

## Megawati flies in today to boost ties



Megawati Soekarnoputri

REZAUL KARIM

Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri flies in Dhaka today on a three-day visit to strengthen relations between the two countries. She will be the first Indonesian head of state to visit Bangladesh. Her previous trip to Dhaka in 2001 was in the capacity of vice president. President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will receive her at Zia International Airport at 1:10pm. President Megawati will go straight to the National Memorial at Savar to pay tributes to the independence war martyrs. She is coming to Bangladesh on the first leg of a 10-day trip across Asia. Mongolia, Japan and Vietnam will be her next destinations. President Megawati and Prime Minister

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## SC grants govt leave to appeal against HC order

Proceedings on chief justice's suggestions stayed for 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday granted the government leave to file an appeal against a High Court order that asked it to produce record of the chief justice's recommendation on confirmation of additional judges. A full bench of the Appellate Division also extended a stay for three months on entire proceedings of the High Court (HC) on three separate writs on the same issue. During the period, the appeal petition will be heard in the Supreme Court. Three former additional judges

and two lawyers filed the writs challenging non-confirmation of service of the additional judges despite recommendations by the chief justice. Attorney General AF Hasan Ariff yesterday told the Supreme Court the government to produce the chief justice's recommendation went against the constitution. He submitted that appointment of judges is an exclusive domain of the executive. The question of looking into the recommendations of the chief justice to determine the primary question of ascertaining the necessity of such recommendation

in this context is irrelevant. Referring to Article 48 of the constitution, the attorney general argued that it is the president's jurisdiction to appoint judges and that it is his constitutional obligation to discuss the matter with the prime minister. The recommendations of the chief justice are a part of the decision-making process and the court cannot demand to see what the recommendations are, he added. Dr Kamal Hossain argued on behalf of the petitioners that one of the three petitioners asked for producing the chief justice's recom-

mendation before the court. But the other two petitioners have not insisted on the court's seeing the recommendations. So, the court should not stay entire proceedings of the case. Opposing the attorney general, Advocate Ajmalul Hossain told the court that his client is concerned about the fact that the government is not going by the chief justice's recommendation. Ajmalul said had the chief justice not recommended for his clients, he would not have anything to say. SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## HC asks Kazi Zafar why his stay in Australia should not be cancelled

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a suo moto notice on Kazi Zafar Ahmed and his lawyer Khan Saifur Rahman asking them to explain why the order granting Zafar permission to stay six months in Australia for medical checkup should not be cancelled. The court order came following press reports that Kazi Zafar was enjoying asylum in Australia and drawing disability support pension there. A division bench comprising Justice Syed Amirul Islam and Justice MA Hafiz also directed the Bangladesh High Commission in Australia to report the facts about Kazi Zafar in four weeks after an inquiry. Kazi Zafar, prime minister from

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## Suppl budget with Tk 2,150cr extra expenditure passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the supplementary budget for the outgoing fiscal 2002-03 giving approval to over Tk 2,150.22 crore additional expenditure. The additional money was spent on 49 heads under different ministries and divisions. Over Tk 1,892.41 crore was spent under non-development heads, while Tk 257.81 crore was spent under the development head. Prior to passage of the supplementary budget, 49 grant demands from various ministries and divisions of the government were approved through voice vote following the disposal of 242 cut motions raised by six lawmakers belonging to the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Krishak Sramik Janata League and an independent legislator. Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui, who was presiding over the session, allowed each of the lawmakers to speak on a few selected cut motions and sternly disposed of the rest of the cut motions due to time constraints

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## Macro-neglect to DU microfilms

Lack of preservation puts priceless books and manuscripts at decay-end

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

Due to lack of proper preservation, centuries old *puthis* and *pandulipis* (hand-written books and manuscripts), newspapers and periodicals printed in Bangladesh over the last century, have been decaying in the Dhaka University Central Library for years. About two hundred rare manuscripts and at least five hundred microfilmed newspapers have already been damaged, although there is a regular supervisory committee. Another five hundred *puthis* and newspapers are going to meet the same fate if preventive steps are not taken, said sources in the library. The university library has a collection of more than 30,000 such books and manuscripts, dating back to the medieval period, written on palm and banana leaves, bark, stone slabs and handmade papers in Sanskrit, Bangla, Arabic, Pali, Urdu, Persian, *Maithili*, Oriya, Hindi and a few dialects. About 20,000 among the manuscripts have been identified and 6,500 most decayed manuscripts have been microfilmed and laminated, the sources said. Work on identifying other manuscripts is on but they are in

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A microfilm on valuable reference of the Dhaka University Central Library lies damaged. About 200 rare manuscripts and at least 500 microfilmed newspapers have already been damaged and more are on way to meet the same future due to negligence of the authorities.

PHOTO: STAR

## HSC exams rescheduled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Examinations of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), Diploma in Commerce and Madrasah Education Board on June 19 and 28 have been rescheduled, board officials said yesterday. The June 19 HSC examinations were shifted to June 30 and the June 28 examinations to July 2. The June 19 examinations of Diploma in Commerce were rescheduled to July 3 and the June 28 examinations to July 5. The Madrasah Education Board examinations were rescheduled from June 19 to June 26. The reschedule came after a call for a June 19 half-day hartal by the Bangladesh Chhatra League to protest the killing of a BCL leader and another full-day call by the main opposition Awami League in protest at the proposed budget.

## Tk 2cr foreign currency haul at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) seized foreign currencies equivalent to about Tk 2 crore yesterday. The consignment, seized from a toilet in flight No. BG-011, contained 9.66 lakh Saudi Rial, 8 lakh UAE Dirham and 38,200 Euros. The flight was scheduled to depart for New York at 10:45pm via Dubai-Brussels when the consignment was unearthed. Customs officials, aided by two aircraft engineers, recovered seven packets taped inside a commode lid in one of the aircraft toilets. The packets were opened in the presence of officials from different agencies and the currencies were found to be equivalent to local Tk. 1.89 crore. Custom officials suspect that the packets were sneaked into the aircraft by aircraft technicians when it was at the bay. Customs officials described it as one of the biggest currency hauls in recent times at the ZIA. SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Traders at Sona Mosque land port threaten strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Traders have called an indefinite strike at the Sona Mosque land port in Chapainawabganj from June 21, protesting seizure of trucks reportedly laden with undeclared, smuggled and banned goods by the BDR. Terming the seizures 'harassment of traders', they announced the plan to enforce the indefinite strike at a press conference held in the city yesterday noon. They claimed that BDR men were seizing 'legally imported goods' from outside their territory of eight kilometers from the border with a view to harassing the traders since April last. 'Protesting the harassment, we called an indefinite strike from May 14 forcing the Rajshahi divisional anti-smuggling task force to sit in a meeting and take some decisions to

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## Criminal case filed against 4 policemen

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A criminal case was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday against four police personnel. The accused are Assistant Commissioner Manzur Morshed, Inspector Newaz Ali, Officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhanmondi Police Station Mozammel Haq and Sub-Inspector Akhter Hossain. Advocate Navana Akhter filed the case accusing the policemen of assaulting her and some other women while they were in a procession at the Russel Square, Dhanmondi during hartal hours on May 13 this year. The procession was brought out by Jubo Mahila League protesting the reinstatement of an accused in the Jail Killing Case in the Foreign

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## Export target slashed 5pc as market saps

MONJUR MAHMUD

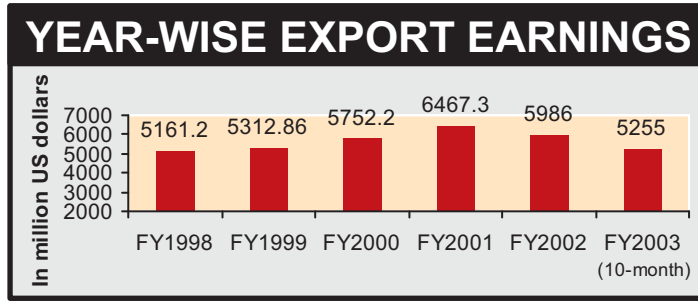
The government has slashed the export target for the current fiscal by \$350 million or 5 per cent as export did not pick up substantially due to a price slump in the global market. "Export target for the current fiscal was \$6,750 million. But in view of the latest performance, we

thought it would not be possible to achieve the target and revised it to \$6,400 million," said a highly placed source at the Ministry of Commerce. This is for the second consecutive year the target is revised due to poor export performance. In 2001-02, the target was slashed to \$5,950 million from the original \$7,170 million.

"We expected that export would get a boost this fiscal but it showed a poor recovery in the first half that continued up to the third quarter of this fiscal (July last to March this year) due to the Iraq war," the source added. According to an export review, prices of readymade garments, knitwears, frozen food and jute goods, which account for 85 per cent of the total export earnings, dipped to a five-year low in fiscal 2002-03.

Exporters had to sell an additional 15 per cent goods on average to earn every single dollar in the last fiscal. Because of continued price slump, they had to increase the volume of goods sold to keep their

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## Mugger 'murdered' by mates in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged mugger was gunned down at Paikpara in Mirpur yesterday evening. Police said Jahangir alias Sohel, 18, might have been murdered by the members of his group over share of money. The group mugged one trader at Karwan Bazaar yesterday morning and sat on the roof of a building of Science Laboratory staff quarters at Paikpara for distribution of the money in the afternoon. Locked in an altercation, one of the gang members reportedly shot Jahangir in the abdomen. His mother Saleha Begum took him to the Suhrawardy Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead. She later took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) to hear the same.

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## Ctg businessman rescued 7 hours after abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A millionaire businessman was rescued unhurt, after seven hours of his abduction yesterday, in the early hours from Kumira under Sitakunda. Hajee Shah Alam, 45, was kidnapped from his building material and motor parts depot in Olonkar intersection under Pahartali Thana. Cadres of Jubo Dal, Jatiyatibadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) based in Mirersarai and Chittagong city were allegedly involved in the kidnapping, police sources said. Police caught red-handed one of the six kidnapers, an ICS activist

and 3rd year honours student of Chittagong College. An auto-rickshaw driver was also held in this connection. The miscreants came in front of Alam's firm by a microbus at 9:30pm Monday and picked him up posing as detective branch men. They took him to Chhota Kamaldah of Mirersarai. Later, the gang forced him to swallow some tablets. Assuming those as strong sedative, Alam instantly pretended to be unconscious. Then they took him on an auto-rickshaw and started towards the city. A patrol team of Sitakunda police

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## Prime accused in Ctg triple murder held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested the prime accused in sensational triple murder case in Hathazari Thana from city's Kapasgola in Chawkbazar yesterday afternoon. Former UP chairman Abul Kalam was arrested from a residence in Kapasgola yesterday afternoon. He was the main accused in killing of three brothers, at Charia Kazipara of Mirzapur union under Hathazari. He had been absconding since the incident. Hathazari police took him into custody. Armed criminal shot Abul

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## Cook pours fuel on the WMD row

BBC ONLINE

Former cabinet minister Robin Cook has accused Tony Blair's government of "not presenting the whole picture" in the run-up to war with Iraq. He made the claim when he appeared as the first witness yesterday at a House of Commons inquiry into whether the threat posed by Saddam Hussein was exaggerated. Fellow ex-minister Clare Short followed, accusing Blair of a "series of half truths, exaggerations, reassurances that weren't the case" in the run-up to war. She said she presumed Blair

saw the devices he used to get the UK to back America against Iraq as "honourable deception". Iraq was an "appallingly difficult intelligence target", said Cook, as there was no hope of putting in any western agents and there were few leaks from Saddam's regime. Cook, an ex-foreign secretary, told the MPs he had "no doubt about the good faith of the prime minister", but said the "burning sincerity and conviction of those involved in exercise" was a "problem". This conviction had led to intelligence material being carefully selected to back up their case for

war, rather than being used as a basis for assessing whether or not Saddam posed a threat, he said. The London inquiry comes ahead of a similar probe by Congress in Washington into whether the Bush administration misled or inflated threats posed by Iraq before going to war. The US debate has been fuelled by senior senator Carl Levin, who claimed he had evidence the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) deliberately withheld crucial information from the UN arms inspectors deployed to Iraq before the war to find evidence of banned weapons.

In London, Cook's evidence was being closely watched because he was the only minister to quit Blair's cabinet ahead of the conflict, in his case because he believed the US-led coalition should seek further UN sanction before attacking. Short quit her post after the war having publicly agonised before the conflict over whether she should stay on as international development secretary. Only the impartiality of a full public inquiry will be sufficient to dispel the air of suspicion that hangs around this government

Short told the committee she believed the US and UK decided in summer 2002 that there should be a war against Iraq in early 2003. She said this timetable led to Saddam's threat being exaggerated, to "false" links with al-Qaeda being talked up, to the efforts for a second UN resolution being abandoned with the blame wrongly placed on France; and to the early curtailment of Hans Blix's inspection regime. The foreign affairs select committee is set to look in particular at claims that Iraq had the capacity to launch a strike using weapons of

mass destruction (WMDs) within 45 minutes. Since the war was declared over, there have been no significant finds in the search for Saddam Hussein's WMD and in recent days there has also been a resurgence of military clashes involving US forces. Both the prime minister and his director of communications, Alastair Campbell, have refused to appear before the committee, which takes evidence in public and publishes its reports. A separate inquiry by Parliament's intelligence and secu-

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