

## Bharat Ratna awarded to Lata Mangeshkar

NEW DELHI, Jan 26: India has conferred its highest civilian honour on "Melody Queen" Lata Mangeshkar, whose music has enthralled audiences in the country for decades, reports AFP.

It also bestowed awards on Indian-born conductor Zubin Mehta and US economist and diplomat John Kenneth Galbraith.

The honours list, declared late Thursday on the eve of the country's Republic Day, additionally gave the highest civilian award of Bharat Ratna (Jewel of India) to Bismillah Khan, a maestro of the "shehnai," a classical Indian wind instrument.

Mangeshkar, 70, whose songs are played at the official Republic Day celebrations every year, was quoted as saying Friday that she was overjoyed.

Speaking to The Times of India daily from London, she said, "I am very happy and grateful to the nation and its people who have showered on me such love and affection.

"Compared to so many big artistes, I am such a small artiste. Ultimately for us the country means everything and for keeping its name and fame high, I will do anything."

The 86-year-old shehnai virtuoso Khan echoed her.

Calling the honour an "Act of God," he said: "I have so much

more to learn. I want to learn but I have no more strength. Age has caught up with me."

India on Friday celebrates its transition to a republic in 1950, three years after gaining freedom from British colonial rule.

The second highest award, the Padma Vibushan or Special Decoration of the Lotus, went to Bombay-born conductor Mehta, several Indian classical musicians and Galbraith, who served in India.

Galbraith was one of the most popular US envoys to India, who shared a warm rapport with then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Padma Bhushan, or Decoration of the Lotus, was conferred upon Indian film legend Amitabh Bachchan, called a "one-man industry" by French director Francois Truffaut, and Arun Netravali, the Indian-born president of Bell Laboratories.

Others honoured include evergreen film actor Dev Anand, who despite being in his seventies still plays swashbuckling heroes, dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy, tennis player Leander Paes and industrialist Rahul Bajaj, owner of the world's biggest scooter manufacturer.

## Euro Parliament

From Page 1  
being made by Bangladesh government to bring Golam Azam and others responsible for war crimes to an international court.

The resolution drew attention to the fact that international companies started exploiting Bangladesh's natural gas reserves and called on European Union to support Bangladesh government in its attempt to exploit these resources.

It also welcomed the Commission's proposal to allow duty-free access for all products from least developed countries, excepting arms -- to European markets which will have a positive effect on imports from Bangladesh into the European Union.

The European Parliament also welcomed the efforts of Bangladesh in recent years to combat child labour.

## Mufti Hannan

From Page 1  
During investigation police arrested four of the 17 accused. They are Anisul Islam, Mehedi Hassan alias Abdul Wadud alias Gazi Khan, Hasmat Ali Kazi and Wasim Akhter alias Tarek Hossain alias Marfat Ali.

Aminul Islam, Wasim Akhter and Mehedi Hasan confessed their involvement in the bomb planting near the meeting venue of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Kotolipara before the court under Section 161 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The absconding accused are Mufti Hannan, Habibullah alias Mofizur Rahman, Munshi Ibrahim, Mahmud Azahar alias Mamunur Rashid, Rashed driver alias Shimul, Shah Newaj alias Azizul Haque, Lokman, Yusuf alias Abu Musa Harun, Sheikh Mohammad Enamul Haque, Ismail alias Noor Islam, Saiful, Hasanuzzaman and Khokon.

Police recovered 60 KG explosives, two big live bombs, gun powder and some explosive materials from the soap factory of Mufti Hannan and from the residence of Hasmat Ali Kazi on July 23 last year.

Earlier, police submitted a charge sheet against seven persons including Mufti Hannan to the court in connection with a case filed under Arms Act.

## Polls observers

From Page 12  
welcome to make observation before the polls, during the polls and after the polls to make the election more transparent.

"The observers both from home and abroad will absolutely be free to move and observe the polls. They will be given free access to monitor the elections," he said.

Asked about the question of neutrality of the poll observers, he said if somebody is biased, if somebody makes false statement they will be discredited. "You can't hide truth, it'll come out," said the CEC.

A Needs Assessment Mission of the European Commission will be visiting Bangladesh January 27-February 6 to determine the scope and structure of the EU election monitoring in the upcoming polls.

The mission of seven people, including four Commission officials from Brussels, a representative of Swedish EU Presidency and two consultants, will have two meetings with the CEC for a preview of the entire gamut of the election process.

