

Inside Today

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Is there Still Time to Step Back from the Abyss?

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 776.51 (+1.0%)  
Market capital Tk 505.84 cr  
Transactions in volume 300,642  
Transactions in value Tk 428 cr

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



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NEWS BRIEFS

20 injured in N'ganj clash

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 27: At least 20 persons were injured in a clash between the supporters of rival MP candidates at Araihazar thana under Narayanganj last night, police said. The clash occurred when two processions brought out by the supporters of BNP candidate Alauddin Angur and independent candidate Roknuddin Molah came face to face and exchanged provocative slogans, reports BSS.

Pirates loot fish from trawlers

SATKHIRA, Jan 27: Pirates looted fish from two trawlers in the river Kalindi near Raimongon area on Thursday night. The trawler owners — Monsur Member and Abbas Tarafdar — alleged that pirates from the neighbouring country swooped on their trawlers when they were returning after fishing from the Bay of Bengal, reports UNB.

29 killed in Somali clash

NAIROBI, Jan 27: A clash between two factions in Somalia killed 29 people and wounded over 60 others, a radio station operated by one of the militias reported today. The radio station said militiamen loyal to warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed fought the Rehmanwein Resistance Army (RRA), which is armed and supported by his rival Ali Mahdi Mohamed, most of Friday in Harare, north-east of the capital Mogadishu, reports Reuters.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ram	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
7	26	—	5:46
8	29	5:19	5:47
9	30	5:18	5:47

## Hasina warns Western donors against backing 'farcical polls'

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned the Western donors against backing the 'farcical elections' and called upon them not to play with the fate of the people of Bangladesh.

In an unusual and hard hitting attack on the donors, Hasina accused some of them of going along with the government in holding 'unilateral elections' in the name of upholding democracy.

"This government is holding this 'farce' (election) at the encouragement and support of some donor countries and leading the nation towards a state of confrontation," Hasina told an extended meeting of the AL working committee at the

Engineers Institution in the capital.

The ruling BNP and its backers would be held responsible for any situation arising as a result, she cautioned.

The warning from the AL chief apparently came in the backdrop of a series of abortive behind-the-scene dialogue between the ruling party and the mainstream opposition facilitated by a number of Western diplomats.

She said the Awami League would resist any attempt, from home and abroad, to violate the people's fundamental right to exercise their franchise and the attempt to curb the Opposition campaign for their democ-

atic rights.

"The people want to know why these countries are supporting this corrupt and incompetent government, instead of supporting people's movement for voting rights," she said.

Responding to an earlier US State Department statement on the Bangladesh elections, the AL president said "how come the champions of democracy can support an election in which the voters will not have the option to choose their representatives... an election boycotted by parties representing 69 per cent of the population."

The State Department statement had said in the near term, we also encourage all parties to avoid violence.

coercion, or interference in the right of voters to cast their vote peacefully for their chosen candidate, and to permit the fullest possible observation and transparency of the election process."

"I ask the US and the UK if democracy will be limited only within their boundaries, and will democracy change when it crosses the Atlantic or the Pacific?" Hasina said.

"I know I may not be liked for what I am telling today but my politics is my love for Bangladesh and its people," she added.

About the economic situation, she said that the poor were becoming poorer and the poorest were living a sub-human life in the slums.

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## Clashes mark hartal in Khulna: One killed, 50 injured

KHULNA, Jan 27: One person was killed and more than 50 were injured in clashes between police and opposition activists here today as violence reigned high in this hartal-bound industrial city during the Prime Minister's electioneering tour, reports UNB.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami enforced a day-long hartal and staged black-flag demonstration in Khulna and Bagerhat against Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's campaign for February 15 elections boycotted by the opposition.

Kamal Hossain, 14, succumbed to his wounds as police allegedly fired tear-gas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the demonstrators

at Natun Rasta crossing near the Khalishpur industrial hub at about 11 am. The body of the boy was taken to Khulna Sadar Hospital.

During the 90-minute street fight between police and demonstrators before the arrival of the Prime Minister, more than a hundred homemade bombs were exploded on the scene. Two police men were also injured.

Riot police backed by armed battalion used a barrage of tear-gas shells and rubber bullets to control the unruly protesters, witnesses said.

They said the angry protesters damaged and set afire about 10 shops in the area during the violence.

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## Opposition calls 8-hour hartal in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The mainstream opposition political parties called a half-day hartal in the city tomorrow protesting the killing and police firing in Khulna and Bagerhat yesterday and attacks on Opposition rallies in Sylhet on January 23 and 24.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami, through separate press release last night, gave the eight-hour hartal call beginning at six tomorrow morning.

AL President Sheikh Hasina in a statement urged the people in the capital to make the hartal a success.

JP acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Jamaat leader Abbas Ali Khan also made similar appeal.

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## AL asks workers to start campaign to unseat govt

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League yesterday instructed its party cadres to go ahead with the one-point programme aimed at unseating the government as well as to launch an all-out campaign to resist the February 15 parliamentary elections.

