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# \$4b pledged for tsunami survivors, rebuilding

World leaders open aid summit in Jakarta

REUTERS, Jakarta

World leaders tried to put \$4 billion in aid pledged for tsunami survivors to work yesterday, the urgency of their task conveyed in a chilling warning that the death toll could double without quick action to prevent disease.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appealed at the summit in the Indonesian capital Jakarta for \$977 million, covering basic humanitarian needs for an estimated 5 million people in the next six months.

"What happened on 26 December, 2004, was an unprecedented, global catastrophe. It requires an unprecedented, global response," he said, calling it the largest natural disaster the world had faced.

Governments around the world have pledged \$3.7 billion in aid so far and private groups, corporations

and individuals another \$630 million.

Aid workers have yet to reach large parts of Aceh, a province of 4 million people on the northern tip of Indonesia's Sumatra island, because the gargantuan waves destroyed roads, bridges and ports.

They fear the overall death toll, now around 146,000 from the strongest earthquake in 40 years and the tsunami it spawned, could climb higher when they do get to these parts.

The summit in Indonesia, focusing on longer-term aid now that the global relief effort is in full swing was also set to endorse debt relief to help nations rebuild, and back a tsunami warning system to save lives in the future.

It opened amid extraordinary security with a minute of silence for the victims.

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned before the summit

that access to safe drinking water remained inadequate, encouraging diarrhoeal diseases such as cholera and dysentery.

"If basic needs... are not urgently restored to all populations by the end of this week, WHO fears that outbreaks of infectious disease could result in a similar number of fatalities as occurred due to the direct impact of the tsunami," it said.

Annan said the catastrophe was "like a nightmare from which we are still hoping to awaken."

It was all too real for millions in 13 affected countries and for tens of thousands of relatives of foreign tourists from 40 countries who are dead or missing following the disaster.

"From the nameless fishing villages of Sumatra to the modern tourist resorts of Thailand; from the beaches of Sri Lanka and India to the coastal communities of the

Maldives and Somalia; the disaster was so brutal, so quick, and so far-reaching that we are still struggling to comprehend it," Annan said.

He told reporters that as large parts of northern Sumatra had not been surveyed, the toll was likely to climb, adding: "We may never know how many people actually died."

Secretary of State Colin Powell, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao were among a score of other leaders at the summit.

The European Union unveiled an aid package that brought total contributions from the EU and individual members to nearly \$2 billion.

It pledged an additional 350 million euros (\$462 million) and a billion euro concessional loan through the European Investment Bank to help rebuild devastated areas, on top of the 100 million euros promised earlier for emergency relief.

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10,000 teachers protest RU professor's murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 10 thousand teachers of different public universities across the country yesterday abstained from taking classes to protest the killing of Rajshahi University (RU) teacher M Yunus.

Besides, the university teachers went on a token hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. Addressing a rally during the hunger strike, they demanded immediate resignation of the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government for failing to provide security for the intellectuals and persons of free thoughts.

Blaming the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir for the killing of Prof M Yunus, the teachers said inaction of the government in fact had resulted in the unabated killings of intellectuals.

Prof Yunus, also the president of RU, Bangabandhu Parishad and senior vice-president of Bangladesh Economic Association, was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants near RU campus on December 24.

"The coalition government never

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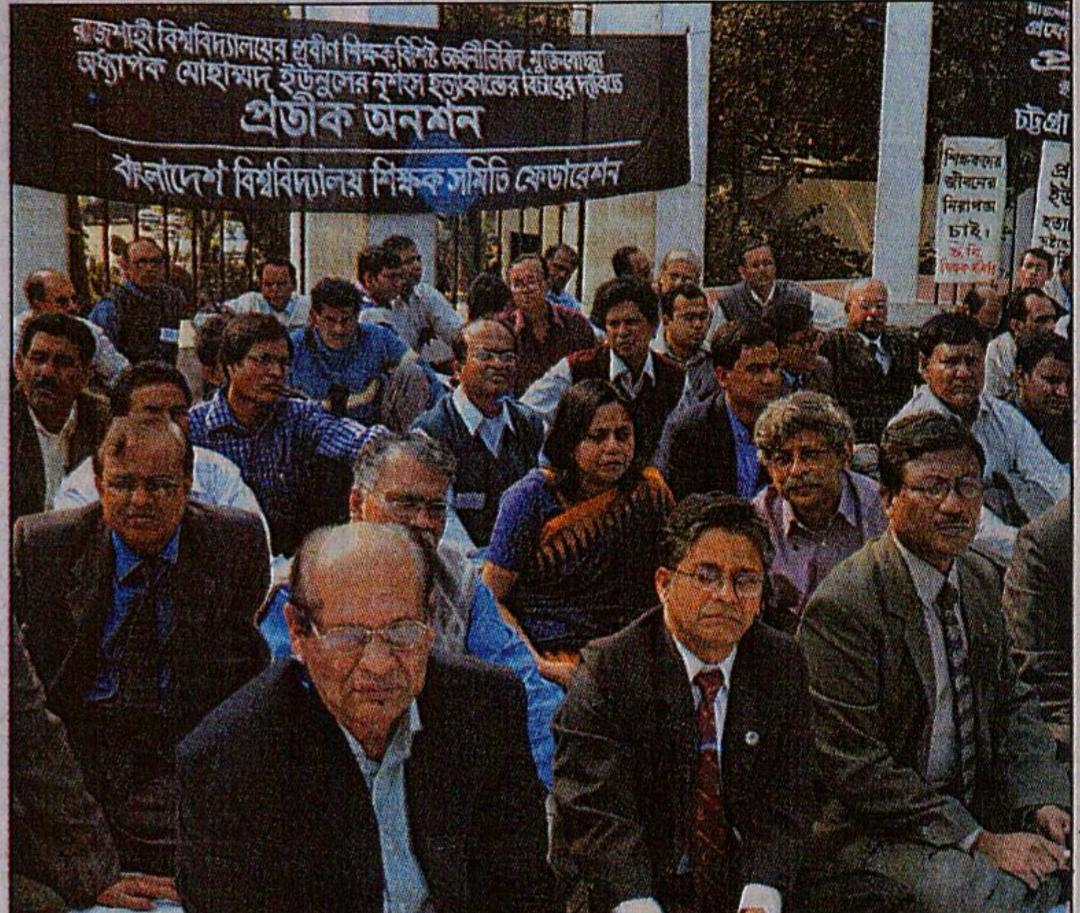


PHOTO: STAR

Teachers of public universities from across the country observe a token hunger strike at the city's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday protesting the December 24 assassination of Prof M Yunus of Rajshahi University.

**Biman unionists protest cabinet bodyview**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Union leaders of Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday protested a cabinet committee observation that the national carrier's staff members are inefficient.

The finance minister's comment on the poor performance of Biman also sparked resentment among them.

Biman Steering Committee (BSC), platform of all unions of Biman, yesterday at a meeting asked the minister to retract his comment on the national flag-carrier.

Biman is no longer a loss-making organisation despite running with staff shortage for long, the union leaders said at the meeting held at Balaka Bhaban.

The protest came a day after policymakers at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs suggested reducing Biman's 'excess and inefficient' manpower.

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## Little headache about children's head injury

DMCH has only 10 beds, many are refused admission

NAIMUL HAQ And  
SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Treatment of female and child patients requiring surgery for head and spine injuries is being greatly impeded as the only public hospital having neurosurgery facilities--Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH)--has only 10 beds for

Most of the less severe cases of female and child patients with head and spine injuries are refused admission as we cannot provide them with beds. But when the situation turns worse, we are compelled to accommodate severely injured cases on extra beds," explained Prof Shafiq Uddin Ahmed, head of the neurosurgery department.

Patients admitted for surgical treatment are forced to wait even for months for their turn as the neurosurgery department has only one operation theatre, and surgeons

have to put patients on a long waiting list.

The Daily Star correspondents found the hospital has 53 beds for male patients requiring neurosurgery, and 85 such patients were admitted on a single day recently.

"Most of the less severe cases of female and child patients with head and spine injuries are refused admission as we cannot provide them with beds. But when the situation turns worse, we are compelled to accommodate severely injured cases on extra beds," explained Prof Shafiq Uddin Ahmed, head of the neurosurgery department.

Seven-year-old Shumi from Borai village in Gazipur district, unable to walk, accommodated in the open space under a staircase (B-

V2) has been waiting since September 19 last year for removal of a spinal tumour.

"We are hoping for long to have the surgery done as soon as possible but surgeons have not yet fixed any date for it," said Shamola Begum, Shumi's grandmother.

Ward boys tried to take advantage of the situation and persuade Shamola to shift Shumi to a private clinic, but she did not as she was unable to afford the expenses.

Ozifa Begum, 35, from Nalertekh of Pardipur has a large tumour close to spinal cord in her abdomen. In her hospital bed (B-V4), Ozifa is waiting for surgery since August last year and does not know yet when surgeons would set a date for it. Her

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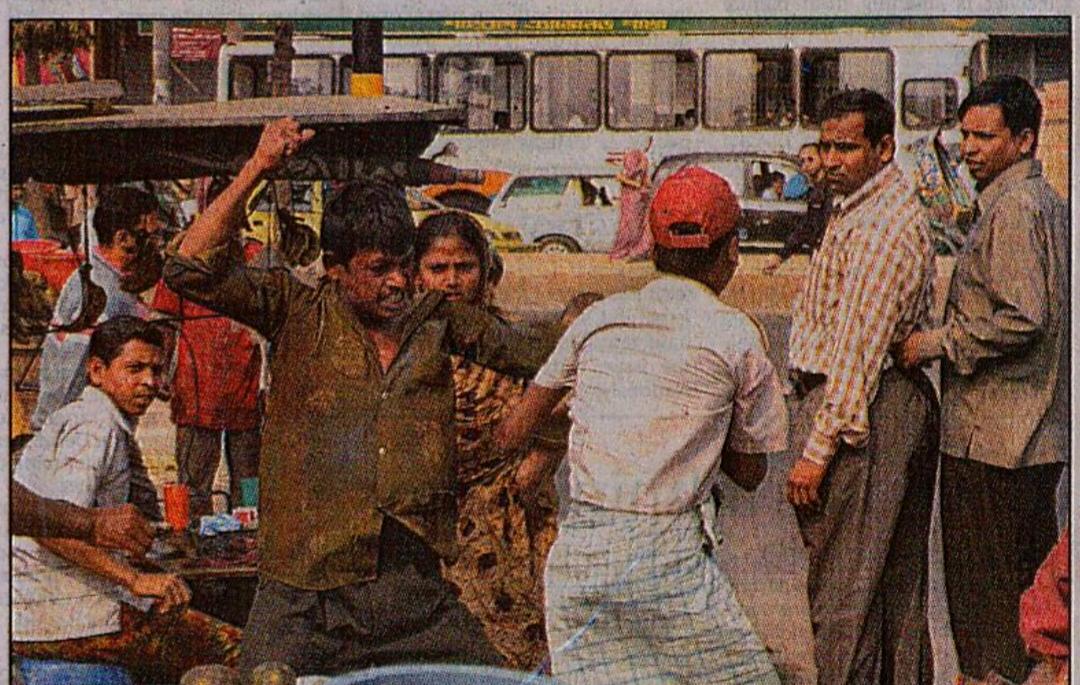
## Tk 1.3cr mobile phones seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs intelligence yesterday seized illegally imported mobile phones worth around Tk 1.3 crore at Zia International Airport.

Customs officials while checking an imported consignment of garment accessories at 12:00pm found 1,063 pieces of cellphone sets of different brands.

Sun Moon Traders, 382/B Malibagh, Dhaka, imported the consignment that reached here in a Dragon Air flight early yesterday, Customs sources said.



DESPERATION ILLUSTRATED... Two roadside vendors jump in fury at each other's throat at Shahbagh in the city yesterday over share of the extra-wide road divider they use to sell their merchandises.

## JS body for use of Rab to evict land grabbers

BSS, Dhaka

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Land yesterday recommended stern actions, including deployment of Rapid Action Battalion, to evict illegal occupants from government land and establishments.

The House body decided to get firsthand knowledge about the

status of the illegally occupied land, and vested and abandoned property

across the country. Members of the committee and senior government officials will start visiting the sites from today, sources in the Jatiya Sangsad said.

The committee at its 13th meeting also recommended government patronage for establishing five

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## BSF kills one

BSS, Thakurgaon

The Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi youth near the Balladangi border in the district Wednesdays.

Tazul Islam, 30, son of Sharif Uddin of Udaypur Talboti village of Balladangi upazila in Thakurgaon was killed on the spot when the BSF fired about 14 bullets, BDR sources said.

The BSF also took away his body from the scene near the boundary pillar No. 379, opposite to the Beurhbari outpost of 20 Battalion BDR.

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) at an outpost level flag meeting with the BSF yesterday protested such killings on the border by the BSE.

A company commander level flag meeting is scheduled to be held near the zero line today for identifying and handing over the body to Bangladesh authorities.

50 jailed in double murder case

BSS, Rangpur

Seventeen people were jailed for life and 33 others for two years in a double murder case on Wednesday.

Those awarded life imprisonment are Nurul Haq, Moshed Ali, Majibar Rahman, Motahar Hossain, Abdur Rashid, Motiar Rahman, Kaisar Ali, Azizul Haq, Anwarul, Abdul Halim, Abdul Mazid Teli, Abdul Mazid Panati, Kopper, Aiyub Ali, Azgar Ali, Kalu Mia and Abdur Rashid.

Mohammad Sharif Uddin Azad, additional district and sessions judge, Rangpur, handed down the judgement in the jam-packed courtroom.

The court fined the lifers Tk 5,000 each, in default, they are to suffer another year in jail.

According to the prosecution, a gang of miscreants, equipped with lethal weapons, swooped on Sobor Uddin, son of Shahi Mahmud, and Abdul Jallal, son of Kamal Uddin

## Expert body for more BB power to catch money launderers

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

An expert committee recommends amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act (Amla) giving more power to the central bank to deal more sternly with money launderers.

The committee in a report submitted to the Bangladesh Bank (BB) on December 30 suggests that the BB be empowered to formulate rules and regulations under the act as well as to issue temporary freezing or seizure orders with a maximum validity of 30 days.

The amendment proposal is also for vesting the Office of the Controller of Insurance and the Securities and Exchange Commis-

sion with the authority to enforce the law in their own areas.

The committee notes the existing definition of money laundering is too broad. It names the following offences as specific categories to be dealt with under the Amla: Counterfeiting currency, piracy of products, smuggling, insider trading or market manipulation, tax evasion, financial fraud, environmental crime, extortion, corruption and bribery. The list also includes offences like trafficking in human beings, of narcotics, arms and stolen goods, terrorism, involvement with any organised criminal group etc.

The central bank assigned the committee last year to find ways and means to close all avenues of money laundering.

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