

Delhi demands action on 'immigrants, insurgency'

Morshed meets Vajpayee, Advani

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi
 New Delhi yesterday asked Dhaka to immediately take steps to tackle "presence of insurgent training camps in Bangladesh" and large-scale "illegal immigration".
 Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani also asked visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan to hand over "88 terrorists". The list of terrorists was given to Bangladesh last year.
 After the meeting, Morshed told reporters that many Bangladeshi

criminals had taken shelter in India and "illegal immigration on both sides is a matter of concern".
 Morshed also said Bangladesh would never allow its territory to be used for activities directed against a third country.
 "We don't know the number (of illegal immigrants), but it can happen with 4,000-odd miles of border between us. The number could be 10 or five or none," he told journalists.
 Morshed later had a half-an-hour meeting with Prime Minister Atal

Behari Vajpayee who reiterated India's concern over "illegal immigration".
 Indian Home Secretary RCA Jain told reporters that Bangladesh had
See Morshed Khan's press conference on back page
 committed to fight terrorism but did not specify.
 "There was no express commitment for any specific action or promise of demonstrative action

from their side," Jain said.
 Advani told Morshed that Indian security forces have busted several ISI modules in India and wanted Dhaka's cooperation in the fight against terrorism, he said.
 Morshed invited Advani to visit Bangladesh, Jain said.
 AFP adds: Morshed and his counterpart Yashwant Sinha on Friday decided to hold foreign secretary-level talks in Dhaka in April to resolve the thorny immigration issue.
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India to seal Assam border

PTI, Guwahati
 India decided to adopt measures to seal the Bangladesh border with Assam to prevent further infiltration of Bangladeshis, official sources said yesterday.
 The decision was taken at a tripartite meeting in Assam on implementation of the Assam accord.
 Union Home Ministry Joint Secretary RC Jain announced at the meeting on Friday that the Centre accepted the problem of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam as a national one.
 The meeting among the state, the Centre and the All Assam Students Union (AASU) also decided that steps would be taken to beef up security along the international border.
 Installing floodlights along the border is necessary to prevent immigrants from slipping in at night, the meeting was told.
 The meeting also decided that
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Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan (L) gestures during a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in New Delhi yesterday.

Army captain planned abduction at Bangabazar, says arrestee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 An army captain and four others planned abduction of a hundi trader from Bangabazar, which led to the arrest of eight detectives and their informant on February 6.
 Nitai Roy, a businessman arrested in connection with the attempted abduction, also admitted that the captain, Atiq, two soldiers and a police informant extorted Tk 3 lakh from the same hundi trader, Suresh Kumar, on January 29.
 Captain Atiq, his cousin, a police informant, a businessman and Nitai planned to extort money from some Indian hundi traders, according to the confession.
 Nitai's confession was recorded at the chamber of a metropolitan magistrate at the end of a four-day remand.
 Captain Atiq and his team went to the Shyamoli bus stand in an army jeep and picked up the Indian trader on January 29. He was released on payment of Tk 3 lakh.
 The captain, his cousin Dulal, the soldiers, the jeep driver, the police informant and two Bangabazar businessmen shared the booty, Nitai said.
 Later, the eight detectives went to the Bangabazar to abduct the Indian trader, Suresh on February 6. But he recognised the police informant and cried out for help. Shopkeepers caught the abductors and turned them in.
 After his statement was recorded, Nitai was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.
 Captain Atiq and the two soldiers have already been detained following the charges. Army also formed a high-powered committee to probe the matter.

Tk 350cr NGO fund stuck in incomplete 'political link' probe

NAZRUL ISLAM and MUSTAK HOSSAIN
 The government has failed to make any headway in its investigation on "political links" of certain non-government organisations (NGOs), lingering release of funds, over Tk 350 crore, to those organisations for over a year.
 The fund blockage has severely affected various projects of the NGOs -- which in the end has affected millions of rural people.
 The NGOs have been forced to

squeeze their programmes on literacy, poverty alleviation, women empowerment, and building up of social capital through technical support to small organisations, sources said.
 Worried about the slow progress of investigation, that started some 15 months ago, representatives from donor agencies met the government twice on this issue. But they were told the investigation was on and the government would act once it is over.
 "The NGO Affairs Bureau is yet to complete the investigation and

there is nothing relating to politics," said Shahjahan Majumdar, director general of the bureau.
 "We don't have any political motive behind holding back their (NGOs) funds, rather the bureau is always concerned about strict adherence to rules and regulations," Majumdar told The Daily Star.
 He said the bureau had to deal with audit objections before releasing new funds.
 In her speech to the nation after taking office in October 2001, Prime
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Dinajpur blasts Red alert in 16 dists, madrassahs under police watch

ANWAR ALI, Dinajpur
 A 'red alert' was issued to police stations and outposts in 16 districts under Rajshahi Police Range yesterday following Thursday's bomb blasts at Dinajpur.
 Detective police have been asked to keep close watch on all madrassahs and Islamic organisations in the region, police sources said.
 Plainclothes police teams have fanned out to nab two of the injured persons who fled away in a waiting white microbus after seven powerful bombs exploded in a tin-shed house at Chhoto Gurgola in the town. Three persons were critically injured.
 Dinajpur Police Superintendent

S M Kamal Hossain told The Daily Star that "important information" was gathered during interrogation of the two madrassah teachers arrested in connections with the blasts.
 The two -- Hafez Habibur Rahman alias Shafiqul Islam and Faruk Hossain are now on three days' remand. They are teachers of Hazrat Aayisa Siddiqia (R) Salafia Islamia Girls' Madrassah in the area.
 Badal, another person critically injured in the blasts, is now under treatment at the Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.
 A source in the investigation team said, "Any major development
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Meghna tragedy: One more body recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Death toll in Thursday's launch capsizing in the Meghna rose to nine with the recovery of one more body yesterday.
 Caught in a storm, the small launch sank near Char Amirabad, about 20 km from the district headquarters of Chandpur.
 The body recovered yesterday from the river in nearby Ekhlaspur area was identified to be of Hira Siddiqi 25, district administration sources said without giving details.
 Eight bodies were recovered earlier, five of those found trapped inside the launch. Local people recovered three bodies.
 BIWTA rescue vessel M V Rustam salvaged the launch Friday afternoon.
 It was seen anchored near the spot till yesterday.
 A river cruise turned into a tragedy as the launch -- MV Amit
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2 killed in blast while making bomb in Barisal

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
 Two persons were killed and another was injured when a bomb they were making went off at village Tarakupi in Gouranadi upazila in the early hours of yesterday.
 Police and local people identified the dead as Hannan Howlader, 22, and Shah Alam, 28.
 The injured, identified as Monir Hossain, 19, was admitted to a local hospital.
 Locals said accomplices of the victims took away the bodies to nearby Kalkini upazila of Madaripur.
 Police spotted the place of blast in the afternoon and launched a drive to recover the bodies.

World protests US plans for Iraq war

AFP, Paris
 Anti-war protesters came out in their millions in cities around the world yesterday as the United States looked increasingly isolated over a possible invasion of Iraq.
 A day after the historic UN Security Council session in New York which was an effective slap in the face for US hopes of gathering support for forcible overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the protests and the procession of politicians professing support for further weapons inspections only added to Washington's woes.
 Even British Prime Minister Tony Blair, considered US President George W Bush's staunchest ally on Iraq, accepted yesterday that UN inspectors should be given more

time -- but not too much time -- to ferret out Saddam's alleged stocks of weapons of mass destruction.
 Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf told Bush war against Iraq was "not a good option", Russian Foreign Minister Ivan Ivanov said the Security Council meeting had held out the prospect of "a unique opportunity to solve this most burning world problem politically", and Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes said it would now be "inconceivable" for the United States to attack Iraq.
 German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who chaired Friday's meeting, said there should be no time limit for UN weapons inspectors to complete their work in Iraq.
 "We believe that efficient inspec-

tions will lead Iraq to cooperate fully," he said. "So we have to give the inspectors as much time as they need."
 However, there was better news for the Americans from Brussels where a diplomat said NATO ambassadors should reach a compromise solution to their damaging deadlock over Iraq by Tuesday after France, Belgium and Germany sparked a crisis by blocking US proposals to begin military planning to defend Turkey in case of war.
 Iraq was quick to make political capital out of Friday's UN Security Council session, in which the United States found itself in a distinct minority after Blix's mixed report on Iraqi disarmament, with most other nations on the 15-member body in
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Anti-war protesters demonstrate against a probable US-led strike on Iraq in London yesterday. It was the largest peace demonstration in London.

5 killed, 25 hurt in Magura bus mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura
 Five people were killed and 25 others injured, 14 of them seriously, in a road accident on the Magura-Dhaka Highway yesterday evening.
 Witnesses said the accident occurred near Garai Bridge when a Magura bound bus from Faridpur skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch at around 5.30 pm.
 Three of the dead were identified as Monirul, 40, of village Arpara under Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur district, Zahangir, 35, of village Rothkhola in Faridpur sadar upazila and Nisha, 12, of village Parnanduali in Magura sadar upazila. Identity of two others could not be known immediately.
 All the dead were bus passenger.
 The seriously injured passengers, identified as Raja, 45, Ranu Begum, 40, Monimala, 40, Shahida Begum, 30, Minto, 20, Imran, 5, Ambia, 10, Joystna, 10, Surat Ali, 50, Mosharraf, 30, Ali Hossain, 17, Nayan, 20, Sayeeda Khatun, 45, and Shamim, 4, were admitted to Magura sadar hospital.

Strike by Indian truckers halts export-import thru' Benapole

UNB, Benapole
 Trade with India through Benapole Land Port came to a halt as truckers across the frontier began an indefinite strike yesterday.
 Indian Motor Workers Union called the strike protesting alleged assault on some truckers by Indian border guards.
 "As port activities on the Bangladesh side resumed yesterday, the Indian truckers tried to unload the goods. But members of the border security force (BSF) took them to the camp and tortured them," a report quoting the strikers said.
 In an instant protest, truck drivers and workers began the strike, leaving some 1,000 trucks carrying goods for Bangladesh stranded in Petrapole area on the Indian side.
 Meanwhile, local district and police administrations held talks with the union leaders, but failed to make any headway in ending the strike.
 Benapole is the biggest land customs station between Bangladesh and Indian State of West Bengal.

Aussies run thru' India

AFP, Centurion
 Jason Gillespie led a deadly Australian pace assault on India's shell-shocked batsmen to fire the defending champions to a nine-wicket victory in the World Cup Pool A match at Supersport Park yesterday.
 Gillespie grabbed 3-13 from 10 superb overs and Brett Lee took 3-36 as the Indians were shot out for their lowest World Cup score of 125 before a packed house of 25,000, many of whom had flown in all the way from India to watch the high-profile game.
 "We bowled very well and put the pressure on them," said Australian skipper Ricky Ponting.
 Australia surpassed the meagre target with 27.4 overs to spare and record their second consecutive win in the preliminary league, having defeated India's arch-rivals Pakistan by 82 runs last Tuesday.
 Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden put on 100 for the first wicket off just 18 overs, before Gilchrist was stumped off Anil Kumble for 48.
 Hayden returned unconquered on 45 and Ponting made 24 not out to end a powerful display that will leave World Cup rivals uneasy.
 As the game headed for an early finish, disappointed fans vent their anger at Saurav Ganguly's men with jeers each time a fielder ran near the boundary line.
 "We were outplayed in every department," said the Indian skipper.
 "We need to pull our socks up. We just didn't put enough runs on the board and should have applied ourselves a lot better. That wicket was worth more than 125 runs."
 "There's still a lot of cricket left in this tournament. We need to win the next four games and carry bonus points into the Super Sixes."
 The pathetic display by what some say is one of the best batting line-ups in the world follows its failure to last 50 overs in the opening match against minnows Holland.
 They now fell short of their previous lowest World Cup score of 158 against Australia at Trent Bridge in 1983 - the year India won the title.
 Sachin Tendulkar was the only top order batsman to offer resistance, making a dour 36 as five other specialists failed to reach double figures.
 India were reduced to 80-7 before tail-enders Harbhajan Singh and Kumble showed team-mates
 h o w t o
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Agony and ecstasy... Indian batsman Rahul Dravid looks at his dishevelled wickets as Australian paceman Jason Gillespie rushes to teammates for celebration in yesterday's World Cup match at Supersport Park.

RAT nabs 3 'criminals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The Rapid Action Team (RAT) arrested three listed criminals in Badda and recovered arms and ammunitions from them in the early hours of yesterday.
 The three 'criminals' -- Al Amin Shikder, Shoeb Ahmed and Nazrul Islam had been on the run for long. Al Amin has 14 cases pending
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