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INDIA-US DIPLOMATIC ROW US asked to withdraw diplomat

STAR REPORT

India yesterday asked the US to withdraw a particular diplomat from its New Delhi embassy, the very day Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade reached home following a row over her alleged visa fraud in the US.

An Indian foreign ministry official said New Delhi had requested that Washington withdraw the diplomat of a "similar rank" to Khobragade, AFP reported.

Indian government sources said India had reason to believe that the officer had been involved in processes relating to Khobragade case and subsequent unilateral action by the US, reports Times of India.

The Indian government's move comes just as the bitter diplomatic dispute appeared to be cooling down. The two countries have been at loggerheads over Indian consulate worker Khobragade, who was arrested and charged in New



Devyani

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Wife of Mitul in tears after the human haulier driver died of his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday. Hartal pickets hurled a petrol bomb at Mitul's vehicle at Bayzid Polytechnic area of the port city burning him fatally. Inset, a file photo of Mitul in the ICU.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Another burn victim dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A human haulier driver died at Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday, four days after he was burnt in an arson attack.

Md Mitul, 22, had more than 80 per cent of his body burnt. He succumbed around 4:00am.

Arsonists hurled a petrol bomb at his vehicle near the Polytechnic intersection in the port city around 9:30pm on January 6.

Mitul left behind a two and a half years old son.

Meanwhile, a trucker was burnt in Satkhira on Thursday.

Azibor Rahman, 38, was attacked while driving a truckload of onions from Satkhira to Dhaka.

"Azibor did not take his truck out for once during hartal and blockade. He only got out yesterday knowing that the hartal has been lifted," said his brother, Rezaul Karim.

Criminals attacked his vehicle with a petrol bomb in Bhomra port around 9:30pm, he added.

Azibor's entire face and his hands were burnt. By the time the Fire service arrived, the truck was half burnt down, with the victim trapped inside.

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NO-BLOCKADE DAY People bear jams due to rush, fog

STAR REPORT

After nine days of non-stop nationwide blockade of rail, road and waterways by the 18-party, huge rush of traffic yesterday caused 54km tailbacks on Dhaka-Chittagong highway and long queues at ferry terminals.

Adding to the passengers' misery was the dense fog that snapped ferry service at Mawa-Kewrakandi and Paturia-Daulatdia terminals for over 11 hours stranding several thousand buses, trucks and private vehicles there.

The Dhaka city too witnessed traffic jam at different points, as people came out to do their necessities within the 48-hour window before the next spell

of non-stop blockade begins at 6:00am Sunday.

An Awami League rally in the capital's Suhrawardy Uddyan also contributed to traffic congestion in adjacent areas.

The BNP-led alliance had called the non-stop blockade of rail, road and waterways from the first day of the new year to resist the January 5 parliamentary polls.

"It took us eight and a half hours to go 16 kilometres on Dhaka-Comilla highway at Chandina," said bus passenger Mostafa, who was coming to the capital from Comilla.

Banker Rebeka Sultana with her little daughter had to face acute lava-

tory scarcity as they got stuck in a long tailback. Their bus took eight hours, 7:00am to 3:00pm, to reach Gouripur from Comilla town, about 45 kilometres.

She was bringing her daughter to a doctor in Dhaka. However, she missed the appointment, reports our Comilla correspondent.

Reports of people being stranded in queues also came from Chandpur, Manikganj, Madaripur and Munshiganj.

The 54-kilometre tailback on Dhaka-Chittagong highway stretched from the cantonment area in Comilla sadar upazila to Daudkandi toll plaza.

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The Economist

ANOTHER BEATING

THE ECONOMIST

It is becoming hard to know whether Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a cynically good actress or cut off from political reality. Smiling before journalists in Dhaka, the capital, on January 6, she chided opposition parties for their "mistake" in boycotting general elections the day before, then waved aside doubts over the legitimacy of her victory.

Either way, her country's democracy is in a rotten state. Of a potential

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Need critical for political dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US Senate has adopted a resolution on Bangladesh, stressing "critical need for political dialogue" towards free, fair and credible elections.

The resolution, cleared by the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on December 18, was agreed upon without amendment, said a statement posted on the official website of the Senate.

Condemning the political violence in Bangladesh, the Senate urged the country's political leaders to engage "directly and substantively" in a dialogue towards free, fair and credible elections.

Meanwhile, Russia said it regretted that key opposition parties in Bangladesh boycotted the parliamentary elections.

Moscow said it was ready to continue constructive partnership with a government, which would be formed soon and hoped the political parties, would not go beyond the constitution in order to ensure stability and strengthen

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

EC fails to hold free, fair polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) had failed to hold the 10th parliamentary election in a fair and transparent manner, Brotee, a non-government organisation and local election observer, said yesterday.

"The Election Commission could have held a fair and transparent election within its executive power," said CEO of Brotee Sharmeen Murshid at a press conference in its office in the capital.

She claimed that due to the failure of the EC and

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With a child sleeping, a family of four travels on a motorbike ignoring the risk they are taking. Only the biker is wearing a helmet. The photo was taken near Shahbagh in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with BNP standing committee member Mahbubur Rahman that the ongoing movement of the BNP-led opposition alliance is "democratic and peaceful"?


Yes (57%)
No (43%)

TOTAL VOTES: 520

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Mizanur Rahman, chairman of National Human Rights Commission, that the government had failed to protect the Hindus?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net



Painter Elephant

MAIL ONLINE

He has a delicate brushstroke and an eye for colour that would give Picasso a run for his money. So it's all the more impressive that this impressionist painter is in fact... an elephant.

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Int'l trade fair from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) begins today for showcasing various goods from home and abroad amid tight security arrangements.

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the commerce ministry are

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Fajr	5:30	6:05
Juma	12:30	1:15
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:36	5:40
Esha	7:00	7:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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