

## Vested Property

### Act will be amended

The Vested Property Act will be amended and, if necessary, will be scrapped. Minister for Law and Justice Abdul Matin Khasru said in parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Responding to a call attention notice moved by Dharendra Nath Saha (AL-Narail), he said the Law Commission has been asked to review the act and recommend necessary steps for its amendment.

If the Law Commission suggests Page 12 Col 4

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## Inside Today

### Article

#### Sub-regional grouping

### Principles, Practice and Prognosis

Column: Currents and Crosscurrents  
by M M Rezaul Karim  
Page 4

### Business

Belgium agrees to provide loan for setting up backward linkage industries for garments sector

DSE index increases by 23 points  
Pages 6, 7

### Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
20	30	—	5:47
21	31	5:18	5:48
22	01	5:18	5:48

## Monday's elections to go ahead

# Supreme Court upholds Benazir's dismissal

ISLAMABAD, Jan 29: The Supreme Court today upheld the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto and ordered new elections to go ahead, ending the former prime minister's battle to be returned to power without another vote, reports AP.

President Farooq Leghari dismissed Benazir on November 5, charging her with corruption, economic mismanagement and sponsoring police hit-squads.

Benazir challenged the dismissal in court, and tried to block the general elections scheduled for Monday. She has said she would refuse to accept the results unless she is re-elected.

In today's 6-1 ruling, the high court said the president's layers had produced evidence to substantiate the charges of corruption, phone tapping and extrajudicial killings.

It was disappointing, Benazir's lawyer, Atizaz Ahsan, said of the ruling.

Benazir said the decision

came as no surprise. At a news conference at her home in the southern port city of Karachi, she said she had prepared to withdraw her case two days ago, but her lawyers resisted.

I didn't expect any justice from the Supreme (Court) but they (the lawyers) said 'let's go ahead and test the waters,' she told reporters.

She said that if she doesn't get the majority in the Monday's vote, it is rigged.

Hundreds of riot police surrounded the white marble courthouse, wearing helmets and holding steel shields.

About a dozen women lay on the tree-lined road blocking traffic. They carried placards demanding Benazir's return to power and tried to storm the gates of the courthouse when the decision was announced. No one was injured.

AFP adds: Benazir is trailing behind her key political rival Nawaz Sharif only days before general elections, according to a survey published today.

Only 25 per cent of voters said they would vote for Benazir in Monday's polls compared with 40 per cent who said they supported the former premier Sharif, the survey released by the Private Gallup-Pakistan said.

The Gallup poll was conducted from January 19 to 22 in the rural and urban areas over a sample of more than 2,000 voters. It warned, however, that its findings still left room for uncertainty.

In three previous elections in 1988, 1990 and 1993, the PPP was behind in early poll but surged just before the vote.

However, the poll said this time the lead of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) could be too large to bridge in the race for the 217-member National Assembly.

The survey added that cricket-turned-politician Imran Khan and his 10-month-old Movement for Justice were unlikely to garner much support. See Page 12 Col 8

## JS snippets

By Nazmul Ashraf

Ruling party MP Mohammad Shahjahan asked Water Resources Minister Abdul Razak in the House yesterday whether the Ganges waters, flowing into Bangladesh following the recently signed water-treaty with India, could be used for 'Oju' (ablution).

While raising the question, the AL lawmaker quoted a BNP member who earlier claimed in the House that the Ganges water could not be used for 'Oju'.

In reply, the minister said, "like water of any other river, the Ganges water can also be used for 'Oju' and even for a bath."

Amid laughter in the Treasury Bench, the minister added, "I also made it clear that the Ganges water did not contain anything harmful, as claimed by the BNP."

While speaking on a bill, BNP legislator Abdul Mannan recited from poems of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

Interrupting him, the Speaker commented, "Yes, we've also learnt about such poems." But he added in a lighter vein, "Were the poet alive, he would probably demand the right to See Page 12 Col 4

# 3 bills extending tenure of CHT bodies passed

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed three identical bills, extending the tenure of the local government councils of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban hill districts by 360 days.

The bills, passed by voice votes, also said that the government would try to hold elections to the three local government councils within the next 180 days. In case, the elections do not take place, the government will appoint an interim council to run the local administrations there, the bill said.

Earlier, President Shahabuddin Ahmed had promulgated three ordinances extending the time limit of the local government councils. The original tenure of the elected councils (parishads) expired on July 11, 1992 and the tenure was extended thrice during the BNP government, by a total of 1640 days. With the passage of the bills yesterday, the tenure

has been extended to 2000 day from 1640 days.

While arguing for passage of the bills, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Lt Gen (retd) Noor Uddin Khan said that the government had made "substantial progress" in resolving the "crisis" in the area through dialogue. Extension of the tenure of the local bodies would eventually help the government hold meaningful elections in the areas, with the active participation of both the Bangalee and non-Bangalee communities living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, he said.

Replying to Opposition objections to the passage of the bills, the minister concerned said that the BNP government had extended the tenure of the same local bodies for three times.

He also said that during the BNP rule, a government delegation had gone to Agartala of India. See Page 12 Col 1

## Padma barrage planned for optimum use of water

The government plans to build a barrage on the Padma river to ensure optimum utilisation of water available through Indo-Bangla water treaty. Water Resources Minister Abdul Razak told parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Responding to a series of questions, he said the government is trying to mobilise foreign assistance for the project. Funds are also expected from donor countries and agencies for water management programme, he added.

The minister said a proposal has already been prepared for the Padma barrage in 10 years at a cost of 4.5 billion US dollars, equivalent to about Tk 18,000 crore.

The Prime Minister has taken special initiative to mobilise the fund, he said adding that the government has received positive response from various donor agencies.

The Prime Minister's Office, the Planning Commission and the Economic Relations Division are continuing their efforts to get funds for the project, he said, seeking cooperation. See Page 12 Col 7

## Circuit breaker on some issues to be lifted for 3 days from Feb 1

By Shehab Ahmed

The 'Circuit Breaker' on trading of shares of a number of listed companies which have not been traded for 30 days or more, will be totally relaxed for three days from February 1.

This was decided at a meeting of the circuit breaker committee on Tuesday, according to official sources. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is expected to send circulars in this regard to the Dhaka and Chittagong Stock Exchange today.

Prices of 25 to 30 issues listed with the stock exchanges were locked-in at an abnormal height after the stock market took a nose-dive in late November last year, the sources said.

The decision to relax the 10

**Share-market scandal**  
**Businessmen laud**  
**Khaleda's demand**  
**for JS probe**

The leading businessmen appreciated opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia's demand for parliamentary probe into the share-market scandal, party sources said, reports UNB.

The Indian Parliament had played key role in probing the share-market scandal of Bombay, a chamber leader was quoted to have said during exchange of views with Begum Zia at an iftar party yesterday evening.

See Page 12 Col 7

## Hillary to host iftar party for Hasina

From A Correspondent

NEW YORK, Jan 29: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will join First Lady Hillary Clinton on February 3 at an iftar party at the White House. This was confirmed today by a State Department spokeswoman.

"Hillary is looking forward to the meeting. This will allow her to renew her contacts with Bangladesh," the spokeswoman said. Hillary had visited Bangladesh last year and often writes about her experience. See Page 12 Col 3

## PM leaves for US

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left last night for the United States of America to attend the World Micro-Credit Summit, reports UNB.

The three-day world conference begins in Washington on Sunday to plan a better living for the poor across the globe.

The Prime Minister was seen off at the Zia International Airport by senior cabinet members, diplomats, chief of three See Page 12 Col 3

## PM at graduation ceremony of DSCSC Govt wants sub-regional economic cooperation

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government wants to develop economic and trade relations with the neighbouring countries through 'sub-regional economic cooperation', reports UNB.

"We are determined to uphold the principles of the SAARC. We are also interested in sub-regional cooperation to develop economic and trade relations with our neighbours," she said.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the Graduation Ceremony of the 21st Army Staff Course, the 15th Naval Staff Course and the 17th Air Staff Course of the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur in the morning.

Sheikh Hasina reiterated that "Friendship to all and malice to none" is the guiding principle of the government's foreign policy as advocated by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

**EVEN A DRIVER OF A POLLUTER VEHICLE USING 'GAUGE MASK':** An auto-rickshaw driver looks helplessly in the middle of a jam on a city street yesterday, wearing the 'gauge mask' that is becoming the only shield available against ever increasing pollutants in city's air. Auto-rickshaws and other two-stroke engine vehicles, that use a mixture of engine oil and lead petrol, have been identified by authorities as the main culprits, contributing to an abnormal rise in the pollution level. — Star photo by Amran Hossain

## 5 more testify

## 'Yasmin was throttled to death'

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Jan 29: The Special Court, Rangpur, today recorded depositions of five more witnesses in the sensational Yasmin murder and rape case.

Dr Matlubar Rahman, Associate Professor of forensic department, Rangpur Medical College, a witness and chairman of the 3-member medical board that conducted autopsy of Yasmin's body, submitted his deposition.

The body of Yasmin was ex- See Page 12 Col 4

## Alamgir Mohiuddin given addl charge

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has been given additional charge of the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry, reports UNB.

An official announcement said yesterday Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed over the portfolio to Dr Alamgir.

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গ্যাসের অপচয় রোধ করুন  
অকারণে গ্যাসের চুলা জ্বালিয়ে রাখবেন না  
রান্না ঘরে সবসময় বাতাস চলাচলের ব্যবস্থা রাখুন  
আগামী প্রজন্মের জন্য গ্যাস ব্যবহারে মিতব্যয়ী হোন  
প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাসের অধু্যাবহার রোধ করুন  
গ্যাসের পরিকল্পিত ব্যবহার নিশ্চিত করুন

তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিসন এন্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড  
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানী)

## Local varieties of infectious micro-organisms identified

By Morshed Ali Khan

A team of Bangladeshi microbiologists have successfully identified local varieties of micro-organisms which cause deadly infections such as meningitis, Septicaemia (blood infection) and respiratory tract infection.

Identification of these micro-organisms would help the vaccine manufacturers to develop the exact vaccination for the first time in the country.

Dr Samir K Saha, an associate professor at the Department of Microbiology at the Bangladesh Institute of Child Health of Dhaka Shishu Hospital who led the team, said that for the first time these serotypes or varieties of 'Streptococcus Pneumoniae' were identified in Bangladesh which would help formulate the vaccine.

children each year.

The team at the Shishu Hospital conducted the studies in collaboration with ICDDR, B and the Institute of Tropical Medicine of Nagasaki University, Japan.

The diseases are under control in the western countries because they have formulated the exact vaccine after identifying the serotypes of these micro-organisms," noted Dr Saha. "But that vaccine is unlikely to be valid in our country as there is a remarkable difference of serotype distribution of these micro-organisms."

Another major breakthrough that Dr Saha has achieved through the eight year-long study is to identify 'the increasing burden of infection caused by the micro-organism Haemophilus Influenzae Type-B' among the children of Bangladesh. Over the study period, in a single paediatric hospital about 700 children were found to 'have the infection with this micro-organism. See Page 12 Col 8