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## 'No camps of insurgents in Bangladesh'

The government yesterday refuted an allegation of providing shelter to insurgents from Tripura state of India and reiterated its stand not to allow its territory for insurgent activities against any foreign country, reports BSS.

When the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was drawn to a news report published in some local dailies quoting BBC on the alleged existence of camps of insurgents in Bangladesh, spokesmen of the Ministry said "Bangladesh remains committed not to allow its territory to be used for any insurgent activities against any foreign country."

He added that in view of such a firm stand the 'question of the existence of any such camp in Bangladesh does not arise.' BBC quoted Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar as saying that there were at least 25 camps of the different insurgent groups in Bangladesh.

## Khaleda condemns police attack on BNP men during hartal

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has protested the police attack on her party leaders and workers in the city during January 26 hartal, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, she said police resorted to baton charge on BNP lawmakers Sadek Hossain Khoka, Amanullah Aman, Joyntal Abedin Faruque, Nazimuddin Alam and JCD president Habbun Nabi Sohel on Topkhana Road and in Mirpur.

She demanded immediate punishment to the police officials responsible.

The BNP chief said hartal has become the only alternative means to protest against the misdeeds and misuse of the government when other democratic ways are obstructed.

"We have been compelled to enforce hartal for realising public demands as Awami League government in a fascist manner has snatched all democratic rights," she said.

Begum Zia alleged that the government had let loose its armed cadres and branded criminals and used police for carrying out naked attack and repression on opposition activists in the name of maintaining hartal. "It is unprecedented in a civilized society," she added.

## BNP's public rally in city on Thursday

By Staff Correspondent

Main opposition BNP will hold a public meeting at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm on Thursday to press for opposition 4-point demand and cancellation of municipal election schedule.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will address the meeting, said a press release.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday urged all to make the public rally a success.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Awami Jote will also arrange separate meetings in the city on Thursday.

## JP jt meet tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

An emergency joint meeting of the Jatiya Party will be held tomorrow at party's central office at 6:30 pm, said a press release.

JP secretary general Nazim Rahman Manju has asked the office bearers of the central committee, president and general secretary of Dhaka city unit, and presidents and general secretaries of all front organisations to attend the meeting in time.

## Holzman

From Page 1

briefing her on the developments and assured Holzman of all cooperation regarding the energy sector in Bangladesh.

Another US team, scheduled to visit Bangladesh from February 12 to 14, would be headed by former US envoy to India, Frank Weisner. The 12-strong team would be comprised of US businessmen, entrepreneurs and executives. This visit is linked with a US-Bangladesh Trade Fair, an annual event.

BNP sources claimed that yesterday's Khaleda-Holzman meeting also reflected the 'general disappointment' over poor performance of the government in dealing with energy sector.

## Lewinsky back in Washington, closed testimony today

WASHINGTON, Jan 31: Monica Lewinsky arrived back in Washington yesterday, in preparation for deposition testimony in President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, while Clinton rescheduled a February trip to Central America so he would be home when the case ends, reports AP.

Subpoenaed by the Senate to testify tomorrow, Lewinsky was greeted at the Mayflower Hotel by several dozen tourists and anti-Clinton demonstrators, held behind red velvet ropes as she walked past wearing a black topcoat and baseball cap.

"God bless the dress," one protest sign read, referring to the stained clothing of Lewinsky that had evidence of a sexual relationship between the president and the former White House intern.

Lewinsky's closed testimony is scheduled to be conducted tomorrow in the stately hotel, where she will be questioned by House prosecutors and White House lawyers, with two senators serving as referees. The Senate would have to decide whether to release a videotape of her testimony or to call her as a live witness. Three House prosecutors interviewed her at the hotel last Sunday.

Impeachment prosecutors expect Lewinsky to support an obstruction of justice charge against Clinton with "almost total recall" of her conversations with him and her interpretation of what he said, House officials familiar with the strategy contend.

The prosecution team believes that she "has a lot of information if you ask the right questions," said one House official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Rep Ed Bryant, a Tennessee Republican and a soft-spoken former federal prosecutor, was assigned to question Lewinsky. He must skillfully use the former intern's interpretation of events to overcome Lewinsky's statement that "no one ever asked me to lie, and I was never promised a job for my silence."

Meanwhile, The New York Times reported in Sunday's edition that Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr has concluded he has the constitutional authority to seek a grand jury indictment of Clinton before the president leaves office.

Attributing its account to several unidentified associates of Starr, the newspaper said that despite concluding he has legal authority to seek a criminal indictment, Starr has not decided whether to do so.

Clinton rescheduled his long-planned Feb 10-15 trip after the Senate set a goal of voting on two articles of impeachment by Feb 12.

Instead, the president and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will make a day trip to Mexico on Feb 15 to meet with President Ernesto Zedillo.

Meanwhile, a Newsweek poll released yesterday said 65 per cent of Americans — and even 45 per cent of Republicans surveyed — believe that Clinton should not be indicted after leaving office for the actions that led to his impeachment.

Only 28 per cent responded that Clinton should be convicted in the impeachment trial and removed from office.

More than half of those surveyed, 54 per cent, said Republicans have been hurt by the impeachment proceedings, and 40 per cent of Republicans agreed with that assessment.

The poll interviewed 751 adults from Jan 28-29, with a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Former White House intern Monica Lewinsky is escorted into the Mayflower Hotel by an unidentified man Saturday in Washington, DC. Lewinsky is due to give a videotaped deposition to Republican prosecutors today which will be used in Clinton's impeachment trial before the Senate.

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## Ghorasal power plant

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By the year-end, another 200 MW power will be added by two private sector barge-mounted plants.

The government has taken steps to build more power plants in private and public sectors in the coming years. The private sector schemes will add 1200 MW of power and the public sector another 1000 MW.

"We have limited resources. But if we use it in a planned way, we may solve bigger problems," the Prime Minister said.

She urged power sector officials and employees to be more honest and sincere and the people to stop wastage of power to help the government solve the power crisis.

The function was also addressed by Science and Technology Minister Noor Uddin Khan who is also former energy minister, State Minister for Power Rafiqul Islam, the Russian Ambassador and Natural Resources Secretary Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury.

Built with a Russian commercial loan and the government's funds, the Ghorasal sixth unit actually took 12 years to be completed.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this plant was signed in 1987 with Technopromexport. Work on the project began in 1993. But till the Awami League government came to power in June '96, only 8 per cent work of the project was completed.

Due to the tremendous importance given by the Prime Minister to pursue all power projects, it was possible to complete the remaining 92 per cent of the project in the last two and a half years," PDB Chairman Nuruddin M Kamal said while speaking on the occasion.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also maintained that

the present power crisis was the result of "sheer negligence" to this sector by the past governments. To improve the power supply situation, the government had to pursue reforms to improve generation, distribution and bill collection systems, she added.

The Prime Minister also announced a host of facilities to be made available to all power sector employees who live in isolation in plant areas. These facilities include development of medical centres, schools and children's playgrounds.

Besides, as an incentive to all the employees of the Ghorasal Power Plant, the Prime Minister announced Tk 1000 bonus for each employee (totaling Tk 10 lakh).

Jamaat-e-Islami has expressed concern over the "motivated spread of confusion" by the government and a section of the press about Islam and its followers centring the attempt on the life of poet Shamsur Rahman, reports UNB.

In a resolution, a meeting of the party's working committee yesterday demanded judicial probe into the incident at the residence of Shamsur Rahman.

Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) also demanded judicial inquiry commission to probe the incident of attempt on the life of poet Shamsur Rahman at his residence before the Eid day.

Moazzem Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Obaidur Rahman and Kamaruzzaman against BNP chief Khaleda Zia.

Visibly angered by Nasim's speech, the MPs of BNP and Jamaat walked out of the House.

Meanwhile, JP legislator Dr. TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury took the floor to say that there was nothing wrong with the BNP's proposal.

"What's wrong with forming a parliamentary committee to probe into the alleged incident of police excesses against the BNP legislators?", asked the JP lawmaker. "Why should the AL refrain from looking into the allegation of police atrocities on the opposition on the plea that such incidents went unpunished during the BNP regime?"

