

French minister arrives, talks today

**BSS, Dhaka**  
French Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Renaud Muselier arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day official visit.  
Director General (Europe) Azizul Huq received him at the Zia International Airport.  
Muselier will hold official talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Reaz Rahman at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this morning.  
The talks between the two state ministers are likely to cover bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest.  
Muselier will call on Minister for Foreign Affairs M Morshed Khan at his office after the official talks.  
He will also call on Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury at the latter's Secretariat office and pay a courtesy call on Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar at

Tk 17,100 cr revised ADP okayed, 182 projects discarded

**STAR REPORT**  
Projects based on political considerations are eating into national resources, said Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman as Tk 17,100 crore revised annual development programme (ADP) for the current fiscal year was approved yesterday.  
With Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) finalised the ADP and excluded a total of 182 projects considering their poor progress and costs involvement.  
The government has slashed the ADP for the second time this year. The ECNEC on June 4, 2002 okayed Tk 19,200 crore ADP for the current fiscal of 2002-2003 and cut it to Tk 17,500 on March 16 this year mainly in the face of shrinking foreign assistance.  
After the ECNEC meeting, the finance and planning minister said the size of the ADP for the 2003-2004 financial year would be 20 to 25 per cent higher than the revised ADP for this fiscal.  
While talking to pressmen, Saifur said projects taken on political considerations act as impediment to proper utilisation of national resources.  
"The culture of pushing less important projects with lump-sum allocation should not be continued," he said.  
"It has become our culture to allocate only Tk 50 lakh for a project requiring Tk 50 crore and a five-year project is taking 20 years to be implemented, ultimately pushing the total cost up sharply. We don't want to continue this culture."

Launch owners call off strike as govt gives in

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Launch owners yesterday called off their wildcat strike as the government revoked its earlier restriction on plying of launches between 3pm and 8pm.  
The decision was taken at a meeting between the leaders of the Launch Owners Association of Bangladesh and the Minister for Shipping, Akbar Hossain.  
Launches started to set out from the Sadarghat terminal for the country's southern region in the afternoon, on duty officials of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) confirmed yesterday.  
The launch owners association decided to go on a strike on Tuesday protesting the government restriction.  
The government imposed the restriction soon after the Monday's launch disaster in Fatullah in which 131 people died. The government fixed the timetable as no westerners usually occur during these hours of the day.  
At the meeting, it was decided that the launches would ply as usual and the vehicle owners would take extra care to avoid mishaps in river routes during the current season.  
"We have withdrawn the strike



Former Indian prime minister and chairman of South Asia Human Rights I K Gujral speaks at a view exchange meeting at the Supreme Court Bar Association Auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.



Discussions at a dialogue on foreign trade, financial sector and transport system at Chittagong Stock Exchange office yesterday. The dialogue was organised by the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo.

Anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla's death today

**BSS, Dhaka**  
The 41st death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque will be observed today.  
Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Sangsad has chalked out an elaborate programme to observe the day.  
The programme includes placing wreath at the mazar of the great leader, offering prayer and milad-mahfil and discussion on the life and work of Sher-e-Bangla.  
Bishwa Bangalee Sammilan will hold a discussion and poetry recitation programme on the mazar premises at 8am today.  
President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in separate messages paid tributes to the memory of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque and recalled his contribution to the cause of the downtrodden.

