

## WB assistance for Ganges barrage project sought

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: World Bank President James Wolfensohn called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite here yesterday, reports BSS.

Wolfensohn was accompanied by the Bank Vice President Ms. Meiko Nishimizu.

The World Bank President congratulated Bangladesh Prime Minister on the progress achieved by her government in only seven months since coming to office.

Sheikh Hasina briefed the World Bank President about the recently concluded water treaty with India and said that her government was keen to foster good relationship with neighbouring countries on the basis of mutual benefits. The government has drawn up a plan to construct a barrage to make sure that full benefits are reaped from the water. The plan will be environment-friendly.

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## Kibria asks secys to speed up ADP implementation

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria yesterday called upon all concerned to speed up implementation of Annual Development Programme (ADP), reports BSS.

He assured cooperation from the Finance Ministry to remove uncalculated delay to get clearance for fund allocation and other impediments in the way of implementation of different projects.

Kibria was holding discussion with secretaries of different ministries on situation of the administration at the conference room of the ministry, a PID handout said.

The Finance Minister asked the government officials to make the administration dynamic. He said as principal accounts officers of respective ministries, the secretaries can

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## Saturday holiday, banks to remain open till 1 pm

The government has announced February 8 (Saturday) as a public holiday on the occasion of the holy Eid-ul-Fitr, an official handout said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

But all banks and other financial institutions will remain open on the day till 1 pm, the handout added.

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### DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1797.64 (-0.47%)  
Market capital Tk 13455.68cr  
Transactions in volume 275528  
Transactions in value Tk 8.90cr

### CSE MARKET

CSE price index 760.13 (+0.09%)  
Market capital Tk 9975.36cr  
Transactions in volume 83297  
Transactions in value Tk 16079900

### Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
27	06	—	5:52
28	07	5:15	5:52
29	08	5:15	5:53



The rush of home-bound people is increasing as the Eid-ul-Fitr is nearing. The photo was taken from Sadarghat launch terminal in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Dhaka preparing concept paper on sub-regional grouping

By M Anwarul Haq

The government is preparing a concept paper on sub-regional co-operation among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan, spelling out the framework and objectives of the proposed idea, diplomatic sources said here yesterday.

The paper will be placed at a specially convened meeting of foreign secretaries of the four countries.

The meeting is likely to take place in Kathmandu sometime in March for launching the idea on sub-regional co-operation on "more concrete terms" Foreign Ministry sources added.

The Foreign secretaries' meeting is likely to be followed by a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, the sources further indicated.

The concept paper will aim at identifying the areas of co-

operation between the four countries. The paper will also aim at exploring the possibilities of undertaking some steps under a common platform to address some identical problems confronting the countries.

The issues may include the problems of illegal trafficking of women and children, cross-border trade and smuggling. However, the thrust area of the co-operation must be combating insurgency and terrorism in the region.

Although harnessing of water resources is seen as a crucial area, this may take a back seat at the formative stage of the sub-regional concept, diplomatic sources added.

The concept paper will also address common concerns like environmental degradation and river management.

Talking to The Daily Star

yesterday a high official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the idea of sub-regional co-operation was first floated by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at the SAARC Foreign Ministers Conference held in New Delhi in December last. Foreign Secretary of Nepal Kedar Bhakta Srestha also delivered an "approach paper" at the Standing Committee meet during the SAARC summit.

The official informed that the idea was generally welcomed by the four countries but the summary of conclusions of the SAARC Foreign Ministers meet did not finally include the concept due to objection by Pakistan at that time.

The official said that the idea of sub-regional grouping was manifested in Article 7 of

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## Clinton's call to prepare America for 21st century

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: In a long State of the Union speech laying out second-term goals, President Bill Clinton on Tuesday issued a national call to action to improve education, balance the budget and reform campaign financing, reports Reuters.

"We face no imminent threat, but we do have an enemy: the enemy of our time is inaction," Clinton told the joint houses of Congress in the ornate House of Representatives chamber and millions watching on television. "So tonight, I issue a call to action...to prepare America for the 21st century."

Clinton warned Congress against amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, saying that this could cripple our country in time of crisis.

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## 400 houses gutted at Mirpur slum

At least 400 houses and 12 cows were burnt in a fire at Mirpur Mazar Road in the city early yesterday, reports BSS.

The fire broke out at a slum near Mazar Road at about 2 am and gutted at least 400 kutcha and semi-pucca houses, fire brigade sources said.

Several small factories of different categories were burnt in the fire. The fire was brought under control after nearly one and a half hours.