He said that the 'JP would also be forced to stage a walk-out if the government fails to constitute a parliamentary probe committee.'

Then appeared the deputy leader of the House and LGRD minister, Zillur Rahman. "Under the rules, there is no scope for having a discussion on hartal. On top of all, where is the proof that the police beat up the BNP MPs?"

The deputy leader found BNP allegations an 'unfounded story', and finished his speech without making any comment on the opposition proposal for constituting a parliamentary probe committee.

At this point JP whip advocate Fazle Rabbi sought floor. But the deputy speaker turned a deaf ear to his appeal and asked Awami League whip Abdus Shahid to move a motion of vote of thanks on the Presidential address delivered on January 25 last.

Advocate Rabbi at this stage led the walkout by seven JP MPs present in the House at that time.

Following the bill's introduction, the Chair hurriedly adjourned the House until 6:00 this evening.

moved amidst the JP walkout, the Chair asked the law minister to introduce the Legal Aid Bill 1999.

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—AFP photo

## Detention of Aziz Bhai: Showcase on govt

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday directed the government to show cause within two weeks as to why the detention of Aziz Mohammad Bhai should not be declared to have been passed without any lawful authority and is of no legal effect and the detenu be set at liberty forthwith.

Upon a writ petition filed by Nowrin Aziz Mohammad Bhai, wife of Aziz Mohammad Bhai the division bench of the HC comprising Justice K M Hasan and Justice Md Ali Asgar Khan also ordered the government to show cause as to why Aziz Mohammad Bhai should not be brought before the HC so as to satisfy itself that he is not detained without any lawful authority or in an unlawful manner.

Aziz Mohammad Bhai was arrested on January 6, 1999 and the order to detain him for 30 days was issued the following day.

Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan assisted by Advocate Fazlul Hoque Khan Farid and Md Tanuzzuddin moved for the petition.

Five fishermen drown, three abducted by pirates

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 31: Five fishermen drowned when a fish loaded trawler sank in the confluence of the Baleswar river and the Bay of Bengal near Chandesar along the Sundarbans in the early hours of Saturday.

Three other fishermen were abducted by the pirates of Sundarbans.

According to Chowdhury Mostafa, president, Patharghata Trawler Owners' Association the trawler that sank was overloaded.

The dead fishermen were identified as Ayub Ali, 27, Nurul Alam, 22, Zakir Hossain, 26, Kaosar, 20, and Kabir Kazi, 32. All hailed from Gyanpara Patharghata of Barguna district. Bodies of Ayub and Kaosar were recovered from Charduan and Charkhali of Patharghata yesterday afternoon.

The abducted fishermen — Sagor, 26, Shaheed, 24, and Tipu, 27 — could not be rescued till filing of this report tonight.

Meanwhile, the pirates demanded a ransom of Tk 10,000 for releasing each of them.

JS snippets

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member did not mean the blaze the fire brigadesmen fight against. It's the political violence flaring up across the country," said the minister, making an appeal to all concerned to practise tolerance in politics.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid then commented: "I think he (Osman) meant the fire in the heart."

Golam Faruk Obhi spoke harsh about deposed President HM Ershad who expelled him from the Jatiya Party on Thursday.

Without naming Ershad, Obhi asked the home minister, "I would like to know how an MP who was jailed on charge of moral turpitude could be allowed to attend the parliament session keeping him in a sub-jail on the premises of the parliament complex?"

The minister appeared to be happy hearing the question, which he said, should have been asked much earlier. "It was done as per law of the land," he replied.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina was seen enjoying some lighter moments with her party lawmakers minutes before the sitting started.

As she entered the House at about 4:45 pm, she was surrounded by a group of AL lawmakers on the passage leading to her seat. The PM was seen talking to her party colleagues in a jubilant mood.

At that time, some 45 members were present in the Treasury Bench while the Opposition seats were totally empty. The House requires the presence of at least 60 members to start its business.

The members who will attend in time will be rewarded and the late-comers will be fined Tk 100 for every hour," a smiling Leader of the House was heard from the press gallery as saying.

But none asked if the penalty would also be applicable for Sheikh Hasina, who came 15 minutes behind schedule yesterday.

