The Baily Star



India has torpedoed its own peace offer: Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday accused India of undermining its own peace offer by setting preconditions for talks.

At the weekend Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee offered to sit down to talks with Pakistan, but later qualified his offer by saying Pakistan had to first end its alleged support of Islamic rebels fighting Indian rule in Kashmir.

"It is regrettable that in subsequent statements the Indian prime minister has undermined his own offer of friendship by repeating hackneyed allegations against Pakistan, and by placing preconditions for talks," a foreign ministry statement said.

The only way forward was through "unconditional" dialogue, the Pakistani statement said. India's Junior Foreign Minister

Digvijay Singh told the Asian Age news-

BNP leader murder Hartal observed in Phultala: 2 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A half-day hartal was observed in Phultala upazila yesterday protesting the murder of BNP leader Noor Hossair

Noor Hossain was gunned down by unidentified assailants at 9:00 pm on Sunday at Shikirhat.

Police on Monday arrested Shaikh Lutfar Rahman, member-secretary of Phultala upazila unit of Four-Party Alliance Liaison Committee and another young man named Mashiur Rahman for interrogation.

Police said the murder was a sequel to previous enmity with some armed cadres of outlawed PBCP. But wife of the slain BNP leader said intra-party rivalry is responsible for death of her husband.

Rumi suicide case 2 accused give confessional statement

BSS, Khulna

Two accused in the Rumi suicide case gave their confessional statement before a Metropolitan Magistrate here yester-. Metropolitan Magistrate Rabiur

Reza Siddiqui recorded the statements of both the accused. The investigation officer of the case

paper that dialogue could begin in June provided Pakistan responded to India's concerns, even with a "one line" statement shunning violence.

India alleges that Pakistan funds, trains and arms Islamic rebels and helps them slip over the invisible 767kilometre (475 mile) Line of Control (LoC) from Pakistani-controlled Kashmir into the Indian-controlled zone

Pakistan, which promised last May to halt the incursions, says it is not possible to stop them 100 per cent because of the military's stretched resources and the porous, mountainous

terrain of the LoC. It also says India should be able to stop the militants coming in as it allegedly has 20 times more troops in Kashmir than Pakistan. Pakistan denies providing any more

Khosru censures

business body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

politics

than diplomatic and moral support to

anti-India rebel groups The hostile neighbours came to the brink of a feared nuclear war last year over Kashmir, a Muslim majority Himalayan region claimed by both and divided between them.

Islamabad reiterated its call to station international observers along the LoC to verify claims of infiltration. "This would be in the interest of

objectivity, fairness and in accordance with international norms," the statement said.

"Pakistan has taken a number of steps to ensure that its territory is not used for any prejudicial activities against other countries.

A raft of United Nations Security Council resolutions dating back to 1948 call for a plebiscite to allow Kashmiris to choose rule by India or Pakistan. Islamabad wants the resolutions implemented.

US Marine

control of Baghdad since April 9.

hotel took cover in or behind their

vehicles during the firing, which

lasted around 20 minutes. There was

no immediate comment from the US

from rainwater, filling up of low lying

area in and around the city and

excessive pumping of water by deep

tube-wells are the major factors

The WASA has 403 deep tube-

FROM PAGE 12

US forces April 11



Retired US Lt General Jay Garner (C) raises arms with Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani (L) and Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani (R), in Dukan, northern Iraq yesterday. Garner's visit to the autonomous Kurdish region was welcomed by pro-US Kurds.

Blix attacks US war intelligence

FROM PAGE 12 andLondon

Near the region's other major city, Kirkuk, special forces discov-"I think there's been a lot of disturbing elements that so much of the ered a weapons cache with 40 bunkintelligence on which the capitals built ers filled with multiple rockettheir case seems to have been shaky,' launched rockets, artillery rounds he said.

Blix said he found it "very, very disturbing" that US intelligence failed to identify as fakes documents suggesting Iraq tried to buy uranium from Niger, the West African nation which is the third-largest producer of mined uranium.

