

What's on today.....

Seminar: The Zoological Society of Bangladesh will hold a seminar on "Primate Conservation in Asia." Dr David J Chivers of the University of Cambridge will be speaker at the event. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00 am-12:00 pm.

Certificate awarding ceremony: Bangladesh Bar Council and Legal Education and Training Institute (LETI) will hold the Call to the Bar Ceremony 2000 in which certificates will be awarded to new lawyers. Chief guest: Chief Justice Latifur Rahman. Venue: Winter Garden, Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6:30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Film show: Three movies *Le Juge et l'assassin* (Judge and the Assassin), *Farwell my concubine* and *The White Balloon* will be screened. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 11:00 am, 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

Weather

Dry weather may continue

Prevailing dry weather is likely to continue over the country in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over Rajshahi division and the river basins of the country and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during morning, said the Met Office. Slight rise in night temperature is expected over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 32.0 degree Celsius at Teknaf and the lowest 8.6 degrees at Srimongal. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:30 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:44 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	27.5	73
Chittagong	30.2	76
Rajshahi	27.1	68
Khulna	29.0	72
Barisal	29.0	74
Sylhet	26.1	57
Cox's Bazar	29.7	61

HERE and THERE

Masterda Surya Sen Parishad

The hanging day of revolutionary leader Masterda Surya Sen was observed in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

In observance of the day Masterda Surya Sen Parishad organised a rally at the central Shaheed Minar.

Speaking on the occasion president of the parishad Faiz Ahmed said Surya Sen drove the British from this territory by fighting against them and being imbued by his inspiration the people of this country established independent Bangladesh through armed struggle in 1971.

He urged the government to telecast and broadcast through state media the heroic stories of the revolutionary life of Masterda.

Among others Mahfuza Khanam, Premranjan Dev., Hari Sadhan Debbaman, Swapan Sarker, DL Chowdhury and Pronoy Barua addressed the rally.

Baridhara Society

The Baridhara Society, a social and community organisation, distributed gifts and winter clothes to DCC cleaners working in Baridhara area recently, says a press release.

The Society's president, secretary and joint secretary general and members of the executive committee were present during the distribution.

In the past the Baridhara Society had taken up different social and welfare programmes including a cleanliness drive, distribution of rain coats etc. and free medical care to the 15 DCC cleaners and their family members.

Baridhara Society also takes initiatives for the improvement of the area in various manners. Some of these are: installing luminous road signs, introducing kitchen garbage cleaning services, supervision of DCC cleaners and tree plantation drives in Baridhara area.

Bangladeshi diplomat dies in Colombo

Feroze Hayat, Bangladesh First Secretary in Colombo, died on Monday at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore, official sources said yesterday, reports BSS.

The deceased, who joined BCS (Foreign Service) in 1991, served Bangladesh missions in Warsaw and Stockholm in different capacities.

Foreign Secretary C M Shafi Sami in a message expressed profound sorrow at the untimely demise of the young diplomat. He was known to all as a hardworking, honest and a man of amiable disposition.

The foreign secretary prayed for the peace of the soul and conveyed his heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Obituary

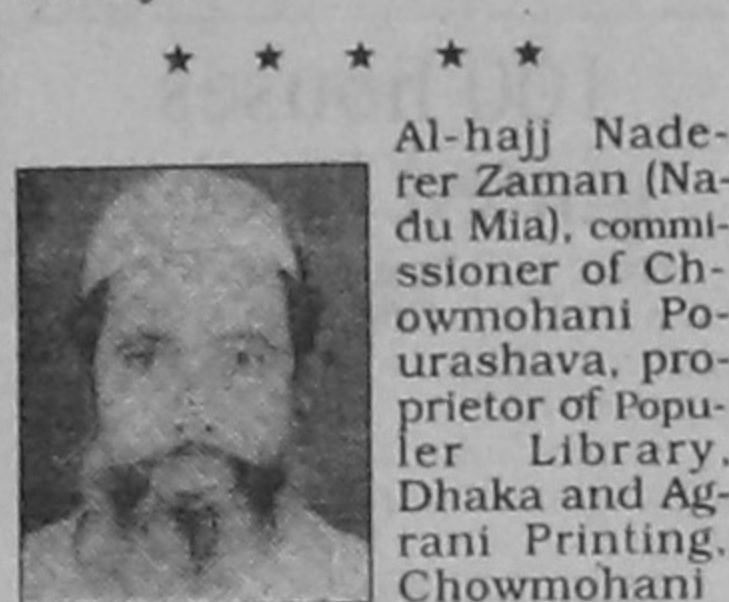
Dr Ismat Ahmad Khan (Proloy), a Bangladeshi physician working in Oklahoma University, USA died in a road accident in Arkansas on Saturday. He was 39, reports UNB.