The estimated loss and cause of the fire could not be ascertained.



A petrol pump operator uses a mask to protect himself from the pollutants in the city's air. The Department of Environment says the suspended particles in the air in certain city areas are four to five times higher than the normal level, making the metropolis one of the most highly polluted cities in the world. But the authorities prefer to blame each other for their failure in enforcing emission control and environmental laws, putting the citizens' lives at risk. —Shehab Ahmed with photo by Enamul Huq

## SAARC observer group says

## Pak election was peaceful barring stray incidents

The SAARC non-government observer group observed that the general election in Pakistan on Monday was generally peaceful barring a few instances of violence and intimidation, reports UNB.

"Despite several irregularities and instances of mismanagement, the elections were conducted substantially in conformity with election laws and procedures in Pakistan," the group said in its preliminary report.

The report faxed to UNB last night said "whether the elections were also free and impartial has to be seen in the light of

the several measures and actions which preceded and which are likely to follow the elections."

The 41-member observer group from four SAARC countries has been in Pakistan since January 29 to observe the February 3 elections. Chief Adviser of 1996 Caretaker government of Bangladesh Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman led the team.

The observer group from Bangladesh includes former Chief Justice Kemal Uddin Hossain, former VC of Jahangir Nagar University Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Bhorer

Kagoj Editor Matlur Rahman and Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam.

It also includes former Foreign Secretary of India Mukund Dubey, Justice Rajender Sachar, journalists Nikhil Chakrabarti and Kuldeep Nayar, Justice JFA Suza, MPs Dr Nilan Diruchelvan and Sunetra Bandernayek of Sri Lanka, former Finance Minister of Nepal Dr Devendra Rajpandey, Prof Krishna Khanal and former SAARC Secretary General K Silwal.

The SAARC observer group comprising delegations from

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## Hasina chairs concluding session UNDP, Japan pledge fund for microcredit programmes

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) yesterday announced it would provide 41 million dollars to help sustain microcredit initiatives in 25 countries, reports AFP.

The programme, dubbed 'Microstart', was the only concrete promise from government and international institution representatives attending the first World Microcredit Summit, which ended here Tuesday.

Microstart aims to provide loans and technical assistance over the next 18 months to microcredit institutions to help develop lending in developing countries, UNDP administrator James Spetch said.

Haiti, Morocco, Lebanon, Uganda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Bosnia could benefit from the programme, Spetch said.

The United States pledged to continue funding the federal US

Agency for International Development (USAID), which distributes funds both in the United States and abroad.

The Japanese delegation said it would ask Tokyo to devote one per cent—roughly 100 million dollars—of its foreign aid to helping organisations that make microcredit loans.

World Bank president James Wolfensohn said the Bank would be 'part of this effort'—meaning the summit's overall goal of boosting microcredit funds—but did not specify the manner of the institution's involvement.

First Lady Hillary Clinton, Spain's Queen Sofia and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed co-chaired the summit.

BSS adds: Sheikh Hasina chaired the concluding session of the three-day summit held here yesterday.

Hasina read out the commu-

nique issued by the Council of Heads of State and Government to the closing plenary.

While reading out the communiqué, Sheikh Hasina said, "We believe that successful anti-poverty strategies must unleash the energies of people living in poverty and enable them to gain access to resource including capital, to improve their condition for themselves, especially their youth and children, and for society they live in."

The communiqué noted that freedom from the bondage of poverty promotes education, health and increases the well-being of the people. The access of people to credit would enable them to work their way out of poverty with dignity, promote their effective participation in social, economic and political activities and would contribute to sustainable development, it said.

## Trade ties with Dhaka growing, says State Dept official

By Staff Correspondent

Relations between Bangladesh and the United States are very good, reinforced by economic cooperation which is playing an important part in fostering it, a US State Department official says.

Talking to a group of journalists at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, the official from the State Department's South Asia Bureau said trade is also playing a vital role in bonding Washington's relations with Dhaka.

The number of US companies doing business with Bangladesh is "quite big and growing", the official said.

He answered a host of questions ranging from regional and sub-regional cooperation, harnessing of water resources in the region, Indo-Pak relations vis-à-vis Kashmir to human rights and trafficking of women and children.

The official was on a routine visit to Bangladesh as part of

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## Young man shot dead in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Feb 5: A young man was shot dead allegedly by a group of youths at Barkoira village in Patia thana of the district early today, reports UNB.

Quoting family sources, police said three local youths called out Abul Hossain, son of Muslim Khan of the village, at about 3.30 am and shot him to death.

