



Atahar Siddiq Khosru

CPJ for PM's help to rescue abducted newsman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has urged Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to order a prompt, impartial inquiry into abduction and arrest of two local journalists in Sitakunda.

In a letter to Khaleda on Wednesday, the New York-based organisation also expressed concern at the recent attacks on other

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Dhaka-Thimpu to renew trade deal

REZAUL KARIM

Bangladesh and Bhutan will soon renew the bilateral trade agreement and the related protocol to further expand trade between the two countries.

Dhaka will also give Thimpu further tariff concessions and duty-free access to some Bhutanese commodities, sources said.

The cabinet has approved a proposal to renew the trade agreement with amendments to the previous one and the related protocol.

The commerce ministry placed the proposal at the cabinet meeting held with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair on April 28.

The two countries had signed a trade agreement in 1980 and the protocol in 1984, both of which expired in September 2000. But export and import between the two sides continued on the basis of

mutual understanding.

However, a commerce secretary-level meeting between the two countries in November 2002 sought renewal of the expired agreement and protocol with certain amendments.

Accordingly, a draft of the agreement and the protocol was prepared with a consensus between the two sides.

Prior to the cabinet approval, the law ministry had vetted the amended agreement and protocol. Earlier, the amendments were adopted at a meeting of the foreign ministry, National Board of Revenue, Bangladesh Bank and other authorities concerned.

The 1980 agreement had 11 articles. Five of them have been retained with some changes and a new article relating to tariff concession has been included in the amended agreement. It proposed raising the number of points of entry and exit of commodities to

eight from four now.

The four new points are Nakugaon, Haluaghat, Banglabandha and Burimari. Following an understanding between the two countries, Burimari point is already being used for the last few years.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is giving 50 per cent tariff concession to some Bhutanese commodities including fruits, fruit juice, red chilly and ginger. But Bhutan is giving duty-free access to some Bangladeshi goods.

On July 1 last year, Thimpu included a new article in its customs law, providing for duty-free access to goods from those countries who reciprocate the same. Through an executive note, Thimpu however continued to give Dhaka duty-free access for some of its goods.

Now, Bhutan has asked

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Angry men, left, take the body of Halima Begum to a police station by rickshaw-van yesterday and Halima, right, cuddles the child of the couple for whom she worked as domestic help at the Shahjahanpur Railway Colony in Dhaka.



PHOTO: STAR

DANCING THE BIRTHDAY AWAY



PHOTO: STAR

Artists synchronise a dance sequence at a cultural event organised by the cultural affairs ministry at the National Museum auditorium to mark the 142nd birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore yesterday.

Storm sends Dhaka into darkness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nor'wester packing winds of up to 107 kilometres per hour lashed the city last night, causing widespread damage.

The storm pulled down electric lines plunging most of the city into darkness and blew apart billboards and uprooted trees that blocked traffic movement.

Some cars crashed on Hare Road during the blinding storm

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Graft charge against Sylhet mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Corruption charges were pressed yesterday against the mayor, 16 former and new ward commissioners and two others of the Sylhet City Corporation.

Assistant Director of District Anti-corruption Bureau Md. Ekramur Reza has filed a case with the Kotwali Police Station under Section 409/406/420 and section 5(A) of the Section 409 of the Anti-corruption Law of 1947.

According to the case, the then chairman of Sylhet Pourashabha, now the elected mayor, Badar

Uddin Ahmed Kamran and the other accused had misappropriated public money worth Tk 20.41 lakh by illegally leasing out the third floor of the Shibganj Kitchen Market in the city on October 24, 2001.

The leasing had no approval from the Ministry of Local Government, it was stated in the case. Besides, there is no provision to lease out a market place to an individual.

Azadur Rahman Azad, joint convener of Sylhet District Juba League, was the lessee of the floor

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Special court for trial of Saddam, aides

AFP, Baghdad

A special court in the Iraqi justice system could try Saddam Hussein and officials of his former regime for crimes against the Iraqi people, the new US senior advisor to Iraq's justice ministry, Clint Williamson, announced here Thursday.

"We think the Iraqis should have the lead on that," Williamson said of the prosecution of the 55 top Iraqi officials on Washington's most-wanted list, headed by Saddam.

"There is a broad consensus that crimes against the Iraqi people

be handled by Iraqi justice.

"It has to be clarified and the details have to be determined, but it will probably take place within the broad premises of the Iraqi justice," Williamson said on leaving the court in the Baghdad district of Al-Azamiya where work resumed officially Thursday.

"Prosecution involving crimes on a large scale will mobilise the system for years. So we need to set up some sort of special arrangements to deal with it," he said.

Saddam, whose regime was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

US envoy begins tour of Indo-Pak peace effort

AFP, Islamabad

US envoy Richard Armitage entered talks with Pakistan's leaders Thursday, kicking off a tour of South Asia to encourage a peace bid between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan.

Armitage landed in Islamabad late Wednesday heading a delegation of nine senior United States officials including Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca.

He met Foreign Secretary Riaz Kokhar before holding 45 minutes of talks with Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali. He then went into talks with Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kashuri and will meet President Pervez Musharraf later Thursday.

"The two sides discussed bilateral relations, the India-Pakistan situation, Afghanistan and Iraq," a Pakistani official said of the meeting with Kokhar, describing the mood as "positive."

On his third swing through the volatile subcontinent in a year, Armitage is expected to press Pakistan to do more to stop Muslim militants crossing into the Indian zone of Kashmir, another Pakistani official said.

"The Americans would like to raise the issue of sealing the Line of Control (LoC) to block movement into Indian-controlled Kashmir," a foreign ministry official told AFP, referring to the dividing line between Pakistani and Indian zones of the disputed region.

Rebel incursions are at the heart of high-stakes tensions which have had the nuclear-ready subcontinent on edge for the past 17 months. The issue brought the hostile neighbours to the brink of a feared nuclear war 12 months ago.

It was Armitage who doused the flames then, spearheading an international diplomatic offensive between Islamabad and New Delhi and winning the war-averting pledge from Musharraf to perma

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



SHAZNEEN CASE

Hearing adjourned till tomorrow

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Hearing of the Shazneen case has been adjourned till tomorrow.

Kazi Rahamat Ullah, Judge of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, yesterday adjourned the hearing following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

Meanwhile, Mohammad

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Tripura rebels kill 10 more

AFP, Gauhati

Assailants in northeastern India killed 10 sleeping villagers and wounded six others in the second attack blamed on separatist guerrillas in two days, officials said Thursday.

The attack in the village of Mohorchora late Wednesday raised the death toll to 32 in the latest spate of separatist violence in the state of Tripura.

Chief Minister Manik Sarkar,

Tripura's top elected official, blamed rebels of the National Liberation Front of Tripura for the killings in Mohorchora, about 45 miles north of Agartala, the state capital.

On Tuesday, suspected rebels from another separatist group gunned down at least 19 Bengali settlers in a village close to Agartala. Three others were killed in separate attacks elsewhere in the state, where several tribal groups have been

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 9		6-31 pm
May 10	5-19 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: PID

Children pose for photograph when they called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday on the first anniversary of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children at the Prime Minister's Office.