

MORSHED-POWELL TALKS

## Free access, easy visa to top agenda

RAFIQ HASAN

Six major issues are likely to dominate official talks between Dhaka and Washington during the June 19 layover of US Secretary of State Colin Powell in Bangladesh.

Dhaka is likely to seek duty- and quota-free access of goods to the US market, a liberal policy on visit and immigration visas for its citizens and a soft attitude toward



Colin Powell



M Morshed Khan

Bangladeshis living in the US.

Washington is likely to seek minimisation of the trade gap heavily tilted to Bangladesh, special protection of its investment in Bangladesh and consent to signing the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), said the foreign ministry sources.

The US has an investment of US\$1.2 billion in different sectors in

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## AL calls dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) has called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal for June 28 in protest against the proposed budget for the fiscal 2003-04 and deterioration in law and order.

The decision to enforce the general strike from 6:00am to 6:00pm came from a presidium meeting at the major opposition party's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

AL President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The party had enforced a hartal in protest against the law and order slide on June 12 that coincided with

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## 10 killed in cop-terrorist clash in Makkah

AFP, Riyadh

Ten people, including five members of the security services, were killed in an overnight clash between police and suspected terrorists in the holy city of Makkah, western Saudi Arabia, the daily Okaz reported Sunday.

Five other security officers were injured in the fighting in Makkah's Khaldiya district and seven people on the authorities' wanted list were arrested, the paper said.

The London-based Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA), citing "diverse sources" in Saudi Arabia, said that eight security

officers and three civilians were killed in the clash.

Okaz said the shootout occurred after a group of men aboard a vehicle ignored police orders to stop and took refuge in a building in Khaldiya following a car chase through the streets in which shots were fired.

Police evacuated the building and stormed the apartment where the suspects were holed up, the report added. Inside they found a large quantity of weapons and explosives, while one of those arrested was wearing an suicide bomber's belt.

Okaz said that the dead included a captain in the security forces while

a lieutenant-colonel and three sergeants were among the wounded.

According to MIRA, large forces of police were sent to the area and carried out wide-scale searches, but Okaz praised the authorities for the way they managed the incident.

It was not immediately known if the suspects were linked to the May 12 Riyadh suicide bombings that left 35 people dead.

Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz told Saturday's Al-Riyadh newspaper that five more people had been arrested recently in connection with the blasts, one of

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## AL joins Sangsad today to protest budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) has decided to join the budget session in the Jatiya Sangsad today.

Leader of the opposition and AL president Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that they would go to the parliament to protest against the anti-poor budget.

"If we don't protest the pro-rich, anti-poor budget, people will blame us for not representing them," she said at a press briefing.

"We would also join the discussion on supplementary budget

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## 147 RU teachers for dropping SQ Chy from OIC top job race

RU CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and forty-seven teachers of Rajshahi University called upon the government yesterday to withdraw Salauddin Quader Chowdhury's nomination for the secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

In a joint statement, they alleged that Chowdhury, parliamentary

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## BB check on misuse of export perk

### No more in cash but in banking instruments

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Instead of cash, export incentives from now on will be given in banking instruments to stop misuse of the perk.

As a priority, the incentives will be used to adjust loans of the export houses, if any.

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) in a circular last week gave the order to the commercial banks. It has attached 14 directives for the banks to follow in giving the incentives.

The banks will blacklist export houses that would have misused the facility. The banks also realise the misused incentives from the exporters and return the money to the BB.

The BB order came in the teeth of allegations of misuse of cash incentives by some unscrupulous export-

ers. Some of the allegations were proved right.

The circular further said that grey fabric exporters at the export processing zones will not be entitled to incentives.

The Export Promotion Bureau will monitor the incentive and a government-appointed auditor will monitor the system until the bureau develops an oversight mechanism.

Exporters of high-priced cloth (\$2 per metre and above 10,000 metre in volume) will have to receive certificates from the watchdog entity before shipment. Otherwise, they will not be entitled to the incentives.

Every year, Tk 600 crore to Tk 700 crore is given to exporters as cash incentives. The current budget provides for Tk 602 crore for this purpose. The proposed budget for the next fiscal contains Tk 1,400

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PHOTO: STAR

Passengers stranded at the Chittagong railway station wait for hours on end yesterday as railway employees stopped train movement following the murder of a railway officer and Sramik Dal leader Shafiuddin Ahmed.

## Railway officer hacked to death in Ctg

### Rail links snapped for 4 hours as 25,000 join protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Armed criminals chopped a railway officer and freedom fighter to death at his residence under the Khulshi Police Station on Saturday night.

Shafiuddin Ahmed, 45, was brutally murdered at around 11:00pm when he was watching TV at his Ambagan railway colony residence, police said.

An officer of the railway engineering department and the assistant general secretary of the Central Railway Sramik Dal, Shafi was then alone at home.

His wife, daughter and son were then at a neighbouring relative's house.

Twenty-five thousand railway officials, workers and party men spontaneously suspended their

work and put up barricades on rail tracks at Pahartali and adjoining places yesterday morning to protest the killing.

Railway communications with Chittagong remained snapped for four hours from 7.30am to 11.30am. The CRB activities were also disrupted.

Six persons including a son of a

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## CrPC amendment, 3 other bills placed Days spent in jail before conviction to be counted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new bill and three amendment bills were introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday and subsequently all the bills were sent to the parliamentary standing committees concerned for scrutiny and submission of reports on those within 10 days.

Two of the four bills sought some major reforms in legal provisions for dealing with women and children repression and jail terms for the

convicts in such cases, while the other two dealt with the sericulture sector.

The bills are Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2003, Prevention of Women and Children Repression (Amendment) Bill, 2003, Bangladesh Sericulture Board (Amendment) Bill, 2003 and Bangladesh Sericulture Research and Training Institute Bill, 2003.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed

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## Mortar attack on US military HQ in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

Unidentified assailants launched a mortar attack on a US military headquarters in Ramadi, west of the capital Baghdad setting the building on fire, an Arab television station reported Sunday.

The Qatar-based al-Jazeera television quoted one of its correspondents in Baghdad as saying that ambulances were seen heading toward the compound.

Jazeera said its correspondent had earlier seen US military vehicles entering Ramadi while helicopters circled overhead.

The compound had previously served as headquarters for the Iraqi Military Intelligence before president Saddam Hussein was ousted by US-led forces in April, Jazeera said.

The Pentagon had no immediate comment on the report.

Several US soldiers have been killed or wounded in the last two weeks in ambushes concentrated in two main areas -- to the west of Baghdad around Ramadi and Falluja, and to the north around Balad, Baquba and Tikrit, Saddam's

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