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Kibria's daughter, son have no faith in probe efforts

Still reeling from the shock of losing their father -- Dr Reza Kibria and Dr Nazi Kibria, son and daughter of Shah AMS Kibria -- yesterday blamed the government for the 'pre-planned murder' and said they do not trust the government to bring the culprits to book.

The slain lawmaker's two wards demanded an international probe to find out the persons responsible for the Thursday's grenade attack

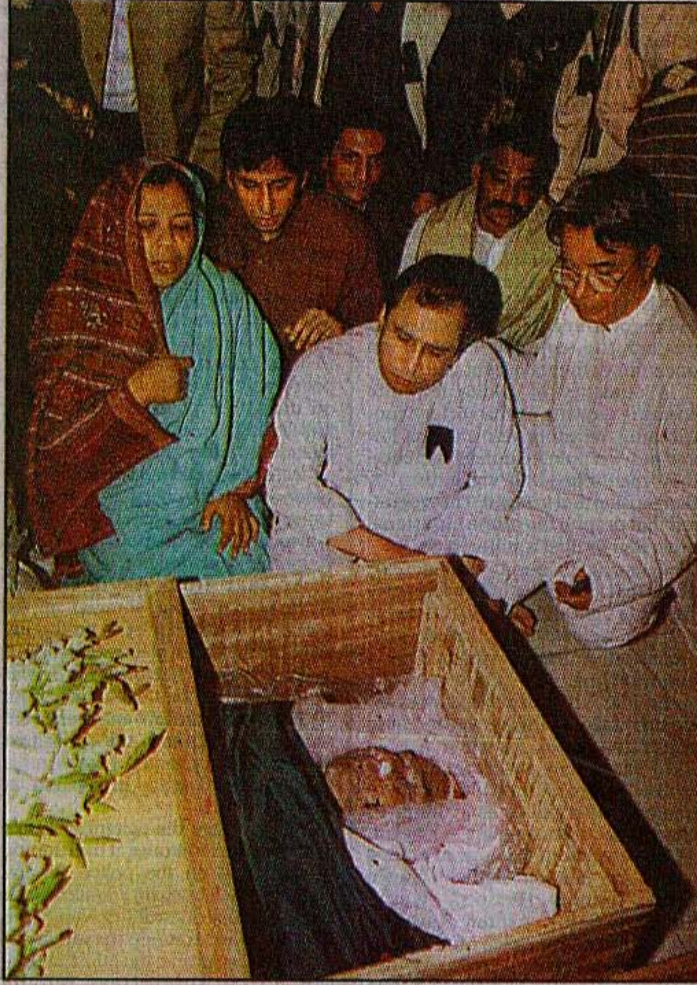
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GRENADE CARNAGE
Businesses see it as blow to economic stability

Businesses yesterday condemned Thursday's grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Habiganj, dubbing it a blow to the stability of the economy.

They demanded exemplary punishment of the perpetrators through a transparent probe.

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(Clockwise from left) Slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria's daughter Dr Nazi Kibria and son Dr Reza Kibria take a last look at their father; Party men carry away former Awami League lawmaker Obaidul Kader after being injured in a police action at Motijheel in the capital; Pickets set fire to a bus at Agrabad in Chittagong during hartal hours yesterday.

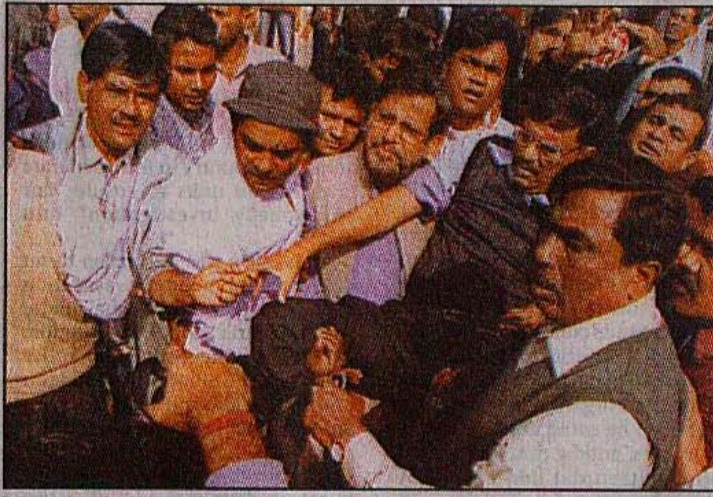


PHOTO STAR

Iraq closes borders as polls start today

Rocket hits US embassy; 7 GIs, 18 others killed in chopper crash, attacks

AGENCIES, Baghdad

Iraq battered down the hatches yesterday, and braced itself for the final onslaught promised by insurgents intent on sabotaging the country's first democratic elections in decades set for today. A rocket has hit the US embassy compound inside Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, killing two people and wounding at least six, a diplomatic source says.

The rocket struck after dark yesterday and the explosion was heard across Baghdad's city centre and sirens sounded in the Green Zone shortly after the attack.

A US embassy official confirmed a blast occurred but had no details on casualties or the cause.

"It was a rocket. Two people are dead and at least six are wounded," a diplomatic source said.

The nationality of those killed and wounded was not known.

Also seven US soldiers and 16 Iraqis were killed in a string of attacks yesterday and Friday, as extremists continued their bloody campaign despite the government's claim it had netted three aides to

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, terror network al-Qaeda's frontman in Iraq.

Two US soldiers were killed when their helicopter crashed in western Baghdad on Friday, the US military said Saturday in a statement.

Two Task Force Baghdad soldiers died when their helicopter went down in the southwestern portion of the Iraqi capital late Friday, the statement said.

Insurgents, meanwhile, stepped up their own attacks, killing five American soldiers in three separate strikes in northern, western and southern Baghdad, according to the US command.

American troops and insurgents exchanged fire on a major Baghdad thoroughfare. The crackle of gunfire could be heard over the noon call to prayer. US fighter jets thundered through the skies over Baghdad throughout the morning in a show of force against the militants.

More than 1,413 US troops have been killed in Iraq since fighting began in March 2003.

With just a day to go before the polls, a suicide bomber blew himself up outside a joint US-Iraqi security

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5 of a family die in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Seven people, five of a family, died in a road accident in Jaldhaka upazila of Nilphamari district early yesterday.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at Chaoradhange village of the upazila when a microbus, carrying eight people, crashed into Teesta Barrage Project amid thick fog at about 6:00am, killing the seven on the spot and injuring one.

The victims, including a bridegroom, were returning to their home at Amrul Bari village in Jaldhaka upazila by the microbus after the marital engagement at Sadhur Bazar village of Hatibandha upazila under Lalmonirhat district.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies with the help of the local people.

The dead are Moinul Islam, 22, the bridegroom, his three sisters-- Ruby, 16, Baby, 12, and Arjina, 10-- his brother-in-law, Azizul Islam, 25, their neighbour Azgar Ali, 50, and driver of the vehicle, Sujon, 25.

The injured, Khalilur Rahman, 38, is undergoing treatment at Jaldhaka health centre.

In Dhaka, a government official died in a road accident in Kalyanpur area yesterday morning, according to the UNB.

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JMJB behind Jatra attack, nabbed terrorist says

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An operative of Bangla Bhai on Friday night claimed Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) responsible for carrying out the bomb attack on a jatra show (a folk theatre form) at Laxikola village of Shahjahanpur upazila on January 14, in which two were killed and 70 wounded.

Shafiqullah, 26, arrested from a Jamatul Mujahidin's operative's house with a huge amount of explosives on January 16, said in a state-

ment to a magistrate that Osman, a member of the JMJB bomb squad, carried out the attack along with several others.

Jamatul Mujahidin operative Joyal made the bombs along with two others at his house at Chakshadu village in Gabtali upzila, Shafiqullah said in his confessional statement to Magistrate SM Ferdous Alam under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

Shafiqullah, the eighth son of

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600 SIs for separate probe unit soon

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to recruit 600 sub-inspectors to open separate investigation units in 300 police stations and 3,109 personnel for the Department of Youth Development to increase its manpower.

It has also decided to form four new upazilas, raising the total number of the local administrative units to 476 in the country.

The new upazilas are Sonaimuri segregated from Begumganj of Noakhali, Subarnachar separated from Sadar upazila of Noakhali,

Dakkhin Surma cut out from Sadar upazila of Sylhet and Comilla Sadar Dakkhin in Comilla town.

Proposals for the fresh recruitment and new upazilas were approved by the National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganisation (Nicar) at its 91st meeting held at the International Conference Center (ICC) yesterday with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

"The decision to create 3,109 new posts at district and upazila levels was taken to increase the manpower of the Department of Youth

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Rickshawpuller bombed to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants bombed a rickshawpuller to death on Darus Salam Road in Mirpur yesterday.

Mafizul Islam was sitting on his rickshaw when the killers hurled a bomb at him at 10:00pm. He died on the spot.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police rushed to the spot with their dog squad and raided the adjoining areas to hunt down the killers.

They picked up six people from the fourth floor of a nearby building, including its owner, on finding evidence, sources said.

Mafizul hailed from Gaibandha and lived with his wife and only child in Duari in Mirpur.



BEGINNING OF THE ROT: Zimbabwe opener Stuart Matsikenyeri looks back at his stumps after he was bowled by Bangladesh spinner Manzarul Islam during the fourth ODI at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO STAR

The World Bank, a leading multilateral organization in global economic development has a need for qualified and experienced

ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST

to further enhance the capacity of its Dhaka Office. The assignment is currently envisioned to be on contractual basis with the possibility of conversion to term or regular basis after a period of solid performance and continued business need. An exceptional candidate may be considered for immediate assignment to term or regular position. The incumbent will be expected to provide expertise on a number of environmental issues as a member of the Dhaka Environment Team, which is part of the World Bank's South Asia Environment and Social Department. While it is desirable for the incumbent to have broad-based experience across a wide-range of sectors, there is particular interest in candidates with background in environmental issues in infrastructure projects, water resources management, and natural resources management.

Some of the prerequisites and desired qualifications for the position include, but are not limited to :

- An advanced degree in engineering or environmental planning or environmental sciences or a closely-related field, and 5-10 years of relevant experience;
- Solid experience in managing and/or leading environmental impact assessments and related environmental studies, preferably as leader for a multi-disciplinary team of engineers and scientists;
- Experience in well-established engineering consultancy firm and/or international work experience would be desirable attributes;
- Field-based experience conducting environmental impact assessments, surveys, inventories, are highly desirable;
- Proven ability to take initiative, work independently and adapt to change;
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to effectively function as a member of multi-disciplinary teams;
- Effective written and spoken communication skills;
- A willingness to undertake frequent travel within Bangladesh and possibly in the region.

Women candidates are encouraged to apply. Applicants are requested to send an electronic resume to wbod@worldbank.org clearly stating "Environmental Specialist" in the subject heading within 14 days from the day of advertisement. The electronic resume should detail their qualifications and experience and include at least three references in English.

Only the short-listed candidates shall be contacted.

China-Taiwan flights start after 55 years

AFP, Taipei

The first direct flights between bitter rivals China and Taiwan since the end of a civil war 55 years ago started yesterday, carrying Lunar New Year holidaymakers amid hopes for improving cross-strait relations.

Six Chinese planes landed in Taipei and one in southern Kaohsiung while Taiwan's China Airlines and EVA Airways also each sent a flight to Beijing on the first day of the historic opening of the air links.

China's flag carrier Air China flew two planes from its subsidiary Shandong Airlines to avoid showing the mainland flag in Taiwan.

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian, who is currently visiting the Pacific nation of Palau, said the

landmark flights proved "difficulties can be overcome as long as the two sides have sincerity and sit down to negotiate."

Chen also urged Beijing to allow the aircraft to fly over the airspace of other countries, rather than just Hong Kong as with the current services, the United Daily News here reported.

Passengers and crew aboard the flights that first landed in Taiwan were greeted at Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek International Airport by government officials, parliamentarians and business representatives.

"The exchange of commercial flights is a historic step in cross-strait relations and it can serve as a model to settle future bilateral

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Robbers shoot dead engineer, loot house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers gunned down an engineer and shot his daughter before looting cash and valuables from his home at Dakkhin Khan, Uttara in the early hours yesterday.

Abdul Hamid Biswas, a consultant of LGRD, died on the way to the hospital after being shot in the head, while his daughter Farah Hamid, 14, was shot in the left thigh.

A gang of eight robbers, clad in shorts and T-shirts, cut the barbed wire of the eastern boundary wall of the 50-year-old's house at around 2:30am. They then cut three grills of the kitchen window and entered the house, said Kaynat, Hamid's youngest daughter.

Hamid, his wife Sayeeda, their two daughters -- Farah and Kaynat -- and their house help were in the

house during the incident.

Sensing the presence of the robbers, Hamid came out of his room and tried to confront them, Kaynat said.

Sayeeda Hamid and the house help fled the house through another door and sought help from some labourers in the street who were unloading bricks from a truck, said a neighbour, Sultan, quoting the help.

"The robbers while arguing with Hamid shot him in the head and right thigh," said Kaynat. As Farah came to her father, seeing him collapsed on the ground, the robbers also shot her in the left thigh, she added.

As the labourers refused to help, the maid knocked on several doors in the neighbourhood and cried for help, while Sayeeda rushed into the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Pay commission places report tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Pay Commission will submit its report to the prime minister tomorrow suggesting 70 percent salary hike for the government employees in 20 grades.

The commission members headed by its chairman Mujibul Haq will submit the report. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman is expected to join them.

Finance ministry sources said after the submission, the ministry will scrutinise the report to see the financial viability of the recommendations. It will then make its own

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Clarification

Responding to the story headlined "Risky lending pushes rate to record 75pc", published in The Daily Star of Thursday, the National Bank of Pakistan yesterday said that it did not lend out 205.74 percent of its deposit as mentioned in the story.

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Prayer Timing		
January 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

POSTPONED

The University of Information Technology & Sciences (UITS) deeply regrets the postponement of the "Orientation of MBA Executive Participants" scheduled this evening at Hotel Purbani due to unavoidable circumstances.

The program will now be held at the same time and venue on 16 February, 2005.

Lilia Tan-Habacon Registrar

SUCCEED
EARLY LEARNING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS PROGRAM

SUCCEED Launching Postponed

The launching of SUCCEED: Early Learning for School Success Program scheduled to be held on January 30, 2005 at IDB Bhaban, Begum Rokeya Sharani, Dhaka has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. We regret any inconveniences caused for the postponement of the program.

Save the Children
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