Govt to seek HPSP extension till Dec

**NAIMUL HAQ**  
The government is going to request development partners to extend the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) by six months till December this year.  
The move follows failure of the government to launch the proposed Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS) in July as the next phase of the HPSP.  
The five-year HPSP is scheduled to expire on June 30.  
Sources said the health ministry on Tuesday asked the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to send a formal request to the donors including the International Development Agency (IDA) to extend the HPSP.  
Earlier, the donors on March 30 informed the government that they would suspend its funds amounting to US\$ 65 million for the health sector if it failed to implement by April 30 certain reforms and policies as agreed before the launch of the HPSP.  
Reversing the process of unification of two wings of the health ministry is a major reform suggested by the donors.  
About the HNPS, a top official said the health ministry failed to complete preparation of the project concept paper (PCP) and the project implementation paper (PIP) for it. So, there is no alternative but to agree to the donors' suggestions to get the funds.  
The ministry had engaged four consultants to prepare the PCP and the PIP by April 30.  
The prime minister on January 29 had instructed the health ministry to launch the HNPS in July.  
Meanwhile, health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain recently told The Daily Star, "In the last five years, the IDA and other donors had made no significant contribution to health sector." He had categorically said the decision to withdraw funds would not harm the sector and that if needed funds would be mobilised from domestic sources.  
The US\$ 2.1 billion HPSP was launched in July 1998 and the spending stood at \$1.6 billion till June 2002. The donors committed to provide a total of \$1,000 million.  
The health secretary could not be contacted for his comments.

Over 1000 PCs choke on CIH virus

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Over 1,000 computers yesterday were reportedly affected by the Chernobyl computer virus, commonly known as 'CIH virus'.  
The virus has been hitting computers after zero hours on April 25 every year since 1999.  
Officials of the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) and Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) said many individuals and institutions contacted them for information and remedy about the CIH virus.  
"We have received phone calls at our help desk ranging from data loss to no display on the monitor," a BCC official said.  
The virus erases data from hard disk drive and corrupts the BIOS of computer motherboard.  
"The lost data could be retrieved after running a software," M Sabur Khan, president of BCS, told The Daily Star.  
Computer virus is a man-made programme that gets loaded onto

Jamuna Group chief gets bail in all cases

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Chairman of Jamuna Group Nurul Islam Babul was released from the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after he was granted bail in all cases filed against him.  
The Detective Branch of police arrested Babul at his Gulshan residence in the early hours of Friday. The arrest of the industrialist came two days after he allegedly issued a death threat to the executive chairman of the Board of Investment.  
On interrogation, the detectives produced Babul before a First Class Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on Friday. But the court sent Babul to the Dhaka Central Jail and fixed yesterday for hearing of the bail petition.  
Defence lawyers Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, advocates Khondoker Abdul Mannan, Salma Islam and Moklesur Rahman Badal yesterday submitted a bail petition in connection with wetland grabbing case, which was filed with the Savar Police Station, before a First Class Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.  
The counsels termed the case a conspiracy aimed to damage Babul's image in society. They also pointed out that the sections of the case that implicated him were

BSF, BDR sit in city today to talk illegal immigration

**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi**  
Ajai Raj Sharma, director general of the Border Security Force (BSF) will lead the Indian delegation at the biennial meeting with the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) beginning at Dhaka today.  
The delegation for the five-day meeting, which will include representatives of the home and external affairs ministries, is expected to raise the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh and the 'presence' of insurgent training camps.  
Bangladesh has denied that its nationals are illegally staying in India and that its territory is being used by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), northeastern insurgents in India and radical

Hosts tumble again

**HASAN MASOOD in Chittagong**  
A collapse in the final session on the third day left Bangladesh staring at defeat against South Africa in the first GrameenPhone Test yesterday.  
At stumps the hosts were 185-5 in their second innings after South Africa declared their first innings at 470-2 fifteen minutes before lunch at the MA Aziz Stadium.  
Needing 297 runs to make the Proteas bat again, Bangladesh were still 112 runs in arrears with only five wickets in hand going into the fourth on a wicket producing variable bounce.  
Although Javed Omar and Habibul Bashar gave Bangladesh a sniff of a fightback but their hard work was undone by the loss of three wickets in the last ten overs.  
The second-wicket pair Bashar and Javed added a record 131 runs for any wicket to frustrate the South African bowlers for more than one



BRILLANT BASHAR: Habibul Bashar raises his bat to the cheering crowd after completing his 11th Test half-century in Chittagong yesterday.

Arms loot PBCP claims responsibility, 27 shown arrested

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**  
Outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party has claimed responsibility for looting rifles and 600 bullets from Storeroom of Daulatpur Jute Mill on Thursday night.  
PBCP's Khulna divisional unit chief Ripon Ahmed sent a fax message to some local newspapers, at 7 pm on Friday, claiming the responsibility.  
Meanwhile, there is no headway in the investigation of arms looting case in which 27 out of 80 people have been shown arrested yesterday.  
Of them, 24 are ansars and three others are listed criminals of Rupsha upazila, police said. They were sent to district jail yesterday.  
Despite combing operations in all ten districts of south-western region, police have failed to recover any of the looted rifles and bullets and arrest real culprits involved.

Reeling under endless agony Power outage, water crunch cripple city's northern part

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Residents of Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Mohakhali and the cantonment areas suffered yet another day of acute power and water crisis yesterday.  
The power supply by the Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) in these areas decreased by half after one of the two 50 KVA transformers at the Bashundhara grid went out since Tuesday night. Normally the DESCO supplies about 100 to 120 MW power every day to these areas.  
Consequently, yesterday was the fifth consecutive day of the crisis.  
From Tuesday night the DESCO has been supplying power by alternatively load shedding in these areas.  
"We got power for two hours today morning, but had to go without it for the next two," said a Gulshan resident.  
"The normal power supply will be restored by tomorrow. Works are under way," said Saleh Ahmed, managing director of the DESCO, to The Daily Star yesterday.  
Water supply by the Dhaka WASA was also disrupted at these areas due to frequent power outage.  
The 15 deep tube wells in the areas are facing problems extracting

'Withdraw admin cadre officials from edn sector'

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Leaders of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) General Education Association yesterday demanded withdrawal of all officials of administrative cadre under the education ministry.  
They termed the appointment of 140 administrative cadre officials to different posts under the education ministry as 'humiliating' and 'disgraceful' for the education cadre officials.  
The leaders also termed the appointments as a process to make education cadre 'meritless' and a threat to the standard of education.  
The demands were made by Mohammad Kafil Uddin and I.K. Selim Ullah Khandoker, president and secretary general, of the B.C.S. General Education Association at a

Charges pressed against RAT official in extortion case

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**  
The Speedy Trial Court-1, Dhaka, yesterday framed charges against an assistant commissioner (AC) of the Rapid Action Team (RAT) of police and another person in an extortion case.  
The accused are AC Kazi Mohammad Shafiq Iqbal and his cousin Javed Parvez Sumon.  
Magistrate Moksudur Rahman Patwary fixed May 4 for trial of the case.  
In the case filed with Ramna police station on April 17, it was alleged that the AC Iqbal demanded Tk. 50,000 from a businessman at Sayedabad on April 12. He had earlier arrested the brother-in-law of the businessman and demanded Tk 3 lakh for his release.  
Later, the businessman, Dulal Miah, filed an extortion case accusing Iqbal and Sumon under the Law and Order Disruptions Crimes (Speedy Trial) Act.  
Following the case, a RAT team arrested Iqbal from his office on April 17 and handed him over to the Detective Branch (DB) of Police.  
Sumon was arrested from his South Goran residence in the city on April 18.  
DB submitted a charge sheet against them on April 25 (Friday), showing 35 people as prosecution witnesses.

4 reporters get TIB award

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday awarded four reporters for their outstanding contribution to investigative journalism.  
The prize giving ceremony of the Investigative Reporting Award -2002 was held at the National Press Club.  
Fokhre Alam of Doink Janakantha and Zayadul Ahsan (Pintu) of The Daily Star jointly won the award. Each received Tk 50,000, certificates and crests.  
Alam was chosen for his series report 'Sundarban: Bhumi Dakhal Kore Gore Utheche Basati' published on February, 2001. Pintu was picked for his report titled 'Idris pays for whose fault?' published in June-August 2001.  
Kazi Hafiz of Doink

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
April 27		6-25 pm
April 28	5-27 am	

Prayer Timings		
April 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-31	6-37
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation