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# The Daily Star

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**Special body report by March likely**

## Foreign ministry to be revamped

By M Anwarul Haq

The Foreign Ministry and the country's missions abroad are likely to be revamped and restructured on the basis of the recommendations of a high powered special committee.

Formed at the initiative of the Prime Minister to infuse greater dynamism in the overall operational sphere of the nation's foreign policy with major thrust on economic and commercial interests and investments, the committee is learnt to have made considerable progress.

Committee members are having meetings every week, mostly on Tuesdays, and have already interviewed dozens of experts and diplomats. Several of the country's ambassadors and high commissioners who were in Dhaka on home leave or for consultations have appeared before the Committee. It has also sought the opinions of heads of missions and senior diplomats posted overseas. The Committee may also seek the suggestions of a wide array of officials, academics and eminent citizens before finalising its recommendations.

Manzoor Morshed Khan, special envoy of the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Restructuring and Re-organisation Committee, told The Daily Star yesterday considerable progress has been made and the final report is expected to be ready sometime in March.

Khan said, "We are meticulously studying the entire spectrum as per the terms of reference" and added, "we are seeking the wisdom of all."

He, however, declined to give details saying, "It is for the government to disclose the report."

Talking to The Daily Star earlier, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman said he had full confidence in the ability of Morshed Khan and the committee constituted at the Prime Minister's directive. The committee is an independent body and it is working independently, he added.

The special committee, now known in the diplomatic See Page 12 Col 7

## Al-Quds body to raise funds to protect Muslim identities

The Al-Quds Committee has decided to raise an emergency fund to protect historical, cultural, religious and architectural identities of Muslims in Jerusalem including the Al-Aqsa mosque, reports UNB.

A proposal to this effect was adopted at the just concluded meeting of the Al-Quds Committee, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman told newsmen at the airport on return from Morocco after attending the meeting.

The proposal, moved by King Hassan II of Morocco, also aims at defending the rights of Palestine over the city (Jerusalem) and supporting the struggle of its people for the liberation of their entire homeland.

The meeting held on January 16-17 in Ifrane, a winter resort in Morocco, also reviewed the latest situation in Jerusalem in the light of the See Page 12 Col 6

## Our demand is very clear, says Hasina

### 'Opposition's return to JS will now be unconstitutional'

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday scotched the idea of Opposition's return to Parliament and demanded fresh general election immediately under a neutral caretaker government to overcome the crisis.

"There is no question of returning to Parliament, nor there is any scope. It will tantamount to violation of the Constitution and we cannot violate it," said Hasina who led the en masse resignation by the Opposition MPs on December 28 to press for a caretaker government to conduct general elections.

Talking to United News of Bangladesh (UNB) at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday afternoon, Hasina answered queries on current political crisis, the High Court ruling, summoning of Parliament, possibility of a summit with the Prime Minister and the Opposition programmes and their impact.

"Our demand is very clear: Resignation of the government, dissolution of Parliament and fresh polls under a neutral non-party caretaker government. And this is the only solution," she said.

The Awami League President said the ruling party was making the situation complicated and pushing the country to uncertainty by its unnecessary delay in accepting the demand. The crisis is deepening every day, she added.