He was the only son of Mazharuddin Khan, brother of noted Rabindra Sangeet artist Rezwana Chowdhury Banya. He left behind his wife, a daughter and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

The body of Ismat is expected to arrive today (Thursday) evening by Bangladesh Biman. His *Namaz-e-Janaza* will be held on January 14 after *Juma* prayers and he will then be buried at Banani.

His *Qulhwani* will be held on January 15 after *Asr* prayers at his father's residence at 2/7 Lalmatia, Block-B, Dhaka.

State Minister for Jute AK Faezul Huq expressed his deep shock at the premature demise of Dr Isma. He prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed his sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.



Al-Haji Nadeer Zaman (Nadu Mia), commissioner of Chomohani Porurashava, proprietor of Popular Library, Dhaka and Agri Printing, Chomohani died of a cardiac arrest on January 10 at night. He was 52, says a press release.

He left behind his wife two sons, four daughters and a host of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.

Former additional post master general Mujibur Rahman Laskar died at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York on Tuesday. He was 65, reports BSS.

Laskar is survived by his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of friends, relatives and admirers to mourn his death. Family sources said his body will be brought home on the Bangladesh Biman flight on Monday. He will be buried at Banani graveyard.

Chehlum

The *chehlum* of Haji Md Salim will be held tomorrow after *Zuma* prayers at his residence at 38, Md Asgar Lane, Churhatta, Chawk Bazar in the city, says a press release.

Haji Salim was a renowned politician, social worker, and ex-commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation.

The *chehlum* of Al-Haji MFK Khan Chowdhury, a retired director of the National Board of Revenue, will be held on Saturday noon at his village home in Pathkhaguri in Tangail, says a press release.

Khan, who died at the age of 76, is survived by his wife, one daughter and a host of relatives.

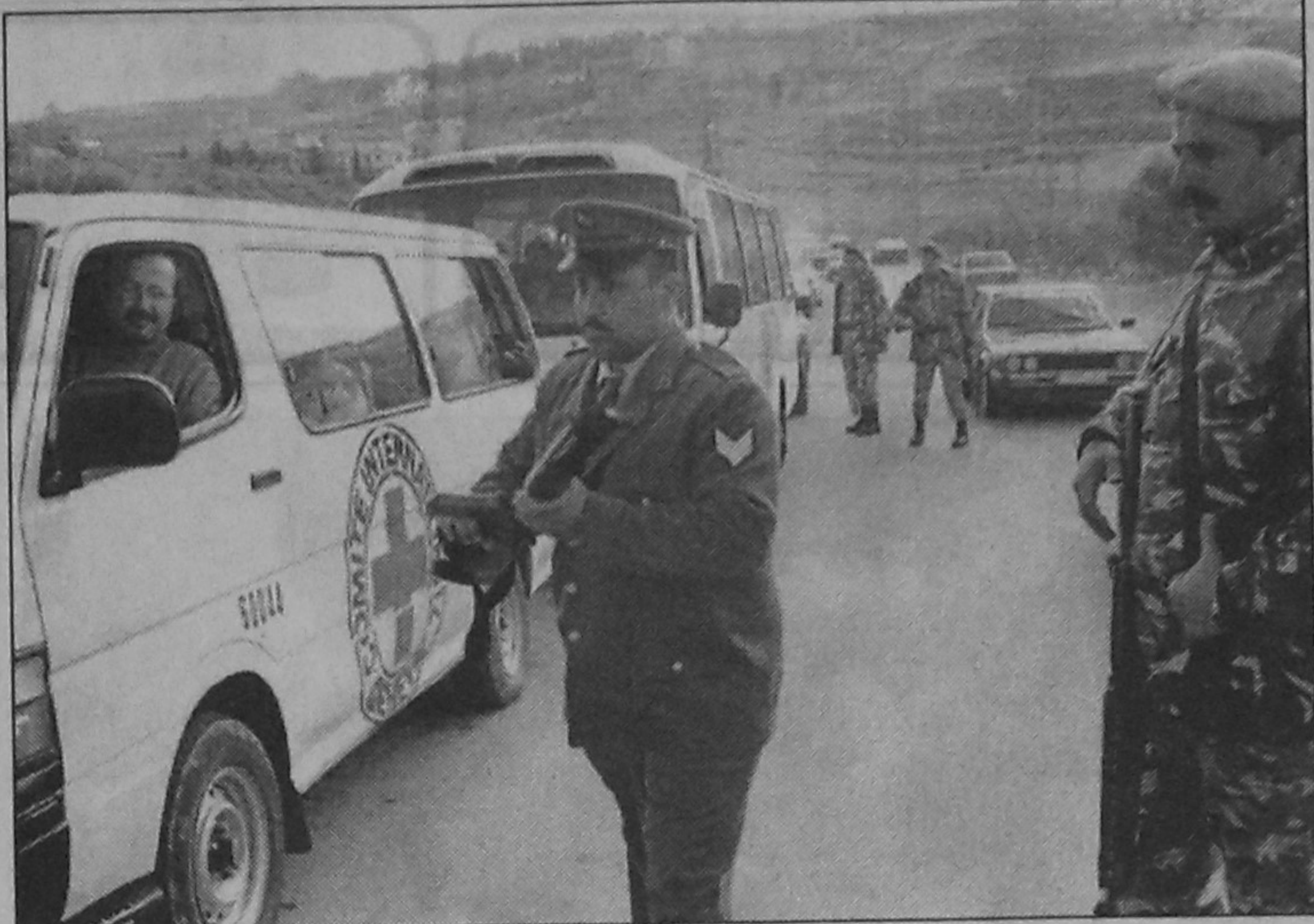
A total of 627 persons were arrested and eight illegal weapons and 12 rounds of bullet were seized during the 25th day of the countrywide combing operation by police yesterday, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar force, reports BSS.

The combined force arrested 349 persons on different charges from across the country including four metropolitan areas and seized the arms and ammunitions. They also arrested 278 wanted accused during the operation.

A total of 154 persons including 19 warrantees were arrested from Dhaka metropolitan area and two illegal weapons and six bullets were seized while 14 persons from Chittagong metropolitan area.

Eleven persons including seven warrantees were arrested from Khulna metropolitan area while three persons from Rajshahi metropolitan area. A total of 131 persons including 74 wanted accused were arrested from Dhaka range with three weapons and four bullets while 118 persons including 86 wanted persons were arrested from Chittagong range with three weapons and two bullets.

Seventy-seven people including 35 warrantees were arrested from Rajshahi range while 80 persons including 41 wanted persons were arrested from Khulna range. A total of 26 persons including nine warrantees and 13 persons including six wanted persons were arrested from Sylhet range.



The Bangladeshis, who ended up in Lebanon after their ship got stranded in the Mediterranean, were transferred from the village of Naqoura, near the border with Israel, to Beirut International Airport by the ICRC, upon a decision by the Lebanese government to send them back to their country. — AFP photo

479 beggars, 450 illegal immigrants held in KSA

RIYADH, Jan 12: Saudi police arrested 479 beggars around the capital during the three-day Eid-ul-Fitr holiday marking the end of Ramadan, a newspaper reported today.

Women and children accounted for 47 of the beggars of varying nationalities who were detained from Friday, Al-Jazira daily said, reports AFP.

More than 12,000 beggars were arrested in the kingdom in 1998, of which 9,000 were foreigners, the authorities said.

Most beggars are arrested during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, a month of piety and charity. Many are also arrested during the Hajj, or annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Al-Jazira also reported the arrest during the Eid of 450 foreigners living illegally in the Kingdom.

Since Saudi Arabia launched a campaign against illegal immigrants in 1997 some 1.5 million people have been expelled while one million have formalised their stay.

Biman incurs loss of Tk 33.69cr in 1998-99, JS told

The Bangladesh Biman incurred a loss of Tk 33.69 crore in 1998-99. Parliament was told yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a written question of Fazul Azim (BNP), Civil Aviation Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain attributed four major reasons to the loss.

These include fall in the revenue target, tough competition with renowned international airlines, non-receipt of rebate on aircraft fuel procured from internal sources and absence of wide bodied aircraft for international routes.

Mosharraf said, to overcome the loss, one A310-300 and one DC 10-300 aircraft were added to the Biman's fleet under three drylease contract to increase number of flights in profitable routes.

The Minister said there is no plan to buy aircraft for the Biman during the current fiscal.

In reply to another question by Mustafizur Rahman Fizu (AL), he said the government has plans to construct airports in important places of the country to increase staff service.

He said Bogra and Khan Jahan Ali airports are now under construction.

Besides, steps have been taken to resume operation at Shamsheernagar, Comilla, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Tejgaon and Ishwardi airports.

Father strangulates newborn in revenge

BAGERHAT, Jan 12: A father strangulated his newborn son after his father-in-law refused to pay dowry to him, reports UNB.

Hospital and police sources said Zubeda Khatun, wife of Tuhinuzaman, 30, of the town, gave birth to a son on January 4 in Sadar Hospital.

Tuhin demanded Tk 50,000 as dowry from his father-in-law in return for recognition of the baby as his son. Angered by the refusal Tuhin strangulated the baby on January 6, in revenge. He has since been in hiding.

Family sources said Tuhin married Zubeda, 19, 15 months ago. He tortured her occasionally demanding dowry from her parents.

Teenage housewife allegedly commits suicide

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGONJ, Jan 12: Teenage housewife Shamsun Nahar allegedly committed suicide on Tuesday night. She lived in "Adamji Jute Mills" labour colony.

She was the daughter of Shamsul Alam, a former labourer of the mill.

Shamsun Nahar, 15, got married to Karim Miah only a few months ago but resided in her father's house. She allegedly took poison in the night.

A case has been registered under Siddhirganj thana.

Noted US historian Wolpert to write book on Bangabandhu

Renowned US historian Dr Stanley A Wolpert, who is now on a visit to Bangladesh, will write a book on the country's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told this to BSS in the evening after receiving Prof Wolpert earlier at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where they discussed host of matters including the emergence of Bangladesh and the pivotal role played by the Bangabandhu.

Prof Wolpert, an expert on South Asia and author of over a dozen books on politics and personalities of the region, arrived here Sunday at the invitation of Foreign Minister Azad.

Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami received the distinguished historian, who currently chairs the South Asian of the Institute of International Studies and Overseas Programme of UCLA at the airport.

The foreign minister, who met Prof Wolpert about two years ago in Los Angeles, requested him to write a book on the Bangabandhu. Azad said he has already communicated the message (Prof Wolpert's decision to write a book on Bangabandhu) to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Prime Minister asked all concerned to make available everything needed for the purpose, he said.

Azad said Prof Wolpert, who is the guest of the Foreign Ministry, has already done quite a bit of home work, but can only start his work on the new book on the leader of Bangladesh after he finishes his current assignment — a biography on Mahatma Gandhi.

Prof Wolpert presented Azad with two books.

Meanwhile, the visiting professor went to Tungipara earlier in the day to pay homage to the Bangabandhu. Accompanied by Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Jawadul Karim, Prof Wolpert saw the progress of work of the Bangabandhu Mausoleum, went round the ancestral home of the Bangabandhu, the school he attended and the present home of the Bangabandhu's family members.

Prof Wolpert, who took several pictures of the leaders ancestral home and the neighbourhood, also talked with some villagers. Two family members of Bangabandhu including Sheikh Helaluddin MP accompanied the professor.

Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami, who was present during the meeting between Prof Wolpert and Azad, said he has come to know that the distinguished historian has made considerable study on the political history of Bangladesh. The foreign secretary said he was convinced through his talks with the visitor that Prof Wolpert has undertaken a project to write a book on the Bangabandhu and contemporary history of Bangladesh.

The 73-year-old historian, who spent several years in the region both to study and teach, will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before he leaves on Friday on completion of his visit.

The foreign minister said Prof Wolpert is expected to visit Bangladesh again to collect materials for the book on the leader.

Abul Hasan Chy hosts dinner

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury yesterday hosted an Eid reunion dinner at his official residence.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, Political Adviser to the Prime Minister SA Malek and all state ministers were present on the occasion.

Members of the diplomatic corps, officials of the ministry of foreign affairs, senior newsmen and elite of the city attended the function.

Qulkhwani

The Qulkhwani of Jahurul Alam Chowdhury, Wardmaster of Chittagong Medical College and Hospital, will be held at his village home Charkhagaria, Satkania under Chittagong district after *Asr* prayers today, reports BSS.

Jahurul died of a heart attack at his village home on January 10 and was buried at his family graveyard the same day.

He was 54 and is survived by his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives.

Hijack alert

From page 1

edly obtained permission from Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi to attend the Biswa Etema in Dhaka. They reportedly had Israeli passports and identified themselves as Palestinian Arabs, the sources said.