The JP lawmakers, clearly divided into two factions, behaved in their own ways. The group loyal to Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Monju entered the House first while the group enjoying the blessings of Ershad came later.

The pro-Ershad JP members followed BNP to stage a walk-out. While the BNP was preparing for the walkout, Monju's followers left the House one by one, understandably to avoid the protest.

Legal Aid Bill 99 placed in JS

A bill seeking to provide legal aid by the state to the poor and helpless who are unable to get justice for socio-economic insolvency was introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Introduced by the Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, the Legal Aid Bill 1999, seeks to establish a national legal aid organisation with headquarters in Dhaka.

—AFP photo



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## Rashidpur Gasfield Drilling of Well-5 on without trouble

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Jan 31: Drilling of Well No 5 in Rashidpur Gasfield in Habiganj district is going on in full swing and up to 4200 feet has so far been drilled without any major trouble.

There are positive signs and we are optimistic about successful completion of the drilling, an official of the Sylhet Gasfield Ltd told The Daily Star yesterday. "Everything is being done carefully and under highest safety arrangements," he said.

The well will be drilled up to a depth of 9500 feet within 90 days, he added. Drilling began on January 5.

Two other wells, one 13 kms and the other six kms from Well No 5 will be drilled. Drilling of the three wells in the same gasfield are scheduled to be completed by November 30, he said.

Reserve of gas in the three wells has been estimated at about 1.32 trillion CFT, he said.

The project is being implemented by the Sylhet Gasfield under the 'Gas Infrastructure Development Programme' (GIDP), partly financed by the World Bank and IDA.

The Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) of India has

been given the contract for the drilling under an agreement signed with Petrobangla on May 27 last year, he said.

Drilling of the three wells will cost Tk 124 crore including Tk 63.4 crore in foreign currency.

About 90 mmcf of gas, 72 barrels of motor spirit and condensate will be produced daily in the three wells. After processing, the dry gas will be supplied to the national grid, the officials said.

To process the produced gas, work is going on to install two Silica-Gel plants of 45 mmcf capacity each at a nearby location at a cost of Tk 117 crore under a Surface Development Facilities project of the GIDP.

Measures have been taken to make the plants ready with the completion of drilling, officials added.

It may be mentioned here that in the Rashidpur Gasfield, there are four old gas wells, producing about 77 to 85 mmcf gas daily now.

Rashidpur Gasfield is located in the hilly area of Bahubal thana. It is one of the 6 gasfields owned by the Sylhet Gasfield Limited.

## No breakthrough in Indo-US talks

NEW DELHI, Jan 31: Indian and American negotiators today ended the eighth round of talks aimed at nudging New Delhi into signing a nuclear weapons treaty without making any breakthrough, reports AP.

The two sides promised to meet before the middle of the year.

"We have had a very fruitful, productive and constructive three days of discussion," Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told journalists in New Delhi after talks with US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.

The talks began after New Delhi set off underground nuclear tests in the deserts of Rajasthan state in May, following which neighboring Pakistan retaliated with its own explosions.

Washington joined many other countries in imposing economic and military sanctions and opened talks to persuade India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

India refuses to sign the treaty, saying it needs a defense against the threat it sees from China and Pakistan.

A joint statement issued at the end of the talks said "both delegations are satisfied with the outcome of the talks. As

## Corrigendum

The news report on Baghabari power plant headed "PDB grants developer some 'undue' facility" published in The Daily Star Saturday mistakenly mentioned that NEPC was setting up its power plant in Baghabari. NEPC, which was offered some undue facility by the PDB, is setting up its barge-mounted plant in Haripur. The Baghabari plant is being set up by another company — Westmont. The mistake is regretted.

Surveys by different government and non-government organisations are also underway to identify arsenic patients while they continue to suffer.

According to available statistics, "field kit" tests of tubewell waters in many of the 61 districts show arsenic contamination much higher than the WHO recommended level of 0.01 mg/L.

পোলিও মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ গড়ুন

৫ম জাতীয় টিকা দিবস

দ্বিতীয় রাউন্ড ২রা ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯৯৯

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam