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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Khaleda shocked at Basil's death

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday condoled the sudden death of Basil Assad, son of Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad. Begum Zia in a message to the Syrian President said, "I am grieved to learn about the news of the sudden death of your beloved son in a car accident. Please accept my sincere condolences," reports UNB.

### Hasina to address rallies in Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Jan 22: The Leader of the Opposition and president of the Awami League Sheikh Hasina will arrive here tomorrow on a two-day visit. She will address some election rallies in support of her party's mayoral candidate ABD Mohiuddin Chowdhury. The rallies are scheduled to be held separately at the EPZ crossing, Badamtoli crossing at Agrabad, the Alankar Cinema crossing, Muradpur bus stand and the Kalurghat Ispahani School mazdan. Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths in the morning of January 24 at the monument near the Bangladesh Bank here on the occasion of the 1988 mass killing day and address a public meeting in the afternoon at the Lalidighi Maidan.

### One injured in bomb blast

One Faruk al Hamid Sujan, 18, was seriously injured when a bomb was hurled at him at the Mazar Road or Mirpur near Gabtoli yesterday evening. He was rushed and admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, reports BSS.

### Pak Jamaat chief resigns

LAHORE, Jan 22: Leader of Pakistan's Islamic Fundamentalist Jamaat-I-Islami Party, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, resigned today, accepting responsibility for the party's humiliating defeat in last October's general elections. The Jamaat Central Executive Committee nominated its former general secretary, Chaudhury Rehmat Elahi, as acting amir, reports Reuter.

## Higher supplementary duty makes up for VAT shortfall

By A Special Correspondent

Revenue collection targets for the first half of the ongoing fiscal year have been almost fully realised, thanks to collection under supplementary duties.

Provisional estimate of total revenue collection for July-December 1993 is Taka 4057 crores. This is 99.18 per cent of the six monthly target. The revenue target for fiscal year 1993-94 is Taka 9360 crore. NBR officials are confident final figures for July-December 1993 revenue collection will be higher than provisional estimates.

The target for receipt under supplementary duties on import is Taka 30 crore for the entire fiscal year. This target has already been exceeded in the first half of the year. Receipt under supplementary duties for July-December 1993 was Taka 37.03 crores which

is 320.33 per cent of the six-monthly target. Other supplementary duties have also shown good yield. Collection of domestic supplementary duty has exceeded the target for July-December 1993 by nearly Taka 117 crores.

By collecting an extra Taka 142 crores as supplementary duty, the government has covered a large part of the Taka 165 crores shortfall in collection of value added tax (VAT) from domestic sources.

The six monthly target for domestic VAT collection was Taka 589 crores and only 72 per cent of this target could be realised. VAT receipt on import was better at 98 per cent of the six monthly target of Taka 826 crore.

While the government's revenue collection programme is largely on track, the pro-

gramme to invest surplus revenue is faltering badly. Sources in the IMED, a division of the Planning Ministry which is responsible for monitoring project implementation, say that only 17 per cent of the annual target for ADP expenditure has actually been spent in five months.

With the public sector unable to invest surplus revenue by the full amount, the government is being forced to think about ways in which the tax regime can be eased. And, private investors are being looked upon as most eligible for future softer tax terms.

Customs duty on capital machinery for export-oriented industries has been withdrawn. Further concession in the form of lowering of import duty on machinery spares for all sectors is being considered seriously by the Finance Ministry.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing an election rally at Azampur, Uttra in the city, seeking votes for the 'fish' — symbol of her party's mayoral candidate Mohammad Hanif — yesterday.

— Star photo

## Major parties take city polls seriously

By Nurul Kabir

The upcoming city corporation polls, although constitutionally considered non-partisan like elections to any other local government body, now appear to be a political struggle of the leading parties of the country.

The major parties, especially the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the largest opposition Awami League (AL), seem to have taken the polls as a means of showing each other's superiority in terms of public support, to the rest of the citizens living outside the four mayoral constituencies.

The policy-makers of both parties strongly believe the results of the city corporation polls would definitely influence that of the next parliamentary elections, due in early 1996.

Considering this, both Begum Khaleda Zia, Chairperson of the BNP and Sheikh Hasina, the AL President, are now out canvassing for their respective candidates in the city polls.

While the BNP and the AL are engaged in a power and prestige fight, the Jatiya Party (JP), which had been facing resistance in holding rallies

across the country since long, is now busy exploiting the present 'resistance-free political environment' for consolidating its base in the major cities.

The Jamaat-e-Islami, disappointed at the criticism against it during the 11th session of Parliament, has decided to 'show' the BNP, the AL and others its own strength in the four major cities.

The Leftist eight-parties alliance, on the other hand, is using the city polls to consolidate their strength especially in the capital. Convinced that their mayoral candidate, although a dedicated politician, will not win the polls, the Left parties are using the occasion to make the people aware of the alliance's aims and objectives.

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