In June 12, 1996 general elections 189 foreign observers had been in Bangladesh. Besides, the diplomatic missions in Dhaka engaged 81 other observers to monitor the seventh parliamentary elections.

## Met office

From Page 1  
that jolted western India killing many yesterday, also shook the southern part of Bangladesh.

"Panic-stricken people came out of their houses and began to run for safety," said the report said. However, the local Upazila Nirbahi Officer said there were no reports of damage or injuries.

The tremor was also felt in Pabna, Satkhira, Barisal and Noakhali districts, according to reports.

According to an Associated Press (AP) report, an apparent aftershock of the quake hit Bangladesh 30 minutes after the tremor. Hundreds of frightened residents came out into the streets in Satkhira, it said.

## JCD posts

From Page 12  
At least 20 of them were assured of posts of vice-president and 30 of the posts of joint secretary, the insiders said.

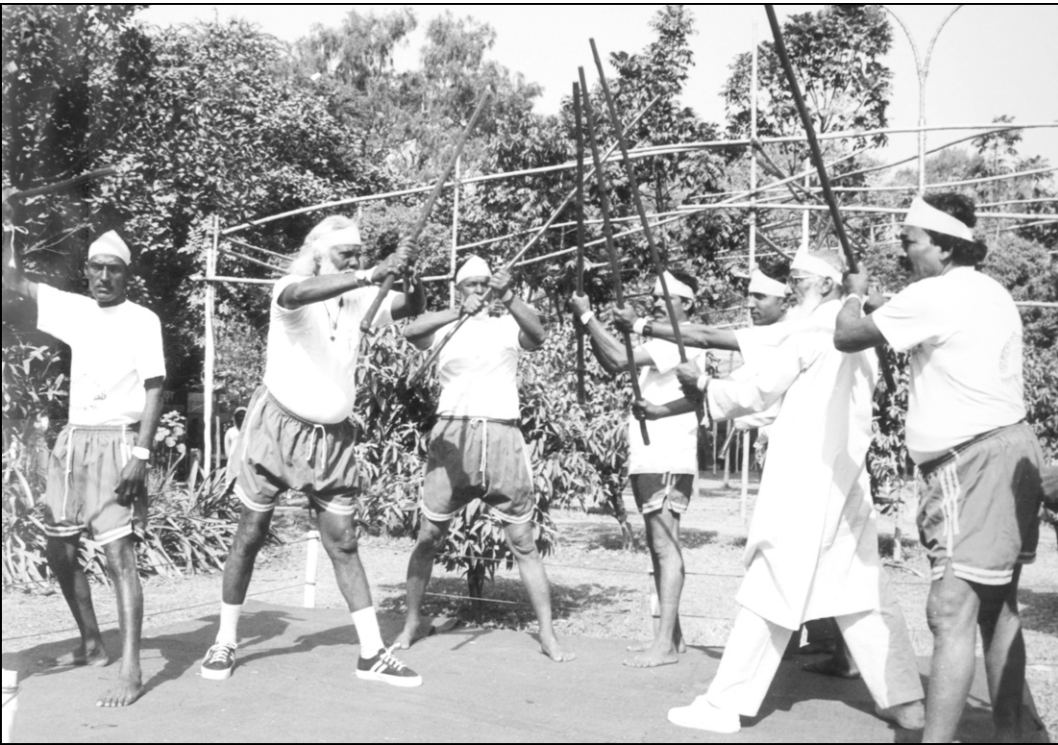
Most of them have no link with JCD or BNP for long and are either doing business or "controlling markets and slums" or are unemployed, the insiders said.

Talking to this correspondent, a senior leader of JCD said hostilities in the organisation may intensify if the "ousted and expelled" activists are accommodated in the full-fledged committee.

"They (Pintu-Laltu) are in the grip of BNP hardliners and are moving towards turning JCD into an organisation of non-students to serve their petty group interests".

A supporter of Pintu said those opposed to Pintu and Laltu will be given "reply" soon.

"The process to form a full-fledged committee has started and they (opposed to Pintu) will be gradually removed from JCD units at universities, colleges and at district and thana levels", he said.



Members of the Bangladesh Lathial Bahini presenting a traditional Lathi khela at the Pabna Festival yesterday. The two-day long festival has been organised by the Pabna Association in Dhaka to mark its platinum jubilee. -- Star photo

## DMCH plagued with constraints

From Page 12  
more than Tk 40 lakh in a couple of days' notice. Hasina inaugurated the national blood transfusion centre and attended the Millennium Get-together of the college on January 5.

Most of the money was spent on whitewashing and decorating the college and hospital buildings, polishing the floors, cleaning the toilets and corridors, repainting and renovating the parking area and the walkways, and other arrangements for the inauguration ceremony and the get-together.

To make sure that everything went smooth, the health minister, secretary and additional secretary, director general of health, director of the hospital and other high officials were on round-the-clock supervision, as patients at different departments suffered without medicine and other facilities. The prime public hospital in the country is supposed to treat them free with all additional costs borne.

On the same day, while talking to the assistant in-charge of

the neurosurgery department Mohammad Faruk at around 8:30pm, this correspondent came to know that he had only five ampoules of Oradon and eight ampoules of Diclonef injections in stock for the rest of the night.

"I have to make do with these until the staff for the next comes with fresh stocks," Faruk said.

Ruhul Amin, store in charge at the hospital, said that he had a limited stock of life-saving drugs.

"We supply drugs on the basis of demand," Amin said, "but at times we cannot give a ward more than its 'allocation', even if it needs more."

A doctor informed that after office hours ending at 2:30pm, there was no way patient could get access to antibiotics and other important medical aid.

The gynaecology and obstetrics department dealt with 4,200 cases in one single operation theatre in 1998. Two years on the scenario remains the same. Mothers and their new-borns sleep on the floors because the hospital does not have funds to

buy extra beds.

Neurosurgery, one of the busiest among 37 departments in the hospital, does not even have proper tables and overhead lights at the operation theatre.

In 1998 the hospital attended 24,744 patients, one-third of whom had to stay on floors and corridors during treatment. They brought their own food and drugs.

One doctor at the gynaecology and obstetrics department said that she was yet to receive a set of operation lights she had requisitioned for a year back. Another doctor informed that the casualty ward badly needed an additional suction machine and blood pressure measuring devices.

The scenario is more or less the same in other departments and wards.

"We have repeatedly requested the hospital authority to supply enough stock of medicines and other emergency supplies but they show little or no concern," said an intern doctor on duty at the casualty ward.

## Opposition's mass upsurge

From Page 1  
entirely on the President. "We can not stop him from resigning if he wants to do so. He has the right to resign anytime. If he does so, we will have to elect a new president," she said.

Hasina also reminded that it was her party that elected Justice Shahabuddin President and that BNP refused to vote for him.

To another question, the Prime Minister said she will meet the group of five senior lawyers who proposed a compromise formula to end the "controversy" over appointment of the two judges. The meeting will take place after the law minister returns home.

But the PM bitterly criticised the senior lawyers' suggestion for elevation of two High Court judges to the Supreme Court as desired by the pro-opposition lawyers who staged a rowdy protest at the court corridor against the appointments made by the President.

"Why does the senior lawyers' compromise formula lack suggestion for action against the lawyers who let loose vandalism at the highest court?" she asked.

Terming the formula unconstitutional, the Prime Minister said its implementation may encourage others to go for violent protests to realise unconstitutional demand.

Asked about last week's bomb explosion at a CPB rally in the city, Sheikh Hasina blasted BNP chief Khaleda Zia for blaming the ruling party for the incident even before primary investigation.

"Her (Khaleda's) statement proves that she knew about the explosion beforehand. Otherwise, she would not have made a readymade statement."

She said the government has taken extra security measures for public rallies. "From now on we will have to be cautious so that the Opposition does not plant bomb at Awami League office to blame the ruling party."

Blaming BNP for recent acts of terrorism, Hasina said the Opposition has now opted for violence after failing to face the government politically. "Begum Zia has brought in terrorists in Chhatra Dal leadership in line with her politics of terrorism."

The PM reiterated her call to BNP to help passage of the bill seeking retention of women's reserved seats in parliament. She also urged the opposition party to place its suggestions in parliament for increasing seats for women and direct election to those.

## Quake in India, Pakistan

From Page 1  
aged, and police said 1000 people had been killed there. The air force said it had landed two helicopters at its base in Bhuj and the government said the runway would be able to handle small planes by Saturday.

Police in Gujarat's commercial center of Ahmedabad, a city of 4.5 million, reported at least 260 dead in that city, where 50 multi-story buildings had collapsed.

The Nuclear Power Corp. has two 220-megawatt nuclear plants at Kakrapar, about 200-300 kilometers south of the epicenter.

"The director of Kakrapar atomic power station has confirmed that both nuclear units are working normally, there is no trouble," the corporation's spokesman told the AP on condition of anonymity.

He said all Indian reactors were designed to be earthquake proof.

Gas pipelines, most power supply stations, phone lines and water service were knocked out in the arid state that is prone to drought.

"The whole state has been affected. Communications have been disrupted all over the state," said Gujarat's home minister Haren Pandya.

The quake was also felt in Nepal, and an apparent aftershock hit Bangladesh, where hundreds of panicked residents flooded into the streets of Satkhira, on the border with India.

In Ahmedabad, hundreds of people besieged the fire station asking for help to dig their relatives out of the collapsed buildings, said fire chief Rajesh Bhat. A bulldozer worked near one

collapsed building to clear the rubble as people stood around dazed, a few pulling at pieces of wood and stone.

"This is an emergency. We are facing a riotous crowd," Bhat said. "A fear psychosis is developing in the city. People have fled their homes and are taking refuge in open fields."

About 70 children and some teachers were feared dead in the collapse of their school building in one part of Ahmedabad, while in another district 19 engineering students were believed trapped in their collapsed college.

Baijubahi, an Ahmedabad man who uses only one name, said his wife had died in the earthquake and six members of his family were still trapped in their building.

"The police are trying to persuade me to go to the hospital for my wife's post-mortem," he said. "I'm more concerned about the rest, who could have survived."

The quake struck as many cities were celebrating India's 51st Republic Day, which commemorates the adoption of the constitution. The tremor caused high-rise buildings to sway from New Delhi to Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, many hundreds of miles from the epicenter.

The swaying lasted more than two minutes in Gujarat, according to witnesses, but just over a minute farther away, as in New Delhi. The government said there had been 18 aftershocks.

Cabinet Minister Mahajan insisted that the quake measured 6.9, according to a preliminary figure given by the Indian Meteorological Institute.

However, the US Geological Survey, taking an average of seismograph measurements from around the world, said it

was 7.9, close to a major quake that can kill thousands.

In the town of Surat where police reported at least 31 dead three people were killed in a stampede at a diamond factory. When the quake hit, diamond workers in the three-story factory crowded into a narrow stairwell and tried to push their way to the only exit, said police official Vineet Gupta.

In India's capital, New Delhi, bleachers set up for the Republic Day parade celebrating the 51st anniversary of India's constitution, swayed just before Vajpayee and other dignitaries arrived.

In Pondicherry, on the south-eastern coast, the crowd watching a Republic Day parade panicked briefly, fleeing the festivities, but were quickly calmed by loudspeaker announcements.

In the desert state of Rajasthan, the 8th century Jaisalmer Fort, a popular tourist attraction, was damaged. Some of the distinctive yellow stones supporting the gate fell and the walls developed cracks.

Millions of Hindus at the world's largest religious gathering in Allahabad, in Uttar Pradesh, more than 1,000 miles east of the epicenter, felt the ground sway under them. No injuries were reported.

In India's financial capital, Bombay, people sleeping late on the holiday rushed onto the streets and held onto doorways as the skyscrapers swayed.

On June 16, 1819, another quake in western India killed between 1,500 and 2,000 people.

## Clash of tectonic plates causes quake in India

PARIS, Jan 26: The violent earthquake in northwest India that left more than 1,000 feared dead and a trail of flattened buildings today is just the latest manifestation of an aeons-old geological phenomenon, reports AFP.

Asia and the Indian sub-continent were originally entirely separate, but at some point long ago the two land masses collided. For some 40 million years in fact, India has slowly continued to grind its way into its neighbour.

This phenomenon, an infinitely slow, grinding clash of tectonic plates -- underground layers of the earth -- is what produced the Himalayan mountain range, and even now periodically leads to devastating earthquakes.

The continuing momentum of the slow-motion collision builds up tremendous pressure, crushing and deforming the earth's crust.

The effect stretches from the Himalayas north to the frozen wastes of Siberia in Russia's eastern extremity, and from the Aral Sea in Central Asia to the Pacific Ocean.

It is like a gigantic, natural bulldozer, edging forward just a few centimetres a year.

This is why earthquakes are so common in the Himalayas,

even if they are rarely as strong as the one in the Indian state of Gujarat on Friday.

There are also sometimes strong earthquakes at the so-called roof of the world, thousands of kilometres inside Asia, in northern China and the former Soviet central Asian republics.

Until 20 years ago, scientists could not explain the phenomenon.

It was in 1975 that French scientist Paul Tapponier of Paris' Institute of Global Physics, and his US colleague Peter Molnar of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston, came up with a theory.

Working from satellite images, they discovered "internal" earthquakes were actually linked to the cataclysmic friction between the land masses of the Indian sub-continent and Asia.

This theory helps explain why zones far away from the immediate seismological "zone of conflict" are also vulnerable to earthquakes.

For this grinding conflict between the two continents has created six giant fault lines across Asia comparable to California's San Andreas fault, which has caused deadly earthquakes on the west coast of the United States

## Sumon held in Comilla

From Page 1

member. Later, they gave a photograph of Sumon to Comilla police. Acting on a tip-off, they raided a residential hotel arrested him.

A DB team from Dhaka then went to Comilla and confirmed Sumon's identity and brought him to the capital last night.

"The main accused could be arrested as DB was working very hard for the last several months to trace him" DC of DB Abdul Hannan said.

Sumon's armed gang picked up Mohsin and Saem from their houses at SK Das Lane and took them to a nearby Rifle Club. They sent a message to the victims' families for Tk 50,000 as ransom.

The families then repeatedly appealed to Sutrapur police to rescue them but they did not respond. The gang then killed the boys, cut the bodies into six pieces each and threw those in the manhole.

The officer-in-charge of Sutrapur than was later closed and three sub-inspectors were

suspended for negligence of duty.

The case was handed over to DB and 11 people including Sumon's father was arrested.

One of the arrested, Sharif Munna, gave a confessional statement before the CMM's Court.

On the basis of a statement by another arrested, Ramzan, DB police recovered the machete with which the bodies were cut into pieces and the scooter used by the gang members.

Mohsin's father Mohammad Abdul Momen filed the case with Sutrapur police following the killings.

The incident triggered public protest against it and police inaction.

People of the area brought out processions demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the killers.

There were public appeals even to the Prime Minister, seeking justice.

## Car bomb blast in Spain: One killed

SAN SEBASTIAN, Spain, Jan 26: A civilian cook for the Spanish Navy was killed when a limpet bomb attached to his car exploded today in the first fatal attack of the year blamed on the Basque separatist group ETA, reports A P.

The blast, at 7.40 am local time tore the roof off the car and blew the victim's body out of the vehicle. The victim was named as Ramon Diaz Garcia, 51, said a police spokesman, customarily not identified. Two other people were also slightly injured in the blast.

The bomb exploded as Diaz drove his car away after having breakfast in a bar near his house.

Employed as a cook at Navy offices in the city for the past 12

years, Diaz was married with two children, aged 24 and 17. He was to be buried in the small town of Hernani, close to San Sebastian, on Saturday.

At midday today, civil servants and politicians took part in five-minute silent vigils outside government and official buildings. Such protest has become customary following ETA attacks.

Protest demonstrations were also called for Saturday across the northern Basque region.

The characteristics of the attack led police and politicians to immediately blame ETA, which has killed some 800 people since it began a campaign for an independent Basque state in 1968.

## President urges womenfolk

From Page 1  
efforts to increase the pace of female education by exempting school fees, supplying free books, providing food for attending schools and such other inducements. NGOs are also supplementing these facilities.

The President said condition of women in this society has been progressing slowly since middle of the last century and mentioned that the spread of education changed the system that bread-earner man of the house is master of everything keeping women within four walls.

Slowly but steadily the women have been organising themselves for a greater role to play in society. In an environment of man-dominated society, it was almost an uphill task to march forward and make progress in establishing rights and creating opportunities for the development of women."

Appreciating various activities of the DBPW that established the first hostel for working women in the country, President Shahabuddin hoped that more women organisations would come forward to help themselves in matters of working women.

"In recent years the number of working-class women, particularly in the urban areas, has registered a phenomenal growth, demanding more physical facilities for accommodation, transport, insurance, etc," said the President.

The function was also addressed by DPBWC founding president Selima Ahamed who flew in here from Karachi, current president Razia Matin Chowdhury, MP, general secretary Zulekha Haque and other leaders like Rokeya Mannan, Ferdousi Ali and Monira Khan.

## Vegetable exporters

From Page 12  
earnings from vegetable exports to nosedive. Revenue from this sector has gone down from Tk 200 crore in 1996 to Tk 160 crore in 1999.

Had Biman extended full co-operation, export earnings from this sector would have shot up to Tk 400 crore per year, said SM Jahangir, a leader of the association.

The fare for cargo transport by Biman is also exorbitant. The fare increased several times over the past few years. Price of vegetables in the London markets, by contrast, declined due to huge supply of vegetables from India and Kenya, one source said.

In 1995 the fare was Tk 52 per kilogram on a Dhaka-London flight but now the fare has gone up to Tk 67.55 per kilogram.

Exporters from India and Kenya get subsidy from their governments and can sell vegetables at lower prices, said local exporters.

## Mir to splash down safely in south Pacific: Moscow

MOSCOW, Jan 26: Russia announced Friday that the 130-tonne Mir space station would splash down to safely to Earth in the Pacific Ocean in between Australia and Chile in early March, reports AFP.

The foreign ministry stressed that most of the 15-year-old craft would burn up in the atmosphere and any parts of the orbiter that survive the descent would fall harmlessly into the Pacific.

Any debris from Mir will splash down "in the open sea, in the southern Pacific and removed from (existing) routes used by ships and airplanes," a foreign ministry statement said.

The largest piece of debris -- whose estimated size was not given -- would crash into the sea about half-way between Australia and Chile, south of the Polynesian islands, said the ministry.

A Progress M1 craft is due to nudge Mir from its current orbit and manoeuvre the craft to a final destination of 47 degrees latitude and 140 degrees longitude, Moscow said.

Several nations, and in particular Japan, have voiced fears that sections of Mir may come tumbling down over their territory when the fault-prone Soviet-era space craft makes its fateful descent around March 6.

Moscow has promised to keep Tokyo informed of minute-by-minute developments once Mir's last plunge is underway.

## Joseph Kabila sworn in as Congo president

KINSHASA, Jan 26: General Joseph Kabila took the oath of office today to succeed his slain father as president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a vast, ruined country split by a war which involves the armies of five nearby states, reports AFP.

The general -- just 29 years old, the Supreme Court revealed -- was little known outside military circles before a bodyguard pumped three pistol bullets into president Laurent Kabila on January 16, and is untested as a politician.

Wearing a dark suit with a blue tie, he declared, in a firm, clear voice before the Supreme Court and members of the provisional parliament: "I, Joseph Kabila, swear fidelity to the

nation," and went on to vow to protect its independence and territorial integrity.

The audience in Kinshasa's historic Palace of the Nation on the bank of the Congo River erupted in ululation and applause, but a cross-section of people on the streets of Kinshasa told AFP they doubted whether he would have the strength of will to impose himself as an effective leader.

His father, who died of his wounds on January 18, the government said, was buried Tuesday in front of the palace in a mausoleum once topped by a statue of King Leopold II of the Belgians, who ran the territory as a private estate for 23 years.

## Taliban offices closed in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Jan 26: Police have sealed a branch office of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia here in line with UN sanctions imposed last week, officials said Friday, reports AFP.

The political office has been shut and its staff shifted to the Afghan consulate in Peshawar, they said.

Taliban ambassador Abdul Salam Zaef, quoted by the private Afghan Islamic Press, said the militia had closed its political offices in Peshawar,

## Aides of Clinton

From Page 12  
asking staffers to report any suspected vandalism, but a spokesman said Thursday he doubts anything will be done with the findings.

"What we are doing is cataloging that which took place," White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said. He refused to say what acts of vandalism had been reported, the extent of any damage or even why the review was being conducted.

"I don't think anything will ever come of it," he said. "Part of changing the tone in Washington is to allow some things that others may have made a focus of, to let pass."

Karen Tramontano, the counselor to Clinton's chief of staff, John Podesta, said she was in the White House West Wing and

adjacent office buildings late the night before Clinton left office, and saw no vandalism.

"We left everything in good condition," she said. "We all left our offices intact."

However, several former officials in the Clinton administration told The Washington Post that some pranks were played on the incoming Republicans, but they say nothing malicious was intended.

The actions were meant to be humorous or expressed the frustration of White House staffers who were losing their jobs, the Democratic officials said.

The Bush administration said they didn't find the alleged vandalism funny and say it will cost taxpayer money to clean up and repair.