Police said the killing might be a sequel to previous rivalry between the youths and the victim.

The body was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The victim's father lodged a case with Patia police naming three youths in connection with the murder.

## HC order to allow Zobaida to meet lawyers

The High Court yesterday directed the state to allow Zobaida Rashid to meet her lawyers in jail on February 15 about the Bangabandhu murder case but kept pending retraction of her confessional statement, reports UNB.

A High Court Division Bench of the Supreme Court made the order under Section 561-A of CrPc which provided the majority with inherent power to allow the interview.

Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, a sitting MP of opposition BNP, moved the case to the bench comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Justice Jainal Abedin.

Rahman submitted for giving Zobaida Rashid division one in the prison according to the order issued by the Chief

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## Gowda for talks with Pakistan

NEW DELHI, Feb 5: Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda said today he was prepared to hold talks at foreign minister level with Pakistan, the Press Trust of India said a day after Pakistan elected a new premier, reports AFP.

"I am prepared to sort out our pending problems with Pakistan," Gowda said at Port Louis in Mauritius, where he is on a two-day visit, the agency said.

Nawaz Sharif won the elections with a crushing majority on Tuesday, ousting former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

There has been no official dialogue between the two countries since January 1994, when India and Pakistan's foreign secretaries met in Islamabad, the session ending in acrimony. (See also page 8)

## US urged to write off loans under PL-480

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had a meeting with the members of the House of Representative Committee on International Relations at the Capitol Hill here yesterday, reports BSS.

Benjamin Gilman, chairman, US House of Representatives International Relations Committee, welcomed the Bangladesh Prime Minister and commended the water sharing treaty with India, establishment of democracy in Bangladesh and her role in the microcredit summit.

The Prime Minister briefed the Congressmen about the ongoing development works in Bangladesh and said her government was putting all efforts to eradicate poverty.

"We are also working to enable democracy and fundamental rights, in particular, rights of women and children to take strong roots in society,"

She said the focus of her government was to reach the fruits of development to the widest number of people. "Good governance, eradication of corruption and streamlining of the

administration are our primary objectives."

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh-US relations are based on solid foundation and have grown steadily both in 'scope and depth'. She said "our common commitment to international peace and security resulted in Bangladesh becoming a co-partner with the US in the Gulf war and the only participant in the US-led support to the restoration of democracy in Haiti."

She said the US Congress had always been supportive not only of our democracy but also of our development efforts.

The Prime Minister thanked the US Congress for the debt write-off of project assistance in 1991 amounting to US dollar 300 million. "I would strongly urge you to take steps to write off the food assistance loan under PL-480 to Bangladesh which today amounting to nearly US dollar 800 millions."

Lee Hamilton, Matthew McHugh, Eric Faleomavaeg, Gary Ackerman, Robert Menendez and Tom Manton were present.

## Boy chopped to death by housemaid

By Staff Correspondent

The minor son of a teacher of Residential Model College was chopped to death while his wife was also seriously injured by their housemaid in the city yesterday afternoon, according to police.

Sharif Harunur Rashid, the House Master of the Qudrat-e-Khuda House of Residential Model College at Mohammadpur, was not present in the residence during the murder, said some teachers of the college who took the victims to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sharif's daughter, a student of Class X, was also not present at the time.

The housemaid, Shaheda, 25, who was reportedly employed by the family only a month ago was absconding. Nurul Amin, 32, the guard of the house has been taken into custody.

Shafayet, 7, who is a student of Kakoli High School and his mother, Farida Begum, were rushed to the DMCH with severe injuries. Shafayet died after an

## Businessman stabbed to death in Mirpur

A young businessman was stabbed to death reportedly by a group of extortionists at Shah Ali Bagh in city's Mirpur area last night, reports BSS.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) sources said Mohammad Masudur Rahman, 30, a businessman was stabbed by the extortionists at his shop in the evening as he refused to give them the money they wanted.

Masud was rushed to DMCH in a critical condition where he died.

Relatives of the victim alleged that a group of extortionists came to his shop at about 1 pm and demanded Taka 20,000 from him as a toll.

## One choked to death in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Feb 5: Police recovered the body of one Majid Ali, 20, from the Mirjuna road playing ground this morning.

The young man, who lived in the Gynukhana area of the town, was allegedly choked to death.

Police say Majid was a member of an organised gang of thieves and the murder was the result of a conflict among the thieves.

