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PM leaves for Indonesia, Brunei today

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka today on a four-day official visit to the Republic of Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam.

Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan, State Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Quamrul Islam, attorney general, foreign secretary and other senior officials will accompany the prime minister.

In Indonesia, the prime minister will hold official talks with President Megawati Soekarnoputri on January 24 at Istana Merdeka State Palace in Jakarta.

The entire gamut of bilateral relations between the two countries will be reviewed and the talks are expected to identify common grounds for strengthening cooperation in all relevant fields, particularly trade, investments and energy. A number of bilateral agreements are expected to be signed during the visit.

In the evening, the Indonesian president will host a state banquet

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Detective on suspect hunt murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A detective on a hunt for suspects was killed and police found the body with a broken neck near the Matuail Bridge in Demra on the outskirts of Dhaka in a morning search yesterday.

Police blamed the killing of Sub-Inspector Mosharrif Hossain of Detective Branch's Keraniganj zone on two suspects of murdering Sabuj, a local youth, last year.

Law enforcers sent the body of the 50-year-old officer to Mitford Hospital for an autopsy after they recovered it at about 7:00am.

"It's highly likely that he was killed in a place and the body was dumped in Demra. We are trying to find the leads to the killing," Police Commissioner Ashraf Huda said of the unknown circumstances surrounding the death.

The killers took away his pistol and eight bullets, but his cellphone was found with him.



Mosharrif Hossain

"Mosharrif had dinner at Keraniganj police officers' mess before he left office for a manhunt," a police officer said.

The victim's wife Momtaz Begum said: "He called me at around 8:30pm Wednesday and told me to wait for him to shop together at the kitchen market in Mirpur section-1."

"As he didn't show up, I tried to

call him back, but his cellphone was off," said Momtaz who waited at the market until 10:00pm with their two sons before she returned home to West Manipur in Dhaka, thinking her husband was busy.

Early morning, Momtaz informed Keraniganj police who relayed the message to all police stations, sending law enforcers searching for their colleague.

Mosharrif arrested two suspected killers of Sabuj in previous operations and mounted his last hunt for two others in an area far from Keraniganj Police Station.

Police said locals found a white microbus that probably gave Mosharrif a free ride in the area for tailing the suspects.

Abdus Salam filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station for the killing of his brother, father of sons Russell and Rabbi and daughters Moni and Mukta.

The body was taken to his home village in Bairahata in Madaripur for burial, the victim's family said.

Teesta water deal to have ripple effects on other common rivers

Indian water secretary says

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

Efforts by India and Bangladesh to work out an interim accord on sharing of Teesta river water, for which the secretary-level Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) set up a technical panel yesterday, are likely to have a bearing on similar arrangements for the other six rivers including Mahi and Dharala.

Indian Water Resources Secretary V K Duggal indicated this yesterday. Asked if the two-day JCE meeting found time to talk about the six other rivers, he said, "Let us wait for the results of the efforts of Teesta water-sharing. Then we can take up the case of the other rivers."

The issue of the six rivers did come up briefly on the first day of the meeting but sources said both sides will be focused on the interim accord for Teesta, sources said.

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Iraq guerilla attacks kill 2 GIs, 7 others

REUTERS, Falluja, Iraq

Guerrillas yesterday attacked an Iraqi police post with assault rifles and a grenade, killing two policemen and a civilian, hours after a mortar attack on a US base killed two soldiers and wounded another.

Insurgents also opened fire on a bus carrying Iraqi women home from work at a military base west of Baghdad, killing four women and wounding six others. All the attacks were in the volatile "Sunni triangle" region around Baghdad.

The latest upsurge of violence came amid US talk of handing over political power to an Iraqi administration later this year and a dispute over whether this should be done before or after elections are held.

South of the capital near Diwaniya, a Spanish Civil Guard police commander was shot in the head and seriously wounded during a joint operation with Iraqi police against "members of a terrorist

group", the Spanish Defence Ministry said.

Police near Falluja, a hotbed of resistance 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, said guerrillas in a passing car lobbed a grenade and opened fire with AK-47 assault rifles at a checkpoint on the highway to the town of Ramadi.

"We were standing at our checkpoint and saw some cars come by. From one of them, a grenade was thrown and Kalashnikovs were fired at us," policeman Maher Mohammad said. He said the attackers wore checkered head-dresses around their faces.

Two policemen and a civilian were killed in the attack, and five police were wounded. A pool of blood lay on the side of the highway, along with a police vehicle pock-marked by bullets.

A US military spokeswoman in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit said mortars and rockets had been fired at an American base near

Baquba, 65 km north of Baghdad, on Wednesday evening.

"Last evening, we had a mortar attack on a forward operating base near Baquba which killed two soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division and critically wounded another," Major Josslyn Aberle said, adding that rockets were also used in the attack.

The deaths brought to 349 the number of US soldiers killed in action in Iraq since Washington launched a war in March to topple Saddam. Including non-combat deaths, the toll is 505.

"We were able to identify where the attack came from and responded by firing artillery shells at the location," Aberle said. "There are no indications, however, that any insurgents were killed in our assault."

Guerrillas fighting the US-led occupation have often targeted Iraqi police and others cooperating with

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High profile business team in Khaleda's entourage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 18-member high profile business delegation will accompany Prime Minister Khaleda Zia during her four-day official visit to Indonesia and Brunei.

Khaleda is going to Indonesia today, from where she will travel to Brunei on day after tomorrow.

The members of the business delegation are Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Abdul Awal Mintoo, Transcom Ltd Chairman Latifur Rahman, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) President Fazle R M Hasan, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Kaji

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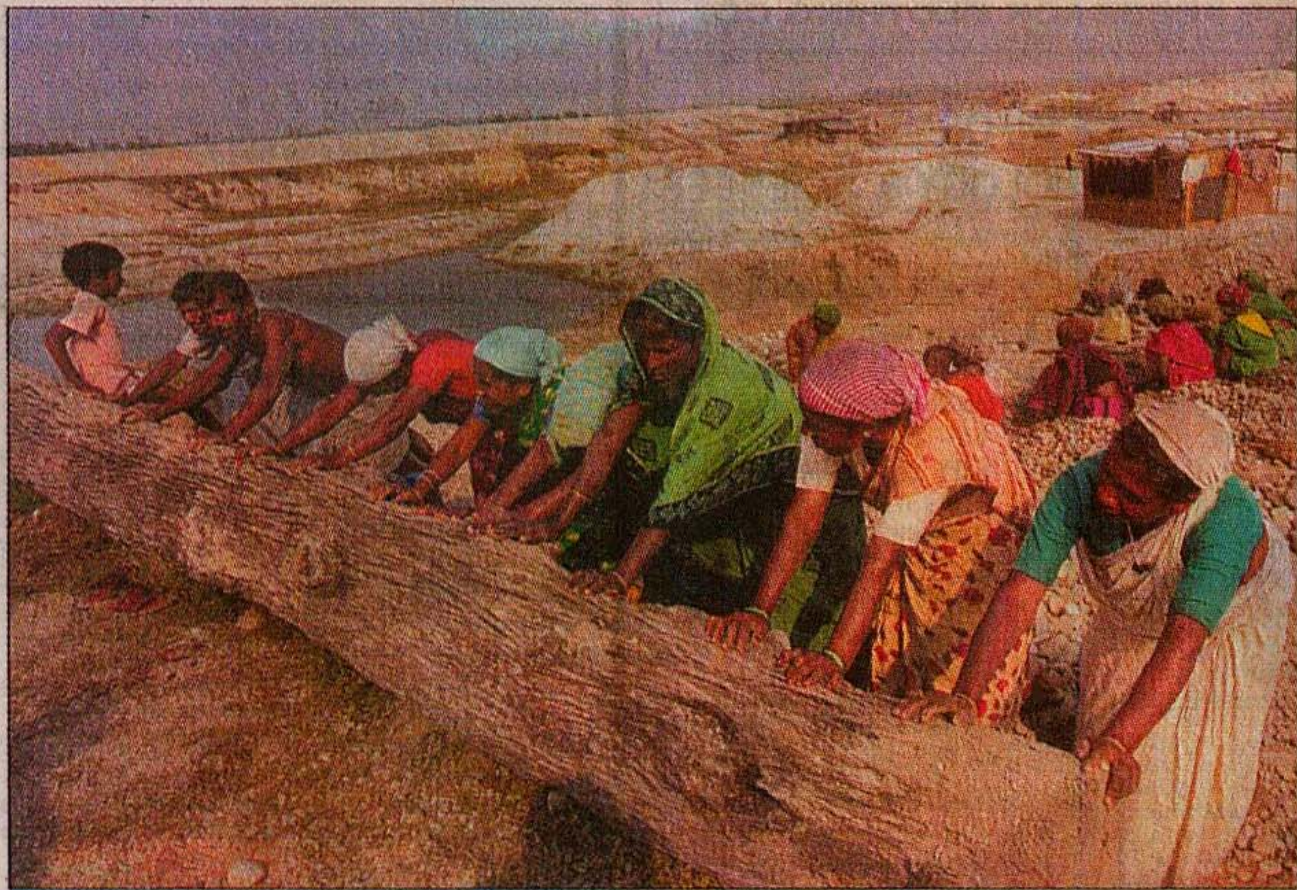


PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Workers at a stone quarry in Tentulia in Panchagarh roll down a log of ironwood found during excavation and to be used as timber selling at four times the regular price. Such logs drifted down the local Dahuk river hundreds of years ago from places as far as the Tibetan China.

Announcement

The next instalment in our series The Strength Within comes out Saturday highlighting on how replacing superstitions with a little advice and medical science has changed fates in rural Bangladesh.

Eid-ul-Azha February 2

UNB, Dhaka

Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated on February 2 as Zilhajj moon was not sighted yesterday anywhere in the country, said a press release of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh (IFB).

The decision was taken at a meeting of National Moon Sighting Committee with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrif Hossain Shahjahan in the chair.

The committee said Zilqad month will be of 30 days ending today and Zilhajj month begins tomorrow (January 24).

Kader Siddiqui demands Altaf's quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition lawmaker Abdul Kader Siddiqui yesterday demanded resignation of Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury for his failure to improve the current lawlessness.

Rising on a point of order in Jatiya Sangsad, the president and lone representative of the Krishak Samik League told the House, "There is no security for our life. I came under attack recently. Journalist Manik Saha was killed in Khulna few days back, a police sub-inspector was murdered in Demra yesterday, and several people died in bomb blast at the shrine of Shahjalal."

With Siddiqui trying to elaborate on the downside of overall law and

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BNP PP MEET

Media flayed for 'anti-govt' stand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP castigated the media at its parliamentary party meeting for what it said was an anti-coalition stand, a swipe that sparked mixed reactions among policymakers, meeting sources said yesterday.

"Newspapers are running guesswork to spike sales and writing against the government instead of highlighting its achievements," a source quoted one of the lawmakers as telling Wednesday's Sangsad

Bhaban meeting, a third since the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) was voted into office with three allies in 2001.

The latest bout of media-bashing came in reminiscence of BNP lawmakers' remarks at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the information ministry on October 27 last year, which demanded framing of laws to control the media as it they believed took a stand against the government.

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IOJ to gear up agitation against Ahmadiyyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The factions of a fringe coalition partner have decided to step up the movement for declaration of the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim, despite Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's refusal to accept the demand.

Political sources said Azizul Haq and Fazlul Haq Amini, MP, factions of the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) were determined to launch a 'vigorous agitation' across Bangladesh to force Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led coalition to bow to the anti-Ahmadiyya demand.

The four-party coalition also brings together the Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party (Nazim). "We are ready to quit the alliance and cut off ties with the government, but we won't budge an inch on the demand. We won't leave the street until the fulfilment of our demand," a top IOJ leader said, requesting not to be named.

He said his faction's links with the government slackened as the government did not include any of its leaders in the cabinet and ignored its voice in decision-making.

Sources in the top IOJ echelon said the premier's refusal to declare

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BNP nominates Reza Ahmed to contest Kushtia bypolls

UNB, Dhaka

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday nominated Reza Ahmed Bachchu to contest the by-election in Kushtia-1 constituency.

He was unanimously nominated at a meeting of BNP parliamentary board at Prime Minister's Office with party Chairperson and Prime

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QULKHAWANI

Our father, MR. NAZMUL HAQUE SIDDIQUI, an eminent insurance personality of the country and Ex Managing Director of Federal Insurance Limited and National Life Insurance Company Limited died of a heart attack on 19th January, 2004 at 5 A.M. (Innalalaha..... Rajewn). He was laid to eternal rest at Bannai graveyard.

QULKHAWANI and a Doha Mahafil for Late Mr. Nazmul Haque Siddiqui will be held on 23rd January, 2004 (Friday) at 3.30 P.M. at House no 20 Road 129 Gulshan -1, Dhaka-1212.

Well-wishers, friends, colleagues, relatives of the deceased are requested to attend the Qulkhawani and Doha Mahafil and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

On behalf of the family members we would like to express our profound gratitude to everybody who visited our bereaved family members and expressed sympathy and consoled us.

THE SONS/DAUGHTERS OF THE DECEASED.

এলিফ্যান্ট ব্র্যান্ড সিমেন্ট

সেনা কল্যাণ সংস্থা

কোন : ৯৫৬৫৮১৬, ৯৫৫০১৭, পানলা-৭৪১৪৯৯৪, মিরপুর-৮০১৯৯৬, ফাজ : ৯৫৬৫৮২০

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