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**AL to arrange Hasina's treatment in US, if govt allows**

**UNB, Dhaka**  
The Awami League (AL) presidium yesterday said the party, if the government agrees, will arrange in the USA the treatment of Sheikh Hasina's ears badly damaged due to the impact of grenade attacks on her rally in the city on August 21, 2004.  
"Her eye treatment is possible in Dhaka but ear treatment is only possible in the USA where she was treated earlier," Acting Party President Zillur Rahman told reporters after presiding over an unscheduled meeting of the presidium at his Gulshan residence.  
Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, detained in a sub-jail in parliament building complex in connection with "extortion" cases, has been suffering from various health complications, including

**CA's first meet today with establishment ministry officials**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will exchange views with officials of the establishment ministry on Wednesday in the first such meeting since he took over charge of the establishment portfolio over a year ago.  
Officials are weighing the meeting highly and expect important directives on ways to expedite administrative functions to come from the meeting.  
The CA is reportedly disappointed by the different ministries' poor performance in implementing the government's Annual Development Programme in the

**Kosovo inches closer to independence declaration**

**EU nations back police mission**

**AP, AFP, Pristina/Brussels**  
Kosovo inched closer to a widely expected declaration of independence on Sunday, amid rising political tension and Serbia's determination to resist what it considers an illegal breakaway.  
Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci refused Friday to say exactly when independence would come, but both Belgrade and the international community visibly stepped up their preparations.  
In Belgrade, Serbian President Boris Tadic vowed to do everything to keep Kosovo within Serbia, as he was sworn in for a second term in office Friday.  
In Kosovo's capital Pristina, freshly printed posters appeared on the streets appealing for calm during celebrations -- including street parties -- that will herald independence in the mostly ethnic Albanian province.  
"Celebrate with dignity," read the posters, illustrated simply with a bright red heart. "For a good start. For Kosovo. Kosovo welcomes the future." The same message was also carried on local television channels.  
The Bota Sot newspaper said Kosovo legislators had been ordered to stay close to Pristina on Sunday and to be prepared for the Kosovo parliament to be convened at three hours' notice.  
Asked at a press conference Friday in Pristina on which date the split would come, Thaci replied: "Let's stick to what the press conference is about" -- namely, a personal pledge to uphold minority Serb rights.  
"In independent Kosovo, not one citizen will feel discriminated



A large hole is being dug next to Omega Poultry Farm at Baraid of Badda in the capital yesterday for dumping dead fowls.

**The Daily Star turns 18**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Leading figures from academia, arts, politics, business, media and civil society last night gathered at a reception hosted by The Daily Star in celebration of its 17th anniversary.  
Former advisers to caretaker governments, members of the diplomatic corps and incumbent and former bureaucrats attended the ceremony at a city restaurant.  
Leaders from across the political spectrum were present at the soiree. Awami League's Tofail Ahmed, BNP's Nazrul Islam Khan, Jatiya Party's Anisul Islam Mahmud and Ziauddin Bablu, left leaders Manzurul Ahsan Khan and Rashed Khan Menon were among them.  
A good number of academics and glitterati of the art world showed up at the reception followed by dinner. Runa Laila and



A scene from the gala reception arranged to mark the 17th anniversary of The Daily Star at a city restaurant last night.

**Dr Yunus takes microfinance model to US**

**AFP, London**  
Grameen Bank, founded by Bangladeshi Nobel Prize winner Dr Muhammad Yunus, is taking its pioneering microfinance model to the United States, the Financial Times reported Saturday.  
The move, which will open doors for some of the 28 million people in the US who do not have bank accounts, comes with the banking sector there being battered by the crisis over subprime loans.  
Grameen Bank made its name by lending money to poor women who are trying to start small businesses but cannot borrow from banks because they do not have a good enough credit rating of bank accounts.

**HASINA CASE**  
**Govt to apply today for permission to appeal against verdict**

**UNB, Dhaka**  
The government is likely to file application today seeking permission to appeal against the High Court judgment that declared illegal bringing the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case against detained former prime minister Sheikh Hasina under the Emergency Powers Rules (EPR) and also scrapped the case.  
On February 12, the full bench of the Appellate Division held up a government petition that sought stay on operation of the High Court judgment and asked it to file regular leave to appeal by February 19.  
A government attorney, requesting not to be named, told the news agency yesterday that they had already collected the certified copy of the High Court judgment.  
Before the delivery of the High Court verdict, the trial court had recorded depositions made by the

**MOBILE USE IN JAIL**  
**Huda, Altaf Chy shifted to N'ganj jail**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Detained former ministers Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and barrister Nazmul Huda were shifted to Narayanganj jail on Thursday for using mobile phones in Dhaka Central Jail violating the jail code.  
For the same offence, action against three other VIP prisoners -- Salauddin Quader Chowdhury,

**Forex worth Tk 91 lakh seized at ZIA**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Customs officials at Zia International Airport (ZIA) seized foreign currency worth Tk 91.65 lakh from a passenger of a Singapore-bound flight and arrested him on Friday night.  
The arrestee -- Rahat Khan -- was handed over to Airport Police

**3 firemen killed as train rams fire truck**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar**  
Three firemen were killed and four others injured as a passenger train ramed a fire truck on a level crossing in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar early morning yesterday.  
Azizul Haque Hawlader, 36, driver, and Abdur Rashid, 45, team leader of the Fire Service, died on the spot while fireman Nilendu Prasanna Singha, 38, died on way to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.  
Critically injured firemen Emdadul Haque, 37, Zahir Hussain, 26, Umar Ali, 30 and Mazif Uddin, 28, were admitted to Sylhet

Osmani Medical College Hospital. The collision took place at around 4:00am when the fire truck was on its way to douse a fire at Rangichhera bazar, said sources at Kulaura Fire Service office and Kulaura Railway Station.  
As the vehicle reached Kulaura School Chaumuhani level crossing, Sylhet-bound Upaban Express smashed into it.  
M Taj Uddin, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, visited the scene Saturday morning.  
Kulaura Railway Police recovered the dead bodies and sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

**SIDR VICTIMS**  
**111 truckloads of Indian relief arrives**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
West Bengal's Transport and Sports Minister Subhash Chakrabarty yesterday handed over 111 truckloads of relief materials for Sidr affected people in Bangladesh at the Benapole border.  
Chakrabarty also declared his state's wish to reconstruct 1000 houses destroyed by the cyclone.  
Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management A Bari Khan formally received the relief materials at the border.  
The Indian relief goods, the first to arrive by road, is part of the aid

**WAR CRIMINALS' TRIAL**  
**Process must start by March 26**

**Demand sector commanders**  
**UNB, Ctg**  
Sector Commanders Forum, a platform of sector commanders of the Liberation War, yesterday demanded that the process of bringing the war criminals to justice must start by March 26.  
The demand came from a meeting of the sector commanders at the city's Muslim Hall in the morning.  
Earlier, the forum leaders placed wreaths at Shaheed Minar and visited the killing fields in Nathpara and Foy's Lake areas.  
Besides, a seven-day signature collection programme of the forum, seeking trial of the war criminals, was inaugurated at DC Hill Park yesterday.  
Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandkar, who was present at the meeting as chief guest, said it is necessary to start trial of the

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**CNG-RUN TRUCK**  
**3 killed in cylinder blast**

**UNB, Savar**  
Three people were killed and five others injured as the gas cylinder of a truck exploded at a CNG-filling station here yesterday.  
Local sources said the cylinder exploded with a big bang when it was being refilled at the filling station of Energy Plus Limited Company at Savar bus stand at

**Future of Musharraf after Feb 18?**

**HAMID MIR, from Islamabad**  
Pervez Musharraf cannot afford a fair and free election on February 18 in Pakistan. That is why rigging is the writing on the wall. Musharraf claimed that Pakistanis will have the mother of all elections on

**Prayer Timing**  
February 17

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-01
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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