

## Blasts during Shahriar's reception in Ctg kill one

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A rickshaw-puller was killed and three others were injured in sniper bomb attacks in front of Chittagong Press Club in city's Jamal Khan area yesterday afternoon before and during a civic reception accorded to writer and journalist Shahriar Kabir.

According to police and eyewitnesses, about seven powerful bombs were exploded in the press club area at 2.40pm- before the civic reception- and while it was taking place. However, the reception that was held at the press club auditorium ended amid mounting tension.

Traffic movement in and round the press club remained suspended for three hours till 6.00pm.

Shahriar Kabir, also President of Ekatturer Ghatak Dalai Nirmul

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Smoke from bomb blasts billows up in the air as police and pedestrians look on yesterday at Jamal Khan area near the Chittagong Press Club where a civic reception was accorded to writer Shahriar Kabir.

PHOTO: STAR

## Chaos rules JS session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad session was in disorder for sometime yesterday as several treasury bench members, including three ministers, gave the speaker a tough time when debating the issues relating to point of order.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda blasted Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar for "compelling him to become disorderly", as the minister was denied the floor despite repeated systematic attempts.

"I pressed the button but you did not respond. I raised my hand but you ignored. And you have given me the floor only after I rose to my feet and shouted," an angry Huda said apparently to ridicule the chair.

Referring to the non-practising method of seeking the floor by pressing button on the desk, the minister asked the speaker if the button system was at all working. "I had to fight a battle to draw your attention... we, the members of parliament, are supposed to be civilised people."

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## UZ system to be reintroduced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The differences of opinion on Upazila system in the relevant cabinet committee ended yesterday as it unanimously decided to reintroduce this local government tier soon.

Sources said two members of the six-strong cabinet committee, who were opposing Upazila system, finally agreed that Upazila system should be reintroduced to fulfil BNP's election commitment as well as further strengthen the local government system.

The unanimous decision was taken at the 5th meeting of the committee held at the Secretariat with committee chairman and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

The meeting was attended by committee members Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Industries Minister MK Anwar and Information Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan. The

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## Shady trade in shadow



Chopped-down trees in the Osmany Udyan reveal a tell-tale sign of flagrant negligence to the park.

Osmany Udyan turns into a thriving place for sex workers and drug peddlers as night descends

MORSHED ALI KHAN

With darkness creeping up on the city's Osmany Udyan, a dozen of female sex workers emerge from the shadowy corners of the park. Some are adults and some too young, but most look frail and run-down. Pimps and vagabonds move in and out of the shady nook in the northeastern part of the parkland. Some sit under trees and take puffs on various drugs. Some policemen armed with 303 rifles move around chattering among themselves, completely oblivious to the trades in the darkness.

The park is home to dozens of sex workers, pimps and drug addicts, who live under trees, sometimes erecting shacks made of polythene sheets and sharing them with friends and families.

Eyes blood-shot and clothes tattered, the tired-

## No end to pilgrims' woes

NAIMUL HAQ

As many as 317 pilgrims at the Hajj Camp at Uttara in the city are waiting to be flown to Saudi Arabia.



Stranded non-ballottee pilgrims read the Koran while waiting in uncertainty at a Hajj camp at Uttara yesterday.

aviation authorities to fly the Hajj pilgrims to the desert kingdom.

The pilgrims from greater Rajshahi region have been staying at the camp since January 26, as they were scheduled to start flying in batches from January 28.

At hostel No. 6 on the second floor of the spacious camp yesterday, Md. Abdul Aziz lay on the floor, his eyes closed.

When approached, the man from Naogaon said frustratingly, "In addition to other costs I paid my travel agent Tk 91,000 and I was supposed to fly in the morning of January 28. But in the morning, our group leader Mufti Aziz Islam broke the news that we are not flying as seats were not booked" said Aziz, from Naogaon who is tagged with a group of 73 pilgrims.

"I came here on the night of January 26 from Naogaon with very little money since we were supposed to stay for only two days at the camp. In fact, most of us have run out of money," said a dejected-looking Israk Ali Dewan who was staying at

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## Iranian FM arrives

### Jan 14

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Kamal Kharazi will visit Dhaka on a one-day official trip on January 14.

Dr Kharazi's visit is seen as an important one against the backdrop of the changing scenario in the region, including developments in the Middle East, the setting up of a new government in Afghanistan and tensions between nuclear arch rivals India and Pakistan.

Dr Kharazi earlier visited Dhaka during the D-8 Summit in December, 2000.

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## AL mulls formation of shadow govt

### Hasina tells newsmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia's call for constructive criticism of her government and alternative suggestions.

The opposition leader also termed the prime minister's offer made in her over-the-air address to the nation on Monday "vague".

Asked whether she would make any suggestion to the government, Hasina instantly said, "Stop repression on the opposition leaders and activists and the religious minorities and this is my first suggestion to the government."

Hasina gave sector-wise analysis of Monday's speech by Khaleda Zia and described it as fabricated, while she was speaking at the press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon.

At the press conference were present AL Presidium Members Abdus Samad Azad and Amir Hossain Amu and AL Secretary General Zillur Rahman, among others.

Referring to the formation of several parliamentary party committees, Hasina told the news con-

## China a trusted friend, PM tells CPC delegation

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her confidence that the existing friendly ties between Bangladesh and China would continue to grow through enhanced cooperation.

"China is a trusted and tested friend and the relations will strengthen in days ahead," she said when the visiting Chinese delegation called on her at the Prime Minister's Office in the evening.

The 10-member delegation led by Vice Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Cai Wu is now on a three-day visit to Bangladesh as part of party-to-party exchange.

During the meeting, Cai Wu said the joint economic commission meeting, agreed upon during the Chinese Premier's visit, is likely to be held this year. He hoped that it would help expand the friendly ties.

Khaleda recalled her visit to China twice as Prime Minister during BNP's 1991-96 rule and also as leader of the opposition last March. It was decided at that time that

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## Buddhadev's remarks unfounded, says Dhaka

BSS, Dhaka

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday dismissed the recent remarks by West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee that foreign agents were operating from Bangladesh as "unfounded".

"Bangladesh does not allow its territory to be used by insurgents or terrorists against any other country. The remarks of the Chief Minister of West Bengal were unfounded," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

He further said: "Such allegations

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## Prayer Timings

Feb 6

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 5-40 6-15

Zohr 12-45 1-15

Asr 4-15 4-30

Magrib 5-53 5-58

Esha 7-15 7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation