Dhanmandi near the Abahani Club. This was around 11.30 in the morning.

In their desperation, the cornered crooks exploded several cocktails and even opened fire. They rushed towards a passing car—carrying a woman and her daughter—broke its windshield and shot the driver in a frantic bid to escape capture, but in vain, witnesses said.

Their uninformed pursuers—three police constables and two Ansars—quickly managed to nab them. That's when the mob took over. Passersby, one and all, roughed them up

badly, causing grievous injuries to all three.

Eventually taken to the Dhaka Medical College in a semi-conscious state, one of the muggers, Jinnah, 24, succumbed to his injuries in the evening. The two others—Gaus, 25, and Sohel, 23—were still in the hospital, tied to their beds in the emergency ward.

Mosharrif, the driver who received a bullet in his chest, was admitted to the Mohakhali Chest Diseases Hospital.

A police constable, Mohamad Hafizuddin, said that a sub-inspector of Dhanmandi police station, Hamidur Rahman, on suspicion, started chasing the autorickshaw carrying the muggers from Dhanmandi Road No 8 Hafizuddin himself and an Ansarman joined him from Dhanmandi Road No-15 where Hafizuddin and the Ansar were

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