At an extended meeting of the AL working committee, the party high command announced a shift towards a more nationalist stance and injected enthusiasm among an estimated 2,000 representatives from different thanas, districts, former MPs, members of the national and advisory committees.

## Foreign polls observers invited

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh will welcome extensive participation of foreign observers and journalists for monitoring the forthcoming general elections.

Acting on a directive from the Chief Election Commissioner, the request for participation of foreign observers was communicated to all heads of missions or their representatives here by the Foreign Secretary in briefings ending yesterday.

The envoys were called in three groups at the Foreign Office. The envoys of the European Union countries, Japan, Australia and Canada were briefed first on Thursday while those of the SAARC countries at a separate session later on the same day.

The last session took place yesterday where envoys

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## Khulna incident sparks violence in city

By Staff Correspondent

A car was set ablaze and at least 15 other motor vehicles were damaged as opposition activists went on rampage in Bangabandhu Avenue and Gulistan areas in the city protesting killing of one person during hartal in Khulna yesterday.

Witnesses said the protesters also clashed with on-duty police.

Police lobbed at least a dozen tear-gas shells to disperse the protesters, police said.

At one stage they set fire to a car in front of the Pir Yameni Market. Fire fighters put out the fire.

Incidents of violence were also reported from Mohakali and Mirpur areas in the city.

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## 13 killed in Makkah hospital fire

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 27: A hospital fire killed 13 people and injured 33 in Makkah, Islam's holiest city, the official Saudi Press Agency reported today, reports AP.

The agency said the blaze on Friday at Alawi Toonsi Hospital was caused by an electrical short circuit.

Most of the victims suffered smoke inhalation.

Sixteen of the injured were treated and released. The others remained in hospitals, the news agency said, quoting an unnamed Civil Defence official.

The victims included men and women of various nationalities, it added, without giving any breakdown.



BDR checking autorickshaw drivers and passengers yesterday as part of its anti-hijacking drive in the city. - Star photo by S. K. Enamul Haq

## Indo-Pak troops trade heavy fire along Kashmir border

CEC 'saddened' by major parties boycotting polls

By Staff Correspondent

An Indian defence ministry spokesman in New Delhi told the Press Trust of India news agency that the Pakistan claim that Indian troops had fired two rockets was 'baseless.'

In Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian-administered Kashmir, the state's senior-most army officer almost rejected the Pakistani charge.

"We categorically deny our hand in the rocket attack," Brigadier PS Bindra told AFP. "This thing has not happened in our sector. We have no knowledge about the same."

"In fact, there has been no firing on the line of control which divides the Indian and Pakistani-held portions of Kashmir for sometime now," he added.

Defence Ministry sources in New Delhi said, however, that Indian troops had fired back on Friday after three rockets fired by Pakistani troops crashed into the Poonch Sector of Indian Kashmir.

The Pakistani attack caused a scare but no casualties, the sources said.

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was perpetuating the tradition of the previous autocratic regime putting the Task Force reports in shelves while it continued to be presided by foreign consultants, he said.

"It was well proved through filing of 29 reports by the Task Force that we ourselves can demonstrate a great deal of understanding of our problems," said Prof Rehman Sobhan, adding that problem at the moment was lack of appropriate leadership and skills.

In his paper, Dr Abdur Rob Khan gave the address of welcome.

Prof Rehman Sobhan said the main thrust should be on recapitulation of our own capability, which so long remained neglected and "we have to address the dynamics of indigenous education systems."

The present government

otherwise could be found in love only with the nation that they have come to share more as a result of parental blessing," Dr Ahmed said.

Dr Zia said that in Pakistan students are tender aged as nine years were taught in very first chapter of their schooling that 'India is our enemy' and madrassahs provided military training to fight for Kashmir.

Asish Nandy said that on the pretext of national interest, India was "depriving Bangladesh of its water share affluently to keep Calcutta Port alive."

Later, the floor was opened for questions and a number of people including university teachers and former government officials took part.

"In fact, the children of South Asia are literally brought up as 'nationalist' or

## Goods worth Tk 150 cr sold at Dhaka Trade Fair

The curtain was drawn

yesterday for the last of some 1.2 million visitors to the Dhaka International Trade Fair '96 which yielded brisk business for both domestic and foreign exhibitors, reports UNB.

Commerce and Information Minister M. Shamsul Islam pulled down the curtain on the 26-day fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the afternoon, calling it a great success in acquainting the country's products.

Officials estimated that goods, mainly consumer products, worth Tk 150 crore were traded at the fair while an amount of Tk 6,180,740 was collected as gate money up to Friday.

Customs authorities also realised approximately Tk 75 lakh as duty from the foreign participants who came from 16 countries and put a total of 63 pavilion and stalls in the fair, opened by the Prime Minister on January 2.

Bangladeshi manufacturers also managed export orders to the tune of Tk 25 crore while dozens of buyers from foreign countries like Japan, United Kingdom, Italy and the United States visited the fair.

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