A BBC broadcast Tuesday night said that Indian intelligence authorities claimed to have foiled a planned hijack of a Biman aircraft from India and that 11 Dhaka-bound passengers were detained. They were carrying Iranian passports and were of Afghan origin.

In its afternoon broadcast yesterday, BBC said there was a hijack alert at Subash Bose Airport again after the detention of the 'Iranians' as an anonymous caller told the airport authorities that if they are not released a Bangladesh Biman aircraft would be hijacked.

Indian army commandos were deployed at the airport. The Biman flight had however landed at Zia International Airport on Tuesday but passengers alleged that they were subjected to harassment while boarding the aircraft, the BBC reported.

One gets 17 yrs RI for possessing illegal arms in Barguna

BARGUNA, Jan 12: A court here today sentenced a man to 17 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing illegal arms, reports UNB.

According to the prosecution, police arrested Yousuf, 35, of Charduan in Patharghata thana on May 30, 1998, on charge of possessing illegal arms.

On the basis of his confessional statement, police recovered two pipeguns and three bullets from a pond at Motherkhal village.

After examining the witnesses and records, First Sub-judge and Assistant Sessions Judge Golam Monju awarded the punishment.

Motorcyclist killed in Bagerhat road accident

BAGERHAT, Jan 12: A motorcyclist was killed and his companion critically injured in an accident on Bagerhat-Pirojpur road in Kachua thana on Tuesday, reports BSS.

Witnesses said the accident took place at about 7 pm at Bhandarkhola when a Bagerhat-bound bus coming from Pirojpur knocked down the motorcyclists on the road.

'Govt to bring down population growth rate in current fiscal year'

The government has decided to reduce the population growth rate to 1.2 per cent from 1.6 per cent by bringing in 71 per cent able couples from existing 51 per cent under family planning programme in the current financial year, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting held in the conference room of the Health Ministry with Health and Family Welfare Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim in the chair.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof. Dr M Amanullah, Health Secretary Syed Alamgir Faruq Chowdhury, Director General of Family Planning Directorate Diraj Kumar Nath and project directors of the Family Planning Sector, among others, were present.

Iraq to allow IAEA inspection

BAGHDAD, Jan 12: Iraq announced Wednesday it had agreed to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to carry out the first inspection inside the country in more than a year, reports AFP.

A team of inspectors would be allowed to carry out checks of Iraqi facilities over a week from January 21, foreign ministry under-secretary Nizar Hamdoun told AFP.

The inspections are part of world-wide monitoring of nuclear facilities by the Vienna-based United Nations agency and not directly part of the UN campaign to disarm Iraq in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War.

Baghdad had given a "favourable answer to a request from the IAEA in the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," Hamdoun said. In 1969, Iraq signed the treaty under which inspections are held as part of safeguard obligations.

The team sent by the IAEA will have four or five members and will carry out routine activities in Iraq, Hamdoun said.

IAEA inspections in Iraq have been halted since December 1998, when Britain and the United States launched a brief air war to punish Baghdad for failing to cooperate with UN disarmament inspectors.

The IAEA, which was also involved in the UN campaign in Iraq alongside the UNSCOM special commission on disarmament, declared in October 1998 that it had found no evidence that Iraq had produced nuclear weapons, despite a major nuclear weapons programme, or was now capable of producing such weapons.

In its last report to the Security Council in October, 1999, the IAEA said it had received no information from Iraq since the previous December.

The director general of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, wrote that there was "no technical impediment" to the agency's resuming work on monitoring Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions.

But, he said, at present the IAEA "is unable to provide any measure of assurance of Iraq's compliance."

A week earlier the IAEA called for "greater transparency" from Iraq on its nuclear capacity, and urged it to allow international inspections to resume "without delay."

After a year-long stand-off, the UN Security Council on December 17 approved a new US-British backed resolution covering sanctions and arms inspections in Iraq.

Resolution 1284 disbanded UNSCOM and offered a temporary lifting of sanctions if it cooperates with a news arms body, UNMOVIC. It also lifts the ceiling on Iraqi oil exports and streamlines the import of humanitarian aid.

But Baghdad has vowed not to implement the new resolution unless its contents are modified.

Resumption of Indian flights to Nepal depends on fool-proof security

NEW DELHI, Jan 12: India said Wednesday it would resume flights to Nepal once it was confident of security at Kathmandu's main airport, the origin of the Christmas Eve hijacking of an Indian Airlines Airbus, reports AFP.

"Indian Airlines flights to Kathmandu will remain cancelled until security is fully upgraded at the airport," Civil Aviation Minister Sharad Yadav said in New Delhi.

"We cannot compromise on the security of passengers even if we have to face losses," Yadav told reporters, adding that negotiations were underway with Nepal for the introduction of a series of security measures in Kathmandu.

The steps, including the introduction of on-board air marshals, were being discussed and finalised between the aviation ministry and federal security and police agencies, the aviation minister said.

India is currently awaiting a full report from a Nepalese task force which is separately probing the December 24 hijacking.

Nepal froze civilian airlinks with India following the hijacking on December 24 of flight IC814 en route from Kathmandu to Delhi by five armed Muslim militants.

The Airbus hijacking ended December 31 at Kandahar airfield where the plane was freed three pro-Kashmir militants in a swap for the 160 hostages on board the plane.

N-plant bomb suspect in Japan admits to other blasts: reports

TOKYO, Jan 12: A Japanese man who tried to blow up a uranium processing plant and the site of the country's worst nuclear accident has admitted to being involved in two other explosions last year, news reports said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Tatsufumi Oshiba, 39, said he was involved in an explosion at JR Urawa Station, north of Tokyo, on December 27 that injured one man. Kyodo News said quoting police officials. The bomb was placed in a locker.

The man was also suspected of hiding a bomb that exploded in a garbage bag aboard a bullet train stopped at a Central Japan Railway Co. train depot in Settsu, Osaka on December 24. Kyodo said. Nobody was injured in that blast.

A total 126 people were exposed to radiation in the leak at Tokaimura on September 30, which was classed as the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986.

More than 320,000 people had to shelter at home for more than a day.

The accident was caused when three workers used steel buckets to pour excessive amounts of uranium into a tank, an illegal operation which sparked a critical nuclear reaction.

One of the three workers died in late December from injuries caused by the massive radiation exposure.

Earthquake jolts Chinese province

BEIJING, Jan 12: An earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale jolted Liaoning province in northern China Wednesday, injuring four people and destroying 400 homes, state media said, reports AFP.

The tremor hit the area between Xiuyan Manchu Autonomous county and Haicheng city in Liaoning at 7:43 a.m. (1743 BST), the official Xinhua news agency quoted the China Seismological Bureau as saying.

The four injured suffered slight injuries, an official in Pingling county near the epicenter told AFP.

An estimated 2,000 people are believed to have been made homeless.

The bureau reported the epicentre was located at 40.5 degrees north latitude and 123.1 degrees east longitude.

Tremors were also felt in the cities of Anshan, Panjing, Shenyang, Liaoyang and Dandong.

White man opens fire in S. African bus, kills three

PRETORIA, Jan 12: A white man Wednesday opened fire in a bus carrying black commuters in South Africa's capital Pretoria, shooting dead three people and wounding four, police said, reports AFP.

"A male boarded the bus as all the passengers got on and opened fire, fatally wounding the driver and two female passengers," police spokesman Mome van Wyk told AFP.

Four people were wounded, one critically, in the attack, in the eastern suburbs of the capital, he said.

The attacker escaped on foot, he added.

"The motive is unknown, but we are investigating all possibilities, including a racial one," he said.

Silent procession protesting killing of trader at Mirpur

By Staff Correspondent

Residents of Mirpur area brought out a silent procession in protest of killing of a business man. The trader was shot dead by an armed man at Mazar Road on Monday.

Syed Saidul Islam Alam, 35, son of late Ali Ahsan and a resident of Mirpur Section-1 was shot allegedly by Abu Baker Siddique. In a critical condition he was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died on Tuesday evening.

A case was filed with Pallabi police accusing Abu Baker Siddique but police failed to arrest him till writing of this reports till late last night.

According to the family sources a gang of extortionists came to Alam's shop few days back and demanded toll from the employee of the ship. Employee of the shop contracted over phone with owner Alam and conveyed the message but Alam asked them not to pay anything to the gang.

Later on Monday Abu Baker appeared to Alam's residence while he was watching cricket match on Monday. Alam was taken to the Chalanika Club and was shot on his head.

Killing in Sirajganj

Hunters file case against 9 villagers

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 12: The four bird hunters who fired on pursuing villagers, killing one of them and injuring twelve others in the district recently, have filed a case against nine villagers accusing them of snatching their guns.

The four hunters were however still in custody after their bail prayer was rejected. The crew of the boat in which the hunters were travelling, Tayeb Ali and his son Jamat Ali, were freed on bail last Thursday.