## Showcause on govt Abbas, Gayeswar, 4 others granted anticipatory bail

By SC Correspondent

Mirza Abbas and Gayeswar Chandra Roy, president and general secretary of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, and four others have been granted anticipatory bail yesterday by the High Court in the cases arising out of the incidents relating to the rally organised on December 24 protesting the corruption case against BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia.

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Justice Md Jainal Abedin also issued a rule on the government to show cause within 12 weeks as to why the petitioners should not be enlarged on anticipatory bail in the cases.

The court also directed the police not to arrest the accused in connection with the cases till disposal of the rule or till submission of the police reports, whichever is earlier.

Both Mirza Abbas and

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## HC stay order on DU selection boards overruled

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday overruled a High Court order that stayed the functioning of 47 selection boards formed by the Dhaka University Syndicate for appointing teachers, reports UNB.

A High Court Division bench comprising Justice Mozammel Huq and Justice Abdul Matin, on Sunday, issued a rule nisi staying the functioning of the committees formed by the Syndicate on November 12.

The petitioner, Prof Nurul Amin Bepari of the Political Science Department of DU, in his petition alleged that the committees for appointment of lecturers and assistant professors in the university's 47 departments and institutes were formed in contravention of law.

The Appellate Division gave the stay order upon a petition moved by Barrister Shafiq Ahmed on behalf of Vice-Chancellor and Registrar of Dhaka University. Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared for the respondent.

## Tax employees' ultimatum to nab attackers

By Staff Correspondent

Tax officers and employees at a meeting in the city yesterday demanded that the persons responsible for the attack on two tax officers be arrested immediately.

The Tax Officers and Employees Oikya Parishad at a meeting warned that a greater agitation would be launched if the attackers were not taken into custody by February 16, said an official.

It is alleged that some persons, led by one tax evader, assaulted two tax officers at Segun Bagicha on January 30.

Yesterday's meeting was addressed by Tax Commissioner and convenor of the Oikya Parishad, Siddiq Hussain Chowdhury, first secretary of NBR Chowdhury Khalequzzaman, general secretary of Taxation Officers Association Walid Mulla, convenor of Tax In-

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**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
**জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড**  
ঢাকা  
**বিজ্ঞাপন**  
**বিষয় : বন্দরে জাহাজ আগমনের পূর্বেই**  
**আমদানিকৃত পণ্যের শুঙ্কায়ন**  
সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বর্তমানে প্রচলিত শুঙ্ক আইনের বিধান অনুযায়ী বন্দরে জাহাজ আগমনের পূর্বেই আমদানিকৃত অধিকাংশ চালান শুঙ্কায়ন করা যায়। এ শুঙ্কায়ন পদ্ধতির সুবিধা নিতে হলে জাহাজ আগমনের পূর্বেই জাহাজের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ এজেন্ট কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত "IGM" (জাহাজে পরিবাহিত আমদানিকৃত পণ্যের বিবরণ) দাখিল করবেন এবং উক্ত "IGM"-এর বিপরীতে আমদানিকারক বা তার এজেন্ট বিল অব এন্ট্রি দাখিল করবেন। অতঃপর বিল অব এন্ট্রিতে ঘোষিত পণ্য শুঙ্কায়ন করা এবং শুঙ্ক-কর ইত্যাদি টেক্সেজের জমা দেয়া যাবে। এ পদ্ধতিতে আমদানিকৃত পণ্য আগমনের পূর্বেই শুঙ্কায়ন সম্পন্ন করে রাখা যায়। আমদানির পর পণ্য আইনানুগ পরীক্ষা করে যথাযথি পাওয়া গেলে তা খালাস দেয়া হয়। এ পদ্ধতি বিমান ও সমুদ্র বন্দরসমূহ ও কমলাপুর আইসিডিজে প্রচলিত আছে। সকলের নিকট সমগ্র প্রকিয়াটি বিসদভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করার জন্য সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ কমিশনারগণকে এ বিষয়ে আইনানুগ পদ্ধতি ব্যাখ্যা করে গণ-বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারী করার নির্দেশ দেয়া হয়েছে। আশা করা যায় যে, জাহাজের স্থানীয় এজেন্ট, আমদানিকারক ও তাদের নিযুক্ত এজেন্টগণ আইনানুগ পদ্ধতিতে এ সুবিধার সন্ধানবহার করে আমদানিকৃত পণ্যের দ্রুত খালাস সম্পন্ন করবেন।  
ডিএফবি-২৬৩৮-৪/২  
জি-৩৬  
**জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড**