

## FBI to probe only grenade source, not Kibria murder

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) team will investigate only the January 27 grenade attack on Awami League rally at Baiddar Bazar. It will not delve into the murder of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, CID and government sources said yesterday.

According to the sources, FBI will investigate the source of grenade, its routes and destinations as well as the country of origin. However, the sources said FBI would analyse the documents and

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## NBR probes import, duty mismatch

### Tariff cut, customs corruption thought to be main reasons

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is looking into why the revenue collection from import grew only by eight percent in July to December 2004, when imports marked a 23 percent growth.

NBR sources said an unusual increase in imports of zero- and low-

tariff items, coupled with corruption of a section of customs officials, is seriously holding back the government from collecting its targeted import revenue.

The budget for the current fiscal year foresaw a 22 percent growth in import and 19 percent in overall revenue collection. But, the NBR in the last eight months could achieve

only 54 percent of its target.

The sources said, in line with donors' prescription, the current year's budget introduced a three-slab import duty structure instead of a four-slab one and a three-tier supplementary duty structure instead of a seven-tier one. This new import tax structure is also a reason

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## US-INDIA COOP US expresses 'constructive concern' over Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The United States Monday said there has not been any specific initiative on US-India cooperation on issues relating to Bangladesh but expressed "constructive concern" about the threats and attacks on the press and political opposition, law and order situation and corruption.

"There has been no development of specific initiatives on US-India cooperation on issues pertaining to Bangladesh," a spokesperson for the

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## Combine S'pore tech with Dhaka's labour

### PM urges Singapore business leaders

UNB, Singapore

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday proposed that private sectors of Singapore and Bangladesh develop, through a coordinated venture, a competitive supply chain for global consumption of their products.

"We are looking forward to a meaningful and rewarding match-making of Singaporean technology and Bangladeshi labour and production facilities, to the advantage of both," Khaleda said at a business

luncheon meeting sharing her thoughts on 'Business Prospects and Opportunities in Bangladesh'.

Singapore Business Federation and International Enterprise of Singapore jointly organised the meeting in collaboration with the Bangladesh High Commission in Singapore at Swissotel, the Stamford Hotel.

State Minister for Trade and Industry Heng Chee How in his address said Singapore is ready to

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## 2 killed, 100 injured in season's first nor'wester

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country last night experienced the season's first major nor'wester with heavy rain that left at least two people dead and over 100 wounded.

Met office said the nor'wester that lashed the capital and its surrounding areas at about 7:45pm lasted for some 20 minutes, blowing off many roadside billboards, light and signposts, but bringing a relief after a hot and humid day.

The wind blew at a speed of more than 80 kilometres per hour snapping power lines and TV cables in many areas of the city. The rain created waterlogging in the low-lying areas.

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PHOTO: STAR

Two pedestrians brave a desolate city street amid a nor'wester that lashed and soaked the capital for about 20 minutes yesterday evening.

## PM's PRIORITY PROJECTS A few ministers, BNP MPs grab lion's share

### Observes JS body on planning ministry

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The prime minister's priority projects under the water resources ministry remain limited to the constituencies of a handful of ministers and ruling party lawmakers, the members of parliamentary standing committee on planning ministry noted yesterday.

The heated meeting in the evening at the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhaban also alleged massive irregularities and corruption infesting these projects, particularly the ones on canal excavation, flood embankment and river dredging.

With Makbar Ali in the chair and

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman present, the meeting discussed the state of the ministries of power and water resources, and also expressed concerns at the poor rate of implementation of the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Referring to a list of ongoing and completed priority projects under the prime minister, a committee member told Saifur, "You have allocated funds for these projects, but we don't see any project here for your own area."

There are 49 priority projects on the list, six of them completed, 22 under implementation and 21

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## Move to make first defence policy

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Armed Forces Division (AFD) has initiated steps to formulate the first time a defence policy for the country to provide the armed forces with directions to strengthen themselves on a priority basis, sources said.

AFD, an organisation under the Prime Minister's Office, has already assigned a number of its senior officials to prepare a draft of the policy in line with the country's foreign policy.

The defence ministry meanwhile has taken steps to formulate a policy on budgetary allocation for the armed forces.

The armed forces have been running without a defence policy since the independence while the

defence ministry does not have a policy on allocation of budget for the army, navy and air force though these forces enjoy the highest allocation from the national budget.

Defence experts said the armed forces all too often get into difficulties while operating in absence of a defence policy. They have long been demanding a defence policy highlighting the needs of the forces.

The armed forces have already started preparing sets of written goals and objectives, which would include, among other considerations, their respective size, facilities and capacities.

Top officials of the army, air force and navy have been tasked with preparing the first ever written goals of the defence services. AFD will

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## 45 Ctg journos offer to go to jail

CPJ condemns conviction, editors give reaction

STAR REPORT

Forty-five Chittagong-based journalists in a joint statement yesterday offered to go to jail as a gesture of sympathy to their fellow professionals punished by the High Court on Monday.

"We are ready to receive voluntary imprisonment to stand beside our fellow journalists at the time of their distress," the statement said.

The High Court on Monday convicted and fined the editors, publishers and three reporters of The Daily Prothom Alo and Daily Bhorer Kagoj for contempt of court for running a report that an additional judge had "tampered" with his law school graduation exam results.

Prothom Alo Editor Matjur Rahman and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and its two reporters Ekramul Haq Bulbul and Masud Milad were

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## Tornado victims in crying need of food, medicine

### Death toll rises to 48

STAR REPORT

The victims of Sunday's devastating tornado in four upazilas of Gaibandha and Rangpur districts are in crying need of food, medicine and shelter with the death count in the devastating twister reaching 48 yesterday.

Eight more people died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday. They were identified as Sahidul, 40, Jesmin, 10, Samsuzzoha, 12, Sarubala, 60, Saka, 35, Sorbanu, 80, Momena, 32, and Zannati, 6, all hailed from Gaibandha.

The RMCH and other local hospitals are still crammed with the injured. Government and non-government medical teams are

working in the affected areas but the victims and their relatives complained of inadequate treatment facilities.

A few tornado-hit people managed to erect makeshift sheds with CI sheets but others are still living under open sky. Foods and other relief materials distributed so far among the victims have proved inadequate.

The tornado that swept Sundarganj and Sadullapur of Gaibandha and Mithapukur and Pirgachha upazilas of Rangpur on Sunday night devastated as many as 30 villages, injuring more than 1,000 people.

The tornado-hit areas in Gaibandha turned into a human sea

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## 2 criminal groups clash in Dhaka jail, 6 guards stand-released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Central Jail authorities yesterday stand-released 6 jail guards including the chief jail warden for beating up inmates in violation of the jail codes following sporadic clashes between two factions of prisoners.

Jail sources said a group of

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## Hartal shifted to Mar 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and its left allies have shifted their March 27 countrywide hartal to March 31 to facilitate the Christian community's observance of Easter Sunday.

The hartal date was changed after a delegation of the Christian community met the leaders of the

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4. Rifle Square, Dhanmondi, Dhaka	10. 60, B.B. Road, Narayanganj
5. Quaderi Chamber, 37 Agrabad C/A, Chittagong.	11. 14, Dishari Hawapara (East Zindabazar), Sylhet
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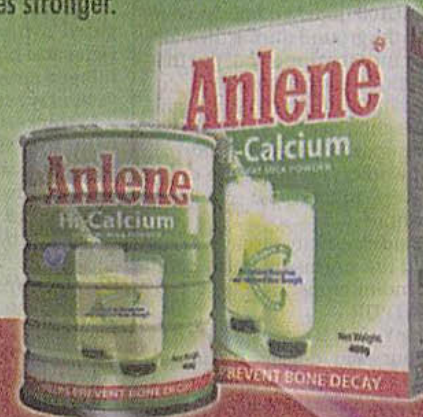


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