# Nigerian boat with 260 aboard sinks

172 bodies recovered

LAGOS, Nigeria, Jan 27: More than 220 people most of them Nigerian traders. were feared dead after their boat capsized in stormy seas, a newspaper reported today. savs AP

The accident occurred Wednesday morning off Nigeria's southeast coast as the boat headed for Gabon, said Saturday Punch Newspaper. It said bodies continued to wash up on shore.

The accident was not formally announced by the military government, but the state-run news agency carried excerpts of the Punch report. It is not unusual for Nigeria's inilitary junta to keep quiet about incidents that might add to the country's image as a centre of de-

cay and corruption. Punch, which has been forced to close in the past for angering the government, quoted witnesses as saying the boat was carrying about 260 people but did not have enough life rafts or other safety equipment.

It developed engine problems and stalled, the newspaper said. "While the opera-

## Foundation stone of Khan Jahan

Ali Airport laid BAGERHAT, Jan 27: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of an airport here today, hoping that it will boost economic activities and tourism in the maritime re-

gion, reports UNB. The Khan Jahan Ali Airport project on 95 acres of land, being financed from the national exchequer, is expected to be completed in two years. An amount of Tk 15 crore has been earmarked in the current annual development programme (ADP) for its implementation.

The new airport will open a direct air link between capital Dhaka and the country's southwestern region, including the second sea port of Mongla, the Sundarbans and other tourist spots in the

### 10 hurt as rivals clash over appointment of principal

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 27: At least 10 people were injured, one of them seriously, in a clash between rival groups over appointment of the principal of a madrassah at a village in Hossainpur thana of the district today.

reports UNB. Police seized one revolver, some lethal weapons and hand-made bombs, and arrested seven people, including a principal candidate. Moniruddin from the scene.

According to witnesses. the clash crupted at Madhakhola village when Moniruddin's men attacked the supporters of acting principal Anwar Hossain Bhuiyan during a managing committee meeting of the madrassah at about 2 pm.

tors were battling to bring the engine to life, a great gale arose, tossed the boat pouring its contents into the sea," said Punch. Fishermen in the area tried to rescue people, but the storm thwarted their efforts.

By Thursday, 172 bodies had been recovered and only people rescued. More bodies were floating at sea. but morgues in the area had no room for them. Dr. Emmanuel Bassey, a medical officer in the city of Eket where the victims were taken, warned of a possible disease outbreak unless the bodies were quickly disposed

### 2 more BNP leaders elected uncontested

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday reviewed five petitions regarding nominations, disposing three and keeping two pending.

The cases of BNP candidates Nazmul Huda from Dhaka-1, Ziaur Rahman Khan from Dhamrai and Shahnewaz Chowdhury Mantu from Chittagong-11 constituencies were settled. The cases of two others - Zahir Uddin Swapan from Barisai-1 and Obaidul Haque Khandaker Chittagong-1 - remained pending.

Nazmul Huda and Shahnewaz Chowdhury Mantu were elected uncontested. Ziaur Rahman Khan was allowed to remain in the electoral race.

With this, the number of ruling party candidates elected unopposed rose to

There were six review petitions from the five constituencies. The review con-

tinues today. Nazmul Huda arrived at the CEC's office with his lone rival Mohiuddin Ahmed — an elderly man in kurta — and said "he wants to withdraw his nomination paper in view of a mistake made.

Mohiuddin had earlier appealed against the rejection of his nomination and got it confirmed by the EC. The man who had seconded his candidature was not a voter in Dhaka-I Constituency.

"During the appeal the Commission erroneously accepted a document produced by Mohiuddin and reinstated his candidacy," the CEC admitted. "On this ground his (Mohiuddin's) nomination be cancelled and his election symbol be scratched from the ballot paper," the CEC said. During the process, Mohiuddin remained silent.

In the case of Ziaur Rahman Khan, the petition for review was rejected as the petitioner did not dispute the evidence produced by the defendant proving that he was not a bank loan defaulter.

The petition against Shahnewaz Chowdhury Mantu was 'not pressed' by the petitioners. Therefore, the decision of the returning officer in his case remained valid. He was elected unopposed.

# One killed in Khulna

Awami League workers showed black flags as the Prime Minister drove into the city through Ralli Gate near Daulatpur from Jessore at about 1:15 pm. At Kashipur near Khal-

ispur, Juba Sanghati and Awami League offices were ransacked by the ruling party supporters.

Earlier, the BNP supporters armed with bombs and sticks allegedly ransacked League office at Shankha Market and Jamaat office near Dakbunglow at about I am They also burnt the motor cycle of Chhatra League leader Sudul.

A procession of Jamaat were also attacked at Ferighat at about 10:30 am where several processionists were beaten up.

Police lobbed tear-gas shells on pro-hartal activists in New Market area at about 12:15 pm where several bombs were exploded.

The Prime Minister, who flew into Jessore from Dhaka this morning, reached Khulna at about 1.30 pm and crossed the Rupsha river through the terry ghat here at about 1:35 pm for Bager-

No sooner had the Prime Minister's motorcade left for Bagerhat than the opposition militants with black flags paraded the city streets shouting anti-government and

anti-polls slogans. Lawyers of Khulna bar boycotted court and brought out a procession at about 12 noon, demanding that the February 15 election sched-

ule be rescinded.

They also held a rally at the court premises. Molammad Ali and Rajab Ali of Awami League, Abdul Halim of Jamaat and Israil Hossain of JP addressed the rally.

In the afternoon, the Prime Minister returned to Khulna after her Bagerhat tour, took iftar at Circuit House and left for Jessore at about 7 pm to fly back to

A series of bomb blasts rocked the troubled city in the evening as soon as the Prime Minister left Khulna. Bombs were exploded in the main city centres including at Picture Palace, Dakbunglow and Hadis Park.

Awami League and Jamaat took out protest processions while JP held a rally at Dakbunglow in the evening, condemning the killing of Kamal, said to be an Awami League

SMA Ali of JP presided over the protest meeting, addressed by Razia Faiz and

Abul Kashem Engineer. BNP leaders and workers took position at about 30 places including Dakbunglow, Picture Palace, Shibbari, Boira, Jangsan, Mujgunee, Boalkhali and Daulatpur to greet Prime Minister Begum

Opposition workers assembled at about 15 points including Dakbunglow, Shibbari, Joragate, Natun Rasta crossing to protest Begum Zia's visit.

The hartal, called by the opposition, forced shops, banks and private offices closed. All vehicles went off the roads during the shutdown. The metropolitan city wore a deserted look.

A tense situation was prevailing in the city. A huge contingent of police, BDR and armed battalion forces was deployed in the city. Additional police forces from Rajshahi and Khulna divisions were called in for beefing up security for the PM's electioneering tour.

### Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing the extended meeting of her party at - Star photo the Engineers Institution in the city yesterday.

### Hasina From Page 1

The AL has clear-cut policies on economy, agriculture, industries, commerce, education, health and foreign affairs to ensure overall development of the country.

she said. Turning to the latest political situation. Hasina urged those involved in the electoral process not cooperate in holding the February 15

The 'AL President alleged that the government in the name of the on-going drive to recover illegal weapons was using the armed forces and other security agencies to serve its political interests.

"We don't want that the army help the government steal votes," she said. "We don't want that they stand on the way of the people and want them to get back to the barracks.

She explained the 'Opposition's efforts to end the longstanding political crisis" and said that the ruling party had not responded despite many concessions offered by the Opposition in its dialogue with the BNP.

She accused Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of violating the Constitution on many counts and said the BNP was out to rig the polls only to cling to power.

### Prithvi' launched

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: India today conducted flight trial of a longer range version of the indigenously developed surface-to-surface guided missile "Prithvi" at Chandipur, Orissa, according to agency reports here, says BSS.

The launching of the 250km range missile developed by the country's Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) came following the induction of main battle tank, "Arjun".

The "Prithvi" is launched in the face of veiled disapproval of the United States of America and hue and cry raised by Pakistan.

The today's test launch of the most sophisticated short range missile, which was the 15th in the series, was carried out after a gap of about 19 months.

The launching of the missile, which was billed for January 16, was postponed for undisclosed reasons.

### CEC saddened

From Page 1 as soon as complaints

reached the EC that he had printed a coloured calender with a sheaf of paddy in it. he was asked to appear before the Election Commis-Asked what punitive ac-

tion would be taken if he was found guilty, Justice Sadeque said first the EC would have to determine the nature of the violation.

The CEC again said that if all the parties participated in the forthcoming election then it would have been much easier to penalise for the anomalies.

# Launch campaign: AL

From Page 1

The new position of the AL was emphasised during a speech by the party president Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina called upon her party activists to build up a strong resistance against the government efforts for holding an "unilateral elections."

The on-going movement for the people's voting rights would continue until the Opposition's demand for a caretaker government was met. The hour-long speech by

the AL chief had a buoying effect on the local-level leaders who were seen cheering and clapping at the meeting which took place at the Engineers' Institution audi-

We now hear the true daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," exclaimed one AL leader, visibly moved by the speech.

However, her strong comments directed towards some of the donor countries surprised many, while other leaders said it vented a sense of pride which, they said, the country's people would certainly appreciate.

Today we do not have any space to hold our accumulated frustration," observed KM Abdullah, an AL leader from Hasina's home district

He told the packed auditorium that the AL workers were now pushed to the wall and 40 years of opposition politics had cost the party and its workers a lot.

Many leaders pointed ou at the meeting that the ruling BNP had abandoned the field due to pitched Opposition campaign.

"Whom do we fight now they are not on the field and. obviously, not near us," commented a leader from the Patuakhali district.

ABM Mohiuddin, Mayor of Chittagong City, told the meeting that the Awami League workers were not afraid of the consequences.

He recalled how the party workers bravely fought the country's glorious war of independence.

A leader from Habigani district pointed out to the party president that she should be extra-cautious in letting people use the "oars of the boat," the party's sym-

Earlier, AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman placed the party's activity report at the meeting.

AL sources said that a formal resolution of the meeting was expected in couple of days.

### 'Cosmetic surgery contrary to Islam CAIRO, Jan 27: The mufti

of Egypt, responsible for giving religious rulings, declared today that cosmetic surgery was contrary to islam. reports AFP.

"Cosmetic surgery is illegal if it is to accentuate the charms (of a woman) because it is aimed at changing a being created by God," Sheikh Mohammad Sayed Tantawi said, quoted by Al-Wafd newspaper.

Plastic surgery centres have mushroomed in Egypt over the past decade.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (R) inviting German Foreign Minister Klaus. Kinkel to start their talks in Moscow yesterday. During their talks, Yeltsin stressed again Russia's opposition to expansion of the Western military alliance NATO. - AFP/UNB photo

### India asks Nepal to help control passage of Pak-trained terrorists KATHMANDU, Jan 27: Vi- no "confirmed information excepting those items which

"But I would like to fully

assure that we would not al-

low anybody to use Nepalese

soil against India," Lohani

covered in the talks. Lohani

said he had asked that India

provide a trade corridor

through its territory to

Bangladesh for Nepalese

ciple to provide the overland

transit facility to Nepalese

exports," he said, adding the

agreement was subject to rat-

ification by a joint commerce

secretary-level meeting in

cooperation on reducing cus-

Nepal also sought India's

"India has agreed in prin-

On trade matters, also

by anti-Indian terrorists."

added.

siting Indian External Affairs about the use of Nepalese soil Minister Pranab Mukheriee asked Nepal today to help control the alleged passage of Pakistan-trained terrorists through Nepal into India, an official said, reports AFP.

The request came during more than two hours of talks between Mukherjee and his Nepalese counterpart, Prakash Chandra Lohani, the foreign ministry said. After emerging from the

talks Mukherjee told newsmen: "I had cordial talks with Dr. Lohani on subjects of mutual interest including trade, joint cooperation for development of water resources for mutual benefits and several other issues." But he did not specify the

A highly placed official of the foreign ministry told AFP that during the talks. Mukherjee sought Nepal's cooperation to control the passage of terrorists which New Delhi alleges are trained

by Pakistan. Pakistan has repeatedly denied the charge. But replying to a question

Lohani said Kathmandu had

issues.

toms duties on its products to Indian markets to help close its massive trade gap. Nepal's total exports to India in the 1994-95 fiscal year, ending July 16, stood at 60 million US dollars while imports were 360 million

the coming weeks.

dollars. The Indian side agreed to waive customs duties completely on Nepalese products

could jeopardize Indian products of similar type. In other matters, the two ministers discussed amend-

ing several clauses in the 1950 Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty. The Indian side said the

treaty could not be amended although some of the irrelevant clauses could be changed through an exchange of letters. Officials did not say which clauses were considered ir-

relevant. The treaty gives India political leverage over Nepal while citizens of either nations can cross over to the other side without requiring

Mukharjee arrived here Friday afternoon on a threeday official visit leading a 30member Indian delegation at the invitation of Lohani. Mukherjee earlier referred to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's visit to

India next month, which he said would be an important milestone in the efforts being made" in both our countries to build a durable and longterm relationship.

# US urges parties

WASHINGTON, Jan 27: The United States voiced regret Friday at the ongoing political crisis in Bangladesh and called for fair and peaceful elections in the South Asian country reports AFP.

"The United States regrets that the major political parties in Bangladesh apparently have not been able to arrive at a mutually agreedupon formula under which fully participatory elections can be held," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said. "And the United States

dispute will continue to work for a long term solution on the issues that clearly divide them," he told reporters The US Ambassador in Dhaka is working very hard on this with all concerned,

hopes that both sides in this

interference in the voting process. "We believe that there should be the fullest possible observation and transparency of the election process.

he said, urging all parties to

avoid violence, coercion, and

Burns said. The Bangladeshi opposition has sought for nearly two vears to force Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to step down to allow for elections under a neutral caretaker

government So far, however, Khaleda has refused, on grounds that handing over power to a caretaker administration would be unconstitutional.

### Appeal to save traders from toll collectors

The members of Badamtali. Waiz Ghat and Babu Bazar Rice, cement, fruits and vegetables traders association vesterday appealed to the authorities concerned to stop harassment by the illegal toll collectors, reports BSS.

In a statement here last night they appealed to the government and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) for immediate intervention to save the business community of the areas from toll collectors as well as leasers of backland road tax collection.

### 4 more expelled from BNP

The Bangladesh National ist Party (BNP) yesterday expelled with immediate effect four district and thana level leaders of the party for disobeying the party decisions and indulging in activities contrary to party discipline, a press release said, reports

The expelled persons are: Abdul Hai, vice president, Habigani District BNP and member, Nabinagar thana committee. Advocate Zakir Hossain, vice president Noakhali district committee, Major (Retd) Asgar Ali, member. Gaibandha district convening committee and Mohaınmad Ekhlash Uddin Mollah, member, Pallabi thana convening committee.

### Special DU Senate meet tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

The Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University has convened a special meeting of the Senate on January 29. The irregularities in different sectors of the university will be discussed in the

meeting, sources said. Seven teachers and 25 registered graduates in a letter requested the VC to call a special meeting of the Senate by January 29, sources added.

The two agenda mentioned in the letter were irregularities in appointing teachers and officers in the university and delay in the implementation of the decisions taken by the Senate.

This is the seventh special meet of the DU Senate since Independence. The earlier meetings were held on June 28, 1975, January 29, 1976, January 20, 1980, June 24, 1986, May 3, 1990 and March 17, 1993.

### Dais of minister's meet set on fire in B'baria

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 27: The opposition activists foiled the first election meeting of the ruling party candidate. State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Harun Al Rashid, in the town today, reports UNB.

The state minister, the BNP nominee for contesting the February 15 parliamentary election from Brahmanbaria-3 seat, could not hold the meeting as the dais at the Deaf and Dumb School premises was set afire at about 5 pm.

Witnesses said the opposition activists had attacked the meeting venue, set fire to the dais and damaged the microphones,

However, an election meeting was later held inside the school building, which was addressed by the minister who held the Awami League and Jativa Party responsible for the attack

# Avoid interference in voting process.

Pakistan to take counter-measures against 'Prithvi' launching

ISLAMABAD, Jan 27; Pakistan today called India's test of a longer-range version if its medium-range Prithvi missile very dangerous and said Islamabad would have to take counter-measures, reports Reuter.

# Another shutdown of US govt averted

WASHINGTON, Jan 27 Just three hours before a midnight deadline, President Clinton and a conflict-weary Congress averted a third shutdown of the US government since November by financing dozens of agencies for seven more weeks, reports AP.

"There's no question now of the government shutting down," Clinton said Friday night before signing legislation warding off another round of furloughed workers and padlocked offices that both sides saw as a public relations nightmare.

The Senate passed the bill 82-8 earlier Friday, capping a week in which Republicans relinquished their effort to pressure Clinton into a pact to balance the federal budget by 2002. The House of Representatives passed the measure on Thursday.

Republicans were especially eager to avoid another closure, since most Americans blamed Republican intransigence in the budget fight for the first two.

'All of us want to avoid another shutdown of the federal government," said Senate Appropriations Commit tee Chairman Mark Hatfield.

in a sign of the Republican's determination to do so. Hatfield called the threat of another closure "a gun to our head" that prevented sena-

UN probing rocket attack on mosque ISLAMABAD. Jan 27 United Nations military observers in the disputed

Kashmir region launched ar

investigation Saturday into

rocket attack on a Pakistani mosque that left 19 peopl dead, reports AP. Pakistan has accused in dian troops along the contested Kashmir border of firing two Russian-made rockets into the remote Pakistani town of Forward Kahuta about 300 kilometres northeast of Pakistan's capital is-

### amabad. 8-hr hartal

From Page 1 peal to the people to make the shutdown a total success. Kamal Hossain, a pro-AL Chhatra League worker, was killed during clashes between police and opposition activists in Khulna yesterday morning. The three major parties enforced a full-day hartal in Khulna and Bagerhat in protest of the Prime Minister's campaign tour.

Meanwhile, AL chief Sheikh Hasina in a separate statement yesterday protested, what she claimed, killing of a Chhatra League worker and injuring of over a hundred party leaders and workers by armed terrorists of BNP at Kashipur in Khulna. She alleged that during the PM's presence in Khulna armed terrorists of Jubo Dal

cover attacked offices of the opposition political, parties including that of the Awami League. Hasina said the mass movement for a caretaker government could not be stopped by resorting to

and Chhatra Dal under police

## Trade Fair

repression.

killing, firing, arresting and

From Page 1 be the permanent venue of international the Dhaka trade fair.

Later, the commerce minister distributed prizes among the best pavilions and stalls of the fair, and the winners of recently held National Flower Exhibition.

Among local participants . HRC Syndicate Ltd. won the first prize in pavilion category while GMG Industrial Corporation Ltd. the second prize, and Monno Ceramics Industry Ltd. and Uttara Motors Ltd. the third prize jointly.

In stall category, Gloria Electrical Industries won the first prize, Bangladesh Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd (Milk Vita) second prize and Atlas Toys the third prize.

Among foreign participants. Export Promotion Centre of Iran won the first prize in pavilion group. Samho Machinery Co. Ltd. of South Korea second prize. and Export Promotion Bureau of Pakistan and Tata Group of companies of India the third prize jointly

 In stall category, Bhutan Fruit products Ltd. won the first prize, Euro Chairs Marketing Syndicate of Malaysia second prize and Dabur India (Pvt) Ltd won the third

Jatiya Udyan and Baldha Garden jointly won the first prize of the flower exhibition Golap Sambhar of BDR the second prize. Mohua Bon third prize, and Orchid Society And Amateur Rose jointly the fourth prize

tors from changing the measure - which have would delayed its completion until a new shutdown began Saturday morning.

On another budget front where Republicans have suddenly become less combative. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole sought to assure financial markets that Republicans would reach agreement with Clinton over extending the government's debt limit and avoiding a historic federal de-

"We believe we can get this done, get it done in a timely fashion," Dole said,

### Polls observers

From Page 1 from South East Asian countries. China. Brazil and from the Middle Eastern countries

were present. Foreign Secretary Faroog Sobhan who conducted the briefings reportedly told the diplomats that he had been instructed by the Chief Election Commissioner to convey the latter's request that participation of foreign observers was being "sincerely

desired" by the CEC. Besides welcoming observers from their respective countries, the foreign missions have also been permitted to monitor the polls using their resident staff, according to meeting sources.

The diplomats were told that there was no deadline for providing the list of poll monitors and observers but an early list, at least seven days ahead of the polls. would help the EC and the Foreign Ministry to provide police escort and protocol services if required.

When some diplomats pointed out that movement for poll monitoring might be hampered and could be a matter of security concern because of a possible Opposition-called hartal on the polling day, they were informed that the monitors would be taken to the spots on the previous night. The EC was also considering providing helicopter facilities for the monitors wherever

A western diplomat observed that movement of monitors might be hampered by giving a prior schedule. The diplomat reportedly said that the observers would like to be flexible in their movement to monitor the polls.

The British envoy was

learnt to have said that a

team of observers would be

coming from his country to monitor the elections. Other envoys appreciated the plan for polls monitoring and said that they would convey it to their respective

governments but did not make any commitment. It was learnt that no briefing was given about the political situation in the country.

### PM in Bagerhat

From Page 1

which they passed in parliament. The PM said despite her government's repeated calls for dialogue to resolve the political problems the Opposition declined to sit for the discussion as they had no

commitment to democracy

and the people. She said her government was ready to give all possible concessions within the framework of the Constitution, but the Opposition wanted to create a constitutional crisis through violating the Constitution.

Referring to the boycott of elections by some opposition parties, Begum Zia said these parties had participated in elections under an illegal and autocratic government and given it legitimacy in Parliament. "They sat in the Sangsad with autocrat Ershad. We are

a democratically elected gov-

ernment, but they do not

want to participate in the polls under the democratic government because they do not want peace: stability and welfare of the people. Mentioning BNP's victory in the past elections, the Prime Minister said those

elections proved that people identified the BNP as their "You must go to the polling centres and exercise your voting right. Don't be misguided by the conspirators," she said and listed her government's development

programmes during the last

five years. The BNP Chairperson said the three parties are opposing the coming polls despite their claim of struggling for establishing the people's voting right. She asked the Opposition as to how they would establish the voting right without participating in the elections

Bagerhat district unit duba Sanghathi President and Chairman of Ranobijov union parishad Fakir Tarigul Islam formally joined the BNP at a meeting