

PREMIER BANK SCAM PROBE

SEC blames directors, top management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The SEC probe committee has held several directors and the top management of Premier Bank responsible for opening some 32,000 fake beneficiary owner's accounts "in a bid to grab a major portion of its public offer," sources said.

The four-member probe team of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has finalised its report in which it suggested cancellation of the depository participant (DP) licence of Premier Bank. The

team also recommended legal and administrative actions for the criminal offence.

The private bank's Managing Director Kazi Abdul Mazid, its Vice-president and Manager of Banani branch Syed Nowsher Ali and three others have been named in the probe report, the sources said.

SEC Executive Director Monsur Alam, who heads the inquiry team, told reporters yesterday that they sent the report to the SEC chairman's residence by a special mes-

senger. But when contacted at 7:00pm, Chairman Mirza Azizul Islam told The Daily Star he did not receive the report.

The chairman however said, "We will soon convene a commission meeting to discuss the findings of the probe and take actions."

SEC can lodge civil or criminal cases against the DP's and issue managers alongside its administrative actions, said a top SEC official who is also a member of the probe team.

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Earthquake toll may climb up to 2,000

Huge toll averted as sea did not produce tsunami

AGENCIES, Gunung Sitoli

Residents searched through smouldering rubble for survivors on Indonesia's Nias island yesterday, and relatives wept over the bodies of the dead after an 8.7-magnitude earthquake hammered the region, triggering a tsunami scare.

Death toll estimates ranged from 430 to 2,000.

UN and other relief agencies rushed to ferry aid supplies to the island, which bore the brunt of the quake's force almost three months to the day after an even bigger

tremor nearby sent killer waves crashing into coastlines around the Indian Ocean's rim.

Fears of a second tsunami faded yesterday when seas failed to rise up in the hours after the overnight quake but not before triggering panic in nations still traumatised by the earlier disaster.

An overflight yesterday of Gunung Sitoli, the island's biggest city, indicated about 30 percent of its buildings were destroyed, and there was significant damage in the island's second biggest town, Teluk Dalam.

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Bangladesh sleeps on tsunami alert

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Authorities in Bangladesh virtually slept Monday night and did not care to send wake-up calls to residents in coastal areas although a tsunami warning was issued from the US to countries within 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) of the epicentre of the Sumatra earthquake.

The district administrations made no move to either alert or evacuate coastal people to the possibility of a tsunami although the epicentre of the quake was just 428 kilometres off the Chittagong observatory centre.

Twenty minutes after the earthquake ruptured the ocean floor off coast of Sumatra, tsunami warning

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STATE DEPARTMENT HR REPORT

Dhaka fails to probe political attacks thoroughly

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Releasing a report on human rights and democracy, the US State Department has said the Bangladesh government "failed to conduct thorough investigations of politically motivated attacks."

"An increase in politically-motivated attacks in Bangladesh seriously undermined further political progress," it said in the "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The US Record 2004-

2005" report that was submitted to the Congress by the Department of State Monday.

The government's poor human rights record worsened during the year as it continued to commit numerous abuses, including a significant rise in extra-judicial killings, harassment of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and discrimination against religious minority groups, the report said.

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JS body questions HC stay

Decides to send letter to speaker for guideline

SHAKHAWAT LITON

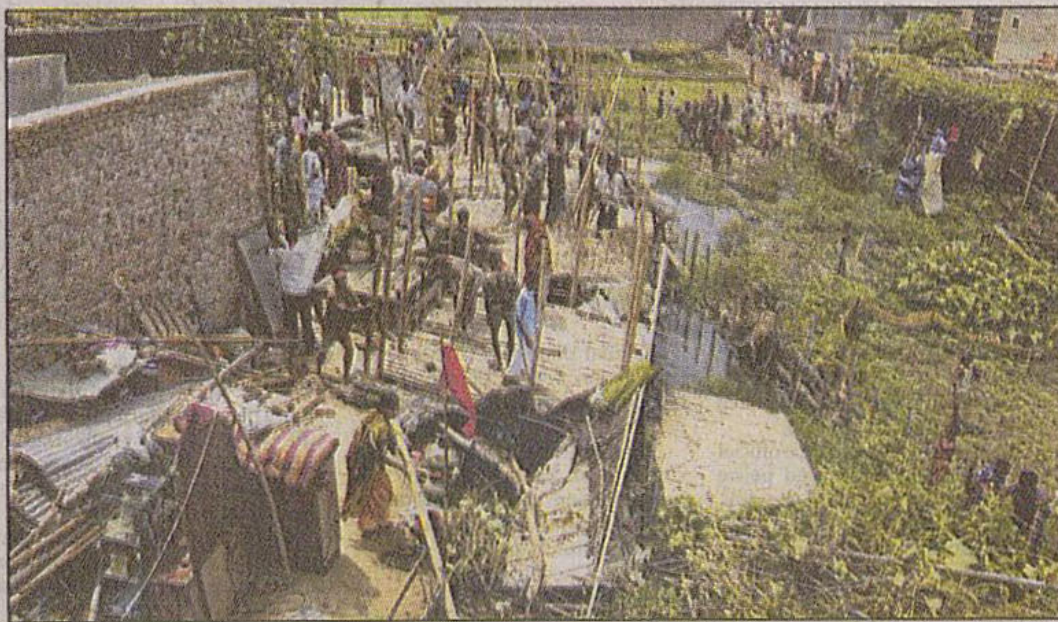
A parliamentary body yesterday observed that the High Court (HC) has recently stayed the activities of a parliamentary subcommittee although the constitution does not allow the court to intervene in parliamentary affairs.

The parliamentary standing committee on commerce ministry made the observation at a meeting and decided to send a letter to the speaker seeking his suggestion on what should be done in this regard.

The committee members referred to a writ petition filed by an insurance company upon which an HC division bench issued the stay order earlier this month.

The petition was filed after the parliamentary subcommittee had decided to probe alleged corruption and irregularities in private life insurance companies and issued a letter on February 11 to the National Board of Revenue and Bangladesh Bank seeking information about a particular insurance company.

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Workers in red headbands pull down illegal structures on encroached lands of Kalyanpur canal at Agargaon yesterday, marking the launch of a Wasa drive to restore unhindered flow along the city's drainage canals to avoid waterlogging during the rains.

CITY CANAL CLEANUP DRIVE

Wasa knocks down 50 structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-awaited drive by the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) for restoring unhindered flow of the drainage canals to free the capital from waterlogging in rainy season began yesterday with the demolition of illegal structures on Kalyanpur canal and its branches.

Some 50 bamboo-made houses and parts of several semi-pucca houses and boundary walls were demolished during the drive conducted in Agargaon Janata Housing area under Kafil and Mirpur police stations.

Another drive will be conducted

soon to remove the remaining structures on the main canal and branch canals.

A Wasa demolition squad along with 50 police personnel including 10 policewomen led by two magistrates started its operation at 10:30am. The team first demarcated the canal areas with rope and red flags and then went for bulldozing the illegal structures.

Wasa Managing Director ANH Akhter Hossain also visited the spot.

Some house owners, including a ward commissioner and government high officials, yesterday promised to remove their illegal encroachment soon while some

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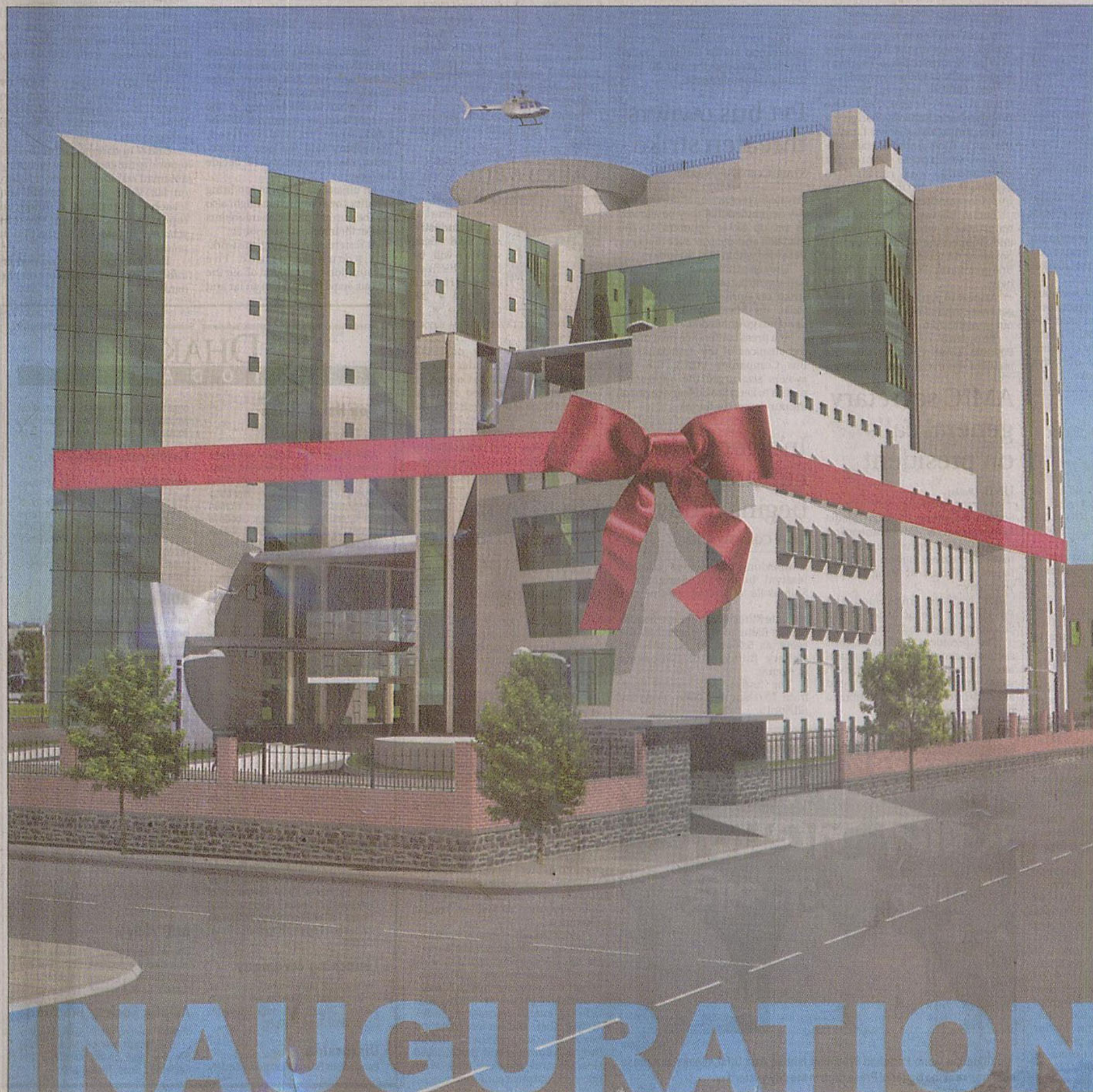
Zahiruddin Khan passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former industries minister and BNP leader AM Zahiruddin Khan died of a cardiac arrest at the Bumrungrad Hospital in Bangkok early yesterday. He was 68.

His body will be flown to Dhaka today in a Thai Airways flight.

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Inauguration of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka,

30th March, 2005

by

Begum Khaleda Zia,

Honourable Prime Minister,

Govt. of The People's Republic of Bangladesh.

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