In December, the US state depart ment used the information to support its case that Iraq was lying about its the Palestine Hotel on the east bank weapons programs. But on March 7, in the city centre, said it was not clear Mohammed ElBaradei, the head of the what the US forces were aiming at. International Atomic Energy Agency American soldiers have been in (IAEA), told the Security Council that the documents were forgeries. He said US troops around the

Asked whether he believed US agents had fabricated the documents, Blix said: "Not quite that far. They might have got this fake contract from somewhere. The CIA say they got a copy of the document from the UK."

"I certainly do not suggest that the UK intelligence service would have fabricated [it], I wouldn't dream of that. But there may be others around." Blix said he believed the US secre-

weapons to the Security Council. The UN weapons chief was prepar ing to brief the Security Council on his readiness to send arms experts back to

Iraq, in a closed session at 3.30pm vesterday. Blix, who is leaving his post in June, has said he is willing to field inspection teams if the security council agrees, on the condition that they are independent

ent from the military. Most members of the council, including Britain, say any weapons of mass destruction found now by the US military must be verified by the UN inspectors before sanctions can be lifted.

But the US is urging the council to approve immediately the lifting of the 13-vear-old UN sanctions, so that Iraqi oil revenues can be used to finance postwar reconstruction

Instead of Mr Blix's team, US officials want to send former UN inspectors from the US, Britain and Australia to verify any discovery of banned weapons. The Bush administration blames Blix for hurting its drive for international support in the run-up to the war and has not invited UN inspectors to return, deploying its own teams to search for illegal weapons.

'We see no immediate role for Blix and his inspection teams," Richard Grenell, a spokesman for the US

ambassador to the UN. John Negroponte, said yesterday.

But many diplomats argue that the US would have difficulty convincing most people in the world of the validity of any chemical, biological, ballistic or nuclear arms the US military may find without some neutral verification

"The whole basis by which for years the sanctions regime was held in place was the prospect of UN arms inspectors confirming the disarmament of Iraq," said David Scheffer, an international lawyer and former state department official, now senior vice president of the United Nations Association

The Russian foreign ministry vesterday warned that UN sanctions could only be lifted after the international weapons inspectors are allowed to return and complete their work in

A Russian foreign ministry spokesman, Alexander Yakovenko, told the Interfax news agency: "Only inspectors from Unmovic [the UN monitoring, verification and inspection commission which Blix heads] and the IAEA, who have a mandate from the UN security council, can clarify this

Russia demands UN role in weapons checks

The scientist also allegedly told

If true, the allegations would mark a

weapons of mass destruction, the

original pretext for waging war on Iraq.

mobile laboratories, able to analyse

chemical and germ samples quickly,

have been kept at a safe distance for fear

prove to be of incalculable value," Major

General David Petraeus, commander of

the army's 101st Airborne Division, told

confirm the report and the White House

declined to comment. The report was

withheld for three days by military

censors who forbade the New York

Times to publish some of the details

about the chemicals or interview the

Military officials refused to identify

the scientist. They said he told them that

several months before the war he saw

Iraqi officials bury chemical precursors

for weapons and other sensitive mate-

rial to conceal and protect them for

Bush gave Saddam an ultimatum in

March, the scientist said, Iraqi officials

set fire to a warehouse where biological

weapons programme was so compart-

mentalised, only he had firsthand

information about the chemical weap

shanty at Barrister Jamiruddin Molla's

slum at Sujatnagar Natun Mahallah at

ons in the area in which he worked

3 burnt alive

FROM PAGE 12

around 2:45am

The man told officials that the Iraqi

weapons research was conducted.

Four days before President George

US central command refused to

"What they have discovered could

of being damaged in fighting.

the New York Times.

scientist in question.

future use

Until now the MET's sensitive

THE GUARDIAN, Undated

American weapons experts that from Russia on Monday dragged the Iraq the mid-1990s Iraq had sent illegal crisis back into the bitter acrimony of weapons and technology to Syria and the Security Council by insisting that had been cooperating with al-Qaida. UN inspectors verify that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction before it breakthrough for the coalition forces allows sanctions to be lifted and the who have yet to find any evidence of

new Iraq" to freely sell its oil. The demand came as a scientist who claims to have been in charge of the Iraq regime's chemical weapons programme told the US military that Baghdad destroyed its chemical weapons and biological warfare equipment days before the war.

The Russian foreign ministry spokesman, Alexander Yakovenko, said chief inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed El Baradei must return to Iraq and report as soon as possible

"It is very simple. To lift sanctions, the Security Council resolutions must be fulfilled by confirmation that there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. And, according to the UN resolutions, only Blix and El Baradei can give us this.

Blix is expected to demand a role for his team at a meeting of the Security Council this week.

Vakovenko added that Russia was not opposed to lifting sanctions, but wanted to see "international law' adhered to

The Russian call was echoed by Britain's Foreign Office minister, Mike O'Brien: "We need to have some element of independent verification," he said yesterday.

"The UN inspectors are clearly a possibility for doing that. We are talking to the Americans and other allies, and indeed, the UN, about how verification can be carried out. At the moment we are ready to operate under Nato procedures and we will send samples of material that we find to laboratories that will be able to properly analyse it under

independent verification techniques." The renewed diplomatic focus on Iraq's weapons coincided with a report in yesterday's New York Times that an

used to manufacture illegal weapons.

Baghdad hospital

Locals alleged that Kamal first sprayed petrol on the victims and then Iraqi scientist led Members of MET set them on fire. Alpha, the mobile exploitation team set Halim filed a case with Pallabi Police up to hunt for illegal weapons of mass

Station accusing Kamal of arson and destruction, to material which could be murder.

Bangladesh genetically engineered

biosafety guideline (required for risk-

Prof. Zeba noted Bangladesh has a

Representatives from Ubinig

Seed industry representatives

however claimed that hybrid has no

adverse effect on bio-diversity.

Moreover, high pricing of hybrid seeds

does not matter much as long as farm-

ers get higher output and economic

The Ubinig representatives also

pointed out that soybean oil being

marketed in Bangladesh has no label-

ling. Most of the oils come from geneti-

cally engineered soybeans cultivated in

Some jumped to the river, but most

"I can't remember anything. What

comes to my mind flashing is torrents of

water that blended us in the launch hull.

The turbulence tore me apart from my

Then I swam ashore in a daze," said the

"I frantically searched for them

After some time, tenacious Osman

swam back to the launch in the hope of

rescuing his dear ones, but his fate had

been sealed. He found none amid the

blinding twister. Meanwhile, divers

plunged in the river and popped back

with bodies, one after another. The

With each retrieval, Osman desper-

He does not know how long the

anxious wait continued before he saw

his wife and three children. They lay

among the line of bodies that continued

"I have nowhere to go, none to speak

to, my entire world has collapsed like a

house of cards," he said, beating his

to grow longer throughout the night.

ately rushed closer to peer into the

faces. Then turned away, waiting for

passengers including Osman and his

USA, Argentina and Brazil, they added.

Lonely turns

the launch in the Buriganga

family got trapped inside.

man breaking down in sobs.

horror began to unfold.

the next haul.

head with his hands.

gains in turn.

FROM PAGE 1

family," he said.

vitamin A enriched 'Golden Rice'.

Tap new tech FROM PAGE 12

guarded by Iraqi civilians who are often stationed at the gates and perched on the roofs with Kalashnikov rifles.

free application of genetic engineering) Most doctors returned to their in place but the National Committee or obs after the looting subsided, but a Biosafety in Bangladesh (NCBB) has majority of nurses and non-medical not been formed yet. So, it means the staff were staying away for fear of country has kept its doors shut to more looting, Premiere Urgence said. application of genetic engineering. The group said sanitary conditions were increasingly posing a criticised the hybrid technology. They hazard, with garbage piling up uncolsaid that farmers are required to buy lected and rats appearing in some of hybrid rice seeds every year from the the buildings. seed marketing companies at a high It added that some hospitals have price. Hybrids cause loss in biohad to bury their dead in their gardiversity as local rice varieties are facing dens. extinction due to the intrusion.

Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday and 50 SA-7 handheld surface-to-air missiles. Myers said. Reuters adds: US troops based in a palace on the west bank of the Tigris river in central Baghdad opened fire on targets across the ing to the evils of politics centering the river yesterday afternoon, Reuters correspondents in the area said. Correspondent Hassan Hafidh, at

seminar on 'Promotion of Small and Cottage Industries in Bangladesh: spects and Role of NASCIB' organised to mark the 19th founding anniversary of National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB) yesterday at the FBCCI auditorium in Dhaka.

Businesspeople should concentrate on vision, leadership qualities and expertise to elect a leader and not on his/her political affiliations, Khosru said.

objectives of a trade body," the minister added. He also urged the businessmen to

tions

keep up with the competitive world ade regime.

3 killed, 25 hurt

earlier forwarded the accused from the

strongly criticised the trade bodies for engaging into too much politics. "Trade bodies are meant to preserve the interests of sectors concerned, not to get into politics that rot congenial business environment," he said allud-

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru

BGMEA election early this year. The minister was addressing a

military. "Politics hinder achieving key

FROM PAGE 12 put behind of petty political aspira-

Khosru advised trade bodies to put a thrust on capacity building and to try to

Trade body leaders should represent businesspeople not politicians, he

wells (8 inches in diameter) and there are also more than 400 private deep tube-wells (4 to 6 inches). The num-

causing the decline.

Water project tary of state, Colin Powell, was entirely water levels on unplanned urbanisahonest in his presentation on Iraqi tion. Concrete coating that prevents recharging of the ground water level

FROM PAGE 1

Vessel of death full of bodies

Shahjahan of Kotaripara village of heavy for its 60-tonne body. Nayakanti.

"We hope Hamza will be here by "Had the master listened to us, the tomorrow morning and lift the vessel disaster might have been avoided," he

Tk 2.000 to each of the victims and burial clothes for the dead.

A four-member body headed by Engineer Jasim Uddin Ahmed was formed vesterday to investigate the

HOTO: AFE

issue."

police remand to the CMM's Court for recording their confessional statement, a CMM Court source told the news agency.

Hasan and Rony, who surrendered before the CMM's Court on Sunday and Monday, were placed on a three-day remand.

Young man shot, mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of muggers shot a young man and snatched Tk 50,000 at Mailibagh Chowdhurypara yesterday morning.

Mizan, 22, was on his way to Mauchak market by a rickshaw. At Chowdhurypara, the muggers stopped his rickshaw and asked him to hand over his valuables.

As he denied, the muggers shot at his left knee and took away his moneybag. They soon left the area leaving him injured.

Local people took Mizan to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) immediately.

The duty officer of Khilgaon Police Station said the victim was one of the gang members of local Lenin group. He was shot by the gang following intra-party conflict. No case was filed.

Criminal Litu's wife takes oath as KCC commissioner STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna Sabina Zaman Shampa was sworn-in

as KCC commissioner yesterday. She was elected unopposed from

Ward No. 24 in the by-election held last month. Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman

administered the oath in the KCC's conference room at noon.

Sabina is wife of notorious criminal Asaduzzaman Litu, a chargesheeted accused in journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case. The seat fell vacant as Litu failed to take oath.

in Mymensingh road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh Three persons were killed and 25 others injured, four of them seriously

Haluaghat Highway yesterday. Police and locals said the accident took place when a Sreepur-bound bus from Dhaka collided head on with a Tarakanda-bound pick up from Fulpur

atnoon S M Aminul Islam, 36, upazila engineer of Fulpur and his assistant Abdul Hye, 45, who were travelling in

the pick up, died on the spot. Another victim, Muktar Hossain, a bus passenger, succumbed to his injuries at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

admitted to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Police seized both the vehicles.

of B Ed final exam leaked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A question paper of Bachelor of Education final examination was allegedly leaked out yesterday.

A teacher of Bikrampur Adarsha Degree College, Munshiganj said that he got a hand written question paper of 'Shikhar Bhittee' (Base of Education) of B-Ed from the city's Nilkhet area on Thursday and all eight questions matched with the question of B-Ed exam.

Feni Teachers Training College were talking about the question at the copier shop at Nilkhet and he collected it for his curiosity.

with the hand written question paper.

the hand written question paper.

The third question 'Madhamik Shikkha Samparkey Kudrat-E-Khuda mmission ... matched with the third of the hand written paper.

ber of deep tube-wells are increasing

in a road accident on the Mymensingh-

The seriously injured persons were

Question paper

He said that a group of students of

The first question of the exam paper 'Explain the word Shikkha Darsaan and how you evaluate the Shikkha Darsaan of Socrates? Which matched

The second question 'Mugha amaler shikkha babasthar And matched with the second question of

by 70 to 80 a year, sources said. WASA deep tube-wells with a capacity of extracting 3,500 litres of

water per minute now extract 1500 litres to 2,000 litres in many areas, including Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Badda, Basabo and some parts of old Dhaka.

> In some areas, WASA sank pipes deeper because of the drop in ground water level but the pumps do not have the capacity to extract water from such low level

The estimated demand for water in the city is about 160 crore litres per day. WASA can supply maximum 150 crore litres. About 82 per cent of this come from ground water pumped by deep tube-wells and the rest is surface water treated by plants of the

WASA, which use water from the Buriganga and the Shitalakkhya.

launch set out from Sadarghat. Many passengers requested the master to delay start, but he ignored their plea. "As soon as the launch approached Pagla, it was caught up by the twister. Passengers requested the master to moor, but he ignored their pleas and

According to the survivors, a

strong wind began to blow before the

by noon," a BIWTA official said.

slowed the vessel in the middle of the river," said Enamul, a survivor. "Within seconds, the launch upturned in the river. Everybody, including women and children, cried out holding each other, but the launch went down immediately," he added. He said the master and his assis-

tants jumped in the river. "I was one of those who swam ashore, leaving many trapped inside the vessel," Enamul said

"More than 500 passengers were on board; it was beyond the launch's capacity," alleged another survivor,

Many alleged that the launch was not against the wind, a routine exercise during storm. Soon after the incident, locals

rushed to the spot to rescue the passengers swimming ashore and those trapped inside. But a naval ship, anchored nearby, did not move quickly, some alleged.

The ship, however, joined in fire service and BIWTA personnel later. At the beginning, they could do nothing as the launch was overturned. But 10 divers plunged into the river and pulled out bodies.

The divers heard someone hitting the vessel floor from inside. The rescuers then cut a hole in the vessel's hull and pulled out two women alive, one aged about 22 and the other 35. They had been trapped for about half an hour.

The local administration has given

further such tragedy.

Chowdhury, Deputy Minister for Industry Prof. Rezaul Karim, lawmaker Abul Kalam and Vice-president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Ali visited spot.

Awami League leaders Zillur also visited the scene and promised to

help the victims financially. Meanwhile, BIWTA's MV Morning

ferry unidentified bodies to different localities. The vessel will stop at every ghat the sunken launch was supposed

IGP removed, 21 top cops transferred

FROM PAGE 12

of this month before appointing him IGP under the same contractual appointment

Shahudul Haq, along with his some other colleagues, left army to join the police service in 1976 at the desire of the then Ziaur Rahman government.

The Awami League in 1997 sent all the police officials with defence background to forced retirement, excepting Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury. Chowdhury, who joined the police from army on April 1, 1973 as assistant police super and was absorbed in the PSC (Public Service Commission) cadre.

Commissioned in 1966, Shahudul Haq served the police department in different capacities. He was police commissioner in CMP, DIG of Khulna, Principal of Sarda Police Academy and additional police commissioner in DMP.

Talking to The Daily Star, an influential cabinet minister termed the removal of Modabbir Hossain overdue on various reasons. Declining to disclose the reason, the minister only said there was strong demand inside the ruling party for long to remove him. The minister however said that he

might be given a job equivalent to the status of Secretary.

Modabbir Hossain, who is close to complete his service tenure, is willing to become an ambassador in anv European country, highly placed

But the government is yet to reach a decision on his future. The government at best may consider an ambassadorial job for him in any Middle Eastern countries, another source disclosed. Alongside changing the IGP, the

government has made some other CID. major changes in the police administra

Twenty-one senior police officials have been transferred and given new assignments.

sources said.

SM Mizanur Rahman, vice principal (current charge) of Sarda Police Academy, has been transferred as additional DIG (current charge) of Barisal range, while Dr Shamsuddoha Khandaker, additional DIG (current charge) of Barisal range, has been made vice principal of the academy.

The SP of Ihenidah, Manzur Oader Khan, has been transferred to Rangpur, while the SPs of Rangpur and Meherpur Moinur Rahman Chowdhury and Shahabuddin Koreshi have been made AIGs in the police headquarters.

The deputy police commissioner of

Mohammad Moniruzzaman, has been transferred as SP of Lalmonirhat.

AIG in the police headquarters, Ms. Mili Biswas, has been made commandant of Range Reserve Force (RRF) while the commandant of the RRF, Morshedul Anwar Khan, has been made special police super of the CID, Dhaka AIG Mohammad Akhtar Ali has also been made special police super of the

The SP of Sarda Police Academy Abdul Jalil Mandal, has been transferred to Joypurhat as SP. The police super of Khulna, Mosharraf Hossain, has been

made AIG (Telecom) at Rajarbag Police Special police super of the CID,

Sarwar Alam Sarkar, and special police super of the SB. Sved Shah Zaman Rai. have been made AIGs in the police headquarters.

The SP of Joypurhat, Habibur Rahman, has been transferred to Khulna as SP. AIG (Telecom), Rajarbag, Kazi Mortaz Ahmed, has been appointed as deputy police commissioner of the RMP. Special police super of the CID, Shaikh Omar Faruque, has been transferred as SP of Netrokona.

AIG at the police headquarters, Jamil

incident. The probe body was asked to find out the reasons and persons responsible for the accident and come up with recommendations to avert

Textiles Minister Abdul Motin

Rahman, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Obaidul Kader and Nazma Rahman

Sun has anchored at the Pagla jetty to

to

Raishahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) Ahmed, has been made SP of Sarda

Police Academy. Deputy police commissioner of the KMP, Mia Lutfar Rahman Chowdhury, has been transferred to the CMP.

Another AIG in the police headquarters, Delwar Hossain Mia, has been made special police super of the SB Commandant of APBN, Bogra, Abul Kashem Ferdous, has been transferred as special police super of the CID, Dhaka. While the SP of Netrokona Baharul Alam, has been made special police super of the SB, Dhaka

Exchange rate FROM PAGE 1

stand at between Tk 22,000 crore and Tk 23.000 crore.

About the NCB reforms, Saifur said the Sri Lankan model may be followed where some banks offloaded 45 per cent of shares to the public and their management have been given to the private sector. Still, the government has controlling stake in them.

About the IMF suggestion for further lowering interest rates on saving instruments, he said the present rate is quite low.

Premiere Urgence has provided infrastructural support for Iraqi hospitals since 1997.

The US Navy also wants a "relatively

neutral territory on the opposite side

of the world" that can support opera-

American officials feel that the

American military would gain

immensely from training with the

Indians, given their exposure to varied

India allowed refuelling facility to

the US warplanes during the 1991 Gulf

war and extended active cooperation

during Operation Enduring Freedom

down in tears as her mother was left

inside the vessel of death, trapped. The

last time she saw of her mother, she was

looking for her mother. Together, they

were supposed to go to their village

home in Babuganj in Barisal. But it

ended in tragedy as the launch, MV

Mitali-3, capsized in the Buriganga

minutes before the storm that sank the

launch. With her daughter and mother,

she came to Savar to visit her brother a

week ago. They were returning home at

Kazirchar village in Muladi thana in

She lost her daughter Khadiza, 12, in

the tragedy. The body is yet to be recov-

ered from the upturned launch. She has

turned like a stone; even tears have

dried up. Her husband still does not

know about the terrible incident and

she has also no heart to tell it to him.

Hosne Ara had a happy family even

Till last evening, Jyosna was still

trying to get out of the sinking launch.

US eyeing

tions in the Middle East.

FROM PAGE 12

andscapes.

in 2001.

Torment

FROM PAGE 1

Monday evening.

Barisal.