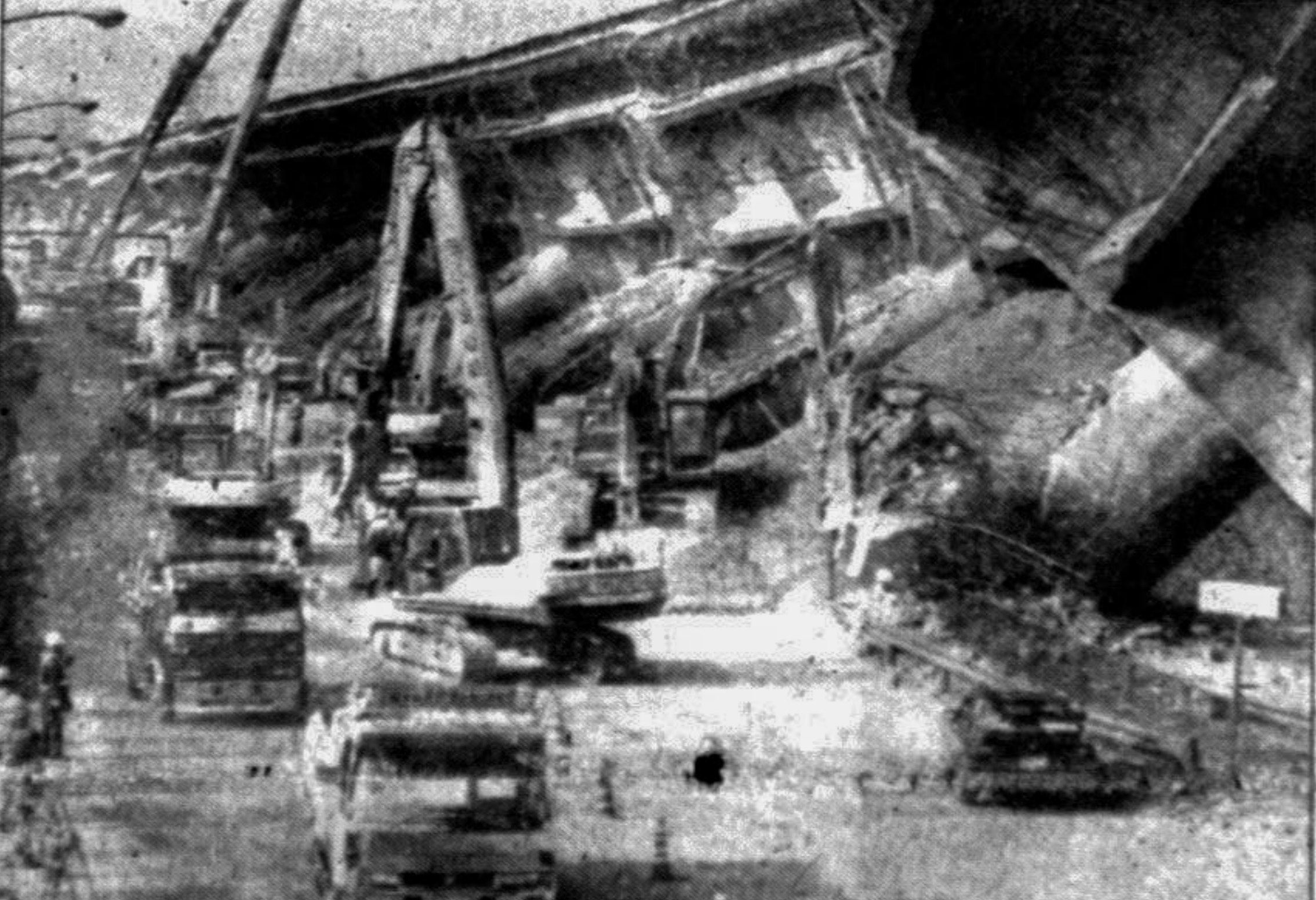
"We're not fighting for ourselves. We are fighting for a permanent arrangement to guarantee the people's voting rights, their security and political stability for ensuring democracy and economic development in Bangladesh."

With the resignation of majority elected MPs, Hasina said this Parliament and the government have become illegal. "But the BNP is clinging to power per force." In support of her contention, she said, out of 300 elected MPs, 147 have already resigned and four members died.

Hasina said the Opposition was compelled to submit resignation to establish the people's rights. "It's a great sacrifice by the elected representatives for the cause of the people and democracy. But without resolving the problem, the government is planning various tactics to stay in power."

The ruling party has resorted to dilly-dally tactics with the issue to buy time, she said adding that an MP has the constitutional right to resign from Parliament but this government wants even to snatch that right.

According to the Article 67(2) of the Constitution, the See Page 12 Col 1



Restoration begins beside a crumpled highway in Neshinomiya, Japan yesterday, four days after an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale, killed more than 4000 people. — AFP photo

## Youngman shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A youngman was shot dead in the city's Adabar area yesterday evening.

Unidentified gunmen shot Mujibur Rahman and his friend Jahangir Alam, both aged 28, near the local Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal office around 5:30 in the evening.

They were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Mujibur expired shortly after admission.

Jahangir, who suffered bullet wounds in the abdomen, underwent surgery immediately.

Witnesses said a gang of about 10 came to the scene on three motorcycles opened fire indiscriminately and fled.

Mohammadpur police said that the incident was a sequel to previous rivalry. None could be arrested.

Mujibur Rahman, who was a small trader, was an activist of the Jubo Dal, local people said.

## Euromoney-BOI confce 206 foreign delegates confirm participation

By Staff Correspondent

More than 500 delegates including 206 from abroad and 300 from home have so far registered their names for participation in the Bangladesh Investment Conference: The Emerging Tiger, scheduled to begin in Dhaka Tuesday.

The conference is being organised jointly by the Board of Investment (BOI) and the Euromoney, a London based organisation famous for organising such conferences on emerging markets of the world.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the conference at 9 am at the Sotargon Hotel.

Of the foreign delegates, 170 have registered from abroad and 36 from within the country.

Leading global and regional fund managers, investment bankers, securities firms and world famous corporations are among those who have signed up to participate in the Bangladesh Investment Conference.

The delegates from different countries so far registered are from: United Kingdom-32, US-10, India-41, Hong Kong-19, Singapore-15, Malaysia-9, Germany-4, Thailand-2, Pakistan-8, Australia-5, the Netherlands-5, Sri Lanka-5, Japan-5, Switzerland-2, Bahamas-2 and the Philippines-3.

According to the organisers, all preparations for holding the conference have been completed. The conference is aimed at promoting foreign direct and portfolio investments in Bangladesh.



## 'Deng not in coma'

BEIJING, Jan 20: The Chinese government today indirectly denied a US newspaper report that ailing paramount leader Deng Xiaoping had slipped into a coma, maintaining he was in "good health" for a 90-year-old man, reports AFP.

A correspondent of the business daily Asian Wall Street Journal, citing a Chinese source in Beijing, said in today's edition that Deng was "in a coma" and "unlikely to live beyond the end of March."

## Heavy shelling in Bihac in defiance of truce

SARAJEVO, Jan 20: Heavy shelling was reported in the Bihac enclave of northwestern Bosnia today as the United Nations struggled to consolidate the latest ceasefire, reports Reuters.

The fighting was concentrated near the town of Velika Kladusa, in the north of the enclave, where rebel Muslims are clashing with forces loyal to the Muslim-led Bosnian government, UN spokesman Major Herve Gourmelon said.

He said that 798 explosions had been recorded in the past 24 hours, a more than seven-fold increase in the usual daily count since the ceasefire began on January 1.

The situation in the Bihac enclave is complicated by the fact that while the Bosnian government forces have signed the ceasefire, the Muslim rebels and their Serb backers from Croatia have not.

Gourmelon also reported scattered firing incidents elsewhere in Bosnia, citing 14 detonations in the Koznja and Dobo areas in the northeast.

In Sarajevo, UN mediators pressed ahead with efforts to

## Kobe turns into smouldering ruins

KOBE, Japan, Jan 20: They survived earthquake and fire. Now thousands of Japanese are fighting hunger, torrid-chilling cold and the threat of disease, reports AP.

The quake Tuesday transformed Kobe, a modern port city, into smouldering ruins without enough electricity, food, fuel and clean water for its 1.4 million people.

As of Friday evening, the death toll stood at 4,393 with 666 still missing, according to the national police. More than 280,000 people were living in emergency shelters because their homes had been destroyed or badly damaged.

Japan Broadcasting Corp. said eight people were recovered alive Friday, including live women from one collapsed apartment building. But hopes for finding any more survivors among the missing were fading.

A team of Swiss tracking dogs scoured ruins on Friday searching for survivors. As of See Page 12 Col 5

## Princess Anne to visit Bangladesh

LONDON, Jan 20: Princess Anne, the only daughter of Queen Elizabeth II, will make an official visit to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in March, Buckingham Palace announced Friday, reports AP.

She will visit Bangladesh March 5-9, then tour Sri Lanka until March 13.

## Fight will continue, vows Dudayev

KHASAVYURT (Russia), Jan 20: Defiant separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev said today Russia's massive military onslaught against Chechnya had failed to crush his people, reports Reuters.

Speaking to a group of journalists in the rebel region, Dudayev said the Chechens were prepared to put with more sorrow. "Grief will come to us from where it has already come," he said, referring to Russia.

"The situation is that the Chechen people is getting used to bombing, rockets and grad missile attacks — they frighten nobody, not even children — and is preparing to send the grief back where it came from."

Dressed in his familiar military fatigues, Dudayev looked tired but relaxed.

He spoke after Russian troops scored a major victory by capturing the presidential palace in the Chechen capital Grozny from which rebels fighters had withdrawn.

Rebel commanders pledged to fight on, however, defying President Boris Yeltsin's assertion that the war was over.

AP adds: A day after seizing the presidential palace, the Russian army tried to force Chechen fighters out of their capital on Friday by bombarding the last open road out of the city.

Many of the civilians remaining in war-shattered Grozny tried to flee the fierce assault in a snowstorm. But Chechen forces were still resisting.

In Grozny, Chechens who pulled back and established new positions across the Sunzha River from the palace Thursday, played down the significance of the burned-out palace.

"Our new headquarters is set up and the fighters are in their positions," Chechen Defence Minister Aslan Maskhadov told a news conference in Nazran, capital of neighbouring Ingusheta.

## AL rally in city today

The Awami League will organise rally and procession today in Dhaka and country-wide on Monday to press for bringing down the prices of essential commodities including rice, pulses, salt, oil and paper, reports UNB.

## BNPPP meets tomorrow

A meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party Parliamentary Party (BNPPP) will be held in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban tomorrow at 7:30 pm, reports BSS.

## Hasina visits ailing Hanif

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad Hanif at BIRDEM. She stayed there for sometime and enquired about his treatment. Dr. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin accompanied her, reports UNB.

## NU Degree exams rescheduled

Degree (Pass and Subsidiary) Examinations of 1994 under the National University scheduled on January 24 and 25 have been shifted due to some unavoidable circumstances. The examinations scheduled to be held at 10 am on January 24, have been shifted to 2:30 pm on the same day while the exams of January 25 have been rescheduled on January 28 at 10 am, reports UNB.

## A look into Bangladesh Railways: Part-II

### A 'sick child' for over 100 yrs

By Murshed Ali Khan

Sixtytwo thousand one hundred and six acres of land; fortytwo thousand-strong workforce; sixteen thousand five hundred and thirtyseven carriages and locomotives; a vast wealth of antique furniture and equipment; and a staggering deficit of Taka ninety crore. It is called Bangladesh Railway (BR).

The history of this railway goes back to the last century. Following the annexation of Burma (now Myanmar) in 1854, the British stationed a contingent of their army near Ishwardi. A firing-range and a godown built there during the period still bear the witness of the British presence. To facilitate logistics and a quicker transit between Calcutta and this part of the region, the rulers then thought of the railway. The idea was based on 1947, and the creation of East and West Pakistan offered the railway nothing but a tail. A 2604 km system whose head was to be found with the Indian Railway. Our share resembled a discarded lizard tail. During the British rule, the whole railway network in our country was constructed to serve Calcutta most. All trunk routes were thus Calcutta-oriented. Moreover, the vital units, such as workshops, locomotives, stone quarries, treating plants, Technical Training Centre, and the Traffic Training School were to be their cup of tea.

A start with a new name came into being, East Bengal Railway was born under extreme unfavourable circumstances. This time, the control remained with the central

Soon after, the British saw the potential of tea and other commercial items in this fertile soil. The Hardinge Bridge across the Ganges was completed and opened to traffic on January 1, 1915. By then Dhaka, Nasayanganj, Chittagong, Comilla and Chandpur had been rail-linked under the Assam Bengal Railway Company. Departure of the British in



A LIVING MUSEUM: A steam engine of the Bangladesh Railway rambling towards its destination. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin